

## THE ARAB MIDDLE EAST IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Spring 2015

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Office hours Tuesdays 11:30am-12:20pm,

Wednesdays 11:30am-12:20pm

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 Apr. 10)	40%
Debate presentation	20%
Class participation	10%

### Texts:

- *The Power and the People: Paths of Resistance in the Middle East* by Charles Tripp, Cambridge University Press [hereafter CT]
- *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism*, second edition, by Zachary Lockman, Cambridge University Press [hereafter ZL]
- *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East*, second edition, by Asef Bayat, Stanford University Press [hereafter AB]
- *The People Want: A Radical Exploration of the Arab Uprising* by Gilbert Achcar, University of California Press [hereafter GA]
- Journal articles accessible through the SFU library website, via the stable URLs listed below [citations denoted *Web*]
- Students are urged to consult an introductory textbook, like William Cleveland's *History of the Modern Middle East*, should they encounter names or concepts which are unfamiliar in the midst of their reading.

**Lecture sessions** will build upon the readings, putting them in a historical and analytical context. As a result, attending lectures is an integral part of the course, not least given that materials from lectures will appear on the in-class tests. After each lecture, the

instructor will answer whatever questions students may have about the readings and lecture. This time will be devoted not only to clearing up misunderstandings, but further, to interpretation and analysis. As a result, students should come to lecture sessions PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE.

**Debate presentations:** 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:** These tests will vary in format, but will focus upon interpretation and analysis. Details will be provided.

**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. The paper is due at the beginning of lecture on April 10, 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.

## Week One

Wednesday, January 7

### **Introduction and Film Screening**

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

*No tutorials this week*

Friday, January 9

### **Film Screening**

- *World War One Through Arab Eyes* (continued)
- ZL: "In the Beginning," "Islam, the West and the Rest," and "Orientalism and Empire," 8-99

## Week Two

Wednesday, January 14

### **Narratives of the "Arab Nation"**

- 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>

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

Friday, January 16

### **The Liberal Lie**

- 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>

## Week Three

Wednesday, January 21

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

- ZL: "The American Century," 100-148

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

Friday, January 23

### **Film Screening**

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

### Week Four

Wednesday, January 28

### **Test No. 1**

*Tutorial Debate Topic:* Be it resolved that the Orientalism of modernization theory, as implemented by rulers indigenous to the Arab world, was little different from the Orientalism of the colonial powers.

Friday, January 30

### **The Rhetoric of Revolution**

- *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>

### Week Five

Wednesday, February 4

### **Where's the Politics?**

- *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.

Friday, February 6

### **Dictating Development**

- *ZL:* "Said's *Orientalism*: A Book and Its Aftermath," 183-215
- *GA:* "Fettered Development," 7-37
- *CT:* "Imposition and Resistance in Economic Life," 134-175

### Week Six

### **Reading Week**

## Week Seven

Wednesday, February 18

### **The Gulf Ascendant**

- *Web*: Michael Herb, "Princes and Parliaments in the Arab World," *The Middle East Journal*, 58, 3 (2004), 367-384 <http://www.jstor.org.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/stable/4330030>

*Tutorial Debate Topic*: Be it resolved that Herb's 2004 optimism about transitions to democracy in Arab monarchies was unwarranted.

Friday, February 20

### **From Capital to Crisis**

- *ZL*: "After Orientalism?" 216-273
- *GA*: "The Peculiar Modalities of Capitalism in the Arab Region," 38-75

## Week Eight

Wednesday, February 25

### **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>

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

Friday, February 27

### **Workers and Their World**

- *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>
- *AB*: "The Poor and the Perpetual Pursuit of Life Chances," 56-85

## Week Nine

Wednesday, March 4

### **Test No. 2**

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

Friday, March 6

**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

Week Ten

Wednesday, March 11

**Gendering the Modern**

- CT: "Body Politics: Women's Rights and Women's Resistance," 176-218
- AB: "Feminism of Everyday Life," 86-105

*Tutorial Debate Topic:* Be it resolved that the revolutionary technocratic states of the 1950s and 1960s were inherently hostile to women and their concerns.

Friday, March 13

**Film Screening**

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

Week Eleven

Wednesday, March 18

**The Nexus of Morality and Politics**

- AB: "Reclaiming Youthfulness" and "The Politics of Fun," 106-150
- GA: "Regional Political Factors," 76-113

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

Friday, March 20

**Film Screening**

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

Week Twelve

Wednesday, March 25

**Test No. 3**

*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.

Friday, March 27

### **Islamism Amidst Revolution**

- ZL: "Turmoil in the Field," 149-182
- AB: "Is There a Future for Islamic Revolutions?" and "The Post-Islamist Revolutions," 241-283
- GA: "Actors and Parameters of the Revolution," 114-143, and "Co-opting the Uprising," 188-217

### Week Thirteen

Wednesday, April 1

### **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.

Friday, April 3

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

- CT: "History Wars: Contesting the Past, Reclaiming the Future," 219-255

### Week Fourteen

Wednesday, April 8

### **Looking to the Future**

- AB: "The Coming of a Post-Islamist Democracy," 305-316
- GA: "Conclusion: The Future of the Arab Uprising," 218-242

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

Friday, April 10

### **Paper Submission and Film Screening**

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