The objective of this course is to provide a basis for understanding historical processes (both global and local) within the Middle East and North Africa in the modern period. Focusing on the transformation of state and society under the impact of a changing world economy and European imperialism, this course has four interrelated themes. The first is the transformation of multiethnic world empires in the sixteenth century to nation-states in the 20th century. Second, we trace the transformation of the Middle East economy, once a self-sustaining system at a central node of world trade, into a marginal economic region dubbed part of “the Third World.” Third, we examine the currents of social change wrought by these political and economic transformations, focusing particularly on the rise of new social and political movements and the new sorts of identities, social categories and notions of personhood they were based upon. Fourth, we trace the changing
relationship of the Middle East to Europe and later, the United States. At the heart of our discussions will be questions about the nature of the interrelationship between “East” and “West,” Middle East exceptionalism and the political, contested nature of historical sources.

EXPECTATIONS: Students will:

Read: Expect to read about 75 pages a week. Here is a list of the required texts:

- Akram Khater: *Sources in the History of the Modern Middle East* (2nd edition)
- Edmund Burke: *Struggle and Survival in the Middle East* (2nd edition)
- Marjane Satrapi: *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*

Additional readings will be posted in T-sq. These are noted in the reading schedule.

Write: Over the course of the semester you will be asked to write 5 short informal “blog posts” of 300-400 words. The topics for these posts are listed on the syllabus under their due dates; distance students will have an additional window of four days to complete their posts. All students should post them using the blog tool on T-square.

ASSESSMENT

- Map Quiz: 15%
- Three Exams: 60%
- 5 short Blog posts: 25%

Tentative Class Schedule

Week 1

Introduction

(W) Introduction: What and where is the Middle East?

Part I: Empire and Early Modern Society

(Th) The Gunpowder Empires: Ottoman and Safavid Rule
   Gelvin: Intro- Chap. 3
   Burke: Shemsigul: A Circassian Slave in Mid-19th Century Cairo
Blog post #1: Consider the facts of Shemsigul’s case. Do you think she received justice?

Week 2
(M) Defensive Developmentalism
Gelvin, Chap. 4-5; also pgs. 69-72
*Jabarti: Napoleon in Egypt

(T) Law, Citizenship and Identity in the Ottoman Empire
Gelvin, Chap. 10
Islahat Fermani
Hati Sharif of Gulhane
Namik Kamal

(W) MAP QUIZ

(Th) Orientalism, Imperialism and Colonial Rule
Gelvin, Chap. 6
Khater:
2.2 An Egyptian Khedival Decree Est. a European Controlled Public Debt Administration
2.3 The Concession for Tobacco Monopoly in Iran

Week 3

July 3&4: Class Cancelled: Happy 4th!

(W) Social Impact and Popular Reaction to Imperialism, Colonialism:
Secularism, Modernity and Politics
Chap. 8-10

Exam 1 (chapters 1-6)

(Th) Social Impact and Popular Reaction to Imperialism, Colonialism: The View from Below

Gelvin: Chap. 7

Burke:
Assef, A Peasant of Mt. Lebanon
Journeyman Textile Weavers in 19th Cent. Damascus
The Shaykh’s daughter

Khater, 2.5: A Coal Miner’s Life During the Ottoman Empire

Blog post #2: Using the readings above for inspiration, Write a letter to the editor about the 19th century reform and social changes we’ve
been discussing from the perspective of a historical protagonist (ex: member of the religious establishment, a Turkish bureaucrat, an Arab peasant, a coal miner etc).

**Week 4**
(M): How the Middle East became “The Middle East”: WWI and its Aftermath

Khater:
4.4 The Balfour Declaration
5.3 The Resolution of the General Syrian Congress
5.4 The American King-Crane Commission Report

**Part III. Nationalism and State Building in the Interwar Period**

(T): New Nationalisms and Nation States
Gelvin Chap. 11-13

(W) The Palestine Mandate, the Nakba and the Founding of Israel
Gelvin: Chap. 14
*Shlaim: The Debate about 1948

**Blog post #3**
Watch the film: al-Nakba (link for film is on T-Sq). Write a response about any aspect of the film which interests you.

Khater:
5.8 The Arab Case for Palestine and a bi-national state

(Th) The Middle East in the Age of Nasser
Gelvin:
“The Contemporary Era” and Chap. 15
Tigers on the 10th Day (360)
Speech Delivered by Abdel Nasser (359)

**Week 5**

(M) **Exam 2 (Chapters 7-14)**
Film: Umm Kulthum

(T) The Arabian Peninsula in the Petroleum Era
Gelvin: Chap. 16

Burke:
Ahmed: Kuwaiti Pearl Diver

(W) Israel, the Arab States and the Palestinians
Gelvin: Chap. 18
Burke:
Ghada: Village Rebel or political protestor (319)
June Leavitt: A West Bank Settler (387)
Abu Jamal: A Palestinian Urban Villager (268)
Khater 9.5: Arab Israeli Soccer Players

Blog post #4
Each reading above provides an account of the life of an individual affected by the Israel-Palestine conflict. The topic of your reaction paper is open—you can focus on any aspect of the readings you wish—but you must deal with at least two of them (one way to approach this is to think comparatively about the relationship of different individuals is to the conflict and how it effects their lives. How do things like gender, citizenship, political affiliation, place of residence, legal status etc. make a difference in shaping the lives and opportunities of individuals.

(Th) The Iranian Revolution
Gelvin: Chap. 19
Persepolis

Blog post #5: I will post some questions for discussion on T-square prior to class. Pick one of them and write your reaction paper about it.

Week 6
(M) The Islamic Revival
Gelvin Chap. 20
Khater:
9.7 Young Veiled Women Embracing Their Lovers
Burke:
Nadia: Mother of the Believers

(T) From Cold War to the War on Terror: The US in the Middle East
Gelvin Chap. 17

(W) The Arab Spring and Wrap-up
Gelvin: Conclusion
TBA

Exam # 3: Day stipulated by Georgia Tech exam calendar (Chap. 15-Conclusion)