

History 34505
Spring 2022
Arabs in American Eyes

Place: UNIV 219
Day and Time: Tuesday/Thursday, 9 am – 10:15 am

Instructor: Professor Holden
Office: UNIV 127
Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday, 8:00 am – 8:30 am
and also Wednesday, 1:30 pm – 2:30 pm
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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 publications. 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 class aims to identify both continuity and change in American attitudes towards the Middle East and North Africa.

Course Evaluation

- Students will produce **five polished pieces of writing** that address a narrow 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 15% of a student's final grade** for this class. You can upload these essays to Brightspace. I will assign papers with due dates at five different times during the semester.
- **Participation** in class s important. Students should read and reflect upon assigned materials before our class in order to discuss the day's topic. **Participation is 25% of a final grade.** Your grade may suffer after more than two unexcused absences. Here is how I evaluate grading: A = attendance and active participation in classroom and/or Brightspace discussions (if you feel uncomfortable initiating classroom discussion, I will set up Brightspace discussion space for each class so that you can comment on class material before class); B = attendance without active participation; C and D = chronic absenteeism. If you are unable to attend class, I expect an email so that you can find out what you missed.

Due Dates!

- essay #1 due on 15 February
- essay #2 due on 1 March
- essay #3 due on 5 April

- essay #4 due on 21 April
- essay #5 due on 3 May

Learning Outcomes

- *Topical*
--To consider writings about the Arab world as windows into American history.
- *Analytical*
--To improve writing skills.
--To develop skills of critical thinking and problem solving.
--To build confidence in discussing complex 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 will be either on Brightspace or on YouTube.

Most readings are on Blackboard. However, students should acquire 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).
- Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad* (1869; reprint, Penguin Classics, 2002).
- Edith Wharton, *In Morocco* (1920; reprint, John Beaufoy Publishing, 2016).

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

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.

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 his descriptions of his experiences let him characterize American identity?

Jan. 27 (Th) Captives and Countrymen, Part I

Class Preparations

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

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

assign review essay of Lawrence Peskin's Captives and Countrymen (due 15 February)

Feb. 1 (Tu) Captives and Countrymen, Part II

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). [available on hathitrust]

Reflections: Define the term "slavery." How does Peskin speak of the institution of slavery? And how does he think Americans in North Africa shape attitudes towards slavery in the US?

Feb. 3 (Th) Captives and Countrymen, #3

Peskin, *Captives and Countrymen*, ch.s 7, 8, 9, Conclusion.

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

Reflections: Who is William Eaton? How would you compare his portrayal in Peskin's book and in the film from the History Chanel? What messages do the author and the filmmaker generate?

Feb. 8 (Tu) Republican Feminism and Imperial Fantasies, part 1

Class 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 Publishing, 2002), PAGES.

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?

Feb. 10 (Th) Republican Feminism and Imperial Fantasies, part 2

assign essay on Revolutionary Values, due 1 March

Feb. 15 (Tu) Freedom and Commerce, Oman (1830s)

Class Preparations

W.S.W. Ruschenberger. *A voyage round the world: including an embassy to Muscat and Siam in 1835, 1836, and 1837* (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea & Blanchard, 1838), advertisement, 9-11, and 81-94. [full book available on hathitrust]

for comparison, "[US-Morocco Treaty of Peace](#)," 16 September 1836, Yale Avalon Project.

review essay of Lawrence Peskin's Captives and Countrymen, due on 15 February (today!)

Feb. 17 (Th) Synthesis Day

Feb. 22 (Tu) Ottoman Constantinople (Istanbul)

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?

Feb. 24 (Th) American Tourism in the (Christian) Holy Land

Class Preparations

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

March 17 (Th) Spring Break

March 22 (Tu) American Muslims in the Holy Land, Part I

Class Preparations

“[Muslims Celebrate Eid el Adha Religious Holiday](#),” 11 August 2019, *Al Jazeera*.

watch film, “[Inside Mecca](#),” National Geographic, 2003, 55 min.

March 24 (Th) American Muslims in the Holy Land, Part II

Class Preparations

Malcolm X (with Alex Haley), *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (1964; reprint, Random House, 1990), 318-363 (Chapter 17 and Chapter 18).

Reflections: What do you know about racial politics in the time of Mark Twain and Malcolm X? As you reflect, what similarities and differences seem important when comparing the descriptions of the Middle East by Twain and Malcolm X? How does Malcolm X follow and/or break the conventions of travel writing we previously discussed? And how do his descriptions of the people and places of the Middle East reflect deeper concerns about the politics & society in the US?

assign essay on Americans in the Holy Land due 5 April

March 29 (Tu) The Kidnapping of Ion Perdicaris

Class Preparations

Perdicaris (Baepler), “In Raissuli’s Hands,” in Baepler, *White Slaves, African Masters*, 285-301.

Reflections: What happened to Ion Perdicaris? What is the tone of his article? How would you compare his descriptions to those of previous authors? What language does he use to describe his captor, Raissuli, the political situation of Morocco, and the role of the US in the world?

March 31 (Th) Synthesis Day

April 5 (Tu) World War I in the Arab World

Class Preparations

Jennifer Keene, *The United States and the First World War*, 2nd ed. (Routledge, 2021), 3-22.

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

essay on Americans in the Holy Land due 5 April (today)

April 7 (Th) The King-Crane Report

Class Preparations

James Gelvin, “The Ironic Legacy of the King-Crane Commission,” in *The Middle East and the United States*, David W. Lesch and Mark L. Haas, ed.s (Routledge, 2012), 30-46.

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.

The King-Crane Commission, “Recommendations,” in *The Middle East and the United States*, David W. Lesch and Mark L. Haas, ed.s (Routledge, 2012), 23-25.

April 12 (Tu) Imperialist Nostalgia

Class Preparations

Renato Rosaldo, “Imperialist Nostalgia,” in *Culture & Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (Beacon Press, 1989), 68-87.

April 14 (Th) Edith Wharton’s Morocco

Class Preparations

Edith Wharton, *In Morocco*, in its entirety.

Reflections: Does Wharton oppose or support French colonial endeavors in the Arab world?

assign essay on Imperialist Nostalgia (due 21 April)

April 19 (Tu) The Desert Sheik as Hero

Class Preparations

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

Listen to Radio Report, “[Valentino’s Sheik: An ‘Other’ to Swoon Over](#),” NPR Morning Addition, 4 February 2008.

Reflections: What message does the director promote about the Arab world in this film? What scenes provide evidence for that judgment? How might this film shape political attitudes?

April 21 (Th) Conclusions

essay on Imperialist Nostalgia due 21 April (today)

assign essay on concluding thoughts (due 3 May)

April 26 (Tu) No Class

April 28 (Th) No Class

Disclaimers

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.

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The deadlines and grading policies enunciated in this syllabus are subject to changes in the event of a major campus emergency. Any changes will be posted on Brightspace, once class resumes.