LEH 300: The Middle East through Urban and Popular Culture        Spring 2007
Tuesdays 2:00-4:30
Prof. Christa Salamandra
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Course Description

This course explores the creativity and dynamism of a region often known only through the news media’s sensational headlines. This alternative approach to understanding the contemporary Middle East focuses not on the actions of politicians and diplomats, but rather on a significant social and cultural process: the growth of major urban centers. We will examine both the development of urbanization and the popular and expressive cultural forms that develop from and give voice to the experience of the modern Middle Eastern city. Historical and ethnographic materials examine film, television, music, dance and domestic architecture in Cairo, Damascus, Istanbul, Algiers and Doha.

Requirements of this writing intensive course include a three essays responding to the assigned readings, each worth 25% of the final grade. A review of a Middle Eastern novel comprises the final 25%.

Attending classes and completing assigned readings are basic requirements for this course. Essays must be typed, double-spaced, and properly, consistently referenced. See www.aaanet.org/pubs/style_guide.htm for a style guide. **Plagiarism in any form, including internet downloads, will result in automatic failure and notification of the appropriate college authorities.** Please visit: http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/hc/plagiarism.html before you begin writing your first essay.

**Blackboard** is an essential feature of this course. You will need it to download reading assignments, indicated by * on the syllabus, and to access other class information. If you have not already done so, please open your CUNY portal account. This gives you access to our class on Blackboard. For technical assistance, contact the IT Center in Carmen Hall.

**Required text:**
Walter Armbrust, ed.
**Week 1, January 30 Introduction: The Colonial City**  

**Week 2, February 6: Cities and Migrants**  
Reading:  
*Bourdieu, Pierre*  

**Week 3, February 13: Cities and Migrants Now**  
Reading:  
*Erman, Tahire*  

**Week 4, February 20: Identity and the Built Environment**  
Film screening: *Bab al-Oued City (Bab al-Wad al-Houm)*. Merzak Allouache, director.  
Readings:  
*Ghannem, Farha*  
*Nagy, Sharon*  
*Mcmurray, David*  

**Week 5, February 27: The Past, the Present and the Politics of Heritage**  
Readings:  
*Salamandra, Christa*  
*Stokes, Martin*  

**Week 6, March 6: Popular and Expressive Culture**  
Readings:

Armbrust, Walter

**Essay 1 due**

**Week 7, March 13: Authenticities, Modernities and Icons**
Readings:
*Danielson, Virginia

**Week 8, March 20: Cinema and National Identity**
Film Screening: Nasser 56. Egypt 1996. Director Mohamed Fadil.
Reading:
Gordon, Joel

**Week 9, March 27: Television, Messages and Audiences**
Screening: Scene from Damascene Days
Readings:
*Salamandra, Christa
*Khamis, Sahar
Murphy, Richard

**Week 10, April 17: Music and Markets**
Film Screening: Islamabad: Rock City. VH1 News Special.
Readings:
Zirbel, Katherine E.
2000 “Playing it Both Ways: Local Egyptian Performers between Regional Identity and International Markets” in Mass Mediations: New Approaches to Popular Culture in
Week 11, April 24: Gender and Dance
Readings:
Dougherty, Robin

*Franken, Margorie

*Van Nieuwkerk, Karin

*Essay 2 due

Week 12, May 1: Diasporas and Ethnicities
Film Screening: “Tales from Arab Detroit: Abu Zayd Comes to America”. Joan Mandell and Sally Howell, directors. ACCESS and Olive Branch Productions, 1995.
Readings:
*Mandell, Joan

*Shryock, Andrew
1998 “Mainstreaming Arabs: Filmmaking and Image Making in Tales from Arab Detroit”,
Visual Anthropology 10 (2-4).

*Reynolds, Dwight F.


**Week 13, May 8: Middle Eastern Americans, post 9/11**


*Howell, Sally and Andrew Shryock


Shryock, Andrew


http://www.arabamericanmuseum.org/

*Book Reviews due*

**Week 14 May 15: Globalization and New Media**


Readings:

*El-Nawawy, Mohammed and Adel Iskandar


<http://www.tbsjournal.com/Archives/Spring02/talkshows.html>

*Wheeler, Deborah


*Shannon, Jonathan H.


Salamandra, Christa


http://www.tbsjournal.com/Archives/Spring03/salamandra.html

**May 21: Final essays due**