

LEH 300: The Middle East through Urban and Popular Culture Spring 2007
Tuesdays 2:00-4:30

Prof. Christa Salamandra

Office: 429 Davis Hall, extension: 8130

Office hours Tuesdays 1-1:50, or by appointment

Email: <christa.salamandra@lehman.cuny.edu> or <christa_salamandra@yahoo.com>

Course Description

This course explores the creativity and dynamism of a region often known only through the news media's sensational headlines. This alternative approach to understanding the contemporary Middle East focuses not on the actions of politicians and diplomats, but rather on a significant social and cultural process: the growth of major urban centers. We will examine both the development of urbanization and the popular and expressive cultural forms that develop from and give voice to the experience of the modern Middle Eastern city. Historical and ethnographic materials examine film, television, music, dance and domestic architecture in Cairo, Damascus, Istanbul, Algiers and Doha.

Requirements of this writing intensive course include a three essays responding to the assigned readings, each worth 25% of the final grade. A review of a Middle Eastern novel comprises the final 25%.

Attending classes and completing assigned readings are basic requirements for this course. Essays must be typed, double-spaced, and properly, consistently referenced. See www.aaanet.org/pubs/style_guide.htm for a style guide. **Plagiarism in any form, including internet downloads, will result in automatic failure and notification of the appropriate college authorities.** Please visit: <http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/hc/plagiarism.html> before you begin writing your first essay.

Blackboard is an essential feature of this course. You will need it to download reading assignments, indicated by * on the syllabus, and to access other class information. If you have not already done so, please open your CUNY portal account. This gives you access to our class on Blackboard. For technical assistance, contact the IT Center in Carmen Hall.

Required text:

Walter Armbrust, ed.

2000 *Mass Mediations: New Approaches to Popular Culture in the Middle East and Beyond*. Pp. 182-202. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Week 1, January 30 Introduction: The Colonial City

Film Screening: *The Battle of Algiers*, Gillo Pontecorvo, director. Algeria/Italy 1966.

Week 2, February 6: Cities and Migrants

Reading:

*Bourdieu, Pierre

1979 "The Disenchantment of the World", in *Algeria 1960*. Richard Nice, trans. Pp. 1-94. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Week 3, February 13: Cities and Migrants Now

Film Screening: *Cairo: The City Victorious?* (Channel 4 series, *The Arabs*); scene from *Waiting*. Laith Hajju, director. Syria 2006.

Reading:

*Erman, Tahire

1998 "Becoming "Urban" or Remaining "Rural": The Views of Turkish Rural-to Urban Migrants on the "Integration" Question", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 30(4): 541-561.

Week 4, February 20: Identity and the Built Environment

Film screening: *Bab al-Oued City (Bab al-Wad al-Houm)*. Merzak Allouache, director.

Readings:

*Ghannem, Farha

1998 "The Visual Remaking of Urban Space: Relocation and the Uses of Public Housing in "Modern" Cairo", *Visual Anthropology* 10 (2-4): 265-280.

*Nagy, Sharon

1998 "The Form of the Qatari House", *Visual Anthropology* 10(2-4): 281-304.

*McMurray, David

1998 Film Review: *Bab al-Oued City*. *Visual Anthropology* 10 (2-4): 443-446.

Week 5, February 27: The Past, the Present and the Politics of Heritage

Film screening: *The House on Chelouche Street*. Moshe Mizrahi, director. Israel 1973.

Readings:

Salamandra, Christa

2000 "Consuming Damascus: Public Culture and the Construction of Social Identity", in *Mass Mediations: New Approaches to Popular Culture in the Middle East and Beyond*. Walter Armbrust, ed. Pp. 182-202. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Stokes, Martin

2000 "Beloved Istanbul": Realism and the Transnational Imaginary in Turkish Popular Culture", in *Mass Mediations: New Approaches to Popular Culture in the Middle East and Beyond*. Walter Armbrust, ed. Pp. 224-242. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Week 6, March 6: Popular and Expressive Culture

Film Screening: *Ghazal al-Banaat* (Flirtation of the Girls). Anwar Wagdi, director. Egypt 1949.

Readings:

Armbrust, Walter. 2000 "The Golden Age before the Golden Age: Commercial Egyptian Cinema before the 1960s", in *Mass Mediations: New Approaches to Popular Culture in the Middle East and Beyond*. Walter Armbrust, ed. Pp. 292-327. Berkeley: University of California Press.

*Armbrust, Walter

1998 "When the Lights Go down in Cairo: Cinema as Secular Ritual", *Visual Anthropology* 10 (2-4): 413-442.

Essay 1 due

Week 7, March 13: Authenticities, Modernities and Icons

Film screening: *Umm Kulthum: A Voice Like Egypt*. USA 1996. Michael Goldman, dr.

Readings:

*Danielson, Virginia

1998 "Performance, Political Identity, and Memory: Umm Kulthum and Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir' in *Images of Enchantment: Visual and Performing Arts of the Middle East*, Sherifa Zuhur, ed. Pp. 109-122. Cairo: American University in Cairo Press.

Week 8, March 20: Cinema and National Identity

Film Screening: *Nasser 56*. Egypt 1996. Director Mohamed Fadil.

Reading:

Gordon, Joel

1998 "Nasser 56/Cairo 96: Reimagining Egypt's Lost Community", in *Mass Mediations: New Approaches to Popular Culture in the Middle East and Beyond*. Walter Armbrust, ed. Pp.161-181. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Week 9, March 27: Television, Messages and Audiences

Screening: Scene from *Damascene Days*

Readings:

*Salamandra, Christa

1998 "Moustache Hairs Lost: Ramadan Television Serials and the Construction of Identity in Damascus, Syria", *Visual Anthropology*, 10 (2-4): 227-246.

