

Introduction to the Middle East 101

COURSE DESCRIPTION

If someone asked you: Where is the Middle East? What would your answer be? Would you with no hesitation point to a particular place on the map of the world? Or, perhaps you would falter for a second before arresting the reality on a piece of paper. What images would run through your head in that moment?



Would it be the falling Twin Towers? Palms, grazing camels and golden sand dunes? Violent protests at the Tahrir Square in Egypt? Or, Alladin's lamp? How much do you think these images define what Middle East is? How, for whom, and by whom are they produced?

This course is designed to introduce you to the anthropological way of thinking about the Middle East as a place/space that emerges through the production of knowledge and representations *in* the Middle East and *about* it. While exploring topics that go beyond the popular depictions of this region, you will be encouraged not only to confront its diversity but also to engage with the multiplicity of ways in which the Middle East has been produced in the public and academic realms through maps, news, films, stories, articles, books, interviews, etc.

Course structure: The Middle East is made *by* and *of* people, animals, plants, objects, landscapes and other material and immaterial "things" that are busy going around their daily businesses. I have structured this course to introduce you to some of these actors and their doings. In part I, we will start with the question "where?" to situate those who act. Places/spaces emerge (historically, economically, accidentally), imprint themselves (in memories, stories, and bodies), and are entangled (in conflicts, politics, and elapse of time). Actors assembled in the Middle Eastern spaces/places take all sorts of forms and often behave unpredictably. Some of them will be summoned in Part II to answer the question "who?" And, although pyramids, camels, mosquitos, peasants and "*reel*" Arabs do not stand for the whole of the Middle East they will help us to think about ideas, images, connections and history. Actors at the least *are* (like Mount Ararat or the Sun in the desert), but most of the time they do more than that, creating socio-material worlds in which we live.

The selection of their doings in Part III reflects a combination of concerns and issues characteristic for any region. We will ask, however, what forms they take specifically in the Middle Eastern context.

COURSE GOALS

This course has two goals. The immediate one is to broaden your knowledge of the region and the way it has come to be known as “the Middle East.” This course will provide you with some useful information that will aid your discussions of the contemporary problems and processes *within* and *beyond* the Middle East; discussions in which you may be engaging in other social settings. The second and broader goal is to learn thinking anthropologically and asking specific questions while looking at a vast geographical area, its history and connections with other parts of the world. Thus, we will learn how to talk about the Middle East using anthropological vocabulary and grapple with concepts such as place/space, construction, imagination, colonialism, dwelling, agency, relatedness, consumption, tradition, modernization, and practice.

REQUIREMENTS:

Two Quizzes	10%
In-class/Blog Participation	40%
Media Review	20%
Creative Project	10%
Intervention Project	20%

Quizzes: There will be two fill-in-the-blanks quizzes on the material covered in the lectures and readings related to the geography and ethnic make up of the Middle East. The purpose of these quizzes is to ascertain that you know the people (in terms of their ethnicity and/or religion) and places (in terms of their geographical location) that will come up again and again in subsequent readings and class discussions.

In-Class/Blog Participation: You will be expected to do the assigned readings and discuss them in class every week. I will require from each student a brief summary of the text, which will be guided by the questions I will provide weekly. Summaries of the text need not be long (a paragraph per reading) however, they should clearly demonstrate that you have done the reading and thought about it, and grades will be higher if you demonstrate that you are thinking about the reading in terms of what has been discussed in class. Engaging in dialogue with other students on the forum is also encouraged and will lead to a higher grade. The summaries and questions will be posted on-line.

Media Review: Once a week, you will be required to submit a paragraph-long summary of any current political or cultural issues related to the Middle East. You may find them on the sites:

- Al-Jazeera English Live
http://www.aljazeera.com/watch_now/2007829161423657345.html

- BBC News Middle East
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world/middle_east/
- Jadaliyya
<http://www.jadaliyya.com/>
- Connected in Cairo (this blog contains a blogroll of many other interesting links)
<http://connectedincairo.com/>

Creative Project: Read a novel (a list of the titles and detailed instructions will be provided separately) and tell us about your reaction to the book in a creative way. It can be a film posted on Youtube, poster presentation, slides, comic book, a poem, or any other creative way approved by the instructor.

