

THE HISTORY OF MODERN EGYPT: Revolutions Past and Present

Spring 2015

Email: pdsedra@sfu.caOffice hours Tuesdays 11:30am-12:20pm,
Wednesdays 11:30am-12:20pm

During the past four years, Egypt has experienced a level of turmoil in domestic politics not seen for at least the past 40 years. This turmoil has remained the focus of intense media scrutiny throughout the world. Indeed, controversy among observers of Egypt extends to the very description of the events since January 2011, with analysts characterizing this political transition variously as a coup and as a revolution. This course will explore the current transition in Egypt in detail, paying close attention to reporting and commentary emerging from the country. As a means by which to grasp the ebb and flow of contemporary Egyptian politics, students will mount a detailed survey of the historiography on past revolutions in modern Egyptian history. Term papers for the course will ultimately compare and contrast facets of past revolutions to facets of the current transition underway in Egypt.

Evaluation:

Presentation 10%

In-class test 25%

Term paper 45%

Class participation 20%

Principal texts (available from SFU Bookstore): *Modern Egypt: The Formation of a Nation-State*, by Arthur Goldschmidt Jr.; *Soldiers, Spies and Statesmen*, by Hazem Kandil; *Revolution in the Age of Social Media*, by Linda Herrera; *The Journey to Tahrir: Revolution, Protest, and Social Change in Egypt*, edited by Jeannie Sowers and Chris Toensing; and *Translating Egypt's Revolution: The Language of Tahrir*, edited by Samia Mehrez.

Format: Among the questions students will consider are: How have journalists and historians constructed their narratives about revolution(s) in modern Egypt? What are the assumptions that inform their work? How and why have these assumptions 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 in seminar having carefully scrutinized not only the readings for the week, but further, the news that has emerged from Egypt that week.** 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 and the news. Attending class is, thus, understandably, an integral part of the course.

Following the news: Sources for English-language news on Egypt are abundant online. Beyond prominent Western newspapers like *The Guardian*, *The New York Times*, and *The Washington Post*, students should consider following

- *Ahram Online* <http://english.ahram.org.eg/>
- *Daily News Egypt* <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/>
- *Egypt Independent* <http://www.egyptindependent.com/>
- *Jadaliyya* <http://www.jadaliyya.com/>
- *Mada Masr* <http://www.madamasr.com/>

Further, Twitter can prove an excellent source for varied perspectives on events underway in Egypt. For a list of Twitter feeds you might consider following, refer to

- <http://thawrathoughts.blogspot.ca/2013/08/a-long-list-of-english-language-egypt.html>

The professor has assembled these feeds into a public Twitter list, to which you can subscribe at

- <https://twitter.com/sedgate/lists/egypt>

In-class test: The in-class test will cover all the material discussed in the course to that point. **This will include the news coming from Egypt that students have discussed in class.** The test will consist of four essay questions, two of which students are expected to answer.

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.

Presentation: Students will give ten-minute presentations on their term papers during the final seminar. Presentations will be followed by ten-minute question-and-answer sessions in which peers are encouraged to offer constructive criticism.

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.

Fair dealing: Particular items indicated below have been copied under the Fair Dealing provisions of the Copyright Act as enumerated in SFU Appendix R30.04A - Application of Fair Dealing under Policy R30.04. Students may not distribute, e-mail, or otherwise communicate these materials to any other person.

January 6, 2015

Introduction

- Film screening: *The Family* (Al-Jazeera English, 2012).

January 13, 2015

Prehistory of the Revolution

- Film screening: *Seeds of Revolution* (Al-Jazeera English, 2011).
- Kandil: "The Long Lull Before the Perfect Storm," 175-220.
- Herrera: "Wired Youth Rise," 1-24; "Cyberdissident Diplomacy," 25-46; "Marketing Martyrdom," 47-70; "Virtual Vendetta," 71-94.
- Sowers and Toensing:
 - Asef Bayat, "The 'Arab Street'," 73-84.
 - Paul Schemm, "Activist Dissent and Anti-War Protests in Egypt," 85-91.
 - Ursula Lindsey, "The Wall Mubarak Built," 107-117.
 - Mona El-Ghobashy, "Unsettling the Authorities: Constitutional Reform in Egypt," 121-131.
 - Mona El-Ghobashy, "The Dynamics of Elections Under Mubarak," 132-148.
 - Issandr El Amrani, "Controlled Reform in Egypt: Neither Reformist nor Controlled," 149-159.

