

University of Florida

ASH3223 (#26659)

History of the Modern Middle East

Spring 2026

T 8-9 (3:00 PM – 4:55 PM)
R 9 (4:05 PM – 4:55 PM)

Instructor: Yehoshua Ecker
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381 Dauer Hall (352-273-5555)
Office hours: Wednesday 4:30pm-5:30pm and by appointment
Zoom meeting also available

Course description

The Middle East has played a significant role in the global arena, politically, economically and culturally. Placing the region in multiple contexts, this course explores its rich and complex histories and identities, their origins, development and their wider impacts. It traces religions, cultures, languages, resources, political traditions, social structures, economic links and international entanglements, wars and conflicts, ideological shifts, state formation, continuity and change in a wide geographic area, throughout the modern period, as the power balance between local and global actors was shifting.

Student learning outcomes / course objectives

- Gain familiarity with the history of the modern Middle East.
- Develop the ability to read, interpret and contextualize regional events.
- Identify patterns of historical developments.
- Gain knowledge of regional political, social and economic structures and variations.
- Ways to approach and evaluate historical sources, claims and narratives about the region.

Weekly course schedule

Week	Topics	Readings
1	Introductions	
2	Climate, terrain, resources	Held, Cotter, Cummings, <i>Middle East Patterns</i> (selection)
3-4	Layers of the past	Lewis, <i>The Middle East: A Brief History</i> (selection)
5-7	Empires and states, war and peace, borders and bargains	Gelvin, <i>The Modern Middle East: A History</i> (selected chapters); Rogan, <i>The Arabs: A History</i> (Ch. 6)
8-11	Rulers and ruled, rogues and rebels, reformers and revolutionaries	Anderson, <i>A History of the Modern Middle East: Rulers, Rebels, and Rogues</i> (selected chapters)
11-12	Social and economic structures	Hitti, <i>History of the Arabs</i> (selection); Inalcik, Quataert, <i>Economic & Social History of the Ottoman Empire</i> (selection); Meijer, Sater, Babar, <i>Routledge handbook on citizenship in the Middle East and North Africa</i> (selected articles)
13	Inter-state, international and global perspectives	<i>Cambridge Encyclopedia of the Middle East and North Africa; Encyclopedia of the Modern Middle East</i> (selected articles)
14	Conclusions	

To be supplemented by sources, excerpts, and documentaries.

Grading

Attendance and active participation: 36

Weekly assignments: 36

Midterm and Final: 30+30

(Extra points for excellent contributions and work)

Weekly assignments

Weekly assignments will be discussed in class and a list will be available on Canvas. Please submit by Tuesday. Detailed instructions for the assignments will be provided in class / on Canvas.

Midterm and Final

Detailed instructions and dates will be provided in class and on Canvas.

Syllabus Changes

The syllabus is subject to change. Changes will be announced in advance as much as possible. Changes and adjustments are to be expected.

Class Policies

Attendance: Attendance is required and will be taken at every class meeting: please write your name and sign the attendance sheet. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies and require appropriate documentation. Read the university attendance policies here:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>. *When possible, please let me know in advance if you will not be attending a class session.* You are allowed up to 3 undocumented absences, after which any unexcused absence will affect your grade. Excused absences include documented medical emergency, family crisis, military service, university sanctioned or official activities.

Email: As a matter of policy, UFL related communications are delegated to your UFL email. Information concerning the course, especially changes in venue, readings, assignments, etc., will be disseminated via Canvas announcements. Please make sure that your contact information is updated and that you are signed up to receive notification of course announcements. Email or Canvas messages are the preferred form of communication (I am usually away from the phone). I will usually see your message within 2 working days.

Turning in assignments: Students are required to provide all assignments in digital form, by the date and time they are due (extra time in case of documented emergencies or extreme circumstances will be considered).

Late Papers and Tests: Tests and papers will not be accepted late without medical documentation or review of specific circumstances.

Electronic devices: All electronic devices are allowed, as long as you use them for class purposes or for other necessary purposes (emergency calls and updates, essential time sensitive communications). Please make sure they do not interfere with the class or disturb other students, do not emit high volume sounds, and are set to reasonably silent mode.

Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code: The University of Florida holds its students to the highest standards. Students are encouraged to read the University of Florida Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code (Regulation 4.040), so they are aware of these standards. The University principles address respect for people and property, for fairness, for Laws and Regulations, and for academic integrity. Any violation of the Student Honor Code will result in a referral to the Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution and may result in academic sanctions and further student conduct action.

The University of Florida Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code (UF Regulation 4.040) can be found at these links:

<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>

<https://policy.ufl.edu/regulation/4-040/>

<https://policy.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/UF-Regulation-4.040.pdf>

The processes of applying the codes can be found at the Dean of Students Office website:

<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-honor-code/>

<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/>

Academic Honesty: Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University. UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all

work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Students commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by the Student Honor Code. Any Student who becomes aware of a violation of the Student Honor Code is encouraged to report the violation to the appropriate University Official. Click the links above to read the Conduct Code. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is defined in the University of Florida's Student Honor Code as follows: "A Student must not represent as the Student's own work all or any portion of the work of another person or Entity." To avoid plagiarism students must give proper attribution to any source used or consulted (oral or written materials, published or unpublished), and clearly mark and attribute direct quotes. Students should follow their faculty's policy on collaboration, should understand how to properly cite sources, and should not give nor receive an improper academic advantage in any manner through any medium. Plagiarism on any assignment will automatically result in a failing grade.

Grading Policies and Scale

Current university grades and grading policies are explained here:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

The grading scale used for this class:

	A	93-100+	A-	90-92	
B+	87-89	B	83-86	B-	80-82
C+	77-79	C	73-76	C-	70-72
D+	68-69	D	63-67	D-	60-62
F	<60				

UF academic policies and resources

<https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>

Technical issues

To resolve technical issues visit the UF helpdesk website: <https://it.ufl.edu/helpdesk/>, or call 352-392-4357.