

ISLAM, MEDIA, AND THE WEST (ILA) E59.1200.004

New York University
Department of Media, Culture, and Communication
Fall 2007

Monday & Wednesday 11.00am - 12:15pm
Silver 514

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Office Hours	by appointment

DESCRIPTION AND READINGS

This course examines contemporary media in the Middle East and the US and their relationship to the perceived rift between Islam and the West. Readings and examples from television, film and journalism focus on the politics of culture, religion and modernity, gender and national identity as they shape and intersect with contemporary geopolitical events, cultural formations and media globalization.

This is an upper-level inter-disciplinary course that draws on readings in media studies, communications, political science, history, literary criticism, sociology and anthropology. Reading and writing requirements for this course are demanding. You will also be asked to watch films and/or videos outside of class above the readings - you are warned ahead of time! Independent research is strongly encouraged (keeping up with global affairs, gaining familiarity with political trends and countries, looking up historical events, etc).

Required Readings

Books: Available at the NYU bookstore and most on-line book sellers.

- Azadeh Moaveni, *Lipstick Jihad: A Memoir of Growing Up Iranian in America and American in Iran*. Cambridge, MA: PublicAffairs, Perseus Books, 2005.
- Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*. Pantheon Books, 2003.

Articles:

Other required readings will be available as PDFs or web links on **Blackboard** (noted on Schedule as Bb).

Audio / Video materials:

There will be required AV materials for you to listen to/watch prior to coming to class. These will be made available on the web or through blackboard, when possible; or will require you to listen/watch them in the Avery Fisher Center at the Bobst Library (noted on Schedule as AV).

Optional Books: Available at the NYU bookstore and most on-line book sellers. We will be reading a substantial amount from the following books. The required excerpts will be available as PDFs on Blackboard. You may however wish to purchase the books for your collection and further reading:

- Benjamin Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld: How Tribalism and Globalism are Reshaping the World*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1996.
- Salam Pax, *The Clandestine Diary of an Ordinary Iraqi*. New York: Grove Press, 2003
- Ayaan Hirsi Ali, *Infidel*. New York: Free Press, 2007.

EXPECTATIONS & GRADING

Class Participation = 25%

- You are expected to thoroughly read before each class and participate in all class discussions, as well as in any Blackboard-based assignments and discussions.
- Your participation grade is based on presence and punctuality, and quantity and quality of in-class participation. You are expected to come to class prepared to intelligently and critically discuss the readings and audio/visual assignments.

6 Short Papers = 60%

- You will be required six short papers on separate sections of the course. Paper 1 is required for everyone; thereafter, you can choose which 5 topics, out of the possible 6, you wish to write a paper on. These papers are short think-pieces / reflections where you show in-depth involvement with the issues and elaborate on your response to the readings / videos. There will be times when you will be asked to write your essays in the form of a formal book or film review; other times asked to debate/argue with the author(s).
- You will sometimes be asked to write the papers using different formats, and will be notified every time: formal book review, film review, fake interview, wikipedia entry, political report, in-depth critique, theoretical essay, etc.
- Typed, double-spaced, stapled and be between 750 – 1,250 words (3-5 pages) each.
- If you wish to email your papers, you must do so no later than 10:30am on the due date.
- Due Dates:
 - Paper 1: Sep. 24 (required)
 - Paper 2: Oct. 3
 - Paper 3: Oct. 17
 - Paper 4: Oct. 31
 - Paper 5: Nov. 19
 - Paper 6: Nov. 28
 - Paper 7: Dec. 12

Final Paper/Project = 15%

- You will be required to write one final paper / project. These will be discussed in class.
- Papers should be typed, double-space, stapled and be between 1,500 – 2,000 words (6-8 pages).
- If you wish to email your papers, you must do so no later than 10:30am on the due date.
- Due Date: Dec. 19 @4pm

