

The War for the Greater Middle East
KHC HI 101
Fall 2011

Professor Andrew Bacevich

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Course Purpose

The purpose of this course is to invite students to consider an alternative to the conventional grand narrative of twentieth century political history. Rather than centering on Great Power competition for dominance in Eurasia, this alternative emphasizes the interaction between the West and the peoples of the Islamic world. In terms of chronology, the course will recount events since 1914. In terms of scope, it will focus on three specific zones of conflict: the Persian Gulf (emphasizing Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Iran); Palestine (that is, Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza); and the region that Washington currently refers to as AfPak (Afghanistan and Pakistan).

Course Approach

This is not a lecture course. We will learn collectively. All participants must come to class prepared to discuss the assigned questions. Answering those questions – which will probably increase in number as we go along -- is an individual responsibility: no spoon feeding. If you need help getting started, see the instructor. Keep this in mind: Our interest in the past is informed by our concern for the present and the future. So be alert to the contemporary implications of the history we are studying.

Our collective learning will yield a collective product. Over the course of the semester, we will identify and assemble documents that will together constitute a “Documentary History” of the events we are studying. This will be our legacy to students who participate in this seminar next year. They will use and improve upon our efforts.

Required Texts

1. Warren Bass, *Support Any Friend: Kennedy's Middle East and the Making of the U. S.-Israeli Alliance*
2. Lawrence Freedman, *A Choice of Enemies: America Confronts the Middle East*
3. David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East*
4. Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror*

5. Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-1999*

Attendance

Attendance in class is required

Academic Dishonesty

Students will adhere to the Boston University Code of Academic Conduct, which can be found at <http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/>

Grading

- Attendance and class participation (20%);
- Oral presentation (20%) – one per student; twenty minutes in-class addressing a “vignette;” see instructor before beginning preparation;
- Book review (30%) – maximum of 2000 words, book chosen from list below; a review will typically a) identify and “situate” the author; b) summarize the book; c) engage the argument presented in the book.
- Final exam (30%)

Course Outline & Readings

Lesson 1. The Short Twentieth Century, 1914-1991

Lawrence Freedman, “Book Review: *The Age of Extremes*,” *Reviews in History* (March 1997), <http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/28>. [Read the “author’s response” to the review as well].

How are we accustomed to “telling the story” of the twentieth century? What truths does that conventional narrative reveal? What gets left out or short-changed? To what degree does this narrative retain relevance in the present age?

Lesson 2. Dismembering the Ottoman Empire

Fromkin, pp. 15-301.

Why had Great Britain supported Ottoman rule prior to 1914? Why did the British view change? What methods did Britain and France employ to dismantle the Ottoman Empire? With what success?

Lesson 3. The New Middle East

Fromkin, 305-567

Describe Great Britain's vision of a post-Ottoman Middle East. What role did the Brits allot for Arabs, Jews, and Persians? What mechanisms did the Brits employ to govern the region and to exclude other great powers? Describe the Middle East as it existed in the wake of the "peacemaking" that followed in the wake of World War I. Who won? Who lost?

Lesson 4. Ataturk and the Creation of Modern Turkey

Readings to be determined.

Who was Ataturk? What was his vision for Turkey? To what degree did he fulfill that vision? Assess his legacy. Where does the Armenian genocide fit in that legacy? What would Ataturk make of present-day Turkey?

Lesson 5. Arab-Zionist Relations between the World Wars

Morris, pp. 3-160.

Explain the source of conflict between Arabs and Jews in interwar Palestine. Did British policy serve to exacerbate or alleviate this tension?

Lesson 6. The Middle East and World War II

Morris, pp. 161-176; T. H. Vail Motter, *The Persian Corridor and Aid to Russia* (Washington, DC, 1952), chapters 1, 2, 3, 9, and 15,

<http://www.history.army.mil/books/wwii/persian/index.htm#contents>

Explain the implications of Persian Gulf oil for Great Power politics. What mechanisms were established to facilitate its exploitation and control? Who benefited as a result? What role did the Persian Gulf play in the conduct of World War II? How did the war and its outcome affect the course of events in the Middle East?

