

SPRING 2007

## IRAQ

aberration of a nation-state

HISTORY 300--007

T, 4:15-6:45, DU-122

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Crown 547: T, 3:00-4:15; Th, 12:00-1:00

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The American occupation of Iraq since April 2003 has brought to light some compounding problems typical of failed states and societies in the Arab east (or west Asia). Chief among them are the common existence of authoritarian patrimonial régimes; a weak political class, often subdued to the ruling clan; a state-controlled economy where the ruling entourage controls key sectors; a low-income economy and a weak professional middle class, with a poor rationalization of labor; the division of society into strong ethnic, religious, and tribal groups, at the expense of the nascent nation-state; and cultures where the individual is subdued to the group, and where individualistic representations of the self tend to be mitigated in favor of collectively imposed identities. Such Mediterranean, Asian, African, or Latin American countries now look more isolated than ever, with little to offer to the outside world (in terms of trade and culture), and with serious problems integrating to the world capitalist economy. The decision to invade Iraq came as a result of failed policies of the now defunct Baathist régime since the early 1980s, which, taken together, have pushed the international community to take action on several occasions. Thus, notwithstanding the internal repression of Iraqis (in all their ethnic and religious varieties), the Baathist régime began a war campaign against neighboring Iran, which in 1978 had just passed into the hands of a Shiï theocracy, headed by Ayatollah Khomeini. Over a million casualties were claimed on both sides in the eight-year conflict between 1980-88, a war that ended with no clear winner, and with no decisive victory on any of the issues (e.g., the loyalty of Iraqi Shiis and Kurds, territorial problems, and the status of Iranian resistance groups in Iraq). It was also in the Iranian-Iraqi war, which became known as the first Gulf war (and the first one between two Muslim countries), that for the first time the Iraqi lethal arsenal of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) was revealed: in 1986 60,000 Iranians died in the bombing of the city of Khorramshahr (on the Shatt-al-‘Arab), presumably by Iraqi lethal chemical weapons;

and a couple of years later, 20,000 Kurds died in the same way in the northern Iraqi city of Halbja (part of a deadly policy known as the “Anfâl” campaign against the Kurds, which in toto claimed 180,000 lives). The sudden occupation of oil-rich Kuwait in August 1990, in less than 24 hours, and its annexation as an “Iraqi province,” prompted the international community for military action, headed by 250,000 US troops that deployed along the Saudi-Kuwaiti border. Even though the rapid liberation of Kuwait in early 1991, in what became known as the second Gulf war, gave free way to US troops to push ahead to Baghdad and topple the Baathist régime of Saddam Husayn, US marines controlled no more than the south of Iraq, mainly around the Shiï city of Basra, for only a couple of months, prior to a sudden withdrawal that left behind a premature and vulnerable Shiï insurgency. Elite Iraqi troops, composed mainly of the venerable republican guards, were soon dispatched to the south to suppress an insurgency in which 300,000 lives were claimed. The decision of president Bush senior to prematurely withdraw US troops from the south, leaving behind a vulnerable Shiï insurgency, has forever damaged the reputation of Americans among Shiïs (roughly 60 percent of the Iraqi population), and pushed the latter to closer ties with neighboring Iran.

Iraq’s reluctance to let UN inspectors to freely check its vast WMD arsenal, led to a decade-long embargo sponsored by the UN. In the meantime, thanks to a no-fly zone imposed by the Anglo-American forces, the Kurds gained more autonomy in the north, and a political truce among rival Kurdish tribal and regional factions pushed “Iraqi Kurdistan” for an unprecedented economic boom. For their part, central and southern Iraq, both controlled by the Baathist régime, had their trade exchange with the outside world drastically limited by the oil-for-food UN sponsored program. Corrupt as it was, the program saw the rise of illicit trade with neighboring countries (Syria, Iran, and southern Turkey), and enabled the Baathist state an even tighter control over the economy. Within less than two decades, the Iran-Iraq war, the occupation of Kuwait, the WMD program and the UN embargo, have *in toto* impoverished Iraq, and pushed the per capita income down considerably, making Iraq unreasonably poor for a country that possesses the second largest oil reserves in the world, next to its neighbor Saudi Arabia.

