

2021 CFE Faculty Showcase on Teaching

Perusall

- The Problems:
  - They aren't reading
  - They aren't engaging with the big issues in the reading
  - I don't know what they are missing
  - These all become more important as the class becomes more interactive
- Solutions:
  - They do triage every day, so create a deliverable
  - Make the deliverable something that engages the big ideas (and maybe the process of being a historian)
- Previous efforts:
  - Quizzes
  - One page summaries
  - Gopen

# Syllabus introduction to <https://perusall.com/>

- **Perusall** is a computer-based reading app that creates a social learning environment. We're hoping to create a learning community despite the physical distance required by the pandemic, and this is one way to do it. It is also a way to keep you anchored in the course, to stay on track with your reading, and to gain insights from the community in this course. To get started, go to <https://support.perusall.com/hc/en-us/articles/360033995074-Getting-started> If you aren't sure about how to annotate historical sources, [this short video](#) might be very helpful. Although it focuses only on primary sources, the general reminders will be helpful for secondary sources as well.

# Comparing with Previous Information

The screenshot displays a web browser window with an article on the left and a chat interface on the right. The article discusses the historical practice of establishing control over the religious landscape by conquering key religious sites. The chat interface shows a conversation with a user named Sarah Shields, discussing the article's content and providing additional context.

**Article Text:**

**E**stablishing control over the religiouscape was standard practice for most empires and kingdoms throughout history. "When you take over new territory, one of the things you want to do to establish your rule, especially if you're coming from a religious tradition different from the conquered territory, is take over the key religious sites. You have a few options: You can obliterate them, you can appropriate them, or you can convert them," Tanyeri-Erdemir explains.

When the Ottomans conquered a new city, one of their first acts was to convert the most prominent church into a mosque, often giving it the name fatih or fethiye, pertaining to conquest. They changed very little of the church's structure, in order to make its former self clear, thereby showing the triumph of Islam over Christianity.

All kinds of territorial empires and kingdoms converted religious buildings, from the Inca to European colonial powers. Aside from Hagia Sophia, another of the most famous examples is the Mosque-Cathedral of Córdoba, built by the Moors as a mosque on the site of a former Roman temple and then a Visigoth church shared with Muslims. The mosque was converted into a church in 1236 by King Ferdinand III, but, in the same spirit as the Ottomans, the Spanish added to the building without destroying its Islamic features.

When the Ottomans conquered Belgrade in 1521, they destroyed or converted every church in the city. When the Hungarians took the city in 1688, they did the exact same thing to the mosques. The same process happened several more times as the city was taken in turn by the Austrians, Ottomans, and Serbians. Today only a single small mosque remains.

Some religious buildings have gone through several denominations of conversion. The Korkut, or Kesik Minare (Broken Minaret) mosque in Antalya, Turkey, went from being a Roman temple in the 2nd century to a Byzantine church in the 7th century, a Seljuk mosque in the 13th century, a Crusader church later that century, and finally an Ottoman mosque in the 16th century before burning down in 1800.

In his ground-breaking book, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (1985), American historian and geographer David Lowenthal asserted that the concept of cultural heritage has more to do with the present than the past, which is idealized and mythologized in order to serve an ideological purpose. Every nation-state manufactures these founding myths in an effort to derive legitimacy and to create a collective national memory, but as Turkish historian Edhem Eldem has written, "There are few countries where the issue of cultural heritage has been as constantly and systematically influenced by political concerns as in Turkey."

In the republican period before Erdogan, fantastical official narratives twisted history to mythologize a largely manufactured Turkish "race" and erase minority cultures and religions. Erdogan's vision is a glorification of

**Chat Interface:**

**Current conversation**

**1 ?** Which empires chose which path, and how did that choice affect the length of their reign? I would assume that having a more relaxed take on religion would allow you to preside over foreign subjects more easily and make the transition easier. However, I'm sure that's not always the case

Jan 23 4:10 pm

**?** I'd like to learn more as well. The issue with remaining relaxed is that it allows to populace to retain important aspects of their identity. If the ruling government ever becomes weak, the citizens of conquered territories can look back upon their existing heritage and find motivation to seek independence. If the rulers obliterate religious sites, they suffer backlash in the short-term but will have an easier time of assimilating the populace in the next generation or two. Appropriation seems to be the best balance, but it requires the ruling parties themselves to alter their beliefs, something that is easier said than done.

Jan 24 9:13 pm

**?** Lax takes on religion fostered trade in states that allowed it in Middle Ages Europe (as far as my memory goes.) Of course, the expelling of the Jewish population in 1290 and the Inquisition are good examples of Western intolerance over religion. In the Muslim states, however, during the Middle ages, there was a wider acceptance for outside religions. As a Jewish man/woman, one would have been lightly taxed and certain restrictions on marriage would have been placed. Otherwise, there wasn't very much in the way of betterment. This was of course true to some extent in Western Europe, however, it would be interesting to study how the events listed above influenced rebellion and an economic downturn which would face Western Christendom in the 1300's forward.

