The overthrow of Mohammad Reza Shah in 1979 and the subsequent emergence of the Islamic Republic of Iran shook the Middle East and reshaped global politics. These events have continued to reverberate for four decades, in ways that no one could have predicted. Hostility between the US and Iran has remained almost constant during this period. Yet despite the growing importance of Iran, few Americans know much about the country or its modern history.

The shattering events of 1978-80 in Iran unfolded against the backdrop of the previous decades of Iranian history, so understanding that history is essential to understanding what has become known as the Islamic Revolution. Nor can the revolution be appreciated without studying the enormous effects it has had. This seminar will place the anti-Shah movement and the rise of religious power in the context of Iran's century of modern history. We will conclude by focusing on today's Iran, including the breakthrough nuclear deal of 2015 and the United States’ withdrawal from the deal three years later.

This seminar is unfolding as the United States reaches the end a four-year campaign of “maximum pressure” on Iran. We will follow the new administration’s proposals for a different approach, and monitor preparations for the Iranian presidential election in June. We will seek to follow these events without losing focus on our broader effort to understand Iran's social, cultural, and political trajectory over the last century. Students will be asked to lead discussions on each week’s developments.

Iran is central to American foreign policy and to America’s view of the world. For decades it has been portrayed as one of the most potent enemies the United States faces anywhere on earth. Anti-Iran sentiment is intense across the American political spectrum. Yet Iranian society is more like American society than are many others in the Middle East, and some of Iran’s strategic goals coincide with those of the United States. Studying Iran’s history and politics is a key to understanding Iran itself, the Middle East, and the long US-Iran confrontation—which may now be entering a new phase.
In this seminar, students will learn to

--appreciate the historical background that has made Iran one of the world’s oldest civilizations;
--trace the 20th-century struggle between democracy and authoritarianism;
--identify major turning points in modern Iranian history;
--understand the legacy of foreign intervention in Iran;
--see the power of literature and other creative arts in Iran;
--recognize the forces that set off the Islamic Revolution of 1979;
--analyze the long course of hostility between the US and Iran;
--assess the 2015 nuclear deal and the American withdrawal in 2018;
--interpret changes in the US-Iran relationship; and
--make informed judgments about Iran’s future and its role in the Middle East and wider world

Requirements, Evaluation, and Workload Allocation

There will be five writing assignments. Four are short papers of about 1,500 words (five pages). The first, a report on a major work of 20th-century Iranian literature, is due February 17; this class will be devoted to discussion of the three works we are studying. The second paper, on causes of the Islamic Revolution, is due February 24. The third, an analysis of a book on the theme of women in Iran, is due March 10.

Our class on March 24 will be devoted to each student’s written and oral analysis of one book from the “Optional Reading” list below. We will group these reports thematically so they can enrich our understanding of material we have studied.

The final written assignment is a research paper of about 6,000 words (20 pages), on a topic of each student’s choice; we will discuss possible topics in class. This paper must be related to modern Iran, but not necessarily to Mohammad Reza Shah's fall or the Islamic Revolution. It should be written as prescribed in the Chicago Manual of Style. The paper, together with an accompanying oral presentation, is due at our last meeting on April 7.

Two preliminary steps are required in preparation of the research paper. On March 3, students should submit a two-page summary of their proposed paper, with a preliminary list of sources. After receiving the instructor’s response, each student should write a 2,000-word draft of the paper, together with a fuller, annotated bibliography; this is due on March 17. These drafts will be returned with comments.

As this is a seminar, there will be considerable classroom discussion. Students are expected to participate actively. This will include making oral presentations on February 17, about a work of Iranian literature; February 24, to discuss the causes of the Islamic Revolution; March 10, to discuss the role of women in Iran; March 24, about a book from the “Optional Reading” list or another book with the instructor's permission; and April 7, to present your research paper.
Students are also expected to **stay informed about current events in Iran**. Following mainstream news outlets should be supplemented with monitoring of specialized sites including https://www.niacouncil.org/press_room/
https://iranian.com/news-feed/
https://www.tehrantimes.com/

**Grading** will be based on this formula: one-third for the four shorter papers, one-third for the research paper, and one-third for class participation, including oral presentations.

