

SIS 619-022  
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Monday 5:30-8  
Hurst 208

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## WAR & PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The violence that has rolled across the Middle East since the 2011 Arab uprisings has deep roots in the region's history. Since the fall of the Ottoman Empire a century ago, successor regimes have struggled to restore stable and just governments. The premise of this course is that discussions of how to bring peace to the region must rest on a clear understanding of the causes of conflict. The causes of violence, tyranny and poverty lie neither on broad deficiencies attributed to Arab culture or Islam, nor in the personalities of individual dictators or the violent ideology of a terrorist group. The solutions are therefore neither impossible (embedded in the deep and essential qualities of culture) nor simple (entailing the removal of a leader or extermination of a particular group). This course identifies the local, regional, and global reasons the peoples of the Middle East suffer so much today. It thereby suggests ways to begin thinking about how they might one day again enjoy stable regimes and peaceful relations with their neighbors.

Part I of the course demonstrates that the peoples of the region have been capable of wise and just governance in the past. We begin in the 16th century, when Turks and Persians established empires more powerful than the earlier Arab Caliphates and in many ways more lawful and just than European states of that era. They built their power by combining Islamic justice with secular, imperial law. Global change shook these systems of rule in the 18th-century, when European capitalists and armies expanded to Africa and Asia. The Safavids collapsed first, and then Napoleon's army invaded Ottoman Egypt in 1798. We study how Ottomans, Iranians, and Egyptians responded to new challenges with vigorous reforms, resulting in the establishment of constitutional monarchies by the late 19th century.

In Part II, we study why the 20th century became the most violent in Middle Eastern history since the era of the Crusades. World War I introduced the trauma of total war, mass starvation, and genocide. The Ottoman and Iranian dynasties fell, while Britain and France colonized nearly all of the Arab world. The Middle East became the axis of international rival for petroleum, the fuel of industrial economies and armies. Loss of sovereignty and the constant threat of war brought an end to ideals of Islamic justice. The new Turkish republic abolished the caliphate in 1923; Iran's new dynasty suppressed the constitution; European colonial regimes undermined former pillars of political authority and social order. We study how new political movements emerged after WWI, each advancing new and rival models of justice: nationalist, communist, religious, as well as liberal. Arab nation-states gained independence by the mid-20th century amidst these internal political divisions as well as international conflict sparked by the demise of old colonial empires and the rise of the Cold War. In this context we re-examine the Arab-Israeli wars as a series of conflicts driven by the stresses of new state-building, American-Soviet rivalry, and the global thirst for oil.

Part III examines how this extended crisis produced violent trends that characterize the region today: the rise of militant Islamic movements, the civil wars that challenge Arab dictatorships, the Palestine-Israel conflict and the contest for control of the Persian Gulf. In this context of "justice interrupted," political violence reached unprecedented levels, in the Lebanese civil war, Iran-Iraq War, the Gulf wars, the Iran-Iraq war, the Palestinian intifadas, and the routine brutality of political dungeons. Students choose one dimension of violence as the subject of individual reading and a final paper.

Goals: The course aims to train students not only in the content of Middle East history, but also in the methods and uses of historical inquiry. In Part I, we consider the reliability of primary sources as we study the pre-modern norms of so-called Islamic governance. We engage in comparative history to tease out general from local trends and the reasons that the Ottoman state lasted longer. And we study how political discourses change over time, in response to the growth of state power and to the challenge of European Orientalism. In Part II, we study how the rules and dynamics of politics changes with mass mobilization and the introduction of mass media. We consider the gendered and class dynamics of politics, how women and peasants became objects of political rivalry and ideology, and why Arabs of the same generation joined mass movements of both communists and Islamists. In Part III, students re-read scholarship on contemporary conflicts through the historical lens they have learned in order to raise new questions and propose new solutions. The final paper will address one conflict of the student's choice. Written as a policy paper for a potential presidential candidate in the 2020 election, it will critique one contemporary book on the conflict from a historical standpoint and offer a new policy approach based on that perspective.

Requirements: Students must complete weekly reading assignments of 100-125 pages and submit a 300-word response to the discussion question in class. These essays, along with attendance and participation in class discussion, account for 30% of the final grade. Two midterm quizzes account for 15% of the grade each. The final paper accounts for 40% of the course grade. Late papers and make-up exams are not normally permitted. More than two absences will harm the grade. The following books have been ordered for purchase online at [shop.AmericanU.com](http://shop.AmericanU.com): Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (6<sup>th</sup> edition); Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*; and al-Jabarti, *Napoleon in Egypt*. Other required readings, marked with an asterisk (\*) on the syllabus, are collected on Blackboard. Students who cannot bring a laptop to class should print these out for reference during discussion. A list of books to choose for the final paper will be distributed in October.

