

History 34505
Fall 2023
Arabs in American Eyes

Place: UNIV 201
Day and Time: M-W-F, 1:30 pm - 2:20 pm

Instructor: Professor Holden
Office: UNIV 127
Office Hours: M-W, 12 pm - 1 pm
Email: sholden@purdue.edu

Ever since Barbary pirates preyed on hapless ships in the Mediterranean Sea, Americans have employed the Middle East and North Africa as an exotic backdrop for a variety of popular works. These descriptions of a foreign land do not always provide an accurate portrait of the Arab world, but an author's comparisons between life abroad and life at home shed light on American values and attitudes. This course explores American engagement with the Arab world through literature, films, travelogues, and government documents. American writings on the Middle East and North Africa create a useful means of viewing evolving conceptions of national identity and global power in the United State US over 300 years. This semester, our class will focus particularly on art, publications and other materials produced between the U.S.'s colonial era and World War I.

Course Evaluation

- Students will produce **four polished pieces of writing** address a set of class readings. These essays require students to construct an original argument based on primary sources that I have assigned for the class (no outside research required). I grade these essays on the coherence of the argument, analysis of text and clarity of expression. The essays must be between 4-5 pages (no more/no less) in 12-point type-face, double-spaced, with one-inch margins. I will take off 5 points for each day this essay is late. **Each essay is worth 20% of a student's final grade** for this class. You can upload these essays to Brightspace.
- **Participation** in class is important. Students should read and reflect upon assigned materials before our class to discuss the day's topic. **Participation is 20% of a final grade.** Your grade may suffer after more than two unexcused absences. Here is how I evaluate grading: A = Consistent Attendance and Active Participation; A- = Consistent (if not perfect) Attendance. B = attendance without active participation; C and D = chronic absenteeism. If you feel uncomfortable initiating classroom discussion, you can send me comments about the reading via email. If you cannot attend class, I expect an email letting me know. I can tell you what you missed, and any possibility to make up the class.

Due Dates!

- essay #1 due on 20 September
- essay #2 due on 2 October
- essay #3 due on 3 November
- essay #4 due on 13 December

Learning Outcomes

- *Topical*
--To reconsider the historical intentions in American writings about the Arab world
- *Analytical*
--To improve writing skills, using evidence to generate an argument
--To develop critical thinking and problem solving
--To build confidence in discussing complex (and often fraught) ideas

This class attends to skills critical for making a positive impression on employers: ability to interact with people, problem-solving skills, oral communication, and written communication.

Course Materials and Preparations:

The assignment for each class is *underneath* the specific day and lecture. It is under the line Class Preparations. Students should prepare assignments for each topic *before* each class meeting.

When students need to watch a movie, it should be either on Brightspace or on YouTube.

Most readings are on Blackboard, and books can be read online for free (hathitrust, Purdue, kindle).

students should acquire or get access to the following:

- Lawrence Peskin, *Captives and Countrymen: Barbary Slavery and the American Public, 1785-1816* (John Hopkins University Press, 2009). [available online at Purdue Library]
- Susanna Haswell Rowson, *Slaves in Algiers, or a Struggle for Freedom* (1794; reprint, Copley Publishing Group, 2016). [the play is in the public domain, so it may be free online]
- Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad* (1869; reprint, Penguin Classics, 2002). [public domain, so you may be able to find this on hathitrust.org or kindle for free]

Grading

A	= 94-100
A-	= 90-93
B+	= 87-89
B	= 84-86
B-	= 80-83
C+	= 77-79
C	= 74-76
C-	= 70-73

I prefer to be contacted via email. My email is sholden@purdue.edu. You should put the course number and query in the subject line (HIST 250, book review query). Use a formal salutation (Dear Professor Holden:) and close with your full name (Sincerely, Gabrielle Union). Consider checking grammar and punctuation when writing emails—make sure your communication is clear.

If I send questions or cancel a class, I will email the class list and post an announcement.

