

**ENVS / HIST / PS 295Q / 395Q: SUSTAINABILITY AND COLLAPSE IN THE MIDDLE EAST
3 MWF IN CFA 110 (ROUND ROOM)**

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Fall 2016

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Course Description

General Description. This course focuses on the questions: “What do sustainable environmental, cultural, and political practices look like? What are practices that lead to environmental, economic, and political collapse? How do we understand the consequences – immediate and long-term – of decisions made about global resources and of prioritizing competing claims over them?” The course explores these questions in the Middle East where modern and historical groups have struggled to create and maintain sustainable societies. This region is a particularly rich place in which to explore the topic of sustainability because it faces ongoing threats to its environment, political systems, and heritage.

This course is arranged thematically. Over the course of the next 10 weeks, we will investigate the Syrian civil war; “competitive” heritage sites in Israel / Palestine, Jordan, and Iran; modern lessons learned from Nabataean irrigation techniques and environmental management; historical and current refugee crises; and the Red Sea – Dead Sea canal project. Each topic is explored from at least two disciplinary perspectives – environmental, political, or historical / cultural.

Learning Goals

By the end of this course, students will:

- 1) Learn to make interdisciplinary arguments;
- 2) Practice analyzing materials from environmental, political, and historical perspectives; and
- 3) Understand examples of the environmental, political, and social challenges currently and historically faced in the Middle East.

Assessment. At the 295-level, students will be assessed based on: in-class participation; small group participation; short writing assignments (one for each class unit); group presentation; final, interdisciplinary paper (8-10 pages).

At the 395-level, students will be assessed based on: in-class participation; short writing assignments (one for each class unit): individual presentation; annotated bibliography; final, interdisciplinary paper (15-20 pages).

We reserve the right to change the number and types of assignments at our discretion.

Attendance and Participation. You must attend all classes and you must complete all work. You are expected to engage with the ideas presented in class. This means that you must come to class and be prepared to discuss the readings assigned for that day. The effort to engage with and debate ideas must

come from you. In most matters we discuss, there are not “right” and “wrong” answers – however, you must learn how to back up your opinion with reasoned argument drawn from the material being studied, an essential life skill.

Evaluation	295Q	395Q
Attendance, Quizzes and In-Class Participation	15%	15%
Short writing assignments	50% (10% each)	25% (5% each)
In-class presentation	5%	10%
Annotated Bibliography	10%	5%
Revised Annotated Bibliography	-	10%
Final Paper	20%	10%
Revised Final Paper	-	25%

Required Texts

Friedman, Saul S. *A History of the Middle East*. Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland & Company, Inc, Publishers, 2006. ISBN: 978-0786423569.

(For 300-level students) (writing guide: I suggest Turabian)

Google Classroom:

Several of our readings will be made available on Google Classroom. **You must print out** these readings and bring them with you to class. You are responsible for having them in class on the day we are scheduled to discuss them.

Schedule

Introductions

M	Sept 12	Introduction: What is Sustainability? Why Sustainability?
W	Sept 14	Framing the Issues Read: Course syllabus; Friedman, 1-19; Benson, Melinda Harm, and Robin Kundis Craig. 2014. “The End of Sustainability.” <i>Society & Natural Resources</i> , Vol. 27, No. 7, pp. 777-782 (Google Classroom pdf); “ Ten Criteria for Wicked Problems .” [Full scientific article here .]; “ The Breathtaking Beauty of Our Planet’s Destruction ,” <i>Foreign Policy</i>
F	Sept 16	Library Orientation and Research Activities – Meet at library in Andrews Forum (first floor) Read: Research Guide Turabian, pp. 5-36 (Google Classroom pdf);
M	Sept 19	A Brief History of the Middle East Watch: “ Imperial History of the Middle East ” Read: Friedman, 20-54, 66-77;

James Sauer, "Prospects for Archaeology in Jordan and Syria," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 45, 2 (Spring 1982) -- only required reading is the section "Historical Overview" on pages 76-78 (though we encourage you to read the whole article) (pdf available on JSTOR)

Unit 1: Identity, Nationalism, and Territory (the Israel-Palestine conflict)

W Sept 21 The Birth of the Nation-State

Read: Friedman, 184-199

The [Sykes-Picot Agreement](#)

The [Balfour Declaration](#)

Charter of the League of Nations, [Article 22](#)

Cook, Steven A., and Amr T. Leheta. 2016. "[Don't Blame Sykes-Picot for the Middle East's Mess.](#)" *Foreign Policy*, May 13, 2016.