Grading Policies

- Students with special needs, either with physical and/or learning disabilities, or religious observances, must come talk to me at the beginning of the semester in order to assure any special needs: extra time for papers; access to materials, etc. Moreover, any student who needs an accommodation due to a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility and/or learning disability, or is Deaf or Hard of Hearing should register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212 998-4980, 240 Greene Street, www.nyu.edu/csd
- Grades will not be curved. If you attend class, do the required work and have a reasonable grasp of the information, you should have no trouble earning at least a C, which indicates satisfactory work.
- Late papers and assignments will be graded down -5 for every day late (24 hours from 11am, including weekends and holidays). Papers and assignments will not be considered once they are more than 5 days late (24 hours from 11am, including weekends and holidays) and will automatically result in an F (0%).
- Timely and intelligent participation in class is required, and is predicated on completing readings / video assignments before class. Your grade will decrease by a full point for every two classes you miss (i.e. from B to B-). You **MUST** notify me in advance if you are going to miss a class or a deadline, and you will need a legitimate excuse (doctor's note, arrest warrant, etc.).
- You are expected to abide by NYU's and Steinhardt's standards of Academic Integrity. Cheating or plagiarizing the work of another will result in an automatic F (0%). Additionally, departmental and university policy permits harsher actions, if warranted.

Grading Standards

A = Excellent. Outstanding work in all respects. Work demonstrates comprehensive understanding and presents thoughtful and creative interpretations, well-focused and original insights, well-reasoned commentary and analysis.

B = Good. Work demonstrates complete and accurate understanding of course materials, presents a reasonable degree of insight and broad level of analysis. Work reflects competence but stays at a general or predictable level of understanding.

C = Adequate. Work demonstrates adequate understanding but remains superficial, incomplete, vague or expresses some important errors or weaknesses. Work may lack concrete, specific examples and illustrations; writing may be vague or hard to follow.

D = Unsatisfactory. Work demonstrates a lack of understanding and fails to express basic aspects of the course. Participation was inadequate or superficial.

F = Failed. Work was not submitted or completed according to parameters (page length, topical focus, types of sources), or completely failed to express the most basic and elementary aspects of the course.

SCHEDULE

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

The syllabus is a roadmap at best. While it is intended that the course will follow the schedule below, modifications along the way are **inevitable**. I will notify you of changes in class and/or email and/or Blackboard.

Readings are also listed in the **suggested reading order** - this is only to simplify the accumulation of knowledge on your part, especially when it comes to historical events and theoretical vocabulary.

Readings are to be completed on the day listed (come to class prepared to discuss the readings, assigned web sites, and audio/visual materials).

Introductions

Wed. Sep. 5

Section 1: Clash of Civilizations?

Mon. Sep. 10: Western Rhetoric

Bb: Bernard Lewis 'The Roots of Muslim Rage,' *Atlantic Monthly*, September 1990.

Bb: Samuel Huntington 'Clash of Civilizations,' *Foreign Affairs*, 72(3), Summer 1993.

Bb: Thomas Friedman, *The New York Times*:

'Defusing the Holy Bomb', November 27, 2002

'The Land of Denial', June 5, 2002

'Courageous Arab Thinkers', October 19, 2003

Wed. Sep. 12: Bin Laden's Rhetoric

Bb: Osama Bin Laden, *Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama Bin Laden*:

Introduction by Bruce Lawrence, pp.xi-xxiii

'Declaration of Jihad', August 23, 1996, pp.23-30

'Terror for Terror', October 21, 2001, pp.106-129 (browse through)

'To the Americans', October 6, 2002, pp.160-172

Bb: Samuel Huntington, 'Osama bin Laden Has Given Common Identity Back to the West,' *New Perspectives Quarterly*, Winter 2002: pp.5-8

Mon. Sep. 17: Jihad, McWorld and Globalization

BB: Benjamin Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld: How Tribalism and Globalism are Reshaping the World*:

Introduction, pp.3-20

Chapter 6, 'Hollywood: McWorld's Videology', pp.88-99

Chapter 10, 'Jihad vs. McWorld or Jihad via McWorld?', pp.155-168

Chapter 14, 'Essential Jihad: Islam and Fundamentalism', pp.205-216

Wed. Sep. 19: Critiques of 'Culture Talk'

Bb: Mahmoud Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terrorism*, New York: Pantheon Books, 2004:

Introduction: 'Modernity and Violence'

Chapter 1: 'Culture Talk; Or, How Not to Talk About Islam and Politics'

Bb: Gilbert Achcar, *Eastern Cauldron: Islam, Afghanistan, Palestine, and Iraq in a Marxist Mirror*, Chapter 3 'The Arab Despotism Exception', pp.69-74.

