

ANTH 413
Anthropology of the Modern Middle East and North Africa

University of Washington – Winter 2014

Instructor:	Michael Vicente Pérez
Email:	mvperez@uw.edu
Class Days and Times:	T/TH 10:30 – 12:20
Class Location:	RAI 116
Instructor Office:	DEN 239
Instructor Office Hours:	Monday 2:00-3:00 and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course draws on contemporary anthropological analyses of the people and politics of the MENA to provide a critical introduction to the region. Ethnographically grounded, the course draws on anthropological studies of local contexts and considers questions of methodology, representation, and power. Particular attention is given to the way large questions can be examined at the local level through the everyday lives of peoples in the region. Some of the key thematic issues guiding this course include knowledge production and representation; gender/ethnic/national identity/subjectivity; ideologies of religion and secularism; security, violence, and terror; human rights and resistance.

LEARNING GOALS:

By the end of this course students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate understanding of anthropological approaches to study of MENA
2. Demonstrate understanding of Orientalism and critique of MENA studies
3. Demonstrate understanding of gender ideologies in everyday practice
4. Demonstrate understanding of relationship between security and everyday practice
5. Identify critiques of human rights ideology and practice in everyday practice

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

I. Course Texts:

- a. *Anthropology of the Middle East and North Africa: Into the New Millennium* by Sherine Hafez and Susan Slyomovics
- b. *Women of Fes: Ambiguities of Urban Life in Morocco* by Rachel Newcomb
- c. *Security and Suspicion: An Ethnography of Everyday Life in Israel* by Juliana Ochs
- d. *The Rise and Fall of Human Rights: Cynicism and Politics in Occupied Palestine* by Lori Allen
- e. **A History of the Modern Middle East* by William Cleveland (optional)

II. Class Participation and Etiquette:

This course is designed to introduce, understand, and critically assess some of the central issues in the study of the Middle East and North Africa. My goal as an instructor will be to facilitate productive discussions and critical thinking about the readings. **Your participation is therefore essential for the success of this course. Students are expected to attend every class, arrive on time, and come prepared.** Participation will greatly depend on students' willingness to play an active role in class discussions. I will occasionally call on students to answer questions concerning course topics and readings. It is important that we work together to establish a tolerant and respectful class environment. Be confident and honest but be respectful. You are encouraged to express your views in this class; disagreements are normal and expected but please refrain from any inappropriate behaviors.

Etiquette: Please make sure that you turn your cell phones off before entering the classroom. No texting during class. If you have special circumstances and need your phone available, please notify me on the first day of class. Students are not permitted to bring computers to class unless there is a verifiable need.

III. Assignments:

Policies: All assignments must be turned in on time. **No late work will be accepted.** If you have an emergency situation, please notify immediately in writing or email. I expect documentation if you are unable to complete an assignment on time. I will not accept any assignments by email.

I expect that all of your assignments will be **typed and stapled.**

A. Discussion Posts (20 pts.): You are required to post 5 responses to the course readings throughout the quarter. These postings will be used to guide and enrich class discussions. To earn full credit, you must submit all 5 posts. You must post no less than 3 posts by week 6 of the course. Failure to do so will result in point deductions.

Your posts should address the week's readings and must be posted **no later than 8:00 pm on the night before class** so that other students have an opportunity to read them. **All students are expected to read the posts before coming class and to bring them to each class session.** You are encouraged to respond to particular posts with thoughtful comments/feedback.

