

Iran and the Islamic Revolution

International Relations 1802Q

Brown University

Fall 2018

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Class Meeting: Wednesdays 3-5:30, Watson Institute 112

Course Description

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 knowing 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 over the last 39 years. 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 upheaval that followed the 2009 election, the election of a reformist president in 2013, 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 launches a multi-faceted global campaign against Iran. Given the urgency of this escalating crisis, we will devote a portion of every class to discussion of the past week's events. We will try to follow the crisis 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 America's view of the world. For decades it has been portrayed as one of the most potent enemies the US 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 reaching a critical point.

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 how literature and other creative arts are used as vital cultural tools in Iran;
- recognize the forces that set off the revolution of 1978-9;
- analyze the long course of hostility between the US and Iran;
- assess the 2015 nuclear deal and the American withdrawal in 2018;
- make informed judgments about Iran's future and its role in the Middle East and wider world;
- and
- interpret the current US-Iran confrontation.

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 September 26; 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 October 10. The third, an analysis of a book on the theme of women in Iran, is due October 31.

Our class on November 14 will be devoted to each student's 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 in the style prescribed in the Chicago Manual of Style. Students will be expected to present oral summaries of their research at our October 24 class. The paper is due at our last meeting, on December 12.

Two preliminary steps are required in preparation of the research paper. On Oct. 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 Oct. 24. These drafts will be returned with comments at the next class.

On December 5, students will present their recommendations for how Iran should deal with the American campaign it now faces. Written recommendations will be for your own use in class discussion. A former Iranian diplomat, Seyed Hossein Mousavian, who remains in close touch with the government in Tehran, will react to what we propose.

As this is a seminar, there will be considerable classroom discussion. Students are expected to **participate actively**. This will include making **oral presentations** on September 26, about a work of Iranian literature; October 10, to discuss the causes of the Islamic Revolution; October 24, to present the topic of your final research paper; October 31, to discuss the role of women in Iran; November 14, about a book from the “Optional Reading” list or another book with the instructor's permission; December 5, to discuss options for Iran with Ambassador Mousavian; and Dec. 12, 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 thedailybeast.com/author/iranwire, iranian.com, and niacouncil.org.

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.

Over 14 weeks, students will spend 3 hours per week in class (42 hours total). Required reading for the seminar meetings is expected to take up approximately 7 hours per week (98 hours total). Preparation of in-class presentations and accompanying written reports should require a total of about 35 hours. The final paper should require about 25 hours of research and writing.

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*](mailto:SEAS@brown.edu).

Required Books -- Estimated total cost: \$210

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

A History of Iran: Empire of the Mind, by Michael Axworthy

A History of Modern Iran, by Ervand Abrahamian

From Ancient Persia to Modern Iran, by Reza Ladjevardian (folder)

The Lonely War: One Woman's Account of the Struggle for Modern Iran, by Nazila Fathi

The Ministry of Guidance Invites You to Not Stay: An American Family in Iran, by Hooman Majd

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

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

Losing an Enemy: Obama, Iran, and the Triumph of Diplomacy, by Trita Parsi

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

Amanat, Abbas, *Iran: A Modern History*

Ansari, Ali, *Modern Iran Since 1797: Reform and Revolution*

Azimi, Fakhreddin, *The Quest for Democracy in Iran: A Century of Struggle Against Authoritarian Rule*

Lorents, John H., *Historical Dictionary of Iran*

Mackey, Sandra, *The Iranians: Persia, Islam, and the Soul of a Nation*

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 Mossadegh 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.*

Roshandel, Jalil, and N. C. Lean, *Iran, Israel, and the United States: Regime Security vs. Political Legitimacy*

Takeyh, Ray, *Guardians of the Revolution: Iran and the World in the Age of the Ayatollahs*

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

Bright, James G., et. al. *Becoming Enemies: U.S.-Iran Relations and the Iran-Iraq War 1979-1988*

Buchan, James, *Days of God: The Revolution in Iran and Its Consequences*

Hiro, Dilip, *The Longest War: The Iran-Iraq Military Conflict*

Murray, Williamson, and Kevin M. Woods, *The Iran-Iraq War: A Military and Strategic History*