Mon. Sep. 24: Islam vs. Media Globalization

Bb: Nathan Gardels, 'Civilizations Out of Sync,' *New Perspectives Quarterly*, Winter 2002: p.2-3.

Bb: Akbar S. Ahmed, 'Media Mongols at the Gates of Baghdad,' *New Perspectives Quarterly*, Winter 2002: pp.46-62.

Bb: Regis Debray, 'God and the Political Planet,' *New Perspectives Quarterly*, Winter 2002: pp.115-118

Sep. 24: Paper 1 Due (Culture Clash, on readings 9/10 - 9/24)

Section 2: Orientalism & Representation

Wed. Sep. 26: Orientalism

Bb: Edward Said, *Orientalism*,

Preface, pp.xv -xxx

Introduction, pp.1-28

Bb: Derek Gregory, *The Colonial Present*, Chapter 1, pp.1-12.

Mon. Oct.1: Media Representations

Bb: Edward Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*:

Introduction, pp.xlix-lix

Chapter 1 'Islam as News: Islam and the West', pp.3-35

Chapter 3 'Knowledge and Power: Knowledge and Interpretation', pp.162-173.

Bb: Jack Shaheen, 'Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People,' *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 588 (July), pp.171-193.

Bb (read either for today or for 10/3): Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East, 1945-2000*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001: 'Iran, Islam, and the Terrorist Threat, 1979-1989', pp.198-234.

Section 3: Iranian Revolution

Wed. Oct. 3: History and Politics of the Iranian Revolution

Book: Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis* (entire book)

Bb: Annabelle Sreberny & Ali Mohammadi, *Small Media, Big Revolution: Communication, Culture, and the Iranian Revolution*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994:

Chapter 5 "Oppositions: Secular and Religious"

Oct. 3: Paper 2 Due (Orientalism and media representations, on readings 9/26 - 10/1)

Wed. Oct. 10: Oppositional Media in Iran: Then and Now

Bb: Annabelle Sreberny & Ali Mohammadi, *Small Media, Big Revolution: Communication, Culture, and the Iranian Revolution*:

Introduction, pp. xvii-xxii

Chapter 8 'The 'Heavy Artillery': Small Media for a Big Revolution', pp. 119-135

Bb: Gholam Khiabany & Annabelle Sreberny, 'The Politics of/in Blogging in Iran'

Section 4: Consuming Identity

Mon. Oct. 15: Popular Culture, Identity and Consumption

Bb: Joan Gross, David McMurray, Ted Swedenburg 'Rai, Rap, and Ramadan Nights: Franco-Maghribi Cultural Identities,' pp.257-268

Bb: Lila Abu-Lughod, 'Dramatic Reversals: Political Islam and Egyptian Television,' pp.269-282

Bb: Christa Salamandra, 'Consuming Damascus: Public Culture and the Construction of Social Identity,' pp.182-202.

Section 5: Palestine, Afghanistan, Iraq

Wed. Oct. 17: Similarities and Differences

Bb: Gilbert Achcar, *Eastern Cauldron: Islam, Afghanistan, Palestine, and Iraq in a Marxist Mirror*, Introduction 'U.S. Imperial Strategy in the Middle East', pp.9-45

Bb: Background Readings/ Strongly Recommended (if you are unfamiliar with the modern histories of Palestine, Afghanistan and Iraq, and US involvement in each, these three chapters will help you understand the current landscape): Derek Gregory: *The Colonial Present*:

Chapter 3 "The Land Where Red Tulips Grew," pp.30-46 (Afghanistan)

Chapter 5 "Barbed Boundaries" pp.76-106, (Palestine)

Chapter 7 "The Tyranny of Strangers" pp.144-179 (Iraq)

Oct. 17: Paper 3 Due (Film and identity, on readings 10/15 and film from list)

Mon. Oct. 22: Palestine-Israel: Conflictual Spaces

Bb: Edward Said, *After The Last Sky*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1986.

