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SEM: Expertise in the Middle East

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Although the experts disagree about how to define the Middle East, they can all agree that we need experts in it. This seminar explores the history of Middle East expertise in three interrelated facets. First, what was the status and work of scholars in Middle East societies before that status became defined in the terms of European colonizers and imperialists? Second, how and why did the Middle East serve as such fertile ground for the development of modern expertise in domains as diverse as law, medicine, engineering, and diplomacy? Third, what is the history of Middle East studies, and how is the field related to these other facets of expertise? We will read from the growing secondary literature on each of these facets. In addition, seminar members will write a **research paper** on a topic of their choosing, but drawing primarily on the vast and underexploited historic archives of Middle East-related scholarly publishing between the mid nineteenth century and the 1970s.