30 August (W)**An American Alliance with Morocco**

Ben Railton, "Does America Owe Its Existence to France and Morocco," *Saturday Evening Post*, 23 October 2019. <https://www.saturdayeveningpost.com/2019/10/considering-history-does-america-owe-its-existence-to-france-and-morocco/>

George Washington to the Emperor of Morocco, 1 December 1789, Gilder Lehrman Collection.

For typed copy of the letter, see <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-04-02-0251#:~:text=It%20gives%20me%20Pleasure%20to,happy%20in%20every%20Occasion%20of>

1 September (F)**1st American Encounters with a Vaguely Eastern World**Class Preparations

Lawrence Peskin, *Captives and Countrymen*, 1-4.

Robert J. Allison, "Americans and the Muslim World: First Encounters," in *The Middle East and the United States: History, Politics, and Ideologies*, 6th ed., David W. Lesch and Mark L. Haas, ed.s (Routledge, 2008), 19-29.

Reflections: What does Allison mean when he writes of "the Muslim world as counterpoint to American values"? What is Peskin's purpose in writing his book on the period? And would the author agree or disagree with Allison's concept of US engagement with a vaguely defined Eastern world as a counterpoint that allows for discussions of the values and interests of the new US?

assign review essay of Lawrence Peskin's Captives and Countrymen, due 9/20

4 September (M)**Labor Day (No Classes)****6 September (W)****Captives and Countrymen, #1**Class Preparations

Peskin, *Captives and Countrymen*, ch.s 1, 2, & 3.

Reflections: What are specific challenges of newly independent US addressed in each of Peskin's first three chapters? How do studies of US experiences in North Africa provide this historian with a useful entry point for explaining events at home as US emerged independent country?

8 September (F)**Captives and Countrymen, #2**Class Preparations

Peskin, *Captives and Countrymen*, ch.s 4, 5, 6.

Samuel Calder to David Pearce, 4 December 1793, in *Naval Documents Related to the United States Wars with the Barbary Powers*, ed. Department of the Navy (US Government Printing Office, 1939-1944).

Reflections: Consulting the worksheet provided on Blackboard, consider definitions of the term “slavery.” How does Peskin discuss the institution of slavery in North Africa? Were Americans “slaves”? How do Americans in North Africa shaped attitudes towards slavery in the US?

11 September (M) 9/11 and the Lessons of History

Class Preparations

Peskin, *Captives and Countrymen*, ch. 7.

watch film, “The Battle of Tripoli,” History Channel, 2004 (45 min.)

C. Hitchens, “To the Shores of Tripoli,” *Time Magazine*, 5 July 2004.

Reflections: This documentary and news article came out in 2004, three years after 9/11 sparked the “War on Terror” (most notably, military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq). What information did the filmmaker and journalist convey about the Barbary Wars at that time? More specifically, how did they narrate these events (word choice, theme music, etc.)? In what ways did the Barbary Wars serve as a lesson of history for them, and does it ring true for you nearly twenty years later? How would you compare Peskin’s work with the film and article? And what lessons does this comparison potentially provide in considering the use and misuse of historical lessons?

13 September (W) Captives and Countrymen, #3

Class Preparations

Peskin, *Captives and Countrymen*, ch.s 8, 9, Conclusion.

Reflections: How does Peskin use captivity narratives to assess emerging American vis-à-vis gender, class, status, imperialism? What is “impressment”? Based on class discussions, how does it differ from North African captivity? Or enslavement in the U.S.? What is the difference between an impressed sailor and an American captive (hostage, slave?) in North Africa?

15 September (F) Discussion, Writing a Successful Analytical Book Review

18 September (M) Synthesis Day (Topic = TBA)

20 September (W) No Class—Book Review DUE

analytical review of Peskin’s Captives and Countrymen due today by 6 pm!

22 September (F) Revolutionary Values

Class Preparations

John Foss, "A Journal of Captivity and Sufferings," in Baepler, *White Slaves*, 71-102.

Reflections: What does Foss identify as differences between American captives and North African captors? How do the descriptions of his experiences generate ideas about American identity?

