An Introduction to the Modern Middle East

An overview over political, social, economic, and ideological developments throughout the region in recent history

This is an interdisciplinary course that examines key historical and political milestones that have shaped, defined and redefined the Modern Middle East since the beginning of the 20th century: modernity, colonialism, nationalism, ethnicity, science, identity and religion, state formation, democratization, wars and geography as well as the impact of external influences on the region. The course will also touch upon recent events in the region, in particular the Arab uprising, the on-going Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Syrian War.

Given the complex history of the Middle East, current events cannot be dissected from the region’s history. This introductory course will provide students with basic building blocks that will enable them to better understand and analyze today’s events and conflicts in the wider context of the region’s historical, political and cultural developments over the past 100 years.

The course will include guest-lectures from experienced practitioners and policy-makers as well as film viewings.

Class Schedule: Monday – Thursday: 18h00 – 20h00

I. Timeline for the course

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week One: 23 May – 27 May</th>
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<tr>
<td>• The Rise of Islamic Civilizations &amp; the Golden Age of Islam – a general and brief overview</td>
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<td>• World War I</td>
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<td>➔ The Fall of the Ottoman Empire</td>
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<td>➔ The British War promises</td>
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<td>➔ The Paris Peace Conference and The Balfour Declaration</td>
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<td>➔ Sykes-Picot, the Treaty of Sevres</td>
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<td>➔ Theodore Herzl’s Zionism</td>
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<th>Week Two: 30 May – 3 June</th>
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<tr>
<td>• The Struggle for Independence between World War I and World War II</td>
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<td>➔ The Palestinian Mandate and the Establishment of Israel</td>
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<td>➔ The establishment of Syria and Lebanon (The French Mandate)</td>
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<tr>
<td>➔ The British Mandate and the Establishment of Iraq</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The Transformations in Turkey and Iran between WWI &amp; WWII: Democracy or Authoritarianism?</td>
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Documentary screening:” The End of the Ottomans” (ARTE TV 2016)

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<th>Week Three: 6 June – 10 June</th>
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<td>• Pan-Arabism under Egypt’s Nasser</td>
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<td>• Israelis and Palestinians between 1948 and the 1970s</td>
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Mid-Term Exam: Historical facts, dates and linkages
### Week Four: 13 June – 17 June

- The Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the Revival of Political Islam
- Ba’athism in Iraq and Syria: Saddam Hussayn and Hafez Al-Assad

### Week Five: 20 June – 24 June

- The Lebanese Civil War and its predicament with Syria
- The First Palestinian Intifada and the Oslo Agreement

*Movie screening: “When Pigs have Wings” (Belgium, France, Germany 2012)*

### Week Six: 27 June – 1 July

- The Middle East and the West: The Gulf wars and the 2003 invasion of Iraq
- Challenging the Status Quo: the Arab uprising, the Syrian war and the rise of violent extremism (Daesh, Jabath al Nusra etc.)

*Documentary Screening: “Syria: The Reckoning - A history of modern Syria offering an intriguing and incisive perspective on the ongoing war in the country.” (Al Jazeera World, 2015)*

### Week Seven: 4 July – 8 July

*No classes. Final written Exam on 6 July, time TBD: Three short questions and one essay question*

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### II. Required Readings

#### A. Books to be purchased by students

- “The Second Arab Awakening: And the Battle for Pluralism” by Marwan Muasher (2015 edition)
- “The Jerusalem Chronicles” by Guy Delisle (Graphic Novel)

*(Price for all books on Amazon UK: total 63 pounds = 80 euros)*
B. Selected book chapters, scholarly and newspaper articles (copies provided by professor) from the following resources:

“A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East” by David Fromkin

“The Shia Revival” by Vali Nasr

“Global Political Islam” by Peter Mandaville

“Power, Politics, and Culture: Interviews with Edward W. Said” by Edward Said

“In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong” by Amin Maalouf

“The Age of the Warrior: Selected Writings” by Robert Fisk

“The View from Damascus: State, Political Community and Foreign Relations in Modern and Contemporary Syria” by Itamar Rabinovich

“The Arab Revolution: Ten Lessons from the Democratic Uprising” by Jean-Pierre Filiu

“The Syrian Jihad: Al-Qaeda, the Islamic State, and the Evolution of an Insurgency” by Charles Lister

Projected Guest Speakers (TBC)

Merete Bilde, Policy Adviser on Religion and Foreign Policy at EEAS (on Political Islam)
Anne Bourlond, Senior Political Analyst - Policy Planning Cell, MENA, Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Inga Skaara, Expert in Semitic Languages, Adjunct Professor for Arabic at Vesalius College (on culture, language and conflict)
Colin Scicluna, Member of Cabinet (MENA) DG NEAR (on EU southern neighborhood policy)
Tarek Zeidan, Director of Communication, Carnegie Middle East (Beirut) (on Lebanon & Syria)
Salman Shaikh, Founder and Director: The Shaikh Group, Paris (on current dialogues and peace talks with and by the Syrian opposition groups); former director of Brookings Institution, Doha
Andre Kahlmeyer, Director Peace and Security Security Section at GGI (on armed Rebel groups, Daesh and Jabath al-Nusra)