

MDES 345p
POWER AND AUTHORITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST
FALL 2019

Lecture MWF 10:00-10:50am
Section: 41537R
Location: THH 207

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

Course Description

This course examines the region called the Middle East through the lenses of power relations and authority. The course is divided into four main parts. First, we will reflect on the relationship between power and knowledge. We will critically elaborate on the question of what the Middle East is and how relations of power and colonial histories are implicated in the construction of the region. In this first part, we will also discuss the role of the social and cultural representations of the Middle East in this construction. Second, we will look at the role of histories of colonialism and nation-state making in shaping the rule and governance in the region. We will particularly focus on the governing of the populations and space and on the everyday workings of the bureaucracy. Third, we will examine how appeal to power and authority in the Middle East operate and manifest in the following selected realms: Gender and Sexuality; Medicine; Expertise and Infrastructure; and Environment. Finally, we will delve into the different forms of resistance to power in the region, ranging from everyday micropolitics to social movements. We will also examine the transnational links between social movements by focusing on the relation between the Black Power movement and the Palestinian struggle.

Learning Goals

- To be able to critically reflect on the construction of the region called “the Middle East” and on the problems with this designation.
- To elaborate on the forms of power and politics implicated in the ways of representing and ordering the region.
- To conceptualize power and authority not only as a limiting but also enabling force.
- To consider the longstanding and complex dynamics between power and resistance in the region.

Course Materials

All the textual resources will be posted on the course website. Please download and/or print the

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 including lectures and discussion sessions.

Leading Discussion (15%) You are required to lead *one* Friday discussion session. In leading the discussion you will provide your brief, critical reflection on the weekly theme of the readings and the theme of the lectures; point to your peers' posts you find striking, crucial and/or problematic; raise questions to discuss; and moderate the discussion. You are required to share the discussion question(s) with me **before midnight on Thursday**. I will reply Friday morning with suggestions.

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 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 Thursday by noon**.

Term Paper (20%) You are required to write a short term paper (approximately 5-7 double-spaced pages). In this paper, you will provide a close analysis of a Middle East related book, news article series, film and/or documentary (based on your own selection) in response to the question of how the region and/or corresponding country in the region is conceptualized and represented in the textual/visual media. In your analysis, you will need to refer to the course readings. The term paper is due on **Friday, September 27th**.

Final Paper (35%) You are required to write a final paper (approximately 12 double-spaced pages). In the final paper, you are required to do close textual analysis of course readings and to critically reflect on the selected course theme(s) in response to *one* of the two questions that will be provided by the instructor ahead of time. The final paper is due on **Saturday, December 12th**.

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. Every Friday, discussion sessions will be held based on the content of the required readings and weekly lectures. The discussions will be moderated by one of the class participants and they 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/department/department-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/academicssupport/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

PART I CONSTRUCTING THE MIDDLE EAST

WEEK 1 Introduction and Region-Making

August 26 – Introduction and Course Overview

August 28 – Politics of Region Formation

Bourdieu, P., 1992. Identity and representation: elements for a critical reflection on the idea of region. In *Language and symbolic power*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 220-228.

Entrikin, J.N., 1996. Place and region 2. *Progress in human geography*, 20(2), pp.215-221.

Lewis, M. and Wigen, K., 1997. World Regions: An Alternative Scheme (Chapter 6), in *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography*. Berkeley: UC Press, pp.1-19 and 157-188.

August 30 – Is there a Middle East?

Bonine, Michael, Abbas Amanat, and Michael Ezekiel Gasper (eds.). 2012. Introduction: Is there a Middle East? in *Is There a Middle East? The Evolution of a Geopolitical Concept*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, pp. 1-7

Yilmaz, H., 2012. The Eastern Question and the Ottoman Empire: The Genesis of the Near and Middle East in the Nineteenth Century. in *Is There a Middle East? The Evolution of a Geopolitical Concept*. Bonine, Michael, Abbas Amanat, and Michael Ezekiel Gasper (eds.). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, pp. 11-35.

Roughi, R., 2012. Why Are There No Middle Easterners in the Maghrib? in *Is There a Middle East? The Evolution of a Geopolitical Concept*. Bonine, Michael, Abbas Amanat, and Michael Ezekiel Gasper (eds.). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, pp.100-116.

