



History of the Middle East

Prothro-Yeager College of Humanities and Social Sciences

HIST 4543/5543

Spring 2020

GRADUATE STUDENT SYLLABUS

Contact Information

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Course Description

This is an upper level survey of Middle Eastern history from the rise of Islam to the end of the first decade of the 21st century; however, the majority of the course will deal with the Ottoman Empire and the 20th century. The class offers the students a foundational knowledge and framework of the history and politics of the region, illustrating how the wider region became such a hotbed of international instability. We will focus primarily on international relations, politics, identity, and warfare over time. The successful student come to understand the current tensions and hostilities in the Middle East through the study of its history and its generally hostile relationship with the West.

The course has three main objectives for graduate students: 1. To provide the student with basic information about the history and politics of the region. 2. To illustrate how imperialism and nationalism shaped the course of Middle Eastern history in order to understand contemporary conditions and events. 3. Helping to build research and writing skills at the graduate school level.

Because the Middle East is such a contentious topic, I anticipate lively debate and disagreement among the students and professor. There is NO room for personal and intellectual growth unless opinions and values are constantly challenged and logically defended, reformed, or abandoned. The class is designed to stimulate lively and rational debate, in which students with various opinions can exchange points of view respectfully without childish shunning or ad hominem attacks. The discussions, lectures, and readings will develop critical thinking skills in relation to historical themes and events. A primary element of the course is improving critical thinking, in relation to changes over time and in challenging accepted paradigms (examples, patterns, models, and standards) and “conventional wisdom.” Students will come to understand that every

document, report, letter, and secondary resource is written from a particular point of view with a particular goal in mind. My goal as a professor is to train the students in parsing out the intentions of every writer, leader, and scholar to come to a better understanding of the events of the past.

Student Responsibility and Expectations

Students are personally responsible for their own education. I am a harsh taskmaster and do not accept excuses that tend to be pervasive in today's society. You are adults, and with age comes responsibility for your own actions or lack thereof. Active student participation in learning (which includes careful reading of ALL assignments, classroom engagement, attentive note taking and participation in discussions), the maintenance of a weekly study schedule, the completion of ALL assignments in a timely manner, adequate preparation for exams, and, when necessary, individual post-exam consultation with the instructor, is essential to meeting the learning outcomes of the course. However, if you turn in all assignments, pass your exams, and participate in discussions, you are not guaranteed a "good grade". A is a designation for excellent work and product, and B for good work and product. If your enthusiasm, work ethic, written work, and test taking efforts are merely satisfactory, you will EARN a C. The bare minimum earns a D. Remember, I am here to help you, but I will not seek you out to do so. If you come to me, I will do my best to facilitate learning and sharpen your analytical and writing skills.

Textbooks and Readings

- 1) William Ochsenswald and Sydney Fisher, *The Middle East: A History*, 6th edition, 0072442336.
- 2) Ian Bickerton and Carla Klausner, *A Concise History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 3rd edition, 0137551002.

I chose these textbooks to save you money and to provide more balanced accounts of the Israeli-Palestinian issue. While neither are fully balanced (we'll discuss these issues in class), they will get the job done. Please order the books ASAP so you have them at the beginning of class.

Online Readings: As assigned

Readings for the week MUST BE DONE by the beginning of the class period for which they are assigned. One paragraph summaries of EACH reading must be turned in at the beginning of the class period.

Academic Integrity, Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

Notice: Understand the following – it applies to all assignments. If you in any instance “cut and paste” from any internet source without citing that source (plagiarism) or use unapproved

internet sources, you will fail the assignment in question. Depending on the severity of the offense, the professor reserves the right to employ any or all university sanctioned disciplinary actions, of which I will pursue prosecution to its furthest extent.

Grading

Assignments	Percentage of grade
Exams (2)	40% (20% each)
Topical Research paper and drafts (between 4200-6500 words)	20%
Debate (preparation for and judging the debate)	20%
Active participation and attendance, including leading two lectures based on the interests of the graduate student.	20%

Final Grade	Percentage
A	90% plus
B	80 – 89.9%
C	70 – 79.9%
D	60 – 69.9%
F	Less than 60%

Exams: Two short answer and essay/research exams will be distributed during the semester. The first is due at the beginning of class on March 11. It will be distributed by class time on March 4. The second will be distributed on May 4 and is due sometime during the exam week. These will be involved essay exam with lengths delineated on the assignment sheets. You will do 2-3 essays and identify 10 key terms/people/events as stipulated on the exams.

