Course Guide: Formation of Middle Eastern Modernities (CMEN01)

Overview:
The aim of this course is to bring together both the disciplines of International Relations and Middle East Studies to chart a history of modern Middle Eastern state formation, while discussing the various ways in which the region is conceptualized, theorized and constructed. Casting a critical eye on discourses about the Middle East, the course will particularly focus on the diverse manifestations of empire and colonialism in the region, as well as the mobilizations, ideologies and resistances that emerged against them. By engaging with different aspects of these themes through the lenses and histories of diverse states, the course also explores the transition from empire to the nation-state in the region, along with its legacies. The goal is to lay the conceptual and theoretical groundwork for a better understanding of the historical and political dynamics of Middle Eastern societies, while gaining a more nuanced picture of power, continuity and change in the region. The course consists of 12 lectures. Students get the chance to engage with one another in critical and meaningful debate rooted in the course readings.

Grades Marking Scale:
Fail, E, D, C, B, A. The highest grade is A and the lowest passing grade is E. The grade for a non-passing result is F.

Scale of grades:

A = 92 - 100 % of total points
B = 84 - 92 % of total points
C = 76 - 84 % of total points
D = 68 - 76 % of total points
E = 60 - 68 % of total points
F = 0 - 59 % of total points.

All assessed course components are graded.

A: The written work is well-structured, has clear objectives and a well-defined and relevant research question, uses appropriate methods/data to answer this question, undertakes a thorough and critical literature review with references to key texts, provides a compelling discussion of the research question and/or the case at hand, shows how the selected theoretical perspective helps (or fails to help) us to understand the questions/case under study. **Keyword: Excellent.**

B: The written work is relatively well-structured, has clear objectives and a research question, uses somewhat appropriate methods/data to answer this question, undertakes an adequate literature review with references to a limited number of key texts, provides a satisfactory discussion of the research question and/or the case at hand, shows – to a certain extent – how the selected theoretical perspective helps (or fails to help) us to understand the questions/case at hand. **Keyword: Good.**

C: The written work has some structural problems, is wanting when it comes to defining objectives and the research question, has problems regarding methodology, fails to undertake an adequate literature review, i.e. omits some important texts, does not offer a convincing discussion of the research question and/or the case at hand, does not engage fully with the selected theoretical perspective. **Keyword: Average.**

D-E: The written work is disorganized and incoherent, does not have clear objectives and a proper research question, fails to use appropriate methods/data, shows little, if any, familiarity with existing literature, does not address the research question and/or discuss the case at hand, fails to engage with the selected theoretical perspective. The difference between D and E is a matter of degree. **Keyword: Below average.**

F: The written work fails to fulfil any of the above-mentioned criteria regarding structure, aims and objectives, identifying and addressing a research question, using a proper methodology, showing some familiarity with existing literature and an ability to engage with theory, or a particular case for that matter. **Keywords: Inadequate, Fail.**
Examination:

Response Papers: Three 600-800 word “response papers” (20 % each) to be submitted electronically. Each response paper should critically engage with some aspect of the course readings for each week that caught your eye. It could be a sentence, a paragraph or a full article. For more information on how to write a response papers see: https://www.thoughtco.com/how-to-write-a-response-paper-1857017

Final Paper: Final paper (40%) to be submitted electronically 4000-5000 words long (double spaced, Times New Roman font). The final paper should be a theoretically informed case study of your choice (subject to prior consent by the instructor). For more information on how to design a case study, see: http://www.arf-asia.org/resources/using_case_study_in_research.pdf

Topic 1: Theoretical and Historical beginnings

The modern states of the Middle East formed in the aftermath of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, and the (European) territorial partitions of the post-First World War settlement. This week explores these moments of beginning both theoretically and historically. In doing so, it questions whether the Middle East can be seen as anything other than a geographic expression and looks into the diverse ways in which its state-society relations can be best conceptualized. In parallel to this, it introduces the entry of these states into the international system from within the confines of a colonial framework, as well as the notion of the colonial state.