25 September (M) Republican Feminism and Imperial Fantasies, part 1Class Preparations

Jan E. Lewis, "A Revolution for Whom? Women in the Era of American Revolution," in *A Companion to American Women's History*, ed. Nancy Hewitt (Blackwell, 2002), 83-99.

Susanna Haswell Rowson, "Slaves in Algiers," in its entirety.

Reflections: What is Rowson's purpose in writing and performing the play? How does her portrayal of women illuminate Lewis's article on women in the era of the revolution? How would you compare and/or contrast this play with the first-hand account of John Foss?

27 September (W) Republican Feminism and Imperial Fantasies, part 2

assign essay on Revolutionary Values, due 10/2

29 September (F) Discussion, Primary Sources as EvidenceClass Preparations

come to class with 3 short quotes (no more than 2 sentences ea., but preferably 1) from either John Foss's account or Susanna H. Rowson's play, and be prepared to talk about how you would explain the importance of these sentences to someone who has not read either of these accounts

2 October (M) No Class—Book Review DUE

essay on Revolutionary Values, due on Brightspace today by 6 pm

4 October (W) Nostalgia, and the Romance of HistoryClass Preparations

Washington Irving, *Tales of the Alhambra* (1832, reprint; SMK books, 2011), read first half.

Reflections: What is the Alhambra? Why does W. Irving travel there? What does he experience there? How does he engage or represent history? What value does he give to this ancient castle-fortress falling into ruin? How could you argue for or against this account offering a

Class Preparations

Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, Chapters 33 and 34.

Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, chapter 25.

Reflections: How would you compare Twain's descriptions of Istanbul and Florence? How does Istanbul reflect what Allison referred to in an earlier reading as a "counterpoint"?

18 October (W) Then & Now, American Tourism in the "Holy Land"

Class Preparations

film, *Walking the Bible* (50 min.)

William M. Thomson, *The Land and the Book, or Biblical Illustrations Drawn from the Manners and Customs, the Scenes and Scenery of the Holy Land* (London: Nelson and Sons, 1872), xi-xiii and 644-647.

William C. Prime, *Tent Life in the Holy Land* (New York City: Harper and Brothers, 1857), 68-84.

assign essay on American descriptions of the Holy Land, due 11/3

Reflections: These three examples of American descriptions of the Middle Eastern places as a Christian Holy Land date to three different times: before the Civil War, after the Civil War and the present day. What conventions in American travel accounts do you perceive across time?

20 October (F) Synthesis Day (TBD)

23 October (M) Imagining a (Christian) Holy Land, Part I

Class Preparations

Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, chapter 41 – chapter 54 (XLI-LIV)

Reflections: How would you compare Twain's description of the Holy Land with those of William Prime (a minister), William Thomson (travel writer), and Bruce Feiler (filmmaker)? Where does Twain follow and/or break the conventions of American travel writing about the Holy Land?

I will email you a set of further questions to help you think about Twain's travelogue.

25 October (W) Imagining a (Christian) Holy Land, Part II

Class Preparations

27 October (F) Imagining a (Christian) Holy Land, Part III

30 October (M) Orientalist Art

Class Preparations

view Frederic Edwin Church's [*Jerusalem, From the Mount of Olives*](#) and [*Syria by the Sea*](#)

Reflections: As you view the paintings by Frederic Edwin Church, you should think about the "visual narrative" of the artist. What choices does the artist make? Why does he choose to paint from a particular vantage point? Is the image sharp or blurry? And with what effect? How does painter E. Church incorporate objects into a painting? Is E. Church a Pilgrim or Sinner?

1 November (W) Brainstorming Session: How to write a Comparative Essay

Class Preparations

come to class prepared to compare or contrast 2 passages (or scenes) about the Holy Land, reflecting on what you can extract from them to make a point about the author's perceptions

3 November (F) No Class—Comparative Essay DUE

Class Preparations

comparative essay on American descriptions of the Holy Land, due today by 6 pm

6 November (M) Western Perceptions (often false) of Ottoman Modernity

Class Preparations

Malte Fuhrmann, *Port Cities of the Eastern Mediterranean: Urban Culture in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge University Press, 2020), 3-9 and 63-69.

