

What is the Middle East? Where is the Middle East? Shifting Geopolitical Imaginations and Boundaries

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Abstract

Regions in which mankind lives and acts are not "naturally" given, but "socially" constructed or constituted through massive and varying waves of human migrations, diverse exchanges of cultures and commodities, shifting perceptions by travelers, geographical, military, political and economic agents and political institutionalization. This seminar will, generally, look at the gradual "invention" as well as the fluctuations of constructing/forming the 'Middle East' as a geographical, political, and a strategic economic entity, which is also to integrate institutionally, from the early twentieth century up to the present. Special emphasis lies on the shifting paradigms or concepts, and changing and often fuzzy geographical areas and boundaries/borders of the region and its recent openness in several directions of competing world regions. The historical relationships of the region with the former Ottoman Empire, colonialist Europe and the currently hegemonic United States of America will be considered as central to the genesis and gradual evolution of the 'Middle East' as an 'idea', an 'image', a 'paradigm or concept', a 'term', and its multi-faceted institutionalization by foreign contending powers.

Brief Bio



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