

The Modern Middle East: Debates and Controversies

HIST4000/7772 | 3 Cr.

Fall 2017 | Th: 2:30-5:15

Prof Jennifer Dueck

All about...

Newscasters and bloggers would often have us believe that the Middle East is an exceptional region, a place where normal assumptions and explanations fall short, a place where the conflicts leave those of us watching from the outside confused and sad. Yet the events and conflicts that occur in the Middle East are all rooted in the connections and contexts of a particular historical moment. Today's alleged "cold war" between Saudi Arabia and Iran becomes much more legible if we look back at the twentieth-century history of oil exploitation, the historical context of American, Russian and British involvement, as well as the social and political forces at work in the Persian Gulf and its environs. The enduring conflict between Israel and its neighbors owes much to the political and military decisions taken by leaders now long dead. In this seminar, we will study different kinds of texts, including historical scholarship, films, fiction and journalism, that teach about how Middle Eastern societies have worked over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

This is an Honours/Graduate seminar based on intensive reading, writing and discussion, intended for upper-level undergraduate students in Arts, as well as MA students in History. We will meet on Thursday afternoons for a three-hour block weekly. While this is a history course, the readings will include an interdisciplinary selection of texts from literature and the social sciences, with a focus on the 19th century to the present.

What will you learn?

By the end of this seminar course, you should be able to:

- ❖ Summarize the scholarly literature about key debates and issues in Middle Eastern history across the 19th and 20th centuries.
- ❖ Synthesize a substantial volume of historical writing about the 19th and 20th century history of the Middle East.
- ❖ Make connections between different kinds of issues in Middle Eastern history, including nationalism, sectarianism, conflict and gender.
- ❖ Demonstrate deep reading of a large volume of relevant texts.
- ❖ Mobilize readings effectively in discussion and writing. Particular emphasis will be placed on seminar discussion, including leading discussions.

Assignments and Assessment

There are four types of assignment in this course. Each will develop a different aspect of deep reading, writing or discussion skills. The assignments for undergraduate and graduate students are similar, but graduate students are expected to demonstrate greater ease and sophistication in each area. Graduate students are also assigned more writing and discussion leadership. As with most courses, what you gain in this seminar is directly proportional to what you put into it. Let me emphasize that my hope for all my students is that they focus on learning rather than on grading. That said, I recognize that you likely have some interest in grades, and you will receive graded feedback on your seminar leadership, class participation, and short essays before the Voluntary Withdrawal Date of 17 November 2017.

The grade weightings are in the table below.

Assignments	Honours	Graduate	Some detail
Class participation	25%	15%	In essence: show up, listen up, speak up. I will grade participation based your performance in the seminar classes, which includes a weekly self-assessment exercise, to be discussed, with handout, on the first day of class. Note that you will fail your participation mark if you miss more than one class (barring exceptional circumstances).
Seminar leadership	15%	20%	Each student will co-lead the seminar discussion two times (honours students) or three times (graduate students). Sign-up in the first week.
Short critical analysis essays	30%	30%	Honours: 6 short essays Graduates: 7 short essays These are short 700-word essays in which you will demonstrate that you have engaged in critical analysis of the weekly readings.
Take-home Exam: Synthesis essay	30%	35%	Honours: 4,000 words Graduates: 5,500 words Due: 18 December 2017

Class participation

Speaking with rigor and enthusiasm about topics that matter is one of the most important skills you can learn during your university studies. This honours/graduate seminar course is an ideal moment to build your confidence and hone those skills. Our weekly seminar sessions will consist almost entirely of group discussion based on the readings assigned. Many of our topics involve controversy --- issues of disputed facts, issues of interpretation, issues of contending perspectives --- which makes it even more challenging to engage with them. This component of assessment will include your own weekly reflections on your participation skills, as well as peer assessment of others. We will discuss grading of class participation, with a self-assessment template, on the first day of class.

Seminar Leadership

An extension of the point above, discussion leadership involves the particular ability to identify questions and asking them at the right moment, as well as more intangible factors such as inspiring trust and setting a group tone. As a discussion leader, you can be confident that the other students will have read their material, and most will also have written a short essay. So they will have things to say. It is your job to draw out that discussion and give it shape. We will talk about different discussion leadership techniques on the first day of class and throughout the course.

