

**ANTH 413**  
**ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE MODERN MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA**  
University of Washington – Spring 2016

Instructor: **Michael Vicente Pérez**  
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Class Days and Times: M/W 11:30 – 1:20  
Class Location: SAV 130  
Instructor Office: Condon 434  
Instructor Office Hours: Wednesday 4:30-5:30 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; power and ideology; the state; displacement and exile; nationalism and colonialism.

**LEARNING GOALS:**

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

1. Demonstrate understanding of Orientalism and critique of MENA studies
2. Demonstrate understanding of gender ideologies in everyday practice
3. Demonstrate understanding of relationship between ideology and power
4. Demonstrate understanding of displacement and exile as lived experience
5. Demonstrate understanding of nationalism and settler colonialism

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

**I. COURSE TEXTS:**

1. 2014. Amélie Le Renard. *A Society of Young Women*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.
2. 2015. Lisa Wedeen. *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
3. 2014. Diana Allan. *Refugees of the Revolution: Experiences of Palestinian Exile*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.
4. 2001. Nadia Abu El-Haj. *Facts on the Ground: Archaeological Practice and Territorial Self-Fashioning in Israeli Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

\*Optional Text: 2013. William Cleveland and Martin Bunton. *A History of the Modern Middle East*. Boulder: Westview Press.

\*Additional readings will be posted on Canvas throughout the quarter.

## **II. 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.

## **III. ASSIGNMENTS:**

Policies: All assignments must be turned in on time on canvas. **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.

- A. Participation (10 pts.):** This course is designed to introduce students to the anthropological study of the MENA. 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. **Your participation will be evaluated according to your role in promoting class discussions.** Silence is acceptable but only as an exception. I will occasionally call on students to answer questions concerning course topics and readings so be prepared to contribute. Participation is worth 10 points so make sure you come to class and participate!
- B. Quizzes (20 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 two days to respond to each question – posted on Friday night, due Sunday night (1-2 pages long). Each quiz is worth 4 points.

**C. Analytical Papers (30 pts.):** You are required to turn in three analytical papers. Your papers should be three-four double-spaced pages. This assignment requires that you critically reflect on the readings and prepare a thoughtful discussion about a particular topic, methodology, theory, argument, etc. Your paper should conform to one of the following approaches:

- Develop your own insights: You may take a particular idea from one (or more) of the readings and provide a discussion about this idea. For example, you may prepare a discussion of Said's notion of Orientalism. How does he discuss this idea and what insights does it provoke? The key here is to (1) identify and briefly explain a particular idea(s) from the readings and (2) develop your own discussion on these ideas. How do you understand the value of these ideas? Did they transform your understanding of something? How? What new insights did these ideas provide? Do you have a personal example to apply them to?
- Evaluate an argument: You may take a particular argument/idea from one (or more) of the readings and develop a position on that argument/idea. In this case, your paper can (1) evaluate the argument (examine its strengths/limitations), (2) challenge the argument (examine and critique its limitations), and/or (3) endorse the argument (examine its strengths and explain its value/build on it to strengthen it). The key is to engage the argument critically. Be sure to explain the argument before taking your position. Consider, for example, what the limitations are to the distinction between resistance and subordination.
- Comparative: You may take the work of two or more authors and compare/contrast them. In this paper, you can draw out the common threads (assumptions, arguments, etc.) of particular authors and/or show how they converge/diverge. The key is to demonstrate that you understand what the authors are saying and how you see the relationship between their works. How, for example, do Said and Massad present the concept of Orientalism? What brings their work together/sets them apart? Why is this important?

\*Do not summarize the readings. Although summarizing specific sections or points in the readings is necessary for framing your paper (and thus some summary is necessary), the bulk of the assignment should be based on your own critical thoughts and/or analysis. A key bit of advice is to think about the limits and possibilities of an idea offered by an author(s). Where do their ideas take us? How? What limits does the idea have? What possibilities?

**D. Essay Exams (40 pts.):** I will assign two essay exams to be completed over a weekend (midterm and final). The exams will consist of two questions but you will choose only one. Each question will focus on a particular theme/issue/text of the course that you will answer in three-five pages using course texts. Your answers must come from course readings. No outside sources are necessary or should be used. The

page limit is three-five double-spaced pages per question. If you go over the page limit, I will deduct points. Each question will be worth 20 points.

