

COURSE DESCRIPTION

No other non-Western region has evoked such strong emotions in the United States as the Middle East. Historically, how have Americans developed their attitudes and images of the region? What types of representation of the Middle East have developed in American culture as a result of our interactions with the region? While all societies engage in stereotyping, under what conditions does stereotyping become linked to power and domination? Have American interactions distorted our understandings of the Middle East? If so, what can we do to rectify misunderstandings of the region? To what extent are American attitudes of the Middle East indicative of attitudes towards the non-Western world as a whole? What light do they shed on how American society has approached the problem of social difference or the other? What role has the creation of Otherness played in the formation of the United States' own political and cultural identity?

In the contemporary era, how has the power imbalance between the United States and the Middle East, as reflected in American regional strategic and economic interests, shaped prevailing conceptualizations of Middle Eastern peoples and societies? In what ways can scholars and educated laymen escape some of the constraints imposed by faulty conceptualizations of the region? How can we escape the weight of tradition?

Course requirements are specified in detail in the *Memorandum of Agreement* attached to this syllabus. They entail regular class attendance, submission of notes on class readings, discussion papers, presentations of readings by discussants, and a research paper. The research paper is due on Monday, May 5. Research project topics will be discussed in class and with the instructor during office hours. Your evaluation will be comprised of discussion papers (20%), research paper (60%) and class participation, reading notes, and periodic quizzes (20%).

My office hours are Friday 11:45-2:30, in Hickman Hall 512, and by appointment. All assignments must be brought to class in hard copy *and* sent to me via the class email listserv: <polisci_451@email.rutgers.edu>. My office telephone is: (732) 932-9322, and my personal email is: <emdavis@rci.rutgers.edu>.

REQUIRED READINGS

(Books are available at the Douglass Cooperative Bookstore, Douglass Campus; contact persons: Deb Nelson, Book Manager, or Carter Smith: (732)932-9017)

Bernstein, Matthew and Gaylyn Studlar, **Visions of the East: Orientalism in Film** (Rutgers)

Sabbagh, Suha, **Sex, Lies and Stereotypes: The Image of Arabs in American Fiction**(ADC)

Said, Edward, **Orientalism** (Pantheon)

Sha'ban, Fuad, **Islam and Arabs in Early American Thought** (Acorn)

COURSE OUTLINE

I. INTRODUCTION (Jan 23)

II. CONCEPTUALIZING THE MIDDLE EAST (Jan. 23, 30, Feb. 6)

Said, *Orientalism*, 1-73, 92-110, 284-328

al-'Azam, Sadek Jalal, "Orientalism and Orientalism in Reverse," *Khamsin*, no. 8 (1981), 5-26 [Douglass Library Reserve (DER) in hard copy and electronic reserve]

Kramer, Martin, *Ivory Towers on Sand: The Failure of Middle Eastern Studies in America* (DER)

Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 57-74 (DER)

Thompson, James, "Mapping the Mind: The Quest for Eastern Metaphors," in *The East, Imagined, Experienced, Remembered*, 18-35 (Art Library Reserve [ALR], College Avenue)

Recommended:

Bernal, Martin, *Black Athenea: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization* (Rutgers), esp. v. I, 1-73

MacKenzie, John, *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts* (Manchester)

Young, Robert, *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West* (Routledge)

Kabbani, Rana, *Europe's Myths of Orient* (Indiana)

*First discussion paper due February 6

III. AMERICA'S ORIENT: EARLY ENCOUNTERS (Feb. 6)

A. Religion and Literature

Sha'ban, *Islam and Arabs in Early American Thought*, 1-63, 141-176 (DER)

B. Missionary Activity

Sha'ban, 83-114 (DER)

IV. THE MIDDLE EAST IN WESTERN SOCIOPOLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS: 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY PERSPECTIVES

A. Orientalist Art (Feb. 13)

Stevens, MaryAnne, ed., *The Orientalists: Delacroix to Matisse*, (ALR) [survey paintings designated by instructor in class]

