This course examines contemporary media in (primarily Arab parts of) the Middle East and the US and their relationship to the perceived rift between Islam and the West. Readings and media examples focus on the politics of culture, religion, modernity, and national identity as they shape and intersect with contemporary geopolitical events, cultural formations and media globalization.

This is an upper-level inter-disciplinary course that draws on readings in media studies, communications, political science, history, geography, literary criticism, sociology and anthropology. Reading and writing requirements for this course are demanding (consider this statement a fair warning). You will occasionally be required to watch films and/or videos outside of class.

This is not a course on the history and politics of Islam and the Middle East. You do not need to have prior knowledge of the subject matter, although it will help. Class lectures and hand-outs will provide brief historical and political context, and background reading materials will help in furthering such knowledge. You should be pro-active in learning more about the regions we will be discussing through your own outside research and reading (keeping up with global affairs, gaining familiarity with political issues and countries, looking up historical events, watching/reading news from/about the region, etc.).

REQUIRED READINGS & VIDEOS
- Book chapters, articles, web links, and other readings will be available on Blackboard.
• Additionally, you will be required to watch films outside of class, to be viewed before we meet. These will either be available at the Avery Fischer Center in the Bobst Library or through other sources (on-line, video rental stores, scheduled screening, etc.)

EXPECTATIONS & GRADING

ASSIGNMENTS
Class Participation = 10%
• You are expected to thoroughly read before each class and participate in all class discussions.
• Your participation grade is based on presence, punctuality, quantity, and most importantly, quality of in-class participation. You are expected to come to class prepared to intelligently and critically discuss readings and audio/visual assignments.
• You will sometimes be given in-class assignments or asked to bring in and summarize examples to class; these count as part of your participation grade.

Film Review = 10%
• Details about film reviews will be discussed in class.
• Length: 1000 – 1500 words
• Due Date: Dec. 2

3 Papers = 30%
• You will be given specific instructions for each, usually around 10 days in advance of the due date.
• These papers require you to show in-depth involvement with the issues and provide your thoughtful and thorough analysis of the readings and videos for the respective section of this course. You have a choice of 3 paper from 5 topics (you may hand in 4 and have the lowest grade dropped). The first paper is required for everyone, and that grade may not be dropped.
• Typed, double-spaced, stapled, between 750 – 1,250 words (3-5 pages) each. If you wish to email your papers, you must do so no later than 10:00am on the due date, and attach them preferably as pdf.
• You are required to post your papers on your blog no later than 10:00am on the due date.
• Due Dates:
  o Paper 1: Oct. 5 (required for everyone / submit via email)
  o Paper 2: Oct. 19
  o Paper 3: Nov. 2
  o Paper 4: Nov. 30
  o Paper 5: Dec. 14
Blog / Public Journal = 50%

- You are required to keep an on-going blog: a writing project of your thought process/progress throughout the semester. In it, you should engage with the readings, ideas, media from class and other readings and media that you have come across outside of class. You must provide a clear, coherent analysis / response to the issues, themes, questions, debates. Do not simply describe, reiterate, paraphrase or quote, but explain what is interesting, what is theoretically convincing or questionable, what is pertinent, problematic, exemplary, etc.
- The journal must be on-line and continuously available/accessible (hence, blog). The format is open-ended. There is no formal structure requirements except providing citations and/or links whenever you are referring to materials. You can use this as a stream-of-consciousness journal, a wiki with sub-categories, a web site, or any form of ‘journal’ in whatever style you wish: formal, informal, ‘dear diary’, letters, fake interviews, Q&A’s, etc., or any mixture of these.
- You are free to post any items you wish, as long as they relate to your entry and are thoroughly explained/analyzed: images, clips, links, music videos, newspaper articles, blogs, etc.
- All of your posts must relate to the theoretical issues discussed in class, readings, etc. In other words, you are expected to draw on the assigned readings, lectures and class discussions in your blog entries.
- Your blog must be up and running no later than Sept. 23, at which time the links will be posted on the main class blog/site.
- You must have at least 30% of your blog completed by Oct. 28 (between 5 and 6 entries and/or 1,800 words)
  - You will be given detailed feedback and a tentative grade on the first installation.
  - You may, of course, ask for more feedback at any time in the semester.
- Your blog must be complete by Dec. 9 with a minimum of 12 entries and/or 5,000 words. There is no upper limit.
- In addition, you must include the following on your blog – these are NOT part of the total word count:
  - Your 3 (or 4) short papers, to be posted by 10am on the due date.
  - Your film review
  - All your required assignments that you have brought to class (links, summaries, etc.)
  - You are required to read your classmates’ blogs, and post one final entry on your own blog that collectively responds to your classmates, of 500 – 700 words, no later than Dec. 14
- You are welcome to use any blog software, or alternatively go through blogs.nyu.edu to set one up and follow the instructions on how to do so. All blogs will be linked on the main class blog/page and on Blackboard.

