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Turkey 2009 Fulbright-Hays Seminar Abroad

This I Believe: The Politics of Identity and the Headscarf in

Modern Turkey, by Wendy Youngblood, Shepaug Valley Regional HS

For use in (Honors) Women's Studies class, grades 11-12

I. Established Goals:

A. CT Social Studies Standards: 6, 7, 8 & 11

Content Standard 6: Rights and Responsibilities of Citizens

Students will demonstrate knowledge of the rights and responsibilities of citizens to participate in and shape public policy, and contribute to the maintenance of our democratic way of life.

- evaluate whether or when their obligations as citizens require that their personal desires, beliefs and interests be subordinated to the public good
- identify and explain characteristics needed for effective participation in public life
- establish, explain and apply criteria to evaluate rules and laws

Content Standard 7: Political Systems

Students will explain that political systems emanate from the need of humans for order, leading to compromise and the establishment of authority.

- compare two or more constitutions and how they promote the principles of their respective political systems and provide the basis for government
- describe how constitutions may limit government in order to protect individual rights and promote the common good
- explain how purposes served by government have implications for the individual and society

Content Standard 8: International Relations

Students will demonstrate an understanding of how the major elements of international relations and world affairs affect their lives and the security and well-being of their community, state and nation.

- describe how the United States influences other governments and international organizations and how the United States, in turn, is influenced by them
- develop proposals regarding solutions to significant international, political, economic, demographic or environmental issues
- identify and analyze the various domestic, political, economic and social interests which play roles in the development of foreign policy (*Honors component*)

Content Standard 11: Human Systems

Students will interpret spatial patterns of human migration, economic activities and political units in Connecticut, the nation and the world. (bridge to next unit)

- describe the consequences of human population patterns and growth trends over time
- explain and analyze the causes of change in the political, social and economic division of the Earth's surface at different scales
- explain and analyze how various populations and economic elements interact and influence the spatial patterns of settlement

B. CT Language Arts Standards: 1, 2 & 3

Standard 1: Reading and Responding

Overarching Idea: Students read, comprehend and respond in individual, literal, critical and evaluative ways to literary, informational and persuasive texts in multimedia formats.

- 1.1 Students use appropriate strategies before, during and after reading in order to construct meaning.
- 1.2 Students interpret, analyze and evaluate text in order to extend understanding and appreciation.
- 1.3 Students select and apply strategies to facilitate word recognition and develop vocabulary in order to comprehend text.
- 1.4 Students communicate with others to create interpretations of written, oral and visual texts.

Standard 2: Exploring and Responding to Literature

Overarching Idea: Students read and respond to classical and contemporary texts from many cultures and literary periods.

- 2.1 Students explore multiple responses to literature.
- 2.2 Students recognize and appreciate that contemporary and classical literature has shaped human thought.
- 2.3 Students recognize that readers and authors are influenced by individual, social, cultural and historical contexts.

Standard 3: Communicating with Others

Overarching Idea: Students produce written, oral and visual texts to express, develop and substantiate ideas and experiences.

- 3.1 Students use descriptive, narrative, expository, persuasive and poetic modes.
- 3.2 Students prepare, publish and/or present work appropriate to audience, purpose and task.

II. Course Standards & Student Academic Expectations

- A. Read, write, and express for a variety of purposes and understandings.

- A.2. Develop varied research skills including evaluation of information.
- B. Break down large problems into their discrete parts.
- C. Construct general understanding from small quantities of old and new knowledge.
- D. Apply content knowledge and skills to understand, predict, and solve problems, theoretical and actual, within the discipline and across the disciplines.
- E. Develop defensible conclusions and judgments.
- F. Recognize, evaluate and challenge personal construction/understanding of women's place(s) within other historical eras and cultures.

III. Enduring Understandings

- A. Turkish women represent a wide variety of cultural, political, economic and religious identities.
- B. The modern Muslim woman must be understood through a complex and dynamic cultural prism.

