

THE HISTORY OF MODERN EGYPT

SPRING 2009

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To this day, Egypt looms large in the Western historical imagination, rivaled only by the Holy Land in terms of appeal for scholars of the Middle East. For innumerable Western students, Cairo has served as an inaugural point of contact with the Arab world – the place where they at last began to speak the Arabic they had studied in university. The streets of Cairo and the sonorities of Egyptian Arabic are familiar to the peoples of the modern Arab world generally, due to the enormous cultural production of Egypt throughout the twentieth century. This focus upon Egypt, both in Western scholarly and Arab intellectual circles, means that there is no avoiding Egypt in discussions of the modern Middle East, the modern Arab world, or modern Islam. The scholarship Westerners have generated in their encounters with modern Egyptian history is enormous – to say nothing of the scholarship in the Arabic language – and has often served as a point of departure for explorations of Arab or Islamic history generally. This makes close scrutiny of that scholarship imperative, and such is the principal aim of this course.

Texts:

- *Re-Envisioning Egypt 1919-1952* by Amy J. Johnson, Arthur Goldschmidt, and Barak A. Salmoni, eds., AUC Press (2005) [hereafter *AJJ*]
- *Nasser: Hero of the Arab Nation* by Joel Gordon, Oneworld Publications (2006) [hereafter *JG*]
- *Cairo Cosmopolitan: Politics, Culture, and Urban Space in the New Middle East* by Diane Singerman and Paul Amar, eds., AUC Press (2006) [hereafter *DS*]
- Students are urged to consult an introductory textbook, like William Cleveland's *History of the Modern Middle East*, should they encounter names or concepts which are unfamiliar in the midst of their reading.

Format: The course is not a survey of Egyptian history, but rather, an interrogation of Egyptian historiography. Among the questions of concern are: How have Western historians constructed their narratives about modern Egypt? What are the assumptions that inform their work? How and why have their concerns shifted over time? What sources have they used, how have they used them, and how have these sources and methods influenced their interpretations? Such questions dictate a particular format for the class. Students are expected to arrive each Tuesday having

carefully scrutinized the readings for the week, and prepared to offer an analysis and critique of each of those readings. Discussion and debate are the foundation of the work students will undertake. The function of the professor is to moderate debate, to offer suggestions for directions of discussion, and to provide context for the readings. The professor expects students to leave no received notion or conventional wisdom unchallenged. Attending class is, thus, understandably, an integral part of the course.

Evaluation:

Presentation		15%
In-class test	February 10, 2009	30%
Term paper	March 31, 2009	40%
Class participation		15%

Presentation: In the inaugural session of the course, each student will select one of the book chapters in the syllabus. That student is responsible for opening the discussion about the article or book chapter selected, in the Tuesday session for which the reading was assigned. This opening or introduction should last roughly five minutes. The point of the introduction is *not* to restate the contents of the reading, as all students in the class will have read the given article or chapter before the session. Rather, the point is to begin to answer the questions listed above: What are the author’s concerns? What are the assumptions that inform the work? What are the author’s sources, and how has the author used those sources? One way to approach this task is to compare and contrast the author’s approach with the approaches of different historians whom you will encounter in this course, or the approaches of historians examining different areas or periods. A second way is to research the author, exploring the context in which the author wrote the work, his or her mentors and influences, as well as the different areas of research the author has pursued over the years.

In-class test: The in-class test will cover all the material discussed in the course to that point. The test will consist of four essay questions, two of which students are expected to answer. The essay questions will require students to identify, analyze, and critique trends in the historiography on modern Egypt.

Class participation: Repeated absences from class will lead to a failing participation grade. Please consult the instructor should you have to miss classes for health or family reasons. Completion of the readings before class and a consistent effort to contribute to class discussions will be rewarded with high marks in this category. Lateness and poor preparation for class will be penalized.

Term paper: Term papers are evaluated for clarity, organization, insight, and originality. Faulty grammar, spelling, and syntax reduce clarity, and will thus reduce your grade. Grades are final and not subject to negotiation. Term papers submitted after the deadline receive a penalty of ten percent for the first day late; for each additional day late, a further five percent will be deducted. The instructor will not accept submissions beyond a week from the given deadline. Extensions of deadlines will only be granted in the event of a documented health or family crisis.

Course regulations:

- I will not tolerate cheating or plagiarism. These are extremely serious academic offences which may lead to loss of credit, suspension, expulsion from the University, or the revocation of a degree. If you are having trouble with a concept or assignment, meet with the instructor well before the relevant deadlines. Keep in mind that poor, but legitimate, performance in a given assignment is far preferable to jeopardizing your academic career through fraud.
- All students in this class are to read and understand the policies on plagiarism and academic honesty. Ignorance of such policies is no excuse for violations. In student papers, it is essential that there be correct attribution of authorities from which facts and opinions have been derived.