It is a violation of the honor code to discuss the exams or work on them as a group in any capacity. If I discover that a student cheated or plagiarized, I will actively prosecute the offender

to the fullest extent under MSU Texas guidelines. This also goes for the book review and final paper assignment (see below). The exams are meant to be analytical exercises that illustrate the region's change over time. Regurgitating lecture and the textbooks will not be acceptable. I want to see the students engage in critical thinking about the region and analyze changes in a temporal context. We will discuss expectations, essay length, etc. in class and requirements will be delineated on the exams themselves.

Research Paper: Each graduate student will research, write drafts, and present a final paper on a research topic approved by the instructor in the third week of class (February 6 at 4pm). The topic must be on some aspect of Middle Eastern history and have enough adequate primary and secondary resources available to support the student's thesis. Since research and writing are skills that can only be acquired through doing, we will be dedicating class time to preparation, research, writing, and rewriting the final paper. With this in mind, I have assigned deadlines for various parts of the paper to be turned in for evaluation throughout the semester. The student will produce a working outline for the paper by the 6th week of class, a 2100-word comparative book review of two or more monographs related to your paper topic in the 9th week, a complete draft by the 12th, and the final copy during exam week. The final paper **MUST** be no shorter than 4200 words and no more than 6500. It is expected that this paper will be of graduate quality. The student **MUST** do each of these steps and have them turned in **ON TIME**. Failure to do so will result in grade reductions for the paper.

The book review may be a new exercise to some in the class. This is **NOT** a book report. Reviews are critiques of books in which the reviewer briefly describes the main thesis and the points the author uses to prove the argument. Once this is done, the reviewer critiques the book (is the argument believable, well researched, persuasive, well written). Does the author fulfill his or her stated or implied purpose? Is the argument subtle or ham-fisted? I will provide a "how to" sheet with a barebones description of how to do a short academic review. I suggest you use review essays from an academic journal (such as the *American Historical Review*) to get a feel for their academic purpose. Now you might be asking yourself, "why do I have to do this? I don't intend to be a professional historian [or] I won't ever take another course in this department." Every academic field requires such critical exercises; furthermore, you may take a position after college in which the boss wants you to critique something in writing. This review will give you practice doing a formal critique.

The book you select for review **CANNOT** be a novel or any other work of fiction. It must be an academic book or a substantial memoir with historical significance. It must be approved by the instructor **NO LATER THAN THURSDAY, February 6 at 4pm**. For every day you are late in requesting approval, the final grade for the review will be lowered by 5%. I suggest you choose and read the book carefully in the first half of the semester to avoid the end of term flood of assignments. Early work is encouraged. It will be due, without exception, on March 7 no later than noon. No late work will be accepted. The same goes for the exams. If I were you, at the beginning of the course, I would begin finding the who, what, where, when, how, and why of terms presented in class and those in the book, keeping them in a separate notebook. In this

manner, you will come to know the basics of each lecture/discussion and reading, so you can better perform in class and build your knowledge base for exams, discussions, the debate, and pop quizzes.

Israeli-Palestinian Debate: Since much of the instability in the Middle East hinges on the 20th century Jewish-Palestinian question, we will have a formal debate in which the students will debate the issue from both sides. One class period is dedicated to the debate itself, but two teams will be selected earlier in the semester to prepare for it. Three students (including all the graduate students) will be “moderators” and judge the debate, selecting the winners based on strength of evidence presented, logic of argument, and persuasiveness. It is expected that the teams will evenly divide research preparation, drafting of argument points, delivery, etc. in the weeks before the debate among themselves. The reason most debates are lost or a student performs unsatisfactorily is due to inadequate preparation and hasty planning just before the debate occurs. **DO NOT FALL INTO THIS TRAP!** Prepare throughout so that logical arguments can be crafted, the other side’s arguments can be anticipated and countered with evidence, and delivery can be practiced and sharpened. This is a team project, but each individual will be graded on their individual contributions, based in part by reports from each team member evaluating the duties and performances of their team members. Work together. This will be something you will have to do in the professional world post-graduation. The graduate students in the course are responsible for knowing the arguments of both sides and help either team if required.

