

HIST479: (De-) Colonizing the Middle East: Theory and Methods
Spring Semester 2018

Instructor:	David Stenner
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Office hours:	Tuesday & Thursday 1:15-2:30pm, Wednesday 4:30-6:30pm
Class days and times:	W 19:30-22:15
Classroom:	MCM 310

Course Description: This seminar addresses the academic scholarship on the modern Middle East. Instead of learning facts about past events, we study how historians and other scholars have interpreted the region's past and present in books and articles. In other words, we analyze debates among academics focusing on the Middle East. Each week, we deal with a different theoretical and methodological approach, including social, environmental, religious, gender, Marxist, intellectual, and political history. Our goal is to understand that different interpretations of the same historical processes can not only coexist, but might even be necessary to increase our comprehension of past events. This is not a lecture class – rather, we will spend our time together on in-depth discussions of the assigned readings. The final course assignment will be a historiographical essay, which shall encompass a critical engagement with the secondary literature on a place or theme selected by each student.

Required Texts:

All readings are available through the course website

Course Assessments:

Weekly Reading Responses: 50%

Before each class meeting, students must submit a brief written analysis of that week's readings. Each response should address the questions: What are the authors' main arguments? What sources do the authors use to support it? What are the similarities and differences between the texts? All papers should be approximately 400 words, double-spaced, and must be submitted via Scholar before the beginning of class. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Final Paper: 50%

An overview response essay covering at the very least five significant books in the field on a theme of your choosing will be due at the end of the semester. The final paper should be 2,400-2,800 words long.

Due date for the final paper: 28 April 2018 @ 2pm

Week 1 (1/10): Modernizing Historiography

Readings:

Y. Di Capua, *Gatekeepers of the Arab Past: Historians and History Writing in Twentieth-Century Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009) pp. 1-18 & 91-140.

J. A. Crabbs, *Writing of History in Nineteenth-Century Egypt: A Study in National Transformation* (Wayne State University Press, Detroit: 1984), pp. 1-26, 67-86, 146-167.

Week 2 (1/17): Modernizing the People

Readings:

- K. Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2002), pp. 1-37 & 76-111.
- Z. Fahmy, *Ordinary Egyptians: Creating the Modern Nation Through Popular Culture*, pp. 1-19 & 39-95.

Week 3 (1/24): Modernizing the State

Readings:

- T. Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt*, pp. 1-94.

Week 4 (1/31): Modernizing Religion

Readings:

- S. Haj, *Reconfiguring Islamic Tradition: Reform, Rationality, and Modernity* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2008), pp. 67-108.
- A. Al-Arian, *Answering the Call: Popular Islamic Activism in Sadat's Egypt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 1-17 & 49-104.

Week 5 (2/7): Modernizing the Mind

Readings:

- O. El Shakry, *The Great Social Laboratory: Subjects of Knowledge in Colonial and Postcolonial Egypt* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2007), pp. 1-19 & 113-142.
- O. Bashkin, *The other Iraq: pluralism and culture in Hashemite Iraq* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), pp. 1-15 & 52-86.

Week 6 (2/14): Gender and Sexuality

Readings:

- E. Thompson, *Colonial Citizens: Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), pp. 1-14 & 113-140.
- B. Baron, *Egypt as a Woman: Nationalism, Gender, and Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), pp. 1-12, 57-81 & 107-134.

Week 7 (2/21): Writing Nationalist Historiography

Readings:

- P. Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), pp. 3-50.
- J. McDougall. "Myth and Counter-Myth: 'The Berber' As National Signifier in Algerian Historiographies." *Radical History Review* 86/1 (2003), pp. 66-88.

Week 8 (2/28): Nationalism, Class Formation, and History

Readings:

- J. Beinín and Z. Lockman, *Workers on the Nile: Nationalism, Communism, Islam and the Egyptian Working Class, 1882-1954* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 3-22 & 83-120.
- H. Hammad, *Industrial Sexuality: Gender, Urbanization, and Social Transformation in Egypt* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2016), 1-24 & 56-77.

Week 9 (3/14): Zionism and its Critics

Readings:

- I. Pappé (1994) *The making of the Arab-Israeli conflict, 1947–1951* (I.B. Tauris, 1994), pp. 87-101.
- B. Morris, *The birth of the Palestinian refugee problem, 1947-1949* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp., 1-28, 61-131 & 286-296.
- A. Shlaim, "The War of the Israeli Historians," *Annales*, Vol. 59, No. 1 (January-February 2004), pp. 161-67.

Week 10 (3/21): Environmental History

Readings:

- D. Davis, *Resurrecting the Granary of Rome* (Athens, OH: University of Ohio Press, 2007), pp. 1-88.
- A. Mikhail, "Unleashing the Beast: Animals, Energy, and the Economy of Labor in Ottoman Egypt," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 118, No. 2 (April 2013), pp. 317–348.

Week 11 (3/28): No class – Individual meetings with Instructor

Week 12 (4/4): International History

Readings:

- R. Vitalis, *America's Kingdom: Mythmaking on the Saudi Oil Frontier*, pp. 1-29 & 62-120.
- T. Mitchell, "Carbon Democracy," *Economy and Society*, Volume 38, Issue 3, August 2009, pp. 399-432.

Week 13 (4/11): Religious Minorities

Readings:

- J. Schreier, *Arabs of the Jewish faith: the civilizing mission in colonial Algeria* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2010), pp. 1-55.
- J. Marglin, *Across legal lines: Jews and Muslims in modern Morocco* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016), pp. 1-20 & 78-101.

Week 14 (4/18): Surveillance and the Security State

Readings:

- I. Feldman, *Police Encounters: Security and Surveillance in Gaza Under Egyptian Rule*, pp. 1-49. [replace ch. 1 with ch. 2 or 4]
- P. Amar, *The Security Archipelago: Human-Security States, Sexuality Politics, and the End of Neoliberalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), pp. 1-37 & 99-138.