

Massachusetts Institute of Technology
21H.615: The Twentieth Century Middle East
A HASS Communication-Intensive Course
Spring, 2003

Course Description: This course explores the 20th-century history of the Middle East, concentrating on the Fertile Crescent, Egypt, Turkey, the Arabian peninsula, and Iran. We will begin by examining the late Ottoman Empire and close with the events of 9/11 and their aftermath. Readings will include historical surveys, novels, and primary source documents.

As a HASS-CI course, this class will offer students ample opportunity for both oral and written expression. Students will improve written expression through two 6-7 page book reviews, one of which must be revised and resubmitted. These requirements conform to the Committee on the Undergraduate Program's specifications for 3-5 assignments totaling a minimum of 20 pages. Students will work on their oral communication skills as participants in group discussions, as facilitators of group discussions, and in their final presentations. See descriptions of all assignments below.

The secondary instructor, a published science fiction author, will be the writing tutor for this course. She adamantly believes that face to face meetings are a necessity—i.e. she is not a proofreader who corrects drafts. Rather, she helps students better communicate their own ideas. Her functions are: (1) Assist students in their written assignments before they are turned in to the primary instructor—by student choice—must set up an appointment a reasonable amount of time before the paper is due. (2) Any paper that students choose to revise and resubmit **must** go through her first, before returning to the primary instructor--**mandatory**. If you want to revise a paper, you should schedule an appointment with her. Only after she approves the draft can it be resubmitted to the primary instructor. (3) Assist students in preparing for discussion facilitation [see below]—by student choice. (4) Assist students in preparation for their final projects/presentations—each group leader **must** have at least one meeting before Week 12, any other meetings are voluntary. She will be attending classes at least once a week, and students can make an appointment with her then.

Required Reading:

- William Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*.
- Kirsten Schulze, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*.
- Noguib Mahfouz, *Midaq Alley*.
- Ghassan Kanafani, *Palestine's Children: Returning to Haifa & Other Stories*.
- Simin Daneshvar, *Savishun: A Novel About Modern Iran*.
- Sahar Khalifeh, *Wild Thorns*.
- Sunallah Ibrahim, *The Committee*.

From Amazon.com or any other bookseller: Students must purchase or borrow one of the following books for Week 13 presentations:

- Ehsan Naraghi, *From Palace to Prison: Inside the Iranian Revolution*.
- Aziz Nesin, *Memoirs of an Exile*.
- Raymonda Tawil, *My Home, My Prison* or Era Rapaport *Letters from Tel Mond Prison*.

A **Course Reader** will also be available online.

Class Requirements:

Participation: Your participation grade is based upon three components: attendance, weekly reaction papers, and informed participation in Friday discussions. Every Wednesday students will submit a one-page reaction paper (typed, double-spaced) on any aspect of the week's readings which interests them. These reaction pieces will receive no letter grade, just a check (plus/minus). Students are allowed to skip one reaction paper over the course of the semester, but will still be expected to participate in the Friday discussion. Failure to submit reaction pieces (9 total—11 are marked on syllabus), attend classes, or participate in discussion will lead to deductions from the final grade. Reaction papers will not be accepted late. No reaction papers will be due on the Wednesdays that the two lengthier papers are due, nor during the week of presentations, unless a student chooses to make up a missed one or to get ahead. There will be no reaction papers for the first and last weeks of class. Students must also facilitate discussion at least once during the semester—students will sign up for a week after the first week of class (**Class 3 of week 2**). Facilitating discussion is not summarizing the readings. Presumably your classmates will have completed all assigned readings and will not want to hear a rehash. Facilitators should use the week's objectives and supplementary handouts as guides to raise points for discussion. Different types of discussion will take place based on the types of sources read for that week. When documents are assigned, it may be useful to read and/or explicate portions of the texts. Some weeks more than one historiographical view may be presented in the readings, and discussion might center on the merits of varying perspectives. When novels or short stories are assigned, it may be helpful to discuss some background on the author and his/her historical context. Facilitators may also incorporate current events into their discussion, held on the last class of the week. The professor will facilitate discussion the first week or two of class so that students will understand the process. Students may come during office hours to discuss their approach to leading discussion—this must be at least a day before the weekly class discussion, or they may discuss this with the secondary instructor. Students will receive a grade and comments from both the professor and their peers when they facilitate discussion. At the end of class each last class of the week, students will be given time to critique the facilitator, and comments will be compiled to maintain anonymity. Participation will count for 20% of your final grade.

Book Reviews: Students will be required to do two 6-7 page book reviews, one of which must be revised and resubmitted (20 pages total). Papers receiving less than a B must be revised within 1 week of receiving the corrected draft and turned in to the secondary instructor. *All revisions/resubmissions must be turned in with the marked original and comments [and subsequent corrected versions if applicable].* Students will have one week to complete every corrected draft. Students receiving a B or higher may wait to see which paper they choose to revise until after the second paper is returned. Students must review one of the novels between Week 1 and Week 7 [Muwaylihi, Mahfouz, or Kanafani], and one of the novels between Week 8 and Week 12 [Daneshvar, Khalifeh, or Ibrahim]

Book reviews of novels will be due the Wednesday following the Friday discussion of that novel. Thus your choices for **Book Review #1** are: Muwaylihi class 2 of week #3, Kanafani class 2 of week #6, or Mahfouz class 2 of week #7. Your choices

for **Book Review #2** are Daneshvar class 2 of week #9, Khalifeh class 2 of week #11, and Ibrahim class 2 of week #12. Strategies for writing these reviews will come in a separate handout.

