

**Selected Modules from a course called: Demystifying the Middle East.
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After participating in the Summer 2019 NEH Institute: Understanding Middle Eastern Millennials through Literature, Culture and Media at the University of Arizona, Tucson, I updated my online course IDST30: Demystifying the Middle East. I included new content and themes that I learned about at the institute. Please see the three modules below for a sampling how I integrated some of the new material into my course.

MODULE 10

21st Century: A Call For Reform

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this week, you will be able to:

- Determine the concerns of youth in the Middle East
- Compare their concerns with your own
- Identify similarities and differences in experiences across geography and social identity categories such as gender, ethnicity, nationality, and class
- Assess the strengths and weaknesses of a survey methodology

INTRODUCTION

Read and take notes on the top ten findings of the [2019 AYS White Paper](#). Consider similarities and differences between what you would say about your future in relation to governance and what "200 million Arab youth have to say about their future.



A Generation Without Borders

Millennials' shifting views are in part brought on by the fact that they are no longer confined to the borders of their respective countries or region, and are thus embracing new ideologies and trends that transcend MENA's borders. Increased exposure to the outside world has also altered their world view, with many sharing a more global outlook.

By being open to new cultures and keeping up to date with global affairs and trends, Millennials are introducing a new way of living that is changing the region's cultural attitudes.



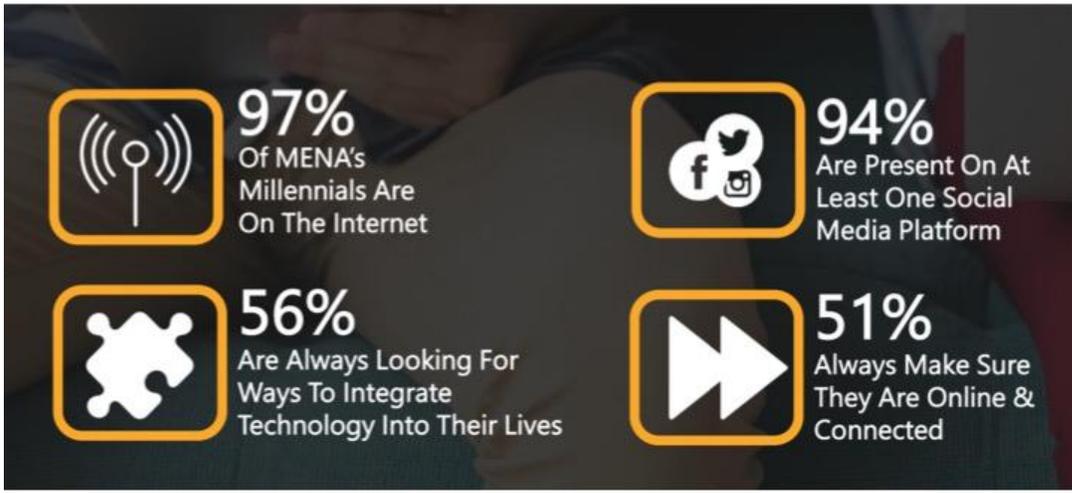
57%
Are Fascinated With Other Cultures And Enjoy Learning About Them



55%
Make Sure They Are Always Updated About Global Affairs



47%
Consider Themselves A Global Citizen Rather Than A Person Belonging To A Certain Group



Source: "[MENA's Millennials Decoded](#)" IPSOS, September 2018

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT

Compare and contrast the concerns as outlined by the 2019 Arab Youth Survey White Paper with your own concerns for your future in the United States.

- Which concerns could you relate to most and why? (4 points)
- What are the differences in concerns and what factors contribute to those differences? (4 points)
- When you think about your future, are there any survey questions missing that you would include? (2 points)

Your response should be one to three paragraphs in length and answer every part of the prompt listed above.

Remember to give credit where credit is due. Cite your sources and do not copy text even if you change some of the words without citing it.

