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, literary criticism, sociology and anthropology. Reading and writing requirements for this course are demanding. You will occasionally be asked 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 however 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.). Some helpful background readings from on-line newspapers and media outlets will be provided on Blackboard.

**REQUIRED READINGS & VIDEOS**

- Book chapters, articles, web links, and other readings will be available on Blackboard.
- Film: *Control Room*, 2004 (directed by Jehane Noujaim), available on reserve at the Avery-Fischer Center in the Bobst Library, Call #DVD2792, and most video rental stores.
EXPECTATIONS & GRADING

ASSIGNMENTS

Class Participation = 10%
- You are expected to thoroughly read before each class and participate in all class discussions, as well as in-class and any Blackboard-based assignments and discussions.
- Your participation grade is based on presence and punctuality, and 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.

4 Papers = 40%
- You will be given specific instructions for each.
- 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 four major sections of this course.
- 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 10:30am on the due date.
- You are required to post your papers on your blog no later than 10:30am on the due date (see below).

Blog/Public Journal = 40%
- You are required to keep an on-going blog: a writing project of your thought process/progress throughout the semester. In it, you should respond to 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.
- 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.
- You should have a minimum of 10 entries and/or 4,000 words. There is no upper-limit (but don’t go nuts!)
- Your blog must be up and running no later than Sept. 22, at which time the links will be posted on Blackboard.
- You must have at least 30% of your blog completed by Nov. 3 (between 3 and 4 entries and/or 1,500 words)
  o You will be given detailed feedback and a tentative grade on the first installation.
  o You may, of course, ask for feedback earlier in the semester.
You may submit a 2nd installation of your journal no later than Nov. 24. This is optional, and strongly recommended if you want feedback before your final submission.

- Your blog must be complete and fully accessible by Dec. 1
- Your blog should additionally include links/posts of your 4 short papers, to be posted no later than each due date, and your classmate feedback due Dec. 10 (see below). These are NOT counted as part of the total word-count!
- 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.

Classmate Feedback = 10%

- You will be given specific instructions.
- You are required to read your classmates' blog, and post one final entry on your own blog that responds to your classmates collectively.
- 500 – 750 words.
- Due: Dec. 10, to be posted on your blog.

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, 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 11 am, including weekends and holidays). Papers and assignments will not be considered once they are more than 5 days late (24 hours from 11 am, 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 readings and any 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. Cheating or plagiarizing the work of another will result in an automatic F (0%). Additionally, departmental and university policy permits harsher actions, if warranted.

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) = Adequate. 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 the most basic and elementary aspects of the course.

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**SCHEDULE**

**Schedule of Readings and Assignments**

- 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**. Changes will be reflected on Blackboard.
- Readings are listed in the suggested reading order.
- Readings are listed as **required** (obvious what that means), **browse** or **background**. Skim through or read the ‘browse’ ones enough to get a general idea of what the piece is about. ‘Background’ readings are provided for further information, these are strongly recommended if you know little about the topic, history, region and are feeling ‘lost’ in class.
- Readings are to be completed by the day listed. Come to class prepared to discuss the readings, and any assigned web sites or audio/visual materials.

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**PART 1: INTRODUCTIONS**

**Wed. Sep. 3 – Introductions, Music Videos**

**Mon. Sep. 8 – Media Attack!**

Required:
- Memorize regional map

**Wed. Sep. 10 – Culture, Religion, and Politics in the Arab World**

**PART 2: POLITICAL / THEORETICAL CONTESTATIONS: Paper Due 9/29**

**Mon. Sep. 15 – The Clash, as Imagined in the US**

**Required:**
- Samuel Huntington ‘Clash of Civilizations?’ Foreign Affairs, 72(3), Summer 1993.
- Choose ONE of the following (your choice):

**Wed. Sep. 17 – 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:

**Mon. Sep. 22 – Jihad, McWorld... 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 up**

**Wed. Sep. 24 – Cultural and Political Critiques**

**Required:**
- Mahmoud Mamdani, Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terrorism, New York: Pantheon Books, 2004:
Part 1: '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)
- Timothy Mitchell, 'McJihad' (political rebuff to Benjamin Barber, with detailed accounts of US's often-harmful role in the Middle East)