IV. Essential Questions

- A. Why is the headscarf such an important symbol in Turkey?
- B. What does the decision to wear (or not to wear) a headscarf reveal about a woman's identity?
- C. In Turkey, is the headscarf solely a woman's issue?
- D. What are the larger implications of Turkey's headscarf debate?

V. Performance Tasks and Other Evidence

Explanation

- We will begin by accessing students' prior knowledge on two levels: about Islam and Turkey. Students will generate a list of personal questions that, if answered, would greatly increase their understanding of Islam and of Turkey. This will be an initial point of departure for self-evaluation at the completion of unit.
- Students will draw "a Muslim woman" and construct a T-chart: Like Me & Unlike Me. This will be repeated on the last day of the unit and students will write a reflection in which they identify and explain the differences in their drawings and charts. Students will interpret the reasons for the changes—what assumptions undergirded their initial impressions? Which courses and materials have shaped their perceptions of Muslim women? What cultural (mis)information has shaped their perceptions? Students will reflect on and describe a time when they have been partially understood and what challenges that presented.

Interpretation

- Students will read the Qur’anic passages that pertain to women’s dress. They will discuss the nuances of interpretation and real-world application (with connections to the US Constitution, historical standards of dress influenced by religious practices).
- Students will read a wide variety of articles from Turkish, European and American newspapers, blogs and magazines. They will watch Turkish and European news videos that document cultural events pertinent to the headscarf issue.
- Students will examine pictures and images of the variety of Islamic covering worldwide, then pictures from the streets of Istanbul, Ankara and smaller towns in Turkey, as well as blogs that address the same issue. They will discuss the differences in style that politicize the headscarf in modern Turkey. We will read passages from *Snow* to expose a Turkish male’s point of view.

Perspective and Empathy

Students will interview a foreign-born Muslim woman about her own practices and the role of Islam in her public life. (I am not yet sure who will be available for this session—in the past we’ve had Syrian, Egyptian and Pakistani scholars in.) Students will formulate questions ahead of time, some drawn from their first day “want to know” list.

Empathy and Application

Students will present a series of skits to the 12th grade Global Studies and 9th grade Western Studies classes to answer each of the Essential Questions. Additionally, we will make this opportunity available to the World Studies teachers in our middle school (we share a building).

Self-knowledge

- Students will generate another chart: Like Me/Unlike Me and answer from a Muslim woman’s perspective. First they must clarify who they are (e.g. where they live, what degree of education they have, how observant they are, etc.) Then substantiate their chart with evidence from our accumulated readings.
- Students will develop a defensible conclusion about their learning. They will be able to use all their notes and materials to give evidence of their learning.

VI. Learning Activities

Day One:

Students will write answers to: what laws in the US are gender specific? Why? What is their historical context/cultural/political origin? Students will draw on prior material covered in this course.

In small groups, students will discuss the following, with one member jotting down salient points: When does a society have an interest in making laws applicable to one segment of the population? To one gender? To what extent is ours a Christian nation—culturally,

politically? Read First Amendment, portions of Constitution that mention religion. What does Bible say about gender roles? Is there evidence of this/these in our laws?

Students will work in pairs to write what they know about Islam (expectation: Five Pillars, the Qur'an, conservative clothing, etc.) They will categorize these items as Certain, Assumed, Unsure. In small groups, they will explain their lists, working together to fill in gaps of understanding and to crystallize questions/ideas that beg further exploration.

They will follow a similar process for an ideological continuum of Islam (radical to moderate). They will draw comparisons to the conservative to liberal continuum within American Christianity. Students will use a world map to color in Islamic states/territories, drawing on knowledge obtained in our readings and in their other Humanities classes. Again, students will categorize their answers as Certain, Assumed, Unsure.

I will lead them through a short lecture about the history of Islam to refresh their memories, ending with a world map that shows Islamic states. Students will use the sites below as a guide to identify states that practice the most conservative cultural integration of Islam.