Intervention Project: Outreach to the community and reporting. You may interview a person from the Middle East, conduct a survey, get in touch with someone on a blog, go to a local mosque, organize a meeting, etc. The idea is to learn about the Middle East outside of classroom (Detailed instructions will be provided separately).

GRADES:

Students are graded on their performance in the activities described above. Students who do everything that is asked of them in a competent and timely manner should expect a grade in the **B** range. **A** is the grade reserved for students who exceed expectations, who push themselves, who do more than is asked of them, who take risks, and from whom the professor learns interesting and exciting things.

Grading scale: A = 92-100 B+ = 88-89 C+ = 78-79 D+ = 68-69 F = 0-59
 A- = 90-91 B = 82-87 C = 72-77 D = 62-67
 B- = 80-81 C- = 70-71 D- = 60-61

ATTENDANCE:

Attendance is mandatory and may affect the grade. On the seventh absence, the overall grade for the course is automatically an F.

COURSE OUTLINE

PART I: INHABITED SPACES / IMAGINARY PLACES

Week one

Middle East: Middle of What? East of Whom? Since When?

Readings:

- Marshall Hodgson, 1974. *The Interrelations of Societies in History*. In *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (28 pages)

Other resources:

- Where is the Middle East? UNC website: <http://mideast.unc.edu/where/>
- Imperial History:

<http://www.yamli.com/#t=video&q=%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%82%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%88%D8%B3%D8%B7&s=0&safe=1>

- Exercise: "Syllabus on Anthropology of North America"
- Quiz on the geography of the Middle East:
http://www.rethinkingschools.org/just_fun/games/mapgame.html

The introductory class will be used to familiarize students with the course requirements and to do a few practical exercises that will prepare grounds for the coming discussions and lectures. We will start with writing down some of the ideas that students have about the "Middle East." I will collect them at return to the students at the end of the semester to evaluate. We will also create an imaginary syllabus on "Anthropology of North America." I am sure that a debate on how to define "North America" and what topics should find its place in such a syllabus will serve as a good introduction to thinking about questions of "boundaries," "contents" and "images" of other geographical areas. We will look at the changing maps of the Middle East and take a quiz on states that are currently considered to be a part of it. Finally, we will discuss Hodgson's text on writing history of the Middle East.

Hodgson's introduction looks at the ways in which "the West" came to be constructed and the consequences of this construction for historical analysis carried out by those who produced "the West" as well as those who indiscriminately accept it. His discussion of the "roots of the Western civilization" will help to highlight the idea that cultural-geographical concepts used by scholars and accepted by a broader public are imperfect historical abstractions that reveal as much as they obscure. For example, the commonly accepted version of history of the rise of civilizations absolutizes lettered traditions, ignoring other centers of civilizational development or scientific debates that often cut across the geographical borders. His introduction will create a useful historical background and a point of departure for thinking about "the Middle East" as a political-historical construct.

Week two

Imaginative Geographies

Readings:

- Mitchell, Timothy. 2002. The Object of Development. In *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Pp. 209-243. (34 pages)
- McIntosh, Janet. 2009. Rethinking Syncretism. Religious Pluralism and Code Choice in a Context of Ethnoreligious Tension. In *The Edge of Islam: Power, Personhood, and Ethnoreligious Boundaries on the Kenya Coast*. Durham: Duke University Press. Pp. 177-220. (43 pages)

Other resources:

Images of the Middle East from within and from outside:

- Oriental images: Film: *The Pasha's Daughter* (silent 1911, 13 min., dir. Ned Thanouser) <http://vimeo.com/2091145>
- Personal production: Jordan/Dalida Kilma Helwa <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kheg4VVK-R8&feature=related>
- Advertising: Saudi Arabia Yours to Discover - Travel Video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sLX86cOMZOc&feature=related>
- Entertainment: Saudi changes tires on a moving car without jackstand <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UiK7ciFttFI&feature=related>
- Music: Sout Al Horeya Amir Eid, Hany Adel, Hawary & Sherif http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fgw_zfLLvh8
- Cartoons: Baby One More Time !!!! Mobarak & Bin Ali <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eQ8RmeNb5Tc>
- Politics: Independent Egyptian Unions Express Solidarity with Wisconsin Workers <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pgxh5ByzRVQ>