Part 3: Towards a Media Critique: Paper Due on 10/6

**Mon. Sep. 29 – Orientalism**

Required:
  - Preface, pp.xv –xxx
  - Introduction, pp.1-28

**Paper 1 Due on Part 2 (Sept. 8 – 24)**

**Wed. Oct. 1 – Media Representations**

Required:
- Edward Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*:
  - Introduction, pp.xlix-lix
  - Chapter 1 'Islam as News: Islam and the West', pp.3-35

Background:

Part 4: Comic(al?) Politics: Paper Due 10/29

**Mon. Oct. 6 – 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’

** Paper 2 Due on Part 3 (Sept. 29 – Oct. 1) **

Wed. Oct. 8 – Voyeurism in the Palestinian Territories
Required:
• Joe Sacco, Palestine: The Special Edition (entire book)

Background:
  o Introduction, pp.3-9 & Chapter 1 ‘States,’ pp.11-49
• Derek Gregory: The Colonial Present: Chapter 5 “Barbed Boundaries” pp.76-106 (history of Palestinian Territories and Palestinian-Israeli conflict)

Mon. Oct. 13 – No Class

Required:
• Mazen Kerbaj, ‘A Happy Childhood’

Background:
• Film: West Beyrouth, (directed by Ziad Doueiri; aka West Beirut), 1998, Available on reserve at Avery Fischer Center at Bobst Library, Call # VCA 10774

Mon. Oct. 20 – War Blogger
Required:
• Salam Pax. The Clandestine Diary of an Ordinary Iraqi. New York: Grove Press, 2003:
  o Introduction by Ian Katz, pp.ix-xiv
  o September 2002 excerpts
  o October 29, 2002
  o November 2, 2002
  o November 15, 2002
  o December 3, 2002
Background:
- 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)

** Mon. Oct. 27 – Islamic Heroism **
Required:
- Tashkeel Comics, ‘The 99’ (entire series)

** Wed. Oct. 29 – Orientalizing Space: Dubai **
*Guest Lecture by Mohamed Elshahed.*
Required:
- TBD

Background:
- TBD

** ** Paper 3 Due on Part 4 (Oct. 6 – Oct. 29) **

** PART 5: EVERYDAY MEDIA & CULTURAL PRACTICES: Paper Due on 12/3 **

** Mon. Nov. 3 – (News, Part 1) From Al Jazeera ... **
Required:
- *Control Room* (film), on reserve at Avery Fisher Center at Bobst, Call #: DVD2792

Browse:

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

** ** 1st Installation of Blog Due **
Wed. Nov. 5 – (News, Part 2) ... to Al Hurra
Required:
• Lawrence Pintak, Reflections in a Bloodshot Lens: America, Islam, and the War of Ideas:
  o Chapter 7 ‘Weaponizing the Media’
  o Chapter 11 ‘Brand America’

Mon. Nov. 10 – Ramadan Serials
• Andrew Hammond, Popular Culture in the Arab World, Chapter 8, pp.231-236.

Wed. Nov. 12 – Reality TV
Required:
• Hammond, Andrew, Popular Culture in the Arab World, Chapter 8, pp.223-229.
• Carroll, Rory 2005. ‘Trial by Television’ Salon.com (March 28).

Background:

Mon. Nov. 17 – Islamic Pop / Popularizing Islam
Required:
• Echchaibi, Nabil 2007. ‘From the pulpit to the studio: Islam’s internal battle’ Media Development.

Background:
• Reading TBD (on Amr Khaled)

Wed. Nov. 19 – Women’s Television
Required:
Background:
• Otterman, Sharon 2006. ‘Fatwas and Feminism: Women, Religious Authority, and Islamic TV.’ Transnational Broadcasting Journal 16

** Mon. Nov. 24 – No Class **

** Optional Deadline for 2nd Installation of Blog **

** Wed. Nov. 26 – No Class **

** Mon. Dec. 1 – Hizballah’s Screens **
Required:
• Helga Tawil Souri, ‘The Political Battlefield of pro-Arab Games on Palestinian Screens,’ Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East, 27(3): 536-551.
• Reading on Al-Manar TV TBD

** Wed. Dec. 3 – Recent Arab Music: From Raï to Rap **
Required:
• Andrew Hammond, Popular Culture in the Arab World, Chapter 6, pp.159-186.
• Film: Slingshot (web link will be provided)

** Paper 4 Due on Part 5 (Nov. 3 – Dec. 3) **

** Mon. Dec. 8 – No Class **

** Wed. Dec. 10 – No Class **
** Classmate Feedback Due **