

Ph. D. Preliminary Examination  
Field: The Modern Middle East  
Prepared by Kenneth M. Cuno  
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Answer one of the questions in each of the three sections below.

I. Islam, nationalism, and politics.

1. In *A History of the Arab Peoples*, Albert suggests that the recent Islamic revival is at root a manifestation of nationalism. Is that interpretation valid for the entire modern period?
2. Discuss and explain how local national identities, such as Palestinian and Egyptian identity, have come to coexist with an Arab national identity. Or, how did it come to be that someone is able to identify as an Egyptian or Palestinian, and as an Arab, at the same time.
3. Jamal al-Din al-Afghani has been claimed as a precursor by Islamic reformers and activists as well as by secular nationalists. Is either of these claims plausible and if so, how?

II. Social & Economic/Women & Gender.

1. The first "modern" reforms in the Middle East focused on the military; two centuries later the military remain an important factor in politics and society. In light of this, discuss the changing nature and role of the military since ca. 1800 in relation to broader political and social changes (excluding Israel).
2. Some critics of the revival of *hijab* (veiling) since the 1960s argue that it is anti-modern, and amounts to a retreat to the practices and mindset of the late nineteenth century. Assess the validity of that argument.
3. The social and economic history of the modern Middle East tends to be framed in terms of a series of "responses" to the "impact of the West." How valid is that, and are there possible alternative ways of looking at that history?

III. Arab-Israeli conflict.

1. Discuss and assess the role of the Arab states in the Palestinian-Zionist/Israeli conflict from the beginning of their involvement in it to Oslo.
2. In spite of Arab opposition from the beginning, the Zionist movement succeeded in establishing a state some fifty years after the first World Zionist Congress. What explains this success?
3. Is Zionism "a form of racism"?

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Answer one of the questions in each of the three sections below.

I. Islam, nationalism and politics.

1. Discuss and compare Turkish, Arab, and Egyptian nationalism in terms of their origin and development, and their conceptualization of the national identity.
2. Assess the validity of Albert Hourani's concept of "the politics of the notables" for understanding the modern history of the Arab countries. Refer to at least two countries as illustrative.
3. How has Islam influenced politics in the modern Middle East?

II. Social & Economic/Women & Gender

1. Discuss and assess the main approaches and interpretations developed to date in the historiography of women/gender in the Middle East.
2. Discuss and assess the stimulus-response model in the socio-economic history of this region, and suggest alternatives.
3. Discuss the relationship of the national movement with both the women's movement and the labor movement in modern Egypt, and assess the consequences of those relationships.

III. Arab-Israeli conflict

1. Discuss and assess the role of the major world Powers in the Arab-Zionist/Israeli conflict, 1897-1997.
2. What is new about the "new" Israeli history?
3. Critically assess the main arguments employed by Zionists and Palestinian Arab nationalists in their claims for national rights in Eretz Israel/Palestine.