

History of the Middle East in the Modern Period The Lester and Sally Entin Faculty of the Humanities Semester Bet (Spring) 2025

Instructor: Brandon Friedman, PhD - brandon1@tauex.tau.ac.il

Office: The Gilman Building, Room 421

Office Hours: (Tu, Thu 11:00-12:00, by appointment)

Course Credits: 3 TAU Semester Credits

For course times/days and location, please visit the TAU International web site (Study Abroad Course Offerings and Schedules). Please note that all information below is subject to change and/or adjustment as necessary.

Course Description (Summary)

This course aims to introduce students to the Middle East from the late Ottoman period until the present. The course will cover some of the major political, social, economic, and cultural themes and transformations in the region, including but not limited to: the period of Ottoman reform (*Tanzimat*), Islamic Modernism, The Wahhabi movement, The First World War in the Middle East, the rise of territorial states and the period of independence, sectarian politics, various forms of nationalism, inter-Arab politics, the Muslim Brotherhood, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the 1978-9 Iranian Revolution, the Islamic revival and the salafi-jihadi phenomenon, and the Arab Spring. The course is meant to introduce students to the region's religions (Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Druze, Ezidi, etc.), peoples (Arab, Kurdish, Turk, Persian, Jewish), and geography by studying them through the processes of historical change.

Course Requirements and Expectations

This course does not require you to memorize dates, names, or places. I will use PowerPoint throughout the semester, but you should *not* spend your time in class trying to summarize or copy what is in the PowerPoint slides. Instead, you should do the readings before class, engage with the instructor during the lecture, and actively take notes based on the issues raised or discussed in class. In that way, you will be engaging with the course materials three times: first, while **reading** the material at home; second, while **listening to** it in class; and, third, while summarizing (**synthesizing**) the discussion in class.

You are expected to attend each class, prepare yourself to participate in class discussions, and make a reasonable effort to join class discussions or ask questions. You are also expected to actively **prepare readings before class meetings**. At a minimum, this means you are responsible for identifying each reading's main argument/hypothesis and assessing whether the author has convincingly supported his/her argument/hypothesis.



Learning Outcomes

This course will help us understand how peoples and societies in the Middle East have behaved across time. It will introduce students to complex socio-political processes of change in the relationships between state and society in the region. Some of the skills students will develop: (1) how to interpret statements of past political leaders; (2) how to integrate conflicting sources of information; (3) how to evaluate conflicting interpretations of the past; (4) how to analyze the magnitude and significance of change; and, (5) how to identify continuities over time.

Evaluation Criteria

Attendance and Class Participation – 15%

Mid-term assignment – 15%

Final take home exam – 70%

Course Schedule and Readings

1. *What is the Middle East? What is the Modern Period?*

- William Cleveland and Martin Bunton, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, Fourth Edition), Chapters 5 & 7.
- Dror Ze'evi, "Back to Napoleon? Thoughts on the Beginning of the Modern Era in the Middle East," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 19:1 (2004), 73-94.

2. *Islamic Modernism: al-Afghani and 'Abduh*

- Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1789 – 1939* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 103-192.

3. *World War I: From Empire to States*

- William Cleveland and Martin Bunton, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, Fourth Edition), Chapter 9.
- Michael Eppel, *A People Without A State* (University of Texas Press, 2016), pp.109-136.
- Matthew F. Jacobs, "World War I: War (and Peace) for the Middle East?," *Diplomatic History* 38: 4(2014), 776-785.
- Ronald Grigor Suny, *They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else: A History of the Armenian Genocide* (Princeton University Press, 2015), Chapters 2 & 9.
- Taner Akcam, *Killing Orders: Talat Pasha's Telgrams and the Armenian Genocide* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), Preface.



4. Ataturk and Reza Shah after World War I

- Ryan Gingeras, *Eternal Dawn: Turkey in the age of Ataturk* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 152-186.
- William Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, Fourth Edition), Chapter 10.
- Ervand Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), Chapter 3.