Jan 25 12:01 am

**?** I think this quote brings up a very interesting point. Many locations that are deemed religiously or spiritually important to people have changed/been converted. In my fathers village in Mayfouk Lebanon, many of the churches were said to be previous spiritually locations pre-Christianity religious practices. I would not equate this situation to that of Hagia Sophia because I believe it has more to do with exerting power and trying to reclaim/rewrite a narrative

Jan 25 12:03 am

**Show all**



# Challenging the Text



quotes UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon noting the risk of water scarcity “transforming peaceful competition into violence”. It is statements such as this that gave birth to popular notions of ‘water wars’. **It is time we dispelled this myth.** Countries do not go to war over water, they solve their water shortages through trade and international agreements.

Cooperation, in fact, is the dominant response to shared water resources. There are 263 cross-boundary waterways in the world. Between 1948 and 1999, cooperation over water, including the signing of treaties, far outweighed conflict over water and violent conflict in particular. Of 1,831 instances of interactions over international freshwater resources tallied over that time period (including everything from unofficial verbal exchanges to economic agreements or military action), 67% were cooperative, only 28% were conflictive, and the remaining 5% were neutral or insignificant. In those five decades, there were no formal declarations of war over water<sup>2</sup>.

I learned this the hard way. A few years ago, I had just written a book about biological warfare<sup>3</sup> and the publishers were keen for me to write another. “How about one on water wars?” they asked. It seemed a good idea. The 1990s had seen cataclysmic forecasts, such as former World Bank vice-president Ismail Serageldin’s often-quoted 1995 prophecy that, although

East had worsened; but Allan began to question his assumptions when he found no sign of the widely predicted water wars. Instead, the burgeoning populations of the Middle Eastern economies had no apparent difficulties in meeting their food and water needs. Allan had been forced to grapple with a situation in which people who are short of water do not necessarily fight over it.

## Invisible water

Allan’s earlier thinking about water wars began to change after meeting the late Gideon Fishelson, an agricultural economist at Tel Aviv University, Israel. Fishelson argued that it is foolish for Israel, a water-short country, to grow and then export products such as oranges and avocados, which require a lot of water to cultivate. Fishelson’s work prompted Allan to realize that water ‘embedded’ in traded products could be important in explaining the absence of conflict over water in the region.

As a global average, people typically drink one cubic metre of water each per year, and use 100 cubic metres per year for washing and cleaning. Each of us also accounts for 1,000 cubic metres per year to grow the food we eat. In temperate climates, the water needed to produce this food is generally taken for granted. In arid regions, Allan described how people depend on irrigation and imported food to

tries diversify their economies, they turn away from agriculture and create wealth from industries that use less water. As a country becomes richer, it may require more water overall to sustain its booming population, but it can afford to import food to make up the shortfall<sup>5</sup>.

Areas seemingly desperate for water arrive at sustainable solutions thanks to the import of food, reducing the demand for water and giving an invisible boost to domestic supplies. Political leaders can threaten hostile action if their visible water supplies are threatened (a potentially useful political bluff), while not needing to wage war thanks to the benefits of trade.

## Sources of war

Israel ran out of water in the 1950s: it has not since then produced enough water to meet all of its needs, including food production. Jordan has been in the same situation since the 1960s; Egypt since the 1970s. Although it is true that these countries have fought wars with each other, they have not fought over water. Instead they all import grain. As Allan points out, more ‘virtual’ water flows into the Middle East each year embedded in grain than flows down the Nile to Egyptian farmers.

Perhaps the most often quoted example of a water war is the situation in the West Bank between Palestinians and Israel. But as Mark Zeitoun, senior lecturer in development studies at the University of East Anglia in Norwich, UK, has explained, contrary to what both the mass

**“In five decades, there were no formal declarations of war over water.”**

Current conversation

👤 ? Is this statement entirely true? We learned that Egypt made threats of war and violence to Ethiopia regarding confrontations over the Renaissance Dam. We also learned of battles and skirmishes that resulted from issues with this dam. Does that not then suggest that wars over water are entirely possible?

📎 ⚙️ ⚠️ ☆ Mar 17 9:31 pm

👤 ? This is a fair question, and looking at when this article was written, March of 2009, maybe the idea of conflict over water wasn't seen as possible, but has changed as the environmental and political landscape of the world has evolved.

📎 ⚠️ ☆ Mar 18 2:46 pm

👤 ? I find this hard to believe, as countries have gone to war for much less important reasons.

📎 ⚠️ ☆ Mar 18 7:22 pm

👤 ? I feel like desperation can be a great motivator for violence

📎 ⚠️ ☆ Mar 18 10:47 pm

👤 ? Fear is a powerful motivator for war. All Egypt's president needs to do is say we'll all die if they build this dam.

