

People, Culture, and Change in the Middle East

Class: 8:00 - 9:45 O'Conr 206, Tuesday, Thursday
Instructor: Dr. Mary Elaine Hegland, O'Conr 318, 554-4646
Office Hours: Tuesday, Thursday 1:40 - 2:40 Or by appointment

The Middle East has been very much in the minds of Americans in the last several years. Revolution in Iran in 1979; Islamic "resurgence" and "fundamentalism"; women in veils; the war against Iraq in 1991; Israel-Palestinian conflict; oil power; and finally, 9/11, the Taliban, El Qaida, the 2003 Iraq War with the continuing insurgency since then, and the Abu Ghraib Prison scandal--are some of the phenomena which have caught the attention of Americans. But most often, attention is on national and international processes and conflicts and on negative stereotypes. Much less often are we introduced to ordinary individuals as people with hopes, fears, problems and special qualities; everyday life, customs, culture, and literature; and community level social and political processes. In this course we will concentrate on the latter aspects of the Middle East and how local level life is connected with national and international level processes. Through films and case studies about people in local communities, we will experience at closer range what life is like for Middle Easterners. The main topics of the course are family, women, and gender; religion--Islam; political conflicts and processes; change; and local community versus national integration and globalization as related to the Middle East. We will examine the interconnections among these five areas. We will study some of the anthropological concepts, theories, and paradigms developed in connection with anthropological research in the Middle East.

Given the international focus as well as internal attention on Islam; women, and gender; and politics, we will emphasize these topics in studying Middle Eastern anthropology. We will focus on how the Middle East is involved in the international flow of culture, religion, politics, people, ideas, goods, information and communication, influence, and capital. The Middle East is the "cradle of civilization" and has for many centuries been a meeting place of cultures and peoples. Although at present Americans are obsessed with Middle Eastern/United States interaction, much influence has gone back and forth between "The West" and "The Middle East" for centuries.

The spirit of the class will be one of cooperative inquiry, examination, and analysis. Students are encouraged to be helpful and supportive towards each other. Please tell me if you have questions or difficulties--I am here to help you learn and get a good grade. We will deal with both of the two main steps in anthropological inquiry: 1. description or the gathering and organizing of information and 2. analysis or the explaining and interpreting of data to shed light on how and why things happen the way they do. This class will be a discussion class as much as possible with the aim of exploring ideas and interconnections. Everyone is required to read, study and think about the readings and to discuss the readings. It is expected that students will work in an active way inside the classroom as well as outside.

Course Requirements and Evaluation:

Participation is required. Students should actively engage in gathering material and thinking about Middle East information and issues. You must be prepared at all times to discuss class materials. I will call on students if necessary. Contribution to class discussion is an important part of the grade. Eventually, students are expected to do more than just add information to the conversation, but also discuss concepts and ideas, probe the material, and come to new insights. The expectation is that students will be constantly and actively involved with the material and with the learning process. Students are to share responsibility for the learning process and will be evaluated accordingly.

Participation is not possible if you are not present! Therefore, for each additional unexcused absence after two, your grade goes down by a third (A- to B+). To be excused, you must (1) notify me before hand, and (2) have written documentation from doctor, etc. If you are more than 5 minutes late, it counts as an absence. Since class participation is such an important part of the grade, your presence and participation in each class period will improve your grade.

Preparation is required. Students are expected to study assignments carefully and to review and think about notes from readings, class lectures, discussions and films. Periodically an announced or unannounced in-class essay based on the readings and films will be given. Your answer should demonstrate that you have read and understood the material. It is crucial to keep up with the reading.

In order to pass the course, all requirements must be completed. Academic integrity is required. Plagiarism brings an automatic F for the course and perhaps more. See student handbook for the definition of plagiarism.

Promptness in fulfilling assignments is required. Essays or assignments may be completed late only if (1) I am

notified beforehand and (2) provided with documentation. Otherwise, paper grades will go down by a third for each day or fraction of a day handed in late. Your essay (**two copies**) must be handed in at the beginning of class on the day due.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION POLICY:

To request academic accommodations for a disability, students must contact Disability Resources located in The Drahnann Center in Benson, room 214, (408) 554-4111; TTY (408) 554-5445. Students must provide documentation of a disability to Disability Resources prior to receiving accommodations.

Aims of the Course:

It is expected that the course will assist you to attain:

1. In-depth knowledge about various aspects of life in the Middle East. We will focus on study in five different Middle Eastern countries: Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Palestine in Israel, and Afghanistan and the Pukhtun, tribal/ethnic group from which the Taliban are drawn, who are found in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Grasp of internal points of view: how Middle Easterners view their lives and worlds.
2. Acquaintance with several of the types of questions which anthropologists ask about family, women and gender; religion-Islam; political processes and conflict; change; and community versus globalization in the Middle East with some concepts, theories, and paradigms which anthropologists use to try and investigate their questions.
3. Knowledge about the process of anthropological inquiry as applied to the analysis of the adjustment and coping tactics used by Middle Easterners to create and recreate their gender roles, attitudes and their religious beliefs and practices; and identity. Experience in the various types of tasks which anthropologists perform, such as observing cultural and social phenomenon and thinking about them, gathering data and information to develop and support an argument, organizing and analyzing data, and presenting arguments and insights in written and oral form.

