

HIS 3055: MODERN MIDDLE EAST SPRING 2026

Instructor: William Wood

Office: Colt 113

Phone: 849-2689 (office)

E-mail: billwood@pointloma.edu

Hours: Generally, between 2:30 and 5:00, M-F (or anytime you can catch me)

Course Objectives

In this course we will explore the history of the Middle East since 1800. While “Middle East” can be defined in a number of different ways, for our purposes we will consider our geographical boundaries to extend from Turkey in the north to the Arabian Peninsula in the south, and from North Africa in the west to Iran in the east. Not a day goes by without news reports concerning events in this part of the world and their potential impact on our lives. To understand what we see and hear in the media, we need to have a better grasp of the historical background to the many difficult issues which plague the region. You will attempt to accomplish this task (or at least begin the process) in this semester by studying in detail the historical processes which shaped the region, reflecting on various presentations of Middle Eastern events, and exploring in depth at least one of the disputed issues in the modern Middle East.

Texts

Gelvin, James L. *The Modern Middle East: A History*. Fifth Edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Thompson, Elizabeth F. *Justice Interrupted: The Struggle for Constitutional Government in the Middle East*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013. [eBook in Ryan Library]

Thrall, Nathan. *A Day in the Life of Abed Salama: Anatomy of a Jerusalem Tragedy*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2023.

Tibon, Amir. *The Gates of Gaza*. New York: Little, Brown & Co., 2024.

Assignments and Expectations

1. Regular (as in every class) attendance is expected. Poor attendance and lack of participation in discussions will adversely affect your grade (up to one full letter grade).
2. There will be two major exams: a mid-term and a final. Both exams will be a mixture of short answers and essay questions.
3. Numerous quizzes will be given, usually at the beginning of class. These may be weekly, they may be both announced and unannounced, and they may be drawn from term sheets handed out in class, your assigned readings, or other sources (including the New York Times!). There will definitely be a map quiz.
4. All students will keep a “journal” during this semester in which you will both summarize and reflect on materials related to your assigned topic which you encounter in various formats. More details on this assignment will be given separately.
5. All students will submit two, 5-6 page reflection (lamentation?) papers on the Thrall and Tibon books. More details later.
6. The final meetings of the semester will be devoted to in-class presentations by students. These

will consist of 10-15 minute presentations where you will present a particular perspective on an issue which is currently (or has recently) impacted the Middle East. In addition to your oral presentation, you will turn in to me a bibliography of the sources you used for your presentation. This will be due on the day you make your presentation.

7. Now, what you really want to know: how your grade will be calculated. Approximately as follows:

| | |
|-----------------------------|------|
| -Mid-term | 20 % |
| -Final exam | 20 % |
| -Quizzes | 10 % |
| -Journal & Presentation | 30 % |
| -Reflection papers (2) | 10 % |
| -Attendance & Participation | 10 % |

Course Calendar (This is a best guess—be prepared for modifications announced in class)

