ANTHROPOLOGY 4020
CULTURES OF ISRAEL AND THE MIDDLE EAST
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University of Colorado, Boulder

Wednesday: 4-6:30pm
Office Hours: 2:30pm -4pm
HALE 240

Course Description
In the Middle East the history of the countries in the region are interwoven with one another, thus it is of utmost importance to study these cultures as individual cultures as well as each culture as part of the region. This is because the political, social and religious factors play a pivotal part in the construction of these cultures. In recent decades, there has been growing interest in the study of Middle Eastern societies and in particular in the relationship between the Muslim states and Israel.

This course introduces the students to the social structure of contemporary Middle Eastern societies and their interwoven history. More specifically, it investigates the cultural phenomena of these societies and the interaction and cultural exchange between them. In the past western societies colonized this region and attempted to impose their "superior" cultures and so to speak "to tame the wild". However, in recent decades the acknowledgement of the importance of these cultures to the world became evident. To begin with the population of the Islamic world is growing rapidly, and the west cannot ignore this fact. Secondly one must remember that Israel has been in existence for only sixty years in the heart of the Near East, a fact that a major section of the Muslim world still refuses and does not accept. Although Islam dealt with the Jewish communities from the inception of Islam, the relationship between the Muslims and Jews was of superiority-subordination, majority-minority nature where Jews were considered as dimi (inferior status) which were always given to the mercy of the Muslims in all spheres of life. And for the first time in the history of Islam it had to deal with Jews as a free nation amongst other nations, in particular within the Middle East.

This course deals with the evolvement of a new era in the Middle East where the nations in the Middle Eastern region are forced to deal with one another and in the process there is an ongoing social interaction and cultural exchange. A special attention is given to the influence of the state, religion, education and the rise of political Islam on their cultures. Can we separate religion from culture?

The course is divided into several sections: The first introduces the students to the Middle Eastern societies and their history, and the social characteristics of the region. The second discusses the conflict of the Middle East and its influence on the culture and way of life of each nation under the influence of Islam and Judaism. The third discusses the relationship between modernity and tradition, and its influence on the cultural characteristics of each society, highlighting areas such as education, equal rights, women' position, values and customs etc.

The course format is lecture and class discussion. The sources for the course include textual material and visual material such as selected videotapes.
Required Readings: (available for purchase in the CU Bookstore).
These books are part of the required readings for the course. These in addition to
materials from books and journals will be available to you in the library, on
BLACKBOARD or distributed to you in class.

Barakat Halim, *The Arab World: Society, Culture, and State*. University of
California Press, 1993

Salzman Philip Carl, *Culture and Conflict in the Middle East*. Humanity Books
(imprint of Prometheus Books), 2008


1. Accommodations due to disability.
If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit a letter to the
Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs be addressed. Disability
Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-
492-8671, Willard 322, and [http://www.colorado.EDU/disabilityservices](http://www.colorado.EDU/disabilityservices)
Disability Services' letters for students with disabilities indicate legally mandated
reasonable accommodations. The syllabus statements and answers to Frequently
Asked Questions can be found at: [http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices](http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices).
If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see guidelines at:
[http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/go.cgi?select=temporary.html](http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/go.cgi?select=temporary.html)

2. Religious observances.
Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort
to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations,
have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance.
See full details at [http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html).
Calendar of the religious holidays most commonly observed by CU-Boulder students
is at [http://www.interfaithcalendar.org/](http://www.interfaithcalendar.org/)

3. Class room Behavior Conduct.
Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning
environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to
discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect
to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics,
sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are
provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your
request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of
this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my
records. See policies at [http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html) and at
[http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_cod](http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_cod)

4. Policy on Discrimination and Harassment
If any student believes s/he has been the subject of sexual harassment or
discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age,
disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the
Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of
Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH and the resources
available to assist individuals regarding harassment or discrimination can be obtained at [http://www.colorado.edu/odh](http://www.colorado.edu/odh)

5. Honor Code
All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-735-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Other information can be found at [http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html) and at [http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/](http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/)

6. Requirements & Expectations
Students must be prepared for each class. Students are responsible for the preparation of all the material detailed in the syllabus below, as well as any additional texts and assignments that may be added during the semester. It is essential that all work must be completed and submitted on time. Extensions will be given only with the doctor's note.

Grades will be based on the following:
1. Class attendance and Participation 10%
2. Two reading assignments 20% (Review papers)
3. Take-home exam (due on day of final) 70%

- Islam: Empire of Faith, by Gardner Films
- The Band Visit (A visit of a an Egyptian police band to Israel)
- The Middle East (Part I: Israeli, Sinai, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, Part Two: The Arab Gulf States)
- Kandahar

Bibliography (a tentative list)

Class Schedule: *(please note that changes may be made by instructor.)*

8/26 Organizational Session and Introduction to the course

Part I: History and Background

Salzman Philip Carl, *Culture and Conflict in the Middle East*. Humanity Books (imprint of Prometheus Books), 2008, pp. chapters 2 and 4


- Film: *Islam: Empire of Faith*, by Gardner Films (or)
- *The Middle East* (Part I: Israel, Sinai, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, Part Two: The Arab Gulf States)

**Part II: Social Structures Institutions: classes, religion and politics**


**Part III: Family Kinship and Gender**

9/23  First assignment is due at the beginning of this class


**Part IV: The Dynamics of Arab Culture**


Part V: Israeli Society, Rebirth, and Arab Nationalism


Film The Forgotten Refugees, followed by discussion.


Part VI: Israel and Palestine

Second assignment is due at the beginning of this class

- **The Band Visit** (A visit of an Egyptian police band to Israel)

**Part VII: Iraq and Iran**


**11/23-11/25 FALL BREAK – NO CLASS ON 25TH**

**Part VIII: Egypt, the influence of Religion on Culture**


- **Film: The Thief and the Dogs** (According to Naguib Mahfouz, the Egyptian Nobel Price winner in Literature)

**Part IX: Civil Society, Religion and Democracy**


**Conclusion**


- **Film: Kandahar**
Guidelines for reading and writing Summaries

In order to help you read, understand and write the major arguments, and/or analysis, and/or the framework of the author or the article you should pay attention to the following:

What is the main argument?
How the author(s) substantiate her/his argument(s)/analysis etc?
What did you learn from the article?
How did the article contribute to your understanding of the subject?

Summaries should be approximately 1200 words, 1.5 spaced, Times New Roman.

You can prepare these summaries in pairs, if you do please hand in one copy with both names on it. You may bring it to class on the day of submission.

The papers for the two reviews will be allocated at the beginning of the term.