



EXTENDED CAMPUS

COLLEGE *of* PROFESSIONAL
and CONTINUING STUDIES

IAS 5483-201: Topics in International Studies: Minorities in the Middle East

Course Description:

Common stereotypes depict the Middle East as a homogeneous zone dominated by Arab Muslims; however, as the cradle of civilisation and at the crossroads of three continents, the Middle East is the home of a very wide range of religious communities, ethnicities, and other cultural groups. In our course, we will discover the area's heterogeneity by examining the experiences and changing positions of minorities since the rise of Islam. We will also shine light on specific contemporary minority communities and the challenges they face. Specific topics will include the non-Muslims in classical Islamic and Ottoman societies, the rise of nationalism, Kurds and other Muslim ethnic minorities, Jews, Druze and other heterodox Muslim minorities, Middle Eastern Christians, and the Bahā'īs. Throughout the course, we will highlight both historically and contemporarily the dynamic between states and minorities—religious, ethnic, cultural—that make up the diverse patchwork of the region.

Class Dates, Format, Location and Hours:

Dates:	November 30-December 5, 2021
Format:	Hybrid
Location for on-site courses:	Building 2775, 2 nd Floor, Room 11. Kapaun Air Station, Kaiserslautern, Germany
Hours:	Tuesday 30 November 19.00–20.30 CET; Wednesday 01 December 18.00–21.30 CET; Thursday 02 December 18.00–21.30 CET; Sunday 05 December 08.00–12.30, 14.30–16.30 CET

Last day to enroll or drop without penalty: November 1, 2021

Site Director:

Name:	Ms. Izete Seppala
Location:	Ramstein Education Center, Bldg. 2120, 4 th Floor, Room 421, Ramstein AB, Germany
Office hours:	Monday- Friday on Ramstein AB- 0830-1630
Email:	apramstein@ou.edu
Phone:	DSN: 480-6807 or CIV: 49-06371-47-6807

Professor Contact Information:

Course Professor:	Dr. D Gershon Lewental
Mailing Address:	Department of International & Area Studies, University of Oklahoma 729 Elm Avenue, Room 314 Norman, Oklahoma 73019
Email Address:	lewent@ou.edu
Office Hours:	Tuesday-Friday; Saturday and Sunday, 30 minutes before and after each class session, or by appointment.
Professor availability:	The professor will be available via e-mail before and after the class.

Textbook(s) and Instructional Materials:

Student materials are available at the OU Bookstore Website at <https://ou.textbookx.com/institutional/index.php>. The website has book selling, renting, buying, returning, and order tracking capabilities. If you need help with an order, or if you have any questions contact the toll-free phone at 1-(855)-790-6637, agents are available from 9a – 5p (EST) Monday – Friday. Text prices are available online.

1. Nisan, Mordechai. *Minorities in the Middle East: A History of struggle and self-expression*. 2nd ed. McFarland & Company, 2002. ISBN 9780786413751.
2. Materials posted on the OU Canvas learning management system: Access Canvas at <https://canvas.ou.edu>, enter your OU NetID and password, and select course to access material. If you require assistance with Canvas, please click on the Help icon. You can search the Canvas guides, chat with Canvas support, or contact OU IT. **Note: Canvas is an essential tool for success in the class; the website, with all its content, will be made available to students at least a month prior to start of class (and likely much earlier). The syllabus, required and recommended readings, introductory discussions, Q&A with the professor, and submission of assignments will all take place on Canvas.**

Course Objectives:

This course represents a combination of a lecture and seminar approaches and individual participation in class dialogues is critical. Classes include **discussion periods** for conversation about readings. Additionally, each student will have the opportunity to lead a discussion over an assigned reading. At the end of this course, it is hoped that students will have not only a better understanding of Middle Eastern minorities, but have developed better research skills, practised critical thinking and reading, and gained experience collecting and presenting information clearly.

Course Outline:

A more detailed outline will be made available on the class website at least a month prior to the start of class.

