

THE MODERN HISTORY OF EGYPT

Prof. Eve M. Troutt Powell

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:30 – 3
College Hall 314

Office: 208C College Hall
Tel: 215-898-3518
Email: troutt@sas.upenn.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 3-4

All over Cairo there are signs proclaiming Egypt as “Umm al-dunya” or Mother of the World, reflecting a pride in the central place ancient Egypt held long ago. Monuments built thousands of years before have stood the test of time, pollution and tourism. But this pride of ancient place has also played a crucial role in the development of modern Egypt. It took generations for Egyptians to gain control of the monumentalizing of the ancient past, or its study, or its artifacts. Other belief systems also overwhelmed the importance of the antiquities, like the spread of Christianity, Islam and Judaism. This course will explore the cultural history of early modern and modern Egypt, from the late eighteenth century to the present. We will explore the culture of Egypt under the Ottomans and the Mamluks, slavery in Egypt; the unsuccessful French attempt to colonize Egypt and the successful British occupation of the country. We will examine Egypt’s complicated relationship with Sudan, its closest neighbor to the south.

One cannot study modern Egypt without studying the history of Egyptian nationalism (and its often close relationship with feminism) and we will examine the development of nationalist movements in Egypt, from the end of the nineteenth century through Gamal `abd al-Nasr’s movement of pan-Arabism, to today. We will investigate Egypt’s wars with Israel, and its peace. We will do all of this with a variety of texts and media, with a special emphasis on novels and films. These can give us a glimpse into how poorly the country and its people have been represented, outside Egypt, and how Egyptian writers and film-makers look at their own society.

This syllabus is subject to change. Updates, changes and announcements will be posted in a timely fashion on Blackboard.

Required Reading:

Books: (all are available at the Penn Book Center on 34th St, in paperback)

William Cleveland, A History of the Modern Middle East
Al-Jabarti, Chronicle of Napoleon in Egypt
Qasim Amin, The Liberation of Egypt

Alaa al-Aswany, The Yacoubian Building
Huda Sha`rawi, Harem Years
Naguib Mahfouz, Palace Walk
-----, Karnak Cafe
Lisa Pollard, Nurturing the Nation

Articles and Chapters: (all are available on the Blackboard site for this course)

Leila Ahmed, Chapters 5-6 in Women and Gender in Islam

David Ayalon, "The Historian al-Jabarti and His Background"

Evelyn Baring (Lord Cromer), Chapter xxxiv in Modern Egypt, vol. II.

Joel Beinin, Chapters 2, 3 in The Dispersion of Egyptian Jewry

Khaled Fahmy, Chapters 5,6 in All the Pasha's Men: Mehmed Ali, his army and the making of modern Egypt

Israel Gershoni, "The Evolution of National Culture in Modern Egypt, 1892-1945"

P.M. Holt and Martin Daly, Chapters 3-4, A History of the Sudan

Johannes J.G. Jensen, "Hassan al-Banna's Earliest Pamphlet"

Edward W. Lane, Chapter 3, Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians (recommended)

Timothy Mitchell, "Egypt at the Exhibition", in Colonising Egypt.

Donald Reid, Chapters 3, 5 in Whose Pharaohs? Archaeology, Museums and Egyptian National Identity from Napoleon to World War I;

Ehud Toledano, "The Other Face of Bondage" in Slavery and Abolition in the Ottoman Middle East.

Eve M. Troutt Powell, Chapter 3 in A Different Shade of Colonialism: Egypt, Great Britain and the Mastery of the Sudan

Course Requirements:

First paper (5-7 pages) – 25% of final grade

Mid-term examination – 25% of final grade

Second paper (8-10 pages) – 25% of final grade
Take-home examination – 25% of final grade

Course Schedule:

Week 1 (Sept. 6): Egypt and the world of the under the Ottoman Empire

Readings: Cleveland, Chapter 3; David Ayalon, “The Historian al-Jabarti and His Background”

Week 2 (Sept. 11, 13): The Napoleonic Invasion

Readings: Al-Jabarti, Chronicle of Napoleon in Egypt

Week 3 (Sept. 18, no class on Sept. 20): Muhammad `Ali

Readings: Cleveland, Ch. 4, Fahmy “An Olfactory Tale of Cairo”

*Please note, on Monday, Sept. 17, special lecture at noon in History Dept. Lounge – Prof. Israel Gershoni

Week 4 (Sept. 25, 27): Muhammad Ali’s Egypt

Readings: Pollard, chs. 1-2; Fahmy, chs. 5-6.

*Please note, on Wednesday, Sept. 26, there will be a special lecture at noon, place TBA – Prof. Beth Baron

Week 5 (Oct. 2, 4): Khedive Isma`il and the Birth of Egyptian Nationalism

Readings: Pollard, ch. 3; Reid (ch. 3, 5); Cleveland, ch. 5; Mitchell, ch.1

FIRST PAPER ASSIGNMENT DUE IN CLASS ON TUESDAY, OCT. 2

Week 6 (Oct. 6, 9): Egypt, Sudan and Colonialism

Readings: Holt and Daly, Chs. 5-6; Troutt Powell, Ch. 3; Cleveland, ch. 6
Lord Cromer, ch. Xxxiv.

Week 7 (Oct. 16, 18): Women and Nationalism

Readings: Pollard, chs. 4-5; Amin (entire book); Ahmed, ch. 5

Week 8 (Oct. 25, 27): The First “Feminists”

Readings: Sha`rawi (entire book), Ahmed, ch. 6

MID-TERM EXAM IN CLASS ON TUESDAY, OCT. 25

Week 9 (Oct. 30, Nov. 1): THE 1919 REVOLUTION

Mahfouz, Palace Walk
Pollard, Ch.6

Week 10 (Nov. 6, 8): The Wafd Party and Semi-Independence: Egypt to World War II

Readings: Cleveland, Ch. 11; Israel Gershoni, "The Evolution"; Johannes Jensen, "Hassan al-Banna"

Film Excerpts (and possible screening): "The Mummy (1932)

SECOND PAPER PROPOSALS DUE IN CLASS THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8

Week 11 (Nov. 13, 15): Gamal `abd al-Nasr's Egypt

Readings: Cleveland, chs. 15-16; Mahfouz, Karnak Café; handout on Sayyid Qutb

Film Excerpts: "Nasser '56"(Egypt, 1996) and "al-Karnak" (Egypt,1975)

Week 12 (Nov. 20) – **NO CLASS! THANKSGIVING BREAK! HALLELUJAH!**

Week 13 (Nov. 27, 29): Anwar al-Sadat and the Peace with Israel

Readings: Cleveland, chs. 17-18; Beinlin, chs. 2-3

SECOND PAPER ASSIGNMENT DUE IN CLASS ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 29

Week 14 (Dec. 4, 6): Husni Mubarak, Islamic Movements and the Economy

Readings: Cleveland, ch. 20; al-Aswany, The Yacoubian Building

Film Screening: "The Yacoubian Building" (Egypt, 2006)

TAKE-HOME EXAMINATIONS DUE IN MY MAILBOX BY 5 PM., DEC. 19

