



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

# Center for Middle Eastern Studies

## Assignment Description (for Educators)

### **Title: Reading “Texts” for Cross-Cultural Connectedness: A Lesson in Brainstorming**

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### **Purpose/Connection to the Curriculum**

The assignment presented here is one component of the Narrative Essay assignment module that is intended for an entry-level community college composition classroom. The goal for this assignment is to help students create cross-cultural connections by first exploring how others use clothing and body performance to make a statement. Then, students explore connections between their own experiences and the examples that were researched in order to develop potential topics to write a personal narrative essay.

### **Overview**

Students should have already received instruction on the following:

- Annotated Bibliography construction and purpose;
- Applying effective evaluation criterion to researched sources;
- Understanding writing as process;
- An introduction to the concept of the “body politic”;
- Narrative Essay guidelines.

The specific assignment explained here is completed at the pre-draft stage of writing, when students are beginning to explore their own potential topics for development.

### **Objectives**

- Conduct research
- Create an Annotated Bibliography
- Present findings of their research to peers using an effective presentation tool such as Prezi or PowerPoint
- Reflect on the significance of cultural events
- Develop critical skills by considering cross-cultural interconnectedness
- Brainstorm potential topics for writing

## **Assignment Process**

The attached assignment guidelines explain in detail each of the three steps involved in completing this project. The guidelines also list the specific “texts” students can explore. **The following are specific to topics concerning the Middle East:**

**Alaa Salah activist photo**

**Ramy Youssef’s “Why Do They Make Her Wear That?”**

## **Some Reflections**

- The assignment sequence spanned a total of four class meetings for a class size of 20 students. I found that meeting with each group at every step of the process helped them gain a depth of understanding of each step in the assignment sequence. Consequently, their critical approach and understanding of the texts was positively impacted.
- Students did work on revising their Annotated Bibliographies multiple times to integrate effective, credible sources. Multiple groups chose original resources that were not credible, so this aspect of research gathering took a bit longer than the other two steps of the assignment sequence.
- A working rubric would have been helpful for the presentation and would have alleviated the need for me to review each “working” presentation before the groups shared their findings with the rest of the class. Thus, I’ll be developing a rubric for the second round of text readings with the next module.

