The University of Texas at Austin – Department of Anthropology

Spring 2011

ANT 324L • Cities of the Middle East

Unique Days Time Location Instructor
31300 Tuesday/Thursday 3:30 PM-5:00 PM SAC 4.174 Sofian Merabet

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Office Hours in SAC 5.164: F 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. or by appointment

Course Description:

This advanced undergraduate course deals with the anthropological and sociological analysis of space, with a special emphasis on urban theory and culture in the Middle East. It does not provide an inclusive overview over the extensive literature on the subject, but attempts at communicating important concepts and philosophies that have been at the forefront of important debates within the disciplines of anthropology/sociology and Urban Studies. This includes the close reading of social scientific texts, but also of fiction, including two novels and an “urban memoir,” as well as through feature films and a documentary. Further, the material to be read will enable us to assess the impact of colonial policies on cities in geographical areas as diverse as North Africa, the Levant, and Turkey. Next to examining some of the major debates in qualitative social science, the course will critically consider how the issues raised in class can be applied comparatively, especially in terms of differing understandings of what constitutes cities in today’s global world and the cultural practices of daily-life that are performed in them.

Required Books: (in alphabetical order)

Books (ordered at the University Co-Op, www.universitycoop.com, 2246 Guadalupe St, Austin, (512) 476-7211):


- The rest of the readings will be scanned and posted on Blackboard!

Films:

- *Pépé le Moko* by Julien Duvivier (1937, 94 mins.)
- *The Battle of Algiers* by Gillo Pontecorvo (1966, 123 mins.)
- *Cairo as told by Chahine* by Youssef Chahine (1991, 24 mins.)
- *Hamam: The Turkish Bath* by Ferzan Özpetek (1997, 96 mins.)
- *West Beirut* by Ziyad Doueiri (1998, 105 mins.)

**Course Requirements for Registered Students:**

The class relies on the intellectual commitment and active participation of all students. It will be run primarily as general discussions with some lectures. In order for the course to be effective, all students must have the reading assignments completed and ready for in-depth discussion for each class. Regular attendance is required. *Mere attendance in class, however, does not constitute participation.* You must come to class having carefully read all materials and be prepared to discuss, question, and argue about issues raised in the readings. It will be beneficial for you to take excerpts/notes on any material that you find enlightening, controversial, or objectionable. You should also take notes in class on themes, key terms, and debates we discuss. These note-taking strategies will be crucial when you write your response papers. In short:

- Attend classes.
- Do all assigned readings (while taking excerpts/notes!) by the date indicated on the syllabus and participate actively in the general class discussion.
- Regular 10-minute oral presentations on the weekly readings to be assigned to two students each class. They are intended to launch the general class discussions.
- Four (4) 2-page (single-spaced/12 point) **NO MORE, NO LESS!** critical response papers to be handed in on time and covering a theoretical question based on the assigned readings (assignment to be specified in class and posted on blackboard).
1) The goal of the 10 minutes oral presentations is two-fold: one, identify and explain the argument(s) that the author is making, and two, provide your own take on that argument. Begin with a short summary of the work and then focus on the author’s argument(s). Try to be concise in all parts of your analysis. An outline can help to remain focused on your analysis and avoid summary or irrelevant description. Following is a sample outline for your assignment:

I. Introduction (includes the author’s and your argument[s])
   II. Short summary of the text (focus on one or two central aspects of the work)
   III. Development and substantiation of your critique

2) The writing assignments are designed to develop critical reading, analytical, and writing skills. Evaluation criteria include: critical and integrative analysis of texts, clarity of thought, ability to synthesize readings and class discussions into your own argument, and ability to formulate a theoretical grounding for it.

Anyone plagiarizing will first be given an “F” (Fail) and a report will be forwarded to the appropriate university authorities.

Grading Procedure:

- 4 response papers: 80%.
- Presentations: 10%.
- Regular attendance/participation: 10%.

Please note that the instructor reserves the right to make changes in the syllabus when necessary to meet learning objectives.

Reading Schedule: (this schedule is tentative and subject to possible revision)

**Week 1:**

- Tuesday, January 18th  
  Introduction to the course

- Thursday, January 20th  
**Week 2:**

- **Tuesday, January 25th**  

- **Thursday, January 27th**  
  Film: *Cairo as told by Chahine* by Youssef Chahine  
  Chapter 3 in Ghannam.

**Week 3:**

- **Tuesday, February 1st**  
  Chapters 4 and 5 in Ghannam.  
  **First Response Paper due!**

- **Thursday, February 3rd**  
  Chapter 6 and Conclusion in Ghannam.

**Week 4:**

- **Tuesday, February 8th**  

- **Thursday, February 10th**  
  Chapters 3 and 4 in Sawalha.

**Week 5:**

- **Tuesday, February 15th**  
  Chapters 5 and 6 and Afterword in Sawalha.

- **Thursday, February 17th**  
  Film: *West Beirut* by Ziyad Doueiri (1998, 105 mins.)

**Week 6:**

- **Tuesday, February 22nd**  
  **Second Response Paper due!**

- **Thursday, February 24th**  
  Chapters 13-26 in El Khalil
**Week 7:**

- Tuesday, March 1st

- Thursday, March 3rd

**Week 8:**

- Tuesday, March 8th

- Thursday, March 10th

**Week 9: Spring Break**

**Week 10:**

- Tuesday, March 22nd

  Third Response Paper due!

- Thursday, March 24th
  Film: *Pépé le Moko* by Julien Duvivier (1937, 94 mins.)

**Week 11:**

- Tuesday, March 29th

- Thursday, March 31st
  Film: *The Battle of Algiers* by Gillo Pontecorvo (1966, 123 mins.)
**Week 12:**


**Week 13:**

- **Tuesday, April 12th** Pamuk, Orhan (2004) *Istanbul: Memories and the City*. Vintage. Chapter One to Chapter Seven.


**Week 14:**


   **Fourth Response Paper due!**


**Week 15:**


- **Thursday, April 28th** Film: *Hamam: The Turkish Bath* by Ferzan Özpetek (1997, 96 mins.)

**Week 16:**

- **Tuesday, May 3rd** Final discussions.

- **Thursday, May 5th** Final discussions.
**Emergency Evacuation Policy:**

Occuants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside.

Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.

Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class.

In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors.

Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line/BCAL: 232-5050

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