A. Islam and Science: Population and map of Islamic world

<http://www.nature.com/news/specials/islamandscience/map/islam-map.html>

Includes some short country descriptors to expose wide diversity of Islamic cultures

B. Map of Turkey

<http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/asia/tr.htm>

Basic maps of Turkey, shown alone and in larger geographic context

C. Map of Muslim Countries

<http://onemanmission.org/introduction/map/map.html>

Colorful world map showing range of Islamic countries

In small groups, students will read "An Islamic Perspective on Women's Dress" from the Muslim Women's League. Students will deconstruct Qur'anic passages dealing with dress. They will then find examples of how different states interpret and apply key passages.

D. The Qur'an and Dress: Text and Interpretation

"An Islamic Perspective on Women's Dress."

<http://www.mwlnusa.org/topics/dress/hijab.html>

An excellent source for looking at the original text and interpretations (hadith).

Students will discuss whether the headscarf (hijab) is more a potential source of unity or division among Muslims.

Homework: journal write (20 minutes)...have you ever had a gendered experience with a rule/law in your home, school or community? Explain. What is the purpose of the rule/law? Did you feel the law/rule was appropriate or fair given the context or its intent?

Extension: Read one of following novels for Honors

- Orhan Pamuk, *Snow*
- Alan Drew, *Gardens of Water*
- Elie Shafak, *The Bastard of Istanbul*, plus http://www.qantara.de/webcom/show_article.php/c-301/nr-98/p-1/i.html

Day Two:

I will present a map of Turkey with demographic information and an historical/political timeline. This will locate the Republic historically and Kemalism culturally to give the students necessary background information to appreciate the tenuous balance between the military, the public and political leaders. The lecture will include information on literacy rates, birth rates, marriage and education data, earning levels, and demographic shifts in the last 20 years. Students will take notes and use those to answer the following question, as well as the HW questions:

What kinds of difference exist within the Turkish state? Categories: economic, gender, political, religious, historic, ethnic. Students will discuss their responses and target questions to clarify or add depth to their understanding.

We will read parts of the Turkish constitution, including the 2007 AKP amendment proposal regarding the lifting of the headscarf ban.

Homework: Formative assessment: What are the key characteristics of the modern Turkish republic? How can a Muslim state be secular, and vice-versa? What data or information seems particularly gendered? What similarities exist between the Turkish republic and the United States? What differences? Which might be most susceptible to gendered interpretation? Explain.

Day Three:

We will talk about our school's dress code and discuss why (or if) it is necessary. Does it articulate values of the students, the school, the community, or a combination of those (or none)? Students will consider these questions through a gendered lens—does the dress code sexualize girls' clothing, or is that a cultural fait accompli for which a school must make appropriate coping strategies? What if clothing had a larger cultural or religious significance in our community—would that impact our dress code or students' adherence to it? Where should the school's jurisdiction end? Students apply American/local mores to examine the role of clothing regulation, clothing choice as a symbol of personal expression (regulated or not by the state). Students discuss implementing a national dress code as an expression of uniform national values.

Homework: List several cultural values germane to our school/area (or invent some to describe a society of your own choosing). Design a dress code that conforms to or promotes

those values. Sketch out one or more examples. Write a defensible conclusion (thesis statement) about why your dress code is healthy/appropriate for the society you describe.

Day Four:

Students will share and discuss their homework sketches, comparing and contrasting their visions of clothing as a reflection of values. Students evaluate the effectiveness of their defensible conclusions and peer-edit to improve the statements according to the school-wide rubric.

Students view a variety of pictures of Turkish women and men from major cities and small towns. Students hypothesize about the subjects' circumstances/context according to the categories we have used for analysis thusfar. Students consult websites for English language newspapers and other media outlets (MTV) in Turkey to judge public faces put forth by various constituencies. Students analyze images for cultural/symbolic meaning.

Use photos in PowerPoint: Attached separately...PPPHeadscarfUnit.ppt.

