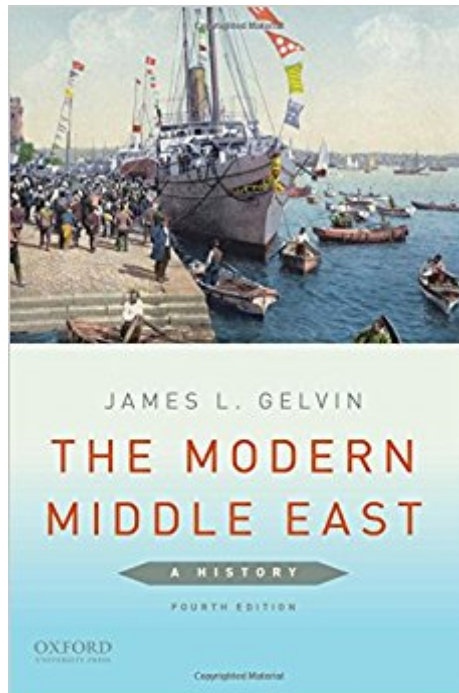


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# The Modern Middle East: A History



## Synopsis

Extensively revised and updated in the wake of the Arab uprisings, the changes that they fostered, and the fault lines that they exposed, the fourth edition of *The Modern Middle East: A History* explores how the forces associated with global modernity have shaped the social, economic, cultural, and political life in the region over the course of the past 500 years. Beginning with the first glimmerings of the current international state and economic systems in the sixteenth century, this book examines the impact of imperial and imperialist legacies, the great nineteenth-century transformation, cultural continuities and upheavals, international diplomacy, economic booms and busts, the emergence of authoritarian regimes and the varied forms of resistance to them and to imperialism in an area of vital concern to us all. *The Modern Middle East: A History, Fourth Edition*, is engagingly written--drawing from the author's own research and other studies--and enriched with maps and photographs, original documents, and an abundance of supplementary materials.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"This is without question the best survey of modern Middle Eastern history currently available in English. It is comprehensive, lucid, nuanced and up-to-date, but it is also a good read--very well-written and entirely accessible to students and general readers alike. I recommend it without hesitation to anyone who wants to acquire a solid understanding of the history of this region from the late Ottoman period onward, and it's a must-read for people who really want to make sense of what is going on in this region today."--Zachary Lockman, New York University "Gelvin's book is among the very best overviews of the modern Middle East. Its great virtue is that he lets readers in on the really exciting thing about this history--the debate over what has driven the region's dramatic

developments. He is also attentive to the history of social classes--beyond just the political elite--and to that of major social movements. It is an essential text for our time."--Juan Cole, University of Michigan "The Modern Middle East is by far the best textbook for introductory and survey courses. In a humorous and conversational style, it offers a substantial analytical and interpretive framework, not just a litany of dry facts that most students will likely forget after their exams. The book accomplishes two objectives at once: it teaches students how to think about history and it introduces them to many of the key issues of the modern Middle East."--Joel Beinin, Stanford University

James L. Gelvin is Professor of History at the University of California, Los Angeles. An award-winning teacher, he is the author of *The Arab Uprisings: What Everyone Needs to Know* (2015), *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: One Hundred Years of War* (2014), *Divided Loyalties: Nationalism and Mass Politics in Syria at the Close of Empire* (1998), and numerous shorter works. He is also coeditor of *Global Muslims in the Age of Steam and Print*.

James Gelvin's text is far and away the best brief introduction to the modern Middle East. It is well written and easy to read, and his insights and interception of the broader themes in Middle Eastern history are both original and well-supported. After a brief introduction to Islam and the Gunpowder Empires of the Ottomans, Safavids and Mughals, Gelvin shows how the emergence of the commercial and industrialized West provided a challenge to the culture, institutions and values of the Islamic Near East. Gelvin destroys the notion that there is a "clash of civilizations" between the Islamic world and the West, and similarly wrecks the perspective that the Islamic world has "bloody borders". Rather, he posits that the Modern Middle East is the result of several factors: "defensive developmentalism", "constitutionalism" and "imperialism". The impact the growing economic (and later technological and political) power that the West brought to bear on the Islamic world has influenced its shape as the Islamic world on one hand sought to adapt, learn and borrow from Europe, while on the other hand, Europe was seeking to exploit and influence the Near East to its own devices. I was particularly pleased to see that attention was given to the Maghreb and Persia as well as to the eastern Mediterranean, an important detail that is often overlooked in general texts on the subject. Gelvin's discussion of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was also masterfully done, especially his summary of the Oslo Accords and his analysis for their failure. (His optimism for the region was heartening.) The final few chapters, on the Middle East in the late 20th and early 21st centuries were the strongest, I thought, but only because of the careful foundation he set in the previous

chapters of the book. The only complaint I have with the text is the lack of maps and a clearer timeline of events which, I think, would make it easier for those not familiar with places and major players and events to get a sense of location and sequence. For those interested in an excellent history (and outstanding analysis) of the Middle East from the middle of the 19th century into the early 21st century, this is the book I would recommend. I can also imagine it as the primary text for a 200-level course on the Middle East.

Gelvin writes a concise, clear history of the Muslims world (that is, mostly the middle-east). He writes in an enjoyable fashion - being true to historical objectivity, yet throwing in personal analysis when appropriate. What makes this book even better is that it was written in 2005 and could thus position itself within a post-9/11 world. Overall, Gelvin's history is not only rich, but entertaining to read. Perfect for a student whose brain might be frazzled by semesters of reading.

A good textbook for a Middle East history class.

Great book for a brief but detailed history of the modern middle east. I like that the author spends enough time on pre-world war 1 Middle east in order to give the reader an adequate background on the region; without which the issues in the modern middle east would lose context and significance. It has a too informal voice at times but that is easily overcome.

I had to purchase this book for a class on the Middle East that I took this semester. The author adds uncommon facts, which added enjoyment to it's reading. I really enjoyed the book. Do note though, that there is a newer edition of the book. I bought this edition because I was auditing the class, so the most recent information was not imperative. The cost difference was dramatic.

Gelvin really makes a clear idea on the modern events of the Middle East

For our midterm my professor stated that we needed to stick to the 3rd chapter of Gelvin and NOT apply it to current events. Gelvin's historical accounts sound like current events in US and the World. Apparently the world's politicians never read this book so we are repeating it.

clearly written.. complex issues presented in understandable prose (with a touch of humor) for the non-academic. I will keep it as a reference as history unfolds

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