The University Of North Texas
Department Of Anthropology

Course: Anth. 3500
Instructor: Dr. Mahmoud Sadri
Semester: Fall 2015
Time and place: 6:30-9:20, Chem. 352
Office location: TWU, CFO, Rm. 312
Office hours: Monday, 3-6 PM and by appointment
Email: MSadri@mail.TWU.edu

SYLLABUS

Course Objectives:
Upon the completion of this course students will be able to:
1. Recognize narrative approaches to the study of the Middles East and to distinguish them from anthropological approaches.
2. Analyze the current events in the Middle East with the use of the systematic social scientific perspectives so they can better understand and analyze a culture not their own. Encouraging active engagement in the discussion of current cultural and political developments in the area.
3. Recall and apply information presented in the course of the semester to dispel the prevalent stereotypes and misperceptions of the area.

Method of Assessment:
1. The first objective will be achieved by requiring a final Paper comprised of a systematic comparison between Anthropological Narratives, Fictional Narratives, and textbook information. 35% of the grade.
2. The second objective will be achieved by free discussion of daily news from the Middle East during the first half hour of every class. Student attendance and participation in these discussions are mandatory. Each student will bring at least one news item to class from the previous week and teams of students choose themes to be discussed in class. 15% of the grade.
3. The third objective will be achieved by weekly Quizzes 50%

Required Readings:
– Bates and Rassam, Peoples and Cultures of the Middle East, New Jersey, Prentice Hall, latest edition. (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:

Recommended Web-sites:

Schedule of classes:

SECTION I. Geography, History, and Demographics of the Middle East

Week 1 Aug. 27
-Introduction: Geo-politics of the Middle East
Readings: pacme, ch. 1

SECTION II. RELIGION: Islam, The Doctrine, and the Culture

Week 2 Sep.3
Islam: the Doctrine
Readings: pacme ch.2

Week 3 Sep.10
Islam: the Culture
Readings: pacme ch.3

SECTION III: ETHNICITY AND HETERODOX RELIGIONS

Week 4 Sep.17
Ethnic and Religious groups
Readings: pacme, ch. 4

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

Week 5 Sep. 24
Pastoral and Nomadic life
Readings: pacme, ch. 5
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Readings: pacme, ch. 6

Week 7 Oct. 8
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. 15
Narrative film session

SECTION V: Family and Kinship Structure

Week 9 Oct. 22
Marriage and Family
Readings: pacme, ch. 8
Recommended: ch. 7

Week 10 Oct. 29
Women’s Roles
Readings: pacme, ch. 9

SECTION VI: Challenges of a Changing World:

Week 11 Nov. 5
Local power structures
Readings: Excerpts from: The Modern Middle East
Recommended: meca, ch. 11

Week 12 Nov. 12
Living History
Readings: Excerpts from: The Modern Middle East

Week 13 Nov. 19
Politics and Economy
Readings: Excerpts from: The Modern Middle East
Recommended: Clifford Geertz, Islam Observed, Roy Mottahedeh, Mantle of the Prophet, Michael Fischer, Iran: From Religious Dissent to Revolution

Nov. 26 Thanksgiving holiday
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Week 15 Dec. 3  Wrapping up  
*Culture and Future:* 
Readings: Excerpts from: *The Modern Middle East*  
Final papers due

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.
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Final paper

The assigned final paper must incorporate the following:

I. Summary of two books:

First: A Summary of Guests of the Sheikh
1. Summarize and critically analyze Guests of the Sheik
2. Recount at least one episode in which the author realizes how East and West misunderstand each other.
3. How are the “rites of passage”: (birth, marriage, death) celebrated? How do they compare to the Western celebration of similar events?

Second: A Summary of a Middle Eastern novel
Summarize and critically analyze one novel from the list of novels provided below. As you prepare to write your summary, it would be helpful if you explore at some of the following areas:

Emotional lives, Daily preoccupations, Gender and sexuality, Friendships, Status, Treatment of children and adolescents in the family, Class distinctions, Body image, family structures, Religious practices, Political life, Encounter with the West, Extremism, Poverty.

II. Comparison of the three sources:

--Find three parallels/differences between Guests of the Sheik, The novel of your choice, and one of our texts: People and Cultures of the Middle East and Modern Middle East

Paper Format:

Papers must be typed, double spaced, with a cover page (no folders), and 7 - 10 pages long. Projects must include references (including page numbers) in the endnotes.

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Choice of Novels:

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Beside Standard choices for the papers that include one of the following:

**Naghib Mahfouz, “Palace Walk”**  
Arabic

**Orhan Pamuk, “Snow”**  
Turkish

**Dolatabadi, “Missing Salouch”**  
Persian

I am offering other selections for people who may want more choices.

**Arabic**

Egyptian,  
Ala Al Aswani, *Yacoubian Building*

Lebanese,  
Elias Khoury, *Gate of the Son*

Saudi Arabian,  
Rajaa Alsanea, *Girls of Riyadh*

Iraqi,  
Mahmoud Said, *Saddam City*

Palestinian,  
Kanafani, *Men in the Sun, Palestine’s Children*  
Sahar Khalifeh, *Wild Thorns*

Christian-Palestinian,  
Emile Habiby, *The Secret Life of Saeed the Pessoptimist*

Libyan,  
Ibrahim al-Koni, *Gold Dust*

**Turkish**

Shafik Alif, *Bastard of Istanbul*  
Yashar Kemal, *Anatolian Tales*  
Orhan Pamuk, *the Black Book*

**Persian**

Sadiq Hedayat, *Stray Dog, Blind Owl*  
Shahrnush Parsipur, *Censoring an Iranian Love Story*  
Goli Taraqqi, *Winter Sleep*