THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS
DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

Cultures and Civilizations of the Middle East
Anth. 3100.008 Fall 2012, 6:30-9:20, ENV 110
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Dr. Mahmoud Sadri
Office hours: by appointment
Office hours at TWU, Monday, 3-6 PM

SYLLABUS

Required Readings:
– Bates and Rassam, Peoples and Cultures of the Middle East, New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1983 (pacme for short) Other recommended works introduced throughout the syllabus.
– A Work of fiction from one of the three major cultures of the Middle East: Arabic, Persian, or Turkish. Further information will be furnished in class.
– Class handouts and on-line resources.

Recommended Readings:

Useful Web-sites:
http://gulf2000.columbia.edu
http://www.payvand.com/
http://www.gooya.com

Course Objectives:
– Familiarizing students with a variety of the systematic and narrative approaches to the study of the Middles East.
– Enabling students to use Anthropological perspectives to better understand and analyze a culture not their own.
– Encouraging active engagement in the discussion of current cultural and political developments in the area.
– Creating a critical awareness of the stereotypes and mis-perceptions of the area.

Schedule of classes:

SECTION I. Geography, History, and Demographics of the Middle East
Week 1 Aug. 28
-Introduction : Geo-politics of the Middle East
Readings: pacme, ch. 1

SECTION II. RELIGION: Islam, The Doctrine, and the Culture
Week 2 Sep. 4
Islam: the Doctrine
Readings: pacme ch.2
Recommended: Seid Hossain Nasr, Idea and Reality of Islam, Other sources:

**Week 3 Sep. 11**

*Islam: the Culture*
Readings: pacme ch.3

**SECTION III: ETHNICITY AND HETEROODOX RELIGIONS**

**Week 4 Sep. 18**

*Ethnic and Religious groups*
Readings: pacme, ch. 4

**SECTION IV: PATTERNS OF RESIDENCE AND LIFE: Nomads, Peasants, Urbanites**

**Week 5 Sep. 25**

*Pastoral and Nomadic life*
Readings: pacme, ch. 5

**Week 6 Oct. 2**

*Village Life*
Readings: pacme, ch. 6

**Week 7 Oct. 9**

*Urban Life*
Readings: pacme, ch. 7
Recommended: meca, ch. 5 Other sources: Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages*, V. F. Costello, *Urbanization in the Middle East*

**Week 8 Oct. 16**

Narrative film session

**SECTION V: Family and Kinship Structure**

**Week 9 Oct. 23**

*Marriage and Family*
Readings: pacme, ch. 8
Recommended: ch. 7

**Week 10 Oct. 30**

*Women’s Roles*
Readings: pacme, ch. 9

**SECTION VI: Leadership**

**Week 11 Nov. 6**

*Local power structures*
Readings: pacme, ch. 10
Recommended: meca, ch. 11

**SECTION VII: Challenges and Dilemmas**

**Week 12 Nov. 13**

*Politics and Economy*
Readings: pacme, ch. 11

**SECTION VII: ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND FICTIONAL NARRATIVES**

**Week 13 Nov. 20**

*Anthropological Narratives*
Readings: GS

*Nov. 27 Thanksgiving holiday*

**Week 15 Dec. 4 final papers due**

*Fictional Narratives*
Readings: novels about Arabic, Persian, or Turkish cultures of the Middle East. Main focus: Naguib Mahfouz, *The Palace Walk*

**Method of Evaluation:**

*Weekly Quizzes 50%; final Paper 35% (comprised of Anthropological Narrative, Fictional Narrative, and comparison of texts) Attendance and Participation 15%.*

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**Disability Policy**

Anthropology does not discriminate on the basis of an individual’s disability as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. The program provides adjustment and aids to individuals with disabilities in the program and its activities.