New York University
Gallatin School of Individualized Study

IDSEM-UG 1543

Session I: May 23-July 3, 2016

Tues/Thu, 5:30 - 8:30

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Imagining the Middle East

This course looks at historical and contemporary representations of the Middle Eastern cultures and societies in the modern Western imaginary. We will examine shifting representations of the Middle East in pre- and post-enlightenment European political and intellectual discourses, Western literary texts and travel literature, and contemporary US popular culture (films, advertising, thrillers, spy novels, romance fiction, etc.). We will also consider the interrelationship between popular cultural representations and the manner in which the Middle East is conceptualized in the academy and in "high culture" in general (e.g., theorized as Orientalism). It is an assumption of the course that a "post colonial" framework is key to interpreting not only the Middle East, but also the "West."

Important Notes:

Learning is a collaborative experience. It is therefore, essential that students attend class, come prepared, and participate in class discussions. Students with absences or habitual lateness will have their grades lowered, even though they may have completed their required assignments.

Please do not hesitate to drop by my office should you have problems with the course, or just want to talk. Students who may need special consideration because of any sort of disability should make an appointment to see me in private. You should be advised that late papers would be substantially penalized and no incomplete grades will be allowed (except in rare and unexpected situations).

Required Readings:
You can purchase the required books from NYU Bookstore. All other readings are posted on the CLASS WEBSITE or will be given to you in class.

3. Zachary Lockman, Contending Visions of the Middle East, Cambridge UP.
6. Linda Khatib, Filming the Modern Middle East, Ingram Books.

**Background Readings:**
It will be helpful if you read the following books and learn more about the history and culture of the Middle East. These readings are not required and are only suggestions:


**Important Note:**
The class meets for three hours twice a week. I will lecture for about one hour. The remaining class time will be spent in student presentations and reports reflecting on readings and discussing the class leader’s short essays.

**Class Discussion Leaders:**
Starting on June 2, students will sign up to participate in preparing for and leading the discussion of readings for two classes during the course of the semester (two students work collaboratively for each class). The students will work with the instructor to develop a critical, analytical summary of the readings to be distributed in class. This critical summary will lay out key terms, concepts, and arguments within the text. The class leaders will also develop a set of discussion questions or a participatory activity for class. Class discussions should focus on a close reading of the text/s, critically analyzing theoretical contributions and may then apply concepts and theories to addressing related issues/problems (it is helpful to choose passages from the readings to consider in order to focus class discussion).

**Course Requirements:**
Students are evaluated and graded based on the following assignments:
1. Attendance and quality of class participation (20%).
2. Two short papers for your role as discussion leader. (30).
3. Oral Presentation (5%).
4. A term paper based on topics covered in the class (45%).

**OUTLINE OF THE COURSE**

May 24

**Part One: Crisis in the Middle East: A Debate**

**Reading:**


Edward Said: The Myth of Clash of Civilizations, A Video
**Recommended Reading:**

My 26  
**Part Two: Visions of the Middle East**
**Reading:**
Zachary Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East*, Chapter 1 (In the beginning), pp.8-37; Chapter 2 (Islam, the West and the rest), pp.38-65, Chapter 3 (Orientalism and empire), pp. 66-98

My 31  
**Reading:**

June 2  
**Reading:**
Amin Maalouf, *The Crusades Through Arab Eyes*, Part One, Two, Three, and Four, pp.1-200

June 7  
**Reading:**
**Kingdom of Heaven**: A documentary

June 9  
**Part Three: Orientalism**
**Reading:**
**Orientalism**: A Video

June 14  
**Reading:**

June16
Reading:

Part Four: Culture, Power, and Representation

June 21

Reading:


Harum Scarum: A Movie

June 23

Reading:
Linda Khatib, Filming the Modern Middle East, Chapter III (Conflicts Within and Without) pp. 103-163. Chapter IV (Representing Islamic Fundamentalism), pp. 165-200.

June 28

9/11 and After

Reading:

Reel Bad Arabs: A Video

Student Presentations

June 30

Reading:

Arna’s Children: A Video

Student Presentations

Final Paper due on July 5.