

History 34505
Spring 2020
Arabs in American Eyes

Place: MTHW 304
Day and Time: Tuesday/Thursday, 3 pm – 4:15 pm
Instructor: Professor Holden
Office: UNIV 127
Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday, 1:30 pm – 2:30 pm
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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 popular 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 provide insight into American values and attitudes. This course explores US relations with the Arab world over 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 *two polished pieces of writing* that address a narrow set of class readings. These essays require students to construct an original argument based on primary sources that I have assigned for the class (no outside research required). I grade these essays on the coherence of the argument, analysis of text and clarity of expression. The essays must be between five and six pages (no more/no less) in 12-point type-face, double-spaced, with one-inch margins. I will take off 5 points for each day this essay is late. Each essay is worth 25% of a student's final grade for this class. I prefer to receive emailed papers. I will assign you papers with due dates at four different times during the semester. It is you who decide (based on your interest or schedule) what two topics you will analyze.
- **Participation** in class discussions is important. Students should read and reflect upon assigned materials before our class in order to discuss the day's topic. Participation is 20% of a final grade. Your grade may suffer after more than two unexcused absences.
- Students must submit *ten short responses to readings*. These responses should be one page (no more than two pages). I ask that you submit these assignments to me via email by 10 am of the day of our scheduled class meetings—certainly no later than 3 pm. These short assignments encourage you to think about the readings before our class and so allow you to participate in class discussion more effectively. There are fifteen prompts listed during the semester under Class Participation. You must decide what ten prompts that you will respond to via email before class. These responses are worth 30% of your grade.

Learning Outcomes

- *Topical*
--To consider the long literary tradition of US writing on the Middle East and North Africa.
- *Analytical*
--To improve writing skills.
--To develop skills of critical thinking and problem solving.
--To improve verbal communication by conversing about ideas.

This class attends to skills critical for making a positive impression on employers: ability to interact with people, problem-solving skills, oral communication, and written communication.

Course Materials and Preparations:

The assignment for each class is *underneath* the specific day and lecture. It is under the line Class Preparations. Students should prepare assignments for each topic *before* each class meeting.

If the line Class Preparations calls on students to watch a movie, I will indicate on the syllabus where and how students where and how can access the film.

Most readings are on Blackboard. However, students should acquire the following:

- Susanna Haswell Rowson, *Slaves in Algiers, or a Struggle for Freedom* (1794; reprint, Copley Publishing Group, 2016).
- Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad* (1869; reprint, Penguin Classics, 2002).
- Edith Wharton, *In Morocco* (1920; reprint, John Beaufoy Publishing, 2016).
- Maisey Yates, *Forged in the Desert Heat* (Harlequin Presents, 2014).

Grading

A	= 94-100
A-	= 90-93
B+	= 87-89
B	= 84-86
B-	= 80-83
C+	= 77-79
C	= 74-76
C-	= 70-73

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.

Daniel Defoe, *The Life, Adventures, and Pyracies, of the Famous Captain Singleton* (1720, reprint; Broadview Press, 2019), 54-60 and 351-353.

Elizabeth Marsh, "The Female Captive (1769)," in *White Women Captives in North Africa: Narratives of Enslavement, 1735-1830* (Palgrave-Macmillan, 2010), 121-161.

Jan. 28 (Tu) Revolutionary Values

Class Preparations

Robert J. Allison, "Americans and the Muslim World: First Encounters," in *The Middle East and the United States: History, Politics, and Ideologies*, 6th ed., David W. Lesch and Mark L. Haas, ed.s (Routledge, 2008), 19-29.

John Foss, "A Journal of Captivity and Sufferings," in Baepler, *White Slaves*, 71-102.

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

Jan. 30 (Th) No Class

Feb. 4 (Tu) Republican Feminism and Imperial Fantasies

Class Preparations

Jan E. Lewis, "A Revolution for Whom? Women in the Era of American Revolution," in *A Companion to American Women's History*, ed. Nancy Hewitt (Blackwell Publishing, 2002)

Susanna Haswell Rowson, "Slaves in Algiers," in its entirety.

Response #4: How does this play edify its audience? What is Rowson's purpose?

Feb. 6 (Th) The Barbary Wars in Fact and Fiction

Class Preparations

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

Joseph Wheelan, "Prologue," in *Jefferson's War: America's First War on Terror, 1801-1805* (Carroll and Graf Publishers, 2003), xvii-xxvi.

C. Hitchens, "To the Shores of Tripoli," *Time Magazine*, 5 July 2004.

Feb. 11 (Tu) No Class

Feb. 27 (Th) Pilgrims and Sinners

Class Preparations

Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, 355-403 (chapter 46 – chapter 50, or XLVI-L)

Response #7: What is Twain’s relationship to his fellow travelers? Who are the Pilgrims? Who are the Sinners? Is Twain a Pilgrim or a Sinner? Based on your insights regarding these questions, how does Twain feel towards Americans and American Christianity? Positive? Or negative?

March 3 (Tu) Twain’s Perception of Islam and Arab Peoples

Class Preparations

Response #8: Twain relies on similes to convey his descriptions of the Holy Land. Identify at least ten or more similes used by Twain? Do the similes and the comparisons flatter the Holy Land? **Or**, you may assess Twain’s comparisons between the US and the ME?

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 (i.e., he is a pig).