Additional notes: The instructor reserves the right to change this syllabus, if the need emerges during the term. Students are encouraged to discuss classroom requirements and any issues related to the course content with the instructor during office hours (Mondays before class) or by appointment. One personal meeting with the instructor on the final paper topic is highly recommended.

## **PART I THE OTTOMAN AND PERSIAN EMPIRES, 1450-1914**

We examine the Ottoman and Safavid imperial political and social order from the perspective of rulers in their capitals of Istanbul and Isfahan, of subjects in the provinces, and of Europeans. To explore their views, we read primary sources-- documents dating from the time we study. Discussion sections will focus on the primary sources. As you read, ask yourselves: what kind of governments were these? How did subjects view them as just, or legitimate? What was the role of religion in government in society? How did diverse peoples get along?

Global change came crashing through the gates of empire in the long 19th century, as European businessmen, soldiers, diplomats, and missionaries invaded the region. Middle Easterners were shocked, but by no means paralyzed by the change. They responded vigorously and creatively to defend their interests. In fact, internally, the Ottoman and Iranian states emerged stronger than they were before 1798; externally, however, the balance of power had tipped toward Europe.

We examine the period along three themes: 1) the cultural, political and economic impact of European imperialism; 2) the nature of government reforms promoted as a defense against European invasion; and 3) the protests by common people against both European imperialism and their own governments' growing power.

## I. Aug 27 Introduction: “Jihad” and Empire from the 6th to the 16th Century

Cleveland, “Rise & Expansion of Islam,” “Development of Islamic Civilization,” and “Ottoman and Safavid Empires,” in *Modern Middle East*, pp. 1-52  
Ahmed, “Women and the Rise of Islam” and “Elaboration of Founding Discourses” in *Women and Gender in Islam*, pp. 41-63, 79-101

Movie shown in class: "The Message," directed by Moustapha Akkad (1977)

Discussion: According to Akkad, what was the message of Islam and why did the Prophet and his followers engage in war? How does Cleveland explain jihad and the expansion of the Muslim state into an empire? And how does the change in women’s status reveal the emergence of Islamic society? How did the 16<sup>th</sup>-century empires differ from the Arab caliphate?

[Sept 3 is Labor Day: No class.]

## II. Sept 10 Islamic States and Society in the 16th-18th Centuries

Ahmed, “Medieval Islam” in *Women and Gender in Islam*, pp. 102-23  
\*Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 155-72, 181-207  
\*Woodhead, "Perspectives on Süleyman," in *Süleyman the Magnificent and His Age*, pp. 164-90  
\*Katib Chelebi, “Tobacco” in *Balance of Truth* (1656), pp. 50-59

Discussion: What role did religion play in the governments of Sultan Süleyman and Shah Abbas? How does Katib Chelebi’s essay on the tobacco controversy illustrate reality against theory?

## III. Sept 17 Napoleon’s 1798 Invasion: Growth of Ottoman and Egyptian Military Regimes

al-Jabarti, *Napoleon in Egypt*, pp. 1-48, 80-101, 167-80  
\*Owen, “Middle East Economy...” and “Conclusion” in *Middle East in the World Economy*, pp. 1-10, 287-93  
Cleveland, “Era of Transformation” and “Forging a New Synthesis” in *Modern Middle East*, pp. 53-75

Discussion: Why did Napoleon invade Egypt? Why did Edward Said call his motives Orientalist? According to Jabarti, how did Egyptians in Cairo respond? How did the Ottoman and Egyptian states respond, according to Cleveland?

## IV. Sept 24 Social and Religious Responses to European Imperialism in the Late 19th Century

Cleveland, “Ottoman Empire and Egypt...Tanzimat,” “Egypt and Iran” and “Response of Islamic Society” in *Modern Middle East*, pp. 76-123  
Ahmed, “Social and Intellectual Change” and “Discourse of the Veil” in *Women and Gender in Islam*, pp. 127-68  
\*Al-Afghani, “Islamic Response to Imperialism” and “Islamic Solidarity” (ca. 1880s) in *Islam in Transition*, pp. 16-23  
\*Taj al-Saltana, *Crowning Anguish* (ca. 1914), pp. 107-40  
\*Huda Shaarawi, *Harem Years* (ca. 1924), excerpts

Discussion: How did religious leaders like Afghani respond to Europeans’ criticism of Islam? How was the status of women ensnared in the debate about Islam and modernity?

