The Maghreb Since 1830

Option offered to as part of M.Phil. Modern Middle Eastern Studies

Hilary Term, 2009

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This course constitutes a study of the Maghreb since the early part of the nineteenth century focusing on the part of the region covered by the modern states of Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. Through a series of weekly lectures and tutorials students will receive grounding in the fundamental historical themes and developments of the region over the past two hundred years. The year 1830 has been chosen as a starting point because it marks the first incursion by the European colonial powers into the region with the French conquest of Algiers and its hinterland.

The course focuses on the impact of European colonialism and its aftermath identifying how the pre-colonial societies were affected by and how they reacted to European control and what sort of states and societies they sought to establish in the aftermath of colonialism. Emphasis will be given to political developments but the economic and social dimensions of the period will also be examined. The course aims to identify some of the main specificities of the region’s recent history whilst at the same time establishing certain common historical themes with the Middle East region as well as with other parts of the developing world (e.g. colonialism and nationalism). Essay topics will include ones focusing on specific states as well as ones addressing the region as a whole.

Organisation of Teaching

The primary teaching vehicle for the course will be a weekly one hour tutorial at a time to be arranged. Each class will begin with brief presentations (no more than 15 mins) based on the essay questions of the topic of the week. Each student will be required to write six essays (around 2,000 words) for the course, which will be taken in and marked. In addition, there will be eight one hour lectures taking place either during Michaelmas Term.

Bibliography

Although most of the best material on the period is in French, and reading knowledge of French would be an advantage, there are a significant number of good texts in English.

General

**General Algeria**

**General Morocco**

**General Tunisia**

**WEEK 1**

**THE COMING OF COLONIALISM**

1. “The establishment of the protectorates in Tunisia and Morocco owed more to internal collapse than external pressure.” Do you agree?

2. Compare and contrast the effect the invasion and occupation of Algeria had on Morocco and Tunisia between 1830 and 1880. Which country was more affected?

Edmund Burke, *Prelude to Protectorate in Morocco* (University of Chicago press, Chicago, 1976)


**WEEK 2**

**THE COLONIAL STATE**

1. “Despite the rubric of ‘protectorate’, the colonial framework established in Morocco and Tunisia was essentially the same as that in Algeria.” How true is this?

2. How similar were the protectorate regimes established in Morocco and Tunisia?

3. Who had the more decisive influence on the establishment and development of the French colonial system in Algeria up until 1914 – the French government, the French army or the European settler population?


Abdeslam Baita, ‘”Reversion to Tradition” in Sate Structures in Colonial Morocco’ in Abdelali Ali Doumou (Editor), *The Moroccan State in Historical Perspective* (CODESRIA, Dakar, 1990)


Vincent Confer, *France and Algeria: The Problem of Civil and Political reform, 1870-1920* (Syracuse University, Syracuse, 1966)


**WEEK 3**

**RESISTANCE**

1. Compare and contrast Emir Abd al-Qadir’s resistance to the French to that of Abdelkrim Khattabi in Morocco against the Spanish.

2. “Nothing more than traditional tribal uprisings against central authority.” How accurate a description is this of the early (pre-nationalist) resistance to colonial control in the Maghreb?


P. Shinar, ‘Abd el-Kader and ‘Abd al-Krim: religious influences on their thought and action,’ *Asian and African Studies*, vol. 1 1965


WEEK 4

**COLONIAL RULE: DIFFERENTIATED COMMUNITIES**

1. “The Berber myth is itself a myth: there was never a differentiated French policy towards the Berbers in Algeria and Morocco.” Do you agree?

2. Does the experience of the Jewish communities in the Maghreb during the colonial period compare more to that of the Muslim or European communities during the same period?


WEEK 5

NATIONALISM

1. “Conservative, reformist and revolutionary.” To what extent does this description adequately explain the differences between the nationalist movements in Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria respectively?

2. Compare and contrast Morocco’s and Tunisia’s paths to independence from 1930.
WEEK 6

THE ALGERIAN LIBERATION STRUGGLE

1. Despite all the odds being stacked against it, how and why was the Algerian liberation struggle successful?

2. “The FLN did not win the war of independence, France lost it.” How accurate a characterisation of the Algerian war for independence is this?
WEEK 7

THE CHALLENGES OF INDEPENDENCE

1. ‘The post independence period in the Maghreb states is fundamentally the story of the creation of regimes built around the personality of a single individual.’ How true is this of Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco during their first two decades of independence?

2. Why were there internal struggles for power in the states of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia immediately after the securing of independence? What can the similarities and differences between these struggles tell us about the region and the respective states?


WEEK 8

THE CHALLENGES OF THE MODERN WORLD

1. How and why did Islamist movements come to present such a challenge to the regimes in the Maghreb from the 1980s?

2. Have the political reform processes begun in the 1980s led to any meaningful political changes in the Maghreb?

3. Is the term ‘civil war’ an accurate description of the internal conflict that Algeria experienced during the 1990s?

François Burgat and William Dowell, The Islamic Movement in North Africa (Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Texas at Austin, 1993)


Laura Guazzone (ed.), The Islamist Dilemma: The Political Role of Islamist Movements in the Contemporary Arab World (Reading: Ithaca, 1995)


Azzedine Layachi (Editor), Economic Crisis and Political Change in North Africa (Praeger, Westport, 1998)


Emma Murphy, Economic and Political Change in Tunisia: From Bourguiba to Ben Ali (London: Macmillan, 1999)


William B. Quandt, Between ballots and Bullets: Algeria’s Transition from Authoritarianism (Brookings Institution Press, Washington DC, 1998)


Larbi Sadiki, ‘Political Liberalisation in Bin Ali’s Tunisia: Façade Democracy’, Democratization, 9, 4, 2002,

Emad Eldin Shahin, Political Ascent: Contemporary Islamic Movements in North Africa (Boulder: Westview, 1997)

Michael Willis, *The Islamist Challenge in Algeria: A Political History* (Reading, Ithaca, 1996)