



GSWS 321-4: Gender, the Arts, and Politics of Homes and Diasporas

(Intersession and SFU Harbour Centre)

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Lecture: Mondays & Wednesdays 13:30 – 17:20

HC 15:30

Office hours: TBA

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Course Description:

This course explores gendered diasporic histories and experiences through the arts. Taking as its focus point Arab diasporas in Canada and the United States, the course examines the insights art can provide into Arab diasporic cultures and experiences. Utilizing a broad range of materials and viewpoints, the course will examine the role of memory, history, and experience in narrating and shaping diverse realities. To help us broaden our understanding of art, we will study a variety of works, including novels, poetry, comic books, music, blogs, and films. In addition to these required texts, the instructor will also supply some theoretical materials and readings that will serve as anchors for our class discussions. The materials will focus on themes of gender, belonging, exile, dislocation, loss, war, trauma, language, equity, justice, race and racism.

Learning Outcomes:

This course aims to develop an understanding of the histories of Arab diasporic communities in Canada and the U.S. It seeks to look at the ways in which Arab American and Arab Canadian artists engage issues displacement and migration. We will look at the ways in which art provides venues for expressions of identity, difference, and belonging and how gender politics influence and inform these works.

Course Texts and Courseware:

- Kaouk, Ada and Dominique Bourque, eds. *The Lands Within Me: Expressions by Canadian Artists of Arab Origin*. Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 2004.
- Kahf, Mohja. *E-mails from Scheherazad*. U of Central Florida Contemporary Poetry Ser. Gainesville: UP of Florida, 2003.
- Jarrar, Randa. *A Map of Home: A Novel*. New York: Penguin Press, 2009.
- Darraj, Susan Muaddi. *The Inheritance of Exile: Stories from South Philly*. Notre Dame, IN: U of Notre Dame P, 2007.
- Bilal, Wafaa, and Kari Lydersen. *Shoot an Iraqi: Art, Life and Resistance Under the Gun*. San Francisco: City Lights, 2008.
- Abu-Jaber, Diana. *The Language of Baklava*. New York: Pantheon, 2005.

Course Films and Documentaries:

- Kaabour, Mahmoud and Tim Schwab, dirs. *Being Osama*. Diversus Inc. 2004. 45 minutes.
- Jacir, AnneMarie, dir. *The Salt of This Sea*. JBA Productions, 2009. 105 minutes.
- Dabis, Cherein, dir. *Amreeeka*. National Geographic Entertainment, 2009. 105 minutes.

Please note: Students are not required to purchase the films and/or documentaries being shown in class. Also, the instructor will provide additional articles, essays and blog links on the expanded syllabus.

Course Evaluation and Assignments:

Attendance and Participation 20%

Position Papers 30%

Final Project 50%

(See details on other side of page)

Prerequisite: 15 units

THE DEPARTMENT OF GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND WOMEN'S STUDIES ENCOURAGES CLARITY OF THOUGHT AND EXPRESSION AND GOOD WRITING.

STUDENTS WILL BE EVALUATED ON THESE SKILLS IN ALL COURSES GIVEN BY THE DEPARTMENT.

IN ADDITION, THE DEPARTMENT WILL FOLLOW POLICY T10.02 WITH RESPECT TO "INTELLECTUAL HONESTY," AND "ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE"

(WWW.SFU.CA/POLICIES/TEACHING)



Required Work

Attendance and Participation, 20%

Attendance is essential in this course. Because the material covered will be new and unfamiliar to most students, it is imperative that you attend class on time and that you actively participate in all classes. Reading assigned materials and actively engaging class discussions are vital aspects of this seminar course.

Position Papers, 30%

Students are responsible for submitting 3 position papers that are one to two pages in length (double-spaced, 1 inch margins). Each paper should have a clearly identifiable argument or position, demonstrating thoughtful and analytic engagement with the theoretical materials. Position papers should respond to themes raised by assigned works and tease out, when possible, connections and common links between our readings. They are not summaries of assigned readings. Each paper is due at the beginning of the class on the day of the assigned readings.

Final Project, 50%

For your final projects, students have one of the following choices:

1. Submit a review of one of the assigned course materials. These reviews will focus on providing your opinions and assessments of the questions, ideas, themes, and topics that emerge through the selected work. Your review should provide a basic summary of the documentary or film but must also move beyond this to address how it interrogates issues pertaining to our exploration of the relationship between feminism and Islam. In particular, your review should demonstrate how the film engages (or shies away from) contemporary debates on Islam and Feminism. The review should demonstrate original thought and clarity of expression. It should utilize, if possible, outside references and materials.
2. Create a zine or pamphlet engaging materials discussed in the course. The material produced should reference, engage with, and present a coherent understanding of selected theoretical materials and discussions and should link them, when possible, to contemporary theoretical debates on diasporic positionalities and experiences. Projects should be made with the intention that they reach a wide audience at Queen's. A two-page analysis and explanation of methods used, as well as a discussion of the experience of producing the zine or pamphlet must accompany submitted work. Group work is permitted for this project.
3. Produce an audio or visual documentary exploring the history, politics, and realities of Arab diasporas in Canada and/or the U.S. This project can be focused on mapping a history (or histories) of Arab immigration to Canada and/or the U.S. It can take as its focus any Arab nationality or grouping and attempt to chart this group's movement from one location to another, its settlements and lived experiences in a new homeland. The project should be historicized and political in its approach and vision. A two-page analysis and explanation of methods used, as well as a discussion of the experience of producing this documentary must accompany submitted work. Group work is permitted for this project.
4. A final research paper which does not exceed 8-10 pages in length addressing and engaging any questions, debates, and discussions raised by the selected course materials. The paper, while referencing theoretical works utilized in this class, should also showcase students' research abilities and skills. Papers must provide a clearly articulated thesis, a works cited page, and follow MLA documentation guidelines.