GRADING POLICIES

- Students with special needs, either with physical and/or learning disabilities, or religious observances, must come talk to me at the beginning of the semester in order to assure any special needs: extra time for papers; access to materials, etc. Moreover, any student who
needs an accommodation due to a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility and/or learning
disability, or is Deaf or Hard of Hearing should register with the Moses Center for Students
with Disabilities at 212 998-4980, 240 Greene Street, http://www.nyu.edu/csd

- Grades will not be curved. If you attend class, do the required work and have a reasonable
grasp of the information, you should have no trouble earning at least a C, which indicates
satisfactory work.

- Late papers and assignments will be graded down –.1 for every day late (24 hours from
11am, including weekends and holidays). Papers and assignments will NOT be considered
once they are more than 5 days late (24 hours from 11am, including weekends and holidays)
and will automatically result in an F (0%).

- Timely and intelligent participation in class is required, and is predicated on completing all
readings and assignments before class. Your grade will decrease by -.1 for every class you
miss. You MUST notify me in advance if you are going to miss a class or a deadline, and you
will need a legitimate excuse (doctor’s note, arrest warrant, etc.).

- You are expected to abide by NYU’s and Steinhardt’s standards of Academic Integrity. See
http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/policies/academic_integrity. Cheating or plagiarizing the work of
another will result in an automatic F (0%). Additionally, departmental and university policy
permits harsher actions.

**GRADING STANDARDS**

A (4.0) = Excellent. Outstanding work in all respects. Work demonstrates comprehensive
understanding and presents thoughtful and creative interpretations, well-focused and original
insights, well-reasoned commentary and analysis.

B (3.0) = Good. Work demonstrates complete and accurate understanding of course materials,
presents a reasonable degree of insight and broad level of analysis. Work reflects competence
but stays at a general or predictable level of understanding.

C (2.0) = Satisfactory. Work demonstrates adequate understanding but remains superficial,
incomplete, vague or expresses some important errors or weaknesses. Work may lack
concrete, specific examples and illustrations; writing may be vague or hard to follow.

D (1.0) = Unsatisfactory. Work demonstrates a lack of understanding and fails to express basic
aspects of the course. Participation was inadequate or superficial.

F (0) = Failed. Work was not submitted or completed according to parameters (page length,
topical focus, types of sources), or completely failed to express basic and elementary aspects of
the course.
SCHEDULE

• The syllabus is a roadmap at best. While it is intended that the course will follow the schedule below, modifications along the way are inevitable.
• Readings are listed in the suggested reading order.
• Readings are listed as required, browse or background.
  o Required readings should be completed before you come to class. These should be incorporated in your papers and blogs.
  o Browse readings should be skinned/browsed through, enough for you to get a general idea of what the piece is about.
  o Background readings are provided for further information. These are strongly recommended if you know little about the topic, history, region and/or are feeling ‘lost’ in class.
• Readings are to be completed by the day listed. Come to class prepared to discuss the readings, any assigned web sites, audio/visual, or other materials.

