

Simon Fraser University History Department Hist 485 Syllabus (Summer 2024)

Course name: The Middle East Through Popular Culture Materials: From the Late Ottoman Empire to the Interwar Period

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Office Hour Thursday 10:30-11:20 at AQ6243 and also by appointment

Course outline: The overall aim of the course is to explore the groundbreaking changes that the Ottoman Empire underwent during the long 19th century and to discuss the nation-building projects and struggles in the Interwar period. Although a significant portion of the Ottoman Empire was officially transformed into the Republic of Turkey as a modern nation-state, it is a nationalistic fallacy to dismiss the shared Ottoman context for the newly emerging countries that were formerly part of the empire. The prevalence of nationalist historiography both in Turkish Studies and Arab and Middle East Studies can be well observed in the courses offered not only at universities in the region but in European and North American Universities. One can find number of courses that examine transition from the Ottoman Empire to Turkish Republic; and also courses that investigate History of Arab World or specific Middle Eastern countries during the 19th and early 20th century.

This course attempts to treat the shared Ottoman context well and go beyond the aforementioned binary and examine the experiences and challenges of the post-Ottoman Middle Eastern History concurrently. Our main endeavor in this course will be examining the transformation of the Middle Eastern societies and more specifically how these changes were treated by the novelists, intellectuals, and directors. To this end, even though we will be consulting academic articles, textbooks, and book chapters to lay the groundwork for further discussion, predominantly, we will be using less-conventional sources including novels, short stories, and TV series and movies.

Course assessment

- Active class participation 20%
- In-class presentation of one of the week's literature readings 20%
- final project outline 10% **deadline week 7 June 20th**
- In-class presentation of the final project 10% **August 1st**
- final project %30 **deadline August15th**
- First draft of final project %10 **deadline July 21st**

Weekly Plan

Week 1 (May 9): Introduction of the course and discussing the syllabus

Week 2 (May 16): Arrival of the West (?)

primary source

- An Imam In Paris: Al-Tahtawi's Visit To France 1826-1831, Rifa'a Rafi' al-Tahtawi (I will provide the excerpts)

Literature

- Roxanne L. Euben, *Journeys to the Other Shore: Muslim and Western Travelers in Search of Knowledge*, (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006)
- Gran, Peter. *Islamic Roots of Capitalism: Egypt, 1760-1840*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 1998.
- Hill, Peter. *Utopia and Civilization in Arab Nahda*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.

Week 3 (May 23): Tanzimat Literature and Westernization

Primary source

- Ahmet Mithat Efendi *Felâatun Bey and Râkım Efendi* (I highly suggest you to obtain your copy as soon as possible)

Literature

- Ahmet Evin, *Origins of Turkish Novel* (selection available on canvas)
- Strauss, Johann. "Who Read What in the Ottoman Empire (19th -20th centuries)?" *Middle Eastern Studies*, 6:1, (2003), 39-76.
- Mardin, Şerif. "Super Westernization in Urban Life in the Ottoman Empire in the Last Quarter of the Nineteenth Century". In *Turkey*, (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 1974) doi: https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004491106_020 (available on canvas)

Week 4 (May 30): Arabic Nahda

Primary source

- Butrus al-Bustani, *The Clarion of Syria : A Patriot's Call against the Civil War of 1860* (available online through SFU library)
- Salama Musa "What is Renaissance?" in *The Arab Renaissance: A Bilingual Anthology of the Nahda* ed. Tarek El-Ariss, New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2018, pp. 31-41 (available on canvas)
- Khalil Gibran "The Future of the Arabic Language," in *The Arab Renaissance: A Bilingual Anthology of the Nahda* ed. Tarek El-Ariss, New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2018, pp. 50-60. 9 (available on canvas)

Literature

- Abdulrazzak, Patel. *The Arab Nahdah*. Edinburg: Edinburg University Press, 2013.
- Ussame, Makdisi, *Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon*. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2000.
- Makdisi, Ussama. “After 1860: Debating Religion, Reform, and Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 34, no. 4 (2002): 601–17. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3879690>.