Readings:


Rogan, Eugene L. (2013) “The Emergence of the Middle East into the Modern State System” Chapter 2 in Fawcett, L. International Relations of the Middle East

http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03kqbqj

Further Reading:


Halliday, Fred, (2005), The Middle East in International Relations, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), Introduction


Rogan, Eugene (2015) The Fall of the Ottomans – the Great War in the Middle East (Penguin)

Topic 2: State Formation, Colonialism and the Cold War

Building upon the previous week, this week’s readings take a deeper look into the legacies of the ways in which European colonialism shaped the emergence of the Middle East into the international state system. In exploring the link between colonialism and these processes of state formation further, it looks into the effects of the arbitrarily drawn territorial boundaries in the region on the power of collective identity and material resources in the Middle East, as well as into the emergence (or imposition) of the idea of the nation-state upon the people and social order of the
region. It also explores the question of whether the Cold War had a significant effect upon the region's processes of state formation.

**Readings:**


Sluget, Peter (2013) “The Cold War in the Middle East”, Chapter 3 in Fawcett, Louise (ed) *International Relations of the Middle East*.

**Further Reading:**


Luciani, Giacomo (2013) “Oil and Political Economy in the International Relations of the Middle East” Chapter 5 in Fawcett, Louise (ed) *International Relations of the Middle East* (pp.103-126).


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**Topic 3: Ideologies of Revolution and Resistance: Arab Nationalism, Baathism and Political Islam**

In his book below, John Chalcraft argues that the history of the Middle East cannot be understood without paying attention to the role played by contentious mobilization, while acknowledging the fact that it is difficult in hindsight to do justice to the “importance of ideas that were untarnished by history, and that appeared new and powerful, and were thus able to exact normative commitment”. This week explores the history of these ideologies and mobilizations, while focussing on Arab nationalism, Baathism and Political Islam. Some questions that are highlighted include the emergence and specificities of Arab nationalism, the relationship between Islam and Arab nationalism, and (following in the footsteps of Malcolm X) whether an Islamic liberation theology can be envisioned to emerge as a global form of resistance to empire.

**Readings:**


**Further Reading:**


**Topic 4: The Arab/Israeli Conflict and its Regional Impact**

The Arab-Israeli conflict is a modern phenomenon, and an ongoing struggle over land that lays its beginnings in the late Ottoman period and has the Palestinian struggle for self-determination at its heart. It remains one of the most enduring conflicts in the region. This week explores these historical beginnings, along with the significance of the British Mandate period and that of the Balfour Declaration, the growth of the Zionist movement, the emergence of Palestinian nationalism, the impact of the critical years of 1948 and 1967 that saw the establishment and consolidation of the state of Israel, and the continuing dispossession of the Palestinians.

**Readings:**


**Further Reading:**

Gelvin, James, *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: One Hundred Years of War* (Cambridge: CUP, 2005).


**Topic 5: The Lebanese Civil War**

As Sune Haugbolle argues in his article below, the Lebanese civil war was one of the most devastating conflicts of the late 20th century, and was both an internal Lebanese affair and a regional conflict involving a multiplicity of regional and international actors. This week explores the history of this conflict, and delves into the many facets, groups, political interests and powers involved within it, as well as the devastating toll it had on Lebanon and its diverse communities of people. It also looks into the debates on the historiography of the war itself, as well as the history of Lebanese state formation and the prospects for peaceful coexistence in Lebanon today.