Grading Policy for Anthropology 188, People, Culture, and Change in the Middle East

Grades will be determined by calculating the numerical values given to various contributions according to the following scale:

93: A, 89-92: A-, 86-88: B+, 83-85: B, 80-82: B-, 77-79: C+, 74-76: C, 70-73: C-, 66-69: D+, 62-65: D, 58-61: D-, 57 and below....F

As noted in your syllabus, students are allowed only two unexcused absences. For an excused absence, you must inform me ahead of time and bring documentation the first day back at class. With each unexcused absence after two, your grade goes down by a third of a grade. If you are more than five minutes late or leave class early, it counts as an absence. As participation is an important part of your grade, each day of attendance can improve your grade.

Grades will be computed numerically and will be derived from the following requirements:

1. Class preparation and participation.....25%
You should come to class with a thorough knowledge of the material in the day's assignment, careful notes on the main ideas and themes in the material, your ideas about and analysis of the material, and two or three good discussion questions. In other words, you must come to class prepared for informed and thoughtful discussion or writing on the reading material. As much as possible, try to engage with the materials and the issues, contributing to class discussion in a creative, insightful, and knowledgeable manner. Quality as well as quantity of oral contributions to discussion, reports from small group discussions, and discussion leadership are significant for grading. Part of the participation grade will come from your comments on the book/main topic when it is your group's turn. I will be recording participation during each class, in order to be as accurate and fair as possible. Please see me if you need extra assistance and support to speak up in class.
2. Three Out-of-Class Essays, each worth 15% for a total of.....45%
A thoughtful, analytical essay with an original, central thesis or argument based on each book must be handed in at the beginning of class on the day of the student presentation. Students must hand in **two** typed copies of each paper, one for me to grade and return and the other for my files. Papers must be at least two pages long and should be no longer than three pages. Students on the (1) Presentation/Student Activity team and (2) the team of commentators on the book/topic do NOT have to hand in a paper. Paper grades will be lowered by a third of a grade

for each day or fraction of a day handed in late. See guide sheets on essays.

3. Presentation and Leading Student Participation Activity.....25%

Class members will be divided into five groups and each group will be responsible for a creative, dynamic, and provocative presentation. Each group will also develop a creative way to engage other class members with the materials and issues, allowing them to apply and extend their knowledge and insights. Each group will be prepared to answer questions, and lead discussion of the text and the issues it introduces. Each group will have to meet outside of class in order to plan, organize, and research the presentation and discussion. Start early with your preparations. See sheet on presentations and student participation activity.

4. Credit from In-Class Essays.....5%.

Periodically, announced and unannounced essays on the readings and other class materials will be given. Such essays will serve to give you (a) a reality check to make sure you have understood the material, (b) opportunity to integrate course material in a thoughtful and insightful manner, (c) opportunity to think about and extend your insights about the material, and (d) practice in writing and analysis to help for the longer essays. Each in-class essay on which you receive one check or higher will earn one point toward these five points. **With more than 2 zeros, your grade will go down by a third of a grade with each additional zero.**

Required Readings: (Available in the bookstore)

Fernea, Elizabeth Warnock, Guests of the Sheik: An Ethnography of an Iraqi Village, New York: Anchor Books, 1989.

Satrapi, Marjane, Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood, New York: Pantheon, 2003. (A comic book!)

White, Jenny B., Islamist Mobilization in Turkey: A Study in Vernacular Politics, University of Washington Press, Seattle and Washington, 2002.

The other readings will be on electronic reserve. (Password is PCCME.)

Reading Schedule:

Take careful and comprehensive notes on all films and speakers as well as on readings, as this information will be required for discussion and helpful for essays and exams. Articles will be on e-reserve. (The password is **PCCME**.)

Tues. Sept. 21 **The Anthropological Approach. Introduction to M.E. Social-Cultural Anthropology.**

I. Iraq: Culture, Society, Women, Gender, Religion, and Ethnic Identity. War, the West, and Globalization. An Iraqi Tribal Group: Cultural/Social Constraints and Individual Creativity. Women and Power: How do women tolerate and resist? What are their resources, strategies, and limits? How do they attempt to influence others and change their own and others' lives?

Thurs. Sept. 23 *Guests of the Sheikh* Beginning to 115 (You can skip 57-64.)

Tues. Sept. 28 *Guests of the Sheik* 116-266

Thurs. Sept. 30 *Guests of the Sheik* 269-333, Review and prepare for essays and presentation

Tues. Oct. 5 **ESSAYS DUE. STUDENT PRESENTATION**

II. Iran: Culture, Religion, Politics, and Gender. The 1979 Revolution, the West, and Globalization. Islamic Resurgence and Fundamentalism. Iran and the U.S. What are women's roles in political resistance and identity construction and maintenance? How do people wield gender symbols in politics? How did people wield Shia religious symbolism in the Iranian Revolution? What has happened more recently regarding attitudes towards the Revolution, the West, the Islamic Republic, Shia Islam, females and gender?