Vignette I: FDR entertains the King (1945)

Lesson 7. Demise of the British Mandate for Palestine

Readings to be determined.

Describe Great Britain's departure from India and Mandatory Palestine. Describe the consequences that ensued in each case. Contrast Gandhi's strategy for gaining Indian independence with the strategy pursued by the Zionists in Palestine.

Vignette II: Terrorists bomb the King David (1946)

Lesson 8. 1948 and Its Consequences

Morris, pp. 177-258

What enabled Israel to achieve independence? Who aided the cause? Who or what created the "Palestinian problem"? Assess the challenges facing the state of Israel at its birth. How did Israel respond to those challenges - institutionally, diplomatically, and militarily? How did the creation of Israel affect US policy in the Middle East?

Vignette III: The Assassination of Count Bernadotte (1948)

Lesson 9. Nasser and the Rise of Pan-Arabism

Bass, pp. 15-48; Sayyid Qutb, "Introduction," *Milestones*,
<http://www.kalamullah.com/Books/MILESTONES.pdf>

Describe the origins of the Muslim Brotherhood. What was the Brotherhood's complaint? To what did its members aspire? On what means did they rely? Explain who Nasser was and what he represented. How have Arab governments - beginning with Nasser's Egypt -- responded to Islamism?

Lesson 10. Overthrowing Mossadegh

Kinzer, entire.

Describe the triangular competition between the U. S. the USSR, and Great Britain to dominate Iran in the wake of World War II. Why did Great Britain and the United States conspire to overthrow Mossadegh? With what consequences for Iran and the Middle East?

Vignette IV: Iranian-Israeli relations under the Shah

Lesson 11. The Suez Crisis of 1956 and Its Consequences

Bass, pp. 49-253; Morris, pp. 259-301

Explain the origins of the Suez Crisis of 1956 - from an Egyptian perspective, a British perspective, and an Israeli perspective. What determined the outcome of the crisis? What role did the U. S. play? What legacy did the crisis leave in its wake?

Vignette V: The Aswan Dam

Lesson 12. The War for Algerian Independence

“The Battle of Algiers”

Explain how the FLN won Algerian independence from France.

Lesson 13. The Six Day War

Morris, pp. 302-386

Describe the origins, conduct, and legacy of the 1967 War. How did the war affect U. S.-Israeli relations? How did it affect Israeli ambitions? What was the U. S. government position on Israeli settlements? How did the Arabs respond to Israel’s victory?

Vignette VI: The attack on the *USS Liberty*

Lesson 14. Rise of the PLO

Reading to be determined.

Describe the pattern of terrorism, foreign and domestic, during the 1970s. Assess the role and evolution of the PLO. Describe the response of nations targeted by terrorist activity.

Vignette VII: The Munich Olympics

Lesson 15. From the October War to Camp David

Morris, pp. 387-493; Freedman, pp. 39-61

Describe the origins, conduct, and implications of the 1973 War. What role did the Soviet Union and United States each play? Explain the strategic vision of Anwar Sadat. Describe the path to and the results of the Camp David accords. How did the outcome affect U. S. relations with Egypt and with Israel?

Vignette VIII: Richard Nixon’s Operation Independence

Lesson 16. The Iranian Revolution and Its Consequences

Freedman, pp. 62-83

Explain the origins and outcome of the Iranian Revolution of 1979? Why did the Islamists come out on top? What were the implications for Persian Gulf politics and for Iran's relations with its neighbors and with the United States?

Vignette IX: Desert One

Lesson 17. The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan

Freedman, pp. 84-121

Explain the inspiration for the Carter Doctrine. Describe its evolution and implementation. Evaluate the short-term and long-term consequences of US support for the Afghan mujahideen.