Introduction, pp.3-9

Chapter 1 'States,' pp.11-49

Bb: Joe Sacco, *Palestine: In The Gaza Strip*. Seattle: Fantagraphics Books, 1996:

'Refugeeland',

'Rooms',

'Tomatoes',

'Road Blocks'

Bb: Helga Tawil Souri, 'Checkpoints: The New Centers of Palestinian Social and Economic Life'

Wed. Oct. 24 : Cinematic Afghanistan

Guest Lecture: Wazmah Osman, director of *Postcards From Tora Bora*

Readings TBA

Mon. Oct. 29: Iraq: New Forms of War Reporting

Bb: Gilbert Achcar, *Eastern Cauldron: Islam, Afghanistan, Palestine, and Iraq in a Marxist Mirror*, Chapter 17 'The Long Tragedy of the Iraqi People', pp.234-241

Chapter 22 'Letter to a Slightly Depressed Antiwar Activist', pp.258-264

Bb: Salam Pax. *The Clandestine Diary of an Ordinary Iraqi*. New York: Grove Press, 2003:

Introduction by Ian Katz, pp.ix-xiv

September 2002 excerpts

October 29, 2002

November 2, 2002 & November 15, 2002

December 3, 2002

January 7, 2003 & January 21, 2003

March 16, 2003 & March 20, 2003 & March 21, 2003 - March 23, 2003

April 1, 2003 - April 7, 2003

Section 6: Religious Fundamentalism, Politics, and Globalization

Wed. Oct.31: Arab Frustrations

Bb: Ahmed Zewail, 'Road Map to a Muslim Renaissance' (Interview), *New Perspectives Quarterly*, Fall 2004, pp.124-128.

Bb: Samir Kassir, *Being Arab*. New York: Verso, 2006.

Foreword

Chapter 1

Chapter 2

Chapter 6

Chapter 7

Bb: Mahmoud Darwish, *Memory for Forgetfulness: August, Beirut, 1982*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995: pp.1-28.

Oct. 31 Paper 4 Due (War and media, on readings 10/17 - 10/29)

Mon. Nov. 5: Defining Fundamentalism

Bb: Carla Pasquinelli, 'Fundamentalisms,' *Constellations* 5(1), 1998.

Bb: Gilbert Achcar, *Eastern Cauldron: Islam, Afghanistan, Palestine, and Iraq in a Marxist Mirror*, Chapter 1 'Eleven Theses on the Current Resurgence of Islamic Fundamentalism', pp.48-59

Bb: Mino Moallem, *Between Warrior Brother and Veiled Sister: Islamic Fundamentalism and the Politics of Patriarchy in Iran*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005, Introduction, pp.1-27

Bb: Tariq Ali, *The Clash of Fundamentalisms* (excerpts).

Wed. Nov. 7: Islam and Globalization

Bb: Ibrahim Abu-Rabi', *Contemporary Arab Thought: Studies in Post-1967 Arab Intellectual History*. Sterling, VA: Pluto Press, 2004: 'Globalization: A Contemporary Islamic Response?', pp.164-184.

Bb: Jocelyne Cesari, 'Islam in the West,' pp.80-92, in *Globalization and the Muslim World: Culture, Religion, and Modernity*, Eds. Birgit Schaebler & Leif Stenberg. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004.

Bb: John Tomlinson, 'Homogenisation and Globalization,' *History of European Ideas* 20 (4-6), 1995, pp.891-897.

Mon. Nov. 12: Islam and Media Globalization

Bb: Masoumeh Ebtekar, 'The Islamic Revolution: From the Shah to the Spice Girls,' (Interview), *New Perspectives Quarterly*, Winter 2002: pp.23-29.

Bb: Dale Eickelman & Jon Anderson, "Redefining Muslim Publics" in *New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere*, pp.ix-xv & pp.1-18.

Bb: Christian Pond, 'The Appeal of Sami Yusuf and the Search for Islamic Authenticity,' *TBS* 16, 2006.

Wed. Nov. 14: Islamist New Media: Hizballah Takes on Technology

Bb: Victoria Firmo-Fontan, 'Power, NGOs and Lebanese Television: A Case Study of Al-Manar TV and the Hezbollah Women's Association,' pp.162-179.

Bb: Dina Matar & Farah Dakhllallah, 'What it Means to be Shiite in Lebanon: Al Manar and the Imagined Community of Resistance,' 2006.