The American invasion of Iraq in 2003 constituted therefore the third Gulf war in the last two decades, and the second attempt by a coalition overwhelmingly controlled by the Anglo-Americans to “readjust” an uncontrollable situation in the region. Since the US attempt to create a democratic “federal” Iraq has failed, the country is now a *de facto* confederacy of three quasi-states in the Kurdish north, the Shiï south, and an insurgent and uncertain Sunni triangle into which Arab and Muslim jihadist guerrillas are pouring in. Whatever the fate of the new constitution, it would be unlikely that the three main ethnic and religious groups (not to mention the underrepresented and repressed minorities) would come up with a consensual agreement that would keep the decision-making process flow from a federal center. With the Bush administration still apologetic about its mistakes and arrogant when it comes to its failures, and unable to see that the reality on the ground is *de facto* fostering an “Islamic state” in the south with strong ties to neighboring Iran, it may take some time before the messy situation clears on the ground.

The purpose of this course is to study the formation of modern Iraq, and the failures to implement a democratic state and the rule of law, since the demise of the Ottoman Empire and the British occupation in 1917, which eventually led to the creation of Iraq in its present

borders. It is often assumed—in particular by those who disregard the colonial heritage altogether—that the original failure of the British was, indeed, to put together heterogeneous populations into “artificially” created borders. It would be more accurate to state, however, that what the British had opted for in the formative period of modern Iraq—between 1917 and 1925, which coincided with the promulgation of the first constitution—was a mini-Ottoman solution to a newly established nation-state. Thus, by giving the Hashimites the reigns of the state, the British had, like the Ottomans before them, eschewed a system of genuine political representation that would have been representative of the Iraqi populations, in favor of a Sunni minority dynasty, whose roots in Mesopotamia were anyhow weak. In effect, and even though the first constitution of 1925 brought for the first time a “democratically” elected parliament, the latter became rather quickly a puppet to governmental policies and the Hashimite court, as the main protagonists of the Hashimite era were graduates of the old Ottoman military school. Yet, despite the big drawbacks of the mandate policies, the British and their Hashimite protégés were nevertheless able to revive agriculture in Mesopotamia (“the country between the two rivers”), transforming swamps, and neglected and poorly managed lands, into productive terrains; and to proceed with the first industrial projects, not to mention the management of the newly discovered oil wealth.

The sudden and brutish ending of the Hashimites in 1958 brought a new class to power. From ‘Abdul-Karim Qâsem and ‘Abdul-Salâm ‘Aref, up to Hasan al-Bakr and Saddâm Husayn, a new group of paramilitary rulers, issued for the most part from small landowning rural families, had initiated the utopian foundations of modern Iraq: a civilian pan-Arab democratic rule, where the masses have the last and final words, and where socialism is fostered by a state-controlled economy. Needless to say, Iraq has turned more violent and unstable with this new class of paramilitary rulers—an instability which has become even more visible once the *ancien régime* has evaporated at the sight of American tanks. The rise of Baathism was neither inevitable nor accidental.

Our survey of modern Iraq will only very selectively bring under the microscope some of the issues raised above, as well as few others, pending on how the situation develops on the ground. Within the horizon of the social sciences, we will examine historical, as well as anthropological and sociological texts.

## GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

We'll discuss our weekly readings collectively in class. Your participation is essential for the success of the course. You'll also have to complete presentations based on the weekly readings and term-papers (see below). Instructions on the presentations will be posted in due time on Blackboard.

In addition to the two-draft free-topic paper (see below the section on papers), you'll have to submit three interpretive essays based on our weekly readings: you'll receive sets of questions for each. *Each paper counts as 20 percent of the total. **All interpretive essays are take-home and you'll be given a week to submit them.** The purpose of the interpretative essays is to give you the opportunity to go "beyond" the literal meaning of a text and adopt interpretive and "textual" techniques. A failing grade in all interpretive essays means also a failing grade for the course, whatever your performance in the term-paper is. **All essays and papers must be submitted on time according to the deadlines set below.***

First Interpretive Essay	20%
Second Interpretive Essay	20%
Final Interpretive Essay	20%
Term-paper: 2 drafts 10% each	20%
Presentations, Blackboard postings, and class attendance and participation	20%

- It is essential that you complete all readings on time, and that you come to class well prepared. **Always come to class with the required book:** we'll discuss all readings extensively.
- The first, second, and final interpretive essays are all based on our weekly readings. They all consist of a single essay for which you'll receive the appropriate questions at the dates below, and you'll submit them in class a week later.
- The question handouts will only be distributed in class—no email communication.
- For all five papers follow the procedures outlined below in the section on papers.
- Essays and papers are to be submitted only in class. Do not email or fax any material. Do not submit your papers outside the classroom.
- It's your responsibility to submit all essays and papers *in class* on time at the required deadlines. Late papers will be graded accordingly, and papers submitted a week after the deadline will be graded F.
- You must also submit, in addition to the printed hard copies, an equivalent electronic file of each paper in the digital dropbox on Blackboard.
- Each non-submitted paper will receive the grade of F, and your final grade will be averaged accordingly.
- The mid-term paper is a free-topic exercise based on a list of authors/books that you should begin researching as soon as possible.
- If you do not show up for an assigned presentations, you'll be graded F.