| | | | | |
|---|-----|----|---|---------------------------|
| M | JAN | 12 | Course Introduction | |
| W | | 14 | Setting: Late Antiquity to 1800 | Gelvin, 1-21 |
| F | | 16 | (continued) | |
| M | | 19 | MLK Day--No Class | |
| W | | 21 | Gunpowder Empires | Gelvin, 22-29 |
| | | | Evilya Chelebi (I & II): Gelvin, 56-58 | |
| F | | 23 | Middle East and Modern World | Gelvin, 30-41 |
| | | | The Travels of Sir John Chardin (I & II): Gelvin, 59-64 | |
| M | | 26 | War, Diplomacy & New Global Order | Gelvin, 42-55 |
| W | | 28 | Defensive Developmentalism | Gelvin, 67-88(T, 1-36) |
| F | | 30 | (continued) | |
| | | | Treaty of Balta Liman: Gelvin, 166-167 | |
| | | | Tanzimat Documents: Gelvin, 167-172 | |
| | | | The d'Arcy Oil Concession: Gelvin, 172-175 | |
| M | FEB | 2 | Imperialism | Gelvin, 89-105(T, ch. 2) |
| W | | 4 | (continued) | |
| F | | 6 | 19th Century Transformation | Gelvin, 106-139 |
| | | | Huda Shaarawi: Gelvin, 177-178 | |
| M | | 9 | Response of Islamic Society | Gelvin, 140-150 |
| W | | 11 | (continued) | |
| F | | 13 | Secularism & Modernity | Gelvin, 151-157 |
| | | | Al-Tahtawi: Gelvin, 178-179 | |
| | | | Muhammad Abduh: Gelvin, 179-180 | |
| M | | 16 | (continued) | |
| W | | 18 | Constitutionalism | Gelvin, 158-165(T, ch. 3) |
| | | | Namik Kemal: Gelvin, 181-182 | |
| | | | [Persia]: Gelvin, 182-185 | |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----|----|--|----------------------------|
| F | | 20 | WWI & State-Building by Decree An Arab Soldier in Ottoman Army: Gelvin, 251-254 Syrian Conference 1919: Gelvin, 254-255 | Gelvin, 189-206 |
| M | | 23 | (continued) | |
| W | | 25 | State-Building by Revolution | Gelvin, 207-221(T, ch. 4) |
| F | | 27 | (continued) | |
| M | MAR | 2 | Nationalisms | Gelvin, 222-231(T, ch. 6) |
| W | | 4 | Catch-up & Review | |
| F | | 6 | Mid-Term Exam | |
| SPRING BREAK--NO CLASS | | | | |
| M | | 16 | Israeli-Palestinians Herzl: Gelvin, 256-257 Balfour Declaration: Gelvin, 257 | Gelvin, 232-250 (T, ch. 5) |
| W | | 18 | (continued: 1948-1993) | (T, ch. 9*) |
| F | | 20 | (continued: 1993-present) | Thrall |
| M | | 23 | (continued: West Bank) | |
| W | | 25 | Autocratic States Nasser Speech 1961; Gelvin, 365-366 | Gelvin, 261-290(T, ch. 8) |
| F | | 27 | (continued) | |
| M | | 30 | Oil | Gelvin, 291-302(T, ch. 7*) |
| W | APR | 1 | (continued) | |
| F | | 3 | EASTER RECESS—NO CLASS | |
| M | | 6 | EASTER RECESS—NO CLASS | |
| W | | 8 | U.S. and the Middle East | Gelvin, 303-320 |
| F | | 10 | (continued) | |
| M | | 13 | Resistance Ali Shariati: Gelvin, 368-370 Ayatollah Khomeini: Gelvin, 370-371 Sayyid Qutb: Gelvin, 372-374 | Gelvin, 321-339(T, ch. 10) |
| W | | 15 | (continued) | |
| F | | 17 | Gaza and Hamas | Tibon |
| M | | 20 | (continued) | |
| W | | 22 | Arab Spring “April 6 Movement”: Gelvin, 374-375 Yassir al-Manawahly: Gelvin, 375-376 | Gelvin, 339-347(T ch. 11) |
| F | | 24 | (continued) | |

| | | | |
|---|-------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| M | 27 | Conclusions | Gelvin, 348-364 |
| W | 29 | Student Presentations | |
| F | MAY 1 | Student Presentations | |

Final Exam: Friday, May 8, 10:30a.m.-1:00p.m.

PLNU Mission ☼
To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service is an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we strive to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

Department of History and Political Science Mission:

As followers of Christ, the Department of History and Political Science promotes wisdom and scholarship about historical contexts and political systems, so that graduates can become local and global leaders in the service of Christ and humanity.

PLNU ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY ☼

PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities. Students with disabilities may request course-related accommodations by contacting the Educational Access Center (EAC), located in the Bond Academic Center (EAC@pointloma.edu or 619-849-2486). Once a student's eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, the EAC will issue an academic accommodation plan ("AP") to all faculty who teach courses in which the student is enrolled each semester.

PLNU highly recommends that students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester/term about the implementation of their AP in that particular course and/or if they do not wish to utilize some or all of the elements of their AP in that course.

Students who need accommodations for a disability should contact the EAC as early as possible (i.e., ideally before the beginning of the semester) to assure appropriate accommodations can be provided. It is the student's responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC.

PLNU ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY ☼

Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent for more than 10 percent of class sessions, the faculty member will issue a written warning of de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university drop date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for their work and participation.

STATE AUTHORIZATION ☼

State authorization is a formal determination by a state that Point Loma Nazarene University is

approved to conduct activities regulated by that state. In certain states outside California, Point Loma Nazarene University is not authorized to enroll online (distance education) students. If a student moves to another state after admission to the program and/or enrollment in an online course, continuation within the program and/or course will depend on whether Point Loma Nazarene University is authorized to offer distance education courses in that state. It is the student's responsibility to notify the institution of any change in his or her physical location. Refer to the map on [State Authorization](#) to view which states allow online (distance education) outside of California.

PLNU COPYRIGHT POLICY ☼

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

PLNU ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY ☼

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. Faculty should follow and students may appeal using the procedure in the university Catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

Use of Generative AI Policy

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT, iA Writer, Marmot, Botowski, GrammarlyGo, Perplexity, etc.) is prohibited in this course for any aspect of your work, including idea generation, drafting, editing, or final submissions. This course is designed to assess your independent critical thinking, writing, and research skills without the assistance of AI technologies. Violations of this policy will be treated as breaches of academic integrity.