ABT 3502 Arab Literatures and Cultures in a Global Perspective

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Course description

This course is an introduction to the modern literature, creative art, film and media produced in the Arabic speaking world and its diasporas around the world. The course explores different aspects of Arab societies and their diasporas --orientalist representations and their heritage, language politics, postcolonial subjectivity, post-colonialism and nationalism-- from a global and local perspective. This global and local approach crosses through novels and films, political discourses and representations. Our perspective assumes that to understand a society and its cultural productions, it is important to be able to analyze its representations, think historically, geographically and multi-directionally, shifting positions between the local and the global for a more complex vision of the World.

Global Student Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of Arabic Literatures and Cultures in a local and global perspective

Students will be able to conduct an analysis of texts, discourses and representations produced in the Arab World and its diasporas taking into account a global and local perspective

Students will be able to demonstrate willingness to address contemporary issues faced by Arab societies and their diasporas.

Active Learning and Grading

1- Active Learning Strategies

Following the syllabus, students will read closely a chapter and analyze an excerpt for each class. The class is partly lecture-based and partly discussion-based. The lectures (complemented by power points) will provide students with additional materials in order to understand the cultural complexity of the topic. The instructor’s teaching methodology implies a back and forth movement between what students already know about their own space and culture and the target culture (mostly Arabic Literatures and Cultures). The instructor will use the example of the US context in order to show the multiple layers at work in the conception of the Arab World, its cultures and languages. The discussions will involve close readings to make the students analyze texts; understand how they build meaning; and recognize social dynamics, political discourses and power structures through textuality. The co-curricular component (participation to skype interviews with guest speakers, lectures, etc…) will help build a better sense of the cultural reality addressed in the course. Students will be asked to give an oral presentation using resources such as newspaper (pre-selected by the instructor), or other sources to produce a project that will be discussed at the end of the term and show students’ ability to address complex questions about the Arab World.

2- Participation, Attendance, Oral Presentations (10%)

You are required to read the books assigned for the semester. Before each class you will have to prepare an excerpt —i.e. analyze and criticize it—, in order to discuss the text
properly. Response-papers of a few sentences as will be due each Tuesday, the question will be sent via e-mails each Friday. Missing class will be penalized. *(For Moodle access, go to https://ecampus.fiu.edu/instructorguide.php and click on Moodle Login. Your login information is your FIU MyAccounts Username and password.)*

3- **Midterm (3x20%)*
In response to a critical theoretical question about our corpus, you will write an essay (2000 words), using critical material and the books discussed in this course, and additional reading online. The essay should show some evidence of your critical ability, analyzing texts and discussing general questions with arguments of your own. You will use the MLA style for the bibliography, quotes.

4- **Final Exam 30%
In response to a critical theoretical question about our corpus, you will have two hours to write an essay in class, you will be able to use all the reading material.

**Co-curricular Component**

This course will have a co-curricular component. In particular, we will organize a series of guest speakers with an expertise in Middle East, invited by the FIU community. The students will have to participate in events organized by SIPA related to the Middle East. This activity will allow the students to interact and be active in their learning process. It will be a part of their participation/oral presentation grade.

- Video conference with writers and movie director (Alexandre Najjar, Wassyla Tamzali, Nadir Moknèche)
- FIU Guest speakers, SIPA lectures series
- Students in small groups will have to present on a particular topic (ex. Arab Spring)

**Required Material**

*Essays*

*Movie*
Gille Pontecorvo, *The Battle of Algiers*, 1966

*Novels*
Course Schedule

Part I Orientalism in Question

Week 1
Introduction to the course: What’s in a name?
History and Context Nahda/Orientalism

Week 2
Introduction to Edward Saïd
Reading E. Saïd, Orientalism, “Preface to the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary”, “Introduction”
Introduction to Assia Djebar, Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade
Readings Fantasia: Part one

Week 3
Tuesday, September 6
Edward Saïd, Chap 1 “The Scope of Orientalism”
Thursday, September 8
Reading Fantasia, Part two Critical reading online: Mildred Mortimer, “Edward Saïd and Assia Djebar: A Contrapuntal Reading”

Week 4
Edward Saïd, Chap. 3 “Orientalism Now”
Assia Djebar, Fantasia, Part three (pp. 113-168), close reading (pp. 125-129)
Critical reading online: Emer O’Beirne, ‘Veiled Vision’

Week 5
Assia Djebar, Fantasia
Reading online: Donadey, ‘Multilingual Strategies of Postcolonial Literature: Assia Djebar’s Algerian Palimpsest’
Assia Djebar, Fantasia/ Saïd, Orientalism
Conclusion
Reading online: Edward W. Saïd, ‘Orientalism Reconsidered’

Week 6
Assia Djebar, Fantasia
Reading online: Donadey, ‘Multilingual Strategies of Postcolonial Literature: Assia Djebar’s Algerian Palimpsest’
Assia Djebar, Fantasia/ Saïd, Orientalism
Conclusion
Edward W. Saïd, ‘Orientalism Reconsidered’

Part II Postcolonial Subjects

Week 6
Introduction to Albert Memmi, The Colonizer and the Colonized
“Preface”, Part one Portrait of the Colonizer, “Does the colonial exist?”
Introduction to Tayeb el Salih, Season of Migration to the North
Week 7
Tayeb Salih, *Season of Migration to the North*

Week 8
Tayeb Salih, *Season of Migration to the North*
Reading online TBD

Week 9
Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the colonized*
Reading Conclusion-Afterword
Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Mask*, “The Black man and languages”

Comparison is reason
Reading posted online: Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, “Of Mimicry and Man”, “Sly Civility”

Part III Postcoloniality in Question

Week 10
Tuesday, October 25
Context Postcolonial representations *The Battle of Algiers*
Robert J.C Young, Part III The Internationals

Week 11
Context Egypt under Nasser
Introduction to Naguib Mahfouz, *Karnac Café*
Reading Naguib Mahfouz, *Karnac Café*, “Qurunfula”

Week 12
Naguib Mahfouz, *Karnac Café*, “Isma’il al-Shaykh”
Naguib Mahfouz, “Zaynab Diyab”, “Khalid Safwan”
Conclusion

Part IV Arabs in Diasporas/Arabs in Revolution

Week 13 /Week 14
Laila Lalami, *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*

Week 15
The last picture
Students Presentations on Tunisia-Egypt
Students Presentations on Libya-Syria