January 20, 2015

The Eighteen Days

- Film screening: *The End of a Dictator* (Al-Jazeera English, 2011).
- Herrera: "Viral Revolution," 95-114.
- Sowers and Toensing:
 - Mona El-Ghobashy, "The Praxis of the Egyptian Revolution," 21-40.

- Ahmad Shokr, "The Eighteen Days of Tahrir," 41-46.
- Mehrez:
 - Sahar Keraitim and Samia Mehrez, "*Mulid al-Tahrir: Semiotics of a Revolution*," 25-67.
 - Amira Taha and Christopher Combs, "Of Drama and Performance: Transformative Discourses of the Revolution," 69-102.
 - Laura Gribbon and Sarah Hawas, "Signs and Signifiers: Visual Translations of Revolt," 103-142.

January 27, 2015

Library Research for Term Paper

- There is no seminar this week. Students are expected to undertake library research for their term papers during seminar time.

February 3, 2015

The Culture of Tahrir

- Film screening: *Tweets from Tahrir* (Al-Jazeera English, 2012).
- Sowers and Toensing:
 - Elliott Colla, "The Poetry of Revolt," 47-52.
 - Ursula Lindsey, "Revolution and Counterrevolution in the Egyptian Media," 53-63.
 - Jessica Winegar, "Taking Out the Trash: Youth Clean Up Egypt After Mubarak," 64-69.
 - Mariz Tadros, "Cross and Crescent in Post-Mubarak Egypt," 189-199.
 - Ted Swedenburg, "Imagined Youths," 285-294.
- Mehrez:
 - Lewis Sanders IV, "Reclaiming the City: Street Art of the Revolution," 143-182.
 - Heba Salem and Kantaro Taira: "*al-Thawra al-DaHika: The Challenges of Translating Revolutionary Humor*," 183-211.
 - Lewis Sanders IV and Mark Visona, "The Soul of Tahrir: Poetics of a Revolution," 213-248.

February 10, 2015

Reading Week

February 17, 2015

Looking Back to 1882

- Goldschmidt: Chapters One through Four, 1-52.
- Canvas:
 - Jacques Berque, "A Revolution That Failed," *Egypt: Imperialism and Revolution*, 112-126 <https://canvas.sfu.ca/courses/19279/files/> [Please view statement on fair dealing above.]

- Juan Cole, “Social and Cultural Origins of the Revolution,” *Colonialism and Revolution in the Middle East: Social and Cultural Origins of Egypt’s ‘Urabi Revolt*, 234-272 <https://canvas.sfu.ca/courses/19279/files/> [Please view statement on fair dealing above.]

February 24, 2015

Looking Back to 1919

- Goldschmidt: Chapters Five and Six, 53-78.
- SFU electronic journals:
 - Erez Manela, “The Wilsonian Moment and the Rise of Anticolonial Nationalism: The Case of Egypt,” *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 12, no. 4 (December 2001) <http://proxy.lib.sfu.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=6899940&site=ehost-live>
 - John Gallagher, “Nationalisms and the Crisis of Empire, 1919-1922,” *Modern Asian Studies* 15, no. 3 (1981) <http://www.jstor.org.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/stable/312286>
- Canvas:
 - Jacques Berque, “Revolution and Transactions,” *Egypt: Imperialism and Revolution*, 304-324 <https://canvas.sfu.ca/courses/19279/files/> [Please view statement on fair dealing above.]
 - Joel Beinin and Zachary Lockman, “1919: Labor Upsurge and National Revolution,” *Workers on the Nile: Nationalism, Communism, Islam, and the Egyptian Working Class, 1882-1954*, 83-120 <https://canvas.sfu.ca/courses/19279/files/> [Please view statement on fair dealing above.]