This course meets the university WRIT requirement and counts as a capstone seminar for the IR concentration. Students taking the course for an IR capstone must take the course for a grade

*Brown University is committed to full inclusion of all students. Please inform me early in the term if you have a disability or other conditions that might require accommodations or modification of any of these course procedures. You may speak with me after class or during office hours. For more information, please contact Student and Employee Accessibility Services at 401-863-9588 or SEAS@brown.edu.*

**Required Books** -- Estimated total cost: $210

*America and Iran: A History, 1720 to the Present,* by John Ghazvinian

*The Coup: 1953, the CIA, and the Roots of Modern U.S.-Iranian Relations,* by Ervand Abrahamian

*Iran Reframed: Anxieties of Power in the Islamic Republic,* by Narges Bajoghli

*Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution,* by Nikki Keddie

*Revolutionary Iran: A History of the Islamic Republic,* by Michael Axworthy

*Shah of Shahs,* by Ryszard Kapuscinski

*The Blind Owl,* by Sadegh Hedayat / *Savushun,* by Simin Daneshvar (also published as *A Persian Requiem / Sin: Selected Poems of Forugh Farrokhzad,* edited by Sholeh Wolpe and Alicia Ostriker [choose one])

Videos: “A Separation” and “Zero Days”
Optional Reading

**History of Iran – General**
Abrahamian, Ervand, *A History of Modern Iran*
Amanat, Abbas, *Iran: A Modern History*
Ansari, Ali, *Modern Iran Since 1797: Reform and Revolution*
Axworthy, Michael, *A History of Iran: Empire of the Mind*
Azimzadeh, Fakhreddin, *The Quest for Democracy in Iran: A Century of Struggle Against Authoritarian Rule*
Lorents, John H., *Historical Dictionary of Iran*

**Constitutional Revolution; Rise and Fall of Reza Shah**
Afary, Janet, *The Iranian Constitutional Revolution 1906-1911: Grassroots Democracy, Social Democracy, and the Origins of Feminism*
Cronin, Stephanie, (ed.) *The Making of Modern Iran: State and Society under Riza Shah, 1921-1941*
Ghani, Cyrus, *Iran and the Rise of Reza Shah: From Qajar Collapse to Pahlavi Power*
Shuster, Morgan, *The Strangling of Persia: A Record of European Diplomacy and Oriental Intrigue*

**Mossadegh and the 1953 Coup**
De Bellaigue, Christopher, *Patriot of Persia: Muhammad Mossadeq and a Tragic Anglo-American Coup*
Elm, Mostafa, *Oil, Power, and Principle: Iran's Oil Nationalization and Its Aftermath*
Gasiorowski, Mark, & Malcolm Byrne (eds.), *Mohammad Mossadeq and the 1953 Coup in Iran*
Katouzian, Homa, *Musaddiq and the Struggle For Power in Iran*
Kinzer, Stephen, *All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror*

**Reign of Mohammad Reza Shah; Iran as America's Cold War Ally**
Alvandi, Roham, *Nixon, Kissinger, and the Shah: The United States and Iran in the Cold War*
Cooper, Andrew Scott, *The Fall of Heaven: The Pahlavis and the Final Days of Imperial Iran*
Gasiorowski, Mark J., *U.S. Foreign Policy and the Shah: Building a Client State in Iran*
Ghani, Cyrus, *Iran and the Rise of Reza Shah: From Qajar Collapse to Pahlavi Power*
Forbis, William H., *Fall of the Peacock Throne: The Story of Iran*
Milani, Abbas, *The Shah*
-- *The Persian Sphinx: Amir Abbas Hoveyda and the Riddle of the Iranian Revolution*
Parsons, Anthony, *The Pride and the Fall: Iran 1974-1979*

