

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.
- Elizabeth Warnock Fernea, Guests of the Sheik, New York, Anchor Books, 1969, 1989 (GS for short)
- 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:

- Dale Eickelman, The Middle East and Central Asia: An Anthropological Approach, New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1981, 1998 (meca for short)

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 Middle 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

Recommended: meca, ch. 1, Other sources: John Perry, The Middle East: Fourteen Islamic Centuries, Arthur Goldschmidt, A Concise History of the Middle East, John Weeks, The Demography of Islamic Nations, Population Bulletin, Vol 43, no. 4, December 1988

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:

Mohammad Ayoub, Islam, Faith and Practice, Charles Kurzman, (ed.) Liberal Islam

Week 3 Sep. 11

Islam: the Culture

Readings: pacme ch.3

Recommended: meca ch. 10, Other sources: Francis Robinson, (ed.) Cambridge Illustrated History of Islamic World, El Zein, "Beyond Ideology and Theology: The Search For The Anthropology of Islam" in: Annual Review of Anthropology, vol 6, 1977

SECTION III: ETHNICITY AND HETERODOX RELIGIONS

Week 4 Sep. 18

Ethnic and Religious groups

Readings: pacme, ch. 4

Recommended: Omran and Roudi, The Middle East Population Puzzle, Lindholm, "The New Middle Eastern Ethnography" in: J. Roy, Anthropol. Inst. 1995

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

Week 5 Sep. 25

Pastoral and Nomadic life

Readings: pacme, ch. 5

Recommended: meca, ch. 4 Other sources: Nina Swidler: "Sedentarization and Modes of Economic Integration in the Middle East" in: When Nomads Settle, Lois Beck, "Women among Qashqa'i Nomadic Pastoralists in Iran" in: Women in the Muslim World, Irons and Hudson, (ed.) Perspectives on Nomadism,

Week 6 Oct. 2

Village Life

Readings: pacme, ch. 6

Recommended: meca ch. 3 Other sources: Lutfiyya, "Islam and Village Culture", Urban Immigrants and the Revolution" in: Iranian Studies, vol XIII, no.9 1980.

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

Recommended: Elizabeth Warnock Fenea, Middle East Muslim Women Speak, Barbara Aswad, "Women, Class and Power: Examples from the Hatay, Turkey" in: Women in the Muslim World, Leila Ahmed, Women and Gender In Islam, Sherifa Luluhur, Revealing Reveiling: Islamist Gender Ideology in Contemporary Egypt, Fatima Mernissi, The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Right in Islam

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

Recommended: Nikki Keddie, "Is There a Middle East?" in *Int. J. Middle East Stud.* 4 (1973) 255-271; Carl Brown, "The Middle East: Patterns of Change 1947-1987" in: *Middle East Journal*, vol 41, no. 1, Winter 1987

SECTION VII: ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND FICTIONAL NARRATIVES

Week 13 Nov. 20

Anthropological Narratives

Readings: GS

Recommended: Clifford Geertz, Islam Observed, Roy Mottahedeh, Mantle of the Prophet, Michael Fischer, Iran: From Religious Dissent to Revolution

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

Recommended: Sadegh Hedayat, The Blind Owl, Aziz Nasin, Hayri the Barber, Yashar Kemal, Anatolian Tales,

Method of Evaluation:

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

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.