March 25, 2025 - MID-TERM ASSIGNMENT DISTRIBUTED (due April 22, 2025)

5. Hasan al-Banna and Nasser in Interwar Egypt

- Brynjar Lia, *The Society of the Muslims Brothers in Egypt: The Rise of an Islamic Mass Movement, 1928 to 1942* (Ithaca Press, 1998), Chapter 2.
- David Commins, "Hasan al-Banna," in *Pioneers of Islamic Revival* (London: Zed Books, 1994), Ali Rahnama, eds., pp.125-153.
- Adeed Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century: From Triumph to Despair* (Princeton University Press, 2002), Chapter 4.

6. Mossadegh: Iran and Oil Nationalization

- Ervand Abrahamian, "The 1953 Coup in Iran," *Science & Society* 65:2 (Summer 2001), 182-215.
- Ervand Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), Chapter 4.
- Fakhreddin Azimi, "The reconciliation of politics and ethics; nationalism and democracy: an overview of the political career of Dr Muhammad Mussadiq," in *Mussadiq, Iranian Nationalism, and Oil* (London: I.B. Tauris, Ltd.), W. Roger Louis and James Bill, eds., 47-68.

7. Nasser, Ba'athism, and the Politics of Arab Nationalism

- Adeed Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century: From Triumph to Despair* (Princeton University Press, 2002), Chapters 6-9.



8. *From the June 1967 Six Day War and to the 1979 Camp David Accords*

- Fouad Ajami, *The Arab Predicament* (Canto Edition, 1992), pp. 1-77.
- David Holden, "The Persian Gulf: After the British Raj," *Foreign Affairs*, July 1971, 721-735.

9. *Kurdish Nationalism*

- Ofra Bengio, *The Kurds of Iraq: Building a State Within a State* (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2012), pp. 1-17.

10. *The Iranian Revolution of 1978-1979*

- Shaul Bakhash, "Khomeini: The 'Idol Smasher'," in *The Reign of the Ayatollahs: Iran and the Islamic Revolution* (Basic Books, 1990), pp. 19-51.
- Misagh Parsa, "Ideology and Political Action in the Iranian Revolution," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 31:1 (2011).

11. *Rentierism & Salafism in Saudi Arabia*

- David Commins, "From Wahhabi to Salafi," in *Saudi Arabia in Transition* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), edited by Bernard Haykel, Thomas Hegghammer, and Stephane Lacroix, pp. 151-166.
- Stephane Lacroix, *Awakening Islam: The Politics of Religious Dissent in Contemporary Saudi Arabia* (Harvard University Press, 2011), Chapters 2 & 3.
- Mordechai Abir, *Saudi Arabia: Government, Society, and the Gulf crisis* (New York: Routledge, 1993), Chapter 4.
- Steffen Hertog, *Princes, Brokers, and Bureaucrats* (Cornell University Press, 2011), Chapter 4.

12. *Egypt's Separate Peace & Lebanon's Civil War*

- Moshe Shemesh, "The Origins of Sadat's Strategic Volte-face: (Marking 30 Years Since Sadat's Historic Visit to Israel, November 1977)," *Israel Studies* 13:2 (2008), 28-53.
- Fouad Ajami, "The Sorrows of Egypt," *Foreign Affairs* 74:5 (September-October 1995), pp. 72-89.
- Fouad Ajami, "Lebanon and Its Inheritors," *Foreign Affairs* 63:4 (Spring 1985), pp. 778-799.



13. 1980s: Iran-Iraq War and the 1990-1991 Gulf War

- Ray Takeyh, "The Iran-Iraq War: A Reassessment," *Middle East Journal* 64:3 (Summer 2010), 365-383.
- Dina Rizk Khoury, *Iraq in Wartime: Soldiering, Martyrdom, and Remembrance* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), Chapter 2.

14. The Israelis and Palestinians: From Intifada to Camp David

- Itamar Rabinovich, *Middle East Maze: Israel, The Arabs, and the Middle East 1948 - 2022* (Brookings Institution Press, 2022), Chapter 2-4.

May 6, 2024 FINAL PAPER ASSIGNMENT DISTRIBUTED – due on May 28, 2025

15. Al-Qa'ida and the Global War on Terror

- Peter Bergen & Paul Cruickshank, "Revisiting the Early Al Qaeda: An Updated Account of its Formative Years," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 35:1 (2012), 1-36.
- Steven Brooke, *Strategic Fissures: Debates and Divisions within al-Qa 'ida and its Periphery*, Chapter 3, "The Near and Far Enemy Debate"

16. 2010-2011 Arab Uprisings

- James Gelvin, *The Arab Uprisings: What Everybody Needs to Know* (Oxford University Press, 2012)

17. The Islamic State Phenomenon

- Michael Weiss and Hassan Hassan, *ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror* (New York: Regan Arts, 2015).

