

## Anthropology 250:

### Introduction to Middle East Studies

Fall 2017

Prof. Diane Baxter

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T/U 12-1:20

GER 242

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#### **1. Course Materials**

Books: (Available at the UO Bookstore)

Ahmed, Leila. 1999. *A Border Passage*. New York: Penguin Books. (Pp. 336)

Matar, Hisham. 2016. *The Return: Fathers, Sons, and the Land in between*. New York: Random House

Articles and Chapters: (Available online on the course's CANVAS site; see the end of this syllabus for a complete list of those readings)

#### **11. Course Description**

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) was of central importance in the development of agriculture, cities, mathematics, science, and western religious traditions. In the contemporary period, while some MENA countries have the fastest-growing economies globally and the region is home to vast supplies of oil, over 88% of the people are under 24 years old, poverty has not declined since 2005 due to rapid population growth, and inequality is growing. Many MENA countries are undergoing extreme political instabilities and revolts continue to rock the region, engaging the concern and response of countries outside the MENA, including the United States. The region, then, both historically and contemporarily, holds global significance.

In this course, there are two primary foci, which may appear at first to be unrelated, but we will see they are linked. The first focus is on the factors involved in the instability/tensions/conflicts/revolts/wars in the MENA today. The second focus is on everyday life in the MENA. Beyond regional instabilities, there are people living their lives. What are those lives like? What is important to people? What are the relationships between everyday life ways, norms, and values and the instabilities rocking the region? What are the local challenges people face and how do their lives interrelate with regional and global trends and challenges?

## 111. Expected Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Examine the diversity within individual MENA countries based on class, gender, age, and level of education
- Examine the political histories, especially of colonialism, in many MENA countries
- Describe the factors implicated in the development of national, familial, religious, and personal identities in MENA countries
- Explain the (re)formulation of identities within the contexts of post-colonialism and globalization
- Analyze current political instability and revolts in MENA countries and see how these may relate to political histories and global forces
- Describe the diversity among MENA countries based on historical experiences, historical memory, and socio/economic/cultural/religious factors

## IV. Estimated Student Workload

The primary workload for students includes regularly attending and actively participating in class, doing all the assigned readings in a timely way, and completing all assignments on time. On the average, students will read approximately 100 pages per week, which should take about 4-5 hours.

## V. How Grades Will Be Determined: Requirements

Section Attendance	10 points	
Midterm	25 points	
Conversation	20 points	
Country Summary	15 points	*group grade
Final Exam	30 points	
Total Points Possible	100 points	

1. **Attendance:** I want to encourage and recognize student attendance in discussion sections so for each section attended, students receive one point. Points in section can definitely make a difference in your grade. All you have to do is show up!

2. **Midterm Exam:** The midterm exam consists of three essay questions and covers weeks 1-4 of our course. For the midterm, students are responsible for all lectures, discussions, readings, and films. All students answer question #1 (worth 10 points) and select two additional questions to answer (5 points each) for a total of 20 points possible. **Due on CANVAS on Sunday, Oct. 22 at Noon**

3. **Conversation:** Students will write a 5-page conversation between/among the characters in our readings/films. Students will choose the characters they will use from a minimum of two sources, set the scene, and create the conversation. There are many themes that we will examine in each of these sources and students will select one or more of the themes (ones we've discussed or another one) that the characters will discuss. Details to follow. Your conversation paper is worth 20 points. **Due on CANVAS on**

**Sunday, Nov. 12 at Noon.**

**4. Country Project:** In our quest to begin to understand the current challenges and crises in many Middle Eastern/North African countries, during week one in discussion sections, students will be assigned a country case study. Each discussion section will have two countries, ½ of the students in the section will be assigned to one of those two countries, and the other ½ will be assigned the other country. Students will research particular issues about their country and this process will coincide with the weekly topics in our course as follows:

Week 2: Colonial history of your country

Week 4: Gender issues

Week 6: Globalization

Week 8: Economics

Week 10: Religion

During the weeks listed above, students will present the information they've gathered on the week's topic to their classmates. At the end of week ten's discussion section, students, as a group will submit a written summary of the above topics. Summaries should be approximately 10 pages, two page per topic. Your project is worth 15 points, 3 points per topic. To be clear, your group submits ONE paper for all students in the group. Your group will decide how the work will be divided. You will receive a group grade.

**Due: Wednesday, Nov. 29, in your discussion section.**

**5. Final Exam:** The final exam consists of three essay questions and covers weeks 6-10 of our course. For the final, students are responsible for all lectures, discussions, readings, and films. All students answer question #1 (worth 15 points) and select two additional questions to answer (5 points each) for a total of 25 points possible. Due: **On CANVAS on Tuesday, Dec. 5 at Noon.**

**6. Extra Credit Possibilities:** On Friday, Oct. 27, a symposium will be held on campus entitled Islamic Feminism/Activism. The conference will have morning and afternoon sessions. Students who attend the morning OR afternoon session and write a 1-2 page response to the session will receive 3 points. Students who attend the morning AND afternoon session and write a 2-3 page response to the sessions will receive 5 points. If you are unable to attend on Oct. 27, you can receive 3-5 points for submitting a 1-3 page review (as if you were a film critic) of one of the following films, all of which are available on You Tube, with English subtitles: Asma, Taste of Cherry, About Elly, Turtles Can Fly, Dear Mr. Waldman.

Written responses/reviews for the symposium or the film are due in class no later than

**Wednesday, Nov. 15, in discussion section.**

You may **NOT** receive extra credit for both the symposium and the film!

