

ATA 593

Fall 2022

Topics in the History of the Modern World

Seminar on Comparative Borderlands

ATA Seminar Room (in-person)

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 Week 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 28** (5 percent).

The final paper drafts are due **December 9** (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 4

Introduction

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

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

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.

Week 2, October 11

American Frontiers, Then and Now

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

Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, "From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in between in North American History," *The American Historical Review*, 104:3 (1999) 814-841.

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

Optional Reading

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.

Week 3, October 18

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) 1-13, 41-93.

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

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 25

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.

Peter J. Taylor, "The State as Container: Territoriality in the Modern World-System," *Progress in Human Geography*, 18:2 (June 1994) pp. 151-62.

James A. Caporaso, "Changes in the Westphalian Order: Territory, Public Authority and Sovereignty," *International Studies Review*, 2:2 (2000) 1-28.

Optional Reading

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

Final paper proposals (250 words) due October 28

Week 5, November 1

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

Enrico Dal Lago, "Writing the US Civil War into Nineteenth-Century World History," *The Journal of the Civil War Era*, 11:2 (2021) 255-71.

Week 6, November 8

Late Ottoman Borderlands

Isa Blumi, "Contesting the Edges of the Ottoman Empire: Rethinking Ethnic and Sectarian Boundaries in the Malësore, 1878-1912," *IJMES*, 35:2 (2003) 237-56.

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.

John Torpey, *The Invention of the Passport. Surveillance, Citizenship, and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 93-121.

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 7, November 15

Making of the Post-WWI Middle East

Karin Loevy, "Railways, Ports, and Irrigation: The Forgotten Regional Landscape of the Sykes-Picot Agreement," *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," *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

Joel Quirk and Darshan Vigneswaran, "Mobility Makes States," in *Mobility Makes States: Migration and Power in Africa* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015) 1-34.

Week 8, November 22

Turkey's Borders and Borderlanders

Alexander E. Balistreri, "Revisiting *Millî*: Borders and the Making of the Turkish Nation State," in *Regimes of Mobility*, 29-58.

Seda Altuğ, "The Turkish-Syrian Border and Politics of Difference in Turkey and Syria (1921-1939)," in *Syria: Borders, Boundaries, and the State*, ed. Matthieu Cimino (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2020), pp. 47-73.

Mikiya Koyagi, "Tribes and Smugglers in Iran's Eastern Borderlands, 1921-41," *Iranian Studies*, 55:2 (2022) 405-22.

Optional Reading

Onur İşçi, "Interwar Territoriality and Soviet-Turkish Convergence across the Aras River," in *Borders, Boundaries and Belonging in Post-Ottoman Space in the Interwar Period*, eds. Ebru Boyar and Kate Fleet (Leiden: Brill, 2022).

Week 9, November 29

Making of Syria and Mobilities in the Desert

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

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.

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.

Optional Reading

Jordi Tejel, "States of Rumors: Politics of Information along the Turkish-Syrian Border, 1925-1945," *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 37:1 (2020) 95-113.

Week 10, December 6

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.

Anthony B. Toth, "Tribes and Tribulations: Bedouin losses in the Saudi and Iraqi Struggles over Kuwait's Frontiers, 1921-1943," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 32:2 (2005), pp. 145-167.

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

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

Drafts of Final Papers due December 9!

Week 11, December 13
Post-WWII Middle East

Boaz Atzili, "When Good Fences Make Bad Neighbors: Fixed Borders, State Weakness, and International Conflict," *International Security*, 31:3 (2006/2007) 139-73.

H. Pinar Şenoğuz, *Community, Change and Border Towns* (Oxon: Routledge, 2019) 1-20, 87-100.

Peter Sluglett, "The Resilience of a Frontier: Ottoman and Iraqi Claims to Kuwait, 1871-1990," *International History Review*, 24:4 (2002) 783–816.

Optional Reading

Asher Kaufman, "Between Permeable and Sealed Borders: The Trans-Arabian Pipeline and the Arab-Israeli Conflict," *IJMES*, 46:1 (Feb. 2014) 95-116.

Week 12, December 20
Boundary Work in Contemporary Middle East

Daniel Meier, "Hizbullah's Borderlands Strategy: From Identity Shaping to the Nation-State Re-ordering," in *Syria: Borders, Boundaries and the State*, ed. Matthieu Cimino (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020) 109-25.

Matthieu Cimino, "The Map and Territory in Political Islam: Spatial Ideology and the Teaching of Geography by the Islamic State," in *Syria: Borders, Boundaries and the State*, ed. Matthieu Cimino (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020) 269-88.

Basileus Zeno, "The Making of Sects: Boundary Making and the Sectarianisation of the Syrian Uprising, 2011-2013," *Nations and Nationalism*, 28:3 (2022) 1040-60.

Optional Reading

Fırat Bozçalı, "Probabilistic Borderwork: Oil Smuggling, Nonillegality, and Techno-Legal Politics in the Kurdish Borderlands of Turkey," *American Ethnologist*, 47:1 (2020) 72-85.

Week 13, December 27
Presentations

Presentations of final paper projects

Week 14, December 10 – January 13
Finals Week

Final Papers due January 13!