

# HISTORY OF THE MODERN MIDDLE EAST

HIS 266-01 (FALL 2015)

GRINNELL COLLEGE

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OFFICE HOURS: T 10-11 AND TH 1:15-2:15

This course charts the emergence of the modern Middle East during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The political history of the states that constitute the Middle East is an essential part of this story. But the story of the modern Middle East is about much more than that. It is about the transformation of frameworks through which individuals and communities experience and make sense of the world around them. For our purposes, this includes history, conceptions of community, economic activity, and religion. We will guide our exploration of these broad themes with a set of more pointed questions: How did the nation (and national citizenship) become an organizing principle for collective life? How did capitalism take root? How and why did secularism become a question of urgent concern? How and for whom did modernity itself become an issue of very self-conscious concern? In answering these questions, we will explore the contestations, negotiations, and exclusions that characterize the emergence of modern forms of government in the Middle East, thus gaining insight into many of the most pressing issues in the region today.

## COURSE TEXTS:

Toby Dodge, *Inventing Iraq: The Failure of Nation Building and a History Denied*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.

James Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East: A History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Robert Tignor and Shmuel Moreh, *Al-Jabarti's Chronicle of the French Occupation*. New York: Marcus Wiener, 2005.

Keith Watenpaugh, *Being Modern in the Middle East: Revolution, Nationalism, Colonialism, and the Arab Middle Class*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.

These texts form the backbone of our course, but throughout the semester we will also be working with articles or excerpts from books. All such readings are on electronic reserve, which you can access via "Library Resources" on our Blackboard course site, and have an (ER) next to them on the syllabus. Primary sources (other than those in Gelvin) will typically have (pweb) next to them, which means you can find them in the "Course Readings" folder on the course site.

The secondary sources (the required course texts and reserves) consist of scholarly treatments of general themes or particular elements of the history of the modern Middle East. As you complete the reading for each secondary text, please always read for argument. You can do so with a few questions in mind:

- Can you identify a sentence or sentences that constitute the thesis statement?
- Can you state the author's thesis – even regarding a single chapter or article – succinctly in your own words?
- If part of a larger work, how does a particular chapter fit into the bigger picture? If a stand-alone piece, can you relate this reading to another that we have completed in the course?
- Can you identify at least two examples the author uses to support her or his argument?
- How is the author defining (implicitly or explicitly) “modern?” How does this affect the author's argument and analysis?

As you read the primary documents with which we will work, please keep the following questions in mind:

- Who is writing? What do you think was her or his purpose in so doing?
- What is the larger relevant context? (Beware of anachronistic analysis!)
- What is the author's relative position of power in the context of the document's production?
- How does this document support or call into question claims made by the authors of our secondary sources?

From a skill-building perspective, then, **the first and second learning goals** of this course are (1) reading scholarly sources for argument and presenting that argument and exemplary evidence in succinct terms and (2) cultivating the ability to offer contextually sensitive readings of primary source documents.

#### COURSE EVALUATION AND POLICIES

Engagement: 25%

As the weighty percentage indicates, I consider your participation in this course to be an essential component of its success. Participation includes regular attendance. In this vein, anything beyond two unexcused absences will result in a reduction of your participation grade. (I realize that things come up – the key to managing your various responsibilities is open communication.) Chronic tardiness will not help your cause, either. However, participation includes much more than attendance. This part of your final grade is a reflection of your *engagement* with the course. I understand that not everyone chooses to speak in each class session, but there are lots of other ways to show engagement: Make eye contact during lecture. When I request that you post to the course site (this includes journal entries and Blackboard posts), do so thoughtfully and punctually. Come by office

hours now and then – even if you don't have a particular agenda. Proofread and edit all your written work carefully (this includes posts and journal entries). All of things add up to leave an impression of the care you are giving to the course.

Map Quiz: 5%

Primary Document Exercises: 20%

The first exercise, which is worth 5% of your final grade, requires that you write a 100-word annotation in which you describe the event, note the significance of the event in the broader history of the region, and note something significant about the event you learned from the source.

The second Primary Document Exercise, worth 15% of your final grade, requires you to select primary sources from our course and from archival material. Once you have selected particular documents, you will write four-five pages in which you discuss/analyze the documents and explain their relevance/importance in understanding the history of the modern Middle East (through the Great War). Of the 15% of your final grade this assignment represents, 12% will reflect the quality of your essay and 3% will reflect the quality of your engagement with the peer review process.

