

Middle Eastern Diaspora and Migration: Dreams and Dilemmas

HIST4000/7772 | 3 Cr.

Fall 2015 | W: 8:30-11:20

Prof Jennifer Dueck

All about...

The Middle East has often been seen by historians and by the media as a self-contained region, a place where the history of conflict and daily life can be studied without reference to the rest of the world. Yet the flow of people into, out of, and around this region, continues to have an enormous impact both on the Middle East and on the world. Indeed the First Arab Congress in 1913 took place not in Cairo or Damascus, but in Paris. And that is but one small example. Today we see daily in the news the impact of Middle Eastern migration in Europe. This course examines in depth the premise that understanding population migration is fundamental to the history of the Middle East.

This is an intensive reading, writing and discussion Honours/Graduate seminar that meets for a three-hour block weekly. In studying the phenomenon of migration and diaspora related to the Middle East, we will consider how Middle Eastern population flows have connected regions as diverse as Central Asia, Africa, Europe, Latin America, and North America. The course is intended for upper level undergraduate students and graduate students in Arts. Readings and discussions will examine the theoretical meanings of migration and diaspora, as well as the socio-economic, cultural and political implications of these population movements. While this is a history course, the readings will include an interdisciplinary selection of texts from literature and the social sciences, with a focus on the time period from the late nineteenth century to the present.

What will you learn?

By the end of this seminar course, you should be able to:

- ❖ Summarize the scholarly literature about key theoretical concepts such as diaspora, migration, and homeland
- ❖ Synthesize a substantial volume of writing from different disciplines about the meaning of migration for the history and people of Middle East.
- ❖ Make connections between different kinds of Middle Eastern migration experiences and their implications.
- ❖ Demonstrate deep reading of a large volume of relevant texts.
- ❖ Mobilize readings effectively in discussion and writing. Particular emphasis will be placed on seminar discussion, including discussion leadership, as well as different genres of synthetic and analytical writing.

And the books...

The following books are available for purchase at the University Bookstore (note that some are also available online if you don't mind reading on a screen). Additional readings will be made available either on UMLearn or through the University Library.

- ❖ Hisham D Aidi, *Rebel Music: Race, Empire, and the New Muslim Youth Culture* (New York: Vintage, 2014)
- ❖ Theresa Alfaro-Velcamp, *So Far from Allah, So Close to Mexico: Middle Eastern Immigrants in Modern Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007)
- ❖ Evelyn Alsultany and Ella Shohat, eds. *Between the Middle East and the Americas: The Cultural Politics of Diaspora*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012. [Also available online through UM Libraries]
- ❖ Dawn Chatty, *Displacement and Dispossession in the Modern Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- ❖ Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (Routledge, 2008). [Available online at http://prodiasporaromana.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Cohen-2008-Global-Diasporas-An-Introduction-2n-Bookos.org_.pdf]
- ❖ Amara Lakhous, *Clash of Civilizations Over an Elevator in Piazza Vittorio*, Trans Ann Goldstein (New York: Europa Editions, 2008)
- ❖ Pardis Mahdavi, *Gridlock: Labor, Migration and Human Trafficking in Dubai* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011)
- ❖ Jean Said Makdisi, *Teta, Mother and Me: Three Generations of Arab Women* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006).

Assignments and Assessment

There are four types of assignment in this course. Each will develop a different aspect of upper-level deep reading, writing or discussion skills. The skills to be assessed are the same for undergraduate and graduate level students, but graduate students are expected to demonstrate greater ease and sophistication in each area. Graduate students are also assigned more writing and discussion leadership. The blank column in the table below is for the grade weightings, which we will collectively decide on the first day of class.

As with most courses, what you gain in this seminar is directly proportional to what you put into it. Let me emphasize that my hope for all my students is that they focus on learning rather than on grading. That said, I recognize that most of you likely have some interest in grades, and you will receive graded feedback on your seminar leadership, class participation, and at least three short essays before the Voluntary Withdrawal Date of 18 November 2015.

The grade weightings are in the table below as per discussion with students on the first day of class.

	UnderGrd	Grad	
Class participation	25%	15%	In essence it amounts to: show up, listen up, speak up. I will grade participation based on a weekly self-assessment exercise, to be discussed, with handout, on the first day of class. As per student consensus on the first day, you will fail your participation mark if you miss more than one class (barring exceptional circumstances).
Seminar leadership (twice, three times for graduate students)	15%	20%	Each student will co-lead the seminar discussion on two separate occasions (three for graduate students). Sign-up on the first day of class.
Six (seven for Graduate students) short essay assignments, 600-700 words	30%	30%	These are short responses to the weekly readings and will include different genres of writing. Sign-up on the first day of class.
Take-home Exam: 7000-word synthesis essay (9,000 words for Graduate students)	30%	35%	Due: 17 December 2015

Class participation

Speaking with rigor and enthusiasm about topics that matter is one of the most important skills you can learn during your university studies. This honours/graduate seminar course is an ideal moment to build your confidence and hone those skills. Our weekly seminar sessions will consist almost entirely of group discussion based on the readings assigned. Many of our topics involve controversy --- issues of disputed facts, issues of interpretation, issues of contending perspectives --- which makes it even more challenging to engage with them. This component of assessment will include your own weekly reflections on your participation skills, as well as peer assessment of others. We will discuss grading of class participation, with a self-assessment template, on the first day of class.

