

# San José State University

## Topics in US Ethnic Literature

### ***E165: Literature of the Middle Eastern and Muslim Experiences in the USA***

**Spring 2017**

#### **Course and Contact Information**

<b>Instructor:</b>	Persis Karim
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<b>Office Hours:</b>	Tu/Thurs. 1:30-2:30 & by appt.
<b>Class Days/Time:</b>	Tu/Thurs. 3:00-4:15 pm
<b>Classroom:</b>	Clark 306

#### **Course Prerequisite: Upper Division Standing**

Course Description- This literature course speaks to the ways that writers both participate in and contest the discourse of what it means to be “American.” Like many other ethnic groups, Arabs, Iranians, and Afghans, (as well as other people of Middle Eastern origin) have contributed to and changed the landscape of this country and our local communities. They contribute economically, politically, and culturally, and while we tend to view them in broad, often very monolithic terms, they are not all the same (just like, for example, people from other continents or regions such as Latin America or Africa). Like other ethnic groups, people of Middle Eastern nationality and heritage find themselves alternately highly visible (through stereotypes and media headlines as well as events such as 9/11 and including, for example, debates over the building of the mosque in NY city, and more recently after the 2016 presidential campaign in which there was discussion of the banning of Muslim immigration from this country) and also highly invisible (not yet designated ethnic groups, prone to be overlooked in racial categories, and often still seen as “foreigners” etc.).

Although people from the Middle East began immigrating to the United States in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, their history and journey of immigration, assimilation, and racialization is thus far, “newer” and less known and, until recently, less studied. This class introduces some of the stories of their immigration, assimilation, and struggle; and, in particular, investigates the ways that literature has been both a tool of belonging and narration, and also a way to contest more recent depictions of these peoples and groups, particularly against stereotypes and media headlines that have reduced them to essentialized categories such as “Muslim,” “terrorist” or “Arab” without noting distinctions in their heritage, language and culture and their unique participation and association as Americans.

To better introduce the literature of Americans of Middle Eastern and/or Muslim heritage we will read a variety of texts—nonfiction, poetry, and fiction, as well as view several films. We will be engaged in an inquiry into what constitutes a new a body of literature that has had a particular resonance in the last ten years, when the United States has become even more entrenched in the Middle East and in the post-9/11 depiction of Muslims in what are often negative stereotypes.

**English Department Student Learning Objectives (as they are evoked in the English 165 Course Goals)**

1. Read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of ethnic American literature.
2. Show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to ethnic American literature, gaining an awareness of the range of cultural experiences and productions that make up Middle Eastern/Muslim American literary and cultural history, focusing on the self-representations of these writers and their communities.
3. Write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and nature of the subject.
4. Develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively.
5. Articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts, strengthening their abilities to engage ethnic American literary text and to analyze both its form and content as well as its social and historical contexts.

**Assignments and Grading Policy**

Coursework includes reading assignments (see schedule below), four 1-2 brief reader responses, a review of a reading/performance by a writer of Middle Eastern heritage, a proposal and annotated bibliography, an 8-12 page research paper, class participation, and a final exam. Class participation includes in-class discussion, reading quizzes, and brief written assignments either in class or on our class Canvas site. The final exam will be comprised of both essay and short identification questions. Late paper policy: keeping in mind the many emergencies and unforeseen events that can occur in the average SJSU student’s life, I have a very generous extension policy. As long as you give me the request in writing—print or email— (complete with a new deadline) before the paper is due, most requests for an extension will be granted. If the original deadline is passed by a student who has not received an extension or an extended deadline has been passed, 10% of the total points possible will be taken off for lateness up to one week, **NO PAPER WILL BE ACCEPTED ONCE AN ORIGINAL OR EXTENDED DEADLINE HAS PASSED BY MORE THAN A WEEK**. Extended or late papers will be graded AFTER on-time student work. Note that doing the reading and being able and willing to respond to the comments and questions of both the professor and your fellow students on a daily basis is a requirement of the course. Reading quizzes and other in-class assignments will be given to ensure that students are indeed completing and understanding the readings. These cannot be made up. Due dates for all papers and the times for all exams are listed on the reading and assignment schedule at the end of the syllabus.