## READINGS

- Week 1: January 16: Introduction
- Week 2: January 23  
Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, Cambridge UP, 052152900X.
- Week 3: January 30  
Tripp (continued)  
Selections from Christopher Cerf, *The Iraq War Reader*, Touchstone, 0743253477.
- Week 4: February 6  
Toby Dodge, *Inventing Iraq*, Columbia 0231131674.  
**first interpretive essay**
  
- Week 5: February 13  
Presentations based on selections from the *Reader*.
- Week 6: February 20  
Kanan Makiya, *Republic of Fear*, California UP 1998, 0520214390.
- Week 7: February 27  
Efraim Karsh, *The Iran-Iraq War*, Osprey Publishing, 1841763713.  
**second interpretive essay**
  
- Week 8: March 13  
Faleh A. Jabar, *The Shiite Movement in Iraq*, Saqi Books, 0863563953.
- Week 9: March 27  
Jabar (continued) and Reader selections.  
**first term-paper draft deadline**
  
- Week 10: April 3  
Eric Davis, *Memoirs of State*, California UP 2005, 0520235460.
- Week 11: April 10  
Davis (continued)
- Week 12: April 17  
Hamit Bozarslan, *Violence in the Middle East*, Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2004, 1-55876-309-0.

**final interpretive essay**

**April 30:**  
**deadline for submitting term-papers**  
**deadline for submitting final interpretive essay**

## PAPERS

You are requested to write one major research paper to be submitted on April 30. You will have to submit, however, a first draft of this paper on March 27. The first draft should be as complete as possible and follow the same presentation and writing guidelines as your final draft, and it will count as 10% of your total grade unless the final draft is of superior quality. The purpose of the first draft is to let you assess your research and writing skills and improve the final version of your paper. It is advisable that you choose a research topic and start preparing a bibliography as soon as possible. I would strongly recommend that you consult with me before making any final commitment. It would be preferable to keep the same topic for both drafts. You will be allowed, however, after prior consultation, to change your topic if you wish to do so.

**Papers must be related to Iraq and the Fertile Crescent (Mesopotamia). Papers with broader topoi must first receive instructor's approval. *Papers should be analytical and conceptual.* Avoid pure narratives and chronologies and construct your paper around a main thesis.**

Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 5th ed., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987. Intended for students and other writers of papers not written for publication. Useful material on notes and bibliographies.

### April 30: FINAL DRAFT DEADLINE

Keep in mind the following when preparing your preliminary and final drafts:

- once you've decided on a paper-topic and prepared a preliminary bibliography, post an abstract and bibliography of your topic on blackboard <[blackboard.luc.edu](http://blackboard.luc.edu)> (see below). Your abstract should include: (i) title; (ii) description; (iii) sources; (iv) methodology (e.g. suggestions on how to read sources). **Your preliminary draft will not be accepted unless you've submitted an on-line abstract before March 25.**
- preliminary drafts should be submitted on time, March 27.
- preliminary drafts should be complete and include footnotes and an **annotated bibliography**. (The Turabian reference above is annotated: it briefly spells what the book is about and to whom it might be useful.)
- do not submit an outline as a first draft.
- incomplete and poorly written first drafts will not be accepted, and you'll be advised to revise your first draft completely.
- if you submit a single draft throughout the semester, you'll receive F for 10% of the total and your final grade will be averaged accordingly.
- the oral presentation is an essential aspect of your grade; if you can't attend the last session, request an appointment.
- **your final draft should take into consideration all the relevant comments provided on your earlier draft:**
  - all factual and grammatical mistakes should be corrected, in addition to other stylistic revisions.
  - passages indicated as "revise" or "unclear" or "awkward" should be totally revised.

- when specific additional references have been suggested, you should do your best to incorporate them into your material.
- there might be several additional suggestions in particular on your overall assumptions and methodology. It will be up to you to decide what to take into consideration.
- **Submit the final draft with your preliminary corrected one.**
- if you're interested in comments on your final paper and interpretive essay, request an appointment by e-mail.