PART 1: INTRODUCTIONS

Tue. Sep. 7 – Introduction and “Name That Video”

Thu. Sep. 9 – Media Attack? Culture, Religion, and Politics
Required:
• Andrew Hammond, Popular Culture in the Arab World, Chapter 1. pp.1-51.
• Memorize regional map

Tue. Sep. 14 – Guest Lecture: Vit Sisler on Arab/Islamic Video Games
Required:
PART 2: POLITICAL & THEORETICAL CONTESTATIONS
Paper Due 10/5 (required for everyone)

Thu. Sep. 16 – The Clash, as Imagined in the US
Required:
- Samuel Huntington, 1993. ‘Clash of Civilizations?’ Foreign Affairs, 72(3), Summer.
- Choose ONE of the following to read and summarize:
- Required Assignment: Find, summarize, and bring to class ONE article/news item on the Ground Zero Muslim Community Center controversy

Tue. Sep. 21 – The Clash, as Imagined by Bin Laden
Required:
- Osama Bin Laden, Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama Bin Laden:
  - Introduction by Bruce Lawrence, pp.xi-xxiii
  - ‘To the Americans’, October 6, 2002, pp.160-172

Background:
- Osama Bin Laden, Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama Bin Laden:

Thu. Sep. 23 – Jihad, McWorld... or Globalization?
Required:
- Benjamin Barber, Jihad vs. McWorld: How Tribalism and Globalism are Reshaping the World:
  - Introduction, pp.3-20
  - Chapter 10, ‘Jihad vs. McWorld or Jihad via McWorld?’, pp.155-168
- Andrew Hammond, Popular Culture in the Arab World, Chapter 4, pp.107-135.

Background:
- Benjamin Barber, Jihad vs. McWorld: How Tribalism and Globalism are Reshaping the World:

** Blog must be active **
**Tue. Sep. 28 – Cultural and Political Critiques**

**Required:**
- Mahmoud Mamdani, 2004. *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terrorism*, New York: Pantheon Books:
  - Introduction: ‘Modernity and Violence’
  - Chapter 1: ‘Culture Talk; Or, How Not to Talk About Islam and Politics’

**Background:**
- Ali Mirsepassi, ‘Reflections on ‘Muslim Anger’’, *CSSAAME* 27(3): 497-502 (critique of ‘culture talk’ in case you find Mamdani difficult or insufficient)

**Thu. Sep. 30 – No Class**

**Tue. Oct. 5 –**

****Paper I Due (Based on Sep. 7 – Sep. 28 Readings and Lectures)** **

(submit via email)

**Thu. Oct. 7 – Catch-up I**

- Required assignment to bring to class:
  - A mediated form that you think reflects, problematizes or otherwise deals with the topics discussed so far (you may supply a link, which you should email to me by 8am)
  - A list of questions about the region / religion / etc. that you wish to have answered. Please post these to Blackboard or email them directly to me by 8am.

**PART 3: TOWARDS A MEDIA CRITIQUE**

**Paper Due 10/19**

**Tue. Oct. 12 – Orientalism**

**Required:**
  - Preface, pp.xv –xxx
  - Introduction, pp.1-28
Thu. Oct. 14 – Media Representations
Required:
• Toufic El Rassi, Arab in America (entire book)
• Edward Said, Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World:
  o Introduction, pp.xlix-lix
  o Chapter 1 ‘Islam as News: Islam and the West’, pp.3-35

Background:

PART 4: COMIC(AL?) POLITICS
Paper Due 11/2

Tue. Oct. 19 – Iran, from the Inside Out and Back Again
Required:
• Marjane Satrapi, Persepolis I and II (entire books)