Proposal and annotated bibliography (SLO 2-5)	1-page proposal (300 words) of your research project plus annotated bibliography with at least 5 entries (Due April 28)	15%
Research Paper (SLO 1-5)	8-12 page analysis (Due May 12)	35%
1-2-pages (SLO 1, 2, 3, & 5)	4 focused 1-2-page (300-500 word) analyses/reader response (Due throughout the semester, see schedule below)	20%
Final Exam (SLO 1, 2, 3, & 5)	Identification terms, passage id & short responses (May 20, 9:45-12noon)	15%
Participation, reading quizzes & other in-class assignments (SLO 1, 2, 3, & 5) 10%	Class discussions/quizzes/etc. for 30 class meetings and sometimes brief writing	15%
Extra Credit: Performance/reading review (SLO 2 & 3)	1-page review of reading or performance by a writer of Middle Eastern heritage author/performer due anytime, but no later than May 5	

The following statement has been adopted by the Department of English for inclusion in all syllabi:

In English Department Courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs.

The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the SJSU Catalog ("The Grading System"). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A = excellent; B = above average; C = average; D = below average; F = failure.

In written assignments for English 165, this scale is based on the following criteria:

A [90-92=A-, 93-96=A, 97-100=A+] = Excellent: The "A" essay is articulate and well developed with fluid transitions and a clear and persuasive use of evidence, which is drawn from the literary text itself, lecture materials (when appropriate), and research materials. An "A" essay contains a fresh insight that teaches the reader something new about the subject matter.

B [80-82=B-, 83-86=B, 87-89=B+] Above average: The "B" essay demonstrates a good understanding of its subject, a clear and persuasive use of evidence, a certain level of ease of expression, and solid organization. However, it usually lacks the level of originality and creativity that characterizes the insight found in an "A" essay.

C [70-72=C-, 73-76=C, 77-79=C+] = Average: The "C" essay makes a good attempt at all the assignment's requirements. It has a reasonable understanding of its subject matter but its ideas are frequently simplistic or over-generalized. The writing style is also more bland and repetitive than the style shown by "A" and "B" essays and it often contains flaws in grammar, punctuation, spelling and/or word choice. It may also use textual evidence out of context.

D [60-62=D-, 63-66=D, 67-69=D+] = Below average: The "D" essay is poorly organized and generally unclear. It has inappropriate or inadequate examples, is noticeably superficial or simplistic, and/or contains some serious mechanical and grammatical problems. A "D" essay may also reveal some misunderstanding of the assignment requirements.

F = Failure: An "F" essay has not addressed the requirements of the assignment and is unacceptable work in terms of both form and content.

### **Classroom Protocol**

You are required to be courteous and professional to both classmates and the professor. Most people take this as a requirement in their daily lives and this statement does not need to be reiterated here. However, people sometimes forget that the classroom is a professional setting and rules that govern a business meeting apply here. For example, devices such as cell phones need to be turned off; using laptops for email or social media instead of note taking or coming to class late is unacceptable. If an emergency arises that requires your absence from class, please contact the professor. Simply prioritizing your education behind other time commitments does not constitute such an emergency. Participating in class discussions and listening to and taking notes on class lectures are absolutely necessary for the successful completion of this course. Protocol for written work requires that all quotations must be enclosed in quotation marks or, when more than three lines, put in an indented block. Full citation of the original author and source must also be included. For all papers, review a writing handbook for help with quote integration, formatting & proper citation (most of you will have purchased one for your Freshman comp. classes). Also see the University policy on "Academic Integrity" below for help defining and avoiding plagiarism of all kinds.

### **University Policies**

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. More details about student workload can be found in University Policy S12-3 at

<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf>.

### **Dropping and Adding**

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Refer to the current semester's Catalog Policies section at <http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html>. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the current academic year calendars document on the Academic Calendars webpage at [http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic\\_calendars/](http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic_calendars/). The Late Drop Policy is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/>. February 3rd is the last day to drop classes in Spring 2015. Information about the latest changes and news is available at the Advising Hub at <http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/>. English

### **Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material University**

Policy S12-7, <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-7.pdf>, requires students to obtain instructor's to record course material. Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be shared publicly without his/her approval. You may not publicly share or upload instructor generated material for this course such as exam questions, lecture notes, or homework solutions without instructor consent.

