



THE NEW
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Syllabus

Title of the Course:	Cultural Heritage and Identities in the Middle East	Course Breakdown:	Online class with individual work
Name of the Instructor:	Dr. Ahmed Fatima Kzzo & Dr. Nedal Haj Darwich	Weekly class time:	Wednesday 18:00 – 20:00 CEST / 12:00 - 14:00 EDT
Language:	English		
Hosted by:	University of Potsdam	Certificate issued by:	University of Potsdam (12 ECTS)
min. number of participants:	10	max. number of participants:	40

Description of the course

Today, many Middle Eastern countries are embroiled in conflict. Most of these countries (Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt) were formed after the First World War, as a result of the abolition of the Ottoman Empire. It seems that these states struggle to form a collective national identity. Interpreting the past is a fraught and complicated process of much importance for the creation and reform of national identities. Especially, after the beginning of archaeological excavations in the 19th century and the rediscovery of ancient Near Eastern civilizations such as Babylonia, Assyria, Hittite, Sumerian, Hurrian, and others, which offered new information and interpretations, interpretation wars became more pronounced.

In this context education systems and museum exhibits play a crucial role in the Middle East in connection with archaeological excavations in Egypt, Iraq (such as Babylonia, Nineveh, and Assur), and Syria (Mari, Ebla, and Ugarit), and others.

Museums in former colonial *metropoles* such as the Louvre in France and British Museum in the United Kingdom, enriched their collections with artifacts from some of these sites to demonstrate and enhance their imperial power. As a counterweight to imperial collections, museums in Middle Eastern countries were founded with the goal of reinforcing a national identity. Examples of these kinds of museums include the Iraqi Museum in Baghdad, the National Museum of Damascus and Aleppo, and Beirut Museum.

This seminar will engage with the cultural heritage and archaeology in the Middle East. In addition, it will discuss the complex relationship between cultural heritage and identities. In so doing, this seminar will encourage discussions about new perspectives on cultural heritage and its role across the Middle Eastern societies.

This is an online seminar that brings together students at the University of Potsdam with learners from around the world in a digital learning environment. It is offered by Potsdam University in collaboration with Off-University.

Aims

- Present the beginning of ancient Near Eastern archaeology and the relationship of the academic discipline of archaeology with imperialism, colonialism, and nationalism.
- Spotlight on Arabic historical resources, which are usually ignored in European universities.
- Present and analyze the education system in Syria, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia and its role in building the national identity.
- Develop new perspectives on the role of archaeology and cultural heritage in societies.

Learning outcomes

- Develop an understanding of the discipline of archaeology and its relationship with imperialism, colonialism, and nationalism.
- Comprehensive understanding of policies used to employ cultural heritage in national identity construction.
- Comprehensive understanding of national states' history and the cultural identities in the Near East.
- Aware of various ideologies in the region and their view on the past/antiquities (such as political parties or even the ISIS "Islamic State in Iraq and Syria")

Seminar requirements

Reading materials: Each week has some reading materials which are required. These materials will be available 5 days before the class session, on each Thursday.

Two or three questions will be attached with the reading materials. These questions should only be kept in mind to be discussed during the seminar time.

Participant's Tasks to qualify for writing the final paper:

Each participant should deliver a short presentation (in a group) and write one short essay to be able to write the long final essay.

Presentations in groups: Participants will be divided into groups to work on a specific subject. The presentation should be discussed with the instructors in advance. The presentation should be around 20 min.

Short essay: Each participant should write a short essay by his choice. The essay should be at least 500 words long.

Long final essay: After making the presentation and the short essay, the participant should submit a long final essay due September 30th, 2022. It should be between 15 – 25 pages (5000 words and 6500 words) in length (do check your Studienordnung if you are a University of Potsdam student). The topic of the essay should be discussed with the instructors and could be on the same topic of the presentation but must be written in an academic and referenced way.

