

Modern Iran Syllabus

Fall Term 2023

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<https://www.dfi.dk/en/viden-om-film/filmdatabasen/film/den-transiranske-jernbanes-indvielse>

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“Iran” baffles outsiders. A complicated modern society, Iran acquired its current appellation through complex processes that spanned centuries, and were later reaffirmed through national and international negotiation. To understand this modern history requires a retrospective look at a history that which has guided Iran’s political and cultural transformation in the contemporary period. We will read primary accounts, historical newspapers, archival documents, literary works, and unpublished sources to show the significance of Iran’s evolution in the Middle East.

To make the learning experience interactive, we will also watch movies and video clips, listen to music, and select documentaries and interviews. Participation is crucial to the success of this course. Students must complete three major assignments, in addition to participating actively in class.

Each student must participate prepare a presentation in class that covers one week's readings. In addition, students must submit an analysis of a primary text on modern Iranian history selected by the instructor. This assignment is approximately 3-5 pages long (double-spaced).

Finally, students must write a 7-page (double-spaced) final paper on a topic that considers the causes and impact of social or revolutionary movement in modern Iran.

GRADING- *Participation: 10 %; Class Presentation: 25 %; Primary Source Assignment: 30%; Final Paper: 35%*

Intellectual Objectives: We will confront the issues of identity, international conflict, and regional rivalry in order to understand the roots of Iran's modern history. We will also hone in on cultural developments to address the causes of dissent.

Course Expectations: The classroom space functions best as a safe and respectful learning environment. Debate can and should take place with civility and without the stifling of well-grounded, though at times oppositional, opinions. Students should put away all cell-phones and non-essential electronic devices. Laptops are permissible, but students may not record or video lectures or classroom conversations. Please also be aware that attending class without having completed the reading and accompanying assignments will not bring about productive conversations in the classroom, and, frankly, it shows!

Readings & Assignments – The course readings and assignments will reinforce the analytical skills of students. Writing, critical reading and textual explication form an integral part of the requirements. In addition, attendance is expected at every class, and all assignments must be turned in on time. Unless there is an emergency, medical, religious, and other excuses must be discussed in advance with the instructor. Unexcused absences and tardy assignments will be penalized with a 1/3 grade deduction per day.

For written assignments students should abide by these general editorial guidelines: 1-inch margins on all sides and on every page; 12-point Times New Roman font for the text; 10-point Times New Roman font for footnotes.

Learning Resources and Disability Policy:

The University provides support and workshops for students requesting guidance in certain areas: <https://www.vpul.upenn.edu/lrc/sds/> . For additional assistance with writing assignments, students can visit the Marks Family Writing Center: <http://writing.upenn.edu/critical/wc/> Students who self-identify and seek accommodations should speak to me directly and also contact the Office of Disability Services. For more information, please refer to this link: <https://www.vpul.upenn.edu/lrc/sds/>. Please know that we are here to support you.

SYLLABUS

Week 1, August 29, 31: Introduction

- Houchang Chehabi, "The Paranoid Style in Iranian Historiography,":
<https://courses.marlboro.edu/pluginfile.php/77898/course/section/68805/Chehabi%20Paranoid%20Style.pdf>

Week 2, September 5, 7: From Absolute Monarchy to Constitutional Monarchy and Revolution

- Ervand Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran*, Chapter 1-2:
https://franklin.library.upenn.edu/catalog/FRANKLIN_9959412913503681
- Afsaneh Najmabadi (1996) "Is Our Name Remembered?": Writing the History of Iranian Constitutionalism as if Women and Gender Mattered," *Iranian Studies*, 29:1-2, 85-109, DOI: [10.1080/00210869608701844](https://doi.org/10.1080/00210869608701844).
- Primary Source: Morgan Shuster, *The Strangling of Persia*, excerpts

Week 3, September 12, 14 – From Chaos to Control: Iran During WWI

- Amir Arsalan Afkhami, "Compromised Constitutions: The Iranian Experience with the 1918 Influenza Pandemic," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, Volume 77, Number 2, Summer 2003, pp. 367-392:
<https://www.proquest.com/docview/230589426?https://hdl.library.upenn.edu/1017/6970&parentSessionId=WraqmKCQeyBefHUIIuvpONQILPXqpRmxYYLbO2de72s%3D&pq-origsite=summon&accountid=14707>
- Kashani-Sabet, *Heroes to Hostages*, Chapter 4
- Homa Katouzian, "The Campaign against the Anglo-Iranian Agreement of 1919," via JSTOR

Primary Source: Presbyterian Historical Society Records

Week 4, September 19, 21 – Autocracy and State Nationalism

- S. Bakhash, *The Fall of Reza Shah : The Abdication, Exile, and Death of Modern Iran's Founder*, Chapter 1: <https://web-p-ebscobhost-com.proxy.library.upenn.edu/ehost/ebookviewer/ebook/bmxlYmtfXzI2ODEyNDdfX0FO0?sid=22ef8293-9b70-4ebd-9f07-c10674e2b30a@redis&vid=0&format=EB&rid=1>
- Primary Source: Archival Document About Reza Shah

