

## Minorities of the Middle East

NES 3655; JWST 3655

Spring 2015

Professor D. Starr

Class Meets: T, Th 1:25-2:40

Location: White Hall 110

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Office Hours:

M 10:00-12:00

Th 2:45-3:45

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

In the media we read about conflict in Iraq between Sunnis, Shiites, and Kurds; strife between Muslims and Copts in Egypt; rebellion in Syria against the ruling Alawite minority; and violence between Israelis and Palestinians; and the list goes on. This course aims to enrich students' understanding of the diversity of Middle Eastern countries, exploring histories of inter-communal contact and conflict. In commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of World War I, we explore the legacy of the Ottoman Empire and the impact of its dissolution. We will focus our attention on commercial centers that fostered inter-communal relations, as well as investigating sites of strife and cases of minority repression. We will read histories, memoirs, and fiction, and view films that help us better understand inter-communal relations, tensions, and conflict. We will also interrogate the terms for exploring a range of distinctions among majority and minority populations including: religious difference (Muslims, Christians, and Jews); divisions of religious rite (Sunni and Shi'a); ethno-linguistic minorities (Armenians and Kurds); national identities (Israelis and Palestinians); cultures of origin (Mizrahi, Sephardi, and Ashkenazi Jews).

### COURSE MATERIALS

Required Books available at the Campus Store:

- Maya Schatzmiller, ed. *Nationalism and Minority Identities in Islamic Societies*. McQueen's University Press, 2005.
- Moshe Behar and Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, *Modern Middle Eastern Jewish Thought: Writings on Identity, Politics, & Culture, 1893-1958*. Brandeis University Press, 2013.
- Waguih Ghali, *Beer in the Snooker Club* (1964). Vintage International, 2104.
- Ali Bader, *The Tobacco Keeper*. Bloomsbury, 2011.

**Course Website:** There is a website for the course on the Cornell Blackboard service: <<http://blackboard.cornell.edu>>. [Course title: "NES 3655 Minorities of the Middle East Starr,D."]  
Readings from electronic sources listed on the course calendar are accessible via the Blackboard site. Please note that the syllabus is hyperlinked so that you should be able to access readings by clicking on the link in the syllabus while you are logged into blackboard. Films will be available to stream via the course website, as well. The site will

also serve as a source of information about the course and as a communication tool. If you have trouble accessing the site, please let the professor know.

## **STUDENT ASSESSMENT**

### **Class Participation (25%)**

Students are expected to attend class regularly, complete the required reading assignments, and participate in class discussions and activities. Please bring the text to class. There will be a map quiz on Thursday, January 29. Additional quizzes may be administered unannounced. Quiz grades will be factored into the overall class participation grade.

### **Exams**

There will be three exams. Each exam will consist of an in-class component and a take-home component. The take-home portion of the exam will be passed out prior to the exam date. On the day of the in-class exam, students are expected to hand in their response to the take-home portion of the exam. Take home exams should be typed, double spaced and printed with one inch margins, using 12 point font.

- **Tuesday, March 3**    **Exam 1 (20%)**
- **Tuesday, April 14**    **Exam 2 (20%)**
- **Date TBA**            **Final exam (25%)**

### **Presentations (10%)**

Students will be assigned to work in pairs or small groups to give a 10-15 minute presentation to the class. Presentations will be scheduled to take place at the beginning of each unit. Presentations are intended as an introductory overview. Teams are encouraged to seek out and utilize visual aids, including relevant maps, charts, or photographs, etc. You must identify your sources. Please post a copy of your digital materials to the discussion board feature of the course Blackboard site within 24 hours of your presentation.

All members of a presenting team must speak during the presentation, but you can divide the work as you see fit (research, preparing visuals, presenting, etc.). Presentations will be graded on the quality and accuracy of information presented, clarity, and effectiveness of supporting materials. All members of the group will be assigned the same grade for the presentation.

Presentation dates will be assigned the week of January 27, and will begin following the first exam. On the date of your presentation, please arrive 5 minutes early to set up and test any technology.