Please use the following guidelines regarding the format of your papers:

- use 8x10 white paper (the size and color of this paper). Do not use legal size or colored paper.
- use a typewriter, laser printer or a good inkjet printer and hand in the original.
- only type on one side of the paper.
- should be double spaced, with single spaced footnotes at the end of each page and an *annotated bibliography* at the end (see bibliography below).
- keep ample left and right margins for comments and corrections of at least 1.25 inches each.
- all pages should be numbered and stapled.
- **a cover page should include the following: paper's title, course number and section, your name, address, e-mail, and telephone.**

### **Electronic forum**

This course is listed on the Loyola Blackboard webpage to freely post messages and conduct discussions: login at <[blackboard.luc.edu](http://blackboard.luc.edu)> and follow the instructions.

Besides a synopsis of all your presentations and term-paper, you must post each week a news item on the Middle East and/or Iraq.

## References

- Atlas of the Middle East*, Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 2003.
- Anderson, Jon Lee. *The fall of Baghdad*, New York: Penguin Press, 2004.
- Anderson, Liam D., and Gareth R. V. Stansfield. *The future of Iraq : dictatorship, democracy, or division?* Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.
- Blix, Hans. *Disarming Iraq*. Pantheon Books, 2004.
- Bodansky, Yossef. *The secret history of the Iraq war*. 1st ed, New York: ReganBooks, 2004.
- Braude, Joseph. *The new Iraq : rebuilding the country for its people, the Middle East, and the world*, New York: Basic Books, 2003.
- Braude sheds light on a country unknown to Westerners after a decade of international isolation and shows how a viable Iraqi economy will help transform the Middle East. Confronting future challenges with optimism, Braude outlines the transition of Iraq's political system; the reconstitution of its worn-out military into an army of nation-building; the promotion of religious tolerance; new business opportunities, and the revitalization of its entertainment industry, media, education, and legal systems. Braude, who was born to an Iraqi-Jewish family, is a business consultant to governments and businesses on the Middle East.
- Chaliand, Gérard, ed. *A people without a country : the Kurds and Kurdistan*. 1st American ed, New York: Olive Branch Press, 1993.
- The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire / by Kendal -- Kurdistan in Turkey / by Kendal -- Kurdistan in Iran / by A.R. Ghassemlou -- The Kurdish Republic of Mahabad / by Archie Roosevelt, Jr. -- Kurdistan in Iraq / by Ismet Sheriff Vanly -- The Kurds in Syria / by Mustafa Nazdar -- The Kurds in the Soviet Union / by Kendal -- Iranian Kurds under Ayatollah Khomeini / by Gerard Chaliand -- The two Gulf Wars: the Kurds on the world stage, 1979 - 1992 / by Kamran Karadaghi -- Operation provide comfort : false promises to the Kurds / by Bill Frelick -- Turkey's Kurds after the Gulf War: a report from the Southeast / by Aliza Marcus.
- Translation of: Les Kurdes et le Kurdistan./ Includes bibliographical references (p. 254-256) and index.
- Cole, Juan Ricardo, and Nikki R. Keddie, ed. *Shi'ism and social protest*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986.
- Shi'ism in the Persian Gulf / R.K. Ramazani -- The Iranian revolution / Richard W. Cottam -- Iranian foreign policy since 1979 : internationalism and nationalism in the Islamic revolution / Fred Halliday -- Sexuality and Shi'i social protest in Iran / Nahid Yeganeh and Nikki R. Keddie -- The growth of Shi'i power in Lebanon and its implications for the future / Helena Cobban -- Shi'ism and social protest in Lebanon / Augustus Richard Norton -- Shi'i organizations in Iraq : al-Da'wah al-Islamiyah and al-Mujahidin / Hanna Batatu -- The evolution of Shi'i political dissent in Afghanistan / David Busby Edwards -- The Shi'i minority in Saudi Arabia / Jacob Goldberg -- The Egyptian opposition on the Iranian revolution / Rudi Matthee -- Soviet attitudes toward Shi'ism and social protest / Muriel Atkin.
- Includes bibliographical references and index.
- Cordesman, Anthony H. *The Iraq War : strategy, tactics, and military lessons*, Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2003.
- Dodge, Toby. *Inventing Iraq : the failure of nation-building and a history denied*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.



