Summarized Syllabus for **Anthropology of the Middle East** (undergrad, Lara Deeb)

Course Description:
Drawing on a variety of texts, this course provides an overview of the Middle East and its cultural, historical, and political complexity from an anthropological perspective. We will also critically examine the ways in which anthropology has contributed to the construction of the Middle East as a region in the first place. In the process, we will explore issues and concepts including: religious piety, honor, nationalism, globalization, orientalism, and cultural production.

This course aims to:
- Familiarize students with the diversity of contemporary life in the Middle East;
- Teach students to read ethnographies and other texts carefully and critically, identify their arguments, and place those arguments into conversation with other readings and discussions;
- Promote students’ appreciation of different forms of knowledge and knowledge-production in order to enable critical analysis and synthesis;
- Encourage students to take these skills beyond the classroom and apply them in critically evaluating media discussions of the Middle East.

**Required Texts:**
- Bishara, Amahl. *Back Stories: U.S. News Production and Palestinian Politics*
- Davis, Rochelle. *Palestinian Village Histories: Geographies of the Displaced*
- Gardner, Andrew. *City of Strangers: Gulf Migration and the Indian Community in Bahrain*
- Hamdy, Sherine. *Our Bodies Belong to God: Organ Transplants, Islam, and the Struggle for Human Dignity in Egypt*
- Limbert, Mandana. *In the Time of Oil: Piety, Memory, and Social Life in an Omani Town*
- McMurray, David. *In and Out of Morocco: Smuggling and Migration in a Frontier Boomtown*
- Osanloo, Arzoo. *The Politics of Women’s Rights in Iran*
- Winegar, Jessica. *Creative Reckonings: The Politics of Art and Culture in Contemporary Egypt*

*[NOTE: Other versions of this course have used the following books instead of some of the above:]*
- Hammoudi, Abdellah. *A Season in Mecca: Narrative of a Pilgrimage*
- Hirschkind, Charles. *Ethical Soundscapes: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counterpublics*
- Meneley, Anne. *Tournaments of Value: Sociability and Hierarchy in a Yemeni Town*
- Abu El-Haj, Nadia. *Facts on the Ground: Archaeological Practice and Territorial Self Fashioning in Israeli Society*
- Stein, Rebecca L. *Itineraries in Conflict: Israelis, Palestinians, and the Political Lives of Tourism*
- Kanaaneh, Rhoda. *Birthing the Nation: Strategies of Palestinian Women in Israel*
- Khosravi, Shahram. *Young and Defiant in Iran*
- McMurray, David. *In and Out of Morocco: Smuggling and Migration in a Frontier Boomtown*

**Suggested Text for Background on Islam:**
- Elias, Jamal. *Islam*

**In addition, there will be articles in PDF format available for download on Sakai**
If you do not already have one, I recommend purchasing a college writing manual. Remember to proofread all your writing for spelling and grammar.

Course Requirements:

1) **Class Participation:** Attendance and **intelligent participation in class discussions** are mandatory and will affect your grade. **You must come to class having read all the readings listed on the syllabus for that day and prepared to discuss them.**

2) **Weekly Sakai Comments and Questions:** Each student will write a **brief weekly Sakai post** to help guide our discussions. This should be app. 200-300 words long, and must be posted into the appropriate Sakai Forum by **7 pm Tuesday evening.** In this post, you should: a) briefly note one or two of the main points that you found most interesting in the readings for the week; and b) raise a minimum of two questions about the readings for discussion. You will be expected to elaborate on your points and questions during class discussions.

3) **Discussion Presentation and Leadership**

4) **Critical Response Essays:** Each student will write **three critical response essays on a choice** of three of the nine ethnographies we will be reading in this class (any of the required texts). Your essay is due in your Sakai Dropbox **before class** on the day that we will be discussing that particular book (listed in schedule below) and should be 3-5 well-written double-spaced pages.

5) **Final Paper:** In addition, each student will write a **9-11 page double-spaced final paper.** You have two options for this paper, to be discussed in class. Remember to proofread! It is in your Sakai Dropbox by midnight on **Wednesday, May 8.**

**Grading:**
Class participation: 15%
Discussion presentation leadership: 10%
Weekly Sakai commentaries/questions: 10%
Three critical response essays: 45% (15% each)
Final paper: 20%
Course Schedule:

Introductions, Encounters, Orientalisms, Representations

1/23: Film in class: *Edward Said On Orientalism* (AV 2995)

1/30: Reading due: Introduction to *Orientalism*, pp 1-28 (Said)
        “The World as Exhibition” (Mitchell)
        “Good Muslim, Bad Muslim” (Mamdani)
        “Do Muslim Women Need Saving?” (Abu-Lughod)
        “Zones of Theory in the Anthropology of the Arab World” (Abu-Lughod)
        “Anthropologies of Arab-Majority Societies” (Deeb and Winegar)

2/6: Reading due: *Our Bodies Belong to God* (Hamdy)
      discussion leaders: __________________

2/13: Reading due: “Living the ‘revolution’ in an Egyptian village” (Abu-Lughod)
       “Meanings and feelings” (Ghannam)
       “The privilege of revolution” (Winegar)
       “Lawrence of E-Rabia: Facebook & the New Arab Revolt” (Burris, *jadaliyya*)
       “Gender and Revolution in Egypt” (Hatem, *merip*)
       “Imperial Feminism, Islamophobia, & the Egyptian Rev” (Naber, *jadaliyya*)
       “The Brotherhood Goes to Parliament” (Shehata and Stacher, *merip*)
       “Why the Anti-Mursi Protesters are Right” (Shokr, *merip*)
       “Morsi’s Sins beyond the Constitution” (Amer, *jadaliyya*)
       TBA from the upcoming *merip* issue on Egypt

2/20: Reading due: *Creative Reckonings* (Winegar)
       discussion leaders: __________________

2/27: Reading due: *Palestinian Village Histories* (Davis)
       Recommended reading: Merip Primer
       discussion leaders: __________________

3/6: Reading due: “Liberating Songs” (Massad)
       “Rai, Rap, and Ramadan Nights” (Gross, McMurray, Swedenburg)
       Film in class: *Slingshot Hip-Hop* (AV 3317)

3/13: Reading due: *Back Stories* (Bishara)
       discussion leaders: __________________

3/20 – spring break (keep reading for after break)

3/27: Reading due: *Gendered Paradoxes* (Adely)
       discussion leaders: __________________
4/3:  Reading due:  *The Politics of Women's Rights in Iran* (Osanloo)
     *discussion leaders: __________________*

4/10:  No reading due; time to get caught up or read ahead.
     Film in class: TBA

4/17:  Reading due:  *In the Time of Oil* (Limbert)
     *discussion leaders: __________________*

4/24:  Reading due:  *City of Strangers* (Gardner)
     *discussion leaders: __________________*

5/1:  Reading due:  *In and Out of Morocco* (McMurray)
     *discussion leaders: __________________*

5/8:  Capstone Day – Final Paper DUE in your Sakai Dropbox by midnight