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY**

I find the use of computers and electronic devices to be more of a distraction than a learning tool in discussion-based classes. Class time will be devoted primarily to discussion and the exchange of ideas. To avoid distractions (yours and your classmates'),

I restrict the use of electronic devices in this class. I ask that you use paper and the writing implement of your choice for taking notes during class discussion. You may use a computer or tablet only if you are reading an electronic version of the text, and you need to reference the text. In that case, please make sure that all other windows are closed, and notifications silenced. Please silence and put away cell phones prior to the start of class.

### **CORNELL CODE OF CONDUCT**

Freedom of speech, within commonly accepted limits of safety and civility, is a paramount value in a university community. In a university community, as in society as a whole, freedom of speech cannot be absolute. Speech that is libelous, or that incites a crowd to riot, deserves no protection. Perhaps no one, in real life, has ever falsely shouted "Fire!" in a crowded theater, but surely no one has a right to do so. Within such commonly accepted limits, however, freedom of speech should be the paramount value in a university community. Because it is a special kind of community, whose purpose is the discovery of truth through the practice of free inquiry, a university has an essential dependence on a commitment to the values of un intimidated speech. Name-calling and the shouting of obscenities, even when they are not carried so far as to abridge freedom of speech, are nevertheless deplorable in a community devoted to rational persuasion and articulate controversy. Civility is a fragile virtue, but one upon which a university ultimately depends. For the full statement of Cornell's Code of Conduct see:

<http://www.dfa.cornell.edu/cms/treasurer/policyoffice/policies/volumes/governance/upload/CCC.pdf>

### **CORNELL CODE OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Absolute integrity is expected of every Cornell student and faculty member in all academic undertakings. Integrity entails a firm adherence to a set of values, and the values most essential to an academic community are grounded on the concept of honesty with respect to the intellectual efforts of oneself and others. Academic integrity is expected not only in formal coursework situations, but in all University relationships and interactions connected to the educational process, including the use of University resources. A Cornell student's submission of work for academic credit indicates that the work is the student's own. All outside assistance should be acknowledged, and the student's academic position truthfully reported at all times. In addition, Cornell students have a right to expect academic integrity from each of their peers, and from their professors. For the full statement of Cornell's Code of Academic Integrity see:

<<http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html>>

### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Appropriate and confidential accommodations will be made for students eligible for support from Student Disabilities Services. Students in need of special accommodations should bring the letter from SDS to the professor at the beginning of the semester.

## COURSE CALENDAR

### ***From Dhimmi to Minority***

Tuesday, January 27

Richard C. Martin. "From Dhimmis to Minorities: Shifting Constructions of the non-Muslim Other from Early to Modern Islam." In Shatzmiller, *Nationalism and Minority Identities*. pp. 4-21.

Benjamin White. "Minorities, Majorities, and the Nation-State." In, White, [\*The Emergence of Minorities in the Middle East: Politics and Community in French Mandate Syria\*](#). Edinburgh University Press, 2011. Pp. 21-42.

### ***Copts***

Thursday, January 29

Charles Smith. "The Egyptian Copts: Nationalism, Ethnicity, and Definition of Identity for a Religious Minority In Shatzmiller, *Nationalism and Minority Identities*. pp. 58-84.

Pieterneilla Van Doorn-Harder. "Copts: Fully Egyptian, but for a Tattoo?" In Shatzmiller, *Nationalism and Minority Identities*. pp. 22-57.

**\*\*Map Quiz\*\***

### ***Copts and Jews in Cosmopolitan Egypt***

Tuesday, February 3

Joel Beinin, [\*Dispersion of Egyptian Jewry: Culture, Politics, and the Formation of Modern Diaspora\*](#). University of California Press, 1998. pp. 33-52.

Waguih Ghali, *Beer in the Snooker Club*. pp. 1-44.

Thursday, February 10

Waguih Ghali, *Beer in the Snooker Club*. pp. 47-220.

### **Jews of the Middle East**

Tuesday, February 10

Roundtable: Jewish Identities in the Middle East 1876-1956. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. 46:3 (2014), 577-601.

- Orit Bashkin. [\*The Middle Eastern Shift and Provincializing Zionism\*](#). pp 577-580.
- Sarah Abrevaya Stein. [\*The Field of In Between\*](#). pp 581-584.
- Michelle U. Campos [\*Between Others and Brothers\*](#). pp 585-588.

