

History 479
Spring 2011
American Representations of the Middle East and North Africa

Place: UNIV 201
Day and Time: Tuesday/Thursday, 1:30 pm - 2:45 pm

Instructor: Professor Holden
Office: UNIV 127
Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday, 9 am - 10 am
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Ever since Barbary pirates preyed on hapless ships in the Mediterranean Sea, Americans have employed the Middle East and North Africa as an exotic backdrop for a variety of publications, such as travel accounts and novels. These descriptions of a foreign land do not always provide an accurate portrait of the Arab-Islamic world, but an author's comparisons between life abroad and life at home reveal much about American values and attitudes. This course explores Arab-American relations over the past 300 years, using American writings on the Middle East and North Africa as a prism for viewing evolving conceptions of national identity and global power in the United States. Assigned readings include eighteenth-century captivity narratives, nineteenth-century travel accounts, and twentieth-century films, novels and magazine articles. In the present day, an era fraught with new tensions between these two regions, this class aims to identify both continuity and change in American perceptions of this region of the world.

Course Evaluation

- Students will produce **three polished pieces of writing** that address specific themes in the readings for this course. These essays require students to construct an original argument based on the primary sources assigned for our class (no outside research is required). Grades are based on analysis of text and clarity of expression as well as proper use of grammar. Three essays of between five and six pages (no more/no less) must be submitted in 12-point type-face, double-spaced, with one-inch margins. You will be penalized 5 points for each day that this essay is late. I do not accept emailed submissions of these essays. Each essay is worth 20% of a student's final grade for this class.
- **Participation** in class discussions is an important component of the final grade. Students should come to class prepared to discuss a given topic. This means that readings must be read and reflected upon before class. Your participation is 25% of a final grade. Your grade will suffer after more than two unexcused absences.
- You will submit **responses to readings** between one and two pages (no more/no less) for certain classes. These are specifically listed on the syllabus. I ask that you submit these assignments to me via email by 9 am of the day of our scheduled meetings so that I may reflect upon your responses. These short assignments encourage you to think about the readings before our class. They also allow you to practice your writing skills and to get to know me as a reader who will evaluate your longer essays. These responses will not receive a letter or number grade, but

instead a plus (+), check (✓) or minus (-). I will often encourage you to re-write all or part of this response so as to improve either your analysis or a certain element of grammar. These responses will be worth 15% of your grade.

Course Materials

The following books are for sale at bookstores serving Purdue (and on reserve):

- Paul Baepler, ed., *White Slaves, African Masters: An Anthology of American Barbary Captivity Narratives* (The University of Chicago Press, 1999).
- Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad* (1869; reprint, Signet, 1997). (You can also access this book at <http://books.google.com/books>)

Most of the material for this class can be accessed through Blackboard.

Disclaimers

Plagiarism will not be tolerated at Purdue University: Plagiarism is a crime, and students can be expelled for turning in a paper that they did not write. Copying a person's work verbatim is not the only form of plagiarism. In some cases, plagiarism involves paraphrasing the idea of another without a footnote or the repetition of another author's phrase. Students are advised to consult Purdue University's Guide to Academic Integrity for guidelines at: <http://www.purdue.edu/ODOS/osrr/integrity.htm>. Plagiarized work will receive a 0, and the professor reserves the right to forward the case to the administration.

In the event of a major campus emergency, the requirements, deadlines and grading policies set down on this syllabus are subject to changes that may be required by a revised semester calendar. Any changes will be posted, once the course resumes, on the course website. It may also be obtained by contacting the instructor via email or phone.

January 11 (Tu) Course Introduction

January 13 (Th) Orientalism
--Film Clip, *Aladdin* (20 min.)

Class Preparations

Laura Fokkena, "Are you a terrorist or do you play one on TV," www.poppolitics.com

Little, *American Orientalism*, 9-42

Response #1: What is the image in your mind when you think about the Middle East?

January 18 (Tu) Rise of Colonial America/Decline of Ottoman Empire

Class Preparations

Mather (Baepler), "The Glory of Goodness," 61-72

Response #2: What are the main points and thesis of Mather's sermon?

January 20 (Th) Revolutionary War and American Values

Class Preparations

Foss (Baepler), "A Journal of Captivity and Sufferings," 71-102

Response #3: What does Foss identify as the differences between American captives and North African captors? How does that then help define the national character of the US?

January 25 (Tu) The Barbary Wars
--Start Film, *The Battle of Tripoli*

Class Preparations

Frank Lambert, *The Barbary Wars: American Independence in the Atlantic World* (Hill and Wang, 2005), 79-103 (Chapter 3)

January 27 (Th) The Barbary Wars
--End Film, *The Battle of Tripoli*

Class Preparations

Frank Lambert, *The Barbary Wars: American Independence in the Atlantic World* (Hill and Wang, 2005), 123-155 (Chapter 5)

February 1 (Tu) Class Conflict in the New Republic

Class Preparations

Cowdery (Baepler), "American Captives in Tripoli," 159-186

Ray (Baepler), "The Horrors of Slavery," 187-203

Response #4: Compare the two narratives and identify Ray's principal complaints.

February 3 (Th) No Class (Get Ahead on Your Reading!)

February 8 (Tu) Gender in the New American Republic

Class Preparations

Martin (Baepler), "History of Captivity and Sufferings," 147-157

Bradley (Baepler), "An Authentic Narrative," 247-283

Response #5: Choose either Martin or Bradley and analyze what the text reveals about the appropriate role of American women at this time. What are the specific passages where they complain of their treatment? And what insights do these passages give you in terms of the cultural interpretation of how a woman should or should not behave?