## **VI. How Grades Are Determined: Standards for Grading**

\*These standards are set by the Department of Anthropology for all courses.

A+: Quality of student's performance significantly exceeds all requirements and expectations required for an A grade. Very few, if any, students receive this grade

in a given course.

A: Quality of performance is outstanding relative to that required to meet course requirements; demonstrates mastery of course content at the highest level.

B: Quality of performance is significantly above that required to meet course requirements; demonstrates mastery of course content at a high level.

C: Quality of performance meets the course requirements in every respect; demonstrates adequate understanding of course content.

D: Quality of performance is at the minimal level necessary to pass the course, but does not fully meet the course requirements; demonstrates a marginal understanding of course content.

F: Quality of performance in the course is unacceptable and does not meet the course requirements; demonstrates an inadequate understanding of course content.

## VII. Grading Rubric

A+	98+	C+	78-79
A	93-97	C	73-77
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	88-89	D	62-69 (no pluses or minuses given)
B	83-87	F	61 and below
B-	80-82		

Points are not rounded up so, for example, a score of 87.5 translates to a B grade. Please don't ask for your grade to be rounded up. The answer will be "no!"

## VIII. Grading Policies

**Policy on Late Assignments:** It is very important to turn in all assignments on time. It is rare that extensions will be granted. If you have an emergency that requires you to ask for an extension, you must do so before the assignment is due. No extensions will be granted for the reading response papers.

If you ask for and are granted an extension on your conversation, a new date will be determined.

If you have not been granted an extension and you turn your conversation in late, points will be taken off as follows:

- ◆ 5 points if the assignment is turned in within 24 hours after the due date
- ◆ 10 points for papers turned in 24-48 hours after the due date

No conversations will be accepted after that.

If you ask for an extension on your final exam and it is granted, the new due date will be 24 hours after the original due date. No final exams will be accepted after that. If you have not been granted an extension and turn in your final exam within 24 hours after the due date, 10 points will be taken off. No final essays will be accepted after that.

**Policy on Incompletes:** By university regulations, incompletes can only be considered if a student has finished almost all of the course work. Taking an incomplete is generally not a good idea. Many students who take incompletes never complete the course and wind up with an automatic FAIL. Therefore, incompletes are rarely given and are solely at the discretion of the instructor.

### **IX. Students with Documented Disabilities**

It is important to be in touch with the instructor early in the quarter. Accommodations will gladly be made.

### **X. Academic Honesty**

Students at the UO are expected to act with academic honesty. It is the official policy of the University of Oregon that all acts of alleged academic dishonesty by students must be reported to the Director of Student Conduct and Community Standards in the Office of Student Life. The two most prevalent forms of academic dishonesty are cheating and plagiarism. For more information, see the UO website at <https://studentlife.uoregon.edu/conduct>.

### **XI. Weekly Schedule**

#### **Week One    Context**

9/26            People, Language, Culture

9/28            Unrest, Uprisings, ISIS

Read:            *Begin A Border Passage*  
Mahfouz, *Norwegian Rat*

#### **Week Two    Colonial Realities & State-Making**

10/3            Colonial Histories

10/5            Making of the State—Jordan Case Study

Read:            Fromkin, Middle East Map  
Ghosh, *In An Antique Land*, excerpts  
Continue *A Border Passage*

#### **Week Three    Narratives**

10/10           The Case of Israel and Palestine

10/12 Film: *The Attack* (DVD 05674//95 minutes) (Class ends at 1:50pm)

Read: Chafets, Red Toenails and a Blue Tattoo  
Costanti, The Politics of Reconciliation  
Continue reading *A Border Passage*

**Week Four The Challenge of Identity**

10/17 *The Attack* discussion and *A Border Passage* (Colonialism and Identity)

10/19 *A Border Passage* discussion (Gender, Islam, and the West)

Read: Finish *A Border Passage* (by Tuesday)

**Week Five Divisions & Collisions 1: Gender and Class**

10/24 Watch film: *Wadjda*

**Class ends at 1:50**

10/26 Discuss *Wadjda*

Read: Begin reading *The Return*  
Baxter, Honor Thy Sister

10/29

**Week Six Forces Inside and Out**

10/31 Globalization

11/2 Guest Speaker: Awab al-Rawe

Read: Fahmi, Fragmenting a Metropolis  
Continue reading *The Return*

**Week Seven Authoritarianism, Identity, Trauma**

11/7 Discuss *The Return*

11/9 Discuss *The Return*

Read: Bellin, Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East  
Finish *The Return* (by Tuesday)

**Week Eight Oil and Economics**

11/14 The Effects of Oil

11/16 Inequalities

Read: Ross, Will Oil Drown the Arab Spring  
Ross, Oil, Islam, and Women

**Week Nine Divisions and Collisions 2: Religion and Power**

11/21 Sunni-Shia Divide and Power

11/23 **Thanksgiving**

Read: CFR, Sunni-Shi'a Divide

**Week Ten Divisions and Collisions 3: Generational/Ideological/Reflections**

11/28 Generational/Ideological Tensions in Tehran

11/30 Continue Generational/Ideological Tensions  
Concluding Exercise

Read: Khosravi, *The Third Generation* (Ch. 5) and *Culture of Defiance* (Ch. 6)

**Readings, Articles and Book Chapters**

Ghosh, Amitav. 1992. *In An Antique Land*. New York: Vintage Books. (Pp. 353)

Khosravi, Shahram. 2008. *Young and Defiant in Tehran*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. (Pp. 176)