San José State University
Humanities
ANTH/MDES/RELS 145, Spring 2017

Middle East Traditions

Instructor: Persis Karim
Office Location: Faculty Office Building 216
Telephone: (408) 924-4476
Email: persis.karim@sjsu.edu
Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 1:30-2:30 PM or by appointment
Class Days/Time: Tuesday & Thursday 12-1:15 PM
Classroom: Engineering 403
Prerequisites: WST, 100W
GE/SJSU Studies Category: Area V

Course Description:

This course focuses on the Middle East and North Africa as a complex culture area encompassing shared and competing values, religious traditions, ethnicities, and ecological/geographic concerns. The goal of the course is to give students a framework for understanding, and even predicting, the lines of religious, cultural, and political conflict and alliances within the region and in the larger global context both in the past and in the contemporary sense. We will begin by examining longstanding traditional patterns that persist, and are shared across ethnic, religious and regional boundaries. We will then explore the contribution this shared legacy has made to contemporary disputes in the region. In addition, we will examine cycles of religious revitalization, (and so-called fundamentalisms), competing ideologies, relations between minority and majority populations, and the legacy of pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial experiences on the peoples of the Middle East, as well as cultural, historical, and psychological dimensions which contribute to understanding—and misunderstanding—the complex dynamics of the region. The course will conclude with consideration of the viability of competing potential resolutions to current controversies in the region. Note that it is impossible to teach a class such as this without also addressing politics and particularly the larger geopolitical interests.
such as oil, control of certain regions, occupations and ongoing wars and interventions by other nations. It is not possible to understand the region without also addressing these issues.

**Prerequisites G.E. Status:** Middle Eastern Traditions is an upper division G.E. course. It has a significant amount of reading and writing, and requires passage of the WST. In addition, completion of 100W is required—although in the Fall Semester, 100W may be enrolled in concurrently with this class.

NOTE: "It is University policy that courses to meet Area R, S, and V of SJSU Studies must be taken from three different departments or distinct academic units. This policy has been suspended beginning fall 2012 until further notice and students are permitted to take two or three R, S, or V courses from the same department. However, we encourage you to continue taking R, S, and V courses from different departments in order to broaden your education."

**Course Requirements**

Class will meet Tuesdays and Thursdays. Lectures, student-led discussion, films, and slides will follow the course syllabus and include class participation in overall discussion, group work, and your own research projects. Since the required readings cover only a small part of the material tested, regular participation in class is essential. Please be prompt. Participation is expected, and will be evaluated along with written work in determining final grades. Note that we will diverge from the syllabus schedule when topics require more discussion than originally allocated. I will make every effort to notify you in class or send an email. It is your responsibility to check in with me or your classmates, however, if you miss class and want to know about what transpired in class or what changes might have been made in reading.

**G.E. Area V Learning Objectives**

**CULTURE, CIVILIZATION, & GLOBAL UNDERSTANDING**

**Learning Objective 1**

Students shall be able to compare systematically the ideas, values, images, cultural artifacts, economic structures, technological developments, or attitudes of people from more than one culture outside the U.S.

This learning objective will be met by systematically comparing cultural cosmologies, economies and worldviews found throughout the Middle East and North Africa, especially in Part I of the course. In addition to lectures, your first and second readings cover these topics. Your quizzes and essays address this objective.

**Learning Objective 2**

Students shall be able to identify the historic context of ideas and cultural traditions outside the U.S. and how they have influenced American culture.

Part II of the course addresses this learning objective, as do all of your required readings. Here, specific case studies will be considered in their pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial manifestations, where appropriate. The shift of movements from outside the U.S. to inside the U.S. will be considered. Examples range from Ibn Khaldún’s medieval Islamic worldview of ‘oscillating elites’ to Emmanuel Wallerstein’s ‘world systems theory,’ from the Israeli kibbutz movement to the People’s Temple, and sustainable collectivist communities in the U.S., and how social movements in the Middle East and North Africa have impacted U.S. society and culture. Midterms will address this objective.
Learning Objective 3

Students shall be able to explain how a culture outside the U.S. has changed in response to internal and external pressures.

