

MAP/World Cultures – V55.0511

Middle Eastern Societies

Spring 2008
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:00-9:15
14 West 4th St., Rm. 101

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 questioning the usefulness and origins of the very term “Middle East”. It then raises questions of how historical and anthropological knowledge, western media and travel writing, and academic scholarship have traditionally defined the Middle East. The course proceeds to offer a brief historical perspective of Islam, how it rose in 7th-century Arabia, how it spread rapidly through the region, and how Islamic orthodoxy was established. It then offers a brief historical overview 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 some important contemporary issues affecting Middle Eastern societies. These include: women and their position in Middle Eastern societies; the Arab-Israeli conflict; problems of democracy and human rights; Islam and politics; and the Gulf War and the current war in Iraq. We will use a wide range of materials including diplomatic documents, short stories, scholarly texts, and 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 attempted to control 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.

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*.
- John Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*.
- Charles Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*.

There are also other readings which you can find on Blackboard.

Course Requirements:

- regular attendance at lectures, completion of all assigned reading on time, and active participation in recitations (20%);
- a map exercise due on September 13th in addition to randomly, unannounced pop quizzes (10%);
- two midterm exams, one on February 19th, and the other on March 25th (40%)
- a final exam given during exam week (30%).

Weekly Topics:

Week 1 (January 22nd and 24th): Introduction to the course: What, When and Where is the Middle East

- Daniel Bates and Amal Rassam, *Peoples and Cultures of the Middle East*, pp. 10-16.
- Alasdair Drysdale and Gerald Blake, *The Middle East and North Africa: A Political Geography*, pp. 10-30.

Week 2 (January 29th and 31st): Representing, picturing and imagining the Middle East

- Richard Critchfield, *Shahhat, an Egyptian*, pp. 3-24.
- Timothy Mitchell, "The invention and reinvention of the Egyptian peasant," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, v. 22, 1990, pp. 129-150.
- Richard Critchfield, and Timothy Mitchell, "Response" and Reply," *IJMES*, v. 23, 1991, pp. 277-80.
- Jack Shaheen, *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People*, pp. 1-37.
- Thomas Friedman, "One Country, Two worlds," *New York Times*, January 28, 2000.

Week 3 (February 5th and 7th): Islam: dogma, faith and practice

- John Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, pp. 1-114.
- Kristina Nelson, "The sound of the Divine in daily life," in Donna Lee Bowen and Evelyn Early, eds., *Everyday Life in the Muslim Middle East*, pp. 257-61
- Anne Betteridge, "Muslim Women and shrines in Shiraz," in Donna Lee Bowen and Evelyn Early, eds., *Everyday Life in the Muslim Middle East*, 276-89.

Week 4 (February 12th and 14th): The Ottoman Heritage:

- William Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, pp. 37-51, 57-102.
- Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700-1922*, pp. 89-109, 140-171.
- Jerry Brotton, *The Renaissance Bazaar*, pp. 48-54.
- Albert Hourani, "The Ottoman Background of the Modern Middle East".

!!! February 19th: First Midterm Exam !!!

Week 5 (February 21st): European Colonialism and its impact I

- Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti, "Chronicle of the French occupation of Egypt (1798)", pp. 3-15, 101-111, 167-180.
- William Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, pp. 103-117.

Week 6 (February 26th and 28th): European Colonialism and its impact II

- Charles Smith, *Palestine and the Arab Israeli Conflict*, pp. 20-54.
- William Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, pp. 117-129.
- Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, pp. 299-314.
- The Earl of Cromer, *Modern Egypt*, vol. II, pp. 123-167.

Week 7 (March 4th and 6th): WWI and redrawing the map of the Middle East

- William Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, pp. 149-170.
- Charles Smith, *Palestine and the Arab Israeli Conflict*, pp. 55-104

Week 8 (March 11th and 13th): The Middle East in the Interwar period

- William Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, pp. 172-232.
- Charles Smith, *Palestine and the Arab Israeli Conflict*, pp. 105-162.
- Gamal Abdel Nasser, *The Philosophy of the Revolution*, pp. 25-78.

Week 9 (March 18th and 20th): Spring Break

!!! March 25th : Second Midterm exam !!!

Week 10 (March 27th): Palestine, Zionism and Israel I

- Charles Smith, *Palestine and the Arab Israeli Conflict*, pp. 162-216.
- Ilan Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine: One Land, Two Peoples*, pp. 142-184.

Week 11 (April 1st and 3rd): Palestine, Zionism and Israel II

- Charles Smith, *Palestine and the Arab Israeli Conflict*, pp. 253-340.
- Ghassan Kanafani, "Men in the Sun".

Week 12 (April 8th and 11th): Women and gender

- John Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, pp. 93-100.
- Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*, pp. 144-168.
- Arlene E. Macleod, *Accommodating Protest*, pp. 97-141.
- Margot Badran and Miriam Cooke, eds., *Opening the Gates: A Century of Arab Feminist Writing*, selections.
- Elizabeth Fernea, *Women and the Family in the Middle East*. Selections.
- Julie Peteet's article in Judith Tucker, ed., *Arab Women: Old Boundaries, New Frontiers*.

Week 13 (April 15th and 17th): Problems of democracy and human rights

- *John Esposito and James Piscatori, "Democratization and Islam," *The Middle East Journal*, v. 45 (1991), pp. 427-440.
- *Nikki Keddie, "A woman's place: Democratization in the Middle East," *Current History*, v. 103, January 2004, pp. 25-30.
- *Sami Baroudi, "The 2002 Arab Human Development Report: Implications for Democracy," *Middle East Policy*, v. 11, Spring 2004, pp. 132-141.
- *Dave Eickelman, "The Arab "street" and the Middle East's democracy deficit," *Naval War College Review*, v.55, Autumn 2002, pp. 39-48.
- *Sammy Smooha, "The model of ethnic democracy: Israel as a Jewish and democratic state," *Nations and Nationalism*, v. 8, 2002, pp. 475-503.

Week 14 (April 22nd and 24th): Islam and Politics

- John Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, pp. 115-252.
- Gudrun Krämer, "Islamist notions of democracy," in Joel Beinin and Joe Stork, *Political Islam*, pp. 71-82.

Week 15 (April 29th and May 1st): Iraq, The US and the Middle East

- William Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, pp. 473-497, 541-548.
- *Richard Falk, "Human Rights," *Foreign Policy*, March-April 2004, pp. 18-28.
- Faleh A. Jabar, "The worldly roots of religiosity in Post-Saddam Iraq," *Middle East Report*, Summer 2003, pp. 12-18.

- Sinan Antoon, "Of graves and grievances," *Middle East Report*, Summer 2003, pp. pp. 34-37.
- Sarah Graham-Brown, "Multiplier Effect: War, occupation and humanitarian needs in Iraq," *Middle East Report*, Summer 2003, pp. 12-23.

Week 16 (May 5th): Challenges to the future

- William Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, pp. 519-539.
- Charles Smith, *Palestine and the Arab Israeli Conflict*, pp. 437-525.