**Iran in the Middle East and the World**
Gause, F. Gregory, *The International Relations of the Persian Gulf*
Hitchcock, Mark, *Iran and Israel: Wars and Rumors of Wars*
Parsi, Trita, *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the U. S.
--Losing an Enemy: Obama, Iran, and the Triumph of Diplomacy*
Roshandel, Jalil, and N. C. Lean, *Iran, Israel, and the United States: Regime Security vs. Political Legitimacy*
Literature in Mid-Century Iran: Daneshvar, Hedayet, and Farrokhzad
Brookshaw, Dominic Parviz, and Nasrin Rahimieh (eds.) Forugh Farrokhzad, Poet of Modern Iran: Iconic Woman and Feminine Pioneer of New Persian Poetry
Javadi, Hasan, and Susan Sallée (eds.), Another Birth and Other Poems by Forugh Farrokhzad
Katouzian, Homa, Sadeq Hedayat: The Life and Legend of an Iranian Writer
Mozaffari, Nahid, Strange Times in Persia: An Anthology of Contemporary Iranian Literature
Moyyad, Heshmat (ed.), Stories From Iran: An Anthology of Persian Short Fiction 1921-1991
Pezeshkzad, Iraj, My Uncle Napoleon

The Islamic Revolution Explodes; The Shah Flees; Khomeini Returns; Hostage Crisis; Religious Power Is Consolidated
Arjomand, Said Amir, The Turban for the Crown: The Islamic Revolution in Iran
Bowden, Mark, Guests of the Ayatollah: The First Battle in America's War with Militant Islam
Cooper, Andrew Scott, The Fall of Heaven: The Pahlavis and the Final Days of Imperial Iran
Milani, Moshen, The Making of Iran’s Islamic Revolution: From Monarchy to Islamic Republic
Mottahedeh, Roy, The Mantle of the Prophet: Religion and Politics in Iran
Nasr, Vali, The Shi’ite Revival
Shawcross, William, The Shah’s Last Ride
Takeyh, Ray, Hidden Iran: Power and Paradox in the Islamic Republic

Emergence of the Islamic Republic; War With Iraq; Militancy and Isolation
Buchan, James, Days of God: The Revolution in Iran and Its Consequences
Hiro, Dilip, The Longest War: The Iran-Iraq Military Conflict
Ottolength, Emanuele, The Pasdaran: Inside Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps
Razoux, Pierre, and Nicholas Elliott, The Iran-Iraq War
Tucker-Jones, Anthony, Iran-Iraq War: Lion of Babylon 1980-88

The Republic Matures; Rise of Khatami and Ahmadinejad; Green Movement
Ansari, Ali M., Iran under Ahmadinejad: The Politics of Confrontation
Arjomand, Said Amir, After Khomeini: Iran Under His Successors
Dabashi, Hamid, Iran, The Green Movement and the USA: The Fox and the Paradox
Dennis, Anthony J., Letters to Khatami: A Reply to the Iranian President's Call for a Dialogue Among Civilizations
Hasehmi, Nader, and Danny Postel (eds.), The People Reloaded: The Green Movement and the Struggle for Iran's Future

The US and Iran: Three Decades of Hostility
Ansari, Ali M., Confronting Iran: The Failure of American Foreign Policy and the Next Great Crisis in the Middle East
Beeman, William O., The “Great Satan” and the “Mad Mullahs”—How the United States and Iran Demonize Each Other
Crist, David, *The Twilight War: The Secret History of America’s Thirty-Year Conflict With Iran.*
Goode, James, *The United States and Iran: In the Shadow of Mussadiq*
Fayazmanesh, Sasan, *The United States and Iran: Sanctions, Wars and the Policy of Dual Containment*
Leverett, Flyntt, and Hillary Mann Leverett, *Going to Tehran: Why the United States Must Come to Terms With the Islamic Republic of Iran*
Limbert, John *Negotiating With Iran: Wrestling With the Ghosts of History*
Mousavian, Seyed Hossein, *Iran and the United States: An Insider’s View on the Failed Past and the Road to Peace*
Porter, Gareth, and John Kiriakou, *The CIA Insider's Guide to the Iran Crisis: From CIA Coup to the Brink of War*
Rezaian, Jason, *Prisoner: My 544 Days in an Iranian Prison*
Solom, Jay, *The Iran Wars: Spy Games, Bank Battles, and the Secret Deals That Reshaped the Middle East*
Taheri, Amir, *Nest of Spies: America’s Journey to Disaster in Iran*