This set of readings will address the questions of how the Middle East is presented by the Euro-American political and economic establishments as a place in a need of development and stabilization (Mitchell). This image will be juxtaposed with the portrayals of the Muslim world by those who live on its "fringes" and see it not only in terms of economic opportunities but also think of it as a land of their spiritual ancestry and heritage (McIntosh). We will also look at the specific instances of image production on Youtube that include non commercial clips on Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt, and a commercial advertising on Saudi Arabia. The goal of this module is to go beyond locating the Middle East on the point of (dis)juncture between the West/the Rest and to approach this region from multiple geographical and social locations. We will pay attention in particular to the constant flow and swap of images, ideas and objects between those who live in it, those who visit it and those who have never been there.

Week three

Colonial Spaces

Readings:

- Mitchell, Timothy. 1988. Enframing. In *Colonising Egypt*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 34-62. (28 pages)
- Abu El-Haj, Nadia. 2001. *Facts on the Ground: Archaeological Practice and Territorial Self-fashioning in Israeli Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (selection)

Other resources:

- *The Adventure of Tin Tin: Land of Black Gold*.
- Film: Agatha Christie's *Death on the Nile* (fiction 1978, 140 min., dir. John Guillermin)

This set of readings concentrates on the construction of space through the colonial urban design and peculiarity of Western conceptions of order and truth via Europe's colonial encounter with nineteenth-century Egypt (Mitchell). It also addresses the contemporary forms of colonization and rearrangements of public space to make it fit the national projects of reclaiming history and control. We will specifically touch upon the relationship between the development of scientific knowledge in Israeli archaeology and the construction of the social imaginations and political orders in the Israeli State (Abu El-Haj). We will also look at the ways in which colonial order is represented in fiction.

Week four

Inhabited Places

Readings:

- Salamandra, Christa. 2004. *A New Old Damascus: Authenticity and Distinction in Urban Syria*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. (selection)
- Crawford, David. 2008. *Moroccan Households in the World Economy: Labor and Inequality in a Berber Village*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press. (selection)
- Mottahedeh, Roy P. 2000. *The Mantle of the Prophet*. Oxford: Oneworld. (on the interior of the home)

Other resources:

- Film: *Tea on the Axis of Evil* on everyday life in Syria (documentary 2009, 67 min.)

The forms of imagining/representing the Middle East discussed earlier will be contrasted in this set of readings with the ideas of dwelling, inhabiting, occupying and making familiar. These readings will concentrate on aspects of everyday life that domesticate space and make it livable. I want to emphasize here different kinds of everyday practices taking place in public and private settings that shape places and spaces in some concrete ways and mark them as religious, political, economic, and gendered – all in all social. What do people call home and how do they create it? This will be the central question bringing together the readings in this module.

PART II: ACTORS: HUMAN AND NON-HUMAN

Week five

Mosquitos / Camels

Readings:

- Mitchell, Timothy. 2002. Can the Mosquito Speak? In *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Pp. 19-53. (34 pages)
- Khalaf, Sulayman. 1999. Camel Racing in the Gulf: Notes on the Evolution of a Traditional Sport. *Anthropos* 94:85-106. (21 pages)

Other resources:

- Robots replace children as camel jockeys in UAE:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b0aEtNH1NyY>
- UAE's Foreign Maids Lack Protections (NPR)
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=8895917>

Tradition and modernization are two key words in this module. We will ask the questions of what it means to “modernize” and to “preserve” a tradition. We will look at how tradition is reinvented with the help of the camels who have become catalysts of governing practices, economic investments, practical knowledge and social mobility. Similarly, we will look at the ideas of modernization in a historical context, bringing a mosquito to the center of action. This module will also speak to the situatedness of ethnographic practices through a juxtaposition of the depiction of the Emirati rulers with the news podcast on the deteriorating situation of the immigrant workers in the UAE.