### **Academic Integrity**

Your commitment, as a student, to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The University Academic Integrity Policy S07-2 at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf> requires 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 Student Conduct and Ethical Development website is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/>.

### **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 at [http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD\\_1997-03.pdf](http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_1997-03.pdf) requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the Accessible Education Center (AEC) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aec> to establish a record of their disability.

## Required Texts/Readings

*Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* by Mohja Kahf  
*This Muslim American Life* by Mustafa Bayoumi  
*West of Kabul, East of New York* by Tamim Ansari  
*The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid  
*Sons and Other Flammable Objects* by Porochista Khakpour  
*A Map of Home* by Randa Jarrar

## Required Films

“Maryam”  
“The Reluctant Fundamentalist”

## Course Requirements and Assignments

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## General Expectations, Rights and Responsibilities of the Student

As members of the academic community, students accept both the rights and responsibilities incumbent upon all members of the institution. Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with SJSU’s policies and practices pertaining to the procedures to follow if and when questions or concerns about a class arises. To learn important campus information, view [University Policy S90–5](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S90-5.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S90-5.pdf> and SJSU current semester’s Policies and Procedures at <http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html>. In general, it is recommended that students begin by seeking clarification or discussing concerns with their instructor. If such conversation is not possible, or if it does not address the issue, it is recommended that the student contact the Department Chair as the next step.

## Dropping and Adding

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the current academic year calendars document on the [Academic Calendars webpage](http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic_calendars/) at [http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic\\_calendars/](http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic_calendars/). The [Late Drop Policy](http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/) is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/>. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes.

Information about the latest changes and news is available at the [Advising Hub](http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/>.

## Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material

[University Policy S12-7](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-7.pdf), <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-7.pdf>, requires students to obtain instructor’s permission to record the course and the following items to be included in the syllabus:

- “Common courtesy and professional behavior dictate that you notify someone when you are recording him/her. You must obtain the instructor’s permission to make audio or video recordings in this class. Such permission allows the recordings to be used for your private, study purposes only. The recordings

are the intellectual property of the instructor; you have not been given any rights to reproduce or distribute the material.”

- It is suggested that the greensheet include the instructor’s process for granting permission, whether in writing or orally and whether for the whole semester or on a class by class basis.
- In classes where active participation of students or guests may be on the recording, permission of those students or guests should be obtained as well.
- “Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be shared publicly without his/her approval. You may not publicly share or upload instructor generated material for this course such as exam questions, lecture notes, or homework solutions without instructor consent.”

### **Academic integrity**

Your commitment, as a student, to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The [University Academic Integrity Policy S07-2](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf> requires 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 [Student Conduct and Ethical Development website](http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/) is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/>.

### **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](http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_1997-03.pdf) at [http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD\\_1997-03.pdf](http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_1997-03.pdf) requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the [Accessible Education Center](http://www.sjsu.edu/aec) (AEC) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aec> to establish a record of their disability.

### **Accommodation to Students' Religious Holidays (Optional)**

San José State University shall provide accommodation on any graded class work or activities for students wishing to observe religious holidays when such observances require students to be absent from class. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor, in writing, about such holidays before the add deadline at the start of each semester. If such holidays occur before the add deadline, the student must notify the instructor, in writing, at least three days before the date that he/she will be absent. It is the responsibility of the instructor to make every reasonable effort to honor the student request without penalty, and of the student to make up the work missed. See [University Policy S14-7](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S14-7.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S14-7.pdf>.