**Women in Iran**
Afary, Janet, *Sexual Politics in Modern Iran*
Al-Saltana, Taj, *Crowning Anguish: Memoirs of a Persian Princess From the Harem to Modernity*
Ansary, Nina, *Jewels of Allah: The Untold Story of Women in Iran*
Ebadi, Shirin, *Iran Awakening: One Woman’s Journey to Reclaim Her Life and Country*
Farman Farmaian, Sattareh, and Dona Munker, *Daughter of Persia: A Woman's Journey From Her Father's Harem Through the Islamic Revolution*
Nazila Fathi, *The Lonely War: One Woman’s Account of the Struggle for Modern Iran*
Lewis, Franklin, ad Farzin Yazdanfar (eds.), *In a Voice of Their Own: A Collection of Stories by Iranian Women Written Since the Revolution of 1979*
Satrapi, Marjane, *Persepolis and Persepolis 2*

**Currents in Iranian Politics and Culture**
Alinejad, Masih, *The Wind In My Hair: My Fight For Freedom in Modern Iran*
Asadi, Houshang, *Letters to My Torturer*
Homayounpor, Gohar, *Doing Psychoanalysis in Tehran*
Khosravi, Shahram, *Young and Defiant in Tehran*
Mahdavi, Pardis, *Passionate Uprisings: Iran's Sexual Revolution*
Majd, Hooman, *The Ayatollah’s Democracy: An Iranian Challenge*
Maslin, Jamie, *Iranian Rappers and Persian Porn: A Hitchhiker’s Adventures in the New Iran*
Mirsapassi, Ali, *Democracy in Modern Iran: Islam, Culture, and Political Change*
Sequence of Classes

Jan. 20: Introduction; Persia in World History; European Interventions; Constitutional Revolution; Fall of the Qajar Dynasty; Discovery of Oil

Jan. 27: Rise of Reza Shah; Radical Social Reforms; First Conflicts Over Oil; Occupation During World War II; Fall of Reza
Reading: Ghazvinian, pp. 3-140; Keddie, pp. 1-104

Feb. 3: Flowering of Democracy; Rise of Mossadegh; Oil Nationalization; Coup of 1953
Reading: Abrahamian, pp. 1-226; Ghazvinian, pp. 141-206; Keddie, pp. 105-131
GUEST: Ervand Abrahamian

Feb. 10: Rule of Mohammad Reza Shah; Iran as America's Cold War Ally

Feb. 17: Literature in Mid-Century Iran: Daneshvar, Hedayat, and Farrokhzad
Reading: The Blind Owl or Savushun or Farrokhzad’s poetry
DUE: Paper and oral report on one of these works

Feb. 24: Revolution; Mohammad Reza Shah Flees; Khomeini Returns; Religious Power Is Consolidated; Hostage Crisis; Emergence of the Islamic Republic
Reading: Axworthy, pp. 133-186; Ghazvinian, pp. 309-341; Kapuscinski, pp. 1-160; Keddie, pp. 170-239
DUE: Paper on causes of the Iranian revolution

March 3: War With Iraq; Militancy and Isolation; Reform Promises Under Khatami; Rise of Ahmadinejad; Polarization and the Confrontation of 2009 (Green Movement); Election of Rohani
Reading: Axworthy, pp. 187-423; Ghazvinian, pp. 347-450
GUEST: John Ghazvinian
DUE: Proposal for research paper

March 10: Women in Iran
Reading: One book from above list
Viewing: “A Separation”
DUE: Book report (oral and written)

March 17: The US and Iran: Decades of Hostility; Effect of Sanctions; Growth of the Revolutionary Guard; Nuclear Deal of 2015; US Withdrawal From the Deal; Washington Intensifies Anti-Iran Campaign
Reading: Bajoghli (pp. 1-120); Ghazvinian, pp. 451-534
GUEST: Narges Bajoghli
DUE: First draft of research paper
March 24: **Reports on Individual Reading**
Reading: One book from the “Optional Reading” list above, or another with the instructor’s permission
DUE: Book report (oral and written)

March 31: **Iran’s Role in Today’s Middle East; Future Prospects; Options Facing the United States; 2021 Presidential Election in Iran**
Reading: Ghazvinian, pp. 535-545; Iran packet (posted)
Viewing: “Zero Hour”
GUEST: Hussein Mousavian, former Iranian nuclear negotiator and ambassador to Germany

April 7: **Presentation of Research Papers**
DUE: Oral report on research findings