

## **HSTR 135D: The Modern Middle East**

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Welcome to the History of the Modern Middle East! This is an introductory course which focuses mainly upon the Middle East since 1800, but which also provides some background to the region in the first couple of weeks. While discussing many of the major political, diplomatic, and military events which have taken place in the region over the past two centuries, this class also places these events within broader a broader international context. We will be looking at events in the Middle East, relations between the Middle East and Europe and the United States, and attempting to place them within broader themes which reflect the modern era more generally. As the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and Africa the Middle East has long had a deeply interconnected relationship with world history, a major factor driving the diversity of the Middle East. As this is a d-listed course which provides credit toward the university's diversity requirements, the diversity of the Middle East constitutes an important theme.

### **Evaluation**

**All** of these assignments must be completed in order to earn a passing grade in this course.

Map Quiz: 5%

Quizzes, Homework, In-class assignments: 15%

Attendance and class participation: 20%

Paper: 15%

Midterm: 20%

Final Exam: 25%

## Thematic Issues, Educational Goals

### **I. Class Theme: Diversity**

As you likely know, this is a "D" class (ie, HSTR 135D) which satisfies four credits toward the "diversity" requirement of MSU's Core curriculum. Diversity is thus an important theme of this course. As we discuss in this class, the land, communities, and states within the Middle East are diverse in lots of ways that you may not know about. Think, as we begin to have our class sessions and do our reading, about the ways in which the concept of diversity applies to what you're learning.

### **II. Learning Objectives**

- a)** To gain a better understanding of the major events taking place in the political, social, and cultural history of the Middle East from 1800 to the present day.
- b)** To see events **thematically** and **comparatively**, rather than just memorizing things.
- c)** To read texts more **critically**, assessing their merits and weaknesses.
- d)** To become more familiar with **current affairs**, specifically of an **international** or **cross-cultural** nature, and develop an understanding of how the events discussed in this class relate to them.
- e)** To strengthen various technical skills, such as the reading of primary source material, writing, and presenting material orally.

### **III. Perspective**

One important aspect of diversity is diversity of **perspective**. By this, I mean developing a better understanding of what might be the historical memory for people living in the Middle East today. As you learn their history, think about how living through these events might shape the views of people in the region. If you had lived in the Middle East for all or most of your life, how do you think you'd view events taking place in the world today?

### **IV. Specifics**

Intelligent, well-meaning, and informed people can disagree on just about all of the major issues we'll be talking about in this class. I don't care about your political views. What matters is your ability to relate your views to **specifics**. You need to engage the readings and the class more generally. Think about why you think the way that you do.

**Specifics** matter in history, too. People don't do what they do or think what they think simply because of their religion or nationality. People's views of the world are shaped, to some degree, by real events that affect people's lives. What are some of the specific issues related to the events we study? What were people concerned about? Make your points by discussing actual events and developments.

## **V. Categorization**

Think of this class as a computer desktop. You will be generating a lot of files over the course of the semester. Will you leave them all unorganized on your desktop? Of course not! Instead, you will put them into folders. Three folders that you should start out with are **reforms, relations, and community identity**. A lot of the events and developments that we will be talking about in this class relate to these three concepts. Once we have a collection of events and developments—"files"—for each folder, we can start comparing things better. **What other themes or sets of issues—broad topics like the three I've mentioned—can you detect over the course of the semester?**

### **Rules, petty bureaucracy, and other essential points**

**VI. Plagiarism:** Students caught plagiarizing or otherwise cheating will receive an 'F' in this course and will be reported to the Provost's office. Students can view the code of conduct they are expected to live by [here](#).

**VII. Electronic devices.** Please turn all electronic devices, including cell phones and computers, off. If you cannot function without a computer and feel perplexed by this rule, please talk to me. **Every time** I see someone employing an electronic device (texting, using a computer, etc) without permission, your attendance/participation grade for the semester **will fall by one point**, whether I mention this to you in class or not.

**VIII. How to address me.** You can call me "Jim" or "Professor Meyer," depending on what you feel most comfortable with. Please **don't** call me "Mr. Meyer."

