

**San Francisco State University**

**History 850: Modernity and the Islamic World**

**Instructor: Dr. Maziar Behrooz**

**Fall 2007: Wednesday 7-945; Science 268**

**Office Hours: Science 223, W 5-6 & TH 10-11 or by appointment; office phone: (415) 338-1776**

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**Course Abstract:**

This research graduate seminar examines the impact of Modernity on the Islamic World (Middle East and beyond) from the 1700s to the present. The course will take a comparative approach to various patterns in the Middle Eastern societies (nationalism, Islam, socialism, gender) attempting to implement, confront, learn, and adopt aspects of Modernity to Moslem societies. The goal is to find a topic of interest, which is both focused and manageable, and develop it into a research paper.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

The first half of the course will be devoted to group discussion of selected reading assignments. Participants will be assigned books for in class presentation, discussion, and writing of book reviews.

Participants will be required to give book presentations, do the readings, participate in class discussions, write book reviews, and give presentations on their final paper before submitting it.

**Research Paper:** Your task is to develop a thesis, conduct research, and write a research paper, mine is to oversee this process, guide its development, and judge its outcome. Your project thesis should be an original one. It may also be a different approach to an already well researched subject.

This course will take the Early Topic Selection approach which means you are encouraged to select a paper topic as early as possible and begin your research.

You should be prepared to argue the originality of your topic both orally and in your paper introduction. Your paper should also include an evaluation of the state of the field under study, the significance of your topic, and why your work differs from other researches done in this area. Your work should be based on primary and secondary sources. This should include primary non-English sources depending on your language proficiency (to be determined in class).

You are expected to turn in a rough draft copy of your work. This will be read by all class members and commented on. Students who develop a topic early on and choose to present early will not be expected to turn

in a complete draft. The later your presentation the more complete your draft should look.

Each student is required to read the work of others and comment on them. Comments on presentations and rough drafts should be constructive. Remember, everyone will go through the same process. If you know of sources unknown to the author, you can provide her\him with it. If you see a contradiction in his\her argument, you should bring it up academically and constructively.

Final papers should be between 30-35 pages long, typed double space. Endnotes and bibliographies should follow the Chicago Manual of Styles.

### **BOOK REVIEWS**

No two books are alike so guidelines for book reviews must be general. There is, however, one basic rule. In order to write a good review you must think carefully about the book and about your review. Reviews should be 1,000 words maximum, so you must take pains to organize and present your thoughts with maximum precision, clarity and conciseness. Do not submit a review that exceeds the maximum word limit by more than five percent. Begin your review with the author, title, and facts of publication, using a standard bibliographic form.

Write on the author's purpose for writing the book, his thesis, how the book is organized, what type of sources are used to develop his theses, how well the author accomplishes his task and how the book relates to the main theme of our class.

### **Grade breakdown:**

Final paper: 40%  
Class participation: 20%  
Book reviews: 20%  
Paper presentation 20%

### **Course Outline:**

**Note: The following is a rough outline and it is subject to change.**

#### **Week 1:** August 29

Course introduction preview of Iran: A Cinematographic Revolution.

Read: Carr, What is History? Esposito, The Straight Path (115-253), Vahdat, God and Juggernaut (Introduction and "the Nature of Modernity).

#### **Week 2:** September 5

+Library tour: Class will meet at 4:30 PM at the intersection of Bancroft and Telegraph (south gate UC Berkeley) for a tour and introduction to UC Berkeley library resources on the Islamic world.

#### **Week 3:** September 12

All students will be prepared to discuss books and reading assignments by Carr, Esposito, and Vahdat part 1. Questions for discussion:

- + What is History and who is a historian? Is it really "his story"?
- + What are Modern interpretations of Islam?
- + What is Modernity?

**Week 4:** September 19

- + Discussion of Vahdat, God and Juggernaut
- + Vahdat book review due.
- + One page paper topics proposals due.
- + Scheduling for first one on one meeting and discussion of paper topics with instructor.

**Week 5:** September 26

- + Discussion of Arkoun, Rethinking Islam
- + Arkoun book review due

**Week 6:** October 3

- + Discussion of Jahanbegloo, Iran: Between Tradition and Modernity
- + Sanjoo book review due.

**Week 7:** October 10

- + Discussion of Gole, the Forbidden Modern
- + Gole book review due.
- + Scheduling for second one on one meeting and discussion of paper topic with instructor.

**Week 8:** October 17

- + Discussion of Keddie, Women in the Middle East
- + Keddie book reviews due.
- + Rough drafts for the first group of presentations should be e-mailed to instructor.

**Week 9:** October 24

- + First group of paper presentations.
- + Rough drafts for the second group of presentations should be e-mailed to instructor.

**Week 10:** October 31

- + Second group of paper presentations.
- + Rough drafts for the third group of presentations should have been e-mailed to the instructor.

**Week 11:** November 7

- + Third group of paper presentations.
- + Rough drafts for the fourth group of presentations should have been e-mailed to the instructor.

**Week 12:** November 14

- + Fourth group of paper presentations.

+ Rough drafts for the fifth group of paper presentations should have been e-mailed to the instructor.

**Week 13:** November 21 (Thanks Giving Recess)

**Week 14:** November 28

+ Fifth group of paper presentations.

+ Rough drafts for the sixth group of presentations should have been e-mailed to the instructor.

**Week 15:** December 5

+ Sixth group of paper presentations.

**Week 16:** December 13

**WE WILL HAVE CLASS IF WE NEED TO HEAR PRESENTATIONS.**

**FINAL PAPERS ARE DUE BY FRIDAY DECEMEBR 21 (BEFORE NOON) IN MY MAIL BOX AT THE HISTORY DEPARTMENT.**

**Books:**

Muhammed Arkoun, ed., *Rethinking Islam*

E.H. Carr, *What is History*

John Esposito, *the Straight Path*

Nilufer Gole, *the Forbidden Modern*

Ramin Jahanbegloo, ed., *Iran: Between Tradition and Modernity*

Nikki Keddie, *Women in the Middle East*

Farzin Vahdat, *God and Juggernaut*