March 5 (Th) 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 #9: As you view the paintings by Frederic Edwin Church, you should think about the “visual narrative” of the artist. What choices does the artist make? Why does he choose to paint 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 (Tu) Racial Politics in Postwar America
--Guest Lecture, Professor Neil Bynum

Class Preparations

“Muslims Celebrate Eid el Adha Religious Holiday,” 11 August 2019, *Al Jazeera*, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/08/muslims-celebrate-eid-al-adha-religious-holiday-190811073635616.html>.

Watch film, “Inside Mecca,” National Geographic, 2003, 55 min.
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cwFZucL7PsE>)

March 12 (Th) Malcolm X in the Holy Land

Class Preparations

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

Response #10: What does Malcolm X most enjoy in the Arab-Islamic world? How do his comments on the Middle East reflect concerns about the politics & society in the US? How would you compare Malcolm X's description of the hajj with Twain's descriptions of the Holy Land?

Assign Essay #2--due via email on March 26 by 5 pm

March 17 (Tu)	Spring Break
March 19 (Th)	Spring Break
March 24 (Tu)	No Class
March 26 (Th)	The Desert Sheik as Hero

Class Preparations

Watch film, "The Sheik," 1921, 1 hour, 27 min.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oDaRentuB7g>

Listen to Radio Report, "Valentino's Sheik: An 'Other' to Swoon Over," NPR Morning Addition, 4 February 2008, <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=18602260>

Response #11: What feeling does the director communicate to his audience? And how? What is the political intent of the filmmaker? And what is your evidence for that judgment? Is there information or a particular "take" that the director emphasizes in regard to the Arab world?

Essay #2 due to me via by 5 pm

March 31 (Tu)	Early 20th-Century Encounters with the Arab World
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Class Preparations

Perdicaris (Baepler), "In Raissuli's Hands," in Baepler, *White Slaves*, 285-301

Barbara W. Tuchman, "Perdicaris Alive or Raisuli Dead," *American Heritage*, 10, no. 5 (August 1959), <https://www.americanheritage.com/perdicaris-alive-or-raisuli-dead>

Response #12: What happened to Ian Perdicaris? And how does he describe his experience? What is the tone of his article? How does he feel about Raissuli? Is he merely a bandit?

April 2 (Th) World War I in the Arab World

Class Preparations

James Gelvin and Martin Bunton, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 6th ed. (Routledge, 2018), 139-160.

April 7 (Tu) The King-Crane Report

Class Preparations

James Gelvin, “The Ironic Legacy of the King-Crane Commission,” in *The Middle East and the United States*, David W. Lesch and Mark L. Haas, ed.s (Routledge, 2012), 30-46.

The General Syrian Congress, “Memorandum Presented to the King-Crane Commission,” in *The Israel-Arab Reader: A Documentary History of the Middle East Conflict*, 8th ed., Walter Laqueur and Dan Schueftan, ed.s (Penguin, 2016), 21-23.

The King-Crane Commission, “Recommendations,” in *The Middle East and the United States*, David W. Lesch and Mark L. Haas, ed.s (Routledge, 2012), 23-25.

April 9 (Th) Images of the Arab World in the Media

Class Preparations

Watch film, “Valentino’s Ghost,” 2012, 1 hr., 33 min.

Response #13: What is the argument put forth in this film? How does the director connect geopolitics with images put forth in Hollywood films and news media? With what effect?

April 14 (Tu) The US and Imperialism in Arab World

Class Preparations

Edith Wharton, *In Morocco*, in its entirety.

Response #14: Does Wharton refute or support French colonial endeavors in the Arab world?

Or

Response #14: How does Wharton describe Moroccan women and their society? What evidence does she provide about the lot of women? And where are the weaknesses in her argument?

April 16 (Th) The US and Women in the Arab World

Assign Essay #3—due via email on April 30 by 5 pm

- April 21 (Tu)** **Recycling Tales of Moroccan Captivity, Part I**
 --Film, "The Wind and the Lion," 1975 (2 hrs.)
- April 23 (Th)** **Recycling Tales of Moroccan Captivity, Part II**
 --Film, "The Wind and the Lion," 1975 (2 hrs.)
- April 28 (Tu)** **Reconcilable Differences: Post-9/11 Desert Romances, Part I**

Class Preparations

Maisey Yates, *Forged in Desert Heat*, in its entirety (this work contains explicit sex scenes; let me know if you would like a pdf that does not have scenes that could be uncomfortable for you)

Stacy E. Holden, "Love in the Desert: Images of Arab-American Reconciliation in Contemporary Sheik Romance Novels," *Journal of Popular Romance Studies* (29 August 2015), <http://jprstudies.org/2015/08/love-in-the-desert-images-of-arab-american-reconciliation-in-contemporary-sheikh-romance-novelsby-stacy-e-holden/> --please also read Megan Crane's author response to the article, <http://jprstudies.org/2015/08/stacy-holdens-love-in-the-desert-an-authors-responseby-megan-crane/> .

Response #15: How does the desert shape this book's plotline? How does the author describe it? How does the Sheik connect with it? And how does it influence the American heiress?

- April 30 (Th)** **Reconcilable Differences: Post-9/11 Desert Romances, Part II**
 --Webinar with romance author *Maisey Yates*

Essay #3 is due via email by 5 pm

Assign Essay #4--due via email on 8 May by 5 pm