DISCUSSION

Add a new discussion topic in this forum by Wednesday at 11pm (**to do so, just click the "reply" button below**). In your post please include the following:

1. Research 2019 protests in Sudan, Iraq, Lebanon, and / or Egypt and summarize who is protesting and why. What are the demands? How do the concerns of these protesters compare and contrast with the concerns of Arab youth as outlined in the Arab Youth Survey White Paper? What do you think are the motivations of such a survey? Are there any shortcomings to such a survey and if so what are they?
2. After you have reported back your findings and analysis include a good discussion question that is an open-ended question that can be answered by your classmates and that facilitates analysis, interpretation, and synthesis. Examples include:
 - Analysis Question: Questions that begin with “Why...” “How would you explain...” “What is the importance of...” “What is the meaning of”
 - Compare and Contrast Questions: “Compare...” “Contrast...” “What is the difference between...” “What is the similarity between...”
 - Cause and Effect Questions: “What are the causes / results of...” “What connection is there between...”
 - Clarification Questions: “What is meant by...” “Explain how...”

Before Sunday at 11pm, please reply to at least one other student's post. In your reply, please respond to the question that they posed and comment on their findings.

MODULE 11

Gender, Sexuality, and Identity

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this week, you will be able to:

- Identify key terms related to sexuality, the law, and representation
- Differentiate between LGBT and Queer approaches
- Question the discourses and ideologies of sexuality

INTRODUCTION

Read Katerina Dalacoura's article [Homosexuality as cultural battleground in the Middle East](#) and notes on the following questions:

- How does she outline the history of sexuality in SWANA?
- How does she rely on theories developed from scholars like Edward Said?
- What is Joseph Massad's discussion of the "gay international" and what are critiques of it?
- What is her main argument and what you think about it?

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT

Read the following two articles: [What it's like to be Gay in Morocco](#) and [Queer and Trans Subjects in Iranian Cinema](#)

Compare and contrast the two articles: Describe one example of orientalism and one example of disrupting orientalism any one or more of the following questions or write about a topic that comes up for you. Reflect on both articles in relation to each other. (5 points for each article)

- What are the similarities and differences in these two articles?
- How can you apply Katerina Dalacoura's theory to the articles?
- Did anything stand out to you that was surprising?
- What is the relationship between culture and identity?

Your response should be one to three paragraphs in length and answer every part of the prompt listed above.

Remember to give credit where credit is due. Cite your sources and do not copy text even if you change some of the words without citing it.

DISCUSSION

For this discussion, you will post a response to the article [Queer Alliances in Times of War](#) originally published on the Jadaliyya website on October 17th, 2017.

In your post please include the following:

1. Reflect on your initial reactions to the article by thinking about the following questions:
 - What is the main argument?
 - Who is being addressed, by who, and why?
 - How can this reading be brought into conversation with the previous readings on sexuality and gender?
 - What is the definition of Queer? How does it compare with LGBT?
2. Write a good discussion question that is an open-ended question that can be answered by your classmates and that facilitates analysis, interpretation, and synthesis. Examples include:
 - Analysis Question: Questions that begin with “Why...” “How would you explain...” “What is the importance of...” “What is the meaning of”
 - Compare and Contrast Questions: “Compare...” “Contrast...” “What is the difference between...” “What is the similarity between...”
 - Cause and Effect Questions: “What are the causes / results of...” “What connection is there between...”
 - Clarification Questions: “What is meant by...” “Explain how...”

MODULE 12

Literature Presentation and Essay Assignment

Please review and familiarize yourself with the expectations of the assignment. Post any questions on your group page or on the class Q and A bulletin.