Week 5 (June 6): Confrontation and Nostalgia Through the “Historical” TV Series

Primary source

- [at least] the first 4 episodes of the TV series *Payitaht: Abdulhamid* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2-ZHA6RAdDg&list=PLFCxIHnP1BCU6CCpNHECSXFNknX8azlaK&index=2&t=90s>
- *Safar Barlek (1967) movie* (we will watch it together in the class)

Literature

- Deringil, Selim. *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire 1876-1909*. I. B. Tauris, 2011.
- Yavuz, M. Hakan. *Nostalgia for the Empire : the Politics of Neo-Ottomanism* Oxford University Press, 2020.

Week 6 (June 13) : Nationalism in the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey through

primary source

- Ömer Seyfettin’s short stories (I will provide the pdf and we will read them together in the classroom)

Week 7 (June 13): Owners and Guardians of Modernity

Primary source

- Yahya Haqqi, *The Saint’s Lamp* (available on canvas)

Literature

- Lucie Ryzova, *The Age of the Efendiyya*

Week 7 (June 20): No class

Week 8 (June 27): War of Independence and aftermath (online)

Primary source

- Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, *Stepmother Earth [Yaban in Turkish]* (I highly suggest you to obtain your copy as soon as possible)
- Refik Halid Karay *Stories of Exile* (I highly suggest you to obtain your copy as soon as possible)

Literature

- Michael Provence, *The Last Ottoman Generation and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Cambridge: CUP, 2017), introduction, chapters 1&3, conclusion.
- Olivier Bouquet, “Old Elites in a New Republic: The Reconversion of Ottoman Bureaucratic Families in Turkey (1909-1939),” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 31 (2011), pp. 588-600.
- Zürcher, Erik J. “The Ottoman Legacy of the Turkish Republic: An Attempt at a New Periodization.” *Die Welt Des Islams* 32, no. 2 (1992): 237–53.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/1570835>.

Week 9 (July 4): No class

- students are advised to start reading: Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, *The Time Regulation Institute*

Week 10 (July 11): Egypt during the Interwar Period

Primary source

- Cairo 30 (movie) (we will watch it together in the classroom)

Literature

- Danielson, Virginia, *A Voice Like Egypt: Umm Kulthum, Arabic Song, and Egyptian Society* (University of Chicago Press, 1997).
- Fahmy, Ziad, *Ordinary Egyptians: Creating the Modern Nation through Popular Culture* (Stanford University Press, 2011).

- “Strolling through Istanbul: Egyptians in 1930s Turkey,” in Ebru Boyar and Kate Fleet, eds. *Borders, Boundaries and Belonging in Post-Ottoman Space in the Interwar Period* (Brill, 2022).

Week 11:(July 18): Palestine before 1948

Primary source

- documentary by Michel Khleifi *Fertile Memory* (we will watch it together in the class)
- movie *Farha* on Netflix
- Palestine 1920: The Other Side of the Palestinian Story | Al Jazeera World Documentary: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QUCeQt8zg5o>

Week 12 (July 25): Time and Modernity

Primary source

- Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, *The Time Regulation Institute* (I highly suggest you to obtain your copy as soon as possible)

Literature

- Giddens, Anthony, and Anthony Giddens. 2013. *The Consequences of Modernity*. 1st ed. Newark: WILEY.
- Allen, Barry, *Living in Time: The Philosophy of Henri Bergson* (New York, 2023; online edn, Oxford Academic, 18 May 2023), <https://doi-org.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/10.1093/oso/9780197671610.001.0001>

week 13: (August 1) presentations

Guidelines for the assignments

1- Outline guideline

Please note that outlines can be relatively informal, and there are several different ways to prepare a decent outline. Therefore, do not treat the following example as a gold standard but rather see it as a decent example. Also, if you are planning to do something other than writing a final paper, this structure may not work for you.

Consider this as an opportunity to start thinking about your final project. In one sentence, a good outline gives me some idea about the nature of your project (description), your stance (argument), and how you are going to achieve it (method). There is no single correct format for the outline; it may vary depending on the nature of your project. The following questions may be used as starting

points: What is the topic and my research concern/question? What is missing in the literature? What do I want to accomplish and how am I going to realize it? What is wrong/missing in the literature? What can I bring new to the field? Please feel free to include anything else, including your questions/concerns, so that I can share my ideas and feedback. There is no word-limit, but please provide enough details so that I can have a decent sense of what are you planning to do.

