

MDES 441w
CITIES OF THE MIDDLE EAST
FALL 2019

Lecture MW 2:00-3:20pm
Section: 41501R
Location: THH 209

Instructor: Ekin Kurtic
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Office: Taper Hall (THH) 256L
Office Hours: MW 3.30-5.30pm

Course Description

The Middle East has a long urban tradition, including some of the world's oldest cities such as Cairo, Damascus, Istanbul, and Baghdad. The making of these Middle Eastern cities reflects diverse histories of colonialism, imperialism, and nation-state building. In the last few decades, urbanization in the region has continued at an accelerated rate resulting in varied socio-political transformations. Cities are therefore dynamic landscapes, subject to constant change and remaking. For instance, contemporary processes of migration, neoliberalization, and globalization reshape the social, economic, and cultural urban landscapes in the region. On the backdrop of a conceptual approach to cities as spaces formed by and formative of social, political, technoscientific and economic practices as well as non-human forces, this course examines how urban life has been constructed, governed, experienced, contested, and transformed in the Middle East. We will explore concepts such as colonialism, modernization, marginality, space, (im)mobility, segregation, and greening as they inform our understanding of the complexities of city life in an array of empirical cases. The course will also invite students to approach cities as multispecies landscapes co-developed and co-inhabited by human and non-human agents. The course readings encompass journal articles, book chapters, and books in history, anthropology, sociology, and human geography.

Learning Goals

- To think about the Middle East as a region with a longstanding and dynamic urban life.
- To consider the transnational and transregional connections as they play out in the making of cities in the Middle East.
- To familiarize with approaches and concepts in social sciences and humanities for studying the cities.
- To be able to apply main concepts of urban history, anthropology, and human geography to the study of the Middle East.
- To learn how to critically engage with scholarly works on urban life and space in the region.

Course Materials

All of the textual resources will be posted on the course website. Please download and/or print readings and bring them to class. You will need to have them and your notes with you in order to participate in class discussion.

Requirements and Grading

Class Participation (10%) You are required to regularly and actively attend every class meeting, which will be composed of a lecture followed by a collective discussion (see details under *Course Policies*).

Weekly Posts/Reading Responses (20%) As of the third week of the classes, you are required to post a reading response on the course website each week (approximately 200-250 words). The posts need to summarize the main points of the weekly readings and closely engage with them by raising original questions and/or critiques. In your posts, you are also encouraged to connect the weekly readings to the readings and lectures of the previous weeks. The posts will be visible to all students taking the course. You are also required to read other students' posts and bring your reflections into the class discussion. Weekly posts/responses are due **every Tuesday by 5pm**.

Book Review (30%) You are required to read an entire monograph and write a book review (approximately 5 double-spaced pages). You will choose the book according to your own thematic and empirical interest among the options listed under "Further Reading(s)." Instructions on how to write a book review will be provided by the instructor ahead of time. The book review is due on **Wednesday, October 23rd**.

Final Research Paper (40%) You are required to write a research paper (approximately 15 pages, double-spaced). The research paper will focus on a specific city and topic, which you develop an interest about over the course of the semester. You will submit a brief research proposal (2 pages, double-spaced) and meet the instructor in office hours to discuss it. The proposal and meeting will count for 5% of the grade. The proposal is due on **Wednesday, November 6th**. You are required to briefly present your research topic in the final class meeting. The final paper is due on **Saturday, December 14th**.

Course Policies

Class Participation: This is a lecture and discussion based course. You are required to regularly and actively attend every class meeting. You are expected to have carefully read all the textual material and have critically engaged them. Each session will be composed of one hour of lecture followed by a 20 minutes long collective discussion moderated by the instructor. Class discussions will be based on the content of the required readings and lectures and will take place in an inclusive environment supported by principles of equal participation, collective learning, and mutual respect.

Lateness Policy: Late submissions are not accepted except with the prior permission of the

instructor or with a doctor's note. An assignment handed in late without instructor's permission or doctor's note will be marked down one half-grade for each day it is late.

