History of Modern Middle East

Class Meetings: Wed 11:30 AM-12:50 PM & Fri 11:30 AM-12:50 PM in Engelhard Hall 209

Course Overview:

The interconnecting regions stretching from Northwest Africa to Southwest Asia and the Iranian Plateau, currently known as the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), have historically been the breeding ground for the world's greatest civilizations, thanks largely to the geographical positioning at an international crossroads where Mediterranean, Atlantic, African, European, and Asian histories met and commingled. With its porous and ever-shifting boundaries MENA has also acted, over the centuries, as an important conduit between and among adjacent communities, cultures, societies, and states. As such, since 1800 in tandem with the rest of the world and in response to both external and internal forces MENA underwent transformations in political, economic, social, and cultural realms — a series of processes which may collectively be called modernity.

This course surveys the various ways in which modernity arose, and was encountered, at different levels across MENA in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As lived in daily life, embodied in the form of reforming policies, new state apparatuses and institutions, or even experienced as a set of worldviews, modernity assumed many guises ranging from new modes of knowledge production, communications and transportation, city planning and governance, to novel forms of entertainment and consumption patterns, and above all in ways of thinking about the natural world, the state, and religion as well as normative gender roles.

Challenging the older scholarship's stereotypical representation of the region as a static, pre-modern universe situated outside of its contemporaneous historical processes, the course will
highlight the numerous ways in which modernity manifested itself across the region. Thematic and contextual issues, concepts and phenomena, such as imperialism, colonialism, Orientalism, capitalism, and nationalism—among others—drive content, and will be discussed in relation to significant historical developments that swept the region in the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries.

**Learning Objectives:**

Upon the completion of the course students will:

1) Learn various interpretative frameworks for approaching history in general and for understanding MENA in particular
2) Be able to recognize the diversity of MENA, and be able to evaluate common stereotypes about the peoples and communities of the region
3) Understand historical processes, and critically analyze events, individuals, periods, and concepts vis-à-vis broader political, economic, societal, cultural, and environmental contexts
4) Understand the nature of evidence in historical research and get familiar with a variety of primary and secondary sources
5) Understand how the modern Middle East came into being and how this process is central to the underlying forces shaping current events across the region

**Required Texts:**


This course is a combination of lectures and in-class discussions which revolve around weekly assigned readings contributing to an overarching theme. While all students are required to carefully read the book chapters and the complementary journal articles assigned for each week, a group of students are responsible to present and discuss weekly journal articles. While the assigned chapters from the course's primary text books serve as the basis for lectures and map out the larger historical contexts, the accompanying journal articles provide students with a more...
specific, and in-depth, understating of the historical processes discussed in the preceding lecture session.

The required text books are held on reserve at Dana Library and articles will be available in digital format on Blackboard under the relevant weekly session. Sources indicated with (*) are optional.

**Course Requirements & Evaluation Criteria:**

The course's final grade is divided into four "assignments" as follows:

- Alert attendance at weekly lectures and ACTIVE participation in weekly discussions, 15% of final grade
- Short-essay Assignments, 25% of final grade
- Midterm exam, 25% of final grade
- Final exam, 35% of final grade

**Grading:** Students' grades in this class are EARNED, not awarded. Students will receive numerical grades for each individual "assignment" and these, with weighted percentages, determine their final letter grades, as set by Rutgers policy. A =90-100, B+=86-89, B=80-85, C+=76-79, C=70-75, D=60-69, F= 59 or below. To pass this class, students must complete EVERY "assignment," but completion of an "assignment" does not guarantee a passing grade. Students can track their grades on Blackboard or with a calculator.

**Attendance:** According to Rutgers attendance policy "all undergraduates are expected to attend all regularly scheduled classes." This means that students must attend all lectures, arriving on time and staying until the course period is over. Students must notify me in advance via email if they plan to miss class and a determination will be made if this absence will be excused. Absences are excused only for religious observances, athletic events, emergencies, or other documented and approved circumstances—and require a face-to-face explanation. **Students who are responsible for weekly article discussion should not miss class.** If students are too sick to attend class they must email me before class begins and bring in a doctor's note the following class; otherwise their absence will NOT be excused. 4 unexcused absences may result in students losing a full grade. It should also be noted that the History Department employs a blanket policy for students who miss eight or more classes – whether through any combination of excused and/or unexcused absences. Such students will not earn credit in this class and should withdraw to avoid getting an F.
**Short-essay Assignments:** Throughout the semester students will be asked to submit a series of short analytical essays on selected topics. Each paper would be 3-4 pages in length and should draw mainly on course texts.

**Academic Integrity:** Rutgers University treats cheating and plagiarism as serious offenses. Cheating is both a moral and an ethical offense. It violates both your own integrity and the ethics of group commitment: when you cut corners and cheat, you undermine those students who took the time to work on the assignment honestly. As a standard minimum penalty, students who are suspected of cheating or plagiarism are reported to the Office of Academic Integrity. Pending investigation, further penalties can include failure of the course, disciplinary probation, and a formal warning that further cheating will be grounds for expulsion from the University. All students are required to sign the Rutgers Honor Code Pledge. To receive credit, every assignment must have your signature under the following phrase: "On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination / assignment."