Week 5, September 26, 28 – Women, Race, and Slavery

- Willem Floor, “Barda-Dari” (Slavery), *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (1989), accessed online: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/barda-iv>
- Janet Afary, “On the Origins of Feminism in Early Twentieth-Century Iran,” https://dlwqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/47467192/afary_origins_feminism-libre.pdf?1469332233=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DOn_the_Origins_of_Feminism_in_Early_20th.pdf&Expires=1693104050&Signature=EbgMgYZBzvg5IIMkjY~hgMBD9l49LB22T2Hr5zMRvL9GSKIQXfYvL6T~SiC~MEO~ndofKlrpfgN13f9GaDg60ODGq88l24Ssy7mqbaKK9kjsXqooYci4lOrNJSxXnlr8YKWy6d2QH-x1xLWRXmyDsgRpdoB4~cKrnE0E1A-z45KV5UxSRNOd4cGtbOcMQjJVikaFijhvTpdf-elGOqcZB300J9gjHU0aq7Y1xdsGJ~0Hlovjc3Ji8c2im4dow82PC8lFIFDDblMUbxNc1eLYTyH3oF44QoXtZGRwjleykNtxGb6f4lmpdCJWWlmqNeLyPWcRPZ6UQ6PWgscPIBSyA__&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA
- Zia-Ebrahimi, Reza. “Self-Orientalization and Dislocation: The Uses and Abuses of the ‘Aryan’ Discourse in Iran.” *Iranian Studies* 44, no. 4 (2011): 445–72. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23033306>.

Primary Source Assignment Due

Week 6, October 3, 5 – WWII and Occupation

- Jennifer Jenkins (2016) “Iran in the Nazi New Order, 1933–1941,” *Iranian Studies*, 49:5, 727-751, DOI: [10.1080/00210862.2016.1217636](https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2016.1217636)
- Lior Sternfeld, “'Poland Is Not Lost While We Still Live': The Making of Polish Iran, 1941-45.” *Jewish Social Studies*, vol. 23, no. 3, spring-summer 20
- Pardis Minuchehr, “Trauma and Decolonisation: The Sultanabad (Arak) Camp, German Espionage, and the Allied Occupation of Iran during the Second World War”

Primary Source: Journalistic accounts

Week 7, October 10 – WWII Continued

- Ashley Jackson, *Persian Gulf Command*, Chapters 1 & 8: https://upenn.alma.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/openurl?institution=01UPENN_INST&vid=01UPENN_INST:Services&%3Fctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&ctx_enc=info:ofi%2Fenc:UTF-8&rft_id=info:sid%2Fsummon.serialssolutions.com&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi%2Ffmt:kev:mtx:book&rft.genre=book&rft.title=Persian%20Gulf%20Command&rft.au=Jackson,%20Ashley&rft.date=2018-01-01&rft.pub=Yale%20University%20Press&rft.isbn=9780300235364&rft.externalDocID=EBC5431580

~ FALL BREAK ~



Week 8, October 17, 19 – Oil and the Musaddiq Crisis

- Painter and Brew, *The Struggle for Iran*, Chapters 1-4

Primary Source: CIA documents

Week 9, October 24, 26 – Iran and the ‘Third World’

- Robert Steele, “Two Kings of Kings”
- Kashani-Sabet, The Anti-Aryan Moment
- Elleni Centime Zeleke, Arash Davari; Introduction: Third World Historical: Rethinking Revolution from Ethiopia to Iran. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 1 August 2022; 42 (2): 422–429. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1215/1089201X-9987905>

Week 10, October 31, November 2 – The Imperial Reign and Revolt

- Abbas Milani, *The Shah* (excerpts)
- T. Cuyler Young, “Iran in Continuing Crisis,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 40, No. 2 (Jan., 1962), pp. 275-292.
- Blake Atwood, “When the Sun Goes Down: Sex, Desire and Cinema in 1970s Tehran,” *Asian Cinema*, Volume 27 Number 2
- Video of Persepolis Celebration: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FLIOWIsrD30>

Week 11, November 7, 9 – The Islamic Revolution

- Charles Kurzman, *The Unthinkable Revolution in Iran*, Chapter 1, 2
- Talattof, K. (1997). Iranian Women's Literature: From Pre-Revolutionary Social Discourse to Post-Revolutionary Feminism. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 29(4), 531-558. doi:10.1017/S0020743800065193

Week 12, November 14, 16 – The Iran-Iraq War

- Mateo Farzaneh, *Iranian Women and Gender in the Iran-Iraq War* (Excerpts)
- Karimi, Pamela. "Imagining warfare, imaging welfare: Tehran's post Iran-Iraq War murals and their legacy." *Persica* 22 (2008): 47-63.

Week 13, November 21 – The Iran-Iraq War Continued

- Narges Bajoghli, *Iran Reframed*, Chapters 1, 2
- Annie Tracy Samuel, *The Unfinished History of the Iran-Iraq War*, Chapter 1

Week 14, November 28, 30 – The Green Movement – An Insider's Protest

- Negin Nabavi, *From Theocracy to the Green Movement* (Excerpts)
- Negar Mottahedeh, #IranElection: Hashtag Solidarity and the Transformation of Online Life (Excerpts)
- Select videos

Week 15, December 5, 7 – Woman. Life. Freedom

- Select online articles, videos

~ FINAL PAPER DUE ~