

ATA 593

Fall 2023

Topics in the History of the Modern World

Seminar on Comparative Borderlands

ATA Seminar Room

Tuesdays, 14.00-16.50

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Office Hour: by appointment only

This course seeks to familiarize students with the vast literature on borderland studies, with weekly sessions of readings and discussions will explore how the historiography on the study of borders and borderlands has advanced over the past century. Chronologically designed, the course will trace the changing relationships the states had in the monitoring of space and territory, with insights into the workings of modern governance that we take for granted today. The course will largely focus on the Ottoman Empire and the post-Ottoman Middle East, paired with key texts that will encourage students make comparative readings. Thematically, the course will deal with a myriad of aspects that relate to borderlands, bringing state-centered approaches with those that put borderlanders at the center stage of analysis, ranging from interstate competition, border infrastructure, mobility controls, and cartography to colonization, refugees and resettlement, and migration; trade and tariff policies, commerce and entrepreneurs, smuggling, transportation and mobility, tribal communities, ecology and environment, identities and politics of difference, rumors and conspiracies, and pilgrims. As such, each week students will get exposed to different periods, scholarly traditions, and regions, helping them improve their empirical knowledge and analytic skills. While students will learn how to approach border zones as an object of historical inquiry, the course will also help them design individual research agendas that are informed by the most recent insights from the field of borderlands studies.

Assignments & Evaluation

1) Participation (5 percent)

Students are expected to participate in each session and come to the class having done all the required readings and be active during the discussions. Absence is only allowed on the grounds of (documented) medical emergencies. Each unexcused absence will drop a letter grade (from A to B); those with two unexcused absences will fail the course.

2) Presentations (20 percent)

Each student will be asked to present one select piece from optional readings. The presentation will last 15 to 20 minutes and the presenter will discuss the content of the select piece (arguments, methods, themes, historiographical interventions, use of sources). Reading from slides will be frowned upon. (10 percent).

Students will also present their final paper projects in Weeks 12 & 13 to receive feedback from their classmates (10 percent).

3) Response Papers (10 percent)

Students will be required to write a total of two response papers (2 pages long, double-spaced), discussing the required readings for the weeks of their own choosing (response papers can't be written for the weeks when you are assigned to present). Please submit your response papers on Monday, a day before the class.

4) Final Paper Proposals (5 percent) and Final Paper Drafts (10 percent)

Students are expected to have scheduled individual meetings with the instructor and choose a final research paper topic. The final paper proposals (250 words) are due **October 29** (5 percent).

The final paper drafts are due **December 10** (10 percent). I expect to receive papers that are nearly complete (minimum 10 pages for MA students; 15 for PhD), upon which I will provide you feedback.

5) Final Paper (50 percent)

Students are expected to turn in a final paper that is revised in accordance with the feedback received a month prior. The final paper is due **January 13** (minimum 15 pages for MA students; 20 pages for PhD students; double-spaced, with footnotes).

Course Schedule

Week 1, October 3

Introduction

Charles S. Maier, "Consigning the Twentieth Century to History: Alternative Narratives for the Modern Era," in *The American Historical Review*, 105:3 (2000) 807-31.

Willem van Schendel, "Spaces of Engagement: How Borderlands, Illegal Flows, and Territorial States Interlock," in *Illicit Flows and Criminal Things: States, Borders, and the Other Side of Globalization* (Bloomington, Ind., 2005) 38-68.

Bridget Anderson, Nandita Sharma and Cynthia Wright, "Editorial: Why No Borders?" in *Refuge*, 26:2 (2011) pp. 5-18.

Nick Danforth, "Stop Blaming Colonial Borders for the Middle East's Problems," *The Atlantic*, 11 September 2013.

Week 2, October 10

American Frontiers, Then and Now

Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Significance of the Frontier in American History* (New York: Penguin Books, 2008[1920]) 1-32.

Patricia Nelson Limerick, "The Adventures of the Frontier in the Twentieth Century," in *The Frontier in American Culture*, ed. James R. Grossman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994) 66-102.

Pekka Hämäläinen, “The Politics of Grass: European Expansion, Ecological Change, and Indigenous Power in the Southwest Borderlands,” in *William and Mary Quarterly*, 67:2 (April 2010) 173-208.

Optional Reading

Kerwin Lee Klein, “Reclaiming the ‘F’ Word, or Being and Becoming Postwestern,” in *Pacific Historical Review*, 65:2 (1996) pp. 179-215.

Week 3, October 17

Ottoman Frontiers, Then and Now

Colin Heywood, “The Frontier in Ottoman History: Old Ideas and New Myths,” in *Frontiers in Question: Eurasian Borderlands, 700–1700*, ed. Daniel Power and Naomi Standen (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1999), 228–50.

Nikolay Antov, *The Ottoman Wild West: The Balkan Frontier in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*. (Cambridge University Press, 2017) 41-93.

Rifaat A. Abou-el-Haj, “The Formal Closure of the Ottoman Frontier in Europe, 1699-1703,” in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 89:3 (1969) pp. 467-75.

Optional Reading

Dariusz Kolodziejczyk, “Between Universalistic Claims and Reality: Ottoman Frontiers in the Early Modern Period,” in *The Ottoman World*, ed. Christine Woodhead (London: Routledge, 2012) 205-19.

Week 4, October 24

Rise of Modern Territoriality

James C. Scott, *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998) 11-52.

Jordan Branch, “Mapping the Sovereign State: Technology, Authority and Systemic Change,” *International Organization*, 65:1 (January 2011) pp. 1-36.