Part III of the course explicitly addresses this learning objective, as do all three required readings options (and many of the extra-credit readings as well). Samples of problems we explore in MIDDLE EASTERN TRADITIONS include: 1) indigenous responses to internal and external imperialisms and colonial rule, 2) mass movements from the Diaspora to al-Qaeda to ethnic/religious struggles for liberation, 3) strains and constraints of worldview from the ancient Near East to the contemporary Middle East, 4) consideration of other fractured, contentious, and dominated societies in global and post-global distress—examples from the Holocaust to the Iranian Revolution, and the question of Palestine. Competition between worldviews—and the consequences of these conflicts—is a theme that runs throughout the course, but comes to a head in Part III of the course. The third set of required readings specifically focus on this problem. The research project and presentation address these concerns.

Required Texts/Readings

1) Jillian Schwedler, Ed. Understanding the Contemporary Middle East, isbn # 9781588269102

2) Course Packet from Maple Press-Available-Please purchase the first day of class

UC Berkeley Comparative Islam links
orias.berkeley.edu/Islam.html

Recommended Reading

Donna Lee Bowen and Evelyn A Early ed. Everyday Life in the Muslim Middle East: Second Edition isbn # 9780253014665

Lila Abu-Lughod, Do Muslim Really Women Need Saving?isbn #9780674725164

Required Films

“Divorce Iranian Style”
“Promises”
“Islam: Empire of Faith”
“The Square”

Assignments and Grading Policy

News Event Assignment #1-5% Due February 14
News Event Assignment #2 -10% Due April 4
Midterm Exam- 20% In-class March 16
Class Presentation and Final Written Assignment-25% (last two weeks of semester; pls. sign up; including topic proposal/abstract to be developed, and final written report) Due April
27-May 8 (dates to be determined; I will give you a handout with full instructions)

Final Exam-20% (including final paper based on library research/presentation)

Weds. May 24 9:45-noon.

Class Participation/Quizzes/Group Work/Discussion 20% ongoing

In-Class Midterm: Midterm will consist of identification terms, short questions based upon lectures, readings, slides, films, and/or assignments required to date. The midterm will only be given once and may not be taken early or late, be rewritten, resubmitted or made up in case of absence. If you miss the midterm, you miss it. If you come in late to class, note that you will not be given extra time to complete this assignment.

Library Research Assignment: The library research project will be discussed in class (and see below). This assignment will be written up and will provide the foundation for your class presentation. Details of assignments will be discussed in class. This presentation will also be the basis for the final report and that you’ll turn in the day you present.

Presentation/Paper Proposal: This assignment has two parts: (1) Submit an abstract (250 words maximum) of your presentation topic, describing what you intend to study and what preliminary ideas you have; (2) Submit a bibliography listing at least four relevant published books or academic articles -- not internet sources. This proposal will be the basis for your presentation as well as your final report.

Student Presentation: Your research project will involve any number of topics (see list at end of syllabus). Topics must be specific, well-focused and must be researched. You must use source materials other than the internet (books and articles). You should be able to evaluate how authoritative, legitimate and reliable your sources are. The presentation must go beyond description to analysis of at least some of the complexity of the dynamics/issues/traditions explored. Make your topic as specific as possible, find out everything you can about your given subject, and then focus your presentation on why it is important for us to look at/better understand the problem/concept/culture, etc. you are exploring. You will be asked to submit a topical proposal, abstract, and short bibliography prior to your presentation. You will be organized into sub-groups in order to encourage collaboration (to be discussed in class). A final report will be submitted with your presentation.

Final Exam: The final exam will include identification questions, terms, and short questions. It will encompass the entire course. We will meet for the entire duration of the scheduled exam period.

Class Participation: Participation in class is expected, and will be considered along with written work and class exercises/quizzes in determining final grades. Participation will be graded based upon attentiveness, engagement, appropriate discourse, insight, consideration of the ideas of others, questions, comments, and facilitation of class activities. Class participation can affect final grades, especially if final grades are borderline. You will also be quizzed on occasion and participation matters because if you are not in class you cannot take the quiz. No make-up quizzes will be given.

Incompletes and Late Work: See the Course Guidelines for policies and instructions
regarding late work and rewrites. You are welcome to turn in papers early if you know that you will be away on a due date. When submitting completed work, make sure you have included your name, semester and year, and the course number. **Bottom line:** Late work and incompletes are a nuisance; avoid them and they will affect your grade.

**Classroom Protocol**
I expect you to attend class regularly. All activities during class time are considered part of the class and may be part of your assignment and exams.

