

NES/HIST 596M-001

Fall 2008 | Department of Near Eastern Studies

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IMPERIALISM, NATIONALISM, GENDER, AND QUESTIONS OF IDENTITY IN
THE MIDDLE EAST

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The nineteenth century saw the extension and intensification of nationalism, the identification of individuals with a specific region based on a number of factors including ethnic origin and shared cultural values such as language and religion. Nationalism intensified in part as regional systems sharing common cultural features united - Italy became a unified state in 1860, Germany in 1871. But nationalist movements are usually associated with regions where empires began to weaken, such as in Eastern Europe where the gradual withdrawal of the Ottoman Turks and expansion of the Austro-Hungarian Empire saw the emergence of a number of new states.

This course examines the themes of imperialism, nationalism and national identities with respect to the Ottoman Egypt, Syria, and Palestine. As there are no good discussions of theories of imperialism in paperback I will discuss them, along with readings you have. Your own readings will focus primarily on nationalism and how it is represented by different classes within a nation on occasion. We will also consider the question of whether countries resisting imperial efforts to control/occupy them can become imperialist themselves as a means of displaying their modernity.

We will first examine various approaches to the question of nationalism, using as our basic reference our first reading Benedict Anderson's *IMAGINED COMMUNITIES: REFLECTIONS ON THE ORIGINS AND SPREAD OF NATIONALISM*. The course will ask whether Anderson's hypotheses are applicable to the Middle East over the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries through a series of other readings that include specific case studies and new theoretical approaches to the question of nationalism and how it is represented by European imperialists as well as by nationalists.

Our initial focus on Anderson will include the following themes: Does he consider state boundaries/frontiers to be important as defining a sense of "community?"; does his conception of nationalism in non-Western regions as being similar to the Western experience appear sound?; where does his model for the emergence of sacral-based languages come from?; do the examples we see in our readings on Egypt, the Ottomans and Syria bear out his arguments on the creation of a sense of community, imagined or otherwise?

Beyond Anderson's postulations is a subtheme of interest, that of gender. To what extent does recent scholarship suggest a significant role for gender in considering both nationalism and imperialism: that is, what representations of themselves and of the opposite sex are made by both men and women, rulers and ruled, within the context of gender?

The course will be conducted in the following manner. We as a class will discuss specific readings over a period of weeks. Average readings per week will be 150-200 pages. Members of the class will be assigned readings from these assignments to present to the class; other assignments will be discussed by the class as a whole. At times, members will submit brief analyses of the chapters they have read. During this period seminar members will be developing their paper topics in consultation with me. During the course of the semester, seminar members will present a prospectus of their paper to the seminar. At the end of the semester, members will present drafts of their papers to the seminar for class discussion and critique. Class meetings will also include a meeting with librarians on research facilities.

II. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. PROSPECTUS/TENTATIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY. A five-page paper, or proposal, presenting the topic you propose to work on for your seminar paper. In preparing this prospectus, keep in mind the following. 1. You should first define your research topic and explain its significance. Here you can present also the literature on the subject, sources available etc. 2. What are the major issues or questions you will address? What is the PROBLEM that has aroused your curiosity? What approach to this subject will you use. Tentative bibliography means that these are the sources you have found so far.

** Keep in mind that you can alter this approach as you proceed further with your research. Often materials are not available, or you see a shift in the focus of your research as you proceed.

B. BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAY. No more than 5 pages. Discuss the literature on your topic, including scholarly monographs, journal articles, and primary source material. In short, what is available on your topic? Are there gaps in the literature that should be filled? What further areas do you still have to investigate, if any - what sources are relevant to these areas?

** Bibliographic essays will be exchanged in class to give ideas to each other of research topics and sources.

C. PAPER OUTLINES. This will be at a later stage of your research, explaining the topic, the progress you have made, and the sources you have used, and, if applicable, have yet to use. In short, this outline will be a much more advanced stage of your prospectus but in briefer, two-page form, accompanied by a bibliography.

