

## THE HISTORY OF MODERN EGYPT: Revolutions Past and Present

Fall 2013

Email: [pdsedra@sfu.ca](mailto:pdsedra@sfu.ca)

Office hours Wed. 12:30-1:20 pm, Thurs. 10:30-11:20 am

During the past 30 months, Egypt has experienced a level of turmoil in domestic politics not seen for at least the past 30 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): *The Journey to Tahrir: Revolution, Protest, and Social Change in Egypt* (Verso), edited by Jeannie Sowers and Chris Toensing; *Messages from Tahrir: Signs from Egypt's Revolution* (AUC Press), edited by Karima Khalil; and *Translating Egypt's Revolution: The Language of Tahrir* (AUC Press), 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 fifteen-minute presentations on their term papers during one of the final two seminars. Presentations will be followed by ten- to fifteen-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.

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September 5, 2013

### **Week One: Introduction**

September 12, 2013

### **Week Two: Prehistory of the Revolution**

- 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.
- Canvas:
  - Aida Seif El-Dawla, “Torture: A State Policy,” in Rabab El-Mahdi and Philip Marfleet, eds. *Egypt: The Moment of Change*, 120-135  
<https://canvas.sfu.ca/courses/13234/files/736086/> [Please view statement on fair dealing above.]
  - Marilyn Booth, “Exploding into the Seventies: Ahmad Fu’ad Nigm, Sheikh Imam, and the Aesthetics of a New Youth Politics,” in Nicholas S. Hopkins, ed. *Political and Social Protest in Egypt*, 19-44  
<https://canvas.sfu.ca/courses/13234/files/736114/> [Please view statement on fair dealing above.]

September 19, 2013

### **Week Three: The Eighteen Days**

- 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.

September 26, 2013

#### **Week Four: The Culture of Tahrir**

- 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.

October 3, 2013

#### **Week Five: Looking Back to 1882**

- Canvas:
  - Jacques Berque, "A Revolution That Failed," *Egypt: Imperialism and Revolution*, 112-126 <https://canvas.sfu.ca/courses/13234/files/736112/> [Please view statement on fair dealing above.]
  - Alexander Scholch, "Egypt for the Egyptians – The Establishment of a New Order by Autochthonous Social Groups," *Egypt for the Egyptians! The Socio-Political Crisis in Egypt 1878-82*, 135-225 <https://canvas.sfu.ca/courses/13234/files/736085/> [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/13234/files/736081/> [Please view statement on fair dealing above.]

October 10, 2013

### Week Six: Looking Back to 1919

- 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/13234/files/736113/> [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/13234/files/736111/> [Please view statement on fair dealing above.]

October 17, 2013

### Week Seven: Looking Back to 1952

- SFU electronic journals:
  - Ahmad Shokr, “Reflections on Two Revolutions,” *Middle East Report* no. 265 (Winter 2012)  
<http://proxy.lib.sfu.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=poh&AN=85106998&site=ehost-live>
- Canvas:
  - James Jankowski, “From the Old Regime to the New: The Revolution of 1952,” *Nasser’s Egypt, Arab Nationalism, and the United Arab Republic*, 11-25  
<https://canvas.sfu.ca/courses/13234/files/736115/> [Please view statement on fair dealing above.]
  - Khaled Mohi El Din, “Democracy: The Decisive Point,” *Memories of a Revolution: Egypt 1952*, 177-187  
<https://canvas.sfu.ca/courses/13234/files/736116/> [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/13234/files/736080/> [Please view statement on fair dealing above.]

- 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/13234/files/736082/> [Please view statement on fair dealing above.]
- John Waterbury, “Reflections on the Extent of Egypt’s Revolution: Socioeconomic Indicators,” in Shimon Shamir, ed. *Egypt: From Monarchy to Republic*, 61-65 <https://canvas.sfu.ca/courses/13234/files/736087/> [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/13234/files/736083/> [Please view statement on fair dealing above.]

October 24, 2013

**Week Eight: In-Class Test**

October 31, 2013

**Week Nine: A Social Revolution?**

- 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.
- Canvas:
  - Mark Allen Peterson, “The Global and the Multilocal: Development, Enterprise, and Culture Brokers,” *Connected in Cairo: Growing Up Cosmopolitan in the Modern Middle East*, 171-213 <https://canvas.sfu.ca/courses/13234/files/736084/> [Please view statement on fair dealing above.]

November 7, 2013

**Week Ten: An Islamist Revolution?**

- 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.
- SFU electronic journals:
  - Joshua Stacher, “Establishment Mursi,” *Middle East Report* no. 265 (Winter 2012)  
<http://proxy.lib.sfu.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=poh&AN=85106999&site=ehost-live>
- 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/13234/files/736117/> [Please view statement on fair dealing above.]
- The professor may assign further readings closer to the date of the seminar, as events warrant.

*November 14, 2013*

**Week Eleven: A Military Coup?**

- 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>
  - Hicham Bou Nassif, “Why the Egyptian Army Didn’t Shoot,” *Middle East Report* no. 265 (Winter 2012)  
<http://proxy.lib.sfu.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=poh&AN=85107001&site=ehost-live>
- The professor will assign further readings closer to the date of the seminar, as events warrant.

*November 21 and November 28, 2013*

**Weeks Twelve and Thirteen: Presentations**