

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

I. Islam, nationalism and politics.

1. Discuss and assess the main approaches and interpretations developed to date in the historiography of nationalism in the Arab Middle East.
2. Sketch the history of the phenomenon variously called Islamism, "Islamic revivalism," "political Islam," and so on, assess whether (or the extent to which) it has been an anachronistic (anti-modern) and unified movement, and make a case for the best label or name to apply to it.
3. In P.M. Holt's mainly political history of the modern Middle East he refers to the period extending from the end of the First World War into the 1950s as "the years of the notables." Explain that reference and discuss whether or not you think it is appropriate for the whole Middle East in that era.

II. Social & Economic/Women & Gender

1. The Tanzimat reforms of the nineteenth century are regarded as a key factor in promoting social change, even though some reforms were initiated in the eighteenth century. What makes the Tanzimat so significant?
2. Are women in the Islamic Middle East better off now than they were two hundred years ago? Discuss the different approaches and interpretations developed so far by historians of women/gender with regard to the above question.
3. Discuss and compare the relationship between the women's rights movement, nationalism, and the state in Egypt and one other state in the Middle East (excluding Israel).
4. Pick one of the following groups and sketch the main outlines of their history during the past two hundred years. Specifically, how did their status and role change, and why: peasants, ulama, the military, artisans & workers.

III. Arab-Israeli conflict

1. Sketch and assess the role of Britain and the U.S. in the Arab-Zionist/Israeli conflict, since 1918 to Oslo. Specifically, how have these two powers understood their interests and pursued them, and how has that influenced the conflict?
2. Discuss the significance of the "new historians" in Israel in reference to the historiography of Israel and the Arab-Israeli conflict.
3. Sketch the main outlines of a history of the Palestinians during the past two hundred years.