Map and Chronology Assignments: 40%

You will be working with a group to create and maintain a map and chronology that charts change over time in various ways. Steady work on this assignment will be a way to review as we move along in the course. Your group will be responsible for making three entries/annotations per week beginning the week of September 14. There are two “due dates” for the map and chronology. My evaluation of your group's work on the first due date will yield 10% of your final grade, while my evaluation of your group's work on the second due date will yield 20% of your final grade. You will also be responsible for an individual journal, for which you will write from 200-400 words per week describing the process by which your group decided on the entries for that week. At times, I may give you more specific prompts to consider. Your journal will constitute 10% of your final grade

The group map-timeline project is the prime setting for the **third learning goal** of our course. As a group, you will have to debate the merits of different possible entries, raising important questions about questions of causality (what kind of historical explanation is most important?) and reinforcing the complexity of historical change. As a group, you will be deciding on the labels you affix to different entries, each denoting a particular logic of organizing data and explaining historical change. Given its extended nature, this group work assignment will ultimately depend upon your ability to successfully manage professional relationships. In an important sense, this constitutes the **fourth and final learning goal** in the course.

Presentations: 10%

At the end of the semester, groups will present their maps and timeline projects to the class. Format and details TBD.

A note about written work: In all cases, unless otherwise noted, you are to use normal margins and 12-point font. In text (parenthetical, with author and page number) citation is acceptable when accompanied by a works cited page. Please include a minimal header – your name, the course name and, if you choose, a title. All papers should have page numbers where applicable. You will find due dates and submission instructions for all assignments **in bold** in the syllabus. Unless I instruct otherwise, **submit all written assignments to elfenbei.grinnell@gmail.com**. Please be sure to submit all work as pdf.

Course Policies:

- Email policy part I: I am generally good about returning email in a reasonable amount of time. Please always reach out to your colleagues first with logistical questions about our course; you can do so via the email function on the course site. If no one can figure out the answer, then by all means get in touch. You can always ask in class, too, and you will find that I am quite accessible outside of class. I'd much rather meet you in person—and you can email to set up an appointment! [This policy does not apply to real emergencies.]
- Email policy part II: I encourage you to use email to share interesting news or course-related information you come across. This is actually a great way to help promote a collective learning experience.
- I will accept *only* hard copies of written work (unless otherwise noted). All work is due in class. I do not want to hear excuses about printing problems. You are responsible for planning your time in such a way that you can turn your work in on time.
- Know that I am pre-disposed to saying no to requests for extensions. I provide plenty of notice for each of the assignments – it is your responsibility to plan your time accordingly. That said, please do not be shy about approaching me for an extension if you have extenuating circumstances. It is essential to keep lines of communication open.
- If I suspect that you are using computers in class for anything other than note taking or document viewing, you will lose your computer privileges for the remainder of the semester. (If I suspect that you are texting in class I will ask that you leave your phone with me at the start of each class. Cell phones should be set on silent.)
- If you are involved in an extracurricular activity that will take you away from campus be sure to let me know beforehand. Regardless of the reason (except for dire family emergency, hospitalization), if I do not hear from you *before* you miss class I will assume you are simply skipping class. An after-the-fact note from Health Services will not suffice.
- Breaches of academic integrity will result in an official disciplinary process guided by the Dean's office. Although I will inform you of any action I take, I will not negotiate with you privately about such matters. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism I suggest you consult the Student Handbook immediately.

- It is essential to me that everyone in the class has the same opportunity to thrive. Please let me know of any particular learning needs you have (assuming they are on file with the College) and we will work together to make sure that you get the most out of this learning experience.

### COURSE SCHEDULE

#### **August 31:** Introductions

#### BACKGROUND, ENCOUNTERS

#### **September 2:** Ottoman Empire

- James Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East*, 1-31 (read pp. 1-9 closely, skim pp. 11-23; read pp. 24-31 more closely).
- Daniel Goffman, “The Ottoman Empire.” (ER)
- “Draft Treaty of Amity and Commerce between the Ottoman Empire and France, February 1535,” Gelvin, pp. 60-61.

#### **September 7:** Reading community in *Al-Jabarti’s Chronicle*

- al-Jabarti, Intro and 19-61.
  - As you are reading this source, please pay particular attention to the picture of community that emerges. Who is part of al-Jabarti’s community? What makes you think so?

#### **September 9:** Al-Jabarti continued

- **MAP QUIZ**
- al-Jabarti, 62-118.
  - As you are reading this source, please take special note the place of religion in al-Jabarti’s text.
- Class exercise: Mapping the Emergence of the Modern Middle East.

## BECOMING MODERN? LAND, CLASS, AND NATIONALISM

### September 14: Becoming Modern?

- James Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East*, pp. 69-105, photos 117-139, and pp. 140-150.
  - “Treaty of Balta Liman (1838),” “Hatt-i Sharif (1839),” “Islahat Fermani (1856),” and “d’Arcy Oil Concession,” pp. 166-175.
  - Amin, “Economic Change under Muhammad ‘Ali.” (pweb)

### September 16: Economy and Class (cont.)

- Zachary Lockman, “Imagining the Working Class.” (ER)
  - Amin, “Tahtawi and Justice.” (pweb)

**Sunday, September 20: First primary document exercise due 5 p.m. Please submit as .pdf via email to [elfenbei.grinnell@gmail.com](mailto:elfenbei.grinnell@gmail.com).**

### September 21: Economy and Class (cont.)

- Keith Watenpaugh, *Being Modern in the Middle East*, pp. 1-54.
  - “Commercial Convention,” Gelvin, pp. 147-148.