Week six

Pyramids / Belly Dancers

Readings:

- Meskell, Lynn. 2004. Object Lessons From Modernity. In *Object Worlds in Ancient Egypt: Material Biographies Past and Present*. Oxford: Berg. Pp. 177-219. (42 pages)
- Wynn, L. L. 2007. *Pyramids and Nightclubs: A Travel Ethnography of Arab and Western Imaginations of Egypt, from King Tut and a Colony of Atlantis to Rumors of Sex Orgies, Urban Legends about a Marauding Prince, and Blonde Belly Dancers*. University of Texas Press, Austin. (selection)

Other resources:

- The Ancient World in London: Egyptomania in London
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iLe-N-5xJe8>
- Egyptomania in the News:
<http://www.egyptomania.org/news/news20002006.html>

This set of readings aims at taking two very familiar things, pyramids and belly dancers, and putting them in a contemporary context. Many people associate pyramids with the Middle East. Yet the way they are perceived mainly as a component of the Pharaonic history creates a habit of separation between the past and the present. By looking at different forms of Egyptomania (including its role in the creation of the Euro-American Art Deco), we will try to shift the emphasis from the past to the present and to look at the ways in which the pyramids (and other ancient Egyptian objects) as well as belly dancers continue to participate in the contemporary social life in Egypt and EuroAmerica. We will specifically ask how antiquities and belly dancing affect the contemporary economic life in the Middle East and satisfy sensibilities of the local customers and tourists. As a side theme, Wynn’s text reveals ambivalent attitudes expressed by the Egyptians toward the Arab tourists coming from the Gulf,

commenting on the economic dependencies and disparities between the states in the Middle East.

Week seven

Masahif / Water

Readings:

- Mandana Limbert, "The Senses of Water in an Omani Town," *Social Text*
- Varisco, Daniel M. 1983. Sayl and Ghayl: The Ecology of Water Allocation in Yemen. *Human Ecology*, 11(4): 365-383. (18 pages)

Other resources:

- Water in the Middle East
<http://vimeo.com/21172823>

These two "things" have not received much attention in the anthropological literature in the past. Water, so central yet so overlooked as a subject of anthropological inquiry, has only recently become a focus of serious studies and concern among the anthropologists. Similarly, the Qur'an as an object (mushaf), although ubiquitous and central to the Muslim religious practice, has not been seriously investigated so far. So, the aim of this module is twofold. First, it allows us to talk about two essential material "things" that participate in daily lives of many (in case of the mushaf) and everyone (in case of water), their daily presence in public and private spaces and political/economic entanglements that reach beyond local settings. Secondly, it will address the historical contingencies of the disciplinary concentrations and areas of interest.

Week eight

Reel Arabs/ Copts, Berbers, Druze, Kurds, Turks, Assyrians, Persians...

Readings:

- Silverstein, Paul and David Crawford. 2004. Amazigh Activism and the Moroccan State. *Middle East Report*, 233:44-48.
- Amanolahi, Sekandar. 2005. A Note on Ethnicity and Ethnic Groups in Iran. *Iran & the Caucasus* 9(1): 37-41. (4 pages)

Other resources:

- Film: Reel Bad Arabs (documentary 2006, 50 min.)
<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-223210418534585840#>
- Ethnic/religious groups in the Middle East
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Ethnic_groups_in_the_Middle_East

Images of the Arab Middle East permeate the mass media. In this module we will consider the content and the effects of the images produced by Hollywood for the mass consumption in America and beyond. We will also discuss how these images prevent us from noticing that not all Middle Easterners are Arabs, and not all Arabs are Muslims. The goal here is to make students think not only about the images of the "violent Arabs" disseminated by the Hollywood productions but also to go beyond the issues of particular forms of representation discussed in

the film. I would like to bring up here the problem of ethnicity as a social category and the ways in which it is obscured by the images of the “Arab” Middle East.

Week nine

Peasants / Youth

- Mitchell, Timothy. 2002. The Invention and Reinvention of the Peasant. In *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Pp. 123-152 (29 pages).
- An article on Arab Spring and participation of young people – to be determined.