Homework: Students prepare questions for the guest speaker. Students categorize questions, for example General Facts, Anecdotal Evidence/Speaker's Life, Insights into Islam, Gendered Experience. Students rank their questions according to the levels of understanding they might gain based on the speaker's answers (i.e. factual information; understanding reached through empathy; ability to draw comparisons, contrasts with own life, etc.)

Day Five:

Guest speaker talks about her experiences growing up; Islam in her life and education; moving to and living in America, with its attendant challenges. Students ask questions to clarify, deepen understanding.

Homework: students write reflection of their learning after interview with guest speaker. Students will identify which of the group's questions was most effective in deepening their understanding and insight into one (or more) of the Essential Questions.

Days Six and Seven:

Students will read documents connected to the EU Court of Human Rights case of Leila Sahin.

- the suit against the AKP brought by chief prosecutor
<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/english/turkey/8585399.asp?gid=231&sz=98946>
- context of suit explained here:

<http://www.slate.com/id/2187795/>

- article about Leila Sahin
<http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/0,1518,506099,00.html>
- Opinion piece
http://www.global.ucsb.edu/orfaleacenter/luce/luce08/documents/Falk_TurkishHeadscarfDebate.pdf
- decision of European Court of Human Rights
<http://www.echr.coe.int/eng/press/2005/Nov/GrandChamberJudgmentLeylaSahinTurkey101105.htm>
- press release of this case:
<http://www.echr.coe.int/Eng/Press/2004/June/ChamberjudgmentsSahinandTekin.htm>
- two analysts' position on European Court's ruling:
<http://comparativelawblog.blogspot.com/2005/11/leyla-sahin-v-turkey-echr-grand.html>

In groups, students will use follow Article Deconstruction template/rubric: clarify, summarize, hypothesize, evaluate, apply with questions for discussion. Each student will have Lens responsibility: law, religion, gender, identity, domestic political impact, international political impact. After deconstructing the six pieces, students will fill in Lens Chart to expose impact of this case in Turkey, for women and men, observant and secular.

Lens	Most Important: fact(s) plus citation	Also Important: fact(s) plus citation
Law		
Religion		
Gender		
Identity		
Domestic Political Impact		
International Political Impact		
Questions		

Homework: students will read and annotate excerpts from Stephen Kinzer's *Crescent & Star* (pp. 88-90) and Gordon & Taspinar's *Winning Turkey: How America, Europe, and Turkey Can Revive a Fading Partnership* (p. 69-70) Text excerpts appear below:

From Stephen Kinzer's Crescent and Star, pp.78-79 (for complete citation, see Resources page)

The head scarf is tolerated in the Turkish heartland because it is part of the traditional female costume and does not necessarily symbolize religious orthodoxy. In the 1990s a new generation of young women, assertive and liberated but still religiously conservative, began pursuing opportunities that had never been available to their mothers and grandmothers but that, thanks to Kemalism, were available to them. They enrolled by the thousands at universities across the country, eagerly grasping the chance for education offered to them by the Turkish state. At the same time, they insisted on wearing their scarves....[P]ublic universities are supported by taxpayers, and the young women who enrolled believed they had a right to attend regardless of how they dressed. They were wrong.

Istanbul University was built on the grounds of what was once the Ottoman defense ministry but is today a bastion of Kemalism. One day I met two aspiring doctors at the McDonald's across the street. Both had been expelled from medical school for refusing to remove their head scarves.

"Hello, I'm Stephen," I said as I greeted them, extending my hand. They only smiled and nodded in reply. These women considered even shaking a man's hand sinful. I hated that, but still I found myself sympathizing with them.

One of the two, Tülay Erdogan...was twenty-three years old and had dreamed since childhood of becoming a doctor. But a few days earlier she had arrived to take an examination and was told that she could enter the room only if she removed her scarf. Suddenly she and several hundred of her classmates found themselves unexpectedly challenged. Nearly all of them refused to remove their scarves, choosing to quit school rather than uncover themselves.