**IV. COURSE EVALUATION:**

100-99	4.0	A	76-75	2.4	C+
98	3.9		74-73	2.3	
97	3.8	A-	72-71	2.2	
96	3.7		70	2.1	C
95-94	3.6		69	2.0	
93-92	3.5		68	1.9	
91-90	3.4	B+	67	1.8	C-
89	3.3		66	1.7	
88-87	3.2		65	1.6	
86-85	3.1	B	64	1.5	
84	3.0		63	1.4	D+
83-82	2.9		62	1.3	
81	2.8	B-	61	1.2	
80	2.7		60	1.1	D
79	2.6		59	1.0	
78-77	2.5		58	0.9	

**V. COURSE SCHEDULE:**

**WEEK 1: Orientalism and “The Middle East”** **March 28-April 1**

**Monday:**

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

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

**Wednesday:**

\*Massad: Desiring Arabs: Introduction (pgs. 1-50)

**Quiz 1 Due Sunday, April 3, at 8pm**

**WEEK 2: Gender in the MENA** **April 4-8**

**Monday:**

\*Mahmood: Feminist Theory, Embodiment, and the Docile Agent: Some Reflections on the Egyptian Islamic Revival (pgs. 202-225)

**Wednesday:**

Le Renard: Introduction and Chapter 1 (pgs. 1-50)

\*Cleveland: Chapter 21 The Arabian Peninsula in the Petroleum Era (pgs. 451-473)

**Quiz 2 Due Sunday, April 10, at 8pm**

**WEEK 3: Gender in the MENA**

**April 11-15**

**Monday:**

Le Renard: Chapters 2-3 (pgs. 51-106)

**Wednesday:**

Le Renard: Chapter 4-5 and Conclusion (pgs. 107-170)

**Analytical Paper 1 Due Sunday, April 17, at 8pm**

**WEEK 4: The State and Power in the MENA**

**April 18-22**

**Monday:**

Wedeen: Preface, 2015 (pgs. vii-xviii) and Chapter 1 (pgs. 1-31)

\*Cleveland: Chapter 19 The Consolidation of Authoritarian Rule in Syria and Iraq: The Regimes of Hafiz al-Asad and Saddam Husayn (pgs. 397-422)

**Wednesday:**

Wedeen: Chapters 2-3 (pgs. 32-86)

**Quiz 3 Due Sunday, April 24, at 8pm**

**WEEK 5: The State and Power in the MENA**

**April 25-29**

**Monday:**

Wedeen: Chapter 4 (pgs. 87-142)

**Wednesday:**

Wedeen: Chapter 5 (pgs. 143-160)

\*William Cleveland: Chapter 13 The Palestine Mandate and the Birth of the State of Israel (pgs. 221-252) and Chapter 17 Israel and the Palestinians from 1948 to the 1970s (pgs. 322-344) [optional]

**Midterm Exam Due Sunday, May 1, at 8pm**

**WEEK 6: Displacement and Everyday Exile in the MENA**

**May 2-6**

**Monday:**

Allan: Introduction (pgs. 1-36)

**Wednesday:**

Allan: Chapters 1-2 (pgs. 37-100)

**WEEK 7: Displacement and Everyday Exile in the MENA**

**May 9-13**

**Monday:**

Allan: Chapter 3 (pgs. 101-136)

**Wednesday:**

Allan: Chapters 4-6 (pgs. 137-212) and Conclusion (pgs. 213-228)

**Analytical Paper 2 Due Sunday, May 15, at 8pm**

**WEEK 8: Settler Colonial Politics in the MENA**

**May 16-20**

**Monday:**

\*Piterberg: The Zionist Colonization of Palestine in the Context of Comparative Settler Colonialism (pgs.15-31)

Abu El-Haj: Chapter 1-2 (pgs. 1-44)

**Wednesday:**

Abu El-Haj: Chapter 3-4 (pgs. 45-98)

\*Shai: The Fate of Abandoned Arab Villages in Israel, 1965-1969 (pgs. 86-103)

**Quiz 4 Due Sunday, May 22, at 8pm**

**WEEK 9: Settler Colonial Politics in the MENA**

**May 23-27**

**Monday:**

Abu El-Haj: Chapter 5-6 (pgs. 99-162)

**Wednesday:**

Abu El-Haj: Chapter 7-8 (pgs. 163-200)

**Quiz 5 Due Sunday, May 29, at 8pm**

**WEEK 10: Settler Colonial Politics in the MENA**

**May 30-June 3**

**Monday:**

Abu El-Haj: Chapter 9 (pgs. 239-276) and Conclusion (pgs. 277-282)

**Wednesday: CLASSES END**

**Analytical Paper 3 Due Sunday, June 5, at 8pm**

**Final Exam Due Wednesday, June 8, at 8pm**