Students must rewrite and resubmit one of these reviews and are encouraged to rewrite any paper that receives a grade lower than B-. *Remember all rewrites must be accompanied by the marked original with comments.* Late papers will lose one letter grade per day. These assignments will represent 40% of your final grade.

Student Presentations: Students will be placed into one of three groups based upon the book that they choose for week 13. The three choices are all written by those who have been imprisoned in the Middle East—in other words, they are critics of the country in which they live. The Naraghi memoir deals with Iran, the Nesin memoir deals with Turkey, and the Tawil or Rapaport memoirs deal with Palestine/Israel. Your task will be threefold: (1) Research your author. (2) Do some research on the topic to understand the quality (or lack thereof) and biases of the text. (3) With your group create an informative presentation for the class. Student presentations will receive a grade from the professor based on content, from peers based upon performance, and from group leaders based upon contribution to the group. A separate handout will describe further details of this project, which represents 20% of your final grade.

Final Examination: The final exam will consist of a map of the Modern Middle East, and a single essay question. During the last week of class, students will receive three broad-based questions covering the entire semester's work. On the scheduled exam date, you will be asked to respond to one of those questions—but you will not know which one until the day of the exam. The final will represent 20% of your final grade.

Academic Honesty: While I always encourage collaboration and discussion among my students, the work that you submit for this class must be your own. In recent years, the history department has been troubled by a range of behaviors that range from the careless and ignorant to “first degree” plagiarists. All cases involving such issues will be directed to the Committee on Discipline.

MIT's academic honesty policy can be found at the following link: <http://web.mit.edu/policies/10.0.html>.

If you have any further questions about issues related to academic honesty, please see the primary instructor or the secondary instructor before the assignment in question is due.

Course Schedule

Week One: Introduction to the Middle East & Islamic Empires

- *Cleveland, 1-58*
- *Course Reader, start Muwaylihi [Allen]*

Week Two: The Ottoman Order & the Age of Imperialism

- **Class 2 reaction paper #1 due (*Eid al-Adha*—Feast of the Sacrifice celebrated by Muslims)**
- **Class 3 sign up for week to lead discussion; decide on book for presentation; Secondary instructor- presentation on Writing & Effective Communication**
- *Cleveland, 62-129*
- *Course Reader, finish Muwaylihi [Allen]*

Week Three: World War One & The End of Empire

- **Class 2 reaction paper #2 due [or Muwaylihi review due]**
- *Cleveland, 130-140; 146-167*

Week Four: Iran & Turkey

- **Class 2 reaction paper #3 due**
- *Cleveland, 140-145; 169-189*
- *Course Reader—Reuter Concession for the Imperial Bank of Persia (1899), Concession of Tobacco Regie in Persia (1890), Russian-Persian Railroad Agreement (1890), The William Knox D'Arcy Oil Concession, Great Britain & Persia Agreement (1919), The Turkish National Pact (1920), Treaty of Friendship: Turkey and Russia (1921)*

Week Five: The Arab-Israeli Conflict, Part I

- **Class 2 reaction paper #4 due**
- *Cleveland, 233-264*
- *Schulze, 1-22; documents 1-7 (97-105)*
- *Kanafani, 1-12; 149-198*

Week Six: Egypt, Iraq, & Transjordan in the Interwar Period

- **Class 2 reaction paper #5 due [or Kanafani review due]**
- *Cleveland, 190-211*
- *Mahfouz—all*

Week Seven: Syria & Lebanon in the Interwar Period

- **Class 2 reaction paper #6 due [or Mahfouz review due—last chance for Book Review from first set of choices]**
- *Cleveland, 212-232*
- *Course Reader—Salibi*
- *Begin Daneshvar*

Week Eight: Turkey & Iran in the Post-WWII Era; Egyptian Revolution

- **Class 2 reaction paper #7 due**
- *Cleveland, 265-300*
- *Daneshvar—all*

Week Nine: The Middle East in the Age of Nasser

- **Class 2 reaction paper #8 due [or Daneshvar review due]**
- **Class 3: Watch *Nasser 56*, movie.**
- *Cleveland, 300-335*
- *Schulze, 23-32; documents 8 & 9 (105-106)*
- *Start Khalifeh*

Week Ten: The Arab-Israeli Conflict Part II

- **Class 2 reaction paper #9 due**
- *Cleveland, 336-358*

- *Schulze, 33-60; documents 10-15 (107-112)*
- *Finish Khalifeh*

Week Eleven: The Development of the Client State

- **Class 2 reaction paper #10 due [or Khalifeh review due]**
Cleveland, 359-409
- *Schulze, 61-70; documents 16-18 (112-114)*
- *Ibrahim—all*

Week Twelve: Iranian Revolution; Oil, Politics, Petrodollars, & Arms

- **Class 2 reaction paper #11 due [or Ibrahim review due—last chance for book review #2]**
- **Class 3 researchers must share papers with the rest of their group**
- *Cleveland, 410—435*
- *Prepare for presentations*

Week Thirteen: Presentations; Islamist Movements

- **Iran Presentation Class 1.**
- **Turkey Presentation Class 2.**
- **Palestine/Israel Presentation Class 3.**
- *Cleveland, 436-457*

Week Fourteen: Conflict or Peace?

- **Questions for final exam determined**
- **Class 2—21st Century Luncheon—you will receive invitations and instructions**
- *Cleveland, 483-526*
- *Schulze, 71-96; documents 19-25 (115-121)*