Other resources:

- Film: *Garbage Dreams* (documentary 2009, 79 min., dir. Mai Iskander)
http://www.snagfilms.com/films/title/garbage_dreams1
- Skype interview with the students at Cairo University.

“Among the figures in the scholarly imagining of the post-colonial world, ‘the peasant’ is a strange kind of presence. With this abstraction, a category of human being has become a field of expertise, the subject of his own scholarly journals, and the object of a distinct body of theory and description. ‘What are villagers in India, in Egypt, in Mexico really like?’” Although Mitchell investigates emergence in the literature on the Middle East of a particular category of people “the peasants,” his approach can be used to look at other instances of scholarly production in which a particular group of people suddenly gains an academic and political recognition. Therefore this and the next set of readings will be devoted to thinking about the ways in which humans become “women,” “terrorists,” “peasants” or “youth.” It also addresses the political conditions of writing about the Middle East. I would like to include here a text on the role of the youth in the “Arab Spring” but I have not found a good article yet.

Week ten

“Respectable Women”/“Missing Terrorists”

Readings:

- Amar, Paul. 2011. Turning the Gendered Politics of the Security State Inside Out? *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 13(3): 299–328. (29 pages)
- Kurzman, Charles. 2011. *The Missing Martyrs: Why There Are So Few Muslim Terrorists*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (selection)

Other resources:

- Film: *Al-irhab wal Kabab (Terrorism and Kebab)* (fiction 1993, 105 min., dir. Sherif Arafa)
- Meet Asmaa Mahfouz and the vlog that Helped Spark the Revolution
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SgjIgMdsEuk>

Women as an object of investigation have a very privileged position in the literature on the Middle East. It is one of the most popular foci of academic

inquiry. Terrorism and terrorists is another. This set of readings is bringing these two constructs to the ground and attempts to address them in a practical fashion. Both authors suggest looking at data (ethnographic and statistical) in order to seriously rethink our understanding of the images of “Middle Eastern women” and “Muslim terrorists.” Btw, I like the idea that the terrorists are also missing at the end of the film “Terrorism and Kebab.”

PART III: PRACTICE

Week eleven

Economic practices/Tourism

- Pollard, Jane and Michael Samers. 2007. Islamic Banking and Finance: Postcolonial Political Economy and the Decentering of Economic Geography. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 32(3): 313-330. (17 pages)
- Miller, Michael B. 2006. Pilgrims' Progress: The Business of the Hajj, 191:189-228. (40 pages)
- Wener, Cynthia. 2003. The New Silk Road: Mediators and Tourism Development in Central Asia. *Ethnology* 42 (2): 141-159. (18 pages)

Other Resources:

- Hajj
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9x_WU0-uMns

Readings in the third part of the course direct our attention to human practices that are ubiquitous and fundamental. We will be interested here in what forms and particularities these practices assume in different parts of the Middle East. Texts selected for module eleven deal with making a living and spatial mobility. We will discuss specifically economic practices and tourism. We will look at travel experiences, the impact of tourism on the visited communities, the choice of touristic activities, and the level of institutionalization of the tourists' movements. The main goal here is to understand the tourist experience and tourism industry (including religious tourism) from the perspective of both tourists themselves and those whose worlds, or constructed versions of them, are being displayed. We will connect these ideas with the discussion of circulation of other economic practices and some characteristics of the Islamic banking system.

Week twelve

Speech practices/Writing

Readings:

- Caton, Steven C. 1986. Salāam Tahīyah: Greetings from the Highlands of Yemen. *American Ethnologist*, 13 (2): 290-308. (18 pages)
- Messick, Brinkley. 1989. Just Writing: Paradox and Political Economy in Yemeni Legal Documents. *Cultural Anthropology*, 4(1): 26-50. (24 pages)

Other Resources:

Qur'anic *tilawa* (recitation) competitions:

- Girl reciting the Qur'an
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=41yisjnxUA&feature=fvwrel>
- Reactions
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tialEg_b1p4&feature=related
- Competition
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xrvuT0mrjPQ&feature=related>
- Islamic calligraphy in the West Bank
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QAkbxl42BLg>

Speaking as a primary form of communication takes different forms. It is not only descriptive but also performative. Explorations of performativity of particular forms of speech (greetings and recitation) will be the focus in this module. We will also engage materiality of writing, its performance and its effects, including the question of change. We will examine in particular the changing relation of writing and authority in a Yemeni Muslim society and look at the creation and interpretation of texts, from sacred scriptures to administrative and legal contracts, pointing to the fundamental ways that authority is established and maintained in a complex state.