The grading scheme is as follows:

1 = sehr gut (very good: an excellent achievement)

2 = gut (good: an achievement that is significantly above the average requirements)

3 = befriedigend (satisfactory: an achievement which corresponds to average requirements)

4 = ausreichend (sufficient: a performance that still meets the requirements despite its deficiencies)

5 = nicht ausreichend (not sufficient: an achievement which does not meet the requirements)

Intermediate grades may also be used for better differentiation, as following:

1,0; 1,3; 1,7; 2,0; 2,3; 2,7; 3,0; 3,3; 3,7; 4,0; 5,0

Teaching Method

Off-University has built up the secure digital learning platform [Coworkingsquares](#). The seminar will take place on this platform. When registration is open, you can register for the seminar on the platform through the Off-University [website](#). After registration, you will be able to join the seminar, see the reading materials, and communicate with your instructors and classmates on the platform. The reading materials and questions will be uploaded five days prior to the class to the weekly class folders.

The participant should read the reading materials and prepare questions before the class session. During the class sessions, there will be a lecture with PowerPoint, which helps the participant to engage with the subject. In addition, we believe that a successful seminar should be interactive. Therefore, it is necessary to give time to discuss the given questions and any other issues to involve all participants and understand one another.

Class sessions

The class session, every Wednesday at 18:00, will be divided between lecturing (around 30min) and discussions, short essays, or presentations (around 60min).



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Online Consultation

The participant can contact the instructors on the platform *Coworkingsquares* via direct message or arrange office hour for online consultation with the instructors. All meetings will take place on this online education platform.

Seminar Outline:

Week 1: Introduction to the Seminar. The Formation of the Middle Eastern States (Kzzo and Darwich)

The first session provides a brief overview of the seminar. A general historical and geographic introduction to the Middle East is also provided. It will offer a view of the formation of the Middle Eastern states after the First World War.

Reading materials:

Scheffler, Thomas (2003). 'Fertile Crescent', 'Orient', 'Middle East': The Changing Mental Maps of Southwest Asia. In *European Review of History: Revue europeenne d'histoire* <<https://doi.org/10.1080/1350748032000140796>>

Yilmaz, Huseyin (2012). The Eastern Question and the Ottoman Empire: The Genesis of the Near and Middle East in the Nineteenth Century. In Michael E. Bonine, Abbas Amanat and Michael Ezekiel Gasper, *Is There a Middle East? The Evolution of a Geopolitical Concept*, pp. 11-35. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Week 2: Identities, Orientalism, and Archaeology (Kzzo and Darwich)

This session will spotlight the different aspects of identity, such as religious identity, ethnic/national identity, and cultural identity. In addition, the session will highlight the history of orientalism and its relationship with archaeology.

Reading materials:

Abdel-Fattah, Nabil (2021). Tangible Heritage and Identity: Identity of Place and Identity of People. *ASO Studies* <<https://asostudies.com/en/node/233>>

Nielsen, Robert (2017). The Invention of Nationalism. In *Whistling In The Wind. Economics, Politics, Religion and Esperanto* <<https://whistlinginthewind.org/2017/04/23/the-invention-of-nationalism/>>

Week 3: The Beginning of Archaeological Excavations in Egypt (Kzzo)

This session will offer the participants a panoramic view about the beginning of the interest to explore the Near East by Western countries, starting from Napoleon's Campaign to Egypt and the publication of *La Description de l'Égypte*.

Reading materials:

- Bard, Kathryn A. (2007). *An Introduction to the Archaeology of Ancient Egypt*. Victoria: Blackwell Publishing. (from p. 3 Parag. "1.2. Egyptian Archaeology" to p. 21)
- Tyldesley, Joyce (2014). Egypt. In Paul Bahn, *The History of Archaeology: An introduction*, pp. 73-89. London and New York: Routledge.
- Hassan, Fekri A. (2011). Imperialist Appropriations of Egyptian Obelisks. In David Jeffreys, *Views of Ancient Egypt since Napoleon Bonaparte: imperialism, colonialism and modern appropriations*, pp. 19-68. London and New York: Routledge. (Optional reading)

Week 4: Archaeological Excavations in the Middle East before the First World War (Darwich)

This session will concentrate on the beginning of the excavations in Iraq, Anatolia, Iran, and the Levant in the mid-19th century. In addition, it will deal with the issue of how the local governors and European empires dealt with the excavations in the Near East.

