UNDERSTANDING MODERN NORTH AFRICA

Course Syllabus

Instructor: Wilfrid J. Rollman
Senior Lecturer, International Relations Department
Tel: 781-643-7177 (Res.); 617-353-2978 (Dept.)
E-mail: rollmanw@bu.edu

Class Meetings MW, 6:00-7:30 P.M., IR Dept., Rm 102 (154 Bay State Road)
Office Hours Monday, 1:30-3:30; Wednesday, 11:00-3:00; By Appointment

Course Description

An introduction to the politics, cultures, societies, economies of the region of northwest Africa called by medieval Arab geographers and travelers the Maghrib. The term describes a large and geographically varied landscape whose inhabitants have identified culturally with the Islamic Middle East since the area’s conquest by Muslim Arabs after the seventh century, while maintaining an identity of their own which combines elements of their Arabo-Islamic heritage with that of the Amazigh (Berber), Mediterranean, and African world of which they have also been a part since ancient times. Since the 1950s and 1960s, this region has been divided politically into the nation-states of Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania, and the disputed territories of the Western Sahara.

In the Middle Ages, Maghribi merchants, scholars, soldiers, and governing dynasties were part of an, in several periods, politically dominated the western Mediterranean, including Muslim Iberia (al-Andalus). They participated fully in the flowering of Islamic Civilization in that region: in the production of the brilliant scientific, institutional, and artistic achievements epitomized in its wealth of surviving monuments and the widely influential work of its renowned philosophers, physicians, and writers, both medieval and modern.

Prior to its conquest and colonization by European regimes in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, its governments and fleets of privateers played a significant role in the political and economic affairs of Western Europe and the United States—not to mention in their collective imaginations—as the “Barbary Corsairs”. As colonies, and later, as independent states, the nations and societies of this region have developed deep and complex cultural, political and economic relationships with Europe, especially France, which became the dominant colonial power there after its conquest of Algeria in the nineteenth century.
Today, several million of the region’s people live in Europe and are having a significant impact on its political, socio-economic, and cultural life. The region provides Europe—and to some degree the United States—with critical supplies of oil and gas, is seen as an important and growing market for European goods and continues to be a place of critical political and strategic concern for European and American governments. While it continues to interact closely with the Arab and Islamic world, it persists in sustaining its own architecture of interests, identity, and priorities based on its own geographical, cultural, and historical experiences and context, all of which merit serious study and appreciation on their own and which also provide a unique vantage point from which to better comprehend the greater Middle East/North African and Mediterranean region generally. Since January, 2011 the entire region has been shaken by popular protests which had their beginnings in North Africa: governments in Tunisia and Libya were overthrown, Morocco’s monarchy was moved to undertake important reforms, and Algeria and Mauritania struggled to maintain an uneasy status quo.

The course will focus on the region’s political, social, economic, and cultural development since 1900, with emphasis on the period post-WWII. It will provide an overview of the its medieval legacies, but its principal emphasis will be on the Maghrib’s experiences as French, Spanish, or Italian colonies emerging independent nations and states. The course and readings will also provide an in-depth consideration of the problems, achievements, and challenges confronted by the Maghrib since it achieved independence. This section will include discussion of critical issues, such as the quest for democratic government, economic development, education policies, gender equality, immigration, and human rights. Substantial attention will also be given to social and cultural developments and their critical interaction in the political process, with particular attention to the “Arab Spring”. Salient in this regard is the role being played by Islam in politics and the search among all North Africans for cultural authenticity, democracy, and justice throughout the region as it enters the more and more fully globalized setting of the twenty-first century.

Prerequisites: None

Required Texts:


Course Requirements, Assignments, Projects:

I. Class Attendance and Participation

II. Map Exercise (materials provided by instructor)

III. Readings—As Indicated in the Syllabus

IV. Two Examinations: Mid-Term and Final

V. Two Reading Quizzes

VI. Two Short Writing Projects:

a. Analytical paper on the image of North Africa in film based on a study of either: *The Battle of Algiers* (Gillo Pontecorvo, 1966), OR *Ali Zaoua: Prince of the Streets* (Nabil Ayuch, 2000), OR *Halfaouine: Boy of the Terraces* (Ferid Boughedir, 1990). All of these films raise social, political, historical, and cultural issues critical to Tunisians, Algerians, and Moroccans today and convey an impression of how they see and deal with these issues. This paper should describe and analyze the focus and interpretive stance of the film reviewed. The paper should be typed, double-spaced, and 1,500-2,000 words in length.

b. A Review and analysis of one (your choice) of the books from the “required texts” list. In this essay describe briefly the scope of the work selected and analyze its strengths and weaknesses. Does the book have a thesis or a particular perspective/bias? Is it adequately documented? How has it been useful to you in this course? Would you recommend this work to others? Your paper should be typed, double-spaced, and 1,500-2,000 words in length.
THE ASSIGNED FILMS ARE AVAILABLE AT KRASKER FILM/VIDEO SERVICES IN THE MUGAR LIBRARY

ALL DUE DATES for writing projects are given in the syllabus. Work not received on the date due will be penalized one full grade for each day it is late (allowances made, of course, for excusable delays).


