

Syllabus: Arab American Literature

The aim of this course is to look at the history of Arab American Experience through Literature, Video Art, Stand-Up Comedy, and Films. Texts can be purchased at Shakespear & Co. Other readings will be posted on Blackboard. Please note that more than five absences will automatically result in failure unless you bring in a valid explanation.

Texts:

How Does it Feel to be a Problem?: Being Young and Arab in America (2008)
Moustafa Bayoumi

“Orientalism” Edward Said

Inclined to Speak: An Anthology of Contemporary Arab American Poetry (2007)
Ed. Hayan Charara

Grape Leaves: A Century of Arab American Poetry (1999) Ed. Gregory Orfalea
and Sharif Elmusa

The Girl with the Tangerine Scarf (2006) Mohja Kahf

“Not Quite White” Helen Samhan

Films:

Towelhead Opens 9/12 at Angelika Movie Theater: 18 W. Houston Street at
Mercer (212) 995-2000

Planet of the Arabs and Arabs a Go-Go Jacqueline Salloum

Where We Come From Video Art by Emily Jacir

Axis of Evil Comedy Featuring: Ahmed Ahmed, Maz Jobrani, Aron Kader, and
Dean Obedeillah

Arab American Comedy Tour featuring Maysoun Zayid

Def Poetry Jam: featuring Suheir Hammad

Assignments:

- External Event Papers (2pp) 20% (Each paper is worth 10% each) The external event is on September 9th. You may discuss possible options with me before you write your review. External Event papers are due on 12/12.
- 4 (3pp) short papers in place of a midterm and a final paper. These short papers can be in response to particular readings or films/videos. You may also choose to do up to two individual presentations in place of papers. Please discuss with me beforehand. Each paper will be worth 15% (altogether: 60%)
- Blackboard Responses 10%

- Attendance. Participation. Behavior. 10%

The **4 short papers** (3pp. each) are due: 9/30; 10/28; 11/25 and 12/12. They can be submitted with revisions as a final portfolio. This option is for those students who received a grade of B or lower on their short papers and would like to revise papers. These papers should be in depth responses to readings or films discussed in class. The essays should show some research into the writer, filmmaker or artist discussed.

Plagiarism

Please be aware that submitting the work of other people as your own is a serious offense; it is punishable by either suspension, or dismissal from the university. Varieties of Plagiarism are:

1. Submitting of essays, or portions of essays, written by other people as one's own;
2. Failing to acknowledge, through footnotes and bibliographical entries, the source of ideas essentially not one's own;
3. Failing to indicate paraphrases or ideas or verbatim expressions not one's own through proper use of quotations and footnotes;
4. Submitting an essay written for one course to a second course without having sought prior permission from both instructors.

Week 1: August 29

Introductions

Week 2: Sept. 2 / Sept. 5

How Does it Feel to be a Problem?: pp. 1-114 (Rasha; Sami; Yasmin)

Week 3: Sept. 9 / Sept. 12

How Does it Feel to be a Problem?: pp. 117-270 (Akram; Lina; Omar / Rami; Afterward)

9/9: Panel with Author 7 PM

Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts 323 W. 39 Street, 2 Fl., New York City

<http://www.arteeast.org/pages/events/506>

9/12 Towelhead opens at Angelika Theater

Week 4: Sept 16 / Sept. 19

Inclined to Speak: Rd. Introduction; D.H. Melhem; Etel Adnan / Naomi Shihab Nye; Mohja Kaf; Suheir Hammad

Week 5: Sept 23 (Class Canceled Sept 26 - I will be out of town giving a lecture)

Suheir Hammad (video clips from Dep Poetry Jam and trailer for upcoming film)

First papers due via email on 9/30

Week 6: Oct 3

Inclined to Speak: Lawrence Joseph; Hayan Charara; Saladin Ahmed

Week 7: Oct. 7 / Oct. 10

Inclined to Speak: Jack Marshall; Philip Metres; Haas Mroue; and Khaled Mattawa

Week 8: Oct. 17

On Orientalism: Edward Said / *Our Work Is of this World*: Moustafa Bayoumi

Week 9: Oct. 21 / Oct. 24

Arab American Comedy Screenings and Discussions of Representation & Assimilation

Week 10: Oct. 28 / Oct. 31

Not Quite White: Helen Samhan

Second Papers are Due

Grape Leaves: Read Introduction; Khalil Gibran; Amin Rihani; Mikhail Naimy

Week 11: Nov. 4 / Nov. 7

Grape Leaves: H.S. (Sam) Hamod; Fawaz Turki; Elmaz Abinader; Etel Adnan

Eng. 251.83
Asian 220.04

Contact: ZohraSaed@gmail.com

Office Hours: Tues 5:30pm

Office: 1

Week 12: Nov. 11 / Nov. 14

Girl with the Tangerine Scarf

Week 13: Nov. 18 / Nov. 21

Girl with the Tangerine Scarf

Week 14: Nov. 25 (Class Canceled - I will be away on a trip)

Third Papers are Due via Email

Week 15: Dec. 2 / Dec. 5

Girl with the Tangerine Scarf vs. *Towelhead*: Constructing Arab American
Coming of Age Narratives

Week 16: Dec. 9 / Dec 12

Mousa Kraish: Arab Americans in Hollywood

Fourth Papers are Due

Week 17: Dec. 16 Last Day of Class Celebration (Bring snacks)