What is the Middle East and where is it exactly? Which countries and populations does it include and why are others excluded? Who says so, and what is the connection between naming and political power?

Core Reading
Davison, R. H. ‘Where is the Middle East?’,*Foreign Affairs*, 38 (4) 1960: 665-675.

Introduction:
- Great geographical diversity (*Lawrence of Arabia*)
- Distribution of natural resources
- Social and Political Diversity
- Varied attitudes and cultures

Orientalism ~ the representation of Asia in a stereotyped way that is regarded as embodying a colonialist attitude.

- Orientalism by Edward Said, 1978
- Relationship between occident and orient is represented as dichotomous opposites
- Romanticised but inferior and dangerous
- Represents colonial superiority
- Stereotypes are justified and perpetuated imperialism and domination
- Shown as ignorant of their own culture and needing imperial tutelage
  - eg. A Turkish Tale, Comics, Art, Literature
- The unnecessary dichotomy between East and West (loss)
- Encourages Generalisations
- Are humorous stereotypes damaging? Yes, humour is seen as a platform of understanding that can create bias ideas of certain people misrepresented

Contemporary Orientalism:

- Men represented as violent, serving
- Women represented as sexy and submissive ~ orient is submissive to occident
- Confirmation bias of the region as you find what you expect to

Location:

- Near and middle east
- No set agreed boundaries, not defined by the UN. Fundamentally Bureaucratic
- 19 Core states as defined by the US Near East Affairs Bureau
- Term started as military vocabulary
  - 3 Largest Islamic empires included; Umayyad, Abbasid, Ottoman

Does a problem with Islamic extremism create a Middle Eastern State?
Middle East is politicised and politicising - Ideational character