Syllabus

METHOD. APPROACH. TO STUDY OF ISLAM & MID. EAST - 38800

Last update 04-11-2016

HU Credits: 4

Degree/Cycle: 2nd degree (Master)

Responsible Department: islamic & middle east stud.

Academic year: 0

Semester: Yearly

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Prof. Reuven Amitai

Coordinator Email: reuven.amitai@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: Tuesday, 15:30 - 16:30

Teaching Staff:
Prof Reuven Amitai
Course/Module description:
The seminar will concentrate on conceptual, theoretical and methodological issues related to Middle Eastern Studies, from the beginning of Islam to the contemporary time. Among the questions to be discussed: the problems of the sources; the Islamic state and the question of political legitimacy; islamization; into the modern period; nationalism and ethnicity; working in archives and libraries; gender; the question of Orientalism; working in archives, use of oral sources; biographies of holy men as historical sources; etc.

Course/Module aims:
The course comes to strengthen the students' ability to deal with methodological and theoretical issues in their graduate studies, as well as current and future research. It will introduce them to various approaches in the study of the Islamic Middle East, from the rise of Islam to today. It will obviously not solve all the problems, and not deal with all possible methodological issues, but should provide a number of insights and techniques in order to better read and analyze source material and modern studies. Another goal of the course is to present a rich and inter-disciplinary portrait of recent and present research, and to map out possible lines for future research.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:
By the end of the course, students will be more able to critically evaluate current research approaches in the study of history; analyze political, social and cultural issues in the context of Islam and the Middle East in a comparative perspective; and make use of the tools and insights provided by the fields of social sciences, comparative history, cultural studies and other disciplines.

Attendance requirements(%):
85%

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Active participation in class discussion, based on readings, and short weekly papers.

Course/Module Content:
Semester I:

1. The problems and uses of sources
2. The Islamic state and its legitimacy
3. Islamization

4. Into the Modern Era

5. Nationalism and Ethnicity

6. Gender

7. "Orientalism"

Semester II:
TBA

Required Reading:
1. Introduction and Organization: some general remarks on principles, methodology and theory.

2. The problem of the early sources

   Michael Cook, Muhammad (Oxford, 1983), ch. 7. [BP 75 C66]

3. The use of sources in writing the history of the modern Middle East


4. The Islamic state and its legitimacy 1


   TBA: A section from Ibn Khaldun’s Muqaddima.

5. The Islamic state (and "Islamic State") and its legitimacy 2
Emanuel Sivan, Radical Islam: Medieval Theology and Modern Politics (New Haven, 1985), ch. 4. [BP 163 S63]


6. Islamization 1


Richard W. Bulliet, “Conversion to Islam and the Emergence of a Muslim Society in Iran,” in Levtzion, Conversion to Islam, 30-51. [BP 52 C66]

7. Islamization 2


Monika Wohlrab-Sahr, Symbolizing Distance: Conversion to Islam in Germany and the United States, in Karin van Nieuwkerk (ed.), Wonder Embracing Islam: Gender and Conversion in the West (Austin, 2006), 71-92.

What’s happening (or might be happening) in Europe today: http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europppblog/2015/03/30/being-german-becoming-muslim-how-german-converts-to-islam-balance-their-national-identity-and-their-faith/

8. Into the Modern Era 1


9. Into the Modern Era 2


See also: Michael Cook, Islam: A Comment, in Beachler et al., 131-135.

10. Nationalism and Ethnicity 1

אנטוני ד’ סמית, האומה בהיסטוריה, תרגמה איה ברויאר (ירושלים, 2003), פרק שני.

המקור באנגלית:
Anthony Smith, The Nation in History: Historiographical Debates about Ethnicity and Nationalism (Hanover, NH, 2000), chapter 2.

ארנסט גלנר, לאומים ולאומיות, תרגם דן דאור (תל-אביב, תשנ”ד), עמ’ 15-38.

המקור באנגלית:

11. Nationalism and Ethnicity 2


12. The Study of Gender in Middle Eastern Studies 1


N.R. Kedde, Deciphering Middle Eastern Women’s History, in N.R. Kedde and B Baron (eds.), Women in Middle Eastern History: Shifting Boundaries in Sex and Gender (New Haven and London, 1991), 1-22. [HQ 1726.5 W67]

13. The Study of Gender in Middle Eastern Studies 2

A Roundtable from the International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, 48/3 (August 2016):

Beth Baron, Gendering Middle East History: Introduction, 551-554.

Sara Pursley, Gender as a Category of Analysis in Development and Environmental History, 555-560.

Sarah Ghabrial, Gender, Power, and Agency in the Historical Study of the Middle East and North Africa, 561-564.

Marie Grace Brown, In Touch: The Body and Sensibility as Historical Text, 565-569.

Malek Abisaab, Gendered Expressions of Labor in the Middle East, 570-573.


14. Orientalism and its critics (and supporters)


Semester II:
TBA

Additional Reading Material:


Course/Module evaluation:
End of year written/oral examination 0 %
Presentation 0 %
Participation in Tutorials 20 %
Project work 40 %
Assignments 40 %
Reports 0 %
Research project 0 %
Quizzes 0 %
Other 0 %
Additional information:
The course includes two mandatory tours to archives in Jerusalem, that will take place the second semester.