

**Sovereignty and Culture in the Middle East**  
University of California, Berkeley

**History 103F**  
**W 4-5:59 pm**

Prof. Aimee Genell    Office: 2207 Dwinelle  
Office Hours: Monday 12:30-2:30 PM and by appointment  
E-mail: amg21@berkeley.edu



Ottoman World Map ca. 1840

**Course Description:**

This course analyzes the political and cultural history of state formation in the Middle East from the late eighteenth century through the early twenty-first century. It considers the transition from a world of multiple overlapping sovereignties to a world of territorialized nation-states. “Sovereignty” will be used a category to examine diverse phenomena in Middle Eastern history including the nature of Ottoman political order, the expansion and collapse of modern empires and the rise of national states. Through comparative study, the course asks what is the nature of the state in the Middle East? European powers constrained sovereignty in the Ottoman and Qajar Empires through legal and economic restrictions—practices that continued to varying degrees in the Middle East mandates, and later in states that attained full formal independence. As such, the course’s central themes include the relationship between states in the Middle East and European powers and later the United States, the role of law in imperial expansion, as well as changes in the definition of sovereignty. The first half of the course studies the Ottoman and Qajar Empires in a world of imperial rivalries and the second half considers the territorial and political reordering of the Middle East in the aftermath of World War I.

In addition to participating in weekly discussions, students are expected to produce three short research assignments based on primary sources and complete a final research paper. Research projects should be decided upon early in the semester and in consultation with the instructor.

### **Course Requirements**

#### **3 Mini-Research Projects**

Students will track a particular issue related to the weeks' readings within a particular set of primary sources and write a brief account of their findings (1-2 pages)

1. First mini-research project – using 19<sup>th</sup> century periodicals
2. Second mini-research project – using British Foreign Office Records and records of the League of Nations
3. Third mini-research project- using architecture, photography and material culture as historical sources

#### **Research Paper:**

Students will produce a research paper. The paper may be based on one of the three mini-research projects listed above, or drawn from other sources. The papers must be based upon original research. All research projects should be decided early in the semester and in consultation with the instructor. An outline of the research paper including a list of primary and secondary sources is due November 19th.

#### **Assessment**

Class participation 20%

3 Mini-Research projects 40%

Final Research Paper 40%

#### **Required Readings**

Leslie Pierce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire*

Mostafa Minowi, *The Ottoman Scramble for Africa: Empire and Diplomacy in the Sahara and the Hijaz*

Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of the Empire*

Timothy Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil*

All readings will be available on bCourses. Items will also be available on reserve at the library.

#### **Wed. Aug. 24 – Introduction: The Problem of Sovereignty in the Middle East**

#### **Wed., Aug. 31 - Background: Sovereignty in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire**

Leslie Pierce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire*, intro., chaps. 1, 5-6, 8, conclusion (**focus on chap. 5 and 6, conclusion**)

**Wed., Sept. 7 – Provincial Power Brokers and the Crisis of the Ottoman Order?**

Ali Yacioğlu, *Partners of Empire: The Crisis of the Ottoman Order in the Age of Revolutions*, intro., chap. 1, 4, 5, conclusion

Document:

“Negotiating with the power of the Sultan: the Ottoman *Sened-i İttifak* (Deed of Agreement), 1880” in *The Modern Middle East: A Sourcebook for History*

**Wed., Sept. 14 – The Tanzimat, the Ottoman Empire and “the Family of Nations”**

R. Horowitz, “International Law and State Transformation in China, Siam and the Ottoman Empire during the 19th Century,” *Journal of World History*, 15:4(2004), pp. 445-486

Umut Özsü, “The Ottoman Empire, the Origins of Extraterritoriality, and International Legal Theory” in Florian Hoffmann and Anne Orford, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of the Theory of International Law*

**Wed., Sept. 21 – The Qajar Empire between the Russia and Britain**

Abbas Amanat, *The Pivot of the Universe: Nasir al-Din Shah and the Iranian Monarchy, 1831-1896*, chap. 6-9, epilogue

Fiuz Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain in Persia, 1864-1914: A Study in Imperialism*, (1968), selection

**First mini-research project – Using 19<sup>th</sup> Century Periodicals**

“Islamic Critiques of European Imperial Expansion”

(See worksheet)

**Wed., Sept. 28 - The Ottoman Scramble for Africa?**

Mostafa Minowi, *The Ottoman Scramble for Africa: Empire and Diplomacy in the Sahara and the Hijaz*, intro., 5-6

Thomas Kühn, “Shaping and Reshaping Colonial Ottomanism: Contesting Boundaries of Difference and Integration in Ottoman Yemen, 1872-1919,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 27, 2(2007): 233–44

Recommended:

Antony Anghie, “Finding the Peripheries: Sovereignty and Colonialism in Nineteenth Century International Law,” *Harvard International Law Journal*, 40, 1(1999): 1-71

**Wed., Oct. 5 – Sovereignty and the Ottoman Road to War**

Mustafa Aksakal, “Not by those old books of international law”: Ottoman Intellectuals on the Eve of the Great War,” *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 15, 3(2004): 507-544

Ahmed Cemal (Ahmed Djemal), *Memoirs of a Turkish Statesman, 1913-1919*, p. 137-144, \*197-237, pay particular attention to these pages

**Wed., Oct. 12 – The Scramble for International Recognition at Paris**

"The Wilsonian Moment and the Rise of Anticolonial Nationalism: The Case of Egypt," *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 12:4 (December 2001), 99-122

Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (2009) introduction, "Jan Smutts and Imperial Internationalism"

Documents:

Series of Pamphlets sent to Wilson and Clemenceau from delegations representing various subjects of the Ottoman Empire including Egyptians, Greeks, Armenians, Arabs and Sudanese as well as the Zionist Organization

**Wed., Oct. 19 – Sovereignty and the League of Nations Mandates System**

Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of the Empire* (2015), intro., chap. 1-2 (skim), 5, 7, 9, conclusion (**focus on chap. 7 and 9**)

League of Nations Covenant, Article 22

**Second mini-research project: League of Nations Records and Published British Foreign Office Records**

Background: Sarah Shields, "The League Takes the Case," *Fezzes in the River: Identity Politics and European Diplomacy in the Middle East on the Eve of World War II* (2011)

Track responses to the transfer of the Sancak of Alexandretta from Mandate Syria to the Republic of Turkey (See worksheet)

**Wed., Oct. 26 - "Sovereignty belongs to the people without conditions": Independence and the New Turkey**

Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building: Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic*, chap. 2-4

M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *Atatürk: An Intellectual Biography*, chap. 6

The Turkish Modern Woman – newspaper articles, 1924 & 1926

**Wed., Nov. 2 - The Cold War and Decolonization in the Middle East**

Annabel Jane Wharton, *Building the Cold War: Hilton International Hotels and Modern Architecture* read chapters on Istanbul, Cairo, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem

Robert Jackson, *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World* (1993), introduction, chap. 1-4, 7

**Third mini-research project - Architecture, photography and material culture as**

**historical sources**

“Nationalism and Revolution in the Middle East”

See worksheet

**Wed., Nov. 9 - Sovereignty in the Age of Oil**

Timothy Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil*, intro., chaps. 2-3, 5, 8

**Wed., Nov. 16 – The American Invasion and Occupation of Iraq and its Aftermath**

Nehal Bhuta, “Antinomies of Transformative Occupation,” *The European Journal of International Law*, vol. 16, no. 4(2005)

Film: James Longley, “Iraq in Fragments”

**Wed., Nov. 30 – Conclusion and Paper presentations**

**FINAL PAPERS WILL BE DUE DECEMBER 12!!!**