Read the following book that you are assigned to (everyone in the group needs to read the entirety of the book):

- *Cities of Salt*, Abdul Rahman Munif (1984)
- *Season of Migration to the North*, Tayeb Salteh (1966)
- *Persepolis*, Marjane Satrapi (2000)

- *Spectres*, Radwa Ashour (2010)
- *The Map of Salt and Stars*, Zeyn Houkhadar (2018)
- *The Yacoubian Building*, Alaa Al Aswany (2002)

Questions to ask while reading:

1. Who is the author and what is their relationship to the topics of the novel?
2. What is the political, social and historical context both for when the novel was published and for the setting of the story in the novel? How does the story have significance or resonance now?
3. What is the overall message or theme of the text? Does it have a message that the author may not have intended it to have?
4. What is the literal meaning? What meaning might you gather beyond the literal message?
5. Are there any messages that you relate to? That you particularly agree or disagree with?
6. Is there any repetition in the novel? Why might it be there? Are there any metaphors? Is there an allegory?
7. Do any of the main characters represent something beyond the individual?
8. Do any particular passages, quotes, images or words stand out to you?
9. How can you compare/contrast with other novels that you have read?
10. How can you connect the story to any topic or theme that we have covered in class? For example can you analyze the novel through a critique of Orientalism or through a feminist lens?

Create a Group Presentation (100 points)

Include:

- Author's biography (10 points)
- Brief plot summary (10 points)
- Responses to the text (10 points)
- Socio-historical and political context (20 points)
- Analysis of major themes with examples from the text (20 points)
- 3 group discussion assignments to prepare (10 points each)

Presentations can be made in a format of your choice including audio-visual, slideshow, blogging, or any other creative method.

You also have the option, as a group to organize the materials how you think makes the most sense--you do not have to address the above topics / questions in the same order.

You may determine how to divide the work amongst your group members. For example: You can opt to include a discussion between group members; Each person can choose a quote to respond to that relates to the same agreed upon theme; You may each contribute to analysis of several themes.

Make who did what and how you worked together explicit.

Write an accompanying 2-3 page essay (60 points)

- You may choose to turn in an essay as a group, in pairs, or individually. If you work collaboratively, please be able to reflect on the process of writing an essay together.
- Choose one specific **topic** that is addressed by the novel (ie. colonialism, orientalism, a specific historical event, gender, sexuality, etc.) and make an argument about the **theme** (what does the author have to say about that topic?)
- Your introduction should include a thesis statement, or main argument. The more specific your thesis statement is, the better.
- Each paragraph should include an example from the text that supports the thesis. Make sure to review how to cite the text properly and avoid plagiarism.
- You do not need to provide a bibliography, as you will only need to cite the novel that you read, though you may do outside research to contextualize the topic that you choose to pursue. If you choose to do outside research, you will need to cite your sources.
- The intention of the essay is to make an argument based on the text, not to merely summarize the plot or the characters of the text.
- Your essay must be typed, double-spaced and 12-point font with the appropriate margins and headings, include a title and reference quotes from the novel to support your thesis statement.

Writing tips:

- Start with a brainstorm or outline to organize your thoughts and pull out one main theme, which you state as a thesis at the beginning of the paper
- Choose quotes that support a claim or argument that you are making and comment on how the quote illustrates your point or is exemplary of your point
- Edit for grammatical and spelling errors (have someone else read and edit your work)
- Check comma usage, avoid run-on sentences and spliced sentences (if comma usage and grammar are a challenge for you, it is better to write a sentence that is short and straight forward than to write a long sentence)
- Avoid plot summary and too much repetition

- A citation from the text, for short essays like this, should be introduced, correctly cited and extensively commented on
- Consult a grammar book or an online writing guide:
 - [Modern Language Association \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
 - [5 paragraph structure for an essay outline \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
 - [history essay guide \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

Grading

- 10 points for clear thesis statement and introduction
- 10 points for supporting evidence
- 10 points for grammar, punctuation, transitions, and flow

You will have the opportunity to give each other feedback on your thesis statement and to edit a draft of the essay before turning in your final draft. This will be worth 30 points of your essay.