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ABOUT THE COURSE

This course offers an economic analysis of the history of the Middle East. It is organized around two major questions: 1) whether and how the Middle Eastern economies have historically been distinct from the West, and 2) whether and why the Middle Eastern economies have experienced a stagnation or decline since the Middle Ages. These questions are discussed by examining the economic institutions of the Middle East and more specific topics such as the roles of religion, women, religious minorities, state, and trade and financial relationships with the West.

Econ 204 is also a General Education course (Content Area 4, International) that aims to meet the following learning goals of general education:

- Acquire intellectual breadth and versatility: the readings include selections that enable students to acquire intellectual breadth and versatility through exposure to controversial subjects such as the economic implications of the Islamic law and religious beliefs, roles of women, and Middle Eastern conceptions of the state. Writing assignments require students to form and articulate their own positions on some of these issues.
- Acquire consciousness of the diversity of human culture and experience: students will read, discuss, and write about the distinctive patterns of economic thought, behavior, and institutions in the history of the Middle East. Examples include the roles of religion and the positions of women and religious minorities.

TEXTBOOKS

Unfortunately, there are no textbooks that are designed specifically for a course of this type. The following books (available at the Coop) include good reference information and starting points, but not much in the way of systematic economic analysis. We will thus also read economics working papers and journal articles on the Middle East (click on the title on the reading list below to download/print).

- Held, Colbert C. 2006. *Middle East Patterns*. 4th edition. Westview Press.
- Richards, Alan and John Waterbury. 2007. *A Political Economy of the Middle East*. 3rd Edn. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- McCloskey, Deirdre. *Economical Writing* Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. **Exams:** one midterm on Wednesday, Oct. 17 and a final examination on Monday, Dec. 10 (10:30-12:30).

2. Writing Assignments:

There will be two types of writing assignments.

- a. The first are in-class writing assignments of 1-2 pages in length, based primarily on the questions given on the "DISCUSSION PROBLEM" column of the reading list below. The primary objective of these assignments is to practice the elements of writing assigned for each part (given immediately below the title of part and discussed in 3.c below) while studying the topics covered in that part.
- b. For the second type of writing assignments, you will choose one of the countries included in the "Regional Geography" section of *Middle East Patterns*. (At most two student per country—first come first served). You are asked to write two papers on this country, each expected to be 5-6 pages in length, answering the assigned questions below:
 1. What has been the most important factor affecting the economic development of this country negatively (or positively) before the First World War? (Due, Monday, Nov. 5)
 2. What has been the most important factor affecting the economic development of this country negatively (or positively) after the First World War? (Due, Monday, Dec. 3)

These questions have been phrased broadly to make them applicable to all countries. But in answering them for your unit you are encouraged to follow your own interests and be as specific as you can.

3. Notes on writing assignments:

- a. Note that because this is a "W" course, you will not pass the course if you do not pass the writing component of the course.
- b. The deadlines for the second type of assignments are serious. Late submissions will lose 10% of total points available for a paper for each class meeting after the due date.
- c. Each paper will be graded on the following categories, weights depending on the nature of the assignment.

