COURSE DESCRIPTION

The ‘Great Divergence’ is a phrase applied to the gap that opened between the West and the rest of the world, in terms of economic development and standards of living. Where is the place of the Middle East in it and how does it affect the destiny of its people? It is the role of the social, political and economic history to explain it.

A recent panel taking place in the World Economic History Congress in Boston defines the current debate and identifies the pertinent questions which will be dealt with in the course.

The abstract sums it this way:

“The Middle East was a cradle of civilisation, and, during the Golden Age of Islam, it was arguably one of the world’s most dynamic centres of learning and civilization. In recent centuries, the West has surged ahead in income, technology, science, and governance. The Middle East is not alone in ‘falling behind,’ but it has not played a leading role in discussions of the Great Divergence. This session will explore that topic. The early dynamism of the region poses questions: Why did the political evolution of the Middle East differ from Europe’s and did those differences affect economic performance? Was Islam ‘growth promoting’ during the eighth and ninth centuries but became ‘grow retarding’ later, and, if so, why? What was the impact of the region’s location and its arid geography on economic development? How did changes in transportation, trade routes, and imperialism affect the region? Could different state
policies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have closed the gap with the West, and, if so, why were they not pursued? “

The course is methodologically divided into three sections in reverse chronological order. In the first section, we read and discuss literature defining economic, social, political deficiencies in the contemporary Middle East. In the second we read and discuss the writings suggesting and analyzing various factors for the historical decline of the Middle East. In the third section, we read on and discuss the economic performance of the early Islamic Middle East and the economic development of the region in the 19th and the 20th centuries. Our goal is to develop new original thinking on the issue of the historical roots of the current conditions of the Middle East. We select, understand and pass judgement on the criterions used in measuring the social, political and economic development and whether we should look as to how could history explain them.

**TEXTBOOKS**

Roger Owen and Sevket Pamuk, *A History of the Middle East economies in the Twentieth Century*, Harvard University Press, 1999. For purchase at the bookstore


Articles required will be available on OWL and on the library course reading website.

**COURSE WORK**

Students are required to read the material assigned and to present reports on selected topics assigned to the class. Students will be asked to write a research paper on subject of their choice and present to the class their work in progress.

**GRADING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and participation in class discussions</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation of reading material and research paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research paper of 20 pages double spaced</td>
<td>50%</td>
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</tbody>
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DISCUSSIONS AND READINGS

1. JANUARY 9

INTRODUCTION, COURSE STRUCTURE, ASSIGNMENTS, GENERAL HISTORICAL SURVEY, POLITICAL CONDITIONS, DEBATE TRENDS.

2. JANUARY 16


1. What is economic growth?

2. What is the ‘Great Divergence’?
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Divergence

3. Why did growth occur in the West and not in the rest?

3. JANUARY 23 (AND JANUARY 30)

WHERE IS THE MIDDLE EAST TODAY?
UNDERSTANDING THE MIDDLE EAST ‘DEFICITS’: EVIDENCE FROM THE ARAB HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORTS

The AHDR 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2009 on constitutional, legal, political, and social flaws and constraints on freedom that impede good governance in the Arab region,

Creating opportunities
Governance
Women
Human security
http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/wcm/connect/cbbdc892-a0bc-4846-b780-69fdb635b555/ArabHDR2016-Executive-Summary-UNDP.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=cbbdc892-a0bc-4846-b780-69fdb635b555
Youth
4. JANUARY 30
Reports:
Political participation, Gender inequality, Economic vulnerability, healthcare and illiteracy

5. FEBRUARY 6 AND FEBRUARY 13
THE BLAME GAME


Eric Chaney, “Religion and the rise and fall of Islamic Science”. (On Chaney’s site)

Eric Chaney, “Revolt on the Nile: Economic shocks, religion, and political power” *Econometrica* 2013. 81(5) 2033-2053 (and On Chaney’s site)


Owen, Introduction, pp. 1-10

6. FEBRUARY 13

7. FEBRUARY 27
BACK TO EVIDENCE: THE MIDDLE EAST ECONOMY IN THE 19TH CENTURY. EVALUATING THE ECONOMIC CHANGE IN THE 19TH CENTURY


Owen, Ch. 1, pp. 24-56
Owen, Ch. 2, ‘The economic consequences of the age of reforms, 1800-1850’ pp. 57-82
The effect of the reforms

8. MARCH 6
THE EXPANSION OF TRADE WITH EUROPE AND CONSEQUENCES.
EUROPEAN PENETRATION AND FINANCIAL CONTROL

Owen, Ch. 3, pp. 83-19
Owen, Ch. 4, pp. 100-116
9. MARCH 13

**CHANGING PATTERNS OF PRODUCTION AND INDUSTRIALIZATION**

Issawi, Ch. 3
Issawi, Ch. 7
Issawi, Ch. 8
Owen and Pamuk, pp. 91-149.

10. March 20

**INVESTMENT AND MIGRATION, POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS**

Issawi, Ch. 5
Issawi, Ch. 6
Issawi, Ch. 9
S. Pamuk, “Institutional change and economic development in the Middle East,” *Cambridge History of Capitalism* vol. 1
Richards and Waterbury, *A Political Economy of the Middle East*, Ch. 11: Political Regimes.

11. March 27

**OIL EXPORTING ECONOMIES**

Issawi, Ch. 10
Owen and Pamuk, pp. 202-228.
Richards and Waterbury, Ch. 15: Regionalism, Labor migration and the future of the oil economies.

12. April 3

**GLOBALIZATION AND ITS IMPACT**