You are expected to read and review the assigned lesson before each class. You are expected to, arrive on time, and participate in class discussion by asking and answering questions.

If you are late or absent, it is your responsibility to contact another student regarding assignments, notes, and announcements.

*Note that we will diverge from the syllabus schedule when topics require more discussion than originally allocated.*

Cheating will not be tolerated.

Always respect your classmates and instructor. Any inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated.

Turn off all phones, other gadgets, and log out of any applications during class sessions unless otherwise directed to do so by the instructor.

This class requires a fair amount of reading and writing, and it introduces new material, some of which may be challenging to your assumptions. Keep an open mind. If you have questions, ask them in class. Some of the material may challenge your pre-conceived notions of religion, history, and politics, and as such I expect you to be respectful of each others’ perspectives and to engage in civil discussion. You may find that some of the material is considered “controversial” because it raises things that are counter to what you may have heard in the media. Again, I urge you to understand that how the Middle East is represented in the media, is not the whole picture, and often omits aspects of the whole picture.

**Dropping and Adding**
Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, etc. Information on add/drops are available at [http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/soc-fall/rec-324.html](http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/soc-fall/rec-324.html). Information about late drop is available at [http://www.sjsu.edu/sac/advising/latedrops/policy/](http://www.sjsu.edu/sac/advising/latedrops/policy/). Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for adding and dropping classes.

**University Policies:**

**Academic integrity**
Students should know that the University’s [Academic Integrity Policy is available at http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial_affairs/Academic_Integrity_Policy_S07-2.pdf](http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial_affairs/Academic_Integrity_Policy_S07-2.pdf).
Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University and the University’s integrity policy, require you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The website for Student Conduct and Ethical Development is available at http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html.

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person’s ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include in your assignment any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU’s Academic Policy F06-1 requires approval of instructors.

**Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the DRC (Disability Resource Center) to establish a record of their disability.

**Student Technology Resources**

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library.

A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include digital and VHS camcorders, VHS and Beta video players, 16 mm, slide, overhead, DVD, CD, and audiotape players, sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

**SJSU Writing Center**

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Room 126 in Clark Hall. It is staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists from each of the seven SJSU colleges. Our writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. The Writing Center website is located at http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/.

**Peer Connections**

Peer Connections is located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall in the Academic Success Center. The Peer Connections Center is staffed with Peer Mentors who excel in helping students manage university life, tackling problems that range from academic challenges to interpersonal struggles. On the road to graduation, Peer Mentors are navigators, offering “roadside assistance” to peers who feel a bit lost or simply need help mapping out the locations of campus resources. Peer Mentor services are free and available on a drop-in basis, no reservation required.
Middle East Traditions, ANTH/MEDS/RELS 145