## V. Oct 1 Ottoman and Iranian Constitutional Revolutions, 1906-1913

Cleveland, "Era of Young Turks" in *Modern Middle East*, pp. 124-38

\*Edib, *Memoirs of Halide Edib* (1925), pp. 252-84, 295-311, 329-44

\*Shuster, *The Strangling of Persia* (1912) pp. 3-34, 169-204

Discussion: Why did constitutionalism as a new model of justice appeal to citizens? How did contemporaries understand their failure? What role did Europeans play in this process of democratization?

**Midterm Exam I: Take-Home Essay.** 1,000 words. Due Monday, Oct. 8 in class.

## PART II TRANSITION FROM EMPIRE TO NATION-STATE: ROOTS OF MASS POLITICS & WAR

The Paris Peace settlements after WWI caused as much turmoil in the Middle East as they notoriously did in Europe. As the Ottoman state collapsed, new mass political movements emerged in a contest to create nation states. However, against nationalist protests, Europeans aimed occupy most of the Ottoman Empire, sparking decades of struggle for independence, epitomized by the battle for control of Palestine/Israel. A second struggle occurred within societies over social reform and economic development. These two struggles came together in the 1967 war, a watershed in modern Middle Eastern history. After Israel's dramatic defeat of multiple Arab armies, the dominant discourse politics shifted dramatically from secular nationalism to religious ideology amidst widespread disappointment that revolution and independence had not produced economic growth and social equity. A third struggle in the 20<sup>th</sup> century has been that for democracy, waged first in Iran and Turkey (not colonized) and most recently, in the Arab countries.

## VI. Oct 8 World War I and the End of Empire

Cleveland, "World War I" in *Modern Middle East*, pp. 139-60

•Dadrian, *To the Desert*, 1-35, 94-103

\*Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 101-07, 126-29, 149-63, 184-207

\*Djemal Pasha, "The Arab Rebellion," in *Memories of a Turkish Statesman*, 197-235

Movie shown in class: "Lawrence of Arabia," directed by David Lean (1962)

Discussion: How and why did Ottoman society break apart during the war?

## VII. Oct 15 The Turbulent '20s: World War I's Impact on Middle Eastern Societies

Cleveland, "Arab Struggle for Independence" in *Modern Middle East*, pp. 184-205

Ahmed, "First Feminists" and "Divergent Voices" in *Women and Gender in Islam*, pp. 169-207

\*Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*, 3-7, 63-75, 141-55

\*al-Banna, *Memoirs of Hasan al-Banna Shabeed*, pp. 59-63, 82-83, 109-16, 140-43

Discussion: Why were Middle Eastern politicians fans of Pres. Woodrow Wilson? How did World War I and its peace settlement produce nationalist and Islamist movements? How were women drawn into debates about post-Ottoman identity?

### VIII. Oct 22 Divergent Fates of Democracy in Turkey and Iran, 1918-1953

Cleveland, "Authoritarian Reform in Turkey & Iran" and "Democracy and Authoritarianism" in *Modern Middle East*, pp. 166-83, 261-85

\*Yalman, *Turkey in My Time* (1956), 170-81, 239-51

\*Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, pp. 113-41

\*Mossadeq, letter to the British Nation, Nov. 1952, in *The Middle East and Islamic World Reader*, pp. 254-55.

\*Donald Wilber, "CIA Clandestine Service History: Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq...", i-xiii

Discussion: How did Turkey make the transition to democracy, according to Yalman and Cleveland? Why did Mossadeq's democratic movement in Iran fail? What does the CIA document tell us about the American role in the 1953 coup?

### IX. Oct 29 Palestine and the Establishment of Israel, 1917-1948

Cleveland, "Palestine Mandate & Birth of Israel" in *Modern Middle East*, pp. 266-56

\*Schleifer, "Izz al-Din al-Qassam" in *Struggle and Survival*, pp. 164-77

\*Kanafani, "Land of Sad Oranges" (1958) in *Men in the Sun*, pp. 57-62

\*Elon, "An Open Wound" in *Israelis* (1971), pp. 189-221

Discussion: Why did the conflict between Palestinian Arabs and Zionists turn violent in the 1920s? How did Arabs and Jews react to the 1948 war, according to Kanafani and Elon?

