POSC 245: The Making of the Modern Middle East I (1918-1967)

Carleton College - Winter 2017

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Course Description

This course studies the making of the Modern Middle East, from the fall of the Ottoman Empire to the Arab-Israeli war of 1967. The lectures are divided into three parts: The first part covers major events in the last years of the Ottoman Empire, and the Middle East strategies of the European imperial powers. The second part covers the making of the new Arab states, and the struggles for independence. The third part is essentially centered on the rise of the Arab authoritarian order and the political roles of Arab armed force. Different aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict will be discussed throughout the three parts of the course. Overall, the course has two main goals: 1) - To sharpen the students’ understanding of the historical origins of contemporary Middle Eastern dilemmas. 2) - To encourage students to develop their own ideas and opinions as per the current events, and hone their political and analytical skills.

Required Texts


Course Requirements

Participation (25 % of your final grade)

Students are expected to participate actively in the class. I will be asking you to contribute to class discussions and will invite you to offer your opinion on required readings or on related events unfolding as the course goes on.

Quizzes (10% of your final grade)
Throughout the term you will take two quizzes. They will have several components such as multiple choice questions, short answers, true/false questions and so forth. You will be tested to see whether you understood the general line of an argument, or the main events that shaped the outlook of a historical turning point.

Mid-term (25 % of your final grade)

The Mid-term will be divided into two parts: 1) A series of questions to which you will be expected to reply with short answers. The questions will cover all the material discussed in class from the first lecture to the last. 2) An essay you will be asked to write and which will test your ability to think critically on the material we covered. Reading the material and taking notes in class is indispensable to do well in the exam, but it takes more than just that. You must demonstrate an ability to reflect analytically on the topic and express your own opinions and ideas.

Term paper (40% of your final grade)

We will discuss the topics you could work on for the final paper in class, or in office hours.

What is expected of you as you do the readings?

The readings assigned for the course deal with the most critical events pertaining to the making of the contemporary Middle East. As you read, you will be expected to think critically on the articles by asking yourselves the following questions:

1) What is the author’s main argument?  
2) Do I find that argument convincing or not? Why?  
3) What alternative explanations can be thought of for the author’s evidence?  
4) What are the implications of the argument made by the author?

In addition to the required readings, you are encouraged to keep yourself informed about current issues related to Middle Eastern politics. Consulting newspapers helps a great deal, namely national newspapers following closely Middle Eastern events such as The New York Times, The International Herald Tribune, The Washington Post and The Wall Street Journal. You can also read magazines such as The Economist and Newsweek. Two flagship academic journals are particularly important in the field of Middle Eastern politics, namely, International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies (IJMES) and Middle East Journal. Also, keep an eye on the Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP).
Reading assignments

Thursday, January 5: Introduction

We will discuss the Syllabus in class + General intro to the Middle East

Part I: Death of the Ottoman Order

Tuesday, January 10: Twilight of the Ottoman Empire, Arab Nationalism and The Great Arab Revolt of 1916

Cleveland: pp 149-170.
Fromkin: pp 15-76.
Fromkin: pp 173-187
Fromkin: pp 216-228

Thursday, January 12: The Sykes-Picot Agreement, Herzl, Zionism and the Balfour Declaration

Fromkin: pp 188-199
Fromkin: pp 263-301

Tuesday, January 17: (In-class BBC documentary discussion)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u1zLTXgYLbw

(Lawrence of Arabia)
Part II: Mandates, Independence, and the Rise of the New Arab States

Thursday, January 19: The Making of Modern Lebanon

Salibi: 151 - 191
Zamir: 1- 37
Zamir: 38 -96

Tuesday, January 24: The Making of Modern Syria

Longrigg: 3 - 108
Khoury: 28-94

Thursday, January 26: The Making of Modern Syria (+Quiz 1)

Khoury: 583-618
Longrigg: 293 - 368

Tuesday, January 31: The Making of Modern Iraq

Sluglett: 1-92
Sluglett: 93-192

Dodge: 63 - 171

Thursday, February 2:

Documentary and in-class discussion

Tuesday, February 7:

In-class review session for the Mid-Term

Thursday, February 9

Mid-Term
**Tuesday, February 14: Palestine/Israel under the British Mandate**

Herzel: 11-20

Herzel: 69 - 157
Lockman: 21 - 57

Morris: 1-36

Cleveland: 239 – 271.

**Thursday, February 16: Palestine/Israel under the British Mandate**

Morris: 37 – 112

Morris: 375 – 420

**Part III: Armies, Authoritarianism and War**

**Tuesday, February 21: The Era of the coups in Syria**

Seal: 25 – 99
Seal: 148 - 163
Seal: 307-326
Rabinovitch: 1-74

**Thursday, February 23: The Era of the coups in Iraq and Egypt**

Marr: 37 - 138
Kandil: 1-13
Cleveland: 301 - 322
Cook: 27 - 91
Kandil: 14-69

**Tuesday, February 28: The 1967 war (+ Quiz 2)**

Seal (2): 104 – 141
Kandil: 69 - 97
Seal (2): 142 - 168
Cook: 91-132

**Thursday, March 2:**
In-class paper presentations

**Tuesday, March 7:**
In-class paper presentations

**Thursday, March 9:**
In-class paper presentations