"We love God, we read our Koran, we believe in our religion and we want to apply this religion in our lives," Ms. Erdogan told me over a burger and fries. "What has happened in the last few weeks makes me very angry. I am protesting as much as possible because I really want to become a doctor. It's bad to become a fanatic, but they are pushing us toward fanaticism."

This young woman impressed me as highly intelligent and, although perhaps not exactly what Atatürk had in mind, a product of the Kemalist revolution. The triumph of Turkish secularism had made it possible for her to aspire to a career beyond the wildest dreams of girls in Saudi Arabia or Kuwait or Afghanistan.

...The arrival of the head scarf in such a citadel of Turkish secularism as Istanbul University was a challenge that Atatürk probably had not considered. Perhaps it would have outraged him. I prefer to believe, however, that the idea of women clamoring to become doctors would have seemed to him like a fulfillment of his dream. Turkish secularism no doubt requires that doctors in public hospitals be forbidden to wear head scarves, and along with them judges, lawyers, civil servants, diplomats and flight attendants on the national airline. But why college students?

From Philip H. Gordon and Omer Taspinar's Winning Turkey: How America, Europe and Turkey Can Revive a Fading Partnership, pp. 69-70 (for complete citation, see Resources page)

The Turkish establishment's concerns about Islamism are legitimate; Turkey's secular traditions should be protected, and worries about fundamentalism are not the result of mere paranoia. But it is also important not to exaggerate the Islamist threat or to confuse the AKP with previous Islamist groups, and it is critical not to take potentially counterproductive steps to neutralize it. After all, the AKP, in power since 2002, had done little to suggest a desire to impose an Islamist agenda. It has respected the rights of secular Turks and earned a reputation for managerial competence and a commitment to democracy that had eluded its recent predecessors....In early 2008, Erdogan's promotion of legislation making it possible for women to wear Islamic headscarves at universities...caused concern among many secular Turks who felt he was not delivering on his postelection commitment to reassure them [that the AKP was not pursuing an Islamist agenda]. Still, the AKP leadership seems to realize that it would be the first victim of any effort to impose Islamism on an unwilling Turkish public. Having avoided the fate of his party's closure in summer 2008, Erdogan has a new opportunity to demonstrate his commitment to Turkey's secular principles and to try to govern with as broad a social consensus as possible.

Even beyond AKP's track record there are other reasons to have confidence that democracy in Turkey will not produce an Islamic state. One is a deeply rooted secular state tradition that predates Kemalism. The Ottoman Empire was itself hardly a theocracy, thanks to a body of laws promulgated outside the realm of sharia law. This legacy stands in contrast to the situation in the Arab world, Iran, and postcolonial formations such as Malaysia or Indonesia, where the state is a product of Islam and Islam was needed for the state to earn political legitimacy.

Second, tolerant, liberal democracy is arguably the best antidote to radical Islam. In the absence of free political expression, the mosque becomes the only outlet for dissent and Islam the only voice of resistance to tyranny....[If] Turkey were to emulate the Arab world and abolish democratic rule in the name of strengthening secularism, the long-term result would likely be a strengthening of radical Islam.

Day Eight:

Students discuss Kinzer and Gordon/Taspinar readings relative to the question: ***what political impact does the headscarf debate have in Turkey today?***

Students will use Text-Based Reading Strategies to answer the questions: ***what is stance of the current party in power (the AKP) regarding headscarves? What is the public reaction?***

Days Nine and Ten:

Students read, listen to, and view a variety of texts from Turks in Turkey and abroad to answer this question: What do civilian Turks (not politicians, not military) think about the headscarf? Students work in pairs, choose 8 of the following including one of the video files (#9, #15). Complete chart at end.

