

## THE ARAB MIDDLE EAST IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Fall 2015

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Office hours Wednesdays 12 noon-1 pm, Fridays 2:30 pm-3:30 pm

This course examines major themes in the history of Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan, and the states of the Arabian Peninsula during the twentieth century. Among the topics students will explore are the legacy of the Ottoman Empire in the Arab world; the development of narratives of Arab nationalism; the political cultures of peasants, workers, and women; the influence of the military upon Arab societies; and the internal dynamics and interactions of monarchical and republican regimes. As the course focuses principally on social, cultural, and political developments within the Arab world, there is little coverage of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

### Evaluation:

Three one-hour tests	30%
Term paper (due Dec. 1)	40%
Debate presentation	20%
Class participation	10%

### Texts:

- *The Modern Middle East: A History*, fourth edition, by James Gelvin, Oxford University Press [hereafter *JG*]
- *The Power and the People: Paths of Resistance in the Middle East* by Charles Tripp, Cambridge University Press [hereafter *CT*]
- *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East*, second edition, by Asef Bayat, Stanford University Press [hereafter *AB*]
- Journal articles accessible through the SFU library website, via the stable URLs listed below [citations denoted *Web*]

**Laptop computers, tablets, and smartphones** are not permitted in the classroom. This is due to the distractions these devices offer to concentration on in-class lectures and discussions. For information on the nature of these distractions and their impact, please refer to:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2014/09/25/why-a-leading-professor-of-new-media-just-banned-technology-use-in-class/>

Students must take notes on paper unless they have documented permission from the Centre for Students with Disabilities to use a tablet or laptop.

**Food** is not permitted in the classroom. Please leave eating for before, after, or breaks during class time.

**Lecture sessions** are divided into two parts separated by a 15-minute break. As indicated in the schedule below, these may include two discussions on particular topics, one discussion and one film screening, or one test and one discussion. The discussions will build upon the readings, putting them in a historical and analytical context. After each discussion, the instructor will answer whatever questions students may have. This time will be devoted not only to clearing up misunderstandings, but further, to interpretation and analysis. As a result, students should come to lectures PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE.

**Debate presentations** will form part of the tutorial sessions. At the beginning of the term, students will select a debate topic of particular interest, from among those listed below. At the beginning of the tutorial to which they are assigned, students will make a presentation of ten minutes either in favor or against the day's resolution. After students have made their presentations, the instructor will open the debate to the rest of the class.

**Class participation:** Regardless of their particular presentation topics, students should read every week's materials with an eye to developing a position on the debate resolutions. Each week, they are expected to be in a position, BEFORE they get to tutorial, to offer an argument either in favor or against the resolution. Repeated absences from lectures or tutorials 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. Lateness and poor preparation for class will be penalized.

**Class tests** will consist of one-hour, closed-book, primary-source analyses. Excerpts of texts, films, and images are among the primary sources that students may find on these tests.

**Course regulations:** I will not tolerate cheating or plagiarism. These are extremely serious academic offences. 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 University 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.

**Term papers:** Students will write a ten- to twelve-page paper on a subject of their choice. This is a historiographical paper intended to analyze and interpret the secondary literature available on that chosen subject. The paper is due at the beginning of lecture on December 1, 2015. Please meet with the instructor BEFORE THE END OF WEEK EIGHT

to indicate the topic you have selected and the sources you have identified. Students submitting papers 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. 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.

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### Week One

Tuesday, September 8

Part One

#### **Introduction**

Part Two

#### **Film Screening**

- *World War One Through Arab Eyes* (Al-Jazeera English, 2014)

*No tutorials this week*

### Week Two

Tuesday, September 15

Part One

#### **Narratives of the “Arab Nation”**

- JG: “The Invention and Spread of Nationalisms,” 220-229.
- Web: James L. Gelvin, “Demonstrating Communities in Post-Ottoman Syria,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 25, 1 (1994), 23-44  
<http://www.jstor.org.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/stable/206110>
- Web: Ziad Fahmy, “Media-Capitalism: Colloquial Mass Culture and Nationalism in Egypt, 1908–18,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 42 (2010), 83–103  
<http://dx.doi.org.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/10.1017/S0020743809990547>

Part Two

#### **The Liberal Lie**

- JG: “State-Building by Decree,” 193-204.

*Tutorial Debate Topic:* Be it resolved that nationalisms are developed and directed by elites.

Week Three  
Tuesday, September 22

Part One

**From the Notables to the New Middle Class?**

- *Web*: Sami Zubaida, "The Fragments Imagine the Nation: The Case of Iraq," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 34 (2002), 205-215  
[http://journals.cambridge.org.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/article\\_S0020743802002039](http://journals.cambridge.org.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/article_S0020743802002039)
- *Web*: Keith D. Watenpaugh, "Middle-Class Modernity and the Persistence of the Politics of Notables in Inter-War Syria," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 35 (2003), 257-286 <http://www.jstor.org.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/stable/3879620>

Part Two

**Film Screening**

- *The Nightingale's Prayer* (dir. Henri Barakat, 1959)

*Tutorial Debate Topic*: Be it resolved that modernization projects in the Middle East failed to dislodge the "traditional" notable class from power.

Week Four  
Tuesday, September 29

Part One

**The Rhetoric of Revolution**

- JG: "State-Building by Revolution and Conquest," 205-219.
- *Web*: Kristin S. Tassin, "Lift Up Your Head, My Brother'," *Journal of Third World Studies* 23, 1 (Spring 2006), 147-168  
<http://proxy.lib.sfu.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=20817253&site=ehost-live>

Part Two

**Film Screening**

- *The Battle of Algiers* (dir. Gillo Pontecorvo, 1966)

*Tutorial Debate Topic*: Be it resolved that the rhetoric of decolonization and nonalignment was cynically deployed to conceal the authoritarianism of post-revolution Arab states.

