MAP/World Cultures – V55.0511
Middle Eastern Societies
Spring 2004

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:30-4:45

Instructor:
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Studies
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Preceptors:
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Course description: This course examines the histories, cultures and societies of the Middle East, a
loosely defined term designating a large area of north Africa and west Asia. It starts by asking how
historical and anthropological knowledge, western media and travel writing, and academic scholarship have
traditionally defined the Middle East. It then offers a brief historical perspective of the Ottoman past, i.e.
the period from the sixteenth century onwards, passing through the colonial period in the nineteenth
century to the present post-colonial period in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The course will then
shift to discussing the important issues of women and their position in Middle eastern societies; the Arab-
Israeli conflict; the politics of oil in the region; and religion and politics. We will use a wide range of
materials including diplomatic documents, short stories, scholarly texts, photographs and videos, to explore
the many different ways people in the Middle East have come to define and shape their world and also how
outsiders have also attempted to define and shape this world.

Course format: The course consists of two lectures followed by one recitation (discussion group) per
week. A list of the weekly topics is given below. The lectures are meant to introduce the weekly topics and
will be related to, but not a repetition of, the assigned readings. During the recitations students will discuss
with their preceptors issues covered by the lectures and/or discussed in the assigned readings in greater
detail and will be encouraged to raise questions and issues for further explorations. Occasionally, we will
be showing video clips and slides during the lecture.

Required books: available for purchase at the NYU Book Center and also put on reserve in the Reserve
Room at Bobst Library (on A Level):

- William Cleveland, A History of the Modern Middle East.
- Joel Beinin and Joe Stork, eds., Political Islam.
- Charles Smith, Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict.

There is also a coursepack of required reading available for sale at MacDougal Center, 127 MacDougal St.
Items marked with an asterisk (*) in the reading list below are included in this coursepack.
Course Requirements:
• regular attendance at lectures, completion of all assigned reading on time, and active participation in recitations (10%)
• a map exercise due on January 29 in addition to randomly, unannounced pop quizzes (20%)
• two midterm exams on February 19 and March 23 (40%)
• a final exam given during exam week (30%)

Weekly Readings:
N.B. Items marked with (*) are available for sale in a coursepack from MacDougal Center, 172 MacDougal St.

Week 1 (January 20th and 22nd): Introduction to the course

Week 2 (January 27th and 29th): What, When and Where is the Middle East
• William Cleveland, A History of the Modern Middle East, pp. 1-38.

Week 3 (February 3rd and 5th): Representing, picturing and imagining the Middle East
• *Richard Critchfield, Shahhat, an Egyptian, pp. 3-24.
• *Edward Said, Covering Islam, p. 3-32.

Week 4 (February 10th and 12th): Islam: dogma, faith and practice
• *Ralph Hattox, Coffee and Coffeehouses: The Origins of a Social Beverage in the Medieval Near East, pp. 3-71, 92-111.

Week 5 (February 17th): The Ottoman heritage
• *Donald Quataert, The Ottoman Empire, 1700-1922, pp. 89-109, 140-171.

!!! February 19th: 1st Midterm Exam !!!

Week 6 (February 24th and 26th): European Colonialism and its impact
• William Cleveland, A History of the Modern Middle East, pp. 102-116.
• Charles Smith, Palestine and the Arab Israeli Conflict, pp. 23-57.
• *Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti’s chronicle of the French occupation of Egypt (1798), pp. 33-65.

Week 7 (March 2nd and 4th): WWI and redrawing the map of the Middle East
• William Cleveland, A History of the Modern Middle East, pp. 102-116.
• Charles Smith, Palestine and the Arab Israeli Conflict, pp. 58-166.

Week 8 (March 9th and 11th): The Middle East in the Interwar period
• William Cleveland, A History of the Modern Middle East, pp. 172-232.
• *Gamal Abdel Nasser, The Philosophy of the Revolution, pp. 25-78.

Midterm Break: March 16th and 18th

!!! March 23rd: 2nd Midterm Exam !!!
Week 9 (March 25th): Women and gender
- *Alifâ Rifat, “Distant view of a minaret”.

Week 10 (March 30th and April 1st): Palestine, Zionism and Israel I
- Charles Smith, Palestine and the Arab Israeli Conflict, pp. 167-299.
- *Amos Oz, “The Insult and the Fury” and “The Finger of God?” in In the Land of Israel, pp. 25-73.

Week 11 (April 6th and 8th): Palestine, Zionism and Israel II
- Charles Smith, Palestine and the Arab Israeli Conflict, pp. 301-403.
- *Ghassan Kanafani, “Men in the Sun”.

Week 12 (April 13th and 15th): Politics of oil and economic integration

Week 13 (April 20th and 22nd): Religion and politics

Week 14 (April 27th and 29th): Challenges to the future
- Charles Smith, Palestine and the Arab Israeli Conflict, pp. 406-504.