** See Kate Turabian, A MANUAL OF STYLE, latest edition, for explanation of outlines which should follow the model of a table of contents.

D. FINAL PAPER. Due the last class - this will be December 9th. This paper must be typed, double-spaced, with page numbers, minimum 20 pages of text. You may use footnotes or endnotes; personally I think endnotes are easier to use. You must also have a bibliography where you distinguish between primary sources and secondary sources; you can include books and articles together within the secondary source section. The bibliography should list at least 12-15 sources; at least two should be primary sources. Textbooks cannot be used as sources.

We will discuss the nature of primary sources in class but here are some examples: memoirs, autobiographies, travelers' accounts from the period, diplomatic documents, private papers, newspaper accounts from the period or by individuals recounting events in which they were involved. Other types of documents are photographs of the era, maps of the era, documentary films [Lowell Thomas on T.E. Lawrence for example].

** I list separately documents in Special Collections and the library that may be of use for

primary sources as well as private papers we have on microfilm. We will have two library visits to examine available sources on the web.

III. IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS

A. PAPER OUTLINES [See above]. A copy of the outline must be made available to all seminar members in advance, i.e., at least the day before, not five minutes before the class! Each presentation should take no more than 15 minutes; the class will then discuss the outline and comment, making suggestions for changes, improvements etc.

B. PAPER DRAFTS. These are more or less finished drafts of the papers, with bibliography. A copy of the paper will be given to me and to one other student who will comment on it - assignments for paper critiques will be given later in the semester.

IV. GRADING

The prospectus, bibliographic essay, paper outline, and general participation in discussions (including presentation of readings on occasion) will count for 50% of the grade. The drafts of the final papers and the student critiques of them, along with the final paper will count 50%.

** Attendance at all seminar meetings is expected as is participation in discussions. Any absences must be explained to me in advance and non-attendance without explanation will result in a lower grade.

V. REQUIRED TEXTS.

Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. 3rd ed.

John Chalcraft, *The Striking Cabbies of Cairo and Other Stories: Crafts and Guilds in Egypt, 1863-1914*.

Eve Troutt Powell, *A Different Shade of Colonialism: Egypt, Great Britain, and the Mastery of the Sudan*.

Heather Sharkey, *Living with Colonialism: Nationalism and Culture in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan*.

Ellen Fleischmann, *The Nation and Its New Women: The Palestinian Women's Movement 1920-1948*.

Charles D. Smith, "Imagined Identities, Imagined Nationalisms: Print Culture and Egyptian Nationalism in Light of Recent Scholarship," *IJMES*, V 29, 1997.

VI. COURSE OUTLINE.

8/26. Introduction to the course. Approaches to the Study of Nationalism and Imperialism. Continued next week.

9/2. A. Library - Searching Sources, Room A315.

B. Theories of Nationalism and Imperialism: Anderson, Ch. 1-6. Two-page papers due covering all chapters but focusing on chapters assigned to each student.

9/9. A. Library - Searching Sources, Room A315.

B. Anderson, Ch. 7-12. Smith, "Imagined Identities, Imagined Nationalisms: Print

Culture and Egyptian Nationalism in Light of Recent Scholarship.” Two-page papers due re Anderson assignment.

9/16. Chalcraft, *Striking Cabbies of Cairo*. Two-page papers due on Chalcraft, noting overall argument but focusing on assigned chapter.

9/23. Powell, *A Different Shade of Colonialism*.

9/30. Sharkey, *Living with Colonialism*.

10/7. Fleischmann, *The Nation and its New Women*, Ch. 1-3. PROSPECTUS DUE

10/14 Fleischmann, “ ” “ , Ch. 4-7. Two-page papers due.

10/21. PRESENTATION OF OUTLINES AND BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAYS. Student critiques.

10/28. No Meeting: Individual Discussion of Papers.

11/4. No Meeting: Individual discussion of Papers.

11/11. Presentation of Drafts of Papers. Student Critiques

11/18. Presentation of Drafts of Papers. Student critiques.

11/25. ***NO CLASS***

12/2. Individual Meetings.

12/9. Final class - papers due