Ackerman, Gerald, *The American Orientalists* (ALR) [survey paintings designated in class]

Graham-Brown, Sarah, "Orientalism in Color: Review Essay of *The Orientalists: Delacroix to Matisse*," *MERIP Reports*, nos. 124-125 (July-Sept., 1984), 56-59 (DER)

Nochlin, Linda, "The Imaginary Orient," in *The Politics of Vision*, 33-59 (DER)
Davis, John, *The Landscape of Belief*, 3-51 (ALR/DER)

Recommended:

Sweetman, John, "The American Story," *The Oriental Obsession*, 211-250 (ALR)

Berger, John, *Ways of Seeing* (Penguin)

Rosenthal, Donald, *The Near East in French Painting, 800-1880* (ALR)

Jullian, Philippe, *The Orientalists* (ALR)

Thornton, Lynne, *Les Orientalistes* (ALR)

*First research project report and bibliography due Feb. 13

B. Travelogues and Domestic Tourism (Feb. 13, 20)

Sha'ban, 115-140

Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, v. II, Chap. XVI, 480-529; Chap. XXIV, 586-630, Chap. XXXI, 684-702 (DER)

Celik, Zeftep. *Displaying the Orient*, 1-15, 17-49, 80-88, 153-198 (ALR/DER)

Eric Davis, "Representations of the Middle East at American World, 1876-1904," IN *The United States and the Middle East: Cultural Encounters*, eds. Abbas Amanat and Magnus Berhardsson, New Haven: Center for International and Area Studies, 2002, 342-381.

Dos Passos, John, *Orient Express*, 73-75, 96-102 (DER)

Hansen, Eric, *Motoring With Mohammed: Journeys to Yemen and the Red Sea*, 1-35, 70-87 (DER)

Recommended:

Lears, Jackson, *No Place of Grace: Anti-Modernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920*, 4-58, 98-139 (Pantheon)

*Second discussion paper due February 20

C. Photography (Feb. 27, Mar. 5)

Perez, Nissan N., *Focus East: Early Photography in the Near East, 1839-1885*, 15-119 (ALR) [skim text and survey designated photographs]

Graham-Brown, *Palestinians and Their Society, 1880-1946: A Photographic Essay*, (ALR) [skim text and survey designated photographs]

Graham-Brown, Sarah, *Images of Women: The Portrayal of Women in the Photography of the Middle East, 1860-1950*, (ALR) [skim text and survey designated photographs]

Recommended:

Alloula, Malek, *The Colonial Harem*

*Second research project report due March 5

D. Film and Popular Culture (Mar. 12)

Bernstein, Matthew and Gaylyn Studlar, *Visions of the East: Orientalism in Film*, 19-98

Hansen, Miriam, *Babel & Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film*, 245-294 (DER)

Michalak, Laurence, *Cruel and Unusual: Negative Images of Arabs in American Popular Culture*, entire

Recommended:

Slide, Anthony, "The Sheik," in *Selected Film Criticism*, 261-262

Kupferberg, Audrey, "The Sheik," in Frank Magill, ed., *Magill's Survey of Cinema*, 964-968

Bodeen, DeWitt, "Beau Geste," *Magill's Survey of Cinema*, 135-137

*Third discussion paper due Mar. 26

V. CONCEPTUALIZING THE MIDDLE EAST IN THE POST-COLONIAL ERA

A. The Middle East Through the Prism of Religion (April 2)

Singerman, R., "The Jew As Racial Alien: The Genetic Component of American Anti-Semitism," in D. Gerber (ed.), *Anti-Semitism in American History*, 103-128 (DER)

Said, Edward, *Covering Islam*, 75-125 (DER)

Naipaul, V.S., *Among the Believers*, 3-36 (DER)

B. The Middle East Through the Prism of Terrorism (April 2)

Lewis, Bernard, "Islamic Terrorism?," in Benjamin Netanyahu, ed., *Terrorism: How the West Can Win*, 65-69 (DER)