Active participation means not only attending class, but contributing to discussion, asking questions, and being engaged. Just showing up IS NOT ADEQUATE. If you can’t commit, there’s no reason to take the course.

Extra Credit

I do NOT offer extra credit.

Make Up Work/Tests

I will only allow make up work if there is a legitimate excuse for missing a deadline. I have sole discretion in determining whether or not a reason is acceptable. University functions approved by the administration counts as excused. Other reasons must be documented in some acceptable form or fashion (proof).

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

I may use MSU’s D2L platform to post documents or give assignments. Each student must be familiar with it as it provides a source of communication between student and professor. In the first week, I will post the syllabus and the terms for the course. You can log into D2L through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor. However, we will NOT use D2L email or chat in this course. If you need to contact me, use my regular email and please provide me with your preferred email at the beginning of the semester.

Online Computer Requirements

It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer. *Assignments are due by the due date, and personal computer technical difficulties will not be considered reason for the instructor to allow students extra time to submit assignments, tests, or discussion postings. Your computer being down is not an excuse for missing a deadline!*

Instructor Class Policies

Conduct: All students are expected to act as responsible adults. Any disruptions or distractions will be dealt with in an appropriate manner. Below you will find general guidelines covering certain unacceptable actions and/or behaviors. As a general rule any behavior that disrupts class will not be tolerated.

Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment conducive to learning. To ensure that everyone has the opportunity to benefit from class time, students are prohibited from engaging in any form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result, minimally, in a request that the offending student leave the classroom. Furthermore, the professor reserves the right to deduct points from the student's semester total or remove the student from the course. **Arriving late is considered a distraction.** If arriving more than five (5) minutes late – DO NOT enter the classroom.

Electronic Devices, Texting, and Phones: The use of tape recorders, iPods, mp3s, or any other recording device in class is **prohibited**. It is imperative that you turn off phones, all other communication devices, and electronic equipment before entering the classroom. The use of a telephone or texting device for any reason is prohibited. *On the first offense the student will be penalized 20 points on her or his participation score for the week. The second offense will result in the student being asked to leave the classroom. The professor reserves the right to expel and administratively withdraw a student from the class upon the third offense.*

Laptops, Tablets, etc.: You must obtain permission from the professor to use laptops, tablets, and phones (or any other device capable of accessing the internet) in the classroom. Recent scholarship suggests that laptops and tablets are **major distractions** to fellow students and generally do not enhance learning or the classroom experience. Furthermore, there will be no surfing, texting, emailing, etc. in the classroom, unless I specifically ask the students to do so.

E-mail: Note that e-mail correspondence is the most effective and convenient way in which to communicate with me outside the classroom. The professor/student relationship is professional by nature and, accordingly, your e-mail correspondence should be constructed professionally. DO NOT use the D2L email function. Please provide me your preferred email at the beginning of the course, and check it daily. My email address is: john.ashbrook@msutexas.edu. Again, DO NOT use the email function on D2L. I will NOT get your message if you do.

Attendance and your grade: I structured this course so that it is to the student's advantage to attend class regularly. From past experience, students who choose not to attend on a regular basis are not successful. I allow three, and only three unexcused absences. After that, each unexcused absence will result in a penalty to your participation grade. If you have a total of 9 unexcused absences, you will not be able to pass the course.

Withdrawals (Course Drop): The professor is NOT responsible for student withdrawals. The student is responsible for meeting all academic deadlines including withdrawal deadlines.

Services for Students with Disabilities: In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Student Disability Office](#).

Grade Appeal Process: Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [Undergraduate Catalog](#)

Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the professor.

Course Schedule

Week 1—Introduction to the Course and Policies

Jan. 22—Why Study the Middle East? Why is identity politics so problematic?

Reading: Linda Anderson, "Scholarship, Policy, Debate, and Conflict: Why We Study the Middle East and Why it Matters," *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin* 38 (1) (2004), 2-15; and Timur Kuran, "Why the Middle East Is Economically Underdeveloped: Historical Mechanisms of Institutional Stagnation," *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 18 (3) (2004), 71-90.