Background:
• Annabelle Sreberny & Ali Mohammadi, Small Media, Big Revolution: Communication, Culture, and the Iranian Revolution (analysis of Iranian political and media events leading up to the 1979 Iranian revolution).
  o Introduction
  o Chapter 5 ‘Oppositions: Secular and Religious’,
  o Chapter 8 ‘The ‘Heavy Artillery’: Small Media for a Big Revolution’
• Film: Persepolis (Available at Avery Fischer / Bobst, Call # DVD 10369)

** Paper 2 Due (Based on Oct. 12 – Oct. 14 Readings and Lectures) **

Thu. Oct. 21 – Voyeurism in the Palestinian Territories
Required:
• Derek Gregory: The Colonial Present: Chapter 5 “Barbed Boundaries” pp.76-106 (history of Palestinian Territories and Palestinian-Israeli conflict)
• Joe Sacco, Palestine: The Special Edition (entire book)
• Film (choose one):
  o The Gaza Strip, directed by James Longley, 2002 (available at Avery Fischer / Bobst, Call # DVD 6068)
- *Jerusalem: Another Day* (aka *Rana’s Wedding*), directed by Hany Abu-Assad, 2002
  (available at Avery Fischer / Bobst, Call # DVD 2597)
- *Paradise Now*, directed by Hany Abu-Assad, 2006
  (available at Avery Fisher / Bobst, Call # DVD 4044)
- *Like Twenty Impossibles*, directed by Annemarie Jacir, 2003
  (available at Avery Fischer / Bobst, Call # 3163)
- *Route 181*, directed by Eyal Silvan and Michel Khleifi, 2003
  (available at Avery Fischer / Bobst, Call # DVD 7072)
- *Lemon Tree* directed by Eran Riklis, 2008
- Other films subject to approval prior to Oct. 14

**Background:**
  (poetic/political explanation of Palestinian dispossession)
  - Chapter 1 ‘States,’ pp.3-9
  - Chapter 1 ‘States,’ pp.11-49
- Joe Sacco, *Footnotes From Gaza* (entire book)

**Tue. Oct. 26 – ‘Normal’ Life in Abnormal Circumstances**

**Required:**
- Readings on 1982 Lebanon War TBD
- Mazen Kerbaj, ‘A Happy Childhood’
- Film (choose one):
  - *West Beyrouth* (aka *West Beirut*), directed by Ziad Doueiri, 1998
    (available Avery Fischer / Bobst Library, Call # VCA 10774)
  - *Beirut: The Last Home Movie*, directed by Jennifer Fox, 1991
    (available at Avery Fischer / Bobst, Call # VCA 4333)
  - *Waltz with Bashir*, directed by Ari Folman, 2009
    (available at Avery Fischer / Bobst, Call # DVD 13779)
  - Other films subject to approval prior to Oct. 19.

**Thu. Oct. 28 – War Blogger**

**Required:**
- Derek Gregory: *The Colonial Present*: Chapter 7 “The Tyranny of Strangers”
  pp.144-179
  (history of Iraq and US involvement in past two Gulf Wars)
  - Introduction by Ian Katz, pp.ix-xiv
  - September 2002 excerpts
  - October 29, 2002
  - November 2, 2002
  - November 15, 2002
  - December 3, 2002
  - March 16, 2003 & March 20, 2003
April 1, 2003 – April 7, 2003

Background:
• Film: The Green Zone, directed by Paul Greengrass, 2010.

** 1st Installation (30%) of Blog Due **

Tue. Nov. 2 – The Threat of Law?
+ Catch-Up 2
Required:
• Required assignment to bring to class:
  o A mediated form that you think reflects, problematizes or otherwise deals with the topics discussed so far (you may supply a link, which you should email to me by 8am)
  o A list of questions about the region / religion / etc. that you wish to have answered. Please post these to Blackboard or email them directly to me by 8am.