Please single-space your post and sign your name at the end. Each posting should be at least two short, coherent paragraphs that follow one of these two formats:

- Close reading (title your posting “Close reading: [name of author/s]”):** Identify a passage from one of the readings that grabs your attention, provokes or excites you, or stumps and frustrates you. Briefly explain how or why it does so and pose a question that might help move our discussion forward to follow your inspiration or address your frustration
- Crosstalk (title your posting “Crosstalk: [topic or theme]”):** Write a short paragraph situating the day’s readings within the context of the course as a whole. What new elements do they bring to our exploration of ethnicity? Which previous readings do they build upon, which do they forget? How do they speak to themes emerging in class discussion?
- B. Quizzes (10 pts.):** Throughout the quarter, I will post 5 quiz questions on canvas. The questions will be brief and relate to the texts/discussions. You will have 24 hours to respond to each question (1-page long). Each quiz is worth 2 points.
- C. Critical Response Papers (40 pts.):** You are required to turn in 4 critical response papers. I will provide you with the questions in advance. You will select one of the questions and prepare an essay response. Your papers must be 2-3 double-spaced pages. I expect that your response will use the readings to construct a coherent and defensible response to each question. Your paper should demonstrate that you understand the readings and are able to present a critical engagement with the authors’ ideas. You must cite the authors when necessary.
- D. Final Paper (30 pts.):** You are required to identify a topic focused on the MENA and prepare a 5-page critical review paper. The essay must identify a key issue in the anthropology of the MENA and (1) identify/explain the theoretical/analytical frameworks and data for the topic and (2) make an argument about the strengths and weaknesses of each approach. Your paper should put the two texts in conversation: consider how their analyses intersect, diverge, etc. You can use one of the course ethnographies for your paper but you must include one outside source (anthropological). In addition, whatever sources you use must be focused on the MENA—no outside comparison will be accepted.

Topics for your paper may include media, religion, secularism, modernity, youth identity, gender, protest, etc. Your paper should have:

1. A clear introduction identifying the topic you chose, why you chose it, and the texts you examine
2. A clear examination of the topic in which you present the setting, data, and arguments of each text and assess their strengths/limitations—how they help us understand the topic
3. A clear conclusion that considers the stakes for understanding the topic selected and how these works matter for improving our understanding of the topic

Topic Proposal: You must prepare a 100-word paper proposal by week 5 of the quarter identifying your topic, justification for topic, and potential sources. You will submit this to me in class for credit.

*Resource: Anthropology Writing Center: For writing assistance, please consider visiting the Anthropology Writing Center. It is located in Denny 430 and is open daily from 9-5 (Monday – Thursday) and 9-1 (Friday). You can visit the center any time during these hours or set up an appointment by visiting tinyurl.com/anthwrc

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE:

WEEK 1: Anthropological Knowledge and the MENA January 6-10

Tuesday:

Susan Slyomovics: Chapter 1 State of the State of the Art Studies: An Introduction to the Anthropology of the Middle East and North Africa (pgs. 3-20)

**William Cleveland: Chapter 9 World War I and the End of the Ottoman Order (pgs. 137-158) [optional]*

Thursday:

**Edward Said: Orientalism (pgs. 67-93)*

**Zachary Lockman: Chapter 6 Said's Orientalism: a book and its aftermath (pgs. 182-214)*

**William Cleveland: Chapter 13 The Palestine Mandate and the Birth of the State of Israel (pgs. 221-252) [optional]*

Quiz #1 Posted January 13 at 10am

WEEK 2: Identity and Religion in the MENA January 13-17

Tuesday:

Sondra Hale: Chapter 7 The Memory Work of Anthropologists: Notes Toward a Gendered Politics of Memory in Conflict Zones – Sudan and Eritrea (pgs. 125-144)

**William Cleveland: Chapter 17 Israel and the Palestinians from 1948 to the 1970s (pgs. 322-344) [optional]*

Thursday:

Dawn Chatty: Chapter 8 Rejecting Authenticity in the Desert Landscapes of the Modern Middle East: Development Processes in the Jiddat il-Harasiis, Oman (pgs. 145-164)

Sherine Hafez: Chapter 10 Will the Rational Religious Subject Please Stand Up? Muslim Subjects and the Analytics of Religion (pgs. 187-202)

**William Cleveland: Chapter 22 The Palestinian Intifada and the 1991 Gulf War (pgs. 441-463) [optional]*

Quiz #2 Posted January 20 at 10am

WEEK 3: Religion and Media in the Mena

January 20-24

Tuesday:

