

# History of the Modern Middle East

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Last Updated: Thu, 01/01/2026

**Course prefix:** HTS

**Course number:** 2041

**Section:** A

**CRN (you may add up to five):**  
34958

**Instructor First Name:** Laura

**Instructor Last Name:** Bier

**Semester:** Spring

**Academic year:** 2026

## **Course description:**

The objective of this course is to provide a basis for understanding historical processes (both global and local) which have shaped the Middle East and North Africa in the modern period (18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century) Focusing on the transformation of state and society under the impact of a changing world economy and European imperialism, this course has four interrelated themes:

1. The transformation of multi-ethnic world empires to nation-states in the 20<sup>th</sup> century
2. The changing relationship of the Middle East to Europe and later, the United States.
3. The rise of new social and political movements and the new sorts of identities, social categories and notions of person-hood they were based upon.
4. The interconnectedness of local, regional and global histories

We will use visual sources (photos, propaganda posters and films), audio sources (interviews, old newsreels and music ) as well as textual sources (including official documents, memoirs and magazine and newspaper articles), paying particular attention to the rich and diverse voices and experiences of those from the region.

## **Course learning outcomes:**

- **Describe the major actors, events and forces which have shaped the history of the Middle East from the 18<sup>th</sup> century through the first decade of the 21st century**
- **Explain the impact of global and local forces on the region, particularly changing relations with Europe and the United States**
- **Recognize the diversity of voices and experiences within the region**

- **Make informed, intelligent arguments about the region and critically evaluate the claims of others**
- **Analyze historical evidence**

#### **Required course materials:**

- James Gelvin: *History of the Modern Middle East* (5th ed)
- Suad Amiri: *Sharon and My Mother-in-Law*

#### **Grading policy:**

Your final grade will be assigned as a letter grade according to the following scale:

#### **Letter Grade**

#### **Percentage**

A

90-100%

B

80-89%

C

70-79%

D

60-69%

F

0-59%

#### **Attendance policy:**

Showing up is required and expected. Though there is no penalty for missing a single session—there are repercussions for missing multiple classes. If you miss 5 or more classes, the highest grade you can achieve is a "B", 7 or more a "C", and 9 or more a "D".

#### **Academic honesty/integrity statement:**

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All work submitted must be original and properly cited. Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic dishonesty will result in immediate consequences as outlined in the university's academic integrity policy.

**Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):**

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Social Sciences area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I understand human experiences and connections?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:

- Students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior, and how historical, economic, political, social or geographic relationships develop, persist or change.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Intercultural Competence
- Perspective-Taking
- Persuasion