(These readings are on electronic reserve. The password is **PCCME** (Stands for People, Culture, and Change in the Middle East. It would be best to download and print as soon as possible to make sure you have the readings when you need them.)

Thurs. Oct. 7 Hegland, Mary Elaine. "Talking Politics: A Village Widow in Iran." In *Personal Encounters: A Reader in Cultural Anthropology*. Pp. 53-59. Eds. Linda S. Walbridge and April K. Sievert. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill. 2003.

Tues. Oct. 12 Hegland, Mary Elaine. "'Women and the Iranian Revolution: A Village Case Study,'" in

Women and Revolution: Global Expressions, ed. M.J. Diamond, Pp. 211-225, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1998.

Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood, (a comic book !) beginning - 71

Thurs. Oct. 14 *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*, 72-153, Review and prepare for essays and presentation

Tues. Oct. 19 **ESSAYS DUE. STUDENT PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION**

III. Turkey and Islamization. Local Level Urban Politics and Islamic Political Parties. Gender Struggle and the Politics of Veiling and Gender Symbolism. Kemalism and secularization versus Islamism.

Turkey is situated between Europe and Asia, with land on both continents. Istanbul also bridges the two continents. Interaction and influences have been going back and forth between Turks and Europe for centuries. The Ottoman Empire covered large parts of Europe. Conflicting forces for westernization versus Islamization take place in the Turkish arena. Mustafa Kemal Ataturk (1881-1938) was determined to modernize and Europeanize Turkey, but other forces now pressure against this. Islamists and secularists are still at odds. Women's role and women's dress are at the center of this controversy.

Why have the Islamist parties and movement become so successful, basically winning recent elections?

What are the main points, main issues, main ideas? What are the main forces and groups in Istanbul, Turkey and what are their values and concerns and class backgrounds? You might write category heads for each of them, and then list their characteristics. What is going on the neighborhood of Umraniye and what kind of people live there? What are their concerns? What are the approaches and tactics of the different political parties? Which political party is most successful in recruiting in Umraniye and why? What are women's roles in politics? What is the meaning of the head scarf or turban or "Islamic dress" or *tesettur* and how and why is it a central political symbol?

Thurs. Oct. 21 *Islamist Mobilization in Turkey*, 14-43

Tues. Oct. 26 *Islamist Mobilization in Turkey*, 47-79, 94-102, 104-108, 197-201

Thurs.. Oct. 28 *Islamist Mobilization in Turkey*, 8-"Secularist Activism in Umraniye," 212-260, 273-6
Review and prepare for essays and presentation.

Tues. Nov. 2 **ESSAYS DUE. STUDENT PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION**

IV. Palestinians, Culture, and Politics. Palestine and Great Britain, Israel, and American. Palestine and Muslims. Gender Constructions and Symbolism, Modernization, and Change.

Thurs. Nov. 4 Julie Peteet, "Women and the Palestinian Movement: No Going Back?" *Middle East Report* 1986, pp. 20-24, 44.

Tues. Nov. 9 Julie Peteet, "Male Gender and the Rituals of Resistance in the Palestinian *Intifada*: A Cultural Politics of Violence." *American Ethnologist* 21(1):31-49, 1994.

Thurs. Nov. 11 Rhoda Ann Kanaaneh, *Birthing the Nation: Strategies of Palestinian Women in Israel*. Berkeley: U. of Ca. Press, 2002, pp. 167-197.

Review and Prepare for Essays and Presentation/Discussion

Tues. Nov. 16 **ESSAYS DUE. STUDENT PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ACTIVITY**

V. Afghanistan. The Pukhtun/Pushtun/Pathans of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Pukhtun Family. Political Socialization and Political Culture and Conflict, Politics. Islam, Gender, and Politics. Afghanistan and England. Afghanistan and the Soviet Union. Jihad and the Taliban. Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and the U.S. Islam and the West.

Thurs. Nov. 18 Charles and Cherry Lindholm, "Marriage as Warfare," *Natural History*, 88(8):11-20,1979.
Cherry Lindholm, "The Swat Pukhtun Family as a Political Training Ground," *Anthropology in Pakistan: Recent Socio-Cultural and Archaeological Perspectives*, ed. Stephen Pastner and Louis Flam, South Asia Occasional Papers 8, Ithaca: Cornell University, 51-60, 1982.

Tues. Nov. 23 Thanksgiving Holiday-Just in Time !!

Thurs. Nov. 25 Thanksgiving Holiday

Tues. Nov. 30 Charles Lindholm, *Generosity and Jealousy: The Swat Pukhtun of Northern Pakistan*, 56, 57, 60-67, 74, 75,198-238, Review and Prepare for Essays and Presentation/Discussion

Thurs. Dec. 2 **ESSAYS DUE. STUDENT PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ACTIVITY**

Congratulations!

Tues. Dec. 7

9:10 - 12:10 AM

Final Exam Period—Reserve for Any Unfinished Class Business