Tue 30 November: Introduction to the Middle East and Islam

- **Reading exercise due**
- Introduction to the Middle East
- The Birth of Islam and emergence of Islamic civilisation

Wed 01 December: Minority communities in the Islamic golden age

- ‘Peoples of Books’ in early Islamic society
- Classical Islamic civilisation and its non-Muslim populations

Thu 02 December: Minorities in the medieval Islamic world

- Minorities in the tumult of Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries
- *Pax Ottomanica*: The Apogee of the Ottoman Empire

Fri 03 December: The Ottoman world from decline to collapse

- Imperialism, nationalism, and Ottoman reform
- The First World War and Ottoman collapse

Sat 04 December: Muslim and heterodox minorities in the Middle East

- **Final research paper proposal due**
- Kurdish, Berber (Amazigh), and other Muslim minorities
- Druze, ‘Alawīs, Alevis, and other heterodox Muslims
- The Bahā’īs: The Struggle for recognition
- Presentation of final research paper proposals

Sun 05 December: Christian and Jewish minorities in the Middle East

- Maronites, Copts, Armenians, and other Christians
- The Jewish communities of the Middle East
- A Future for Middle Eastern minorities?
- **Final exam**

Sun 19 December

- **Final research paper due**

Assignments, Grading and Due Dates:

Readings:

Given the brevity of this course, all students are expected to have **read all course readings in advance of the first class session** (and are encouraged to refresh their memories by looking over the specific readings for each day in advance).

Reading exercise (20%)—due Tuesday 30 November:

Students will answer briefly a series of questions on the required readings, uploading the assignment to Canvas *and* submitting a physical copy at the start of the first class.

Discussion Article Presentation (10%):

Students will prepare a brief (five-minute) summary of an assigned reading that highlights the author's core argument and will lead a (five-minute) class discussion about it. Students will sign up for a presentation through the Canvas website in advance of the class.

In-class Final Exam (15%)—on Sunday 05 December

Final examination on critical terms and ideas covered in the class.

Final Research Paper (30%)—due Sunday 19 December:

Students will paper a research proposal (**due Saturday 04 December**) for a research paper (minimum 4500 words, *excluding* bibliography and footnotes) on a topic of choice relating to the course based upon at least 12 academic secondary sources, of which at least 6 were not assigned as part of the class reading.

Class Participation/Attendance (25%):

Attendance is required; any absence results in loss of entire participation grade, while each additional absences drop the overall course grade by a letter-grade. Participation does not mean 'showing up', it means taking an *active* part in class. Respect your fellow interlocutors: under no circumstances will *ad hominem* attacks, swearing, or insults be permitted.

As stated above, the key to good participation is doing the **required readings**. Textbook readings are supplemented by texts available on the class Canvas website. In addition to the 'required reading', which we will discuss and on which you will be tested, 'recommended reading' is *not* required (and you will *not* be tested on it), but may be useful for further exploration or for preparing research papers.

Assignment Due Dates and Submission:

Submission of assignments must be *at the start of class*. Late papers will be marked down by one letter grade for each day late (e.g., an 'A' paper becomes a 'B', if one day late, and an 'F', if four days late). Assignments must be submitted through Canvas (as an MS Word document, with your surname in the file name). Extensions for papers or incompletes will *not* be granted, except in cases of medical emergencies (with a physician's note); computer issues are not an excuse—always back up your files. Plan ahead so that you do not end up rushing to finish a paper at the last minute. *I am always willing to communicate or meet with you* to clarify terms, explain readings, or work on your papers.

Extra Credit Response Papers:

Each student may submit up to three **extra credit response papers** to *current* news articles on Middle Eastern minorities. To receive credit, read an article from a credible news source (a list of suggested sources appears in the primer) and submit a one-page summary of your thoughts. Other extra credit opportunities may be announced; students are allowed a *maximum of three extra credit opportunities*. You are also strongly encouraged to follow Middle Eastern news during (and after!) the semester.

On-Site Office Hours:

Students are *strongly* encouraged to attend **office hours** for help understanding course material and readings and with preparing the short essay and research paper. Students who wish to discuss a paper *must* bring an outline or draft (show you have been thinking about what you will write). Take advantage of this opportunity—invariably, students perform better as a result. On-site office hours are half an hour before and after each class session, by appointment. Before and after the course, students may also request appointments via e-mail, telephone, and/or Zoom.

Class Behaviour:

Proper **class behaviour** includes arriving on time, turning off mobile phones, refraining from chatting with friends in class, and using professional and appropriate discourse. Respect your professor and your classmates by paying attention—do not distract them or take away from their opportunity to learn; do not use electronic devices, take naps, or engage in activities not relating to the class.

Electronic Devices:

Please note that **electronic devices are not allowed** in my classroom, unless you have a medically-documented disability. Computers, tablets, and phones inhibit students' learning, serving often as a distraction for them and others sitting nearby. Numerous studies have also demonstrated that information retention is higher when one writes notes by hand. (The only exception to this policy concerns class presentations in which students may use a computer, if so desired.)

Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is taken very seriously. You may only submit your own original work and *must* cite (Chicago style) any borrowed ideas, quotations, themes, *etc.* Plagiarism of any kind will result in a failing grade. Learn more at integrity.ou.edu. Students in need of writing assistance are *strongly* encouraged to visit the Writing Centre (ou.edu/writingcenter.html).

Although I have strived to ensure the syllabus' accuracy, it may include mistakes and I may make **changes** to readings or to dates of assignments. I will announce changes by e-mail and on Canvas.

Grading:

This is a letter-graded course: A, B, C, D, or F.

Course grades will be assigned on the basis of several elements:

Assignment	Due Date	Percent of Grade
Short Essay	Tuesday 30 November 2021	20%
Discussion Article Presentation	During class sessions	10%
Research Paper Proposal	Saturday 04 December	NA
Class Participation/Attendance	During class sessions	25%
Final Exam	Sunday 05 December	15%
Research Paper	Sunday 19 December	30%

This division of factors aims to give students a fair chance at a good grade by avoiding too much emphasis on one examination method. Nevertheless, a large share of the grade (25%) derives from

participation and the discussion presentation, so you **must** attend and participate in the class to do well. Since the basis to good participation is reading assigned texts, be prepared each week!

Notice: Failure to meet assignment due dates could result in a grade of I (Incomplete) and may adversely impact Tuition Assistance and/or Financial Aid.

POLICIES AND NOTICES

Attendance/Grade Policy

Attendance and participation in interaction, individual assignments, group exercises, simulations, role playing, etc. are valuable aspects of any course because much of the learning comes from discussions in class with other students. It is expected that you attend all classes and be on time except for excused emergencies.

Excused absences are given for professor mandated activities or legally required activities such as emergencies or military assignments. It is the policy of the University to excuse absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required class work that may fall on religious holidays. Unavoidable personal emergencies, including (but not limited to) serious illness; delays in getting to class because of accidents, etc.; deaths and funerals, and hazardous road conditions will be excused.

If you are obtaining financial assistance (TA, STAP, FA, VA, Scholarship, etc.) to pay all or part of your tuition cost, you must follow your funding agency/institution's policy regarding "I" (Incomplete) grades unless the timeline is longer than what the University policy allows then you must adhere to the University policy. Students who receive Financial Aid must resolve/complete any "I" (Incomplete) grades by the end of the term or he/she may be placed on "financial aid probation." If the "I" grade is not resolved/completed by the end of the following term, the student's Financial Aid may be suspended making the student ineligible for further Financial Aid.

Students are responsible for meeting the guidelines of Tuition Assistance and Veterans Assistance. See the education counselor at your local education center for a complete description of your TA or VA requirements.

OU faculty will submit grades online through ONE not later than 30 days after the course end date. Course end dates are approximately one calendar month after the final seminar date on this syllabus and are provided on the official scheduling website for reference.

Academic Integrity and Student Conduct

Academic integrity means honesty and responsibility in scholarship. Academic assignments exist to help students learn; grades exist to show how fully this goal is attained. Therefore all work and all grades should result from the student's own understanding and effort.

Academic misconduct is any act which improperly affects the evaluation of a student's academic performance or achievement. Misconduct occurs when the student either knows or reasonably should know that the act constitutes misconduct. Academic misconduct includes: cheating and using unauthorized materials on examinations and other assignments; improper collaboration, submitting the same assignment for different classes (self-plagiarism); fabrication, forgery, alteration of documents, lying, etc...in order to obtain an academic advantage; assisting others in academic misconduct; attempting to commit academic misconduct; destruction of property, hacking, etc...; intimidation and interference with integrity process; and plagiarism. All students should review the Student's Guide to Academic Integrity at http://integrity.ou.edu/students_guide.html

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. All students should review policies regarding student conduct at <http://studentconduct.ou.edu/>

Accommodation Statement

The University of Oklahoma is committed to making its activities as accessible as possible. For accommodations on the basis of disability, please contact your local OU Site Director.

Adjustment for Pregnancy/Childbirth-Related Issues

Should you need modifications or adjustments to your course requirements because of documented pregnancy-related or childbirth-related issues, please contact the Professor as soon as possible to discuss. Generally, modifications will be made where medically necessary and similar in scope to

accommodations based on temporary disability. Please see <http://www.ou.edu/content/eoo/faqs/pregnancy-faqs.html>.