Edith Wharton, *The Cruise of the Vanadis* (Rizzoli, 2004), 146-150.

Reflections: What does it mean to be modern? What might you consider the difference between the following terms: Westernization, Europeanization, Modernization? How did Edith Wharton describe the Mediterranean region? What places does she describe in her diary? And how does she evaluate them?

8 November (W) Who Is Lew Wallace?, Part I

Class Preparations

class reading, TBD

Class Preparations

please come to class having sketched a few main points made in the folders provided to you

20 November	No Class
22 November	No Class
25 November	No Class
27 November (M)	WWI in the East, an Overview

Class Preparations

William L. Cleveland and Martin Bunton, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 6th ed. (Routledge, 2018), 139-159.

29 November (W)	How US Troops at Western Front Affected Eastern Theatre
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Class Preparations

“[The Ottomans](#),” episode 2 of “World War I through Arab Eyes,” *Al Jazeera*, 2014 (43 min.)

1 December (F)	Ending WWI in the Middle East
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James Gelvin, “The Ironic Legacy of the King-Crane Commission,” in *The Middle East and the United States*, 6th ed., David W. Lesch and Mark L. Haas, ed.s (Routledge, 2018), 30-46.

Erez Manela, “Woodrow Wilson and the Ugliest of Treacheries,” *The New York Times* (9 March 2019).

The General Syrian Congress, “Memorandum Presented to the King-Crane Commission,” in *The Israel-Arab Reader: A Documentary History of the Middle East Conflict*, 8th ed., Walter Laqueur and Dan Schueftan, ed.s (Penguin, 2016), 21-23.

Zionist Commission to Palestine, “[Statement to the International Commission on Turkey-American Section](#),” June 1919, King Crane Digital Collection, Oberlin College Archives.

“The King-Crane Commission: Recommendations (August 28, 1919),” *The Arab-Israeli Reader: A Documentary History of the Middle East Conflict*, 8th ed., ed. Walter Laqueur and Dan Schueftan (Penguin Books, 2016), 23-25.

Reflections: What is the King-Crane Report? And how did it come to be written? How should we treat this document, given that it sat in a drawer for three years before being published?

And, by the time of its publication, the US had opted out of the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations? In other words, why study a document that did not shape policy?

4 December (M) Edith Wharton's Morocco

Class Preparations

Edith Wharton, "The Seed of the Faith," *Scribner's Magazine* (January 1919), 17-33.

Edith Wharton, *In Morocco*, short selection on Brightspace

Reflections: Does Wharton oppose or support French colonialism in the Arab world? What specifically demonstrates her thoughts about Western interventions in the Arab world? What do you believe are Wharton's beliefs about the emerging role of the U.S. in world affairs?

assign final essay, due on 12/13

6 December (W) Western Tutelage of Desert Sheiks

Class Preparations

Watch film, "[The Sheik](#)," 1921, 1 hour, 27 min.

Listen to "Lowell Thomas Remembers the Allenby Show,"
<https://archives.marist.edu/ltravelogues/Lowell%20Thomas/lowellthomas2.html>

Lowell Thomas, *With Lawrence in Arabia* (Garden City Publishing Co., 1924), xii-xii and 3-10.

Reflections: Compare Lowell Thomas's description of Lawrence of Arabia with the fictive Ben Hassan. What message does L. Thomas and the director promote about the Arab world? What scenes provide evidence for that judgment? How might this film shape political attitudes?

8 December (F) Brainstorming: American Representations of MENA in 20th c.

Mental Health and Wellness Resources

There is a link to Purdue Counseling and Psychological Services on Brightspace, under the Student Services and Resources section. **If you feel stress, anxiety and/or overwhelmed, try [WellTrack](#)**, with information and tools at your fingertips, available to you at any time. **If you need support and information about options and resources**, please contact or see the [Office of the Dean of Students](#). Call 765-494-1747. Hours of operation are M-F, 8 am- 5 pm. **If you find yourself struggling to find a healthy balance between academics, social life, stress**, etc. sign up for free one-on-one virtual or in-person sessions with a [Purdue Wellness Coach at RecWell](#). Student coaches can help you navigate through barriers and challenges toward your goals throughout the semester. Sign up is completely free and can be done on BoilerConnect. If you have any questions, please contact Purdue Wellness at evans240@purdue.edu.

