

History and Culture of the Modern and Contemporary Middle East (A006635)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 5.0 **Study time 150 h**

Course offerings in academic year 2026-2027

A (semester 2) English Gent

Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

Markiewicz, Christopher	LW21	lecturer-in-charge
Franke, Lisa	LW21	co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027

	crdts	offering
Bachelor of Arts in Oriental Languages and Cultures(main subject Arabic and Islamic Studies)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in History	5	A
Master of Arts in Oriental Languages and Cultures(main subject China)	5	A
Master of Arts in Oriental Languages and Cultures(main subject India)	5	A
Master of Arts in Oriental Languages and Cultures(main subject Japan)	5	A
Master of Arts in Oriental Languages and Cultures(main subject Middle East Studies)	5	A
Exchange Programme Cultures and Languages in Context	5	A
Exchange Programme Global Studies and World Societies	5	A
Exchange Programme History	5	A
Exchange Programme Oriental Languages and Cultures	5	A
Linking Course Master of Arts in History	5	A
Linking Course Master of Arts in Multilingual Communication: a combination of at least two languages	5	A
Linking Course Master of Arts in Translation: a combination of at least two languages	5	A
Preparatory Course Master of Arts in History	5	A
Preparatory Course Master of Arts in Multilingual Communication: a combination of at least two languages	5	A
Preparatory Course Master of Arts in Translation: a combination of at least two languages	5	A
Elective Set Arabic and Islamic Studies	5	A
Elective Set Languages of Asia, the Middle East and Eastern Europe	5	A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

Middle East, imperialism, nationalism, Islam, postcolonialism, Arab culture, society, religion

Position of the course

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has played a pivotal role in shaping global history and culture since the 19th century. It has been a site of colonial encounters, nationalist movements, and modernization efforts, profoundly influencing its political and social structures. The region's rich cultural heritage intersects with the legacies of imperialism, the formation of modern nation-states, and the search for identity amid rapid social change. These processes gave rise to diverse political ideologies, from Pan-Arabism to Islamism, and movements calling for reform, resistance, and revolution. The Arab Spring exemplified the enduring hope for freedom and democracy, while ongoing struggles with authoritarianism, economic challenges, and social inequalities continue to shape

the region's trajectory. This course explores the historical and cultural dynamics that have shaped the modern and contemporary MENA region, focusing on its global impact and complex entanglement.

Contents

Through interactive classes and the reading of a variety of sources students acquire knowledge of and insight into the historical, cultural and socio-religious dynamics that have shaped the modern and contemporary Middle East from the nineteenth century until today.

Initial competences

Basic knowledge of the history and culture of the Middle East, acquired through the course "Introduction to the History of Islamic West Asia (600-1800)" and "Introduction to Islam and Being Muslim", or through other means.

Final competences

- 1 To explain the major historical processes that have shaped the modern and contemporary Middle East.
- 2 To identify and engage with key academic issues and debates on the modern history and culture of the Middle East.
- 3 To situate key events and texts in relation to their wider cultural and historical context.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is unrestricted: the student takes into consideration the conditions mentioned in 'Starting Competences'

Conditions for exam contract

Access to this course unit via an exam contract is unrestricted

Teaching methods

Seminar, Lecture

Extra information on the teaching methods

Interactive classes

Study material

Type: Syllabus

Name: Powerpoint presentations
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
Optional: no
Available on Ufora : Yes

Type: Reader

Name: Reader with texts and articles
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
Optional: no
Available on Ufora : Yes

References

Abu-Lughod, Lila. *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998.

Amin, Camron Michael, Benjamin C. Fortna, and Elizabeth B. Frierson, eds. *The Modern Middle East: A Sourcebook for History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Cleveland, William L. *A history of the modern Middle East*. London: Routledge, 2018.

Schielke, Samuli. *Egypt in the Future Tense: Hope, Frustration, and Ambivalence before and after 2011*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015.

Course content-related study coaching

Directly in the class (interactive classes)
Through Ufora
Through office hours

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Oral assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Oral assessment

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Participation

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

not applicable

Extra information on the examination methods

NPE: Active and constructive participation in the classes on the basis of literature and guiding questions.

PE: At the end of the semester the course is assessed through an oral exam with written preparation.

Calculation of the examination mark

NPE: 25%

PE: 75%

Students have to pass both NPE and PE assessments in order to pass the course as a whole.

Facilities for Working Students

Possibility to change the NPE part into an assignment.

Possibility to move oral exam.

Possibility to move feedback.