Short Writing Assignments

These short writing assignments provide skill development on many different levels. First, and most basically, they allow you an opportunity to analyze and critique what you have read. Which parts of the reading did you find most believable or compelling, and why? Did the author mobilize evidence effectively? And what parts of the reading did not convince you? If certain claims or sections left you scratching your head, think about what was missing from the author's account. In these short assignments, you are first and foremost historians. You are free to praise or critique many aspects of each source, but in each case remember always to consider the sources the author is using.

These writing assignments are also intended to catalyze your own thinking about the texts and materials in this course. As the term progresses, I will expect you to make connections between the current week's readings and previous readings from earlier in the semester. Please allow yourself sufficient time each week for writing. Note that you must pass all the short writing assignments and you will have the option to revise and re-submit up to two assignments within two weeks of receiving your mark.

Take-home Exam: Synthesis Essay

This course has a take-home exam, which requires you to conduct your own synthesis of the course readings in a long-form essay. There are many different thematic and topical connections between the readings in this course, which you should try to discuss in the analytical critiques that you write throughout the term. It is your job in this long-form essay-exam to identify connections between these readings, and articulate them in a coherent way. Your essay should have an introduction, body and conclusion. You must refer in some way to most of the course readings, yet you must also be selective about what and how much you include from each individual reading. This is where you demonstrate your ability to build arguments effectively and to use evidence selectively. You should imagine that your readers are scholarly, but not necessarily academically specialized in the Middle East.

Even though I advise you to focus on learning rather than grades, you may nevertheless wish to be aware of the following rubric:

90 and above	A+	65-69	C+
80-89	A	60-64	C
75-79	B+	50-59	D
70-74	B	Below 50	F (failure)

The books and other materials...

We will use the following books. I have indicated where they are available for purchase at the UM Bookstore or for reading via the UM Libraries online. In some cases, I have also placed copies on Reserve at the Elizabeth Dafoe location. Additional readings will be made available either on UMLearn or through the University Library.

Film: *Lawrence of Arabia*, Directed by David Lean, 1962. [Available on Reserve at Elizabeth Dafoe Libraries – note that if you wish to watch it on the library computers, you must bring your own headphones].

Alaa al-Aswany, *On the State of Egypt: What Made the Revolution Inevitable* [alternate title *On the State of Egypt: What Caused the Revolution*] (Toronto: Vintage Books, 2011). [Two copies on reserve at Elizabeth Dafoe Library].

Naguib Mahfouz, *Palace Walk* (NYC: Random House, 2001). [Available for purchase in the UM Bookstore.]

Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000). [Available in hard copy or online via UM Libraries, and for purchase in the UM Bookstore.]

Eugene Rogan, *The Arabs: A History* (NYC: Basic Books, 2011). [Available for purchase in the UM Bookstore.]

Patrick Seale, *The Struggle for Arab Independence: Riad el-Solh and the Makers of the Modern Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). [Available for purchase in the UM Bookstore.]

Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World* (NYC: WW Norton, 2001). [Available for purchase in the UM Bookstore.]

Communicating with me

In person: I welcome all individual conversations with students. Please come to see me at some point in the term, even you haven't got a specific reason. The fact that St John's is built like a rabbit warren and my office is hard to find is a challenge to relish. If you are having difficulty with the course, you might be reluctant to drop by. But know that I would most particularly like to see you. My regular office hours are listed below. But if those times don't work for you, email me and we can arrange another time.

By email: This is undoubtedly the best way to reach me for quick questions or to set up appointments. If you enjoy legalese, by all means read the University's official policy on "Electronic Communication with Students"

(http://umanitoba.ca/admin/governance/media/Electronic_Communication_with_Students_Policy_-_2014_06_05.pdf)

If not, the policy highlights are:

- ❖ You must use your university email account for communication with me. Conversely, I am not allowed to contact you about the course at your private email address.
- ❖ I can reasonably assume that you are checking your email regularly. Failure to do so could adversely affect your performance in the class.

In addition to the policy, I would, equally importantly, advise you to be aware that professional email-writing is a skill worth developing. Beginning your email with "yo prof" or no greeting at all will make a different impression than "Hello Dr Dueck" or "Dear Jennifer". Similarly, the body of your email can be conversational and informal, even funny, yet it should remain firmly in a professional register.

