

# Anthropology of the Middle East

ANTH 242

Session 1: May 26 – July 3

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The Middle East is rich in complexity, and anthropologists have long researched, theorized, and written about the people in the region. This course is an introduction to ethnographic studies of the Middle East, not a survey of the region's history or politics. We will focus on representations of peoples and places in the region through the lens anthropologists use and through ethnographic methods, to critically examine the ways they frame their research, writing, and own position in the communities and texts. Focusing on recently published ethnographies, we will explore the themes of religion, medicine, gender, sectarianism, sovereignty, and the diaspora. Some of the countries we will explore are Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine, and Algeria, and France, among others. There will additionally be a weekly movie that you will critically watch and respond to in a questionnaire I will provide. By the end of this course, you will gain theoretical knowledge and analytical tools that will enable you to examine sociocultural elements of Middle Eastern life critically. The format of the course will mainly be asynchronous, but you will be required to participate in some virtual group discussions, the time and dates of which we will determine together as a class.

## **Intended learning outcomes**

The key goals of this class are:

- To gain a deeper knowledge of the human complexity and richness in the Middle East
- To enhance your understanding of ethnography as a writing genre and analytical method
- To learn how to critically engage theories and texts about communities and practices in the region
- To expand your analysis, research, and writing skills

**Assignments:**

Weekly Reading Responses: 50%

Weekly Film Notes Questionnaire: 20%

Participation in collectively scheduled synchronous virtual discussions: 20%

Map Quiz: 10%

**Required Texts:**

Readings will be available on Sakai & movie links are listed with each week

**Format of course:** Asynchronous with partial synchronous discussions [dates & time TBD]

## **Course Schedule:**

### **Week 1: Introduction & Establishing the Field**

Deeb, Lara, and Jessica Winegar. 'Anthropologies of Arab-Majority Societies'. Annual Review of Anthropology 41, no. 1 (2012): 537–58.

Abu-Lughod, Lila. 1989. "Zones of Theory in the Anthropology of the Arab World." Annual Review of Anthropology 18 (January): 267–306.

Watch: Edward Said on Orientalism: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVC8EYd\\_Z\\_g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVC8EYd_Z_g)

### **Week 2: Medicine, Religion & Friendship in Egypt**

Hamdy: Our Bodies Belong to God: Organ Transplants, Islam, and the Struggle for Human Dignity in Egypt (2012). Chapter TBD

Nye & Hamdy: Lissa: A Story about Medical Promise, Friendship, and Revolution (2017) Graphic novel [selections TBD]

Watch: [to be determined]

### **Week 3: Gender Dynamics in Egypt**

Ghanam. Live and Die Like a Man (2013). Chapters: Introduction, 1, 2

Watch: The Four Women of Egypt

### **Week 4: Sectarianism in Lebanon**

Nucho. Everyday Sectarianism in Urban Lebanon (2016). Intro & additional chapter TBD

Watch: Ziad Doueiri. West Beirut. Lebanon1998:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dCkQ7qC0C6I>

### **Week 5: Occupation & Waste Management in Palestine**

Stamatopoulou-Robbins. Waste Siege: The Life of Infrastructure in Palestine (2020)

Watch: TBD

### **Week 6: Algerian Diaspora in France**

Crapanzano. The Harkis: The Wound that Never Heals (2011) Chapters: Introduction, 1, 2

Watch: Marcello Gatti. Battle of Algiers. 1967: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f\\_N2wyq7fCE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_N2wyq7fCE)