March 3, 2015

Looking Back to 1952

- Film screening: *Four Women of Egypt* (dir. Tahani Rached, 1997).
- Goldschmidt: Chapters Seven through Ten, 79-156.
- Kandil: “Countdown to the July 1952 Coup,” 7-14; “The Dark Side of Militarism,” 15-42; “Two States Within a State,” 43-98.
- Canvas:
 - Khaled Mohi El Din, “Democracy: The Decisive Point,” *Memories of a Revolution: Egypt 1952*, 177-187 <https://canvas.sfu.ca/courses/19279/files/> [Please view statement on fair dealing above.]
 - Laura Bier, “Between Home and Workplace: Fashioning the ‘Working Woman’,” *Revolutionary Womanhood: Feminisms, Modernity, and the State in Nasser’s Egypt*, 60-100 <https://canvas.sfu.ca/courses/19279/files/> [Please view statement on fair dealing above.]

- Recommended further reading (if time permits):
 - Joel Gordon, “The People’s Army,” *Nasser’s Blessed Movement: Egypt’s Free Officers and the July Revolution*, 39-57
<https://canvas.sfu.ca/courses/19279/files/> [Please view statement on fair dealing above.]
 - Joel Gordon, “The Socialist Garden: 1961-1967,” *Nasser: Hero of the Arab Nation*, 69-93 <https://canvas.sfu.ca/courses/19279/files/> [Please view statement on fair dealing above.]

March 10, 2015

In-Class Test

March 17, 2015

A Social Revolution?

- Film screening: *The Factory* (Al-Jazeera English, 2012).
- Goldschmidt: Chapters Eleven and Twelve, 157-200.
- Kandil: “Eradicating the Centers of Power,” 99-112; and “Twilight of the Generals,” 113-174.
- Sowers and Toensing:
 - Joel Beinin, “The Working Class and the Popular Movement in Egypt,” 92-106.
 - Karen Pfeifer, “Economic Reform and Privatization in Egypt,” 203-223.
 - Timothy Mitchell, “Dreamland: The Neoliberalism of Your Desires,” 224-234.
 - Eric Denis, “Demographic Surprises Foreshadow Change in Neoliberal Egypt,” 235-241.
 - Ray Bush and Amal Sabri, “Mining for Fish: Privatization of the ‘Commons’ Along Egypt’s Northern Coastline,” 242-249.
 - Sharif Elmusa and Jeannie Sowers, “Damietta Mobilizes for Its Environment,” 250-260.
- Mehrez:
 - Sarah Hawas, “Global Translations and Translating the Global: Discursive Regimes of Revolt,” 277-305.

March 24, 2015

An Islamist Revolution?

- Film screening: *Egypt in Crisis* (PBS Frontline, 2013).
- Herrera: “Mememes and the War of Ideas,” 115-142.
- Sowers and Toensing:
 - Samer Shehata and Joshua Stacher, “The Muslim Brothers in Mubarak’s Last Decade,” 160-177.
 - Ewan Stein, “The Gama‘a Islamiyya: From Impasse to Opportunity,” 178-188.

- Linda Herrera, “Downveiling: Gender and the Contest over Culture in Cairo,” 265-271.
- Canvas:
 - Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, “The Brotherhood and the Egyptian Uprising,” *The Muslim Brotherhood: Evolution of an Islamist Movement*, 154-195
<https://canvas.sfu.ca/courses/19279/files/> [Please view statement on fair dealing above.]

March 31, 2015

A Military Coup?

- Kandil: “On the Threshold of Power,” 221-244; and “June 30: The Army Strikes Back,” 245-264.
- Herrera: “The Anti-Ideology Machine,” 143-159.
- Mehrez:
 - Menna Khalil, “The People and the Army Are One Hand: Myths and Their Translations,” 249-275.
- SFU electronic journals:
 - Shana Marshall and Joshua Stacher, “Egypt’s Generals and Transnational Capital,” *Middle East Report* no. 262 (Spring 2012)
<http://proxy.lib.sfu.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=poh&AN=7411020&site=ehost-live>

April 7, 2015

Student Presentations