### September 23: Economy and Class (cont.)

- Keith Watenpaugh, *Being Modern in the Middle East*, pp. 55-94.
  - “Young Turk Proclamation, 1908.” (pweb)

### September 28: Economy and Class (cont.)

- Keith Watenpaugh, *Being Modern in the Middle East*, pp. 95-120.

### September 30: Emergent Nationalism

- Elliot Colla, *Conflicted Antiquities*, pp. 121-165.
  - Mustafa Kamil, “What the National Party Wants.” (pweb)
  - Are we talking about the same Egyptian community as al-Jabarti was talking about? Why or why not? Please post 250 well-crafted words in response to this prompt. **Your Blackboard post is due by 9 p.m. on Tuesday, September 29.**

## DELIMITATION OF THE MODERN NATIONAL STATE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

### **October 5:** National State Formation

- James Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East*, pp. 189-229.
- Arkarli, “The Tangled Ends of an Empire and Its Sultan.” (ER)

### **October 7:** National State Formation: Mandate System

- James Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East*, review pp. 193-204.
  - Sykes-Picot (pweb).
  - Treaty of Sèvres (pweb).
  - British Mandate, League of Nations. (pweb)
  - “An Arab Soldier in the Ottoman Army,” pp. 248-251.
  - “Resolution of the Syrian National Congress at Damascus, 2 July 1919,” pp. 251-252.

### **October 12:** National State Formation: Syria

- Keith Watenpugh, *Being Modern in the Middle East*, pp. 121-173

### **October 14:** National State Formation: Israel/Palestine

- James Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East*, pp. 230-247.
  - Herzl, “A Solution to the Jewish Question,” pp. 253-254.
  - Balfour Declaration, p. 254.

### **Friday, October 16:** First map/timeline evaluation

### **October 26:** National State Formation: Iraq

- Toby Dodge, *Inventing Iraq*, pp. 1-62.

### **October 28:** National State Formation: Iraq (cont.)

- Toby Dodge, *Inventing Iraq*, pp. 63-131.

**November 2:** Religion and National Life

- James Gelvin, “Secularism and Religion in the Arab Middle East.” (pweb)
- Andrew Davison and Taha Parla, “Secularism and Laicism in Turkey.” (ER)
  - Ataturk’s Dissolution of the Caliphate. (pweb)

**November 4:** Religion and National Life (cont.)

- Hasan al-Banna, “Our Mission” in *Five Tracts*. (pweb)
  - Amin, “Toward an Effective Reform.” (pweb)
- Ali abd al-Raziq, “The Caliphate and the Bases of Power.” (pweb).
  - Archival materials on dismissal of Ali abd al-Raziq (pweb).

THE MODERN MIDDLE EAST?

**November 9:** Emergent Nations?

- James Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East*, pp. 259-287.

**November 11:** Nationalism – Workshop

- **Peer review:** Rough draft, second primary source exercise due in class. Please bring hard copy with you.
- James Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East* [Third Edition], pp. 283-293.
  - David Ben Gurion, Speech, 2 October 1947. (pweb)
  - Amin, “Egypt’s Liberation.” (pweb)
  - Gamal abd al-Nasr, Speech, 29 May 1967. (pweb)
  - Ben Gurion Letter to DeGaulle, 6 December 1967. (pweb)

**Sunday, November 15: Second primary source exercise due by 5 p.m. Please submit as .pdf via email to [elfenbei.grinnell@gmail.com](mailto:elfenbei.grinnell@gmail.com).**

**November 16:** Religion and National Life

- James Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East* [Third Edition], pp. 307-318. (pweb)
- Elliott Colla, *Conflicted Antiquities*, pp. 260-277.
  - Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones* (pweb).

**November 18:** Religion and National Life (cont.)

- James Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East* [Third Edition], pp. 294-306. (pweb)
- Khomeini, Introduction to “Islamic Government” (pweb).
  - Ayatollah Montazari’s Fatwa on Legitimacy of Supreme Leader. (pweb)

**November 23:** Work Day

**November 25:** No class. Happy Thanksgiving!

**November 30:** The Middle East and Global Capitalism

- James Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East*, pp. 288-316.
- Timothy Mitchell, “McJihad.” (ER)

**December 2:** Return to Iraq

- Sara Pursley, “Lines drawn on an empty map,” parts I and II (pweb)
  - On the basis of your work thus far this semester, do you agree with Pursley? Why or why not? Please post 250 well-crafted words in response to this question and to Pursley’s article more generally. **Your Blackboard post is due by Monday, December 2, at 9 p.m.**

**December 7:** Presentations

**December 9:** Wrap-Up

**December 16:** Final Due Date for Maps and Timelines