Arabic 330: Arabic Culture  
M 4:00pm-6:40pm | LL 408

Instructor | Reem Hazboun  
Office Hours | M 2:00pm – 4:00pm, LL Reference Area  
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General Information

This course is a general survey of the culture of the Arabic-speaking peoples of the world, as reflected in history, literature, the arts, political/social institutions, and the Arab media. Through in-class lectures and discussion, as well as written scholarship, literature, and film, students will examine some of the historical, political, social, religious, and artistic influences that have shaped the Arabic speaking regions in the Middle East. Since such a course could not possibly offer a comprehensive analysis of all events, figures, movements, and institutions in the region’s history, the aim of the course rather is to familiarize students with the major themes that have triggered the formation of a distinct culture in the region to provide a starting point for further, more detailed explorations later in academic careers.

Courses that fulfill the 9-unit requirement for Explorations in General Education take the goals and skills of GE Foundations courses to a more advanced level. The three upper division courses in Explorations will provide greater interdisciplinary, more complex and in-depth theory, deeper investigation of local problems, and wider awareness of global challenges. More extensive reading, written analysis involving complex comparisons, well-developed arguments, considerable bibliography, and use of technology are appropriate in many Explorations courses.

This is an Explorations course in the Humanities and Fine Arts. Completing this course will help students to do the following in greater depth: 1) analyze written, visual, or performed texts in the humanities and fine arts with sensitivity to their diverse cultural contexts and historical moments; 2) describe various aesthetic and other value systems and the ways they are communicated across time and cultures; 3) argue from multiple perspectives about issues in the humanities that have personal and global relevance; 4) demonstrate the ability to approach complex problems and ask complex questions drawing upon knowledge of the humanities.

In addition to this, the course has the following specific course objectives:

1- To explore the meaning of “Arabic Culture,” both in its unity and diversity.
2- To stimulate analysis through the use of multiple media and sources of information to develop ideas, theories and conclusions about the topic.
3- To put into practice speaking, writing, analytical skills to convey thoughts and impressions about the topic of the culture of Arabic speaking peoples.

This syllabus does not bind the course’s instructor to specific details and the instructor retains the right to adjust the course design. Major departures from the syllabus, however, especially with regard to student learning outcomes, major assignment/exam due dates, and grading policies shall be made only for compelling reasons.

This official syllabus and any future updates will be posted to the SDSU BlackBoard and the SDSU Library Syllabus Collection Database. Any major updates will also be announced in class, communicated to all students electronically.
Required Text

- Marvin E. Gettleman & Stuart Schaar (eds). *The Middle East and Islamic World Reader*. Third Edition. (This text will be abbreviated as MEIWR throughout the syllabus).

Grading

General Policies:

1- LATE WORK IS NOT ACCEPTED, NOT EVEN FOR PARTIAL CREDIT.
2- THERE ARE NO MAKE-UPS FOR QUIZZES AND EXAMS.
3- THERE IS ZERO TOLERANCE FOR CHEATING OR PLAGIARISM IN THIS COURSE. ANYONE WHO CHEATS OR PLAGIARIZES (I.E. COPIES WORDS FROM A SOURCE – INCLUDING A WEBSITE – WITHOUT CITING THAT SOURCE) WILL RECEIVE AN “F” IN THE COURSE AND WILL BE REPORTED. IF YOU ARE UNSURE OF WHAT CONSTITUTES PLAGIARISM, PLEASE FOLLOW THIS LINK.

Map Quiz 5%

There will be a map quiz administered on the second scheduled class day including questions on identifying Arabic speaking nation in addition to some questions about capital cities and linguistic diversity in the region. To prepare, study the map of the Middle East and North Africa and complete minimal research on languages spoke in the region.

Film Review: 20%

There is a required 750 word review of one of two films shown in class. Students will be required to follow a format outlined by the instructor prior to the assignment due date. The goal will be to convey the effectiveness of the film in balancing and conveying the following: historical context, cultural themes, public opinion, and - last but not least - how artistic tools were used to illustrate this. No late submissions or substituting films.

Participation: 15%

The lectures and readings for this course complement each other, and therefore attendance is crucial. The instructor will pass around an attendance sheet at the beginning of each class session to better gauge participation during that particular class period. Please note that attendance is NOT mandatory and that ZERO points will be deducted for missing a class – however – if you are not in class, you cannot receive any participation points and therefore your absence can negatively impact you in this way. Additionally, being late or leaving early can also negatively impact your participation as it is disruptive to the class and can be counted against you.