WEEK 2 Socio-Cultural Construction of the Middle East

September 2 – No Class: Labor day

September 4 – Orientalism

Said, E., 1979. 'Introduction' and 'Knowing the Oriental' (Chapter One), in *Orientalism*. Vintage Books, pp. 1-30 and 31-49.

Lewis, M., and Wigen, K., 1997. The Cultural Constructs of Orient and Occident, East and West (Chapter 3), in *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography*. Berkeley: UC Press, pp. 73-103.

Optional: Rowe, J. C., 2013. Cultural Hegemony: Popular Representations of the Middle East in the US. American Orientalism After Said. In: *Popular Culture in the Middle East and North Africa: Post Colonial Outlook*. Mounira Soliman and Walid El Hamamsy (eds.). London, New York: Routledge, pp. 183-197.

September 6 -- Discussion Session

PART II: COLONIAL POWER AND NATION-STATE FORMATION

WEEK 3 Colonial Power and Representing the Middle East

September 9 – Exhibiting 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 – Ordering Egypt

Mitchell, T. 1991. ‘Enframing’ (Chapter 2). In *Colonizing Egypt*. Berkeley: University of California Press pp. 34-65.

Optional: Foucault, M., 1991 Governmentality. In *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. Eds Graham Burchell et al. University of Chicago Press, pp. 87-104.

September 13 – Discussion Session

WEEK 4 Governing Gaza within the Mandate System

September 16 – Production of Bureaucratic Authority

Feldman, I., 2008. ‘Introduction: Government Practice and the Place of Gaza’ and ‘Ruling Files (Chapter 2)’ *Governing Gaza: Bureaucracy, Authority, and the Work of Rule, 1917–1967*. Duke University Press, pp. 1-30 and 31-63.

September 18 – Practice of Government and Bureaucratic Authority

Feldman, I., 2008. ‘Servicing Everyday Life (Chapter 6)’. in *Governing Gaza: Bureaucracy, Authority, and the Work of Rule, 1917–1967*. Duke University Press, pp. 155-189.

September 20 – Discussion session

WEEK 5 Nation-State Formation in Turkey

September 23 – Nationalism and Population Politics

Üngör, U. Ü., 2011. ‘Introduction’ and ‘Nationalism and Population Politics in The Late Ottoman Empire’ (Chapter 1), in *Making of Modern Turkey: Nation and State in Eastern Anatolia, 1913-1050*. Oxford University Press, pp. 1-7 and 8-50.

Optional:

Owen, R., 2007. “The end of empires: the emergence of the modern Middle East states” (Chapter 1). in *State Power and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East*. Gallup Press, pp.5-22.

September 25 – Building a National Space

Kezer, Z., 1996. The making of a nationalist capital: socio-spatial practices in early republican Ankara. *Built Environment*, 22(2), p.124.

Kezer, Z., 2009. An imaginable community: the material culture of nation-building in early republican Turkey. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 27(3), pp.508-530.

September 27 – Discussion Session

*** Term paper is due on September 27th ***

PART III: FACES OF POWER AND AUTHORITY

WEEK 6 Gender and Sexuality in the Middle East

September 30 – Liberating Muslim Women?

Abu-Lughod, L., 2002. Do Muslim women really need saving? Anthropological reflections on cultural relativism and its others. *American anthropologist*, 104(3), pp.783-790.

Cooke, M., 2008. Deploying the Muslimwoman. *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 24(1), pp.91-99.

Al-Ali, N., 2018. Sexual violence in Iraq: Challenges for transnational feminist politics. *European journal of women's studies*, 25(1), pp.10-27.

Optional:

Al-Ali, N. and Pratt, N., 2010. *What kind of liberation?: Women and the occupation of Iraq*. Univ of California Press.

October 2 – Sex/gender transgression

Najmabadi, A., 2008. Transing and transpassing across sex-gender walls in Iran. *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 36(3/4), pp.23-42.

Zengin, A., 2016. Violent Intimacies: Tactile State Power, Sex/Gender Transgression, and the Politics of Touch in Contemporary Turkey. *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, 12(2), pp.225-245.

