

Winter 2013

COM 210

Teaching the Middle East through literature and Film

In this class, students will read 20th century works of fiction and poetry and watch films from various countries in the Middle East, In addition to analyzing and interpreting these literary and cinematic works, students will also learn how to incorporate them into comparative literature and cultural studies courses and into courses on the history, culture, social and political developments in the modern Middle East. Course readings will also include works of cultural theory and criticism by Edward Said, Talal Asad, Fredrick Jameson, Joseph Massad and others.

Readings for Week 1

Orientalism Edward Said Introduction+ Chapter 1 “The Scope of Orientalism”

Sudanese Short Story “Doum Tree of Wad Hamid” Tayeb Salih (available as e-book through UCD library)

Readings for Week 2

Desiring Arabs, Joseph Massad
Introduction+ Chapter 1 “Anxiety in Civilization”

“An Egyptian Childhood” + Excerpt from “The Future of Culture in Egypt” by Taha Husayn (Egypt)

Readings for Week 3

“Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism,” Fredric Jameson
Social Text,15, Autumn 1986

“Jameson’s Rhetoric of Otherness and the “National Allegory,” Aijaz Ahmad
Social Text, 17, Autumn 1987

2 Short Stories “A Happy Occasion” + “That Beautiful Undiscovered Voice” from *The Wiles of Men* by Salwa Bakr (Egypt)

Readings for Week 4:

Film: “Is it Chaos?”

Readings for Week 5:

Genealogies of Religion Talal Asad chapter 1 “The Construction of Religion as An Anthropological Category” + chapter 2” “The Concept of Ritual”

Novella: *Al-Mahdi* by Abdel-Hakim Qasim (Egypt)

Readings for Week 6:

Formations of The Secular Talal Asad Introduction+ Chapter 1 “What might an Anthropology of Secularism look like?” + Chapter 6 “Secularism, Nation-State, Religion.

Novella: *Year of the Elephant* Leila Abou Zeid (Morocco)

Readings for Week 7:

“Zionism From the Standpoint of Its Victims,” Edward Said

Novella: *Khirbit Khizeh* S.Yizhar (Israel)

Short Story: “The Swimming Contest” Benjamin Tamuz (Israel)

Readings for Week 8

The Persistence of the Palestinian Question Joseph Massad

“Introduction: The opposite of terror”+ “The post-colonial colony: time, space and bodies in Palestine/Israel,”

Novella: *Returning to Haifa*

Ghassan Kanafani (Palestine)

Readings for Week 9

Novel: *Wild Thorns*

Sahar Khalifeh (Palestine)

Week 10: No Readings due

Movie: Lemon Tree

Grading:

Students will be assigned weekly presentation topics. Class presentations and meaningful participation the class discussions constitute 70% of the grade.

30% of the grade is allocated to a final project which can be either a traditional research paper on at least two of the works discussed during the course. Specific topics must be discussed with instructor beforehand.

Or

A sample syllabus incorporating some of the works discussed in class in conjunction with relevant and appropriate others of the student's choice. The syllabus must have an introduction explaining the rationale for the choice of reading material and some comments about how to present them in the American academic setting.