

Course Syllabus

A6797 Spring 2019

300 Buell N Wednesdays 11am-1pm

Mapping Maritime Frontiers in the Eastern Mediterranean

Nora Akawi, Naor Ben-Yehoyada

Course Narrative:

In May 2010, the ships of the Gaza Freedom Flotilla carrying humanitarian aid, medical supplies, and construction materials with the aim of challenging Israel's blockade of the Gaza Strip, were intercepted in international waters between the Palestine/Israel coast and Cyprus. The Israeli Navy's violent seizure of one of the ships brought renewed international attention to the Palestinian struggle for liberation and self-determination, and raised the condemnation of Israel's continued colonial project to a new level. The Israeli settler-colonial project and Palestinian resistance are primarily understood as territorial, with their respective imaginaries pertaining to the land. Momentarily, the flotilla and its military raid shifted the focus towards the sea, and presented a reminder that the struggle, not only in the Gaza Strip, but along the coast of historic Palestine, is as littoral as it is territorial.

In this seminar, through reading, writing, and mapping, participants embark on a journey through the maritime aspects of geopolitical constructs in Israel/Palestine, particularly focusing on trade, militarization, and resource extraction, but also on collective environmental and political and cultural narratives and imaginaries involving the sea.

In a recent address at the United Nations, Temple University professor of media studies Marc Lamont Hill called for a free Palestine "from the river to the sea". The subsequent public fury and the termination of his contract with CNN is yet another indication of the centrality of maritime frontiers, both material and immaterial, not only in the ways they restrict movement and livelihood, but also as they forge boundaries for both speech and imagination. A reading of Israel/Palestine's sea and shore offers an insight into such constructed frontiers, as well as alternative transnational frames (Mediterranean, Levantine, or Pan-Arab) with the different ways in which they reconfigure the story and the territory. Such a perspective also stages the contemporary Israeli colonial project within a continuum of multiple maritime imperialisms, from Mussolini's *mare nostrum*, through France's "the Mediterranean as the French Sea," to the various British forces and their corresponding geopolitical projects in the region.

This cross-listed class will bring together graduate students from the two departments of GSAS and GSAPP to study, discuss, and visualize both historical and contemporary aspects of the Mediterranean coast of Israel/Palestine. Students would be encouraged to approach questions of spatiality as it overflows the frameworks of territory and nation-states into maritime constellations, and to reconfigure geopolitical representations considering both the movement and suspension of histories, bodies, produce, resources, and imaginaries of the sea.

*Registration for this class is limited. Please send your CV, letter of interest, and relevant work samples (mapping and drawing work, or written samples) by **Friday January 25th** to nhb2115@columbia.edu and na2366@columbia.edu.*

On Mapping Borderlands:

Mapping Maritime Frontiers in the Eastern Mediterranean is part of a series of seminars and project Mapping Borderlands initiated by Nora Akawi and Nina Kolowratnik in 2014. The seminar takes as a starting point and problematizes the understanding of territoriality as it is still heavily rooted in our imagination of the world as divided into compartmentalized, distinct, and mutually exclusive political formations. It aims to visualize movement and its suspension, both regular and irregular, recognized and unrecognized, as the central elements that define contemporary territories and geopolitical terrains. In Spring 2019, the seminar expands on the political constructs in geographies beyond the terrain or the land, and considers the waters and the coast as spaces not of void and absence, but of memory, of history, and politicized architectural interventions.

The project follows Ananya Roy's call in *The 21st Century Metropolis* to "blast open theoretical geographies", particularly paying attention to Arjun Appadurai's proposal to shift the emphasis from 'trait geographies' to 'process geographies': "in other words, on the forms of movement, encounter, and exchange that confound the idea of bounded world-regions with immutable traits" and potentially forge new geographies of urban theory. The hope is that through critical analysis and representation (drawing, mapping, and other visualizations), not of static conditions, but rather of processes both of building and dismantling borders, other imaginaries for shared terrains can emerge.

Course Structure:

The seminar is organized in two sections: the first dedicated to readings, discussions, and experimentation with visualizing maritime histories and spatiality, and the second is dedicated to development of the final projects of the semester on the topics of interest.

During the first half of the semester, students engage with texts (historical / theoretical, literary, as well as report documents) as well as visual materials (films, maps, and other representations) addressing the histories of colonialism, resistance, trade, and culture in the Eastern Mediterranean, specifically along the coast of Israel/Palestine.

The weeks dedicated to reading, mapping, and discussion are organized according to the following thematic structure:

- Pre-1948 maritime history of the Eastern Mediterranean
- Imaginaries, past and future, of the sea
- Trade and infrastructure
- Militarization and the construction of physical and non-physical maritime frontiers
- Capitalization of the waters through drilling and the extraction of resources

Each week, based on areas interests and expertise, students working in groups of two would be responsible for leading the discussion through the presentation of a brief response text to the readings, and the visualization/mapping of key issues raised.