Week 2—The Rise and Spread of Islam by the Sword

Jan. 27—Pre-Mohammed Middle East to the Umayyads

Reading: Ochsenswald, 16-61

Jan. 29—Pacifying the Dar al-Harb

Reading: Ochsenswald, 75-94

Week 3—The Medieval Middle East to the reign of Suleyman the Great

Feb. 3—Medieval States of the Middle East

Reading: Ochsenswald, 121-158

Feb. 5—The Rise of the Ottoman Empire to its pinnacle of power

Reading: Ochsenswald, 159-200

Students must have approved paper topic and review book selected by Thursday

Week 4—Suleyman and the Decline of the Ottoman State

Feb. 10—Pinnacle of Ottoman Power and the Beginning of Decline

Reading: Ochsenswald, 202-255

Feb. 12—Perceptions of the Ottoman Empire in Western Europe

Reading: Asli Çirakman, “From Tyranny to Despotism: The Enlightenment’s Unenlightened Image of the Turks,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 33 (1) (2001): 49-68.

Week 5—Ottoman Reforms, Counterreforms, and the rise of Turkish nationalism

Feb. 17—The 19th Century Ottoman Empire

Reading: Ochsenswald, 259-291

Feb. 19—Redefining Reform from the Young Ottomans to the Young Turks

Reading: Ochsenswald, 294-347

Week 6—Persia to Iran and the First World War

Feb. 24—Persia to Iran

Reading: Ochsenswald, 349-67

Feb. 26—World War I

Reading: Ochsenswald, 369-87

Paper Draft Outline due at beginning of class

Week 7—Ataturk’s Turkey, Iran to WWII, and the European Mandates

March 2—Ataturk and Iran between the wars

Reading: Ochsenswald, 393-417

March 4—The British and French Mandate System

Reading: Ochsenswald, 420-445

Week 8—Palestine to the end of WWII and the War itself

March 9—World War I, Palestine, and the Roots of anti-Israeli Palestine

Reading: Ochsenswald, 447-459, 471-2; 462-474

March 11—A Closer Look at pre-1945 Palestine

Reading: Bickerton, 15-86

MIDTERM EXAM DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS

Week 9—Post-War Israel

March 23— Political Overview of the State of Israeli and the Palestinian Problem
 Reading: Ochsenswald, 533-79

March 25—The Creation of Israel to the Suez Crisis
 Reading: Bickerton, 87-137

BOOK REVIEW DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS

Week 10—Israel, the Cold War, and the Yom Kippur War
 March 30—Israel to 1974
 Reading: Bickerton, 139-184

April 1—NO CLASS. PORTLAND CONFERENCE

Week 11—The Unsuccessful search for Peace
 April 6—1974-1997
 Reading: Bickerton, 185-320

Week 12—Preparing the Research Paper and Formal Debates
 April 13—Writing the draft and crafting the research paper

April 15—**Palestinian/Israeli Debate in class**

Week 13—Turkey and the Arabian Principalities
 April 20—Turkey in the Post-War Period
 Reading: Ochsenswald, 476-97

April 22—Smaller Arab states and Yemen
 Reading: Ochsenswald, 675-695

POLISHED DRAFT OF FINAL PAPER DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS

Week 14—Iran and Iraq: Profiles in Violent Conflict and Power Politics
 April 27—Iran: Secularism, Fundamentalism, Warfare

Reading: Ochsenswald, 499-531; and Ali Mirsepassi-Ashtiani, “The Crisis of Secular Politics and the Rise of Political Islam in Iran,” *Social Text* (38) (1994): 51-84.

April 29— Iraq, Baathism, and Bedlam

Reading: Ochsenswald, 649-74; Laith Kubba, “Iraqi Shi’i Politics,” in Lawrence Potter and Gary Sick (eds.), *Iran, Iraq, and the legacies of War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004): 141-150; and David Segal, “The Iran-Iraq War: A Military Analysis,” *Foreign Affairs* 66 (1988), 946-963.

Week 15—North Africa, Saudi Arabia, Wabbhabism, and the Politics of Oil
 May 4—Saudi Arabia and North Africa
 Reading: Ochsenswald, 582-624 and 696-715

May 6—Trends in the Modern Period
Reading: Ochsenswald, 718-738

Final Exam and Final Paper due during Finals' Week