- i. **Researching the topic:** Were relevant and good quality reference materials researched and mastered? Make sure to use an adequate number and a balanced mix of printed books, journal articles, and internet resources.
- ii. **Documentation and Citation:** Were all sources documented and cited appropriately? Under the [Student Code, Part VI on Academic Integrity](#), you are responsible for providing proper citation for all direct quotations, paraphrased ideas, and statistical and other information coming from other sources. Make sure to include at the end of each paper a list of “Works Cited.” For further assistance, please refer to [UConn Library’s guide on “Citing Sources.”](#)
- iii. **Argument:** Is there a central idea, a thesis that is consistently sustained throughout the paper? How clear, sophisticated, and original is the idea? Does it convey a clear knowledge of the material and a recognition of alternative perspectives?
- iv. **Support:** How well is your argument supported? Are the contents clearly and consistently relevant to the main topic? Are examples, quotations, statistical and other information skillfully used to support the argument(s)?
- v. **Organization:** Is the paper well-organized? Make sure that your objective is clarified at the beginning, each section has a clear role in meeting the objective, and that ideas flow logically from one paragraph or section to the next.
- vi. **Paragraphs:** Are the paragraphs coherent and well-organized? Is there one clear idea per paragraph, introduced by a clear topic sentence and developed consistently by other well-connected sentences?
- vii. **Sentences:** Are the sentences efficient and well-constructed? Work on constructing clear, concise sentences by avoiding words and phrases that do not fit well. Use vague pronouns and passive voice only when absolutely necessary.
- viii. **Mechanics:** Are the mechanical elements of writing (grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc.) free of errors? Using your word processor to check “spelling and grammar” before printing the paper can go a long way. But be careful: your word processor does not know if you meant “there” or “their”. You also need to proofread yourself to eliminate all errors.

4. The requirements will have the following weights:

Midterm	25
Final	25
In-class Papers	20
Longer Papers	30

5. The grading scale:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>%</u>
A	95+
A-	90+
B+	85+
B	80+
B-	78+
C+	75+
C	70+
C-	68+
D+	65+
D	60+
D-	55+
F	0-54

COURSE OUTLINE

PART I: INTRODUCTION

Writing Focus: “Researching the Topic” and “Documentation and Citation”

TOPIC	READING ASSIGNMENT	DISCUSSION PROBLEM
Introduction	Held, Ch. 1. PBS and CIA websites on the Middle East.	What is the Middle East?
Physical Environment	Held, Ch. 2.	What are some of the physical, climatic, and environmental characteristics of the ME?
Concise General History	Held Ch. 3.	What has been the evolution of economic institutions and performance in Middle Eastern history?
Human Environment	Held, Ch. 4	What are the patterns of distribution of population, peoples, languages, religions, ethnic groups, and settlements in the ME?
	Map quiz and in-class essay	

PART II: THE GROWING WEAKNESS OF THE PRIVATE ECONOMY BEFORE THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Writing Focus: "Argument" and "Support"

TOPIC	READING ASSIGNMENT	DISCUSSION PROBLEM
The West and the Middle East	Kuran, Timur. 2004. " Why the Middle East Is Economically Underdeveloped: Historical Mechanisms of Institutional Stagnation. " <i>Journal of Economic Perspectives</i> 18, no. 3: 71-77.	In what way(s) have the Western and Middle Eastern societies followed distinct paths?
Prices, Incomes, Productivity	1. Özmucur, Süleyman, and Şevket Pamuk. 2002. " Real Wages and Standards of Living in the Ottoman Empire, 1489-1914. " <i>Journal of Economic History</i> 62, no. 2: 293-321. 2. Coşgel, Metin. " Agricultural Productivity in the Early Ottoman Empire. " <i>Research in Economic History</i> , 2006.	How did ME economies perform over time and in recent history?
Religious Minorities	1. R/W, Figure 2.5 (p. 42) 2. Botticini, Maristella, and Zvi Eckstein. 2005. " Jewish Occupational Selection: Education, Restrictions, or Minorities? " <i>Journal of Economic History</i> 65, no. 4: 922-48. 3. Kuran, Timur. 2004. " The Economic Ascent of the Middle East's Religious Minorities: The Role of Islamic Legal Pluralism. " <i>Journal of Legal Studies</i> , 33(2): 475-515.	How can we explain the occupational choices of religious minorities in the ME? How did their economic status change over time?