Reading materials:

- Bahrani, Zainab; Çelik, Zeynep and Eldem, Edhem (2011). *Scramble for the Past: A Story of Archaeology in the Ottoman Empire, 1753-1914*. Istanbul: SALT Galata.
- Jane McIntosh (2014). Western and Southern Asia. In Paul Bahn, *The History of Archaeology. An Introduction*. Pp. 90-118. New York: Routledge.

[Groups and topics of presentation to be submitted before the 5th session]

Week 5: Ancient Languages: Writing and Deciphering (Darwich)

Language is the principal tool to distinguish cultures, nations, and identities. As a result of the excavations in the Near East, we gained knowledge about forgotten languages such as ancient Egyptian and its Hieroglyphic writing, Sumerian and Akkadian and their cuneiform writing.

This session will concentrate on discovering and deciphering these languages.

Reading materials:

Haarmann, Harald (1991). *Universalgeschichte der Schrift*. Frankfurt /New York: Campus Verlag.

Reading the past: ancient writing from cuneiform to the alphabet. Introduced by J.T. Hooker (1990). Berkeley: University of California Press/British Museum.

Week 6: Peoples and Languages (Darwich)

As a consequence of the previous session, this session will offer a more extensive view of the languages in the Near East and their classifications.

Reading materials:

Cathcart, Kevin J. (2011). The Earliest Contributions to the Decipherment of Sumerian and Akkadian. In *Cuneiform Digital Library Journal*, Version 3 http://www.cdli.ucla.edu/pubs/cdlj/2011/cdlj2011_001.html. 1-12.

Sayce, Archibald Henry (1908). *The Archaeology of the Cuneiform Inscriptions*, 2nd edn. London. P. 7-36.

Week 7: This session will be dedicated to presentations and discussions. (Kzzo and Darwich)

This session will be dedicated to participants' presentations and discussions about the different arguments related to the previous sessions.

Reading materials:

Huehnergard, John. 1992. "Languages: Introductory Survey." In David Noel Freedman ed., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 4. Edited, 155–70. New York: Doubleday.

Rubio, Gonzalo (2007). The Languages of the Ancient Near East. In Daniel Snell ed., *A Companion to the Ancient Near East*.

Week 8: Middle Eastern Museums from Nationalism to Universalism

(Kzzo)

This session will focus on the first museums (such as Egyptian Museum, Iraq Museum, and Damascus Museum) in the Middle East, founded during the colonial period, and their relationship with the national identity.

Then we will move to the more recent museums founded in the Arab Gulf countries, especially Louvre Abu Dhabi, where another identity was emphasized (universalism).

Reading materials:

Exell, Karen and Rico, Trinidad (2014). *Cultural Heritage in the Arabian Peninsula: Debates, Discourses and Practices*. New York: Routledge (2nd ed. 2016).

Kzzo, Ahmed Fatima (2014). The Image of Arab Museums. Some considerations about the Presentation of Arab Museums in Internet Sites: in *Proceeding of the 8th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Near East 30th April – 4th May 2012*, Vol. 3, pp. 295-308.

Qassar, Hiba (2020). Politics, identity and the social role of museums in Syria, *Museum Management and Curatorship*, DOI: 10.1080/09647775.2020.1723131.

Week 9: Education Systems and Archaeology

(Kzzo)

The session will concentrate on the education systems in Syria, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia. It will display how history became narrated in the history textbooks of these countries.