Chomsky, Noam, "Middle East Terrorism and the American Ideological System," in E. Said and C. Hitchens, eds., *Blaming the Victims*, pp. 97-147 (DER)

Rifas, L., "The Image of Arabs in U.S. Comic Books," *Itchy Planet*, no. 2 (Summer 1988), 11-14 (DER)

Recommended:

Herge, *The Adventures of Tintin: the Pharaoh's Cigars; The Land of Black Gold*

*Third research project report due Apr. 2

C. The Middle East Through the Prism of the Mass Media (Apr. 9)

Kellner, Douglas, *The Persian Gulf TV War*, 56-108 (DER)

Nimmo, Dan and Jack Coombs, *Nightly Horrors: Crisis Coverage by Television Network News*, 140-178 (DER)

Shaheen, Jack, *The TV Arab*, 21-39, 55-70, 113-134 (DER)

Selected political cartoons comparing anti-Semitism and Arab stereotypes, to be distributed by instructor

*Fourth research project report due Apr. 9

D. The Middle East Through the Prism of Modern Literature (Apr. 16)

Sabbagh, *Sex, Lies and Stereotypes*, entire

Uris, Leon, *The Hajj*, 5-140 (DER)

Recommended

Livingston, Harold, *To Die in Babylon*, 3-106 (DER)

*Fourth discussion paper due Apr. 16

VII. PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH PROJECTS (Apr. 23, 30)

VII. COURSE EVALUATION (Apr. 30)

VIII. SUBMISSION OF RESEARCH PAPERS (May 7)

Memorandum of Agreement

As a student enrolled in *Critical Perspectives on the Middle East* for the 2003 Spring Semester, you will need to adhere to the following rules for this class. These rules are intended to ensure the smooth functioning of the class and that each student derives the maximum benefit from it. Failure to do so will result in a failing grade for the course.

1) Because a seminar requires active student participation, regular class attendance is required. Students are permitted one unexcused absence per semester. For each additional unexcused absence, the student's final evaluation will be reduced one half grade, e.g., from an A to a B+. Unless there

is an emergency, if an absence is to be excused, the student must inform the instructor *prior to* and not after the class takes place.

2) Students cannot actively participate in seminar discussions if they do not complete course readings. Therefore, students are required to complete readings for each class session *before* the session meets. Students must bring to class a short set of typed questions and/or comments on each class reading. Because class participation constitutes 20% of your grade, failure to complete readings for the sessions in which they are due will negatively affect your performance in this course.

3) Discussion papers should be a maximum of 2-3 pages in length and must include: a) the main question or issue being raised by the author(s); b) the significance of the reading for purposes of our class; and c) your critical comments on the reading, e.g., do you agree or disagree with the author(s)' perspective and why, or, were there issues that the author(s) raised that were confusing and need class discussion. Due dates for each of the 4 papers are indicated in the syllabus. The discussion papers should also be sent to the instructor at his personal email address.

4) Each class reading or set of readings will be presented by 2 discussants. The questions that the discussants raise should be sent to the class list serv *at least* one day before the class meets, i.e., Thursday at the latest. The 2 discussants should develop a unified set of questions for class discussion for all of the readings for which they are responsible.

5) Students are expected to begin work during the second week of classes on their final research project. A small amount of funds are available for travel to libraries outside Rutgers University to conduct research. Students should meet with the instructor at least three times during the semester to discuss their research projects. Students are expected to submit progress reports on their research papers according to the dates indicated in the syllabus.

6) Research projects should be at least 20 pages in length, excluding footnotes and bibliography. The prospectus on the research paper must clearly delineate the main question or questions that are being raised, the significance of the topic, a set of hypotheses to be studied, and the resources that will be used in researching the paper. All research papers *must* have a historical section which relates to the paper's topic.

7) Hard copies of all materials sent to the instructor and class list serv should be kept in a file by each student in the event of the loss of computer files.

8) Students are encouraged to use the class listserv to continue discussions that were begun in class, to raise issues which they would like to discuss further with the instructor and the class, or to raise questions about issues with which they are having difficulties.