18. From the Abraham Accords to the Unity of Fronts/Axis of Resistance

- Michael Singh, "Axis of Abraham: Arab-Israeli Normalization Could Remake the Middle East," *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 2022).
- Zaha Hassan and Marwan Muasher, "How the Abraham Accords Fall Short," *Foreign Affairs*, June 7, 2022.

Instructor Biography

Brandon Friedman, PhD, is the Director of Research at the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle East and African Studies at Tel Aviv University. Brandon is also the Managing Editor of the Dayan



Center's journal *Bustan: The Middle East Book Review*. He is the author of *The End of Pax Britannica in the Persian Gulf, 1968-1971*.

TAU International Academic Guidelines

Students may only attend classes which they are officially registered for. No auditing of courses is permitted. Students are responsible for reading and adhering to all policies and procedures in the TAU International Academic Handbook [posted here](#) at all times. Below is a summary of some of these relevant policies and procedures.

Learning Accommodations

In accordance to University guidelines, TAU International may be able to accommodate students with learning disabilities or accommodation requests if these requests are also honored at the student's home university or home school. To be considered, students must submit official documentation from their home school or university (if not in English, a notarized official copy translated into English is required) to TAU International in advance of arrival describing in detail any specific needs and how these are accommodated at the home school or university. Students must also bring a copy of this documentation with them on-site and give it to their faculty on the first day of class while introducing themselves so that the faculty know who they are and what sorts of needs or accommodations they may have. **Without official documentation from the home school submitted on or before the first day of courses, TAU will not be able to honor accommodation support.**

With supporting documentation and by following the correct procedure as outlined above, TAU International and its faculty will do the best it can to make any suitable accommodations possible. However, we cannot guarantee that all accommodations received at the home school can be similarly met at TAU. For example, TAU is usually not able to offer note-taking services in English, private testing rooms, or advance viewing of classroom presentations, exams, or assignments.

It may be an option to provide a student with additional tutoring or support outside the classroom as needed. Students should be aware that this additional support cannot be guaranteed and is based on teacher availability in the subject as well as the specific student level. If available, the cost of additional tutoring or support will be the sole responsibility of the student.

In-Class Exams

TAU does not permit, under any circumstances, taking any in-class (including mid or final) exams early or later than the scheduled exam day. When selecting courses, it is thus very important to note if there is an in-class midterm or final exam as this date/exam cannot be changed. It is also the student's responsibility to clarify exam dates with the professors at



the beginning of a course, with the understanding that not all exam dates can be decided up front as it can sometimes depend on the pace of the course and class learning. It is the

student responsibility to plan to be present for all courses including the final day of class for this reason. Early departures from the program are not approved, nor are early or exception in-class exams.

TAU International Absence Policy

Attendance is mandatory in all of the courses including Hebrew Ulpan. Faculty can and will take attendance regularly. Missing classes will be reflected in the final grade of the course. Up to three justified and properly documented absences from classes may be accepted (for example: emergency matter or illness, both of which will require a doctor's

note). Such cases of absence should be reported to the faculty immediately and again, a doctor's note is required. Teachers are entitled to treat any lateness or absence without documentation as unexcused. Some of our courses such as Service Learning or the Internship Seminar require more practical in-class work; thus, attendance policies may be

stricter in some courses and students then must adhere to the stricter attendance policy as outlined by the faculty/syllabus.

Students are required to arrive on time for classes. Teachers are entitled to treat any single case of lateness and/or repeated lateness as an unjustified absence.

Please note that according to official TAU Academic Policy, if a student's behavior or attendance during is disagreeable his/her course participation may be cancelled at the discretion of TAU with no due refund.

Grade Appeals

Students are responsible for checking grades once posted or distributed by faculty. The limited grade appeals window and the detailed procedure for appealing a grade – whether

a graded assignment, exam or final grade – is outlined clearly in the policies and procedures in the TAU International Academic Handbook [posted here](#).

