Attention!

This is a representative syllabus. The syllabus for the course you are enrolled in will likely be different.

Please refer to your instructor’s syllabus for more information on specific requirements for a given semester.
Introduction to the Field of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures

NELC 5101

1 credit hour

Instructor:
Contact:
Office Hours:

This one-credit hour lecture/discussion course is intended primarily for first- and second-year graduate students in NELC as well as advanced undergraduates (seniors or juniors) majoring in the NELC department. Graduate students in other departments with research interests in the Near East are encouraged to take the course, too.

It offers a concise introduction to the field of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures and its close cognates (Middle Eastern Studies, etc.), focusing on the history and constitution of institutional bases for the study of the Near East, the major debates about how the field is constructed, the development of the terms by which it is defined ("Near" vs "Middle" East, "civilizations," etc.), the debate over Orientalism and its aftermath, the background to Area Studies, controversies about the study of the region, and the place of NELC knowledge in higher education and scholarship generally and in various publics, and how careers in NELC are made.

The course meets for a session of one hour and fifty minutes every other Monday, for a total of eight sessions.

Course Materials

Book available online through library portal:


The other required readings may be found on Carmen unless otherwise indicated.

Attendance Policy

Your progress in this course depends upon your active engagement in class discussions, and we have only eight sessions for this 1-credit course. You cannot afford to miss any session. Please discuss excused absences with me as early as possible. More than one absence may be grounds for reduction of your final grade by one-third of a letter (for example, B to B-). More than two absences will result in a grade of "EN" for the course.
Grading Scale and Assignments

Active participation in the discussion of course materials is a basic requirement and is assumed. Non-participation will be treated as an absence (see above).

1. **Write four responses to the readings**, each of 200-300 words (40% = 10% each).
   a. Due weekly on the Friday before any Monday meeting (choose four different weeks).
   b. The purpose of these written responses is to demonstrate your analysis and critical thinking about the readings and to prepare you to participate fruitfully in discussion during the class sessions.
   c. Write your responses to the readings in the Discussion list in the course Carmen/Canvas site. Read the responses of students who come before you and take into consideration their ideas. Feel free to disagree respectfully.

2. **Journal Summaries**. Pick two journals in the field in consultation with the instructor. Skim all of the volumes of these journals, either online or in the university library. Note the subjects covered, the locales from which the contributors come, and the changes in these two respects over time. Deliver a 6-minute presentation on the careers of these two selected journals (10%).
   a. Presented in Week 5.

3. Write a 5-to-6-page **review of a book** relevant to a public debate in or about the field, chosen from the list at the end of this syllabus (40%).
   a. Due at meeting in Week 15.

4. **5-minute oral presentation** of the issues dealt with in the book reviewed (10%)
   a. Presented at session in Week 15.

Learning Objectives

Students finishing this course will understand the history of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures as a field of knowledge and research, the historical processes that generated it, and what scholars do in this field and why. They will be better prepared to navigate the political pitfalls that circumstances have created for scholarship about the Near East and Middle East and will be better able to pursue a career in this area of study.

Academic Misconduct

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic
misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/)."

Disability policy

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/.

FOR YOUR SAFETY, the OSU Student Safety/Escort Service is available after 7 p.m. by dialing 292-3322.

Readings listed below are to be read in preparation for the session in which they are listed.

NOTE: WE MEET IN ODD-NUMBERED WEEKS ONLY.

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<tr>
<td>o The history of NELC at OSU, what it offers, and its mission.</td>
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<td>o Where is NELC/NES in North America? Comparing department profiles.</td>
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<th>Week 3. Sept 12. Europeans and Americans Studying the East. (92 pages)</th>
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<td>o Lockman, pp. 99-112.</td>
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<td>o Journal review exercise, brief presentations.</td>
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- Marhsall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, vol. 1, pp. 30-45 from his “Introduction to the Study of Islamic Civilization.”


- Lockman, pp. 112-147.

**Week 11. Nov 7. Orientalism.** (66 pages)


**Week 13. Nov 21. Scholars contributing to Public Debates.** (53 pages)


**Week 15. Dec 5. Careers in NELC. Careers with NELC.**

- Deliver your oral presentation on the book you read to review.
- Discussion of the “job market” for NELC degree-holders.
Suggestions for book reviews. Remember, these book reviews are supposed to represent popular scholarship about the Near East, the sort of thing that non-specialists might read. The book you choose should address some controversy (or have caused some controversy) or public debate pertinent to the present. You are welcome to propose a book that you find on your own. This is just a sample of what’s out there.


Anand Gopal, *No Good Men among the Living: America, the Taliban, and the War through Afghan Eyes* (2015)


Rajiv Malhotra, *Being Different: An Indian Challenge to Western Universalism* (2011)

Mahmoud Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror* (2005)


Michael Morell, *The Great War of Our Time: The CIA’s Fight against Terrorism from al Qa’ida to ISIS* (2015)

William R. Polk, *Understanding Iran: Everything You Need to Know, from Persia to the Islamic Republic, from Cyrus to Ahmedinejad* (2011)