History of the Modern Middle East

History 3220

Fall, 2010

Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 9-9:50 am

Classroom 302

Required texts, available at the University Book Store:


Syllabus: You will need to sign up for this course's E-Companion in order to have access to the syllabus, to discussion questions, and to submit written work. Go to this link, and read the left hand column to get further information about signing up for Ecompanion. http://www.uwyo.edu/oninsupp Additional required readings (some primary texts and some articles) will be available only as links or pdfs through the ecompanion.

Course Goals: In this class, we are looking for the historical causes of present day problems. We examine the 19th and 20th century Middle East, and its political, economic, social and cultural developments, in order to seek answers for a number of questions: what is political Islam and why is it an idea that thrives in the present day Middle East? Why do Israelis and Palestinians continue to struggle against each other? How has the development of oil-based economies shaped internal politics
and foreign policies of many Middle Eastern states? How have ideas like nationalism, socialism, and anti-Westernism shaped some Middle Eastern states? Historians study history just because it is interesting, but additionally, the main purpose of this course is to enable you to develop an informed understanding of the Middle East and of current issues there. One result of this course should be that when you hear or read news about Middle East, or if you travel to the Middle East, you will understand what has brought about present day incidents and situations, and you will be able to ask informed questions about new topics.

This course fulfills the A&S Non-western requirement.

Class sessions will combine lecture, discussion, film. Written work will include quizzes, discussion questions (turned in on-line), contributions to the news discussion online, short essays and exams.

Expectations of your conduct and mine follow the ideas established in the document “Students and Teachers Working Together”. My expectations of you include “Academic Honesty” (see the document by this name on the UW website by going to the alphabet and choosing the letter A), and I will pursue any cases of academic dishonesty that I find.

Students needing special accommodations due to disabilities should inform me, so that we can work those out.

Grading scale:

A= 91-100; B= 81-90; C=71-80; D= 61-70; F=0-60

Grades: discussion questions 20%; quizzes 20%; midterm exam 25%; final exam 25%; in-class and online participation, 10%.

Your presence in class is expected; your absence will be noted and will negatively affect your grade. You will need to read materials for this course each week, turn in written work as assigned (the frequency is about every three weeks), and follow current events to prepare for weekly discussions. Expect that every hour in class will require two to three hours of outside work, and plan your week accordingly.

Assignments are due at the time noted (11:59 pm of the due date for work submitted through e-companion). I will not accept or grade late work. Prevent problems by completing your work ahead of the deadline.

Week 1, August 23-27 Course introduction; early Islam; Ottoman foundations and system
Gelvin 1-34 (Intro, chapters 1 & 2).

Quran selections. Go to a Quran website or find a copy of the Quran, and read Surahs (chapters) 1, 112, 99, 98, 97, 96, 93, 92, 81, 74, 34:1-20; 33:32-50; 9:1-66. One place to find the Quran online: www.quran.com.

Film: Suleyman

Discussions questions due from students with last names A-L. Choose three (3) questions from week 1; submit answers through ecompanion by midnight, Sunday Aug 8.

Week 2, Aug 30-Sept 3 Ottomans, Safavids, and competition with Europe; Defensive Development

Gelvin 35 – 87, 147-153.

Discussions questions due from students with last names M-Z. Choose three (3) questions for week 2; submit answers through ecompanion by midnight, Sunday.

Week 3, Sept 6-10, no class Monday. Wednesday Review; QUIZ FRIDAY

Gelvin 88-122, 154-157

Week 4, Sept 13-17 Imperialism and Modernity; new Ideologies

Gelvin 123-146, and documents 157-168; since this is a short list, you should get started early with next week’s materials.

Discussions questions due from students with last names A-L. Choose three (3) questions for weeks 3 or 4; submit answers through ecompanion by midnight, Sunday.

Week 5, Sept 20-24 Jews versus Arabs in Palestine; chapter discussion Wednesday; QUIZ FRIDAY

Harms/Ferry xiii – 64;

Read intro to Theodore Herzl’s book, The Jewish State, at the following link. At the bottom of that page, go to either the pdf version or the html version of the book.
and read Chapter 2 http://www.mideastweb.org/thejewishstate.htm

Read Leo Pinsker’s essay, “Autoemancipation” at the following link:
http://www.mideastweb.org/autoemancipation.htm

Read Ahad Ha'am’s essay, “The Jewish State and the Jewish Problem” at the following link: http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/ahad_haam.html

Discussions questions due from students with last names M-Z. Choose three(3) questions from week 4 or 5; submit answers through ecompanion by midnight, Sunday

Week 6, Sept 27 – Oct 1 World War I in the Middle East.

Read these two chapters in pdf:

William Cleveland, A History of the Modern Middle East, Ch. 9 pp. 146-161, “World War I and the end of the Ottoman Order”

Sydney Fischer and William Ochsenwald, The Middle East, a History, Ch 31, 374-395, “Impact of World War I upon the Middle East”

Read Husayn-McMahon Correspondence (sorry about commercial nature of website); Sykes-Picot agreement; Balfour Declaration (also in your textbook); League of Nations Mandate system.

Choose any chapter of this book: James Bryce, The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-1916, at this link:
http://armenianhouse.org/bryce/treatment/cover.html

Discussion Questions due Sunday night from EVERYONE, A-Z!

Week 7, Oct 4-8 Monday, discuss documents. Wednesday review. Friday, MIDTERM EXAM in class. Take-home portion of exam due Wednesday, Oct 6, midnight—it will be available as of Monday morning, Oct 4 through the ecompanion link.

Week 8, Oct 11-15, Nationalisms in the Middle East: Turkey, Iran, Arab nationalisms Gelvin 171-205; and 215-216

Answers to discussion questions due from students A-L on Sunday.
Week 9 Oct 18-22 Establishing Israel; dispossessing Palestinians.

Gelvin 205-221. Harms/Ferry 65-116. Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel; UN Resolution 194; Israel's Law of Return; on Palestinian "Infiltrators"; from Gelvin 316-317 UN Security Council Resolution 242

Answers to discussion questions due from students M-Z on Sunday.

Week 10 Oct 25-29 Islamism, Independent States, Oil. QUIZ FRIDAY

Gelvin 223-256, and 312-313 (Nasser)

Oil production; Oil Price chart, 1948-2006; map World oil production 2002; various Oil stats charts

Week 11 Nov 1-5 New developments in the Middle East: Islam, independent states, wealth

Gelvin 256-293, 317-320 (Khomeini and Shariati) 320-322 (Sayyid Qutb)

Answers to discussion questions due from students A-L on Sunday, for weeks 10 or 11

Week 12 Nov 8-12 the Intifada and the Gulf War

Harms/Ferry 117-158; pdf reading of Cleveland, Modern Middle East, 463-482. Start reading Gerges

Answers to discussion questions due from students M-Z on Sunday for weeks 11 or 12.

Week 13 Nov 15-19 Political Islam vs Jihad; al-Qaeda and 9/11; Second US Iraq warQUIZ FRIDAY

Gelvin 294-303; Gerges Intro through p 150.

Islamist terms
Week 14 Nov 22, class on Monday only

Gerges 151-250

Week 15 Nov 29-Dec 3  Second intifada and the Wall; US and War on Terror


Week 16 Final exam:  In class portion: Wednesday Dec 8, 8-10 am, Classroom 302; Take home portion due Thurs Dec 9 midnight