📎 ⚠️ ☆ Mar 19 11:24 am

👤 ? I also feel like this statement would provide support against the "human needs theory"

📎 ⚠️ ☆ Mar 19 11:24 am

# Comparing to Other Sources



after I had taken over from John Maddox as editor of *Nature*, I was driving home from the printers with a colleague at four in the morning, having just put the latest issue to bed. News came in over the radio of a coup in Portugal. What would John have done? We agreed that he would have turned the car round and written a new thousand-word Editorial: 'What future for Portuguese science? The coup in Lisbon is, or ought to be, an opportunity for Portuguese scientists ...' We smiled at the thought, but drove on.

This little story exemplifies John's approach to *Nature*. As a one-time journalist, he prized immediacy. He had a formidable list of contacts, and even if he hadn't known any Portuguese scientists, he would still have created a sense of authority.

Until his arrival as editor in 1966, *Nature* had been a worthy journal of record but lacking in flair; it changed rapidly as John brought his journalistic background to bear. 'We wuz robbed' was the title of an Editorial written at the time of the 1966 Football World Cup, proposing a new method for determining the winner. Very

time attention and began to fray at the edges. In 1973, Macmillan and John parted company.

Shortly before I took over, John expounded his 'diminishing tenure' rule to me by drawing a little graph of duration of successive *Nature* editorships. Norman Lockyer, the first, served for a remarkable 50 years, but the stints of his successors — Richard Gregory, joint editors Jack Brimble and Arthur Gale, and John himself — became steadily shorter. In his impish way, John, who had been editor for seven years, predicted I'd last three-and-a-half.

Fortunately I managed rather longer, but when John, by then director of the Nuffield Foundation, got wind of my interest in moving on, he invited me to lunch and revealed that he very much wanted to get back into the editor's chair. Out came the imp in him again: 'Why don't we swap jobs?'

He returned in 1980; at that time, many doubted his wisdom in going back. He proved us wrong over the next 15 years and spectacularly disproved the 'diminishing tenure' rule.

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that to be alarmist. I know all the arguments that have been made by others about international wars being unlikely for water, and they are probably right. But civil strife between competing groups within countries over water rights are very serious. Many of the wars of the past 20 years, on issues other than water, have been between groups within one sovereign state. That did not make them any less murderous.

Furthermore, the century is just starting and we have not seen the full range of expected environmental, demographic and political challenges unfold. Water in this century will become a major source of strife between groups within countries. Drought has driven many tribes in Africa into terrain that they are not normally expected to occupy. When coupled with other factors such as ethnic or religious divides, this becomes a dangerous mix.

Water may also become a *casus belli* between states, if the downstream nation is considerably stronger militarily than the one upstream, and the latter tries to block or reduce the flow of water. Whether it is acted

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## Water: resistance on the route towards a fair share for all

SIR — Wendy Barnaby's Essay 'Do nations go to war over water?' (*Nature* 458, 282–283; 2009) is a welcome counter to mainstream media hype about conflicts over water. But all is not quiet on the waterfront, and the need to establish fair water-sharing is growing increasingly urgent.

For example, southern Iraqi farmers downstream of dams located on the Tigris River in Iraq, Syria and Turkey are being forced into urban centres as the reduced river flows become overwhelmed by sea water. Palestinian farmers eke out a living dependent on highly variable and scarce rainfall, next door to the industrial farms of Israeli settlers whose irrigation water is state-subsidized. The flood-and-drought cycles of the Ganges inundate farmers in downstream Bangladesh.

Attempts to reconcile the mockery that this fluid resource

Current conversation

Excellent point: conflicts by non-state actors due to water might not necessarily constitute war, but conflict could still be an issue.

Mar 15 9:08 pm

I was thinking about this while reading the last article. Why does the author only consider inter-state conflict when intra-state conflict has become more common in recent decades.

Mar 16 9:37 pm

what are some examples of conflict that arises over water within a state?

Mar 18 9:56 pm

I am also thinking that wars/conflict depend a lot on public opinion, and you can see how easily opinion could be swayed if there are water disparities between groups.

Mar 19 12:39 pm

I wonder how local communities experiencing this conflict think about "water wars"? We have been looking at it from a very academic and separated perspective...what do the communities actually involved think about this issue and whether water wars are realistic in the future?

Mar 26 12:13 am

B I A x<sup>2</sup> ☺ </> 📷 🔗 📄

Enter your comment or question and press Enter



# After One Semester:

- The Teaching Assistants are generally pleased with student preparation
- They have some idea of the things that interested them most
- They have a sense of the stuff they didn't "get"
- Still unsure whether a specific number of annotations should be assigned
- We aren't relying on their AI grading
- I will do it again this summer
- Will it be as important once we are all together again?