

**“Islamic Society and Modernity”**  
(Seminar on the Nineteenth Century Middle East)  
HIST 542-01  
Fall semester 2004

Dr Mark Sedgwick

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**Seminar description**

The nineteenth century was the century in which the Arab Middle East first confronted the full force of modernity. The political story of this confrontation is well known, but its social and intellectual aspects are less well known. It is those aspects that are the focus of this seminar.

As well as looking at the dramatic transformations of elite urban society and at the major Islamic revival and reform movements of the era, the seminar will also examine the relationship between social and intellectual change. Ultimately, we will ask how much of contemporary “Fundamentalism” is the product of the nineteenth-century encounter of Islamic society with Western modernity, and to what extent nineteenth-century changes in Islam can be compared with the European reformation of the sixteenth century.

The seminar will be divided into four parts. During the first part, we will spend four weeks establishing our starting point (pre-modern social and intellectual worlds) and looking at two major pre-modern Islamic movements, the Wahhabis and the Sudanese Mahdists. During the second part of the seminar, we will spend three weeks looking at the arrival of modernity, principally in Egypt and Syria, and at ways of understanding modernity in the Arab Middle East. During the third part of the seminar, we will spend four weeks looking at different types of intellectual movement, and one week following the development of these movements forward into the early twentieth century. During the final part of the course, we will spend one week examining possible overall interpretations of the processes we have been considering, and two weeks on presentations of individual research projects.

**Assessment**

Final grades will be calculated as follows:

- Participation: 15%
- Reading responses: 55%
- Research paper: 30%

*Participation* means more than just sitting in class: if you have not done the reading, there is little point in coming to class just to sit there. Note, however, that more than three weeks of absence for any reason (including illness etc.) may result in an F.

*Reading responses* are required for all weeks’ reading. Each reading response must be

- about two-three pages long, and properly typed, documented and proof-read. Do *not* write ten pages.
- analytical. Mere summary of the readings is not acceptable, and will receive a very

- low grade.
- handed in at the start of each class. No late papers will be accepted under any circumstances whatsoever, but your worst response paper will be ignored when calculating the final grade.

The *Research paper* should deal with a topic related to our readings and be about ten pages long. Before starting your paper, you must discuss your topic with me, and obtain my *written* agreement to a 300-400 word abstract and proposed bibliography. The *latest* date for abstracts / bibliographies is Tuesday, November 2. Incomprehensibility or sloppy presentation of the paper will be penalized.

### Notes

1. The university policy on cheating and plagiarism applies in this class. I always report cases of either to the Academic Integrity Committee.
2. Changes to assignments, times, dates, etc. will be announced in class. It is your responsibility to make sure that you learn of any such announcement which might have been made during a class you miss.
3. Where URL references are given, it is usually necessary to follow them *from the AUC server*. Other service providers will not be recognized as authorized. URLs are linked on the on-line version of this outline, at <http://www.aucegypt.edu/faculty/sedgwick/atic542a.html>.
4. Students are assumed to be familiar with the background to the periods and areas covered. Students wishing to refresh their memories may wish to consult:
  - Ira M Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*
  - William L Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*Both are in the bookstore.

## Sections of the course

### Week 1, September 7: Introduction

No reading

### I: Pre-modernity

#### Week 2, September 14: State and society

- Abraham Marcus, *The Middle East on the Eve of Modernity: Aleppo in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), chapters 2 & 3. On reserve: DS 99 A56 M37 1989.
- Nelly Hanna, *In Praise of Books: A Cultural History of Cairo's Middle Class, Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003). On reserve: HT690.E3 H36 2003. Bookstore LE 80 (AUC Press).

#### Week 3, September 21: Religion

- Wael B. Hallaq, "Was the Gate of Ijtihad Closed?" *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 16 (1984), pp. 3-41. Available <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0020-7438%28198403%2916%3A1%3C3%3AWTGOIC%3E2.0.CO%3B2-O>
- Dale F. Eickelman, "The Art of Memory: Islamic Education and Its Social Reproduction," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 20 (1978), pp. 485-516. Available <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0010-4175%28197810%2920%3A4%3C485%3ATAOMIE%3E2.0.CO%3B2-A>
- Rudolph Peters, "Idjtihad and Taqlid in 18th and 19th Century Islam," *Die Welt des Islams* 20 (1980), pp. 131-45. In reader.

#### Week 4, September 28: The Wahhabis

- Alexei Vassiliev, *The History of Saudi Arabia* (London: Saqi Books, 1998), chapters 2 to 4. On reserve: DS 244 V37 1997.
- Natana J. Delong-Bas, *Wahhabi Islam: From Revival and Reform to Global Jihad* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004). On reserve (no shelfmark yet). Bookstore in November (AUC Press).

### II: Modernity

#### Week 5, October 5: Egypt

- Gabriel Baer, "Urbanization in Egypt, 1820-1907," in *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East: The Nineteenth Century*, ed. William R. Polk and Richard L. Chambers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968). On reserve: DS42 .C6 1966aa.
- Charles Issawi, "Asymmetrical Development and Transport in Egypt, 1800-1914," in *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East* (above).
- Gabriel Baer, "Social Change in Egypt: 1800-1914" in *Political and Social Change in Modern Egypt 1850-1950*, ed. P. M. Holt (London: Oxford University Press, 1968),

pp. 135-61. On reserve: DT 43 C63 1965a.

- Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid Marsot, "The Role of the 'Ulama' in Egypt during the Early Nineteenth Century." *Political and Social Change in Modern Egypt 1850-1950*. (above), pp. 264-80.