Ottolengh, Emanuele, *The Pasdaran: Inside Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps*

Pierre Razoux and Nicholas Elliott, *The Iran-Iraq War*

Taheri, Amir, *The Spirit of Allah: Khomeini and the Islamic Revolution*
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*
Hashemi, 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*
Bill, James A., *The Eagle and the Lion: The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations*
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*
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*
Lewis, Franklin, and Farzin Yazdanfar (eds.), *In a Voice of Their Own: A Collection of Stories by Iranian Women Written Since the Revolution of 1979*
Nafisi, Azar, *Reading Lolita in Tehran*
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*
Homayounpour, 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*
Mirsepassi, Ali, *Democracy in Modern Iran: Islam, Culture, and Political Change*
Sayres, Meghan Nuttall (ed), *Love and Pomegranates: Artists and Wayfarers in Iran*

Sequence of Classes

Sept. 5: **Introduction; Persia in World History; European Interventions; Constitutional Revolution; Fall of the Qajar Dynasty; Discovery of Oil**

Reading: Axworthy (*History*), pp. 1-220; Ladjevardian (folder)

Sept. 12: **Rise of Reza Shah; Radical Social Reforms; Occupation During World War II; Fall of Reza**

Reading: Abrahamian (*History*), pp. 1-122; Keddie, pp. 1-104

Sept. 19: **Flowering of Democracy; Rise of Mossadegh; Oil Nationalization; Coup of 1953**

Reading: Abrahamian (*The Coup*) pp. 1-226; Keddie, pp. 105-131

GUEST: Ervand Abrahamian

Sept. 26: **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

Oct. 3: **Reign of Mohammad Reza Shah; Iran as America's Cold War Ally**

Reading: Abrahamian (*History*), pp. 123-154; Axworthy (*Revolutionary*), pp. 15-132; Keddie, pp. 132-169; James A. Bill, "Iran, America, and the Triumph of Repression, 1971-1977" (posted)

DUE: Proposal for research paper

Oct. 10: **Revolution; Mohammad Reza Shah Flees; Khomeini Returns; Religious Power Is Consolidated; Hostage Crisis**

Reading: Abrahamian (*History*), pp. 155-195; Axworthy (*Revolutionary*), pp. 133-186;

Kapuscinski, pp. 1-160; Keddie, pp. 170-239

DUE: Paper on causes of the Iranian revolution

Oct 17: **Emergence of the Islamic Republic; War With Iraq; Militancy and Isolation**

Reading: Axworthy (*Revolutionary*), pp. 187-323; Fathi, pp. 13-152

GUEST: Nazila Fathi

Oct. 24: Reform Promises Under Khatami; Rise of Ahmadinejad; Polarization and the Confrontation of 2009 (Green Movement); Election of Rohani

Reading: Axworthy (*Revolutionary*), pp. 324-423; Majd, pp. 1-252

DUE: First draft of research paper

GUEST: Hooman Majd

Oct. 31: Women in Iran

Reading: One book from above list; Fathi, pp. 153-268

Viewing: "A Separation"

DUE: Book report (oral and written)

Nov. 7: The US and Iran: Decades of Hostility; Effect of Sanctions; Nuclear Deal of 2015; US Withdrawal From the Deal; Washington Intensifies Anti-Iran Campaign

Reading: Erlich, pp. 1-211; Parsi, pp. 3-87

GUEST: Reese Erlich

Nov. 14: 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)

Nov. 28: Iran's Role in Today's World; Future Prospects

Reading: Parsi, pp. 88-380

Viewing: "Zero Days"

GUEST: Trita Parsi, president, National Iranian American Council

Dec. 5: Iran's Options In the Face of New American Pressure

Students will present their views on how Iran should respond to the campaign of American pressure that was launched in mid-2018. A former Iranian diplomat will assess our suggestions.

GUEST: Hussein Mousavian, former Iranian nuclear negotiator and ambassador to Germany

Dec. 12: Presentation of Research Papers

DUE: Oral report on research findings