Title IX Resources

For any concerns regarding gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, stalking, or intimate partner violence, the University offers a variety of resources, including advocates on-call 24/7, counseling services, mutual no-contact orders, scheduling adjustments, and disciplinary sanctions against the perpetrator. Please contact the Sexual Misconduct Office at smo@ou.edu or (405) 325-2215 (8-5), or the Sexual Assault Response Team at (405) 615 -0013 (24/7) to report an incident. To learn more about Title IX, please visit the Institutional Equity Office's website at <http://www.ou.edu/content/eoo.html>

Course Policies

Extended Campus (also and formerly known as Advanced Programs) policy is to order books in paperback if available. Courses, dates, and professors are subject to change. Please check with your OU Site Director. Students should retain a copy of any assignments that are e/mailed to the professor for the course. Neither duplicating services nor office supplies are provided.

Any and all course materials, syllabus, lessons, lectures, etc. are the property of professor teaching the course and the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma and are protected under applicable copyright.

For more information about OU Extended Campus, visit our website at: <http://www.goou.ou.edu/>

INSTRUCTOR VITA

D Gershon Lewental, Ph.D.

Education

- 2011: Brandeis University, PhD in Islamic and Middle Eastern history.
- 2003: Cornell University, AB *magna cum laude* in Near Eastern Studies and Economics, with a concentration (minor) in International Relations.

Current Positions

- Assistant professor, Department of Middle Eastern & Islamic Studies, Shalem College, Jerusalem, 2017–present.
- Adjunct professor, Department of International & Area Studies, University of Oklahoma, 2018–present.
- Visiting assistant professor, Departments of History and International & Area Studies, University of Oklahoma, 2012–2018.
- Associate editor, *Journal of Persianate Studies*, 2016–present.
- Board of Directors, Association for the Study of Persianate Societies, 2018–present.

Frequently Taught Extended Campus (Advanced Programs) Courses

- HIST 6600: Seminar in Middle Eastern history—The Modern Middle East
- IAS 5483: Seminar in Middle Eastern history—Minorities in the Middle East
- IAS 5473: Seminar in Middle Eastern history—Arab-Israeli conflict
- HIST 6600: Seminar in Middle Eastern history—Religion and society

Major Areas of Teaching and Research Interest

- Islamic history and historiography
- Iranian history
- Israeli society
- Memory studies
- The Baha'i faith

Representative Publications and Presentations

- ‘The Death of Rostam: Literary representations of Iranian identity in early Islam’. *Iranian Studies* 50.2 (March 2017), 223-245 (doi: 10.1080/00210862.2016.1248813).
- “‘Saddam’s Qādisiyyah’”: Religion and history in the service of state ideology in Ba‘thi Iraq’. *Middle Eastern Studies* 50.6 (November 2014), 891-910 (doi: 10.1080/00263206.2013.870899).
- *Encyclopædia Iranica* (2013): peer-reviewed entries on ‘The Battle of Qādesīya’ and ‘Rostam Farrokhzād’.
- *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World* (Brill, 2010): over 70 peer-reviewed entries on Jewish press, rabbis, and diplomats, and long entries on Ottoman Jewry (1650–1835), diplomacy, and Bulgarian Jewry.
- Translation from Hebrew of *Zionism in Damascus: Ideology and activity in the Jewish community at the beginning of the Twentieth Century*, by Yaron Harel (London: I B Tauris, 2015).

Representative Honors and Awards Received

- 2012: Foundation of Iranian Studies Best PhD Dissertation Award
- 2012: Brandeis University Nahum & Anne Glatzer Endowed Dissertation Prize
- 2010: Brandeis University Redstone Dissertation Year Fellowship
- 2009: US Department of State Critical Language Scholarship for Intensive Persian Study (Dushanbe, Tajikistan)
- 2009: Mellon Dissertation Research Grant
- 2005: Brandeis University Graduate School Outstanding Teaching Prize

Major Professional Affiliations

- Association for Iranian Studies (AIS)
- Association for the Study of Persianate Societies (ASPS)
- Middle East Studies Association (MESA)
- Association for the Study of the Middle East and Africa (ASMEA)
- American Oriental Society (AOS)
- Association for Israel Studies (AIS)
- Association for Jewish Studies (AJS)
- World Union of Jewish Studies (WUJS)