### **Week 6, October 12: Syria**

- David Dean Commins, *Politics and Social Change in Late Ottoman Syria*. New York: Oxford UP, 1990. On reserve: BP 63 S95 C66 1990.
- James A. Reilly, "Property, Status, and Class in Ottoman Damascus: Case Studies from the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 112 (1992), pp. 9-21. Available <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-0279%28199201%2F03%29112%3A1%3C9%3APSACIO%3E2.0.CO%3B2-E>.
- Bruce Masters, "The 1850 Events in Aleppo: An Aftershock of Syria's Incorporation into the Capitalist World System," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 22 (1990), pp. 3-20. Available <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0020-7438%28199002%2922%3A1%3C3%3AT1EIAA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-C>
- Abdul-Karim Rafeq, "Craft Organization, Work Ethics, and the Strains of Change in Ottoman Syria," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 111 (1991), pp. 495-511. Available <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-0279%28199107%2F09%29111%3A3%3C495%3ACOWEAT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-T>

### **Week 7, October 19: Interpretation**

- Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988). On reserve: DT100 .M57 1989a.
- Thomas Philipp, "Class, Community, and Arab Historiography in the Early Nineteenth Century--The Dawn of a New Era," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 16 (1984), pp. 161-175. Available <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0020-7438%28198405%2916%3A2%3C161%3ACCAAHI%3E2.0.CO%3B2-S>
- Reinhard Schulze, "The Birth of Tradition and Modernity in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century Islamic Culture." *Culture & History* 16 (1997), pp. 29-72. In the Reader.
- George N Atiyeh, ed. *The Book in the Islamic World: The Written Word and Communication in the Middle East* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995), chapter 4. On reserve: Z 8 M63 B66

## **III: Consequences**

### **Week 8, October 26: Liberalism**

- Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), chapter 4. On reserve: JA84.A6 H6 1983.
- John W. Livingston, "Western Science and Educational Reform in the Thought of Shaykh Rifaa al-Tahtawi," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 28 (1996), pp. 543-564. Available <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0020-7438%28199611%2928%3A4%3C543%3AWSAERI%3E2.0.CO%3B2-9>
- Stephen Paul Sheehi, "Inscribing the Arab Self: Butrus al-Bustani and Paradigms of Subjective Reform," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 27 (2000), pp. 7-24. Available <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=1353->

- 0194%28200005%2927%3A1%3C7%3AITASBA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-S.
- Butrus Abu-Manneh, "The Christians between Ottomanism and Syrian Nationalism: The Ideas of Butrus Al-Bustani," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 11 (1980), pp. 287-304. Available <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0020-7438%28198005%2911%3A3%3C287%3ATCBOAS%3E2.0.CO%3B2-M>

### **Week 9, November 2: Salafism**

- Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age* (as above) Chapters 5 and 6.
- Muhammad Abduh, *Risalat al-tawhid*, transl. Ishaq Musa'ad and Kenneth Cragg as *The Theology of Unity* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1966), chapters 11-16. On reserve: BP166.M7513 1966.
- Elie Kedourie, *Afghani and Abduh: An Essay on Religious Unbelief and Political Activism in Modern Islam*. London: Cass, 1966. On reserve: BP70.K4 1966.
- Itzchak Weismann, "Between Sufi Reformism and Modernist Rationalism--A Reappraisal of the Origins of the Salafiyya from the Damascene Angle," *Die Welt des Islams*, 41(2001), pp. 206-237. In the Reader.

### **Week 10, November 9: More liberalism**

- Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age* (as above), chapter 7.
- Darrell Dykstra, "Pyramids, Prophets, and Progress: Ancient Egypt in the Writings of Ali Mubarak," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 114 (1994), pp. 54-65. Available <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-0279%28199401%2F03%29114%3A1%3C54%3APPAPAE%3E2.0.CO%3B2-R>
- Karim Wissa, "Freemasonry in Egypt 1798-1921: A Study in Cultural and Political Encounters," *Bulletin* (British Society for Middle Eastern Studies), Vol. 16, No. 2. (1989), pp. 143-161. Available <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0305-6139%281989%2916%3A2%3C143%3AFIE1AS%3E2.0.CO%3B2-V>
- Byron D. Cannon, "Nineteenth-Century Arabic Writings on Women and Society: The Interim Role of the Masonic Press in Cairo - (al-Lataif, 1885-1895)," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 17 (1985), pp. 463-484. Available <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0020-7438%28198511%2917%3A4%3C463%3ANAWOWA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-5>

### **Week 12, November 23: Beyond the Middle East**

*November 16 is a holiday*

*Timing of November 23 class to be rearranged*

- Adeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1998. On reserve: BP 63 A34 K54 1998.
- Arnold H. Green, "Political Attitudes and Activities of the Ulama in the Liberal Age: Tunisia as an Exceptional Case," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 7 (1976), pp. 209-241. Available <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0020-7438%28197604%297%3A2%3C209%3APAAAOT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-6>

### **Week 13, November 30: Into the new century**

- Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, chapters 7-9 (as above).
- Daniel W. Brown, *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996. On reserve: BP 136.4 B76 1996.

## **IV: Interpretation and presentations**

### **Week 14, December 7: Overall interpretation**

- Nikki R. Keddie "The Revolt of Islam, 1700 to 1993: Comparative Considerations and Relations to Imperialism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 36 (1994), pp. 463-487. Available <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0010-4175%28199407%2936%3A3%3C463%3ATROI1T%3E2.0.CO%3B2-7>
- Steven E. Ozment, *The Reformation in the Cities: The Appeal of Protestantism in Sixteenth-Century Germany and Switzerland* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), esp. chapter 4. On reserve: BR 305.2 O9 1975.

### **Week 15, December 14: Presentations I**

### **Week 16, December 21: Presentations II**