

ISLA 411: Anti-Colonial Resistance in the 20th-Century Middle East

Thursdays: 11:35-2.25 Burnside 708

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Office hours: Wednesdays 2.30-4 Ferrier 484

This course will focus on resistance to British and French colonialism in the Middle East in the 20th Century. By taking an in-depth look at the two regions of *Bilad al-Sham* and Algeria, the course will cover the following themes: colonial government and bureaucracy, colonial education, mediating elites and colonial citizenship, anti-colonial organizing, and armed rebellion. The course will also look at the legacies of anti-colonial resistance through some readings from the more contemporary period, including fiction and film.

Requirements and Evaluation

The grade will be calculated according to the following criteria: class attendance and participation (30%); student questions (10%); 4-page analysis of primary source (15%); final 20-page research paper (45%). A number of students each week will be expected to come to class with pre-prepared questions to kick off discussion. All students should plan to meet with me by the middle of March to discuss paper topics. The paper is due in my box in the Institute of Islamic Studies on April 14 at 3pm.

Paper: this class is a research seminar and as such you are expected to write a research paper that uses at least some primary sources or that takes a historiographical angle. Examples of these two approaches might be:

- 1) A paper on the way in which British colonial officials wrote about Palestine. This might draw on memoirs written by British colonial officials or on British colonial archives (primary sources)
- 2) A paper on the way in which French histories of the Algerian War of Independence have changed in the last 50 years (historiography).

The point is to write a paper that is something more than just a collation of material gleaned from secondary sources. If you are not sure what this means, come and see me early in the semester and I can give you an example of such a paper. I am prepared to be flexible about your choice of topic, as long as it is related in some way to the history of colonialism and anti-colonial resistance in the 20th-century Middle East. We will also be discussing the format of the paper in class time.

Questions: you should take preparing the questions for class seriously by thinking carefully about your questions before class. It is not easy to ask a good question that promotes an interesting discussion. I will be writing your questions up on a screen at the beginning of class, so make sure your questions makes sense!

Readings

Books are available for purchase at Paragraphe, and on reserve in the Islamic Studies Library. All other readings will be on MyCourses.

Schedule

Week 1 (Jan 8): Introduction

Week 2 (Jan 15): Soldiering for Arab Nationalism in *Bilad al-Sham*, 1914-1948

Laila Parsons, *Fawzi al-Qawuqi and the Fight for Arab Nationalism* [book manuscript]

Week 3 (Jan 22): World War 1

Elizabeth Thompson, *Colonial Citizens: Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 15-38

Salim Tamari, "The short life of Private Ihsan, Jerusalem, 1915", in *Jerusalem Quarterly*, 30 (Spring, 2007)

Najwa al-Qattan, "When mothers ate their children: Wartime memory and the language of food in Syria and Lebanon" in *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 46 (2014), 719-736

Week 4 (Jan 29): Colonial Citizens and Soldiers

Elizabeth Thompson, *Colonial Citizens: Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2000), 71-111

"Women and the vote in Syria: A parliamentary debate about the relationship between gender and citizenship in the proposed state, April 25, 1920" in Akram Khater (ed), *Sources in the History of the Modern Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 211-219

Joseph Massad, *Colonial Effects: The Making of National Identity in Jordan* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2001), 100-162

John Bagot Glubb, *The Story of the Arab Legion* (London, 1948), 165-182

Week 5 (Feb 5): The Great Syrian Revolt

Michael Provence, *The Great Syrian Revolt and the Rise of Arab Nationalism* (Austin: Texas University Press, 2005)

Week 6 (Feb 12): Remembering the Great Syrian Revolt from the 1970s

Ulfat Idibli, *Sabriya: Damascus Bittersweet* (London: Quartet Books, 1995) (Translated by Peter Clark)

Week 7 (Feb 19): Colonialism and Revolt in British Mandate Palestine

Mathew Hughes, "From law and order to pacification: Britain's suppression of the Arab Revolt in Palestine, 1936–39, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 2 (Winter 2010), 6-22

Ted Swedenburg, *Memories of the Revolt: The 1936-1939 Rebellion and the Palestinian National Past* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995). [page numbers tba]

[4-page primary source analysis due in class--text will have been handed out the previous week]

Week 8 (Feb 26): Colonialism and Revolt in the Israeli-Occupied West Bank

Sahar Khalifeh, *Wild Thorns* (New York: Interlink Books, 2000) (Translated by Trevor LeGassick and Elizabeth Fernea)

Week 9 (March 5): Spring Break

Week 10 (March 12): Library Orientation

This is a library orientation specially tailored for this class to help students find primary sources for their research papers. Attendance is mandatory.

Week 11 (March 19): Algeria--The Colonial Age

John Ruedy, *Modern Algeria: The Origins and Development of a Nation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 45-113.

Malek Alloula, *The Colonial Harem* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), ix-xxii (Introduction by Barbara Harlow) and 3-26 (Translated by Myrna Godzich & Wlad Godzich)

Week 12 (March 26): The Algerian War of Independence

Ruedy, *Modern Algeria*, 114-55 (skim), and 156-94.

Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963), skim early pages and read the chapter "Colonial War and Mental Disorders"

Nigel C. Gibson, *Fanon: The Postcolonial Imagination*, Key Contemporary Thinkers Series (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003), 1-14 (Introduction) and 84-102 (Ch. 4, "Becoming Algerian").

Week 13 (April 2): Film Showing: *The Battle of Algiers* (Gillo Pontecorvo, 1966)

Week 14 (April 9): Conclusions and Brief Paper Presentations

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/).

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