- Jonathan Marc Gribetz. [“To the Arab Hebrew”: On Possibilities and Impossibilities](#). pp 589-592.
- Rami Ginat. [Jewish Identities in the Arab Middle East: The Case of Egypt in Retrospect](#). pp 593-596.
- Aomar Boum. [“The Virtual Genizah”: Emerging North African Jewish and Muslim Identities Online](#). pp 597-601.
- Lior Sternfeld. [Jewish-Iranian Identities in the Pahlavi Era](#). pp 602-605.

Thursday, February 12

*Modern Middle Eastern Jewish Thought*, Moshe Behar and Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, editors. Brandeis University Press, 2013. pp. xxi-xxxix, 2-11, 21-136.

**\*\*Tuesday, February 17—NO CLASS\*\***

***Armenian Genocide and the end of the Ottoman Empire***

Thursday, February 19

Ronald Grigor Suny, Fatma Müge Göçek, and Norman M Naimark. *A Question of Genocide: Armenians and Turks At the End of the Ottoman Empire*. Oxford University Press, 2011.

- Norman Naimark. Preface. pp. xiii-xix.
- Fatma Müge Göçek, “Reading Genocide: Turkish Historiography on 1915.” pp. 42-55.
- Donald Bloxham, “The First World War and the Development of the Armenian Genocide.” pp. 260-275.

**\*\* Monday, February 23 -- Special Screening\*\***

Film: *Ararat* (Canada, 2002) Directed by Atom Egoyan.  
[Cornell Cinema, Willard Straight Theater, 7:00 PM](#)

Tuesday, February 24

Discussion of *Ararat*

Exam Review

***Greek-Turkish Population Exchange and the Consolidation of Turkish Nationalism***

Thursday, February 26

Film: *Smyrna: The Destruction of a Cosmopolitan City - 1900-1922* (Greece, 2012) Directed by Maria Iliou.

Lerna Ekmekcioglu (2014). [Republic of Paradox: The League of Nations Minority Protection Regime and the New Turkey's Step Citizens](#). *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 46, pp 657-679.

**\*\*Take home exam distributed \*\***

**\*\*Tuesday, March 3 — EXAM 1\*\***

***Domne***

Thursday, March 5

Marc Baer. *The Dönme: Jewish Converts, Muslim Revolutionaries, and Secular Turks*. Stanford University Press, 2010. pp. 1-21; 184-212.

***Kurds***

Tuesday, March 10

Film: *Marooned in Iraq* (Iran, 2002) Directed by Bahman Gobadi.

Michael Gunter. "The Kurdish Minority Identity in Iraq." In Shatzmiller, *Nationalism and Minority Identities in Islamic Societies*. pp. 263-282.

Denise Natali. "[A New Normal for Iraqi Kurds?](#)" *Middle East Report*. 3 Jul. 2014.

Thursday, March 12

Hakan Yavuz. "Kurdish Nationalism in Turkey." In Shatzmiller, *Nationalism and Minority Identities in Islamic Societies*. pp. 229-262.

[Words without Borders](#), special issue on Kurdish Literature (January 2014).

- Bakhtiyar Ali, "The Beginnings of Ja'far-i-Magholi and Hasan Tofan"
- Yavuz Ekinci from "The Lost Lands of Paradise"
- Murathan Mungan, "Omaira"
- Alber Sabanoglu, "Breaking the Taboo: Turkish Writers Face the Kurdish Past"
- Abdulla Pashew, "Union"
- Ziad Rashad, "The Poetry of Truth: An Interview with Abdulla Pashew"
- Murat Özyaşar, "Mirror Shock"
- Kajal Ahmad, "Separation from the Earth"
- Jamal Khambar, "If You See Fatima"
- Hama Jaza, "Sudden Sorrow"

***Mizrahi Jews in Israel***

Tuesday, March 17

Film: *Forget Baghdad* (Germany, 2002). Directed by Samir.

*Modern Middle Eastern Jewish Thought*, Moshe Behar and Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, editors. Brandeis University Press, 2013. pp. 198-248.