**Readings:**

Hanf, Thodor, *Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation* (IB Taurus, 2015), Chapters 3 -5

Haugbølle, S. (2011), The historiography and the memory of the Lebanese civil war,  

**Further Reading:**


Leenders, Reinault,(2012) *Spoils of Truce: Corruption and State-Building in Postwar Lebanon* (Cornel University Press)


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**Topic 6: The Iranian Revolution**

In his book, *Life as Politics*, Asef Bayat argued that the Iranian experience of 1979 may well remain the first and last Islamic Revolution of our time. How did this phenomenon of resistance/great transformation constitute a revolution? What were the historical and social processes and bases of this revolution? Which social forces enabled the Iranian revolution to emerge, how was it mobilized for, and what did its dynamics of grassroots/popular resistance look like? Is Iran an Islamic state? This week explores these questions, while also opening up the discussion into the relationship between Islam and democracy, and the usefulness of using Islam as an undifferentiated category of analysis that is decontextualized from the material in a particular time and place.

**Readings:**


**Further Reading:**


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**Topic 7: The Invasion of Iraq and the roots of the present conflict**
The invasion of Iraq was one of the most controversial, and divisive, foreign policy decisions taken in recent history. It also witnessed record breaking global mass mobilizations of publics against it at the time. This week explores the debates over the explanations for this war. It also looks into the role of the Bush administration in choosing war as a tool for regime change in Iraq, and analyzes the difficulties faced in the processes of state re-building in its aftermath. The relationship between Iraqi society and the Iraqi state after three decades of Baath rule, and the devastating effects of the invasion on the country and its future trajectories are also highlighted.

Readings:

Further Reading:
Bennis, Phyllis and Michel Moushabeck (1992), Beyond the Storm: A Gulf Crisis Reader (Edinburgh: Canongate)
Sluglett, Marion-Farouk and Slugett, Peter (2001), Iraq Since 1958: From Revolution to Dictatorship, (London: IB Taurus)

Topic 8: Palestine/Israel: The Oslo Accords and After

In a journal special issue on “Israel-Palestine after Oslo”, Mandy Turner and Cherine Hussein wrote, “The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is one of the world’s most protracted, despite an over 20-year donor-sponsored peace process instituted after the signing of the 1993 Oslo Accords between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). Initially perceived to have inaugurated a new era of hope in the search for peace and justice in Palestine-Israel, the Oslo peace paradigm of a track one, elite-level, negotiated two-state solution is in crisis today, if not completely at an end”. This week explores the history and roots of this crisis and its transformations upon the land itself, while shedding light on alternative ways to understand this impasse and emerging new strategies of resistance to it.

Readings:

Further Reading:
**Topic 9: The Arab Uprisings and their Aftermaths I**

In what ways did the Arab uprisings in 2011 change the Middle East? Did the toppling of a generation of dictators set in motion significant social, political and economic developments, and could these developments be lasting? Is it time to re-think how we conceptualize and discuss the Middle East as a geographic and conceptual space? Is it possible, and is it meaningful to speak about a “new” Middle East? Can revolutions be predicted, or planned? This week explores these questions, while placing the Arab uprisings in historical perspective, and interrogating diverse ways to conceptualize revolutionary processes in particular contexts.

**Readings:**


**Further Reading:**

Anderson, L. (2011) "Demystifying the Arab Spring." Foreign Affairs 90, no. 3 (pp.2-7)


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**Topic 10: The Arab Uprisings and their Aftermaths II (Selected ‘on the Ground’ Excerpts/or Film Screening and Discussion)**

Recent influential debates within academia have striven to highlight the fact that in order to truly decolonize knowledge—especially when analyzing and theorizing the politics of resistance and social transformation in non-European state/society complexes—scholars must take seriously (and begin from within) the self-perceptions, experiences, political practices, struggles and maps to power of actors and activists on the ground. In this spirit, this week explores a selection of first hand accounts of the uprisings, and inquires into what this different point of beginning can inform us about how to theorize empire, resistance and social change in the Middle East.

**Selected ‘on the Ground’ Excerpts:**

Hamilton, Omar-Robert (2017) The City Always Wins (Faber and Faber), Part I

Pearlman, Wendy (2017) We Crossed a Bridge and It Trembled: Voices from Syria (Harper Collins), Introduction and “Revolution”