## **IX. ME-related news websites:**

- For news: [Aljazeera's website \(www.aljazeera.com\)](http://www.aljazeera.com)
- Juan Cole, whose book we'll be reading this semester, maintains Informed Content ([www.juancole.com](http://www.juancole.com)).
- I also have a website which with photos and links to Mideast news/analysis sites: [jhmeyer.net](http://jhmeyer.net)

## **X. Class Schedule**

**Key Dates: Map Quiz (Thurs. Sept. 6); Midterm (Thursday, Oct. 11); Papers due (Thursday Nov. 8); Final Exam (in class on Thursday, Dec. 6).**

\*\*\*Reading: Unless otherwise indicated, you are expected to have the reading for a week finished prior to the first class for that week.

### **Week 1 (August 28-30): Introduction to the class and the region**

Tuesday: Introduction to the class and syllabus

- \* For Thursday August 30, please read Cole, 1-20.

Thursday: Introduction to the region: the land and its resources; Introduction to Cole

- For Week 2: Please read Cleveland, 1-36; Cole, 21-64; Prepare for **Map Quiz**

### **Week 2 (Sept. 4-6): The Peoples of the Middle East and the Rise of Islam**

Tuesday: The Peoples of the Middle East

**Thursday: Map Quiz!** The Rise of Islam & Islamic Empires

- For Week 3: Please Read Cleveland, 37-56; Cole, 65-122.

### **Week 3 (Sept. 11-13): Ottomans and Safavids**

Tuesday: The Rise of the Ottoman Empire; Ottoman Institutions

Thursday: The Ottomans and Safavids prior to 1800

- For Week 4, please read Cleveland, 61-71; bottom of 74-bottom of 84; bottom of 85-bottom of 89; 92-102; Cole, 123-160.

#### **Week 4: (Sept. 18-20): Early nineteenth century reforms**

Tuesday: Selim III, Mahmut II, and the Tanzimat Reforms

Thursday: The Greek War of Independence and Reign of Muhammad Ali

- For Week 5, please read Cleveland, 103-117; Cole, 161-222.

#### **Week 5 (Sept. 25-27): Crisis and the Reign of Abdulhamid II**

Tuesday: The Crisis years, 1876-78

Thursday: Abdulhamid II and the Ottoman Empire in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

- For Week 6, please read Cleveland, 133-170; Cole, 223-249 (end).

#### **Week 6: Revolution and War in the Late Imperial Era**

Tuesday: Constitutionalism and Revolution in the Middle East

Thursday: World War I & the Peace Settlement

- For Week 7, study for midterm and read Kinzer ix-29

#### **Week 7 (Oct. 9-11): Peace Settlement; Midterm**

Tuesday: The Peace Settlement

Thursday: **Midterm**

- For Week 8, please read Cleveland, 175-216; Kinzer, 30-61.

#### **Week 8 (Oct. 16-18): The Postwar Middle East, Part I**

Tuesday: Turkey and Iran in the interwar era

Thursday: British Mandates in the Arab Middle East

- For Week 9, please read Cleveland, 217-231; 239-271; Kinzer, 82-119.

## **Week 9 (Oct. 23-25): The Postwar Middle East, Part II**

Tuesday: French Mandates in the Middle East

Thursday: Zionism and the Creation of Israel

- For Week 10, please read Cleveland, 273-322; Kinzer, 193-228 (end).

## **Week 10: (Oct. 30-Nov. 1) The Middle East in the Cold War**

Tuesday: Turkey and Iran

Thursday: Pan-Arabism & the Nasser Phenomenon

- For week 11, please read Cleveland, 345-368; Ahmed, 1-31  
On **Thursday** of next week your **paper is due**.

## **Week 11: (Thursday, Nov. 8): The Arab-Israeli Conflict in the Cold War**

Tuesday: Election day—no class!

Thursday: The Arab-Israeli Conflict

- For Week 12 read Cleveland, 423-450; Ahmed, 32-46; 68-92.

## **Week 12: (Nov. 13-15): Iran and Israel since the 1970s**

Tuesday: the Islamic Revolution in Iran (1979) and Islamic radicalism

Thursday: Israel & the Palestinians since the 1970s

- For Nov. 29: Leila Ahmed, 93-194; 243-270; 299-307.

**Week 13: (Nov. 20-22) No Class**

Tuesday & Thursday: No class

**Week 14: Nov. 27-29: The Middle East Today**

Tuesday: Turkey and Iran today

Thursday: The Arab Spring and the Middle East Today

**Week 15: (Dec. 4-6): Review and Final**

Tuesday: Review and Wrap-up

Thursday: In-class final exam

***HAVE A GREAT SEMESTER AND GOOD LUCK IN ALL OF YOUR  
CLASSES!***