After the sixth week, students have the option of either working in newly formed pairs or remain in the same group. With the guidance of the instructors through desk crits and written feedback, students will develop research projects related to the topics of their interest and addressed in the previous weeks. Three presentations with guest critics and experts will be organized throughout the second half of the semester. Successful final projects are expected to include a rigorous phase of research and mapping/drawing experimentation, and the final formats include final presentation and a hard copy of an essay (~2500 words) and visual materials. Hard copies of final projects are due on May 10.

Course schedule:

Scroll down for full schedule and reading list

Week #01 - January 2 Introduction

Week #02 - January 30 *A Short Maritime pre-1948 History of the Eastern Mediterranean*

Week #03 - February 6 *Offshore and Onshore Imaginaries of the Sea*

Week #04 - February 12 *Arteries in a Liquid Body Politic: Trade & Infrastructure*

Week #05 - February 19 *Militarizing the Waters*

Week #06 - February 26 *Underwater Futures: Extraction, Drilling, Resources*

Week #07 - March 6 Teams formed + Prospectus due

Week #08 - March 13 Midterms presentations with guest critics

Week #09 - March 20 Spring Break

Week #10 - March 27 Synthesizing research findings and learnings

Week #11 - April 3 Desk crits

Week #12 - April 10 Desk crits with guest critics

Week #13 - April 17 Pre-final presentation
Week #14 - April 24 Desk crit by appointment

Final review date TBD (between May 3 and 10).
Final Submission of projects due on May 10.

Week #01 - January 23

Introduction

- Wigen, Kären. 2006. "Introduction: Oceans of History." *The American Historical Review* 111 (3): 717–21. <https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr.111.3.717> (Links to an external site.).
- Horden, Peregrine, and Nicholas Purcell. 2006. "The Mediterranean and 'the New Thalassology.'" *The American Historical Review* 111 (3): 722–40. <https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr.111.3.722> (Links to an external site.).

Recommended:

- Horden, P. & N. Purcell, "Introduction" and "Part One 'Frogs round a Pond': Ideas of the Mediterranean" in *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Oxford, 2000): 1-48.
- Algazi, G. "Diversity Rules: Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell's *The Corrupting Sea*," *MHR*, 20, 2 (2005): 227-245.
- Subramanyam, S. "Notes on Circulation and Asymmetry in Two Mediterraneans, c.1400-1800," in Claude Guillot, Denys Lombard & Roderich Ptak (eds.), *From the Mediterranean to the China Sea: Miscellaneous Notes* (Wiesbaden, 1998): 21-43.
- Abulafia, David. "Mediterraneans" in William V. Harris (ed.), *Rethinking the Mediterranean* (Oxford, 2005): 64-93.
- Bayly, C.A. and L. Fawaz, "Introduction: The Connected World of Empires," in *Modernity & Culture: From the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean* (New York, 2002): 1-27.
- Burke III, E. "Toward a Comparative History of the Modern Mediterranean, 1750-1919," *Journal of World History*, 23, 4 (2012): 907-939.

Week #02 - January 30

A Short Maritime pre-1948 History of the Eastern Mediterranean

- Borutta, Manuel, and Sakis Gekas. 2012. "A Colonial Sea: The Mediterranean, 1798–1956." *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d'histoire* 19 (1): 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13507486.2012.643609> (Links to an external site.).
- Tabak, Faruk. 2009. "Imperial Rivalry and Port-Cities: A View from Above." *Mediterranean Historical Review* 24 (2): 79–94. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518960903487933> (Links to an external site.).

Recommended:

- Hanley, W. "Papers for Going, Papers for Staying: Identification and Subject Formation in the Eastern Mediterranean," in L. Kozmat, A. Wishnitzer, & C. Schayegh (eds.), *A Global Middle East: Mobility, Materiality and Culture in the Modern Age, 1880-1940* (London, 2014): 177-200.
- Khuri-Makdisi, Ilham. 2010. *The Eastern Mediterranean and the Making of Global Radicalism, 1860-1914*. California World History Library; 13. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Schayegh, Cyrus. 2011. "The Many Worlds of ṢAbud Yasin; or, What Narcotics Trafficking in the Interwar Middle East Can Tell Us about Territorialization." *The American Historical Review* 116 (2): 273–306.
- International Journal of Middle East Studies Volume 48 (Issue 04, November 2016): 743–66, [Roundtable: View from the Seas: The Middle East and North Africa Unbounded \(Links to an external site.\)](#).
- Issawi, Charles Philip. n.d. *An Economic History of the Middle East and North Africa*. Columbia University Press. <https://www.fulcrum.org/concern/monographs/hd76s013x> (Links to an external site.)

Week #03 - February 6

Offshore and Onshore Imaginaries of the Sea

- Green, Nile. 2013. "Maritime Worlds and Global History: Comparing the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean through Barcelona and Bombay." *History Compass* 11 (7): 513–23. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hic3.12057> (Links to an external site.)
- Tamārī, Salīm. 2009. *Mountain against the Sea: Essays on Palestinian Society and Culture*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press (excerpts)
- Hever, Hannan. 2012. "The Zionist Sea: Symbolism and Nationalism in Modernist Hebrew Poetry." *Jewish Culture and History* 13 (1): 25–41. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1462169X.2012.712884> (Links to an external site.)
- Nocke, Alexandra. 2012. "Modern Israeli Identity and the Mediterranean Cultural Theme: An Exploration into the Visual Representations of Tel Aviv and the Sea**." *Jewish Culture and History* 13 (1): 68–86. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1462169X.2012.726515> (Links to an external site.)