October 4 – Discussion Session

WEEK 7 Medical Authority

October 7 – Medical Modernity and Statecraft

Dewachi, O., 2017. “Ungovernable Life: Introduction” and “Development and its Discontents” (Chapter 5) in *Ungovernable Life: Mandatory Medicine and Statecraft in Iraq*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, pp. 1-28 and 105- 127.

October 9 – State Medicine in Wartime

Dewachi, O., 2017. “Infants and Infantry” (Chapter 6) in *Ungovernable Life: Mandatory Medicine and Statecraft in Iraq*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, pp. 127-151.

Optional:

Inhorn, M.C. and Sargent, C.F., 2006. Introduction to medical anthropology in the Muslim World. *Medical anthropology quarterly*, 20(1), p.1-11.

October 11 – Discussion Session

WEEK 8 Expert Power and Technopolitics

October 14 – Dams, Mosquitoes, and Expertise in Egypt

Mitchell, T., 2002. ‘Can the Mosquito Speak? (Chapter 1)’ in *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Technopolitics and Modernity*. University of California Press, pp. 19-53.

Optional:

Carr, E.S., 2010. Enactments of expertise. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 39, pp.17-32.

October 16 – Building Roads, Establishing Expert Power

Adalet, B., 2018. “Introduction” and “Material Encounters: Experts, Reports, and Machines” (Chapter 3). in *Hotels and Highways: The Construction of Modernization Theory in Cold War Turkey*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, pp.1-22 and 85-121.

October 18 – No Class: Fall Recess

WEEK 9 Governing the Environment I

October 21 – Environmental Imaginaries of the Middle East

Davis, D., 2011. “Imperialism, Orientalism, and the Environment in the Middle East: History, Policy, Power, and Practice,” in Diana David and Edmund Burke eds., *Environmental Imaginaries of the Middle East and North Africa*, Athens: Ohio University, pp-1-22.

Alatout, S., 2011. Hydro-Imaginaries and the Construction of the Political Geography of the Jordan River The Johnston Mission, 1953–56. in Diana David and Edmund Burke eds., *Environmental Imaginaries of the Middle East and North Africa*, Athens: Ohio University, pp-218-245.

October 23 – Environmental Conflicts and Justice

Davis, D., 2012. “Enclosing Nature in North Africa: Natural Parks and the Politics of Environmental History,” in Alan Mikhail (ed), *Water on Sand: Environmental Histories of the Middle East*, New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 159-180, 2012.

Van Etten, J., Jongerden, J., de Vos, H.J., Klaasse, A. and van Hoeve, E.C., 2008. Environmental destruction as a counterinsurgency strategy in the Kurdistan region of Turkey. *Geoforum*, 39(5), pp.1786-1797.

Optional:

Gürcan, E.C., 2018. Extractivism, Neoliberalism, and the Environment: Revisiting the Syrian Conflict from an Ecological Justice Perspective. *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, pp.1-19.

October 25 – Discussion Session

WEEK 10 Governing the Environment II

October 28 – Politics of Nature and Sustainability

Braverman, I., 2009. Planting the promised landscape: Zionism, nature, and resistance in Israel/Palestine. *Nat. Resources J.*, 49, p.317.

Gutkowski, N., 2018. Governing through timescape: Israeli sustainable agriculture policy and the Palestinian-Arab citizens. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 50(3), pp.471-492.

Optional:

Robert Fletcher. 2017. Environmentality unbound: Multiple governmentalities in environmental politics. *Geoforum* 85, pp. 311.315.

October 30 -- Energy and Climate Change

Mitchell, T., 2009. Carbon democracy. *Economy and Society*, 38(3), pp.399-432.

Günel, G., 2016. The infinity of water: Climate change adaptation in the Arabian Peninsula. *Public Culture*, 28(2 (79)), pp.291-315.

November 1 – Discussion Session

PART IV: RESISTANCE TO POWER AND AUTHORITY

WEEK 11 Everyday Politics

November 4 – Mundane Politics of the “Informal People”

Scott, J. 1989. Everyday Forms of Resistance. *Copenhagen Papers* No.4, pp. 33-62.