***Palestinians in Israel***

Thursday, March 19

TV Series: *Arab Labor* (Israel 2007), Created by Sayed Kashua  
Episodes: "The Car" and "Crime on the Border."

Sayed Kashua, "[Why Sayed Kashua is leaving Jerusalem and never coming back.](#)"  
*Haaretz*, July 4, 2014.

Sammy Smootha. "[Minority Status in an Ethnic Democracy: The Status of the Arab Minority in Israel.](#)" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 13(3): 389-413, 1990.

**\*\*Tuesday, March 24 -- No Class \*\***

**\*\*Wednesday, March 25 – Special Lecture\*\***

Sayed Kashua, "The Foreign Mother Tongue"  
4:30 PM, McGraw Hall 165

***Druze***

Thursday, March 26

Ilana Kaufman. "[Ethnic Affirmation or Ethnic Manipulation: The Case of the Druze in Israel.](#)" *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 9 (2004): 53-82

Birgit Schaebler. "[Constructing an Identity between Arabism and Islam: The Druzes in Syria.](#)" *Muslim World* 103, no. 1 (2013): 62-79.

**\*\*Spring Break—No Class \*\***

***Berbers***

Tuesday, April 7

Azzedine Layashi. "The Berbers in Algeria: Politicized Ethnicity and Ethnicized Politics." In Shatzmiller. *Nationalism and Minority Identities in Islamic Societies*. pp. 195-228.

David Crawford. "Royal Interest in Local Culture: Amazigh Identity and the Moroccan State." In Shatzmiller. *Nationalism and Minority Identities in Islamic Societies*. pp. 164-194.

### ***Baha'i***

Thursday, April 9

Juan Cole. "The Baha'i Minority and Nationalism in Contemporary Iran." In Shatzmiller. *Nationalism and Minority Identities in Islamic Societies*. pp. 127-163.

**\*\*Take home exam distributed \*\***

### **\*\*Tuesday, April 14 — EXAM 2\*\***

### ***Shi'a in Iraq***

Thursday, April 16

Graham E. Fuller and Rend Rahim Francke. "The Arab Shi'a in the Sunni State." In *The Arab Shi'a: The Forgotten Muslims*. St Martin's Press, 1999. pp. 33-51.

Orit Bashkin. *The Other Iraq: Pluralism and Culture in Hashemite Iraq*. Stanford University Press, 2009. pp. 125-193

### ***The Iraq War and Beyond—Dissolution of Iraqi Pluralism***

Tuesday, April 21

Ali Bader, *The Tobacco Keeper*. pp. 1-149.

Thursday, April 23

Ali Bader, *The Tobacco Keeper*. pp. 150-330.

### ***Iraqi Christians and Yazidis***

Tuesday, April 28

Victoria Arakelova,. "[Ethno-Religious Communities: To the Problem of Identity Markers.](#)" *Iran & The Caucasus* 14, no. 1 (June 2010): 1-17.

Amanda Ufheil-Somers "[Iraqi Christians: A Primer](#)" *Middle East Report*, 267 (Summer 2013).

Sinan Antoon

- [They Kill Christians \(Too\)](#). *Jadaliyya.com*. 3 Nov. 2010.



- [An Excerpt from Sinan Antoon's "Ave Maria."](#) *Jadaliyya.com*. 21 Aug. 2014.
- [On Dead and Living Characters.](#) *Jadaliyya.com*. 22 Sept. 2014.

***Alawites***

Thursday, April 30

Aslam Farouk-Alli. "[Sectarianism in Alawi Syria: Exploring the Paradoxes of Politics and Religion.](#)" *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 34.3 (2014): 207-26.

***ISIS and the Current Threat to Minorities***

***Conclusion and Review***

Tuesday, May 5

"[Between The Millstones: The State of Iraq's Minorities Since the Fall of Mosul.](#)" February 2015. Report by: The Institute for International Law and Human Rights (ILHR); Minority Rights Group International (MRG); No Peace Without Justice (NPWJ); Unrepresented Nations & Peoples Organization (UNPO).

Alireza Doostdar, "[How Not to Understand ISIS.](#)" The Martin Marty Center for the Advanced Study of Religion, University of Chicago Divinity School. October 2, 2014.

\*\*Take home exam distributed \*\*