**Academic Misconduct:** All class members are expected to maintain high standards of academic honesty and integrity. You are expected to provide citations in papers for all quotations, paraphrases, and ideas taken from any source other than your own original thoughts. Boston University has very strict standards for intellectual integrity, and punishment for plagiarism is severe, and can include permanent expulsion from the university. For more on the definition of plagiarism and the standards to which you will be held, see the CAS Academic Conduct Code, available at [http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/](http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/) or the GRS Academic Conduct Code: [http://www.bu.edu/cas/students/graduate/forms-policies-procedures/academic-discipline-procedures/](http://www.bu.edu/cas/students/graduate/forms-policies-procedures/academic-discipline-procedures/)

Course Grade Value of Projects and Examinations:

- **Map Exercise** = 05% of Total Grade
- **Attendance/Participation** = 10 “ “
- **Mid-Term Examination** = 15 “ “
- **Two Reading Quizzes** = 20 “ “
- **Film Essay** = 15 “ “
- **Book Essay** = 15 “ “
- **Final Examination** = 20 “ “
Lecture Topics and Assignment Schedule:

January 15  Orientation to Course Procedures and Content

Ahmida, *Beyond Colonialism*….., pp. 1-34

January 20  DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY --- NO CLASS

January 22  The Physical and Human Environment


January 27  The Pre-Colonial Maghrib – The Question of “Colonizability”


January 29  Popular Resistance and The French Conquest and Colonization of Algeria

Ruedy, *Modern Algeria*….., pp. 45-113; Miller, … *Modern Morocco*, pp. 7-27

February 3  The Beylik of Tunis and the French Protectorate

Perkins, …*Modern Tunisia*, 39-104

MAP EXERCISE DUE

February 5  Franco-Spanish Conquest and Rule in Morocco

Miller, … *Modern Morocco*, pp. 88-119

February 10  The Search for Nationhood and the Emergence of “National” Resistance in Morocco

Miller, … *Modern Morocco*, pp. 120-142

February 12  READING QUIZ I (First 30 minutes of class)

Remainder of Class: Creation of Modern Libya, Vanderwalle, …*Modern Libya*, pp. 1-75
February 17  PRESIDENTS’ DAY --- NO CLASS

February 19  Radicalization of Resistance Politics in Algeria, 1919-1954


February 24  The Algerian War for Independence, 1954-1962 (Monday Schedule)

Ruedy, *Modern Algeria*, pp. 156-194

February 26  Liberation Struggles and the Construction of National Identities in the Maghrib

Ahmida, *Beyond Colonialism*, pp. 1-34 (review)

March 3  Challenges of Independence: Libya and the Maghrib in General

Ahmida, *Beyond Colonialism*, 35-83; Vanderwalle, *…Modern Libya*, pp. 76-136

March 5  The Challenges of Independence: Algeria


March 8-15  SPRING BREAK --- NO CLASS

March 17  World War II and the Emergence of the Modern Morocco and Tunisia

Miller, *… Modern Morocco*, pp. 142-161; Perkins, *… Modern Tunisia*, pp. 108-129

March 19  MID-TERM EXAMINATION

March 24  Monarchy, State, and Society in Independent Morocco

Miller, *… Modern Morocco*, pp. 162-213

March 26  Tunisia from Bourguiba to Ben Ali


March 31  Tunisia After Ben Ali – the “Arab Spring”

April 2 Islam and Politics in the Modern Maghrib – An Overview

Entelis, *Islam, Democracy*..., pp. 1-74,

FILM ANALYSIS PAPER DUE

April 7 Islamism, Democratic Process, and Civil War: The Algerian Experience


April 9 Human Rights Discourses and Action: the Search for Justice and Identity


April 14 The Quest for Democracy: From Independence to the “Arab Spring”


April 16 The Political Economy of “Old” North African Regimes and Potential New Ones: Four Cases


READING QUIZ II (First 30 minutes of class)

April 21 PATRIOTS’ DAY --- NO CLASS

April 22 The Maghrib in the Global Economy: Globalization, Structural Adjustment and the “Arab Spring” (MONDAY SCHEDULE)

Ahmida, *Beyond Colonialism*, pp. 165-196; Vandewalle, *Modern Libya*, pp. 139-174; Zoubir, *North Africa*, pp. 53-70, 135-158; *Arab Revolts*..., 39-44 (This class will meet in Rm 220 of IR Dept. ((152 Bay State Road))
April 23  Women in the Maghrib


April 28  Intra-Regional Issues in the Maghrib


April 30  The Maghrib in the Larger World: Relations with the European Union and the United States


BOOK REVIEW PAPER DUE

May 2-5  READING PERIOD

May 6-10  FINAL EXAMINATIONS (Time and place to be announced)

May 16-18  COMMENCEMENT