*Khamis, Sahar

2004 "Multiple Literacies, Multiply Identities: Egyptian Rural Women's Readings of Televised Literacy Campaigns", In *Women and Media in the Middle East: Power through Self-Expression*. Naomi Sakr, ed. Pp. 89-108. London: I.B. Tauris.

Murphy, Richard

2000 The Hairbrush and the Dagger: Mediating Modernity in Lahore" in *Mass Mediations: New Approaches to Popular Culture in the Middle East and Beyond*. Walter Armbrust, ed. Pp. 203-223. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Week 10, April 17: Music and Markets

Film Screening: *Islamabad: Rock City*. VH1 News Special.

Readings:

Zirbel, Katherine E.

2000 "Playing it Both Ways: Local Egyptian Performers between Regional Identity and International Markets" in *Mass Mediations: New Approaches to Popular Culture in*

the Middle East and Beyond. Walter Armbrust, ed. Pp. 120-145. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Shay, Antony

2000 "The 6/8 Beat Goes On: Persian Popular Music from *Bazm-e Qajariyyeh* to Beverly Hills Garden Parties", in *Mass Mediations: New Approaches to Popular Culture in the Middle East and Beyond*. Walter Armbrust, ed. Pp. 61-87. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Skyler, Philip

2000 "JouJouka/Jajouka/Jahjoukah: Moroccan Music and Euro-American Imagination", in *Mass Mediations: New Approaches to Popular Culture in the Middle East and Beyond*. Walter Armbrust, ed. Pp.146-160. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Swedenburg, Ted

2000 "Sa'ida Sultan/Dana International: Transgender Pop and the Polysemiotics of Sex, Nation, and Ethnicity on the Israeli-Egyptian Border" in *Mass Mediations: New Approaches to Popular Culture in the Middle East and Beyond*. Walter Armbrust, ed. Pp. 88-119. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Week 11, April 24: Gender and Dance

Film screening: *On Boys, Girls and the Veil*. Yousry Nasrallah, director. Egypt 1995.

Readings:

Dougherty, Robin

2000 "Badia Masabni, Artiste and Modernist: The Egyptian Print Media's Carnival of National Identity", in *Mass Mediations: New Approaches to Popular Culture in the Middle East and Beyond*. Walter Armbrust, ed. Pp.243-268. Berkeley: University of California Press.

*Franken, Margorie

1998 "Farida Fahmy and the Dancer's Image in Egyptian Film" in *Images of Enchantment: Visual and Performing Arts of the Middle East*. Sherifa Zuhur, ed. Pp. 265-281. Cairo: American University in Cairo Press.

*Van Nieuwkerk, Karin

1998 "Changing Images and Shifting Identities: Female Performers in Egypt", in *Images of Enchantment: Visual and Performing Arts of the Middle East*. Sharifa Zuhur, ed. Pp. 21-35. Cairo: The American University of Cairo Press.

***Essay 2 due**

Week 12, May 1: Diasporas and Ethnicities

Film Screening: "Tales from Arab Detroit: Abu Zayd Comes to America". Joan Mandell and Sally Howell, directors. ACCESS and Olive Branch Productions, 1995.

Readings:

*Mandell, Joan

1998 "Cultural Resilience through Change: Finding the Theme for Tales from Arab Detroit", *Visual Anthropology* 10 (2-4): 189-208.

*Shryock, Andrew

1998 "Mainstreaming Arabs: Filmmaking and Image Making in Tales from Arab Detroit",

Visual Anthropology 10 (2-4).

*Reynolds, Dwight F.

1998 "From the Delta to Detroit: Packaging a Folk Epic for a New Folk", *Visual Anthropology* 10 (2-4): 145-164.

Week 13, May 8: Middle Eastern Americans, post 9/11

Film Screening: *Brothers and Others: The Impact of September 11 on Arabs, Muslims and South Asians in America*, Nicholas Rossier, director. Baraka Productions, 2002.

*Howell, Sally and Andrew Shryock

2003 "Cracking Down on Diaspora: Arab Detroit and America's War on Terror", *Anthropological Quarterly*, 76(3): 443-462.

Shryock, Andrew

2004 "In the Double Remoteness of Arab Detroit: Reflections on Ethnography, Culture Work, and the Intimate Disciplines of Americanization", in *Off Stage/on Display: Intimacy and Ethnography in the Age of Public Culture*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

<http://www.arabamericanmuseum.org/>

***Book Reviews due**

Week 14 May 15: Globalization and New Media

Film Screening: *Control Room*. Jehane Noujaim, director. Egypt 2004.

Readings:

*El-Nawawy, Mohammed and Adel Iskandar

2002 "Boxing Rings: Al-Jazeera's Talk Shows", *Transnational Broadcasting Studies*, Spring/Summer.

<<http://www.tbsjournal.com/Archives/Spring02/talkshows.html>>

*Wheeler, Deborah

2004 "Blessings and Curses: Women and the Internet in the Arab World", In *Women and Media in the Middle East: Power through Self-Expression*. Naomi Sakr, ed. Pp.138-161. London: I.B. Tauris.

*Shannon, Jonathan H.

2003 "Sultans of Spin: Syrian Sacred Music on the World Stage", *American Anthropologist* 105(2):266-277.

Salamandra, Christa

2003 "London's Arab Media and the Construction of Arabness", *Transnational Broadcasting Studies*, 10.

<http://www.tbsjournal.com/Archives/Spring03/salamandra.html>

May 21: Final essays due