

CULTURE AND POLITICS IN MODERN EGYPT

On Barak

Spring Semester

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Office Hours: by appointment

Short description:

“Cairo writes, Beirut prints, Baghdad reads” – as this famous maxim suggests, Egypt has long been considered a Rosetta Stone of sorts, offering a cipher for understanding general trends and challenges in the Arab world and the Global South. Yet Egypt’s position as the once undisputed cultural, political, social, and religious capital of the Middle East has been threatened from various directions. “Reading” Egyptian novels, films, music, graffiti and even Islamic ringtones, we will examine key tensions in Egyptian history from the nineteenth century to the “Arab Spring,” and the resumption of autocracy under Abdel Fattah el-Sisi.

Assessment:

Attendance and active participation are mandatory. Students are expected to have read the weekly assignments *closely* and *critically* before coming to class. In addition to the weekly reading assignments, each student is expected to give a **brief oral presentation** on one reading assignment, and **another presentation** on his/her final paper. An excellent presentation is marked by the ability to not only summarize the relevant readings but also by thoughtful and original analysis. Such an analysis usually draws on a synthesis of the reading with other materials such as previous readings, or past discussions. Student presentations should be about 5-8 minutes in length (as a rule of thumb, a double-spaced typed sheet of paper corresponds to 2-2.5 minutes of speaking time). If you have any questions or concerns regarding the presentation, please come see me. I will ask you to choose the date for your presentation at our first meeting. Active participation, and both oral presentations will count towards **21 percent** of your grade.

Mid Term in-class exam, will comprise **19 percent** of the final grade.

Final paper, in the form of a Referat-paper (10 pages long, double-spaced, excluding bibliography and title page) will comprise of **60 percent** of the final grade. Submission dates are set by the university and the Liberal Arts program and must be respected.

Attendance:

Attendance is mandatory. Students are permitted a maximum of three unexcused absences without penalty. Any additional absences will affect the final grade and may result in failure of the course.

Academic conduct:

Plagiarism is taken extremely seriously. Any instance of academic misconduct which includes: submitting someone else's work as your own; failure to accurately cite sources; taking words from another source without using quotation marks; submission of work for which you have previously received credit; working in a group for individual assignments; using unauthorized materials in an exam and sharing your work with other students, will result in failure of the assignment and will likely lead to further disciplinary measures.