Reading materials:

Archaeology under Fire. Nationalism, Politics and Heritage in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East. Edited by Lynn Meskell (1998). London: Routledge.

Kzzo, Ahmed Fatima (2016). The Ancient Past in the East, from the East: An Oriental Perspective (Syria, Saudi Arabia), *Proceedings of the 9th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East*, Vol. 1: 379-393.



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Week 10: Manuscripts and Archaeology (Kzzo and Darwich)

At the beginning of the ancient Near Eastern archaeology, the Bible and classical history writings, such as Herodotus, were the primary resources. Instead, the medieval manuscripts or writings in local Middle Eastern languages were ignored. This session will offer the occasion to spotlight the most important Middle Eastern manuscripts and writings that deal with antiquities.

Reading materials:

El Daly, Okasha (2005). *Egyptology: The Missing Millennium Ancient Egypt in Medieval Arabic Writings*. London and New York: Routledge.

Kzzo, Ahmed Fatima (2018). A Description before the “*Description de l'Égypte*”. Abd al-Latif al-Baghdai's Book on Egypt, *A Oriente del Delta: Scritti sull'Egitto ed il Vicino Oriente antico in onore di Gabriella Scandone Matthiae, Contributi e Materiali di Archeologia Orientale*, XVIII, pp. 287-294.

Week 11: Political Parties and their Views on History and Archaeology (Kzzo and Darwich)

Political parties are the result of the societies' movements and reflect the orientation of their community. In the Middle East, different political parties exist, which have their own view of history. For example, the Syrian Social Nationalist Party distinguishes the “Greater Syria” (Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, and Cyprus) as a cultural unit historically separated from the other Arab countries.

This session will focus on the political currents in the Middle East, such as Ocalanisim (from Abdullah Ocalan), Arabism, Syrianism, and Islamism and their position from history.

Reading materials:

Kzzo, Ahmed Fatima (2020). The Future of the Past: How the Past Contributes to the Construction of Syrian National Identity. In Lorenzo Verderame and Agnès Garcia-Ventura, *Perspectives on the History of Ancient Near Eastern Studies*. Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University.

Week 12: Biological Identity in the Archaeological Studies (Invited Professor)

This session will be dedicated to the most recent research in biological anthropology and epigenetics variations analyses in archaeology. So it will spotlight the biological identity and its contribution to archaeology and rewriting history.

Reading materials:

Duday, Henri (2009). *The Archaeology of the Dead: Lectures in Archaeothanatology (Studies in Funerary Archaeology) Illustrated Edition*.

Week 13: Destruction and Reconstruction of Cultural Heritage (Darwich and Kzzo)

This session will concentrate on archaeology and cultural heritage during the recent conflicts in Syria and Iraq. In addition, it will spotlight other habits and accidents destruction for cultural heritage.

It will also spotlight the methods used for preservation and restoration and their impact on the social texture, such as the reconstruction of Beirut. In addition, it will highlight the latest technologies used for restoration, such as 3D reconstruction and Real Virtual.

Reading materials:

Matthiae, Paolo (2015). *Distruzioni, saccheggi e rinascite. Gli attacchi al patrimonio artistico dall'antichità all'Isis*. Milano: Electa. (Translated notes)

Naccache, Alber Farid Henry (1998). Beirut's Memorycide: Hear no Evil, See no Evil. In Lynn Meskell, *Archaeology under Fire. Nationalism, Politics and Heritage in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East*, pp. 140-158. London: Routledge.

Tim Williams, The Conservation And Management Of Archaeological Sites A Twenty-Year Perspective. The Getty Conservation Institute, [The Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites \(getty.edu\)](http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/documents/conservation_and_management_of_archaeological_sites.pdf).

[To submit the final long essay subject]

Week 14: Summary and New Perspectives for Cultural Heritage and Identity (Kzzo and Darwich)

Discussion and review of the seminar and new perspectives on cultural heritage and its contribution to social peace and diversity co-existence.