Academic Integrity and Codes of Conduct

Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Section 11, Behavior Violating University Standards <https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the Office of Equity and Diversity <http://equity.usc.edu> or to the Department of Public Safety <http://capsnet.usc.edu/departments/public-safety/online-forms/contact-us>. This is important for the safety of the whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. The Center for Women and Men <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage <http://sarc.usc.edu> describes reporting options and other resources.

Support Systems and Accommodations

A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the American Language Institute <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. The Office of Disability Services and Programs http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, USC Emergency Information <http://emergency.usc.edu> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

Course Schedule

Week 1 Introduction

August 26 -- Introduction and Course Overview

August 28 – The Islamic City

Abu-Lughod, J.L., 1987. The Islamic city—Historic myth, Islamic essence, and contemporary relevance. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 19(2), pp.155-176.

Raymond, A., 1994. Islamic city, Arab city: Orientalist myths and recent views. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 21(1), pp.3-18.

Week 2 New Directions in Urban Studies in the Middle East

September 2 – No Class: Labor Day

September 4 – New Perspectives on Cities of the Middle East

Asdar Ali, K., 2015. Reframing the Middle Eastern City: Thoughts on New Research, in *A Companion to the Anthropology of the Middle East*. Soraya Altorki (ed.). John Wiley & Sons, pp. 480-492.

El-Kazaz, S. and Mazur, K., 2017. Introduction to Special Section: The Un-Exceptional Middle Eastern City. *City & Society*, 29(1), pp.148-161.

Çelik, Z., 1999. New Approaches to the " Non-Western" City. *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 58(3), pp.374-381.

Week 3 Colonial Urbanism

September 9 – Colonizing Egypt

Mitchell, T., 1991. Preface and ‘Egypt at the exhibition.’ (Chapter 1) In *Colonizing Egypt*. Berkeley: University of California Press. pp. xi-xviii and 1-34.

September 11 – French Urbanism in Morocco

Wright, G., 1991. Morocco: modernization and preservation (Chapter Three). In *The politics of design in French colonial urbanism*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, pp. 85-160.

Week 4 Modernization and Development

September 16 – Infrastructures of Modernization

Hudson, L., 2008. Bab Al-Sham: Approaching Damascus (Chapter 1) and Bab Al-Watan: On Political Capital, 1897-1908 (Chapter 7). In *Transforming Damascus: Space and Modernity in an Islamic City*. London, New York: I.B. Tauris, pp. 1-15 and 99-116.

September 18 – The Making of a “Modern” Capital City

Kezer., Z., 2015. Political Capital (Chapter 1), in *Building Modern Turkey: State, Space, and Ideology in the Early Republic*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, pp. 17-52.

Further Readings:

Çelik, Z., 1993. *The remaking of Istanbul: portrait of an Ottoman city in the nineteenth century* (No. 2). Univ of California Press.

Hanssen, J., 2005. *Fin de siècle Beirut: the making of an Ottoman provincial capital*. Oxford University Press.

Week 5 The City and the Past

September 23 – Remembering a multi-cultural city

Oktem, K., 2005. Faces of the city: Poetic, mediagenic and traumatic images of a multi-cultural city in Southeast Turkey. *Cities*, 22(3), pp.241-253.

September 25 – Reconstruction, memory, and heritage

Nagel, C., 2002. Reconstructing space, re-creating memory: sectarian politics and urban development in post-war Beirut. *Political geography*, 21(5), pp.717-725.

Totah, F.M., 2009. Return to the origin: negotiating the modern and unmodern in the old city of Damascus. *City & Society*, 21(1), pp.58-81.

Further Reading:

Sawalha, A., 2010. *Reconstructing Beirut: Memory and Space in a Postwar Arab City*. Austin: Univ. Tex. Press

Week 6 (Im)Mobility

September 30 - Mobility

Monroe, K.V., 2011. Being mobile in Beirut. *City & Society*, 23(1), pp.91-111.