January 6
Introduction

January 13
The Legacy of the “Liberal” Era

- *AJJ*: James Whidden, “The Generation of 1919,” 19-45.
- *AJJ*: Malak Badrawi, “Financial Cerberus? The Egyptian Parliament, 1924-52,” 94-123.
- *AJJ*: Lucie Ryzova, “Egyptianizing Modernity through the ‘New *Effendiya*’: Social and Cultural Constructions of the Middle Class in Egypt under the Monarchy,” 124-163.
- *AJJ*: Hanan Kholoussy, “The Nationalization of Marriage in Monarchical Egypt,” 317-350.

January 20

The 1952 Revolution: Milestone or Millstone?

- *JG*: "Introduction," "We're the People," and "The Greater Nation," 1-68.
- *AJJ*: Anne-Claire Kerboeuf, "The Cairo Fire of 26 July 1952 and the Interpretations of History," 194-217.
- *DS*: Omnia El Shakry, "Cairo as Capital of Socialist Revolution?" 73-98.

January 27

Cultivating the Citizen

- *AJJ*: Barak A. Salmoni, "Historical Consciousness for Modern Citizenship: Egyptian Schooling and the Lessons of History during the Constitutional Monarchy," 164-193.
- *AJJ*: Misako Ikeda, "Toward the Democratization of Public Education: The Debate in Late Parliamentary Egypt, 1943-52," 218-248.
- *DS*: Eric Denis, "Cairo as neo-liberal capital? : from walled city to gated communities," 47-72.
- *DS*: Anouk de Koning, "Cafe Latte and Caesar salad: cosmopolitan belonging in Cairo's coffee shops," 221-234.
- *DS*: Yasser Elsheshtawy, "Urban transformations: social control at al-Rifa'i Mosque and Sultan Hasan Square," 295-312.

February 3

The Military and Modernity

- *AJJ*: Tewfik Aclimandos, "Revisiting the History of the Egyptian Army," 68-93.
- *DS*: Mona Abaza, "Egyptianizing the American Dream: Nasr City's Shopping Malls, Public Order, and the Privatized Military," 193-220.

February 10

In-class test

February 17

Midterm break

February 24

Sex and the Social

- *AJJ*: Amy Johnson and Scott McIntosh, "Empowering Women, Engendering Change: Aziza Hussein and Social Reform in Egypt," 249-276.
- *AJJ*: Nancy Gallagher, "Writing Women Medical Practitioners into the History of Modern Egypt," 351-370.

- *AJJ*: Shaun T. Lopez, "Madams, Murders, and the Media: *Akhbar al-Hawadith* and the Emergence of a Mass Culture in 1920s Egypt," 371-397.
- *AJJ*: Mervat F. Hatem, "The 1919 Revolution and Nationalist Constructions of the Lives and Works of Pioneering Women Writers," 398-425.

March 3

Configurations of Race and Space

- *AJJ*: Samia Kholoussi, "Fallahin: The 'Mud Bearers' of Egypt's 'Liberal Age'," 277-316.
- *DS*: Farha Ghannam, "Keeping him connected: globalization and the production of locality in Cairo," 251-268.
- *DS*: Catherine Miller, "Upper Egyptian regionally based communities in Cairo: traditional or modern forms of urbanization?" 375-398.
- *DS*: Elizabeth A. Smith, "Place, class, and race in the Barabra cafe: Nubians in Egyptian media," 399-414.
- *DS*: Anna Madoeuf, "Mulids of Cairo: Sufi guilds, popular celebrations, and the 'roller-coaster landscape' of the resignified city," 465-488.

March 10

The Politics of Culture

- *AJJ*: Caroline Williams, "Twentieth-Century Egyptian Art: The Pioneers, 1920-52," 426-447.
- *DS*: Said Sadek, "Cairo as global/regional cultural capital?" 153-192.
- *DS*: Fanny Colonna, "A round trip to Isma'iliya: Cairo's media exiles, television innovation, and provincial citizenship," 445-464.
- *DS*: Nicolas Puig, "Egypt's Pop-Music Clashes and the 'World-Crossing' Destinies of Muhammad 'Ali Street Musicians," 513-538.

March 17

From the Cinema of Struggle to a Struggling Cinema

- *AJJ*: Andrew Flibbert, "State and Cinema in Pre-Revolutionary Egypt, 1927-52," 448-465.
- *JG*: "The Socialist Garden," 69-94.
- *DS*: Walter Armbrust, "When the Lights Go Down in Cairo: Cinema as Global Crossroads and Space of Playful Resistance," 415-444.

March 24

Fiddling with Folklore

- *DS*: Caroline Williams, "Reconstructing Islamic Cairo: forces at work," 269-294.

- *DS*: Petra Kuppinger, "Pyramids and Alleys: Global Dynamics and Local Strategies in Giza," 313-344.
- *DS*: Galila El Kadi and Dalila ElKerdany, "Belle-Epoque Cairo: the politics of refurbishing the downtown business district," 345-374.
- *DS*: Vincent Battesti, "The Giza Zoo: Reappropriating Public Spaces, Reimagining Urban Beauty," 489-512.

March 31 [Papers Due]

Retrospect

- *JG*: "Ruins" and "Conclusion," 95-134.