PART III: THE THE GROWING STRENGTH OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR BEFORE THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Writing Focus: "Organization"

TOPIC	READING ASSIGNMENT	DISCUSSION PROBLEM
State Power	Coşgel, Metin, Rasha Ahmed, and Thomas Miceli. 2007. "Law, State Power, and Taxation in Islamic History," presented at the Economic Research on Civilisations Conference on "The Economic Performance of Civilizations: Roles of Culture, Religion, and the Law," held at the University of Southern California in February, 2007.	Was the legal community able to constrain the coercive powers of rulers in the history of Islamic Middle East?
Taxation	Coşgel, Metin. 2005. " Efficiency and Continuity in Public Finance: The Ottoman System of Taxation. " <i>International Journal of Middle East Studies</i> , 37 (4): 567-86.	What were the different types of taxes in the Ottoman Empire? What determined the choice of a tax base?
Tax Assignment	Coşgel, Metin M. & Thomas J. Miceli. " Risk, Transaction Costs, and Tax Assignment: Government Finance in the Ottoman Empire. " <i>Journal of Economic History</i> , 2005, 65(3): 806-21.	Were risks or transaction costs more important in determining the allocation of tax revenues in the Ottoman Empire? Why?
Economic Change	Coşgel, Metin. 2007. "State, Legal Community, and Economic Change in Islamic History," Paper for Presentation at the "Law and Economic Development: A Historical Perspective" Conference at Utrecht University, Sept. 20-22, 2007	How did the relationship between rulers and legal community shape economic change in the ME?

PART IV: THE ME ECONOMIES AFTER THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Writing Focus: "Paragraphs"

TOPIC	READING ASSIGNMENT	DISCUSSION PROBLEM
The ME since the 19 th c.	R/W: Chapters 2, 3; Held, Ch. 7.	What are the different patterns of economic development observed in the ME in the 20. century?
Population and Migration	R/W: Chapter 4	In what ways has the rapid population growth in the ME affected economic progress and living standards?
Human Capital	R/W: Chapter 5	How have standards of health and education improved?
Oil	Held, Ch. 6; R/W: Chapters 3, 15	Has the presence of oil helped or hurt general welfare in the Middle East as a whole?
State, Growth, and Reform	1. R/W: Chapters 7, 8, 9. 2. Yousef, Tarik M. Development, Growth and Policy Reform in the Middle East and North Africa since 1950 <i>Journal of Economic Perspectives</i> , Summer 2004, v. 18, iss. 3, pp. 91-115	How have the strength and large size of the public sector affected the efficiency and growth of Middle Eastern economies in the twentieth century?

PART V: RECENT CONTROVERSIES
Writing Focus: "Sentences" and "Mechanics"

TOPIC	READING ASSIGNMENT	DISCUSSION PROBLEM
Religion and Economics	1. R/W: Chapter 14 2. Kuran, Timur. 1995. " Islamic Economics and the Islamic Subeconomy ." <i>Journal of Economic Perspectives</i> 9, no. 4: 155-73.	What are the fundamental elements of Islamic Economics? How has the movement affected ME economies in the 20 th century?
Gender	World Bank. Gender and Development in the Middle East and North Africa: Women in the Public Sphere [overview of book]	What have been the economic consequences of gender inequality in the Middle East?
Militarization and Geopolitics	Held, Ch. 8; R/W: Chapter 13.	What are the sources of militarization and violence in the ME?
Terrorism	1. Held, p. 260-63. 2. Krueger, Alan B. and Jitka Malečková. 2003. Education, Poverty and Terrorism: Is There a Causal Connection? <i>Journal of Economic Perspectives</i> , Fall 2003, v. 17, iss. 4, pp. 119-44	What are the sources of terrorism in the Middle East?
War in Iraq	1. Held, p. 250-54. 2. Bilmes, Linda; and Stiglitz, Joseph, 2006. " The Economic Costs of the Iraq War: An Appraisal Three Years After the Beginning of the Conflict ," National Bureau of Economic Research, Inc, NBER Working Papers: 12054. 3. Davis, Steven J.; Murphy, Kevin M.; Topel, Robert H., 2006. " War in Iraq versus Containment ," National Bureau of Economic Research, Inc, NBER Working Papers: 12092.	Was it economically justified to go to war against Iraq?