Kerry Goettlich, “The Rise of Linear Borders in World Politics,” in *European Journal of International Relations*, 25:1 (2019) pp. 203-228.

Optional Reading

Reviel Netz, *Barbed Wire: An Ecology of Modernity* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2004) xi-55.

Final paper proposals (250 words) due October 29

Week 5, October 31

Conquest of the Steppe

Eugene L. Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan, 1850–1921* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 1-20, 44-69.

Samuel Dolbee, "Empire on the Edge: Desert, Nomads, and the Making of an Ottoman Provincial Border," *American Historical Review*, 127:1 (2022) 129-58.

Alexander Morrison, *The Russian Conquest of Central Asia: A Study in Imperial Expansion, 1814-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021) 1-51.

Optional Reading

Cem Emrence, *Remapping the Ottoman Middle East: Modernity, Imperial Bureaucracy and the Islamic State* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011) 1-13, 75-99.

Week 6, November 7

Late Ottoman Borderlands I

Chris Gratien, *The Unsettled Plain: An Environmental History of the Late Ottoman Frontier* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2022).

Week 7, November 14

Late Ottoman Borderlands II

Sabri Ateş, "Bones of Contention: Corpse Traffic and Ottoman-Iranian Rivalry in Nineteenth-Century Iraq," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 30:3 (2010) 512-32.

Valeska Huber, "The Unification of the Globe by Disease? The International Sanitary Conferences on Cholera, 1851-1894," in *The Historical Journal*, 49:2 (2006) pp. 453-76.

David Gutman, "Travel Documents, Mobility Control, and the Ottoman State in an Age of Global Migration, 1880-1915," in *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association*, 3:2 (2016) pp. 347-68.

Optional Reading

Erdal Çiftçi, "The Karapapaks and their Shifting Loyalties on the Imperial Borderlands during the Nineteenth Century," in *Middle Eastern Studies*, Online View (2022) pp. 1-18.

Week 8, November 21

Making of the Post-WWI Middle East

Karin Loevy, "Railways, Ports, and Irrigation: The Forgotten Regional Landscape of the Sykes-Picot Agreement," in *Boston University International Law Journal*, 36:2 (June 2018) 287-340.

Sara Pursley, "'Lines Drawn on an Empty Map': Iraq's Borders and the Legend of the Artificial State," in *Jadaliyya*, Parts I & II (2/3 June 2015).

Natasha Wheatley, "Central Europe as a Ground Zero of the New International Order," in *Slavic Review*, 78:4 (2019) 900-11.

Optional Reading

Andrew Arsan, “‘This age is the age of associations’: Committees, Petitions, and the Roots of Interwar Middle Eastern Internationalism,” in *Journal of Global History*, 7:2 (2012) 166-88.

Week 9, November 28

Turkey’s Borders and Borderlanders

Alexander E. Balistreri, “Revisiting *Millî*: Borders and the Making of the Turkish Nation State,” in *Regimes of Mobility: Borders and State Formation in the Middle East, 1918-1946*, eds. Jordi Tejel and Ramazan Hakkı Öztan (Edinburgh University Press 2022) 29-58.

Benjamin Thomas White, “Refugees and the Definition of Syria, 1920-1939,” in *Past & Present*, 235:1 (May 2017) pp. 141-178.

Ramazan Hakkı Öztan, “The Great Depression and the Making of Turkish-Syrian Border, 1921-1939,” in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 52:2 (2020), pp. 311-26.

Optional Reading

Jordi Tejel, *Rethinking State and Border Formation in the Middle East* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2023) 35-71.

Week 10, December 5

Making of Syria and Iraq: Mobilities in the Desert

Robert S.G. Fletcher, “Running the Corridor: Nomadic Societies and Imperial Rule in the Inter-War Syrian Desert,” *Past and Present*, 220:1 (2013), pp. 185-215.

Katharina Lange, “Contested Terrain: Cross-Border Violence, Politics and Memory in Syria’s Kurd Dagh Region,” in *Regimes of Mobility*, 170-201.

Nile Green, “Fordist Connections: The Automotive Integration of the United States and Iran,” in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 58:2 (2016) pp. 290-321.

Optional Reading

Ramazan Aras, “Naqshbandi Sufis and their Conception of Place, Time and Fear on the Turkish-Syrian Border and Borderland,” in *Middle Eastern Studies*, 55:1 (2019) pp. 44-59.

Drafts of Final Papers due December 10!

Week 11, December 12

Bordering Lebanon, Israel and Palestine

Cyrus Schayegh, “The Many Worlds of Abud Yasin; or, What Narcotics Trafficking in the Interwar Middle East Can Tell Us about Territorialization,” *American Historical Review*, 116:2 (April 2011) pp.273-306.

Philippe Pétriat, “The Uneven Age of Speed: Caravans, Technology, and Mobility in the Late Ottoman and Post-Ottoman Middle East,” *IJMES*, 53:2 (May 2021) pp. 273-90.

Paul Nugent, "Arbitrary Lines and the People's Minds: A Dissenting View on Colonial Boundaries in West Africa," in *African Boundaries: Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities*, eds. A. I. Asiwaju and Paul Nugent (London: Pinter, 2004) pp. 35-67.

Optional Reading

Lauren Banko, "Border Transgressions, Border Controls: Mobility along Palestine's Northern Frontier, 1930-46," *Regimes of Mobility*, 256-85.

Week 12, December 19

Presentations

Presentations of final paper projects

Week 13, December 26

Presentations

Presentations of final paper projects

Finals Week

December 27 – January 13

Final Papers due January 13!