Background:
• Film: The Road to Guantanamo, directed by Michael Winterbottom, 2006 (available at Avery Fischer / Bobst, Call #: DVD 6342)

** Paper 3 Due (Based on Oct. 19 – Nov. 2 Readings and Lectures) **

** PART 5: EVERYDAY CULTURAL PRACTICES & TELEVISION **

Paper Due 11/30

Thu. Nov. 4 – (News, Part I) From Al Jazeera ...
Required:
• Andrew Hammond, Popular Culture in the Arab World, Chapter 8, pp.205-218.
• Film: Control Room (available at Avery Fisher/ Bobst, Call #: DVD2792)

Browse:
Background:
- William Rugh, Arab Mass Media,
  - ‘Arab Radio and Television Prior to 1990,’ pp.181-199;

**Tue. Nov. 9 – (News, Part 2) ... to Al Hurra**
Required:
- Lawrence Pintak, Reflections in a Bloodshot Lens: America, Islam, and the War of Ideas:
  - Chapter 7 ‘Weaponizing the Media’
  - Chapter 11 ‘Brand America’

**Thu. Nov. 11 – Reality TV**
Required:
- Hammond, Andrew, Popular Culture in the Arab World, Chapter 8, pp.223-229.
- Required Assignment: Find, summarize, and bring to class ONE example of a Muslim and/or Arab ‘reality TV’ program (if this is a link, please email it to me by 8am)

Background:

**Tue. Nov. 16 – Ramadan Serials**
- Andrew Hammond, Popular Culture in the Arab World, Chapter 8, pp.231-236.
- Reading on current Ramadan season TBD
- Required Assignment: Find, summarize, and bring to class ONE example of a ‘Ramadan serial’ (if this is a link, please email it to me by 8am)

Background:

**Thu. Nov. 18 – From Islamic Pop to the Popularization of Islam**
Required:
- Nabil Echchaibi, 2007. ‘From the pulpit to the studio: Islam’s internal battle’ Media Development.
• ONE of the following, which you must read and summarize for class:
  o Lindsay Wise, 2006. ‘Amr Khaled vs. Yusuf Al Qaradawi: The Danish Cartoon Controversy and the Clash of Two Islamic TV Titans,’ TBS 16
  o Others TBD

** Tue. Nov. 23 – Music and Diasporic Consciousness **

Required:
• Andrew Hammond, Popular Culture in the Arab World, Chapter 6, pp.159-186.
• Required Assignment: Find, summarize, and bring to class ONE audio/video example of Arab, Arab-American, Arab-European, Muslim, Muslim-American and/or Muslim-European rap/hip-hop (if this is a link, please email it to me by 8am).

Background:

** Thu. Nov. 25 – No Class **

** Tue. Nov. 30 – America(ns) in the UAE + Catch-up 3 **

Required:
• Readings TBD
• Required Assignment: Find, summarize, and bring to class ONE article/news item about NYU-Abu Dhabi (you may supply a link, which you should email to me by 8am).
• Required Assignment to bring to class:
  o A list of questions about the region / religion / etc. that you wish to have answered. Please post these to Blackboard or email them directly to me by 8am.

** Paper 4 Due (Based on Nov. 4 – Nov. 30 Readings and Lectures) **

** PART 6: NEW MEDIA, OLD WARS? Paper Due 12/14 **

** Thu. Dec. 2 – Islamic Heroism **

Required:
• Tashkeel Comics, ‘The 99’ (entire series)
• Readings TBD

** Deadline: Film Review **
Tue. Dec. 7 – Hizballah’s Screens
• Readings TBD

Thu. Dec. 9 – On-Line Jihad
• Readings TBD

** Final Blog Installation Due **

Tue. Dec. 14 – Gaza & Israel: No Media Allowed, But Sex Yes + “Name That Video 2”
• Readings TBD
• Required Assignment to bring to class:
  o a video / music video / advertisement / audio clip or link to one of these (details to follow)

** Paper 5 Due (Based on Dec. 2 – Dec. 14 Readings and Lectures) **
** Classmate Feedback on your Blog Due **