Students may only use the texts (books and journal articles) assigned in this syllabus to complete the assignments and exams. Resist the urge to cut and paste, either literally or figuratively by using other people’s ideas. If I find that you have used other people’s ideas (including excerpts from Wikipedia, Amazon reviews, book jacket descriptions, etc.), I will not accept the assignment because I will not be able to consider it your own work. As a minimum, you will receive a failing grade (0 points) for that assignment and will not be able to make it up.

**Disability Services:** Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation:https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus’s disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form. For more information please contact Kate Torres at (973) 353-5375 or in the Office of Disability Services in the Paul Robeson Campus Center, in suite 219 or by contacting odsnewark@rutgers.edu.

**Classroom Etiquette:** Students are required to actively participate in class by listening to lectures, taking notes, raising questions, etc. Unless special permission is granted, cell phones
and laptops are not allowed inside the class. Students should bring to the class the printouts of weekly discussion material. In this case, students may use tablets to read a digital version of the assigned journal articles. Students should avoid any behavior during the class that might be disruptive to other classmates.

**Schedule:**

**Week 1: European Interests and the Emergence of Imperialism**  
*Wednesday (September 7)*
- Introduction

*Friday (September 9)*
- Goldschmidt & Davidson, Chapter 10, *European Interests and Imperialism,* pp.147-157
- Clancy-Smith & Smith, Chapter 1, *European Imperialism,* pp.19-42; pp.44-48; pp.51-54

**Week 2: Displaying the "Orient"**  
*Wednesday (September 14)*
- Clancy-Smith & Smith, Chapter 1, *World Fairs and Tourism: Imperial Portraits of the Oriental and the Oriental Response,* pp.48-50

*Friday (September 16)*

**Week 3: Westernization or Defensive Developmentalism?**  
*Wednesday (September 21)*
- James Gelvin, Chapter 5,*Defensive Developmentalism,* pp. 71-86
- Arthur Goldschmidt & Lawrence Davidson, Chapter 11, *Westernizing Reform in the Nineteenth Century,* pp. 159-173
- Clancy-Smith & Smith, Chapter 2, *Between Old and New,* pp.61-73; pp.84-93


**Week 4: Imperialism in Practice**

*Wednesday (September 28)*

- James Gelvin, Chapter 6,"Imperialism", pp. 87-99

*Friday (September 30)*


**Film: Lawrence of Arabia.**

Watch the trailer here: [http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0056172/?ref_=nv_sr_1](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0056172/?ref_=nv_sr_1)
Week 5: Integration and Peripheralization

Wednesday (October 5)


Friday (October 7)


Week 6: Nationalism

Wednesday (October 12)

- James Gelvin, Chapter 10,"Constitutionalism", pp. 150-177

Friday (October 14)

- Greaves, Rose Louise. "Some Aspects of the Anglo-Russian Convention and Its Working in


**Week 7: Modernity, Culture and everyday life**

*Wednesday (October 19)*

*Friday (October 21)*
- **Midterm Exam**

**Week 8: Modernity, Intellectuality and Systems of Thought**

*Wednesday (October 26)*
- James Gelvin, Chapter 8, "The Life of the Mind", pp. 133-142
- Clancy-Smith & Smith, Chapter 1, "Al-Afghani and Azoury," pp.57-60

***Symposium of the Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies minor: The symposium will have two panels. The first will be the historical panel from 2:30-3:50. The second Modern Middle East, from 4:00-5:20. [Extra credit will be awarded for attending the symposium, in particular the second one, and providing a short synopsis of important highlights]**

*Friday (October 28)*
Week 9: Empire and the Politics of Oil

**Wednesday (November 2)**

- Clancy-Smith & Smith, Chapter 1, "Iran and the European Powers: Oil Concessions and Territorial Partitioning," pp.54-56.

**Friday (November 4)**


Week 10: WWI and Its Aftermath

**Wednesday (November 9)**


**Friday (November 11)**


Week 11: Israel and the Question of Palestine

**Wednesday (November 16)**
• Arthur Goldschmidt & Lawrence Davidson, Chapter 16. "The Contest for Palestine", pp. 271-292
• Arthur Goldschmidt & Lawrence Davidson, Chapter 17. "Israel’s Rebirth and the Rise of Arab Nationalism", pp. 293-326

Friday (November 18)
• Arthur Goldschmidt & Lawrence Davidson, Chapter 17. "Israel’s Rebirth and the Rise of Arab Nationalism", pp. 293-326

Week 12: The Rise of Modern Nation States I

Wednesday (November 23)
• Clancy-Smith & Smith, Chapter 5. "From the Great War to World War II, c.1923-1950", pp. 153-174

Friday (November 25)
• Thanksgiving break- no class!

Week 13: The Rise of Modern Nation States II

Wednesday (November 30)

Friday (December 2)
• Cronin, Stephanie. "Reza Shah and the Paradoxes of Military Modernization in Iran." Oriented...

**Week 14: Oil and Modernity**


*Alissa, Reem. "The Oil Town of Ahmadi since 1946: From Colonial Town to Nostalgic City" Comparative Studies Of South Asia, Africa, & The Middle East 33, no. 1 (April 2013): pp. 41-58.*

**Friday (December 9)**


**Week 15: Final Remarks**

*Wednesday (December 14)*

• Review

*Friday (December 16)*

• Make-up Exam

**Week 16: Exam Week**

*Wednesday (December 21) 11:45-2:45.*

• Final Exam