Managing your time and your deadlines

This is a challenge for people well beyond their studies. So if you can hone your time management skills while still a student, you'll never regret it. For this course, it's not only something you'll need to succeed. Given that so much of a seminar depends on input from the students, it also has a significant impact on your fellow students if you are unprepared for class. So you will need to carve out blocks of time every week to devote to this course. If you anticipate difficulty with a deadline, please see me as quickly as possible. Late submissions may be penalized 1% per day, or at my discretion if you discuss with me in advance.

Some Rules and Some Questions

My own preference is for group consensus and a democratic style of learning. So we will decide class expectations in a number of areas together on the first day of class. With respect to certain points, however, there are rules, and it's best to be clear at the outset about which is which.

Open for discussion:

- ❖ How do we want to use technology, if at all, to enhance our learning experience?
- ❖ How do we feel about food and drink in class?
- ❖ How would we like to structure class breaks?
- ❖ How should we handle late arrivals?
- ❖ Do you have particular topics you would like to cover? Some readings later in the terms are still TBC, pending discussion on the first day of class.
- ❖ Grade weightings and participation mark: although these are ultimately at the discretion of the professor, we will discuss them on the first day, and I will take the feedback of the group into account.

Not open for discussion:

- ❖ Instruction time each week is 150 minutes beginning at 2:30pm, with an additional 15 minutes break time (see 'open for discussion' above). Class ends at 5:15pm.
- ❖ Respect copyright. We will use copyrighted content in this course and we must all make sure that we're using it legally and according to University guidelines. Copyrighted works, including those created by me, are for private study and research, and must not be distributed in any format without permission. Do not upload copyrighted works to UMLearn or to any website unless an exception to the Copyright Act applies or written permission has been confirmed. For more information, see the University's Copyright Office website at <http://umanitoba.ca/copyright/> or contact um_copyright@umanitoba.ca.
- ❖ You are not permitted to make any kind of audio or video recording, openly or surreptitiously, in whole or in part, during any part of this course.
- ❖ If you wish to appeal a grade given for term work you must do so within 10 working days after the grade for the term work has been made available to them.
- ❖ Uncollected term work will become the property of the Faculty of Arts and will be subject to confidential destruction.

Regarding Plagiarism:

This point is simple and serious. Be honest. If you use someone else's ideas, acknowledge them. Be forewarned that the consequences are severe if you do not.

Lest there was any doubt, the University's regulations re: plagiarism, cheating and impersonation may be found in the section on "Academic Integrity" of the General Academic Regulations in the online Academic Calendar, and Catalog and the Faculty of Arts regulation at:

http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/student/student_responsibilities.html, which reads:

The common penalty in Arts for plagiarism on a written assignment is a grade of F on the paper and a final grade of F (DISC) (for Disciplinary Action) for the course. For the most serious acts of plagiarism, such as purchase of an essay and repeat violations, this penalty can also include suspension for a period of up to five (5) years from registration in courses taught in a particular department/program in Arts or from all courses taught in this Faculty.

The Faculty also reserves the right to submit student work that is suspected of being plagiarized to Internet sites designed to detect plagiarism or to other experts for authentication.

The common penalty in Arts for academic dishonesty on a test or examination is F for the paper, F (DISC) for the course, and a one-year suspension from courses acceptable for credit in the Faculty. For more serious acts of academic dishonesty on a test or examination, such as repeat violations, this penalty can also include suspension for a period of up to five years from registration in courses taught in a particular department or program in Arts or from all courses taught in or accepted for credit by this Faculty.

And resources beyond...

While I will do my best to facilitate your learning, there are further resources available to you.

Notably, there are **writing tutors** available to help you with your essays through the Academic Learning Centre (ALC): <http://umanitoba.ca/student/academiclearning/> The ALC page also has resources to help you with **study skills, organization**, as well as assistance for students using **English as an Additional Language** (EAL). The History department will also make a writing tutor available **exclusively to History students** in the department on two days of the week.

Other issues, including **accessibility services**, workshops, and tips about **academic integrity** are addressed at the Student Advocacy Services webpage (http://umanitoba.ca/student/resource/student_advocacy/).

All of the above services can also be accessed through this link:
<http://umanitoba.ca/student/saa/accessibility/student-resources.html>

History students can also take advantage of the huge range of academic materials (including primary and secondary sources, as well as pages to help with writing and referencing) made available by the History subject librarian, Kyle Feenstra, tailored just for you! They are available on the Libraries page at this link: <http://libguides.lib.umanitoba.ca/content.php?pid=219304>