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

November 6 – Women and Youth: Everyday Spaces of Agency

Abu-Lughod, L., 1985. A community of secrets: The separate world of Bedouin women. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 10(4), pp.637-657.

Deeb, L. and Harb, M., 2013. Choosing both faith and fun: Youth negotiations of moral norms in South Beirut. *Ethnos*, 78(1), pp.1-22.

November 8 – Discussion Session

WEEK 12 Feminist Movements and Transnational Networks

November 11 – Feminist Movements

Al-Ali, N., 2003. Gender and civil society in the Middle East. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 5(2), pp.216-232.

Bora A., interviewed by Nil Uzun. 2019. Women's and Feminist Movements. In: Özyürek E., Özpınar G., Altındış E. (eds) *Authoritarianism and Resistance in Turkey*. Springer, Cham, pp. 117-125.

Optional:

Ellalti-Köse, T., 2018. The State, Law, and Feminist Struggles in the Neoliberalizing City: The Istanbul Courthouse as a Contested Space. in *Contested Spaces in Contemporary Turkey: Environmental, Urban and Secular Politics*, Fatma Nur Gocek (ed). I.B Tauris.

November 13 – Black Power and Palestine

Fishbach, M., 2018. “Prologue” and “Balanced and Guarded: Martin Luther King Jr. on the Arab-Israeli Tightrope” and “Struggle and Revolution: The Black Panthers and the Guerrilla Image” in *Black Power and Palestine: Transnational Countries of Color*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, pp.1-7; 71-90 and 111-130.

November 15 – Discussion Session

WEEK 13 Social Movements and Protests

November 18 – Arab Spring I

Dabashi, H., 2012. *The Arab Spring: the end of postcolonialism*. Zed Books Ltd. [selections]

Bayat, A., 2013. The Arab Spring and its surprises. *Development and Change*, 44(3), pp.587-601.

Optional:

Gelvin, J. 2015. *The Arab Uprisings: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford University Press.

November 20 – Arab Spring II

Al-Ali, N., 2012. Gendering the Arab spring. *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication*, 5(1), pp.26-31.

Bayat, A., 2015. Plebeians of the Arab Spring. *Current Anthropology*, 56(S11), pp.33-43.

Ismail, S., 2013. Urban subalterns in the Arab revolutions: Cairo and Damascus in comparative perspective. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 55(4), pp.865-894.

ABU-LUGHOD, L.I., 2012. Living the “revolution” in an Egyptian village: Moral action in a national space. *American Ethnologist*, 39(1), pp.21-25.

November 22 – No Class: Professor at a Conference

WEEK 14 Social Movements and Protests -- Continuing

November 25 – Gezi Park Resistance in Turkey

Yıldırım, U. and Navaro-Yashin, Y., 2013. An Impromptu Uprising: Ethnographic Reflections on the Gezi Park Protests in Turkey. *Cultural Anthropology Online*.

Arsel, M., Adaman, F., & Akbulut, B, 2017. ‘A Few Environmentalists’? Interrogating the ‘Political in Gezi Park’ In F. Adaman, B. Akbulut, & M. Arsel (Eds.), *Neoliberal Turkey and Its Discontents: Economic Policy and the Environment Under Erdoğan*. London, New York: I.B.Tauris.

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.

Tuğal, C., 2013. “Resistance everywhere”: The Gezi revolt in global perspective. *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 49, pp.157-172.

November 27 & 29 – No Class: Thanksgiving Break

WEEK 15 Social Movements and Protests – Continuing

December 2 – The Rojava Experience and Democratic Autonomy

Üstündağ, N., 2016. Self-Defense as a revolutionary practice in Rojava, or how to unmake the state. *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 115(1), pp.197-210.

Küçük, B. and Özselçuk, C., 2016. The Rojava experience: possibilities and challenges of building a democratic life. *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 115(1), pp.184-196.

Cemgil, C. and Hoffmann, C., 2016. The 'Rojava Revolution' in Syrian Kurdistan: A Model of Development for the Middle East?. *IDS Bulletin*, 47(3), pp.53-76.

December 4 – Discussion Session

December 6 – Final Discussion and Course Summary

*** The final paper is due on Saturday, December 12th ***