1. **Interview with Turkish feminist author Cihan Aktas**
http://www.monstersandcritics.com/news/europe/features/article_1439079.php/Islamic_feminist_author_defends_the_headscarf
Aktas alleges headscarf ban oppresses women.
2. **NPR piece by Deborah Amos about headscarves** (February 2009)
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=100874408>
Five minute audio clip profiles what being “modern” means for different Turks.
3. **Head Scarf Debate Intensifies in Turkey**
<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/19/world/europe/19turkey.html>
NYTimes article explores how head scarf debate parallels larger social and political issues in Turkey.
4. **James in Turkey, “A Crash course in Turkey’s headscarf debate”**
<http://jamesinturkey.blogspot.com/2008/01/crash-course-in-turkeys-headscarf.html>
Blog from expat in Turkey gives political and social context of headscarf issue, includes three photos of women with head scarves. This entry is from 30 January 2008, just after proposal to lift ban at universities.
5. **Turkey: Dividing the Nation**
http://www.qantara.de/webcom/show_article.php/c-549/nr-12/i.html
Somewhat challenging article puts ideological roots of head scarf issue in international context, highlighting French model of state secularism. Good overview of AKP action and perceived threat to secular Kemalism.
6. **Islam and Democracy in Turkey: A Headscarf Affair, a Woman’s Affair?**
http://www.qantara.de/webcom/show_article.php/c-549/nr-24/p-1/i.html
Somewhat lengthy article examines the headscarf issue through gendered lens. Of

particular interest for Women's Studies classes.

7. Turkish headscarf ban questioned

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2416007.stm>

Short BBC article from 2002 focuses on Prime Minister Erdogan and AKP's negotiation of more conservative social mores within Turkish politics.

8. EU Says Has No Position on Headscarf Debate in Turkey

<http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=123448>

European leaders discuss their stances on the headscarf debate. From leading English language newspaper in Turkey, Today's Zaman.

9. Video: Turkey's Head Scarf Debate (highly recommended)

<http://video.nytimes.com/video/2008/10/14/world/1194824264490/turkey-s-head-scarf-debate.html>

6:38 video reveals political activism component of some wearers of head scarf.

10. HEADSCARFED IT!

http://www.pozitiv.si/dividedgod/texts/Neslihan_Akbulut_Headscarfed_It!.pdf

2 ½ page article, by Secretary General of ADKER, a Turkish women's rights organization. Writer is not native speaker of English and the text may be challenging for some students. It ties headscarf debate to struggles of Muslim women in Europe. It also exposes the class divide that has historically underpinned this issue.

11. Turkey's Headscarf Legislation: The Negative Impact on EU Accession

http://www.rieas.gr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=641&catid=18&Itemid=75

Spanish professor, a visiting fellow at the US Washington Institute, comments on the international political implications of the headscarf debate.

12. Kamil Pasha: Walk the Walk

<http://www.kamilpasha.com/2009/08/02/walk-the-walk/>

Expat blog discusses Turkish journalist's participant observation experiment, wearing hijab in trendy nightclub and revealing clothing in conservative Fatih area of Istanbul. It is recommended that students peruse reader comments at the end.

13. Erdogan Inadvertently Reignites Headscarf Debate

http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=33299

Researcher from Jamestown Foundation reports on Erdogan and centrality of head scarf as symbol of political free expression germane to many (minority) groups.

14. Headscarf Debate Rears Its Head Again in Turkey

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/20/world/europe/20iht-turkey.4.9357104.html>

A follow-up to article #3 (from the next day), discusses headscarf in context of personal freedoms.

Assessment for Skits

Target Schoolwide Competency: Breaking Down Large Problems

Summative Assessment Rubric: Identity Skit

	Outstanding	Meets Standard	Insufficient, Need to Revisit
Break Down Large Problems into their Discrete Parts			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask clarifying questions to determine scope and nature of task and challenges therein 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement organizational strategies to manage task and time 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Devise tool to check understanding of audience, efficacy of skit 			
Answering Essential Question			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully treat Essential Question 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skit title demonstrates understanding 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of nuance, originality 			
Content Mastery			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of appropriate precise language 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accurate, detailed 			
Context			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple points of view 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Illuminates nature of central debate 			
Sources			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full MLA, with no errors 			

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