Week thirteen

Medical Practices/ Relatedness

Readings:

- Hamdy, Sherine F. 2009. Islam, Fatalism, and Medical Intervention: Lessons from Egypt on the Cultivation of Forbearance (Sabr) and Reliance on God (Tawakkul). *Anthropological Quarterly*, 82 (1): 173-196. (23 pages)
- Morgan, Clarke. 2007. Closeness in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Debating Kinship and Biomedicine in Lebanon and the Middle East. *Anthropological Quarterly*, 80 (2): 379-402. (24 pages)
- Dole, Christopher. 2006. Mass Media and the Repulsive Allure of Religious Healing: The Cinci Hoca in Turkish Modernity. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 38 (1): 31-54 (23 pages)

Other Resources:

In this set of readings we will look at anthropology of medical practices in the Middle Eastern context. These readings center on the questions of reformulation of social relations through the rapid changes in the modern medical practices. We will examine understanding of kinship relationships in conjunction with the kidney transplants in Egypt and developments in biomedicine in Lebanon. The nearest equivalent to a word for "kinship" in Arabic is qarābah which means "closeness." It is an important category within Islamic discourse. Closeness is also a useful term for approaching a broader set of social concerns in the region, including an interest in "close marriage." We will explore these ideas and how they are refracted through the issues posed by new medical technologies and "globalization." We will also look at dilemmas of the Turkish government that in

order to be “modern” is requested by the international agencies to incorporate traditional healing methods into its medical system, while the methods themselves include exorcizing of spirits, witchcraft, fortune-telling, and mediumship. Thus, the issues of healthcare will be connected to other social and political problems.

Week fourteen

Political practice/Dreaming

Readings:

- Salvatore, Armando. 2011. Civility: Between Disciplined Interaction and Local/Translocal Connectedness. *Third World Quarterly*, 32 (5): 807-825. (18 pages)
- Mittermaier, Amira. 2011. *Dreams that Matter: Egyptian Landscapes of the Imagination*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (selection)

Other Resources:

- Cartoons: Baby One More Time !!!! Mobarak & Bin Ali
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eQ8RmeNb5Tc>
- Mubarak is High
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kCBFH0_PPA&feature=endscreen&NR=1

When Amira Mittermaier received this year The Clifford Geertz Prize in the Anthropology of Religion for her book “Dreams That Matter” she remarked that although always important, dreams these days are especially necessary to sustain one’s will for political change. Her comment serves as a catalyst for this set of readings that mixes stories of engaging the future by an individual and collective political practice. Individual dreams may fuel collective actions and change trajectories of single lives as well as of entire social groups. Therefore, the central theme of this module is the way in which people exercise, individually and collectively, their powers in order to influence the forthcoming events and what obstacles they encounter in the process of reshaping them. We will also engage issues of governmentality and political control as structural powers that curtail individual efforts and goals.

Week fifteen

Media practices/ Consumption

Readings:

- Peterson, Mark Allen. 2011. *Connected in Cairo: Growing up Cosmopolitan in the Modern Middle East*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. (selection)
- Bishara, Amahl. 2008. Watching U.S. Television from the Palestinian Street: The Media, the State, and Representational Interventions. *Cultural Anthropology* 23 (3): 488-530. (42 pages)

Other Sources:

- Film: Control Room (documentary 2004, 84 min., dir. Jehane Noujaim)
<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=3977004463731346350>

To create a sense of closure, I decided to select for this last set of readings the texts that address consumption and media, and in particular, ones that focus on the popular consumption of images. This choice will tie us back to the beginning of the course where we talk about construction of images, including the ones that circulate in the public sphere. We will discuss here the role of the media in the creation of communities, economic ties and individual desires. We will look at the ways in which media participate in the production of conflict and link individual lives with wider political projects.