February 10 (Th) Captivity Narratives, A Summary of Main Themes
--Assign Essay #1 (Due 2/22)

February 15 (Tu) Ottoman Constantinople (Istanbul)

Class Preparations

Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, 262-281 (Chapters 33 and 34)

February 17 (Th) Imagining the Holy Land
--Film, *Walking the Bible* (50 min.)

February 22 (Tu) No Class (Get Ahead on Your Reading!)

*****Students are encouraged to look ahead at all the questions posed for Twain.*****

*****Essay #1 is due to my mailbox by 1:30 pm. No emailed essays accepted.*****

February 24 (Th) Twain's Humor

Class Preparations

Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, 299-451 (Chapters 38-55)

For Consideration (NOT to be written): What are the comic devices used by Mark Twain? What strikes you as particularly American about his brand of humor? What is the tone of his writing? Is it formal or informal? Choose a passage where Twain's humor is apparent to you and be prepared to discuss it with students in the class.

March 1 (Tu) Twain's Perception of Islam and Arab Peoples

Class Preparations

For Consideration (NOT to be written): Twain relies on similes to convey his descriptions of the Holy Land. What are the similes used by Twain? And what too are the direct comparisons that Twain makes between the US and the ME? What is the effect of these narrative strategies? Do the similes and the comparisons flatter the Holy Land?

A *simile* is a figure of speech in which two unlike things are explicitly compared, as in “he eats like a pig” or “she is as skinny as a pencil.” It differs from a metaphor.

March 3 (Th) Pilgrims, Sinners and Twain’s Depiction of Holy Sites

Class Preparations

Response #6: What is Twain’s relationship to his fellow travelers? Who are the Pilgrims? Who are the Sinners? What does Twain like about them? What does he not like? Is Twain a Pilgrim or a Sinner? Based on your insights regarding these questions, how does Twain feel towards American Christianity? Positive? Or negative?

March 8 (Tu) Orientalist Art

Class Preparations

View paintings of Frederic Edwin Church on web: *Jerusalem, From the Mount of Olives* (http://www.artchive.com/artchive/c/church/church_jerusalem.jpg); *Syria by the Sea* (<http://www.intofineart.com/htmlimg/image-26253.html>)

Response #7: As you view the paintings by Church, you should think about the “visual narrative” of the artist. Why does Church choose to paint these scenes from a particular vantage point? Is the image sharp or blurry? And with what effect? How does Church incorporate objects into the painting? Would you deem Church a Pilgrim or Sinner?

March 10 (Th) Twain’s Holy Land, Summary of Main Themes
--Assign Essay #2 (Due 3/22)

March 15 (Tu) No Class (Spring Break!)

March 17 (Th) No Class (Spring Break!)

March 22 (Tu) An American Playboy in Turn-of-Century Morocco

Class Preparations

Perdicaris (Baepler), “In Raissuli’s Hands,” 285-301

Diana Wylie, “An American Playboy and the Birth of the Interzone,” in *Enchantment: Pictures from the Tangier American Legation Museum* (Tangier, TALIM, 2010), 72-91.

*****Essay #2 is due to me in class on 3/22. No email copies accepted.*****

March 24 (Th) Perdicaris Redux
--Start Film, *The Wind and the Lion*

March 29 (Tu) Perdicasis Redux
--End Film, *The Wind and the Lion*

March 31 (Th) No Class (Get Ahead on Your Reading!)

April 5 (Tu) World War II and Its Wake

Class Preparations

Michael B. Oren, *Power, Faith, and Fantasy: America in the Middle East, 1776 to the Present* (Norton, 2008), 446-502.

April 7 (Th) A Modern Captivity Narrative
--Start Film, *The Road to Morocco*

April 12 (Tu) A Modern Captivity Narrative
--End Film, *The Road to Morocco*

April 14 (Th) Reviving the Captivity Narrative

Class Preparations

Kenneth Roberts, *Lydia Bailey* (1947; reprint, Down East Books, 2001), 310-468 (Chapter 44 to Chapter 63).

Response #8: Compare the characters of Albion and Lear and their views in regard to the following continuums: war vs. peace, isolationism vs. internationalism, protecting strategic interests vs. spreading American values. What do the feelings and actions of these characters reveal about debates in the US in regard to America's place in the world?

April 19 (Tu) The Hajj
--*Inside Mecca* by *National Geographic* (50 min.)

April 21 (Th) Malcolm X's Hajj
--Assign Essay #3 (Due 5/3)

Class Preparations

Malcolm X (Alex Haley), *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (1964; reprint, Random House, 1990), 318-363 (Chapter 17 and Chapter 18).

Response #9: What does Malcolm X enjoy most about his time in the Arab-Islamic world? How do his comments on the Middle East reflect concerns regarding politics and society in the US? How would you compare Malcolm X's hajj with Twain's pilgrimage?

April 26 (Tu)

The Post 9/11 Image of the Sheikh

Class Preparations

Lynne Raye Harris, "Kept for the Sheikh's Pleasure" in *Chosen by the Sheikh* (Harlequin, November 2010), 111-146.

Response #10: How does Harris imagine a Middle Eastern political system?

*****Essay #3 is due in my mailbox on the second floor of UNIV by noon on 5/3*****