Krasner, Stephen D. 2009. "[Think Again: Sovereignty.](#)" *Foreign Policy*, November 20, 2009.

Additional resources:

Recommended reading: Friedman, 208-238

The Berlin Act of 1885 (as model for the colonial settlement of 1919)

The [Palestine Mandate](#)

The [Avalon Collection](#) of historical and legal documents

Wm. Roger Lewis, *Ends of British Imperialism: The Scramble for Empire, Suez, and Decolonization*. New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006.

F Sept 23 Competitive Historical Narratives in Israel and Palestine

Read: From the Hebrew Bible / Old Testament -- 1 Sam 16: 1-14, 2 Sam 8; Josephus, *De Bello Judaico* [on zealots' last stand at Masada] (Google Classroom pdf);

Friedman, 272-278;

Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Google Classroom pdf)

Due: 395 students - Final topic choices

Additional resources: Nadia Abu el-Haj, *Facts on the Ground: Archaeological Practice and Territorial Self-Fashioning in Israeli Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

M Sept 26 Resource Management and the Current Crisis in Israel-Palestine

Read: "[Water in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict](#)," European Parliamentary Research Service briefing paper, January 2016.

Bocco, Riccardo. 2009. "UNRWA and the Palestinian Refugees: A History within History." *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 2&3, pp. 229-252.

Unit 2: Historical Sustainability and Collapse

W Sept 28 The Late Bronze Age Collapse

Read: Butzer 2012

[Nasa-funded study: industrial civilisation headed for 'irreversible collapse'?](#)

[Full scientific article [here.](#)]

Due: Unit 1 short writing assignment

F Sept 30 The Nabateans: Desert Traders

Read: Friedman, 55-61; Avraham Negev, *Nabatean Archaeology Today* (New York: New York University Press, 1986), 1-28 (pdf)

Additional resources: Stephan Schmidt, "The Hellenistic Period and the Nabateans," in *Jordan: An Archaeological Reader*, edited by Russell Adams (Oakville, CT: Equinox Publishing, 2008), 353-412.

M Oct 3 Nabatean Farming and Water Management Techniques

Read: Zeidoun al-Muheisen, *The Water Engineering and Irrigation System of the Nabataeans* (Irbid, Jordan: Publication Office Faculty of Archaeology and Anthropology Yarmouk University, 2009): 139-156. (pdf)

John Oleson, "Nabatean Water Supply, Irrigation, and Agriculture: An Overview," in *The World of the Nabateans, Volume 2 of the International Conference on The World of the Herods and the Nabateans held at the British Museum 17-19 April 2001*, edited by Kostantinos D. Politis (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2007), 217-249. (pdf)

Unit 3: Running Out of Resources

W Oct 5 Water as a Source of Conflict

Watch: [What is Groundwater](#)

Read: Solomon, 384-416

["Natural Resources and Conflict: A Guide for Mediation Practitioners,"](#)
United Nations Environment Program, pp. 1-15

Due: Unit 2 short writing assignment
Annotated Bibliography

F Oct 7 Case Study: Jordan & The Red-Dead Canal

Read: Ramahi, Sawsan. 2014. "Pipeline from the Red Sea to the Dead Sea."
Middle East Monitor.