### X. Nov 5 Age of Arabism: Independence, Revolution and War with Israel, 1952-67

Cleveland, "Age of Nasser," "Radicalization," and "Israel and Palestinians" in *Modern Middle East*, pp. 286-350

\*Party of the Arab Ba'th, "Constitution" (1946) in *Arab Nationalism*, pp. 233-36

\*Nasser, "Morrow of Independence" (1962) in *Contemporary Arab Political Thought*, pp. 74-79

\*Fanon, "Concerning Violence" in *Wretched of the Earth* (1961/1963) pp. 35-43

\*Abu Iyad, *My Home, My Land* (1978/1981) 3-49

Discussion: According to Fanon, why was decolonization necessarily violent? How did Fatah (according to Abu Iyad), Nasser, and the Baathists conceive of their revolutions?

**Midterm Exam II:** 1000 words. Due in class Nov. 12.

## PART III PROPHETS, PETROLEUM & PALESTINE: SOURCES OF CONTEMPORARY CONFLICTS

Conflict spread throughout the region in the past fifty years, an unprecedented period of sustained violence within and between nations. We study both the local causes and the international causes for the violence, as well as its cost. Students will choose one conflict as a topic for their final papers, and complete additional reading in consultation with the instructor. Topics must be submitted and approved by the Thanksgiving break. The final papers should place the conflict in historical perspective. They should include sources from course readings as well as from outside reading and be a maximum of 3,000 words or ten pages long.

**XI. Nov 12 Post-1967: Rise of Militant Religious Movements in Egypt, Israel, and the Gulf**

Cleveland, "Egypt & Lebanon," "Revival of Islam," and "Arabian Peninsula," in *Modern Middle East*, pp. 371-771, 378-422

Ahmed, "Struggle for the Future" in *Women and Gender in Islam*, pp. 208-34

\*Qutb, *Milestones* (1964) pp. i-iii, 5-17

\*Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*, pp. 43-51, 164-71

\*Oz, "The Finger of God?" in *In the Land of Israel* (1983) pp. 49-73

Movies Shown in Class: "Women Under Siege" and "A Veiled Revolution" (1982)

Discussion: Why did religious parties rise in Egypt, Israel and Palestine? What were their goals and why did they embrace violence? What role did women play?

**XII. Nov 19 Post- 1967: Baathist Dictatorship, Islamic Revolution, and Iran-Iraq War**

Cleveland, "Authoritarian Rule in Syria and Iraq" and "Iranian Revolution" in *Modern Middle East*, pp. 355-70, 423-46

\*Makiya, *Republic of Fear* (1989) pp. 46-72

\*Al-i Ahmad, *Occidentosis: A Plague from the West* (1962) 27-35

\*Abrahamian, "Fundamentalism or Populism?" in *Khomeinism*, pp. 13-38

Discussion: How did the 1967 war contribute to the rise of military dictatorship in Syria and Iraq? Why did Iran, by contrast, explode into Islamic revolution? From the evidence presented here, did Khomeini believe that revolution was necessarily violent?

Final Paper Topics Due: Title and 100-word abstract

**XIII. Nov 26 Seeking Justice at the Turn of a New Century**

Cleveland, "Palestinian Uprising and 1991 Gulf War," and "Palestinian-Israeli Relations since 1991" in *Modern Middle East*, pp. 451-98

Ahmed, "Conclusion" in *Women and Gender in Islam*, pp. 235-48

\*Documents in *Sources in History of Modern Middle East:*

Usama bin Laden, Interview & "Jihad against Jews and Crusaders" (1998) 359-65

Ehsan Ahrari, "Facing the Real Enemy in the Arab Middle East" (2002) 366-69

Discussion: After the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 many Americans asked 'Why do they hate us?' Many answered that "they" (Muslims or Arabs) hate our way of life. How do the texts assigned this week prompt you to revise the question and the answer?

**XIV. Dec 3 Last Class: From 9/11 to the Arab Spring**

Cleveland, ""America's Troubled Moment," and "2011 Arab Uprisings" in *Modern Middle East*, 519-56

Presentations of Paper Topics

**Monday, December 10:** Final papers due. There will be no final exam.