

Mideast Study Guide

Note: There will be short answer questions on terms that we have covered to date.

Traditional Concepts and Basic Terms

Lineage / Patrilineage / Matrilineage	Tribe / Tribalism
Endogamy / Exogamy	Descent / Alliance
Father's brother's daughter marriage	Desert Nomadism / Transhumance
Mosaic Model (Carleton Coon)	Chakchouka Model (Fatima Amara)
Segmentary Opposition (M. Sahlins)	Theory of Oscillating Elites (Ibn Khaldûn)
Bled es-Siba / Bled al-Makhzan	Bled al-Fellahin
Leffs / Soffs	'Assabiya (Ibn Khaldûn, Al Muqaddimah)
Honor / Shame	'I against my brother ...' / and territoriality
Hydraulic hypothesis (Karl Wittfogel)	Bakhtiari / Amazigh examples of bled es-siba
Rain / Irrigation / Arid Zone Cultures	Despotism / Expansionism / Individualism
Mesopotamian Pantheon of Gods — esp. Marduk	Grass (film on the Bakhtiari of Iran)
Anarchy / Primitive Democracy / and:	Supreme Monarchy / 'Oriental despotism'
Fellahin of Medjerda (slides)	Saddam's Iraq (slides)
7 Key Elements of Middle Eastern Identity	Jewish identity / Judaism
Islam — Islamic / Muslim root: S L M	'am (Jewish People) / 'umma (Islamic community)
Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)	Abrahamic lineage: Ishmael & Isaac
Qur'an / Hadith (isnad) / Ijma / Ra'i /	Tetragrammaton / Trinity / Allah
Ibadat: Shahadah / Salat / Zakat / Siyam / Hadj	Abrahamic Traditions / People of the Book
Sunni shariah: Hanbali / Hanafi / Maliki / Shafi'i	Islamic State / Testament of Omar / Cisye (jizye)
Shi'a shari'ah: Ja'afari / muta'a marriage	Shariah (Shariat): halal ↔ haram
El Thaqaalayn / Hadith of the Two Weighty Matters	Signs of the Raj'a (the Return) / Mehdi
Islamic Spain / Catholic Spain parallels to:	Byzantine Empire / Ottoman Empire
<u>Comparisons of Judaism, Christianity & Islam:</u>	<u>Contrasting approaches to Jesus / Christ including:</u>
Nature of god / Covenant / Law / Dietary laws	Virgin birth / Son of God / Crucifixion / Messiah /
Messiah / identity of the messiah / raj'a (return)	Death / Resurrection / Occultation / Second coming
Proselytizing / Heaven and Hell, and more	Islamic land law:
British and French use of Ottoman Islamic law	Waqf / Miri / Mulk / Kharaj / Mush'a / Mevat

Study Questions (quiz questions will be taken from those on this page)

You have examined four textbooks introducing elements of the Middle Eastern experience. Briefly discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each, your own criteria in selecting a textbook, which text you selected to use for the duration of the semester, and how your chosen textbook meets your criteria.

Why should we care about tribes, lineages, nomads and the like, given that there are nation-states and global relations that surely are more important?

What are the advantages of endogamy and FBDM (father's brother's daughter's marriage) in traditional Middle Eastern cultures? What might be a political disadvantage?

What difference does it make which model of the Middle East is used to try to understand the peoples and cultures of the region?

How does Carleton Coon's model of the Middle East differ from Fatima Amara's and why might that matter? (name at least two differences)

Why should we bother watching an old silent movie like 'Grass' today?

Ibn Khaldun does not incorporate the Bled al-Fellahin as part of his model because ——

Leffs and soffs are a more problematic organizing principle than segmentary opposition because ——

Wittfogel and Ibn Khaldun both use ecological bases for their theories regarding the development of civilization. How do they differ in this regard?

According to Wittfogel, rain culture and river culture produce very different kinds of State structures. Briefly, what are these and why might they matter?

Karl Wittfogel based his theory of 'Oriental Despotism' on ancient Mesopotamian religion. What is his essential argument in this regard?

Saddam Hussein also used ancient Mesopotamian traditions to support his view of Iraq. Give at least one example of his use of Iraq's ancient heritage, and why it matters.

Sahlins' model of segmentary opposition is based upon an old tribal proverb. What basic political principle does the proverb teach us, and what is its utility?

What core cultural attitudes, values or ideologies do you see presented in your textbook so far?

What are the seven key elements associated with the concept of identity in the Middle East? How are the above similar or different from your own sense of identity? (develop each concept as fully as you can)

How are issues of gender, honor, dishonor, pride and shame addressed in your second reading?

How are issues of migration within and away from the Middle East depicted in your second reading? What is the impact of migration on the family encountered in your reading?

If Ibn Khaldun, Carleton Coon, or Fatima Amara were reading your second reading, what would he or she be interested in and what would s/he likely not be interested in, and why?

In what ways do the slides on Saddam's Iraq demonstrate Wittfogel's principle about hydraulic (irrigation) society?

Be ready for this:

Compare and contrast the two books you selected from the third set of readings in terms of how they approach either relations between two or more Middle Eastern peoples or the differences between them those populations. Give brief but specific examples to support your analysis. Which of these two books helps you most to understand relations between Middle Eastern populations and why? (Do NOT compare the third reading to the second here!)

More questions will be added later...