

## Statement of Rationale for Thinking Historically for HIS 181

I have meant to submit this course for THGE credit for years, but kept being busy and missing the window to submit before I would offer it again and so then waited and then missed the window again and so on. Nevertheless, this course does and will continue to engage intensively with the three SLOs for the GE thinking historically. HIS 181 is structured similarly to HIS 182 which received THGE credit in Fall 2014.

### **THGE Certification Criteria**

Students will be able to

1. Read primary sources historically – asking and answering basic questions about historical sources (historical context, author, audience, genre); drawing historical conclusions from the sources and assessing their reliability and usefulness; and reflecting on how their own background shapes their interpretation;
2. Identify the arguments of secondary sources and recognize differences in interpretation.
3. Articulate responsibly how the past is relevant for the present, drawing informed connections between their study of past events and their bearing on the present.

*SLO: Students will be able to analyze historical sources with appropriate attention to their various contexts.*

This course is a history of the Modern Middle East. Taking the above in reverse order:

3. the entire course is infused with how the current Middle East has emerged from its recent past, in particular the history of European colonialism, the neo-Imperialism of the Cold War, and the emergence of military dictatorships and Islamist politics as a result. Students' whether they know it or not are deeply invested in the current Middle East through their tax dollars and their church Holy Land trips. The course gives students information and tools to more thoughtfully and Christianly carry their identity as Christians and as American citizens (very rarely is there a student who is neither).
2. The core text of the class is *Justice Interrupted* by Elizabeth Thompson. While we use it as a textbook it is not a typical textbook. The author is very much putting forward a narrative that reflects the common perspective of those living in the Middle East about their own history and place in the world. Students are asked to engage this perspective as helpful, but not absolute. In addition, students read two graphic novels and write essay responses to both that engage with the perspective of the authors as well as the advantages and disadvantages of the graphic novel as a medium for historical narrative.
1. The heart of a THGE course is reading primary sources in context. Students read selected primary sources throughout the semester in conjunction with chapters from *Justice Interrupted*. Homework questions ask them to compare the interpretation of the secondary text with the content of the primary source. Class discussion analyzes the particularities of the primary source in its historical context: whether that be a UN resolution related to the

Israeli-Palestinian Conflict or the manifesto of Sayyid Qutb, the “father” of modern jihadi movements.

In addition, over a month of the course is a role play game, “Egypt’s Liberal Experiment,” set in 1920s Egypt. Role Play Games are designed to encourage students to inhabit a particular historical milieu and work to achieve personal and factional goals by appealing to historical events and “thought worlds” bound to that context. Students learn that having an opinion or narrative is not enough, in order to persuade others; they need to compete to present the most convincing interpretation of the available evidence and context. Students thus experience first-hand the power and the limitations of historical interpretation. By being assigned a particular historical character students are also called upon to consider the distance between themselves and those in different time periods and circumstances.

A major rationale of Role Play Games is that the “game” motivates students to dig deeply into primary sources to find the needed support for their character’s positions and objectives. The game as a whole consists of approximately 15 central primary sources students must use as well as supplementary primary sources tied to their particular character.