



Ben-Gurion University of the Negev
The Ben-Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Israel & Zionism
ISIP

The Poetics and Politics of History and Anthropology in Middle Eastern Societies

016-2-2001

Sde Boker Campus

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Office hours and location:

1. Beer Sheva, Main Campus, Building: 72, Room: 601 – Monday 12:00-13:00
2. Sde Boker Campus, Building: Moran, Room: 33 – Tuesday 13:30-14:30

Course Description:

In the first part of this course we will read anthropological studies that are considered to be classics and are highly relevant to understanding Middle Eastern societies. In the second part, we will read historical masterpieces and examine their contribution to our understanding of the Middle East. We will discuss together the methods, theories and problems of both disciplines, and examine their borderlines and points of intersection.

Course Objectives:

The main aim of the course is to provide the necessary theoretical foundations in both disciplines – History and Anthropology – for interpreting Middle Eastern cultures and societies. Another principal objective of this course is to gain experience in critically reading canonical texts – revealing their premises, studying their weak spots, and examining their contribution to our understanding of the cultures of our region.

Course Structure:

The course is divided into two parts (part one – Anthropology, part two – History). In each course meeting there will be a discussion of one major study (+ further reading), based on individual reading.

Total # of Credits:

4

Teaching Method:

The course will be based on individual reading at home and group discussion in class. The students should prepare their weekly assigned readings and come to class with significant questions that stem from the readings.

Course Requirements:

Compulsory attendance – Yes

Pre-requisites – None

Structure of Final Grade:

Course grade will be based on class attendance, knowledge of readings and active participation (25%), and on a final paper, or a seminar paper, which will review a major historical or anthropological work that is relevant to the understanding of the modern Middle East.

Course Schedule Layout:

Part 1 – Anthropology

Week 1:

Weekly subject title: **Introduction**

1. General Introduction
2. Introduction to the History of Anthropology

Week 2:

Weekly subject title: **Sociological Foundations**

3. Émile Durkheim, *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*, trans. by John Spaulding and George Simpson, London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1952, pp. 41-53, 104-122, 123-142, 152-170.

Further reading:

Émile Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method*, trans. by Sarah Solovay and John Mueller, Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1958.

4. Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. by Franz Rosenthal, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1967, pp. 249-263, 313-317, 353-355.

Further reading:

Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, pp. lxviii-lxxxvii.

Week 3:

Weekly subject title: **Urban Sociology**

5. Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life", *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, trans. and ed. By Kurt Wolff, Glencoe, Ill: Free Press, 1950, pp. 409-424.
Friedrich Engels, "The Great Towns", in: Richard LeGates and Fredric Stout (eds.), *The City Reader*, London and New York: Routledge, 1996, pp. 46-55.

Further reading:

Louis Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life" (1938), A. J. Reiss Jr. (ed.), *On Cities and Social Life: Selected Papers*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press and Phoenix Books, 1964, pp. 60-83.

6. Naguib Mahfouz, *Midaq Alley*, trans. by Trevor Le Gassick, Washington D. C.: Three Continents Press, 1977.

Further reading:

Diane Singerman and Paul Amar (eds.), *Cairo Cosmopolitan: Politics, Culture, and Urban Space in the Globalized Middle East*, Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2006, pp. 193-220.

Week 4:

Weekly subject title: **Functionalism**

7. Bronislaw Malinowski, *Sex and Repression in Savage Society*, London: K. Paul, 1927, pp. VII-XII, 1-39, 104-134.

Further reading:

A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *The Andaman Islanders*, Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1948.

8. Henry Rosenfeld, "Processes of Structural Change Within the Arab Village Extended Family," *American Anthropologist* 60(6) (1958): 1127-1139.

Further Reading:

Hilma Granqvist, *Marriage Conditions in a Palestinian Village*, Helsingfors 1935.

Week 5:

Weekly subject title: **Structuralism**

9. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, trans. by Claire Jacobson and Broole Grundfest Schoepf, New York: basic Books, 1963, pp. 206-231.

Further reading:

Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966, pp. 1-34.

10. Pierre Bourdieu, *Algeria 1960*, trans. by Richard Nice, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979, pp. 133-153.