Yazıcı, B., 2013. Towards an anthropology of traffic: A ride through class hierarchies on Istanbul's roadways. *Ethnos*, 78(4), pp.515-542.

October 2 - Immobility

Wick, L., 2011. The practice of waiting under closure in Palestine. *City & Society*, 23, pp.24-44.

Taraki, L., 2008. Enclave Micropolis: The Paradoxical Case of Ramallah/Al-Bireh. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 37(4), pp.6-20.

Further Reading:

Peteet., J., 2017. *Space and Mobility in Palestine*. Indiana University Press.

Week 7 Cities as Spaces of Migration

October 7 – Migration

Mahdavi, P., 2010. The “trafficking” of Persians: Labor, migration, and traffic in Dubai. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 30(3), pp.533-546.

Darici, H., 2011. Politics of privacy: forced migration and the spatial struggle of the Kurdish youth. *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 13(4), pp.457-474.

October 9 – Refugees and Urban Life

Gabiam, N., 2018. Rethinking Camps: Palestinian Refugees in Damascus, Syria. In *Urban Life: Readings in the Anthropology of the City* (6th edition), George Gmelch and Petra Kupinger (eds.), Waveland Press, pp. 137-154.

Further Readings:

Gardner, A.M., 2010. *City of Strangers: Gulf Migration and the Indian Community in Bahrain*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press

McMurray, D., 2001. *In and Out of Morocco: Smuggling and Migration in a Frontier Boomtown*. Minneapolis/London: Univ. Minn. Press

Week 8 Divided Cities

October 14 – Partitioned Cities

Marcuse, P. and van Kempen, R., 2002. States and Cities: The Partitioning of Urban Space (Chapter 1) and The Partitioned City in History (Chapter 2) In *Of States and Cities: The Partitioning of Urban Space*. Peter Marcuse and Ronald van Kempen (eds). Oxford University Press, pp.3-10 and 11-35.

October 16 – Jerusalem

Silver, H., 2010. Divided cities in the Middle East. *City & Community*, 9(4), pp.345-357.

Shlay Shlay, A.B. and Rosen, G., 2010. Making place: The shifting green line and the development of “Greater” metropolitan Jerusalem. *City & Community*, 9(4), pp.358-389.

Week 9 Urban Life in the “Margins”

October 21 – “Informal” and Squatter Communities

Bayat, A., 1997. Un-civil society: The politics of the 'informal people'. *Third World Quarterly*, 18(1), pp.53-72.

Yonucu, D., 2008. A Story of a Squatter Neighborhood: From the place of the " dangerous classes" to the " place of danger". *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, pp.50-72.

October 23 – Queer City

Merabet, S., 2014. Queer habitus: bodily performance and queer ethnography in Lebanon. *Identities*, 21(5), pp.516-531.

Further Reading:

Bayat, A., 1997. *Street Politics: Poor People's Movements in Iran*. Columbia University Press

*** Book review is due on Thursday, October 23rd ***

Week 10 Neoliberal Urban Transformation

October 28 – Gated Communities

Candan, A.B. and Kolluoğlu, B., 2008. Emerging spaces of neoliberalism: A gated town and a public housing project in Istanbul. *New perspectives on Turkey*, 39, pp.5-46.

Kuppinger, P., 2004. Exclusive greenery: New gated communities in Cairo. *City & Society*, 16(2), pp.35-61.

October 30 – Neoliberal Subjectivity

Kanna, A., 2010. FLEXIBLE CITIZENSHIP IN DUBAI: Neoliberal Subjectivity in the Emerging "City-Corporation". *Cultural Anthropology*, 25(1), pp.100-129.

Further Reading:

Elyachar, J., 2005. *Markets of Dispossession: NGOs, Economic Development, and the State in Cairo*. Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press

Week 11 Globalization

November 4 – Globalizing Cities

Malkawi, F. K., 2008. The New Arab Metropolis: A New Research Agenda. In *The Evolving Arab City: Tradition, Modernity, and Urban Change*, Yasser Elsheshtawy (ed). London and New York: Routledge, pp. 27-35.

Yasser Elsheshtawy. 2008. Cities of Sand and Fog: Abu Dhabi's Arrival on the Global Scene. In *The Evolving Arab City: Tradition, Modernity, and Urban Change*, Yasser Elsheshtawy (ed). London and New York: Routledge, pp. 258-304.

November 6 – Complicating Globalization, Multiplying Flows

Ghannam, C., 2006. Keeping Him Connected: Globalization and the Production of Locality in Cairo. In *Cairo Cosmopolitan: Politics, Culture, and Urban Space in the New Globalized Middle East*. Diane Singerman and Paul Amar (eds). American University in Cairo Press, pp. 251-268.

Further Readings:

Kanna, A., 2011. *Dubai: The City as Corporation*. Minneapolis: Univ. Minn. Press

Ghannam, F., 2002. *Remaking the Modern: Space, Relocation, and Politics of Identity in a Global Cairo*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

*** Research proposal is due on November 6th ***

Week 12 Contested Urban Spaces

November 11 – The City as a Battleground

Crane, S., 2017. Housing as battleground: targeting the city in the battles of Algiers. *City & Society*, 29(1), pp.187-212.

November 13 – Arab Spring and Gezi Resistance

Erensü, S. and Karaman, O., 2017. The work of a few trees: Gezi, politics and space. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 41(1), pp.19-36.

Allegra, M., Bono, I., Rokem, J., Casaglia, A., Marzorati, R. and Yacobi, H., 2013. Rethinking cities in contentious times: The mobilisation of urban dissent in the ‘Arab Spring’. *Urban Studies*, 50(9), pp.1675-1688.

Week 13 Urban Environments

November 18 – Waste and Water in the City

Kuppinger, P. 2018. Waste and Garbage in the City: A Case Study from Cairo, Egypt. In *Urban Life: Readings in the Anthropology of the City* (6th Edition), George Gmelch and Petra Kuppinger (eds). Waveland Press, pp. 431-443.

Farmer, T., 2017. Willing to Pay: Competing Paradigms about Resistance to Paying for Water Services in Cairo, Egypt. *Middle East Law and Governance*, 9(1), pp.3-19.

November 20 – Risk and disaster

Angell, E., 2014. Assembling disaster: Earthquakes and urban politics in Istanbul. *City*, 18(6), pp.667-678.

Week 14 “Greening” the City

November 25 – Urban Sustainability in the Gulf

Gökçe G. 2019. Introduction and Inhabiting the Spaceship (Chapter 1). in *Spaceship in the Desert: Energy, Climate Change, and Urban Design in Abu Dhabi*. Duke University Press, pp. 37-64.

Koch, N., 2014. “Building glass refrigerators in the desert”: discourses of urban sustainability and nation building in Qatar. *Urban Geography*, 35(8), pp.1118-1139.

November 27 – No Class: Thanksgiving Break

Further Reading:

Doherty, G., 2017. *Paradoxes of Green: Landscapes of a City-state*. Univ of California Press.

Week 15 Multispecies Cities

December 2 – The City as a Multispecies Space

Wolch, J., 1996. Zoöpolis. *Capitalism nature socialism*, 7(2), pp.21-47.

Hart, K., 2019. Istanbul’s intangible cultural heritage as embodied by street animals. *History and Anthropology*, pp.1-12.

Pinguet, C., 2010. Istanbul’s Street Dogs at the End of the Ottoman Empire: Protection or Extermination. *Animals and People in the Ottoman Empire*, pp.353-71.

Suggested Film: *Kedi* (Cats) directed by Ceyda Torun (2016, 1h 20min)

December 4 – Student Presentations

*** Final research paper is due on Saturday, December 14th ***