

The Making of the Modern Middle East

Start date	9 November 2020	End date	12 November 2020
Venue	Virtual classroom		
Tutor	Mr Rupert Wallace	Course code	2021NRR401

For further information on this course, please contact Mairi Mayfield
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To book See: www.ice.cam.ac.uk or telephone 01223 746262

Tutor biography

Rupert Wallace retired from the Royal Navy in 2014 as a Commodore, after a career which included the Falklands War, three ship commands, heading a flotilla of destroyers and frigates, and strategic UK defence relations work throughout the Middle East and South Asia. He has worked in every Arab country, plus the Palestinian Territories, in addition to Iran, Turkey and Israel, and served with the Coalition Forces in Baghdad leading a team supporting the holding of the Iraqi Constitutional Referendum.

He recently completed a Postgraduate degree in International Relations at the London School of Economics. He now talks widely in schools, institutions and on cruise ships, concentrating on the Middle East and US Politics. He is History Director on an outreach programme to inspire less advantaged pupils to apply to the top universities.

Rupert travels extensively, including riding a bicycle across America, independently travelling the Silk Road from Iran to central China, and he is currently in the middle of a 10-year walk from the Atlantic to the Black Sea.

Programme:

These interactive online sessions will start at 11.00am each day for 4 days beginning on Monday 9 November. Each session will run as: one hour followed by a 20 minute screen break then a further one hour session each day. All sessions will be recorded and made available to students shortly after the course has finished on the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). The lectures will be online using a secure version of Zoom, and you access the sessions via the VLE. If you are new to Zoom, there will be a separate guide for how to set it up.

Monday 9 November 11.00-13.30***Session 1: What and where is 'The Middle East'?***

An introduction to the region – can one define it? How? A quick quiz. Reasoning behind a narrowing-down to a 'core' Middle East – Egypt, the Arabian Peninsula, the Levant, Iran and Iraq. Where does Turkey sit?

Session 2: Long Influences: Monotheistic Religions and the development of social structures

A discussion of the emergence of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, as underpinning the region's identity and dynamics today.

Tuesday 10 November 11.00-13.30***Session 1: The First World War: Transformation***

A look at the upheaval of the geo-political landscape during and after the First World War, including the causes and effects of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the emergence of Arab Nationalism, and the development of Zionism.

Session 2: The Arab-Israeli Conflict

A review of the foundation of the State of Israel in the context of the era of colonialism, the impact of the conflict on the wider region, and its mutation into the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Wednesday 11 November 11.00-13.30***Session 1: The Middle East within the Cold War***

A discussion of the impact of superpower rivalry, including a perspective on the issue of Soviet and US 'camps', the role oil, and the rise of political Islam in the face of the faltering of Arab nationalism.

Session 2: The American Moment

The sense of opportunity, the ensuing hubris and the impact of the campaigns in Afghanistan and the invasion of Iraq will all be addressed, as well as, 'What went wrong?'

Thursday 12 November 11.00-13.30***Session 1: The Arab Uprisings***

Starting (and ending?) in Tunisia, the session addresses what happened, and why almost all seemed to have failed despite extraordinary initial successes – as well as what changes have occurred. A concluding look at governments in the region today, the role of sectarianism, and the seeming emergence of new blocks and axes.

Session 2: Conclusions & wrap up

Course syllabus

Aims

This course aims to provide:

- an understanding of the ambiguities, contradictions and confusion of the history of the Middle East, including the nature of irreconcilable narratives;
- a deeper grasp of the religious and cultural impacts on the region's identity and conflicts;
- maximum participation in an inclusive learning environment to stimulate discussion and debate, and to encourage 'the taking of intellectual risk';
- foster a 'community of learning', and encouragement to study further.

Content

The modern Middle East continues to have the power to capture our attention at almost every turn. Yet why does it look as it does today, so frequently turbulent, contradictory and defiant of explanation? This course looks at key issues including religion, geography, external interventions, resources, and politics to illustrate the highly complex tapestry of history, dynamics and peoples. It offers a modern historical overview of the geopolitics of the region since World War I through World War II, the Cold War, and the American unipolar moment, concluding with an assessment of the Arab Uprisings and their impact on the larger region. Attention will be given to specific issues, including the collapse of the Ottoman empire, the establishment of Israel, and the rise of Arab nationalism.

Presentation of the course

The course will be a mixture of inputs from the tutor and active participation and problem exploration by participants.

As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, participants should be able to:

- better comprehend the historical and geopolitical backdrop to events affecting the region today;
- see linkages in the make-up of the region, for example the relationships between external penetration, identities, irredentism, religion, and resources;
- understand more fully the complexities of the region, and gain a sense of the differences between each state and sub-region;
- develop the ability to assess how outside intervention and foreign policies affect and are affected by the politics and resources of the Middle East.

Reading and resources list

Listed below are a number of texts that might be of interest and can add to the enjoyment of the course, but do not need to be bought, nor are they required.

Author	Title	Publisher and date
Peter Frankopan	The Silk Roads	Bloomsbury, 2015
Eugene Rogan	The Fall of the Ottomans	Basic Books, 2015
James Barr	A Line in the Sand Mo	Simon and Schuster, 2011
John Darwin	After Tamerlane	Penguin, 2008
Bernard Lewis	From Babel to Dragomansgene	OUP, 2004
Stephen Howe	Empire: A Very Short Introduction	OUP, 2002
Malise Ruthven	Islam: A very Short Introduction	OUP, 2002

Additional information

Venue

Virtual classroom via Zoom

Note Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

Information correct as of: 12 June 2020