



Middle East Social and Cultural History

Dr. Daniel Zisenwine

dzisenwine@gmail.com

Course Description

The study of modern Middle East history, reflecting broader trends within the discipline of history, has gradually broadened its perspective in recent decades. Much of the scholarly attention has moved beyond an earlier, nearly exclusive focus on politics and diplomacy. Historians have incorporated new groups and social structures including women, families, and youth into their work. This course examines the history of the modern Middle East from these new perspectives. We will examine social structures, cultural protocols, class formations, and the agendas of different social groups in the region. The course will situate these themes in the broader theoretical debate about social history and its contribution to the study of history, and discuss the impact of social history on prevailing assumptions that underpin modern Middle East history.

Assessment

Mid Term: This will be a take home exam, covering topics studied over the first part of the semester. Students will be asked to answer 2 out of 4 essay questions on topics and readings assigned. Students will have a 48 hour time period to complete the assignment and submit it electronically. The mid term grade will be 30 percent of the final grade.

Minor Assignments: Six short response papers to set readings (1-2 pages each)- 30 percent of the final grade.

Final Exam: A take home exam in a similar format to the mid term exam, covering the later part of the semester. The final exam will be 40 percent of the final grade.

Schedule

This Schedule is Tentative and Subject to Change

Week 1: Introduction: What is Social History?

"What is Social History," *History Today* 35:3 (March, 1985).

Week 2: From Patrimonialism to the Rise of the Bourgeoisie

Reza Sheikholislami, "Patrimonial Monarchy: Nasir al-Din Shah, 1848–1896," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* Fall 1998 18(2): 17-30.

Ehud Toledano, "Social and Economic Change in the 'Long Nineteenth Century'," in Mary Daly (ed.), *The Cambridge history of Egypt: Volume 2: Modern Egypt* (Cambridge, 1998).

Week 3: The Ulamaa

Michael Winter, "The Ulama between State and Society in Pre-modern Sunni Islam," in Meir Hatina (ed.), *Guardians of Faith in Modern Times: 'Ulama in the Middle East* (Leiden, 2009), pp. 21-46.

Mansoor Moaddel, "The Shi'i Ulama and the State in Iran," *Theory and Society*, Vol. 15, No. 4. (Jul., 1986), pp. 519-556

Etty Terem, *Old Texts, New Practices: Islamic Reform in Modern Morocco* (Stanford, 2014), pp. 19-50.

Week 4-5:

Peasants and Landowners

Dale Eickelman, "Village and Community," *The Middle East an Anthropological Approach* (Englewoods Cliff, NJ, 1989), pp. 54-72.

Urban Society

Eickelman, "Cities in their Place," *The Middle East*, pp. 95-125.

Philip S Khoury, "The Urban Notables Paradigm revisited," *Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée*, N° 55-56 (1990), pp. 215-230.

Week 6: Tribes

Philip Shukry Khoury, Joseph Kostiner (eds.), *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East* (Berkeley, 1990), pp. 1-24, 48-73

Week 7: Economic and Cultural Changes in the Early Modern Middle East

Ami Ayalon, *The Arabic Print Revolution: Cultural Production and Mass Readership* (Cambridge, 2016), pp. 1-17; 18-32.

Week 8: Interwar Social Changes

Michael Eppel, "The Elite, the Effendiyya, and the Growth of Nationalism and Pan-Arabism in Hashemite Iraq, 1921-1958," *IJMES*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (May, 1998), pp. 227-250.

Week 9-10: Social Changes under the Military Regimes

Hanna Batatu, "The Egyptian, Syrian, and Iraqi revolutions: some observations on their underlying causes and social character," (Georgetown University, 1983).

Rashid Khalidi, "Social Transformation and Political Power in the Radical Arab States," in A. Dawisha and W. Zartman (eds.) *Beyond Coercion* (London, 1987), pp. 203-219.

Week 11: Civil Society

Augustus Richard Norton, "The Future of Civil Society in the Middle East", *Civil Society in the Middle East*, Vol. I (ed. Augustus Richard Norton) (Leiden, 1994)

Anders C. Harding, "Beyond the Arab Revolts: Conceptualizing Civil Society in the Middle East and North Africa", *Democratization*, Vol. 22 No. 6 (2015), pp. 1131-1153.



Week 12-13: Environmental History of the Middle East

J.R. McNeill, "The Eccentricity of the Middle East and North Africa's Environmental History", *Water on Sand: Environmental Histories of the Middle East and North Africa* (ed. Alan Mikhail), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, pp. 27-50.

Edmund Burke III, "Preface", *Environmental Imaginaries of the Middle East and North Africa* (eds. Diana K. David and Edmund Burke III), Athens OH: Ohio University Press, 2011, pp. ix-xii.

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