- Dudley, William, ed. *Iraq : opposing viewpoints*, San Diego, CA: Greenhaven Press, 2004.
- Ghareeb, Edmund. *The Kurdish question in Iraq*. 1st ed, Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1981.
- Haj, Samira. *The making of Iraq, 1900-1963 capital, power, and ideology*. State University of New York Press, 1997.
- Hersh, Seymour M. *Chain of command : the road from 9/11 to Abu Ghraib*. 1st ed, New York: HarperCollins, 2004.
- Hiro, Dilip. *The longest war : the Iran-Iraq military conflict*, New York: Routledge, 1991.
- Karsh, Efraim, and Inari Rautsi. *Saddam Hussein : a political biography*, New York : Free Press: Toronto, 1991.
- Keegan, John. *The Iraq war*. A.A. Knopf, 2004.  
 Author of the acclaimed *The Face of Battle*, and, most recently, *Intelligence in War*, John Keegan now brings his extraordinary expertise to bear on perhaps the most controversial war of our time. The Iraq War is an urgently needed, up-to-date and informed study of the ongoing conflict. In exclusive interviews with Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and General Tommy Franks, Keegan has gathered information about the war that adds immeasurably to our grasp of its causes, complications, costs and consequences. He probes the reasons for the invasion and delineates the strategy of the American and British forces in capturing Baghdad; he examines the quick victory over the Republican Guard and the more tenacious and deadly opposition that has taken its place. He then analyzes the intelligence information with which the Bush and Blair administrations convinced their respective governments of the need to go to war, and which has since been strongly challenged in both countries. And he makes clear that despite the uncertainty about weapons of mass destruction, regime change, and the use and misuse of intelligence, the war in Iraq is an undeniably formidable display of American power. The Iraq War is authoritative, timely and vitally important to our understanding of a conflict whose full ramifications are as yet unknown.
- Khadduri, Majid. *Independent Iraq, 1932-1958; a study in Iraqi politics*. 2d ed, London: New York, Oxford University Press, 1960.
- Mackey, Sandra. *The reckoning : Iraq and the legacy of Saddam Hussein*. 1st ed, New York: Norton, 2002.  
 The reckoning is an account of the forces--historical, religious, ethnic, and political--that produced Saddam Hussein's dictatorship. Iraq was forged after World War I from the Mesopotamian region of the collapsed Ottoman Empire, and its people have never had a national identity or a sense of a common purpose. Hussein, ruling by terror, pitted the various ethnic groups, religious interests, and tribes against one another, and in so doing achieved the destruction of Iraq's middle class and civilized society. After he goes, the country could be the site of conflict even more vicious than the Balkan wars.
- Makiya, Kanan. *Cruelty and silence : war, tyranny, uprising, and the Arab World*. 1st ed, New York: W.W. Norton, 1993.
- Metz, Helen Chapin, ed. *Iraq : a country study*. Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1990.
- Munthe, Turi. *The Saddam Hussein reader*, New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2002.
- Nakash, Yitzhak. *The Shi'is of Iraq*. Princeton University Press, 1994.
- Nyang, Sulayman S., and Evan Hendricks. *A line in the sand : Saudi Arabia's role in the Gulf War*. 1st ed, [Washington, D.C.]: P.T. Books, 1995.

- Olson, Robert W, ed. *The Kurdish nationalist movement in the 1990s : its impact on Turkey and the Middle East*, Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 1996.
- Pollack, Kenneth M. *The threatening storm : the case for invading Iraq*. Random House, 2002.
- Sciolino, Elaine. *The outlaw state : Saddam Hussein's quest for power and the Gulf crisis*, New York: Wiley, 1991.
- Simons, G. L. *The scourging of Iraq sanctions, law, and natural justice*. St. Martin's Press, 1998.
- Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq* (Princeton University Press, 1978), covers extensively the rise and fall of the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) in the 1940s in the second part of the book, while the first part is an introduction to the Iraqi society from a profile of its landowning and other social "classes." Finally, a third part deals, though less extensively than for the Communists, with the formation of the Ba'th and the coming to power of Saddâm Husayn. The three parts seem like three different narratives without a major thread to bring them together. Extensive use of the Foreign Office archives that the British left in Iraq.
- Samir al-Khalil, *Republic of Fear. The Inside Story of Saddam's Iraq* (Pantheon, 1989), analyses the logic of Iraqi "totalitarianism." Important insights on the ideology of the Ba'th party, its organization, and its links with other state organizations such as the army, the *mukhabarât*, etc. See also by the same author, *The Monument. Art, Vulgarities and Responsibility in Iraq* (University of California Press, 1991).