This course aims to contextualise contemporary debates in IR with a historical overview of colonialism in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as providing the conceptual tools to understand the workings of colonial power. It focuses on the changes introduced to Middle Eastern societies by colonialism, the implications of these changes for states in the region after their independence, and more recent socio-political developments often categorised in the region as "neo-colonial" forms of domination.
Module outline

I. Empire and the International: History and Theory

Seminar 1: Introduction- Dividing Territory: Colonial States in the Middle East
Given the wide differences in colonial practices across the region, to what extent is it possible to make generalizations about colonial states in the Middle East?

Required Reading:
Roger Owen, State, Power and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East (London: Routledge 2004), pp.3-22 (Ch.1 “The End of Empires: The Emergence of the Modern Middle Eastern State”).

Seminar 2: History of Empire in the 19th century

Required reading:
Jurgen Osterhammel, 2014. Imperial System and Nation-Stated, pp.392-430
Geoffrey Nash, 2011. From Empire to Orient. Travelers of the Middle East, 1930-1926.

Seminar 3: Colonialism and Imperialism
What is the difference between ‘colonialism’ and ‘imperialism’?

Required Reading:

Seminar 4: Classical Theories of Imperialism

Required reading:

Seminar 5: Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: Is Knowledge Power?
To what extent were colonial authorities able to develop accurate and objective knowledge about the societies they ruled?
Required Reading:


Seminar 6. East vs. West: a Clash of Civilizations?
How useful is it to think of the encounter between Europe and the Middle East in terms of a ‘clash of civilizations’?

Required reading:


Seminar 7: Does Economics Drive Empire? Egypt in the 19th Century

How did economics facilitate European domination of Egypt during the 19th century?

Required Reading:


II. Empire and the Local: Forming States, Transforming Societies

Seminar 8.

Sroor Leumori. אתרי מלחמת הולנד הראשות המפנות בים האסייתי ובאר שבע

Seminar 9. Natives in the Service of Empire

רות ג'ינאוי, 2013. להילחם של מלחמתם של אחרים - חיילים אפריקאים בצבא צרפת במלחמת העולם הראשונה. כתב העת של החברה היסטורית הישראלית, 33. ירושלים.
Seminar 10. The Northern Frontiers of Empire: Archival and Media Representation

Munir Fakher Eldin, British Framing of the Frontier in Palestine, 1918–1923: Revisiting Colonial Sources on Tribal Insurrection, Land Tenure, and the Arab Intelligentsia, Jerusalem Quarterly 60.

Seminar 11: The Colonial Image: Bedouin Tribes and Colonial Policing

Required reading:

Seminar 12. Policing Skies and Frontiers: Coercion, Airpower and the Colonial State in Iraq

The British Mandate in Iraq was primarily enforced by means of air policing. What effect did this have on the power of the Iraqi state?

Required Reading:

Seminar 13. Conquering Land: Mapping in Egypt and Mandatory Palestine

How was the colonial project in Egypt and Palestine sustained by technologies of cartography? On balance, how significant do you think maps are for the production of social power?

Required Reading:
III. Resistance is Futile (Or is it?): the Empire Strikes Back

Seminar 14. Arab Nationalism as Anti-Colonialism

How should we understand nationalism in the Arab world - is it the expression of a deep-rooted Arab identity, a political reaction to European encroachment, a consequence of Islam’s failure to resist colonialism, or something else?

Required Reading:

IV. American Modern: Remaking the Middle East

Capitalism and Petroimperialism in the Gulf

What effect has oil had on the domestic and international politics of the Middle East?

Required Reading:

Refugees Crisis in the Middle East and Rebuilding Iraq: Colonialism Redux?

To what extent do US state-building efforts in Iraq confirm or refute the argument that the US is involved in empire-building?

Required Reading: