NEHC 10101
INTRODUCTION TO THE MIDDLE EAST
Spring Quarter, 2018

Fred M. Donner
224 Oriental Institute
f-donner@uchicago.edu   Tel. 2-9544
Office Hours: Mon. 3:30-5:00
   or by appointment

MWF 10:30-11:20   M, W: Stuart 105
TAs: N. Kyle Longworth /Veronica Morriss
longworth@uchig... / vmmorriss@uchi...
Office Hours: TBA
   or by appointment

The course is designed to introduce those with no previous knowledge of the Middle East and North Africa to certain broad facets of life and culture in the region. It will facilitate an understanding of some of the key factors shaping the history of the area, and will also provide exposure to some of the rich cultural diversity that marks it. In addition, it can serve as a useful basis for the further study of the history, politics, and civilization of the Middle East, which can be pursued in other courses in various departments of the University, or on your own.

Lectures are held twice weekly (usually M, W). Attendance is required; since lecture topics overlap only in part (and sometimes not at all) with material from readings, one cannot expect readings to provide an adequate substitute.

Readings for each week are listed on the attached course schedule. Since the classes are intended partly to provide a forum for discussion of assigned readings, you should make a point of completing and thinking about the week's readings before the class session on Fridays.

Discussions, usually held on Fridays, are a required part of the course. Participation in class discussions is expected and attendance will be taken. Make a note of questions, comments, and thoughts as you do your readings, and bring them to class! Class sections and locations will be determined during week I.

Written Assignments: There will be two papers; the first of two pages, the second of six pages maximum on set topics. These stand partly in lieu of examination essay questions. Written assignments must be submitted punctually on the date noted on the syllabus. There will be a penalty for late submissions of written assignments.

Tests: There will be two short tests consisting of a series of brief identifications held during the quarter. Test dates are listed on the syllabus.

Examinations: There will be no examinations other than the two tests and the two written assignments noted above.

Books for Purchase: Most of the readings are from books available for purchase from the textbook section at the Chicago Theological Seminary Bookstore (58th & University Avenue). See list on following page.
NEHC 10101 -- Introduction to the Middle East -- Spring 2018

Books for Purchase (cont.) – more or less in the order you will read them:

Fernea, Elizabeth. *Guests of the Sheik*.
Schwedler, Jillian, and Deborah Gerner. *Understanding the Contemporary Middle East*. 3rd edition.
Elias, Jamal. *Islam*. (Religions of the World Series.)
Muhammad Kamil al-Khatib. *Just Like a River*.
Daneshvar, Simin. *Savushun*.
Shlaim, Avi. *War and Peace in the Middle East*.

**Schedule of Lectures, Discussions, etc.**

**Part I. Ethnography and Early Cultural Development of the Middle East**

1. **Mon** Mar 26  Organizational / Geography (Illustrated)
   **Wed** Mar 28  Geography (cont.) and Linguistic Geography
   **Fri** Mar 30  Class Discussion
   **Reading:** Elizabeth Fernea, *Guests of the Sheikh* (first half).
   Schwedler/Gerner, *Understanding the Contemporary Middle East*, ch. 2.

2. **Mon** Apr 2  The Social Order  **PAPER I ASSIGNED**
   **Wed** Apr 4  Urbanization
   **Fri** Apr 6  Class Discussion
   **Reading:** Elizabeth Fernea, *Guests of the Sheikh* (remainder).
   Schwedler/Gerner, *Understanding the Contemporary Middle East*, chapters 7-10.

3. **Mon** Apr 9  Prophecy and History in Near Eastern Tradition  **PAPER I DUE**
   **Wed** Apr 11  The Neolithic Revolution
   **Fri** Apr 13  Oriental Institute Gallery Tour. Gather in OI Lobby.
Part II. Islam in the Middle East

4. Mon Apr 16  Muhammad and the Expansion of Islam
   Wed Apr 18  Basic Tenets of Islam
   Fri Apr 20  Class Discussion

5. Mon Apr 23  Religious Diversity in Islam
   Wed Apr 25  Pilgrimage in Islam
   Fri Apr 27  Class Discussion
   Reading: Muhammad Kamil al-Khatib, *Just Like a River*

Part III. Themes in Modern Middle Eastern History and Culture

6. Mon April 30  TEST I
   Wed May 2   The “Eastern Question” and Islamic Responses
   Fri May 4  Liberalism and Nationalism in the Middle East
   Reading: Schwedler/Gerner, *Understanding the Contemporary Middle East*, ch. 11.

7. Mon May 7  World War I and its Aftermath in the Middle East
   Wed May 9  Israel, Palestine, and the Arab World
   Fri May 11  Class Discussion
   Reading: Avi Shlaim, *War and Peace in the Middle East*, 1-59.
   Schwedler/Gerner, *Understanding the Contemporary Middle East*, ch. 6 and ch. 12.
NEHC 10101 -- Introduction to the Middle East -- Spring 2018

8. Mon May 14    Iran and Turkey  **PAPER II ASSIGNED.**
   Wed May 16    Film “S.O.S. in Tehran”
   Fri May 18    Class Discussion
   **Readings:** Simin Daneshvar, *Savushun* (first half)

9. Mon May 21    Music in the Middle East
   Wed May 23    Women in the Middle East
   Fri May 25    Class Discussion  **PAPER II DUE**
   **Readings:** Simin Daneshvar, *Savushun* (remainder)

10. Mon May 28   **Memorial Day – No Class**
    Wed May 30    Summing-Up and Final Discussion
    **Readings:** Avi Shlaim, *War and Peace in the Middle East*, 60-142.

**FINAL TEST:** The regularly scheduled time for the final for this course is **TUESDAY, June 5, 2018, at 10:30 AM (10:30-12:20)**, in our normal classroom (Stuart 105).

For those who must leave early, an alternative final test will be held on Friday, June 1 (location TBD). This test date is **OPTIONAL.**