Vignette X: The military history of Diego Garcia

Lesson 18. The 1982 Lebanon War and the First Intifada

Morris, pp. 494-610; Freedman, pp. 122-149, 254-271

Describe the origins, evolution, and impact of Israel's 1982 intervention in Lebanon. Describe the origins and aspirations of Hamas and Hezbollah. Why did the Intifada begin? How did Israel respond? With what effect?

Vignette XI: Iran-Contra

Lesson 19. The Persian Gulf War, Phases I (1980-1988) and II (1990-1991)

Freedman, pp. 150-253

Describe the origins, conduct, and impact of the Iran-Iraq War. What role did the United States play and why? Why did Saddam Hussein invade Kuwait in 1990. Assess the success of the US-led response to that invasion.

Vignette XII: Osirak

Lesson 20. The Failure of Oslo

Morris, pp. 611-669; Freedman, pp. 309-340

Describe the Oslo Accords. What conditions made it possible for Israelis and Palestinians to reach agreement? Why did that agreement not yield real peace?

Vignette XIII: Iran Air 655

Lesson 21. Dual Containment

Freedman, pp. 275-308

Vignette XIV: Operation Provide Comfort

Lesson 22. Al Qaeda and the Origins of 9/11

Freedman, pp. 341-396; "Bin Laden's Fatwa," (1996), http://www.pbs.org/newshour/terrorism/international/fatwa_1996.html; "Al Qaeda's Fatwa," (1998), http://www.pbs.org/newshour/terrorism/international/fatwa_1998.html

Describe the origins, aims, and strategy employed by Al Qaeda. Describe the U. S. response prior to 9/11. Characterize U. S. policy toward the Taliban prior to 9/11.

Vignette XV: Khobar Towers

Lesson 23. Bush's Global War on Terror

Freedman, pp. 397-448

Assess the Iraq War: how it was justified, what the U. S. intended to accomplish, what it actually accomplished, and what it cost. What were the war's regional implications?

Vignette XVI: The Downing Street Memo

Lesson 24. Israel's Small Wars: Lebanon and Gaza

Freedman, pp. 449-472

Describe the pattern of Israeli settlement activity in the West Bank. Who are the settlers? Describe the relationship between settlers and Israeli authorities. Explain the rationale for partition as pursued by the government of Ariel Sharon.

Lesson 25. Obama's War - AfPak

Freedman, pp. 473-511

Assess the course of Operation Enduring Freedom, to include its implications for Pakistan.

Vignette XVII: COIN Rediscovered

Lesson 26. The Arab Uprising

Essays in the May/June 2011 issue of *Foreign Affairs*

Why did it begin? What has it accomplished? What are its implications?

Vignette XVIII: The Libya Intervention

Lesson 27. Conclusion

Review books - some possibilities:

Christian Alfonsi, *Circle in the Sand*
Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon, *The Age of Sacred Terror*
Shareen Blair Brysac and Karl Meyer, *Kingmakers*
Douglas Feith, *War and Decision*
Roger Ford, *Eden to Armageddon*
Tommy Franks, *American Soldier*
Steven Freiburger, *Dawn Over Suez*
David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*
Lloyd C. Gardner, *The Long Road to Baghdad*
Lloyd C. Gardner, *Three Kings*
Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor, *The Generals' War*
Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*
Robert Kaplan, *Imperial Grunts*
Gilles Kepel, *Jihad*
Rashid Khalidi, *Sowing Crisis*
David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla*
Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam*
Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong?*
Douglas Little, *American Orientalism*
Amy Marcus, *Jerusalem 1913*
Andrew Mango, *Ataturk*
Aaron David Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land*
Benny Morris, *1948*
Marc J. O'Reilly, *Unexceptional*
Michael Oren, *Six Days of War*
Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco*
Donald Rumsfeld, *Knowns and Unknowns*

Jeremy Salt, *The Unmaking of the Middle East*
Tom Segev, *1967*
Patrick Tyler, *A World of Trouble*
Bob Woodard, *Obama's Wars*
Robin Wright, *The Last Great Revolution*
Daniel Yergin, *The Prize*
Idith Zertal and Akiva Eldar, *Lords of the Land*