Bb: Helga Tawil Souri, 'The Political Battlefield of pro-Arab Games on Palestinian Screens,' *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 27(3), Fall 2007.

Section 7: Arab Media & Al Jazeera

Mon. Nov. 19: Political Economy of the Arab Media Industry

Bb: Douglas Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World*, Chapter 1, 'Arab-World Broadcasting: Development, Trends, Constraints,' pp.3-11.

Bb: William Rugh, *Arab Mass Media*, 'Arab Information Media: Function and Structure,' pp.1-27; 'Arab Radio and Television Prior to 1990,' pp.181-199; 'Arab Television Since 1990: Structure,' pp.201-227.

Nov. 19: Paper 5 Due (Fundamentalism, on readings 10/31 - 11/14)

Wed. Nov. 21: Al Jazeera Basics

No Class Meeting But Following Required:

Bb: Mohamed Zayani, 'Introduction: Al Jazeera and the Vicissitudes of the New Arab Mediascape,' pp.1-41, in *The Al Jazeera Phenomenon: Critical Perspectives on New Arab Media*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2005.

Bb: Hugh Miles, *Al-Jazeera: The Inside Story of the Arab News Channel that is Challenging the West* (excerpts).

AV: *Control Room* (available at Avery Fisher Library Call #DVD2792, Net Flix and most Blockbuster stores)

Mon. Nov. 26: From Al Jazeera to Al Hurra

Bb: R.S. Zaharna 'Al Jazeera and American Public Diplomacy: A Dance of Intercultural (Mis-) Communication,' pp.183-200, in *The Al Jazeera Phenomenon: Critical Perspectives on New Arab Media*.

Bb: Lawrence Pintak, *Reflections in a Bloodshot Lens: America, Islam, and the War of Ideas*:
Chapter 7 'Weaponizing the Media'
Chapter 11 'Brand America'

Wed. Nov. 28: Arab Media and the Transformation of Politics

Bb: Marc Lynch, *Voices of the New Arab Public: Iraq, Al-Jazeera, and Middle East Politics Today* (excerpts).

Bb: Imad Karam, 'Satellite Television: A Breathing Space for Arab Youth?' pp.80-95.

Bb: Marwan Kraidy, 'Idioms of Contention: *Star Academy* in Lebanon and Kuwait,' pp.44-55.

Bb: Helga Tawil Souri, 'The Alternative Modernity of Arab Television'

Nov. 28: Paper 6 Due (Al Jazeera and Arab Media, on readings 11/19 - 11/28)

Section 8: Women and Islam: Honored or Oppressed?

Mon. Dec. 3: 'Enlightened' Muslims

Bb: Ayaan Hirsi Ali, *Infidel*. New York: Free Press, 2007:

Introduction, Chapters 2, 3, 5, 6, 10, 13, 14, 15 (pp.285-289, 295), 16 (pp.307-315).

AV: *Submission Part 1* (Theo van Gogh & Ayaan Hirsi Ali)

AV: *HardTalk* Interview with Ayaan Hirsi Ali

Wed. Dec. 5: Behind the Veil

Bb: Anthony Giddens, 'Beneath the Hijab: A Woman,' *New Perspectives Quarterly*, Spring 2004, pp.9-11.

Bb: Faegheh Shirazi, *The Veil Unveiled: The Hijab in Modern Culture*, Chapter 1 'Veiled Images in Advertising,' pp.10-38.

Bb: Nilufer Gole, 'Islam in Public: New Visibilities and New Imaginaries.' *Public Culture* 4(1), 2002, pp.173-190.

Book: Azadeh Moaveni, *Lipstick Jihad* (begin reading)

Mon. Dec. 10: Veiled Realities (1)

Bb: Mino Moallem, *Between Warrior Brother and Veiled Sister: Islamic Fundamentalism and the Politics of Patriarchy in Iran*. Chapter 5, 'Feminism and Fundamentalism,' pp.155-184.

Book: Azadeh Moaveni, *Lipstick Jihad*

Wed. Dec. 12: Veiled Realities (2), Conclusions

Book: Azadeh Moaveni, *Lipstick Jihad* (finish book)

Dec. 12: Paper 7 Due (The Veil, on readings 12/3 - 12/12)

Dec. 19: Final Paper Due @ 4pm