Further reading:

Edward T. Hall, *The Hidden Dimension*, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966, pp. 139-153.

Week 6:

Weekly subject title: **Cultural Anthropology**

11. Clifford Geertz, *The interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, New York: Basic Books, 1973, pp. 3-30, 412-453.

Further reading:

Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*, New York: Basic Books, 1983.

12. Lila Abu-Lughud, *Veiled Sentiments: Honor and Poetry in a Bedouin Society*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986, pp. 1-35.

Further reading:

Abu-Lughud, *Veiled Sentiments*, 208-232.

Week 7:

Weekly subject title: **Critical Anthropology**

13. Renato Rosaldo, "From the Door of his Tent: The Fieldworker and the Inquisitor," James Clifford and George Marcus (eds.), *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986, pp. 77-97.

Further reading:

Talal Asad (ed.), *Anthropology & the Colonial Encounter*, New York: Humanities Books, 1973.

14. Discussion

Part 2 – History

Week 8:

Weekly subject title: **Historical Facts**

15. Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft*, trans. by Peter Putnam, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953, pp. 48-78.

Further reading:

Bloch, *The Historian's Craft*, pp. 3-19.

16. Edward H. Carr, *What is History?*, New York: Vintage Books, 1967, pp. 3-20.

Further reading:

Richard Evans, *In Defense of History*, London: Granta Books, 1997, pp. 75-102.

Week 9:

Weekly subject title: **Metahistories**

17. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, trans. by Samuel Moore, *The Communist Manifesto*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 3-16.

Further reading:

Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction", *The Communist Manifesto: A Modern Edition*, London: Verso, 1998, pp. 1-30.

18. Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Phillip II*, trans. by Sian Reynolds, New York: Harper & Row, 1972, Vol. 1, pp 231-246 ("The Unity of the Climate").

Week 10:

Weekly subject title: **Petit-Grand Histories**

19. Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, trans. by John and Anne Tedeschi, London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1981, pp. 1-6 (no. 1-3), 9-13 (no. 6), 18-21 (no. 9), 32-34 (no. 15-16), 37-49 (no. 19-22), 56-60 (no. 27-28), 81-86 (no. 42), 103-106 (no. 52), 111-117 (no. 57-58), 125-126 (no. 61).

Further reading:

Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms*, pp. xiii-xxvi.

Lynn Hunt (ed.), *The New Cultural History*, Berkeley, California 1989.

20. Fouad Ajami, *The Dream Palace of the Arabs: A Generation's Odyssey*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1998, pp. 3-16, 26-51.

Further reading:

Ajami, *The Dream Palace of the Arabs*, pp. 51-100.

Week 11:

Weekly subject title: **Historical Demystifications**

21. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd Ed., London: Verso, 1991, pp. 1-46.

Further reading:

Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, pp. 47-140.

Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 2nd ed., Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005.

22. Samir al-Khalil, *The Monument: Art, Vulgarly, and Responsibility in Iraq*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991, pp. 1-48.

Further reading:

Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 1-14.

Week 12:

Weekly subject title: **Telling Fact from Fiction**

23. Geoffrey Roberts (ed.), *The History and Narrative Reader*, New York: Routledge, 2001, pp. 221-236.

Further reading:

Isaiah Berlin, *Against the Current: Essays in the History of Ideas*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001, pp. 80-110.

24. Edward Said, *Orientalism*, New York: Vintage Books, 1979, pp. 1-28, 31-49.

further reading:

Said, *Orientalism*, pp. 49-110.

Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong?: Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 3-81.

Week 13:

Weekly subject title: **Deconstructing History**

11. Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. by Richard Howard, New York: Vintage Books, 1988, pp. ix-xii, 3-37.

Further reading:

Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, pp. 38-64.

12. Hillel Cohen, *Good Arabs: The Israeli Security Agencies and the Israeli Arabs, 1948-1967*, trans. by Haim Watzman, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010, pp. 123-158.

Further reading:

Cohen, *Good Arabs*, pp. 11-38.

Hillel Cohen, *Army of Shadows: Palestinian Collaboration with Zionism, 1917-1948*, trans. by Haim Watzman, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008.