

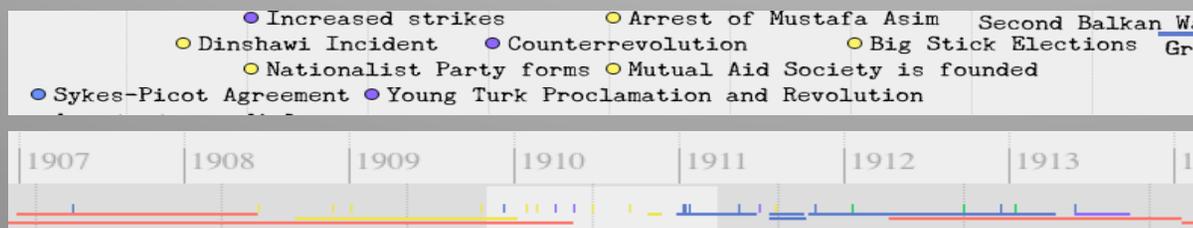
Dynamic Map and Timeline: History of the Modern Middle East (1798 – Present)

When I first began preparing this course, I decided that I wanted to find a balance between two methods of teaching historical change: chronology and thematics. The challenge of this latter approach is the flip side of its benefit. It provides an opportunity to build a depth of knowledge about a particular cause or effect of historical change, which can then be brought into conversation with other causes and effects of change, but it can be disorienting for students because it occasionally requires moving back and forth in time. The map and timeline project provides students with an opportunity to draw on thematic study to produce a rich or “thick” account of historical change in the region. It also provides an opportunity to create a visual image of change over time, particularly regarding political boundaries.

There are two components to the project: a map and a timeline. Over the course of the semester students identify events and moments they deem to be particularly significant, creating entries that provide basic information and comments about significance. The image below draws from a student project to show what a populated timeline looks like. The image to the right shows how the events appear on the map.



The maps and the timelines are linked, so that when a student creates an entry it appears as a pin on the map (as in the image to the left). Students can also draw shapes on the map to illustrate geographic areas tied to a particular entry. As a viewer scrolls through the timeline, the events and shapes populating the map change, creating a visual record of historical change in the Middle East.



Thanks to Mike Conner and the CTS staff for making this project possible. Thanks, too, to the students who have helped me to continue to refine the project with their hard work and dedication to the course. – Caleb Elfenbein