SPRING 2017

The syllabus is subject to change depending on the pace and progress of the class. It is your responsibility to check in with your classmates or the instructor to find out if you missed anything in class or if there are changes to the syllabus. Please note readings are listed for date you are expected to HAVE READ THEM!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jan. 26</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION TO MIDDLE EASTERN TRADITIONS</td>
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<td>Overview of Middle Eastern Traditions</td>
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<td>Course requirements, readings, assignments and expectations. Questions on how to approach the material. What and where is the Middle East anyway? What are Middle East ‘traditions’? Introductions.</td>
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<td>Read: Excerpts from Covering Islam by Edward Said (course packet) pp. 1-38 and Course Packet, pp. 38-62</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Jan. 31</td>
<td>Read: Covering Islam excerpt</td>
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<td>Feb. 2</td>
<td>GEOPHYSICAL UNDERSTANDING THE MIDDLE EAST (UTME) pp. 1-40</td>
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<td>Quiz on UTME reading and Middle East Map and discussion Read: pp. 41-88 UTME</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Feb. 7</td>
<td>Read: UTME pp. 89-138</td>
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<td>Feb. 9</td>
<td>Discussion of Reading; Discussion of news analysis assignment Read: UTME, pp. 89-138</td>
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<td>NO CLASS but on your own WATCH: “Islam: Empire of Faith” on your own over the weekend; write a 1-2 page response outlining what was new, interesting for you; focus on one or two elements in the film. This response will be due on 2/16.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Feb. 14</td>
<td>Read: UTME pp. 315-345 (Kinship, Class Ethnicity)</td>
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<td>Feb. 16</td>
<td>Discussion of reading Read: UTME pp. 377-403 (Religion and Politics); Course packet, pp. 91-99</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Feb. 21</td>
<td>Read: Course packet, pp. 38-62 “Culture Talk”</td>
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<td>Feb. 23</td>
<td>The Role of Women/Gender Politics/Religion Understanding the Middle East, pp. 345-376 Course Packet Reading</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Feb. 28</td>
<td>Course Packet Readings, Read: Excerpts from <em>A Quiet Revolution</em> &amp; Do Muslim Women Need Saving? (handout from Persis on email)</td>
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|      | March 2        | Film Screening of “Divorce Iranian Style”  
            | Read: Course Packet pp.84-91                                                                                                 |
| 7    | March 7        | Discussion of film and readings; preparation for midterm                                                                     |
|      | March 9        | **Midterm in class**                                                                                                         |
| 8    | March 14       | The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict  
            | Read: UTME pp. 175-184                                                                                                       |
|      | March 16       | Discussion of Reading  
            | Read: UTME, pp. 185-223                                                                                                      |
| 9    | March 21       | Discussion of reading  
            | Read: Handouts                                                                                                                |
|      | March 23       | Watch “Promises”                                                                                                              |
| 10   | March 28       | **SPRING BREAK--- NO CLASS**                                                                                                   |
|      | March 30       |                                                                                                                              |
| 11   | April 4        | Second news analysis due – MAP quiz #2  
            | Read: Course packet, pp. 133-143 and handouts                                                                              |
|      | April 6        | Library research day for presentations  
            | Read: International Relations  
            | UTME, pp. 139-174                                                                                                           |
| 12   | April 11       | Discussion of readings  
            | Read: UTME, pp. 259-287                                                                                                      |
|      | April 3        | First draft of topic proposal due  
            | Read: UTME, pp. 287-315                                                                                                      |
| 13   | April 18       | Discussion of Reading  
            | Read: pp. 99-108 and 115-130 in Course Packet                                                                              |
|      | April 20       | Discussion of reading & screening of Meydan - “The Square”                                                                     |
| 14   | April 25       | **Refined topic proposal with bibliography due**  
<pre><code>        | Read: pp. 130-138 in Course Packet                                                                                           |
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<p>|      | April 27       | Discussion of reading; Read: UTME, pp. 403-439                                                                               |</p>
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<th>Week</th>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>May 9</td>
<td>Discussion of reading; Read: UTME, pp. 439-445</td>
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<td>May 11</td>
<td>STUDENT PRESENTATIONS</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>May 16</td>
<td>STUDENT PRESENTATIONS</td>
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<td>Final Draft of report on presentation due</td>
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<td>Final Exam Scheduled for Weds. May 24, 9:45-noon -- please bring a green book to class--</td>
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Possible Topics for Presentations:

1) Land/Water  
2) Contested Territories/Narratives-Israel/Palestine  
3) Minority Religions  
4) Women in Iran, Turkey, Iraq, Saudi Arabia  
5) Effects of US Invasion on Iraq/Afghanistan  
6) Youth Culture in North Africa/Middle East  
7) Arab Spring in a Specific Country  
8) Cooperation Between National/Ethnic Groups  
9) Water and Water Resources  
10) Sufism, Bahai’ism  
11) Islamic Fundamentalism in a specific national context  
12) Israeli Occupation of Palestinian Lands  
13) Music and Popular Culture in a Specific Country  
14) Sephardic Jews in Israel  
15) Human Rights in a Specific Country (Iran, Israel, Algeria, Saudi Arabia)  
16) Perceptions of Iran Nuclear Deal in the US/Israel/Elsewhere  
17) The Rise of Islamic Fundamentalism around the Middle East  
18) Arab Spring-Failures and Successes  
19) Music as a Vehicle for Protest in Palestine/Iran  
20) Hip Hop Music in a Middle Eastern/North African Context  
21) Sufism  
22) Multi-faceted meanings of the Veil  
23) Bedouin in Israel  
24) Orthodox vs. Secular Jews in Israel  
25) Rise of the Islamic State (contexts and support-ISIL)  
26) War in Yemen  
27) US-Iran Relationship  
28) Effect of US Invasion/Occupation of Iraq/Afghanistan  
29) War in Syria-Refugee Crisis  
30) Women and Driving in Saudi Arabia