- M Oct 10 Energy: Oil and Nuclear
- Watch:** [American Power and the Fracking Boom](#)
[Nuclear Energy Explained](#)
- Read:** “[Why the Saudis are Going Solar.](#)” *The Atlantic*, July/August 2015.
“[The Case for Developing Nuclear Energy in the Middle East.](#)” Atlantic Council, April 6, 2016.
- W Oct 12 Food Security in the Middle East
- Read:** Swain and Jagerskog Ch. 2

Unit 4: Cultural Resource Management

- F Oct 14 Cultural Resource Management and Economic Development
- Read:** Kate Clark, “Only Connect -- Sustainable Development and Cultural Heritage” in *The Heritage Reader*, edited by Graham Fairclough et al. (New York: Routledge, 2008): 82-98 (pdf);
Elena Corbett, *Competitive Archaeology in Jordan: Narrating Identity from the Ottomans to the Hashemites* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2014) (pdf);
Simmons & Najjar, 2013, *Joint Custody: An Archaeological Park at Neolithic Ghwair I, Jordan*, *Near Eastern Archaeology* 76:3.
Steen et al, “Heritage Discourses in Central Jordan” in Boytner, Dodd, and Parker, *Controlling the Past, Owning the Future: The Political Uses of Archaeology in the Middle East*.
- Due:** Unit 3 short writing assignment
- M Oct 17 The Underbelly of Tourism and Development
- Read:** Dinero, Steven C. 2002. “Image is Everything: The Development of the Negev Bedouin as a Tourist Attraction.” *Nomadic Peoples*, Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 69-94.
Mustafa and Tayeh. 2011. “The Impacts of Tourism Development on the Archaeological Site of Petra and Local Communities in Surrounding Villages.” *Asian Social Science* Vol. 7, No. 8, pp. 1911-2025.
Addison, Erin. 2015. “[Introducing SCHEP: Sustainable Cultural Heritage through Engagement of Local Communities Project.](#)” American Center of Oriental Research.
- Additional resources:** Batuman, Elif. 2015. “[The Big Dig: Istanbul’s City Planners Have a Problem: Too Much History.](#)” *The New Yorker*, August 31, 2015.
- W Oct 19 No class – Fall Institute Day
- F Oct 21 Writing Workshop
- Due:** (395 students) Expanded Annotated Bibliography

M Oct 24 CRM, Armed Conflict and Trafficking of Antiquities: The Hague Conventions and Beyond

Read: The Hague Convention plus the 1972 addendum
Memoranda of Understandings (MOUs) regarding looted antiquities

Due: (295 students) Expert analysis part of group paper

Unit 5: Conflict in Iraq and Syria

W Oct 26 Origins of Conflict in Iraq

Watch: [“Iraq Explained,”](#) Kurzgesagt
[“The Evolution of ISIS,”](#) *The New York Times*

Read: [“Why Did We Invade Iraq?”](#) and [rejoinder,](#) *National Review*, March 26, 2013.
Wright, Robin. 2008. “Iraq and The United States.” In *Dreams and Shadows: The Future of the Middle East*. New York: Penguin, 381-419.
[“The Islamic State,”](#) *CFR Backgrounder*, August 10, 2016.

Due: Unit 4 Short Writing Assignment

Additional Resources:

[“A Brief History of ISIS.”](#) *The Week*, November 21, 2015.
[“The Rise of ISIS,”](#) PBS Frontline
[“Fractured Lands: How the Arab World Came Apart.”](#) *The New York Times Magazine*, August 14, 2016.

F Oct 28 War in Syria

Watch: [“Syria's War: Who Is Fighting and Why,”](#) Vox

Read:

[“Syria’s Climate Conflict,”](#) *Years of Living Dangerously*.
[“Climate Change Contributed to War in Syria,”](#) *Deutsche Welle*, December 3, 2015. [Full scientific article [here.](#)]
Laub, Zarahery. 2016. [“Syria’s War: The Descent Into Horror.”](#) *Council on Foreign Relations*.
Fisher, Max. 2016. [“Syria’s Paradox: Why the War Only Ever Seems to Get Worse.”](#) *The New York Times*, August 26, 2016
[“Life and Death in Syria,”](#) BBC

Due: 295 Expert Analysis Papers

Additional Resources:

Beauchamp, Zach. 2015. "[The Syria War: A History](#)," Vox interactive timeline.
["Who's Who in the Syrian Civil War," Clarion Project Fact Sheet](#)

M Oct 31 Da'esh and the Destruction of Cultural Heritage

Read:

Garth Fowden, *Qusayr 'Amra: Art and the Umayyad Elite in Late Antique Syria* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004), 248-90.
McGuire Gibson, "[Diary](#)" in *The London Review of Books* vol 31, no 1 (1 Jan 2009): 42-43
Melissa Bailey, "[The Dictator and his Ruins](#)"

W Nov 2 Refugees in Context: History and Policy

Read:

Long, Katy. 2013. *The Point of No Return*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1-26. [plus book review in *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees*, 81-83]
Hanafi, Sari. 2014. "Forced Migration in the Middle East and North Africa." In *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies*. New York: Oxford University Press, 585-598.
Stevens, Dallal. 2013. "Legal Status, Labelling, and Protection: the Case of Iraqi 'Refugees' in Jordan." *International Journal of Refugee Law* 25(1): 1-38.

F Nov 4 Impacts of the Syrian Refugee Crisis

Watch:

["The European Refugee Crisis and Syria Explained,"](#) Kurzgesagt
["Hamsa the Documentary"](#)
["Zaatari Refugee Camp 360"](#)

Read:

Achilli, Luigi. 2015. "Syrian Refugees in Jordan: A Reality Check." Migration Policy Centre Policy Brief (February 2015), 1-12.
["A Tale of Two Za'ataris,"](#) IRIN
["What the Middle East is Doing about the Refugee Crisis,"](#) BBC
["The Mediterranean's Deadly Migrant Routes,"](#) BBC

Additional Resources:

["Syria Regional Refugee Response,"](#) Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal
This American Life special series: "[A Tour of Five Refugee Camps](#)," "[Are We There Yet?](#)" and "[Don't Have to Live Like a Refugee](#)"

McClelland, Mac. 2014. "[How to Build a Perfect Refugee Camp](#)." *The New York Times Magazine*, February 13, 2014.

- M Nov 7 Unit 5 Wrap Up
Visiting Scholar: Dr. Emilia Zankina
- W Nov 9 Writing Workshop
Peer review and workshopping -- everyone please bring 4 copies of your paper to class, printed single-sided!
- Due:** (295 students) Full draft of group paper (expert analyses plus introduction and policy proposal)
Due: (395 students) Full draft of your individual paper.
- F Nov 11 295 Student Group Presentations
- M Nov 14 295 Student Group Presentations
Due: Unit 5 Short Paper
- F Nov 18 395 student presentations during Final Exam period
8:30-11:30 AM

On Nov 11, 14 and 18 everyone will receive participation credit for attendance (or zero credit averaged into your participation score for absences)

RE-WRITE OF FINAL PAPERS (group paper for 295, individual paper for 395): Due Sunday November 20 at 10pm, turn in electronically.

More Course Info.

Late Assignments. **LATE WORK WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.** You must talk to us as soon as possible if, for any reason, you anticipate not being able to turn in an assignment on time. Exemption will be made only for matters of life and death at the instructors' discretion.

Student Athletes. Since assignments and due dates are known well in advance, please plan to turn in work on time or early if the due date conflicts with an athletic event. Any pop quizzes missed for an athletic event will be excused and a make-up option available. Please contact the professors directly to arrange this – it is your responsibility to make sure that you make up any missed work in a timely fashion – no more than one week.

Cheating. Cheating is taken seriously at Knox. This includes you in any way trying to take credit for work not your own. End of story. Please familiarize yourself with Knox's Honor Code and read the College's policy on cheating in order to familiarize yourself with the rules and avoid any unnecessary

unpleasantness. If you are ever unsure, it is always best to ask for advice from one of the instructors about how to proceed. Other resources include Red Room tutors, the CTL, and the librarians. There are lots of resources to help you avoid academic dishonesty – make sure that you use them!