Recommended:

- Bromberger, Christian. 2006. "Towards an Anthropology of the Mediterranean." *History and Anthropology* 17 (2): 91–107. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02757200600624339> (Links to an external site.)
- Nocke, Alexandra. 2009. *The Place of the Mediterranean in Modern Israeli Identity*. BRILL.

- Seikaly, May. 1995. *Haifa: Transformation of a Palestinian Arab Society 1918-1939*. London; I.B. Tauris.

*Monday, February 11, 6pm Laleh Khalili lecture--*Tankers, Tycoons, and the Making of Modern Regimes of Law, Labour, and Finance**

Week #04 - February 13

Arteries in a Liquid Body Politic: Trade & Infrastructure

- Larkin, Brian. 2013. Politics and Poetics of Infrastructure. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 42: 327-443.
- Chua, Charmaine, Martin Danyluk, Deborah Cowen, and Laleh Khalili. 2018. "Introduction: Turbulent Circulation: Building a Critical Engagement with Logistics." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 36 (4): 617–29. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263775818783101> (Links to an external site.)
- Campling, Liam, and Alejandro Colás. 2018. "Capitalism and the Sea: Sovereignty, Territory and Appropriation in the Global Ocean." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 36 (4): 776–94. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263775817737319> (Links to an external site.)
- Pelham, Nicolas. 2012. "Gaza's Tunnel Phenomenon: The Unintended Dynamics of Israel's Siege." *Journal of Palestine Studies* 41 (4): 6–31. <https://doi.org/10.1525/jps.2012.XLI.4.6> (Links to an external site.)

Recommended:

- Chalfin, Brenda. 2010. *Neoliberal Frontiers: An Ethnography of Sovereignty in West Africa*. Chicago Studies in Practices of Meaning. Chicago; The University of Chicago Press.
- Jasanoff, Maya. 2014. "A Passage from Hong Kong." *The New York Review of Books* 61 (6). <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2014/04/03/passage-hong-kong/> (Links to an external site.)
- Martin, Craig. 2013. "Shipping Container Mobilities, Seamless Compatibility, and the Global Surface of Logistical Integration". *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 45 (5): 1021–36. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1068/a45171> (Links to an external site.)

Week #05 - February 19

Militarizing the Waters

- Khalili, Laleh. 2018. "The Infrastructural Power of the Military: The Geoeconomic Role of the US Army Corps of Engineers in the Arabian Peninsula." *European Journal of International Relations* 24 (4): 911–33. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066117742955> (Links to an external site.)

- Cowen, Deborah. (2009) “Containing Insecurity: US Port Cities and the ‘War on Terror.’” In Graham, Steve (ed.) *Disrupted Cities: When Infrastructure Fails*. New York and London: Routledge: 69-84.
- Ridolfi, Giovanni. 1997. “Geostrategy and Naval Power in the Mediterranean: Changing Scenarios, Continuing Conflict.” *Marine Policy*, Geostrategy, naval power and naval port systems, 21 (4): 377–90. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0308-597X\(97\)00022-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0308-597X(97)00022-5) (Links to an external site.).
- Pezzani, Lorenzo, and Charles Heller. 2016. “Death by Rescue.” <https://deathbyrescue.org> (Links to an external site.).

Week #06 - February 26

Underwater Futures: Extraction, Drilling, Resources

**declaring pairs due*

- Mitchell, Timothy. 2009. “Carbon Democracy.” *Economy and Society* 38 (3): 399–432. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03085140903020598> (Links to an external site.).
- Appel, Hannah. 2012. “Offshore Work: Oil, Modularity, and the How of Capitalism in Equatorial Guinea.” *American Ethnologist* 39 (4): 692–709. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1425.2012.01389.x> (Links to an external site.).
- Antreasyan, Anais. 2013. “Gas Finds in the Eastern Mediterranean.” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 42 (3): 29–47. <https://doi.org/10.1525/jps.2013.42.3.29> (Links to an external site.).

Week #07 - March 6

**Teams formed + Prospectus presentations*

Week #08 - March 13

**Midterms presentations with guest critics; submit work plan of immersion in the materials for the project and develop drawings during Spring Break*

Week #09 - March 20

**Spring Break: immersion in the materials for the project and development of text and visualizations*

Week #10 - March 27

**Synthesizing research findings and learnings*

Week #11 - April 3

**Desk crits*

Week #12 - April 10

**Desk crits with guest critics*

Week #13 - April 17

**Pre-final presentation*

[April 23: Last day of classes]

Week #14 - April 24

**Desk crit by appointment*

Final review date TBD (between May 3 and 10).