Week Five  
Tuesday, October 6

Part One

**Test No. 1**

## Part Two

### Where's the Politics?

- *JG*: "Resistance," 317-333.
- *CT*: "State Capture and Violent Resistance," 1-70.
- *AB*: "The Art of Presence" and "The Quiet Encroachment of the Ordinary," 1-55.

*Tutorial Debate Topic*: Be it resolved that the 'quiet encroachments' which Bayat describes have had greater lasting significance on the modern Middle East than the violent resistance that Tripp describes.

## Week Six

Tuesday, October 13

## Part One

### The Politics of Development in an Oil-Rich Region

- *JG*: "Oil," 288-299.
- *CT*: "Imposition and Resistance in Economic Life," 134-175.
- *Web*: Steffen Hertog, "The Sociology of the Gulf Rentier Systems: Societies of Intermediaries," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 52, 2 (2010), 282-318  
<http://www.jstor.org.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/stable/40603088>

## Part Two

### Workers and Their World

- *AB*: "The Poor and the Perpetual Pursuit of Life Chances," 56-85.
- *Web*: Marius Deeb, "Labour and Politics in Egypt, 1919-1939," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 10, 2 (1979), 187-203  
<http://www.jstor.org.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/stable/162126>
- *Web*: Kevin M. Jones, "Unmaking the Middle Eastern working classes: labour and the politics of historiography," *Social History* 40, 2 (2015), 145-156  
<http://proxy.lib.sfu.ca/login?url=http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03071022.2015.1010780>

*Tutorial Debate Topic*: Be it resolved that nationalism and national movements trumped class consciousness and labour movements among Arab workers in the twentieth century.

## Week Seven

Tuesday, October 20

## Part One

### The Politics of the Peasantry

- *Web*: Timothy Mitchell, "The Invention and Reinvention of the Egyptian Peasant," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 22, 2 (1990), 129-150  
<http://www.jstor.org.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/stable/163736>

- *Web*: John Chalcraft, "Engaging the State: Peasants and Petitions in Egypt on the Eve of Colonial Rule," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 37 (2005), 303-325 <http://www.jstor.org.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/stable/3880103>

Part Two

### **Film Screening**

- *The Land* (dir. Youssef Chahine, 1969)

*Tutorial Debate Topic*: Be it resolved that history is made in the countryside.

### Week Eight

Tuesday, October 27

Part One

### **The Militarization of Everyday Life**

- *JG*: "The Autocratic State," 270-287.

Part Two

### **The Urban Landscape**

- *CT*: "Contesting Public Space: Resistance as the Denial of Authority," 71-133.
- *AB*: "Streets of Revolution," "Does Radical Islam Have an Urban Ecology?" 175-201.

*Tutorial Debate Topic*: Be it resolved that the military is only one among several constituencies seeking power and influence within the framework of the modern Arab state.

### Week Nine

Tuesday, November 3

Part One

### **Test No. 2**

Part Two

### **Gendering the Modern**

- *CT*: "Body Politics: Women's Rights and Women's Resistance," 176-218.
- *AB*: "Feminism of Everyday Life," 86-105.
- *Web*: Pardis Mahdavi, "Gender, labour and the law: the nexus of domestic work, human trafficking and the informal economy in the United Arab Emirates," *Global Networks* 13, 4 (2013), 425-440  
<http://proxy.lib.sfu.ca/login?url=http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/glob.12010/abstract>

*Tutorial Debate Topic:* Be it resolved that state structures in the modern Arab world – whether of monarchies or republics – are inherently hostile to women and their concerns.

### Week Ten

Tuesday, November 10

Part One

#### **The Nexus of Morality and Politics**

- AB: “Reclaiming Youthfulness” and “The Politics of Fun,” 106-150.

Part Two

#### **Film Screening**

- *The Silences of the Palace* (dir. Moufida Tlatli, 1994)

*Tutorial Debate Topic:* Be it resolved that there exists not one Islam, but rather, a multiplicity of “Islams” in the modern Arab world.

### Week Eleven

Tuesday, November 17

Part One

#### **Islamism Amidst Revolution**

- JG: “The Arab Uprisings,” 334-346.
- AB: “Is There a Future for Islamic Revolutions?” and “The Post-Islamist Refolutions,” 241-283.

Part Two

#### **The Past in the Present**

- CT: “History Wars: Contesting the Past, Reclaiming the Future,” 219-255.

*Tutorial Debate Topic:* Be it resolved that the economic ascendancy of the Gulf states since the 1970s has led to an unprecedented focus on issues of individual morality in public life throughout the Arab world.

### Week Twelve

Tuesday, November 24

Part One

#### **Test No. 3**

Part Two

#### **Nation and Citizen: Symbols or Souvenirs?**

- AB: “Everyday Cosmopolitanism” and “The ‘Arab Street’,” 202-237.

- CT: “Symbolic Forms of Resistance: Art and Power,” 256-319.

*Tutorial Debate Topic:* Be it resolved that the relevance of citizenship as a political concept is in rapid decline throughout the Arab world.

Week Thirteen  
Tuesday, December 1

Part One

**Paper Submission, Looking to the Future**

- JG: “The End of an Era?” 347-358.
- AB: “The Coming of a Post-Islamist Democracy,” 305-316.

Part Two

**Film Screening**

- *Ali Zaoua* (dir. Nabil Ayouch, 2000)

*Tutorial Debate Topic:* Be it resolved that the Arab uprisings have largely led to further entrenchment of authoritarian rule throughout the Arab world.