



Weekend Courses 2024-25

The Making of the Modern Middle East

Start date: 7 February 2025 **End date:** 9 February 2025

Venue: Madingley Hall
Madingley
Cambridge
CB23 8AQ

Tutor: Rupert Wallace **Course Code:** 2425NRX021

Tutor biography

Rupert Wallace lectures widely on history and world affairs following a career in international relations and defence, which saw him work in almost every Arab country, plus the Palestinian Territories, Israel, Turkey and Iran. He led the team co-ordinating security for the holding of the Iraqi Constitutional Referendum of 2005. Specialising in the Middle East and the development and direction of US foreign policy, Rupert draws on both strong academic background and deep policy and operational experience to enable students to understand the key importance of the historical context and the deep cultural, political, religious and human currents of this highly complex, contested and fascinating region.

Rupert was appointed CBE in 2013 for his work abroad, and he holds a BA in History and a recent MSc in the Theory and History of International Relations from the London School of Economics. For four years he held the post of LSE History Course Director in their schools' outreach programme, encouraging and inspiring students from less traditional backgrounds to apply to the top universities. He delivered the first of the University of Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education's 'virtual' courses on its Professional Studies programme during the COVID pandemic, entitled 'The Making of Modern Middle East', followed by live teaching at the Summer Programme in from 2022 onwards.

Summary of content

The 'Middle East' is rarely out of the headlines, retaining a centrality and exerting extraordinary influence. Indeed, the very term connotes a region that represents and encapsulates so many of the major currents of historical development, from its most ancient heritage, the emergence of the three principal monotheistic religions, external penetration by a series of very different empires, and on to 20th century nationalism, world wars, ideologies, post-colonialism and conflict. How can we best begin to understand why as a region it is so contested, often chaotic and frequently violent?

With its narratives continuing to be dominated by human insecurity, often poor (or even non-existent) governance and degrees of fragility, yet in parts with astonishing wealth, Rupert Wallace's series of seven talks will provide a framework within which to analyse and discuss the factors that have contributed to the Middle East that we see today.

The first talk will introduce the region at the beginning of the 20th century, concentrating on the enduring significance of its long Ottoman domination, providing the critical context for the second talk on the convulsive transformations, western penetration and power vacuums during and between the First and Second World Wars. This will be followed by a specific case study on the Arab-Israeli and Israeli-Palestinian conflicts, from their origins into the modern era.

The next two talks will cover the period 1945-2011. The first will focus on the development of the newly independent states during the Cold War, the emergence of political Islam and consequences of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The second will turn to the impact of the much-trumpeted 'American moment' as the Soviet Union collapses, analysis of the invasion and occupation of Iraq and the military campaign in Afghanistan, together with the significance of the emergence of revolutionary Iran as a major regional actor.

The final two talks will analyse the Arab Uprisings 2010-2024 and will be followed by the concluding session on 'What Now and Where Next?', a discussion of where we are today and what the future might hold for this crucial region as, once more, the tectonic plates begin to shift.

Aims

The course will allow you to:

- gain and develop an understanding of the ambiguities, contradictions and confusion of the modern history of the Middle East, including the nature of irreconcilable narratives
- explore more deeply the religious, political and cultural impacts on the region's identity and conflicts, and its relations with the wider world
- participate at whatever level and pace suits you, in an inclusive learning environment that should stimulate discussion and debate, and ultimately encourage further study and learning about this extraordinary region

Course sessions

Friday

Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the Terrace Bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

19:00	Dinner
20:30 – 22:00	The Middle East in 1914: Poised on the Brink
22:00	Terrace Bar open for informal discussion

Saturday

07:30	Breakfast (for residents only)
09:00 – 10:30	The First and Second World Wars: Transformation
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	The Arab-Israeli and Israeli-Palestinian Conflicts: a case study
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 16:00	Free time
16:00	Tea
16:30 – 18:00	Independence, Nationalism and the Cold War: Aspirations and Possibilities
18:00 – 18:30	Free time
18:30	Dinner
20:00 – 21:30	The American Moment: Unipolarity, Hubris and Chaos 1989-2011
21:30	Terrace Bar open for informal discussion

Sunday

07:30	Breakfast (for residents only)
09:00 – 10:30	The Arab Uprisings: Fury and Resentment 2010-2025
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	What Now and Where Next?
12:45	Lunch

The course will disperse after lunch

Presentation of the course

The course will be taught in seven modules, which Rupert will deliver in an informal and discursive style, encouraging questions and points as he goes along, leading to wider discussion. He will always be available after each session to discuss and develop further any aspect of the issues covered. Above all, Rupert emphasises inclusivity and a space that can comfortably accommodate a range of paces and preferences and the taking of intellectual risk, from those who might choose to partake more by listening to those who wish to be more active.

Learning outcomes

As a result of the course, you will gain a greater understanding of the subject and you should be able to:

- have developed further a wider understanding of the region's complexity
- understand better the key historical factors that have shaped the region
- assess the relative importance of the many cross-cultural and transnational issues
- develop further a desire to remain engaged with the region's development and future

Reading and resources list

There are no compulsory readings for this course. However, you may find the below recommended reading list of interest to supplement your course.

Barr, James, *A Line in the Sand* (Simon and Schuster 2011)

Darwin, John, *After Tamerlane* (Penguin 2008)

Frankopan, Peter, *The Silk Roads* (Bloomsbury 2015)

Gerges, Fawaz, *The New Middle East* (CUP 2013)

Howe, Stephen, *Empire: A Very Short Introduction* (OUP 2002)

Lewis, Bernard, *From Babel to Dragomans* (OUP 2004)

McMillan, ME, *From the First World War to the Arab Spring* (Palgrave Macmillan 2016)

Robins, Philip, *The Middle East (A Beginner's Guide)* (One World 2016)

Rogan, Eugene, *The Fall of the Ottomans* (Allen Lane 2015)

Ruthven, Malise, *Islam: A very Short Introduction* (OUP 2002)

Shlaim, Avi, *Israel and Palestine* (Verso 2010)

For students with a background or interest in international relations theory:

Hinnebusch, Raymond, *The International Politics of the Middle East* (Manchester 2003)

Note: Institute of Continuing Education (ICE) students 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 ICE course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

(Information correct as of April 2024)