Susanne Dahlgren: Chapter 12 Shari'a in the Diaspora: Displacement, Exclusion, and the Anthropology of the Traveling Middle East (pgs. 223-238)

**William Cleveland: Chapter 23 A Peace so Near, a Peace so Far: Palestinian-Israeli Relations Since the 1991 Gulf War (pgs. 463-486) [optional]*

Thursday:

Emilio Spadola: Chapter 14 "Our Master's Call": Mass Media and the People in Morocco's 1975 Green March (pgs. 261-284)

Sebastian Maisel: Chapter 15 The Construction of Virtual Identities: Online Tribalism in Saudi Arabia and Beyond (pgs. 285-300)

Quiz #3 Posted January 27 at 10am

WEEK 4: Ethnographies of the MENA

January 27-31

Tuesday:

Rachel Newcomb: Chapter 1 Introduction: Women of Fes and the Territories of Ideology (pgs. 1-28)

Critical Response #1 Due

Thursday:

Rachel Newcomb: Chapter 2 Rumors: Constructing Fes (pgs. 28-51) & Chapter 3 Mudawana Reform and the Persistence of Patriarchy (pgs. 52-78)

WEEK 5: Ethnographies of the MENA

February 3-7

Tuesday:

Rachel Newcomb: Chapter 4 Solidarity with Distinctions: The Limits of Intervention at a Fassi Nongovernmental Organization (pgs. 79-105)

Thursday:

Rachel Newcomb: Chapter 5 Kinship: Seeking Sanctuary in the City (pgs. 106-126) & Chapter 6 Occupying the Public: New Forms of Gendered Urban Space (pgs. 127-151)

Quiz #4 Posted February 10 at 10am

WEEK 6: Ethnographies of the MENA

February 10-14

Tuesday:

Rachel Newcomb: Chapter 7 Singing to So Many Audiences (pgs. 152-185) & Chapter 8 Conclusion: Community, Chaos, and Continuity (pgs. 186-194)

Thursday:

Juliana Ochs: Introduction: The Practice of Everyday Security (pgs. 1-18) & Chapter 1 A Genealogy of Israeli Security (pgs. 19-34) & Chapter 2 Senses of Security: Rebuilding Café Hillel (pgs. 35-64)

WEEK 7: February 17-21**Tuesday:**

Juliana Ochs: Chapter 3 Pahad: Fear as Corporeal Politics (pgs. 64-78) & Chapter 4 Embodying Suspicion (pgs. 79-98)

Critical Response #2 Due**Thursday:**

Juliana Ochs: Chapter 5 Projecting Security in the City (pgs. 99-118) & Chapter 6 On IKEA and Army Boots: The Domestication of Security (pgs. 119-137)

WEEK 8: February 24-28**Tuesday:**

Juliana Ochs: Chapter 7 Seeing, Walking, Securing Tours of Israel's Separation Wall (pgs. 138-160) & Epilogue (pgs. 161-166)

Thursday:

Lori Allen: Introduction (pgs. 1-32) & Chapter 1 The First Human Rights NGO: Al-Haq's Faith in Evidence (pgs. 33-64)

WEEK 9: March 3-7**Tuesday:**

Lori Allen: Chapter 2 The Beginning of the Decline: International Aid and the Production of Bad Faith (pgs. 65-98)

Critical Response #3 Due**Thursday:**

Lori Allen: Chapter 3 Teaching Human Rights: Citizens and Security Men in Training (pgs. 99-130) & Chapter 4 Making Up the Face of the State: Human Rights in the Creation of Political Authority (pgs. 131-156)

Quiz #5 Posted March 10 at 10am**WEEK 10: March 10-14**

Tuesday:

Lori Allen: Chapter 5 Nationalizing Human Rights: The Political Ethics of Hamas (pgs. 157-184) & Conclusion (pgs. 185-196)

Thursday:

Critical Response #4 Due

CLASSES END

WEEK 11: March 17-21

Finals Week

Final Paper Due March 19 at 5pm