### **Student Technology Resources**

Computer labs for student use are available in the [Academic Success Center](http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/> located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and in the Associated Students Lab 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 DV and HD digital camcorders; digital still cameras; video, slide and overhead projectors; DVD, CD, and audiotape players; sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

### **SJSU Peer Connections**

Peer Connections’ free tutoring and mentoring is designed to assist students in the development of their full academic potential and to inspire them to become independent learners. Peer Connections tutors are trained to provide content-based tutoring in many lower division courses (some upper division) as well as writing and

study skills assistance. Small group and individual tutoring are available. Peer Connections mentors are trained to provide support and resources in navigating the college experience. This support includes assistance in learning strategies and techniques on how to be a successful student. Peer Connections has a learning commons, desktop computers, and success workshops on a wide variety of topics. For more information on services, hours, locations, or a list of current workshops, please visit the Peer Connections website at <http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu> for more information.

### **A Note on the Times We Are Living In**

We must conduct ourselves with civility, decency, and have a great capacity for tolerating differing points of view. I feel strongly that my classroom can and should be a place where we can ask questions, debate, discuss, and entertain a variety of viewpoints, but we must also do so in a respectful and open way. I also want to clarify here that there are facts and there are facts. We can interpret those facts, and come to our own opinions, but we cannot create alternative “alternative facts.” We must maintain an atmosphere of open discussion and academic integrity. Please note, plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated.

### **SJSU Writing Center**

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. All Writing Specialists have gone through a rigorous hiring process, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the [Writing Center Website](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter>. For additional resources and updated information, follow the Writing Center on Twitter and become a fan of the SJSU Writing Center on Facebook. (Note: You need to have a QR Reader to scan this code.)



# English 165—MiddleEastAmerica: Literature of the Arab, Iranian, and Afghan Diaspora

## Course Schedule

Please note that this schedule is subject to change. You will be notified via email or in person of changes. If you are absent from class, however, it is your responsibility to ask the instructor or a peer of any changes.

### Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	January 26	Introductions –Discussion of Course Materials Read: Handouts & Find a Media Story on Muslims/Arabs in <i>NY Times</i> , <i>LA Times</i> , <i>Washington Post</i> , <i>New Yorker</i> only -- between 10/16 & 1/17 bring to class with a brief written analysis (typed 1-2 pages)
2	January 31	<i>This Muslim American Life</i>
2	February 2	<i>This Muslim American Life</i>
3	February 7	<i>This Muslim American Life</i>
3	February 9	<i>This Muslim American Life</i> Watch: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQ0dJ8yuF78">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQ0dJ8yuF78</a>
4	February 14	<i>Girl in the Tangerine Scarf</i> <b>Reader Response #1 due</b>
4	February 16	<i>Girl in the Tangerine Scarf</i>
5	February 21	<i>Girl in the Tangerine Scarf</i>
5	February 23	<i>Girl in the Tangerine Scarf</i>
6	February 28	<i>West of Kabul, East of New York</i>
6	March 2	<i>West of Kabul, East of New York</i>
7	March 7	<i>West of Kabul, East of New York</i>
7	March 9	<i>West of Kabul, East of New York</i> <b>Reader Response #2 due</b>
8	March 14	<i>A Map of Home</i>
8	March 16	<i>A Map of Home</i>
9	March 21	<i>A Map of Home</i>
9	March 23	<i>A Map of Home</i> —Begin research for papers <b>Reader response #3 due</b>
	SPRING BREAK	March 27-March 31
10	April 4	“Maryam”

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</b>
10	April 6	Screening of “Maryam” – and excerpt from <i>Together Tea</i>
11	April 11	<i>Sons and Other Flammable Objects</i> – <b>Research Proposal Due</b>
11	April 13	<i>Sons and Other Flammable Objects</i>
12	April 18	<i>Sons and Other Flammable Object</i>
12	April 20	<i>Sons and Other Flammable Objects</i>
13	April 25	<i>The Reluctant Fundamentalist</i>
13	April 27	<i>The Reluctant Fundamentalist</i>
14	May 2	<i>The Reluctant Fundamentalist</i>
14	May 4	<i>The Reluctant Fundamentalist</i> - - <b>Reader Response #4 due</b>
15	May 9	“The Reluctant Fundamentalist”
15	May 11	“The Reluctant Fundamentalist” Rough Draft of Research Paper—Peer Editing Exchange
16	May 16	Final Class—thoughts, reflections, preparation for final
Final Exam	May 20	9:45 am-12 noon (pls. bring green book); final paper due.