This is just one example of an outline structure:

- Introduction: Provide a very succinct summary of the chosen topic.
- Argument: Briefly lay out your argument and explain your intervention into existing scholarship (i.e., What are you doing new and differently?).
- Essay Plan: Provide a more detailed discussion of your intervention by explaining, at least tentatively, what the main issues, topics, and cases you would like to discuss are. Briefly mention what sorts of sources you are planning to use and how they will help you to build your argument and then paper.

2- In-class presentation of one of the week's literature readings guideline

The weekly presentations are designed to help your cohort to better contextualize the popular culture materials we are covering in that specific week. Every student is expected to engage with the primary sources throughout the semester, and they might also want to consult the related literature if they wish to do so. If you are presenting that specific week, then you will have the additional responsibility of consulting the literature and preparing a presentation as well. My advice for the presenters is to first gain a decent grasp of the primary source and then start reading/skim through the literature. It is important to note that you do not have to cover every aspect of the sources. In other words, you don't need to be comprehensive, instead you may want to focus on a few interesting aspects and elaborate on them. There is nothing wrong with skimming, you do not have to read the assigned literature from cover to cover: yet on the other hand, you should not limit yourself only with the list provided. One of the main aims of these presentations is to encourage you to conduct literature reviews and independent research. Thus, you are highly encouraged to use the list provided in the syllabus as a sort of good starting point. If you find some other interesting articles, books mentioned, please go forward and check them as well. You will be presenting as groups of two or three students. Please, work together: do some division of labor but do not compartmentalize a lot. That is, it would be better, if you have a seamless presentation where the members are in a sort of synergy. Based on my experience, you will perform better, if you cooperate, coordinate and prepare the presentation together rather than working alone throughout the whole process and then just merging the power point presentations at the very end. It is a good idea to time your presentation in advance and ideally it should be around 30-35 minutes in total. You are encouraged to use some sort of visual element to make it easier for your friends to be able to follow more easily.

3- In-class presentation of the final project guideline

The presentation of your final project should be treated more as an opportunity to kickstart your final project, sketch out your ideas, and get some feedback from your cohort and also from me. There is no strict format that you are supposed to follow. You may or may not prepare a PowerPoint or any other sorts of visuals. I expect you to present your project in 10-15 minutes followed by a 5-7 minute Q&A session.

You are expected to talk about the following:

Describe the nature of your project: Tell us about your project in plain language. If you are not writing a conventional essay/term paper, pay extra attention to this part. That is, why do you think this topic can be better examined in the format you choose for your final project rather than a conventional essay?

How does it relate to the existing literature? It is very unlikely that you are doing something that has not been done before. You need to show awareness of the literature and also your contribution to the literature. In other words, successful presentations will clearly demonstrate that they have a really good grasp of the sources and further to that they identify their niches.

What is your argument? It is not that easy to come up with a working argument but please put some work into it. You need to go beyond writing something descriptive.

What are your sources and how are you going to utilize these sources? This is really important, you may not be able to read these sources from cover to cover but more promising presentations will have a rough understanding of the sources and their use for the final project.

How far have you come, what is your current status, and what do you want to accomplish when submitting the project? Successful presentations will give us a decent idea of what has been done, and also they can discuss current dilemmas and challenges they are facing so that the class can give some feedback. Also, it is advisable to mention your rough road map for completing the project by the deadline.

4- The final project guideline

Students should familiarize themselves with the criteria for the in-class presentation of their final projects that take place in the last week of the course.

Students are expected to state their arguments clearly if they are writing a conventional essay. If the nature of their final project does not allow them to state their argument clearly, the main argument and/or main purpose of the project should be well-substantiated throughout the project.

The topic has to be related to the main themes and methods of the course. It is not enough to write something on the Ottoman Empire; the chosen topic has to be from the 19th and early 20th century, and it must have something to do with popular culture and its materials.

Make use of the course material: I expect to see some genuine references to the course materials; you are supposed to refer to sources from at least two different weeks.

If it is a conventional essay, it should be around 3000-3500 words. If you opt for other types of projects, it is not as easy to put a limit on it. However, I expect the same amount of effort to be put into all projects, so it is very advisable to provide me with the receipts. That is to say, please share some bits and pieces about the process so that I can have a rough understanding of how the project was completed.

You are free to use any citation style you want. As for the number of sources you are supposed to use, the criterion is more about the quality of your sources and references. Citing just for the sake of citing will not impress the grader, but if you have sophisticated references to academic sources, it will boost your grade.