Regular class days will begin with a lecture on major historical points, followed by an instructor lead analysis of selected artistic or popular culture items relevant to the historical period. Then, either full class or small group discussions will take place and be overseen by the instructor. Students are expected to fully participate in these discussions. Participation
does not entail simply showing up to class but rather making thoughtful observations and raising meaningful questions during discussion. Discussion points are based on both small-group and full-class discussions. Failure to contribute to discussion will result in the final grade being **significantly** lowered for this portion of the course. Please note that disruption during class will be penalized as deduction from participation grades (including arriving late or leaving early). In class disruptions include speaking out of turn or side conversations, cell phone use, laptop use, gum chewing or eating food. Only drinks will be allowed in class. Any student seen using a cell phone will be asked to leave for the remainder of that class session, which may negatively impact participation grades. This includes a cell phone ringing or vibrating during class.

**It is highly recommended that cell phones are completely powered down and put away during class as to avoid this type of penalty.**

**In-Class Presentation: 20%**

Mid-semester, students will be divided into groups of 3, and be required to select one Middle Eastern country to conduct a 10-15 minute presentation on at the end of the semester. Two class days will be reserved for these presentations and attendance by all is mandatory as response to the presentation of others will count towards the grade for your own presentation and questions about the presentations will be on the final. Two subject areas will need to be covered by presenters to be chosen from the following:

1- Current Events: Assessment will be based on breadth of covered spanning mainly the past two years in the history of the given nation.
2- Cultural significance of one the nation’s largest cities: history, landmarks, events, etc.
3- Food: Description, recipe and sample. Historical significance/back story if applicable.
4- Religion and its impact on the nation. This should include coverage of variety of religions (if applicable) with demographics, religious movements, trends, impacts of religion on: law, language, tourism, popular culture, economy, etc.

All presentations must include the following:

Basic facts about nation including all the following: population, current leader, official country name, climate, major imports and exports, religious and ethnic minority data, some info on popular culture and tourist attractions.

**Midterm: 20%**

**Final: 20%**
Course Calendar, Page 1

Week 1: August 25th
  Course Overview, Meaning of 'Culture,' Pre-Islamic Arabia and the Rise of Islam
  Assignment Due 9/8: Read MEIWR pages 5-17, Study for Map Quiz.

September 1st: No Class, Labor Day

Week 2: September 8th
  MAP QUIZ, Islam: Empire of Faith
  Assignment Due 9/15: Read MEIWR pages 37-40.

Week 3: September 15th
  The Umayyad and Abbasid Periods

Week 4: September 22nd
  The Ottoman Empire

Week 5: September 29th
  Zionism and the Arab-Israeli Conflict
  Assignment Due 10/6: Study for Midterm Exam.

Week 6: October 6th
  Midterm Exam
  Assignment Due 10/20: Read MEIWR pages 194-198 and other selected poems.

Week 7: October 13th
  Film I: Budrus + Discussion
  Assignment Due: 750-word Film Review (if reviewing Budrus) – submit via email by 10/20 at 7:00pm.

Week 8: October 20th
  The World War Impact, Independence, Impacts of the Cold War

Week 9: October 27th
  Film II: The Battle of Algiers + Discussion/Group Activity

November 3rd No Class
  Meet with group members to prepare for presentations
  Assignment Due: Prepare for presentations

Week 10: November 10th
  Presentations
  Assignment Due: Prepare for presentations

Week 11: November 17th
  Presentations
  Assignment Due 11/24: Read MEIWR pages 317-324, 332-334, 353-375, (will discuss 337-353 in class 11/24).
Course Calendar, Page 2

Week 12: November 24th
   Late 20th Century, the Early 21st Century and The Arab Spring
   Assignment Due 12/1: Cartoon Analysis

Week 13: December 1st
   Film III: The Dreams of Sparrows + Discussion
   Assignment Due: 750-word Film Review (if reviewing The Dreams of Sparrows) – submit via email by 12/8 at 7:00pm.

Week 14: December 8th
   Contemporary Culture in Arabic speaking nations
   Assignment Due: Study for Final Exam

Finals Week: December 11th – 17th

Final Exam: Monday, Dec. 15, 2014 4pm – 6pm