In cases of absences due to circumstances beyond a student's control, and in cases of bereavement, the student or the student's representative should contact the Office of the Dean of Students. See, http://www.purdue.edu/studentregulations/regulations_procedures/classes.html.

AI Statement

This *AI Statement* was adapted, most often word for word, from an article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* by Flower Darby (see [here](#)): Cheating isn't new, and neither is 'contract cheating' (paper mills and other schemes to pay someone to do homework), though the latter seems to be growing by leaps and bounds...Cheaters are only cheating themselves...A track coach who would tell runners they could ride a scooter around the track wouldn't make athletes faster or stronger. Think about yourself like that runner...there is value in doing the work of learning instead of outsourcing it to a machine. In this era of remote and hybrid jobs, working in ways that establish trust with your supervisor and team members is more important than ever.

Attendance Policy

Purdue guidelines state, "*Students are expected to attend in-person courses when they are able.*" However, if student feels ill, they should stay home and contact the Protect Purdue Health Center (496-INFO). When students cannot come to class, they should email me. I will help them understand how best to cover missed material and provide an opportunity to increase class engagement. Your grade will be based in part on attendance so keep in touch if any issues arise.

The deadlines and grading policies are subject to changes in the event of a major campus emergency. Any changes will be emailed and posted on Brightspace when class resumes.

Other University Policies

Plagiarism Will Not Be Tolerated at Purdue University: Plagiarism is a crime, and students can be expelled for turning in a paper that they did not write. Copying a person's work verbatim is not the only form of plagiarism. In some cases, plagiarism involves paraphrasing the idea of another without a footnote or the repetition of another author's phrase. Students are advised to consult Purdue University's Guide to Academic Integrity for guidelines at: <http://www.purdue.edu/ODOS/osrr/integrity.htm>. Plagiarized work will receive a 0, and the professor reserves the right to forward the case to the administration for further review by a dean.

Purdue University Policy Prohibits Academic Dishonesty: Purdue prohibits "dishonesty in connection with any University activity. Cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information to the University are examples of dishonesty." [Part 5, Section III-B-2-a, Student Regulations] Furthermore, the University Senate has stipulated that "the commitment of acts of cheating, lying, and deceit in any of their diverse forms (such as the use of substitutes for taking examinations, the use of illegal cribs, plagiarism, and copying during examinations) is dishonest and must not be tolerated. Moreover, knowingly to aid and abet, directly or indirectly, other parties in committing dishonest acts is in itself dishonest." [University Senate Document 72-18, December 15, 1972] <https://www.purdue.edu/odos/academic-integrity/>

Purdue University Policy Prohibits Discrimination: Purdue University is committed to maintaining a community which recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among its members; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. In pursuit of its goal of academic excellence, the University seeks to develop and nurture diversity. The University believes that diversity among its many members strengthens the institution, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas, and enriches campus life. Purdue University prohibits discrimination against any member of the University community on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, genetic information, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, or status as a veteran. The University will conduct its programs, services and activities consistent with applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and orders and in conformance with the procedures and limitations as set forth in [Executive Memorandum No. D-1](#), which provides specific contractual rights and remedies. Any student who believes they have been discriminated against may visit www.purdue.edu/report-hate to submit a complaint to the Office of Institutional Equity. Information may be reported anonymously.
http://www.purdue.edu/purdue/ea_eou_statement.html

Accessibility and Accommodation: Purdue University strives to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, you are welcome to let me know so that we can discuss options. You are also encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Center at: drc@purdue.edu or by phone: 765-494-1247.

Disclaimer: In case of a major campus emergency, the requirements on this syllabus are subject to changes required by a revised semester calendar. Any changes will be posted, once the course resumes, on the course website. It may also be obtained by contacting the instructor via email.