Seminar Leadership

An extension of the point above, discussion leadership involves the particular ability to identify questions and asking them at the right moment, as well as more intangible factors such as inspiring trust and setting a group tone. As a discussion leader, you can be confident that the other students will have read their material, and most will also have written a short essay. So they will have things to say. It is your job to draw out that discussion and give it shape. We will talk about different discussion leadership techniques on the first day of class and throughout the course.

Short Writing Assignments

These short writing assignments provide skill development on many different levels. First, and most basically, they allow you an opportunity for reflection about what you have read. You may at first think you understood everything in the readings, but as you start to write, inevitably you will realize that you

need to go back and explore again. Second, the short writing assignments allow you to practice writing in different genres. On the first day of class we will discuss and brainstorm what genre means for historians, and what types of genres you would like to practice this term. You will each have freedom to choose which genres of historical writing you use for these assignments, with the caveat that you must choose at least four different genres during the term. You must pass all short writing assignments and you will have the option to revise and re-submit up to three assignments within two weeks of receiving your mark.

Take-home Exam: Synthesis Essay

Imagine that you have been asked to write a literature review essay for the *New York Review of Books* on the state of scholarship about Middle Eastern migration. The editors have given you a bibliography and, coincidentally(!), it contains all the readings assigned for this course. It is your job to put the readings together in a coherent way. Your essay should have an introduction, body and conclusion. You must refer in some way to all the readings, yet you must also be selective about what and how much you include from each individual reading. This is where you demonstrate your ability to make connections between the readings you have done during the term and synthesize the material into an essay. You should imagine that your readership is scholarly, but not necessarily academically specialized in the Middle East or migration.

Even though I advise you to focus on learning rather than grades, you may nevertheless wish to be aware of the following rubric:

90 and above	A+	65-69	C+
80-89	A	60-64	C
75-79	B+	50-59	D
70-74	B	Below 50	F (failure)

Communicating with me

In person: I welcome all individual conversations with students. Please come to see me at some point in the term, even you haven't got a specific reason. The fact that St John's is built like a rabbit warren and my office is hard to find is a challenge to relish. If you are having difficulty with the course, you might be reluctant to drop by. But know that I would most particularly like to see you. My regular office hours are Wednesday 1:30-2:30 and Friday 13.40-14.40. But if those times don't work for you, email me and we can arrange another time.

By email: This is undoubtedly the best way to reach me for quick questions or to set up appointments. If you enjoy legalese, by all means read the University's official policy on "Electronic Communication with Students"

(http://umanitoba.ca/admin/governance/media/Electronic_Communication_with_Students_Policy_-_2014_06_05.pdf)

If not, the policy highlights are:

- ❖ You must use your university email account for communication with me. Conversely, I am not allowed to contact you about the course at your private email address.
- ❖ I can reasonably assume that you are checking your email regularly. Failure to do so could adversely affect your performance in the class.

In addition to the policy, I would, equally importantly, advise you to be aware that professional email-writing is a skill worth developing. Beginning your email with “yo prof” or no greeting at all will make a different impression than “Hello Dr Dueck” or “Dear Jennifer”. Similarly, the body of your email can be conversational and informal, even funny, yet it should remain firmly in a professional register.

Managing your time and your deadlines

This is a challenge for people well beyond their studies. So if you can hone your time management skills while still a student, you’ll never regret it. For this course, it’s not only something you’ll need to succeed. Given that so much of a seminar depends on input from the students, it also has a significant impact on your fellow students if you are unprepared for class. So you will need to carve out blocks of time every week to devote to this course. If you anticipate difficulty with a deadline, please see me as quickly as possible. Late submissions may be penalized 1% per day, or at my discretion if you discuss with me in advance.

Some Rules and Some Questions

My own preference is for group consensus and a democratic style of learning. So we will decide class expectations in a number of areas together on the first day of class. With respect to certain points, however, there are rules, and it’s best to be clear at the outset about which is which.

Open for discussion:

- ❖ What grade weighting do we want for each of the four assessment types in this course?
- ❖ How do we want to use technology, if at all, to enhance our learning experience?
- ❖ How do we feel about food and drink in class?
- ❖ How would we like to structure class breaks?
- ❖ How should we handle late arrivals?
- ❖ The order of the class readings.

Not open for discussion:

- ❖ Instruction time each week is 150 minutes beginning at 8:30am, with an additional 15 minutes break time (see ‘open for discussion’ above). Class ends at 11:15am.
- ❖ Respect copyright. We will use copyrighted content in this course and we must all make sure that we’re using it legally and according to University guidelines. Copyrighted works, including those created by me, are for private study and research, and must not be distributed in any format without permission. Do not upload copyrighted works to UMLearn or to any website unless an exception to the Copyright Act applies or written permission has been confirmed. For more information, see the University’s Copyright Office website at <http://umanitoba.ca/copyright/> or contact um_copyright@umanitoba.ca.
- ❖ You are not permitted to make any kind of audio or video recording, openly or surreptitiously, in whole or in part, during any part of this course.

- ❖ If you wish to appeal a grade given for term work you must do so within 10 working days after the grade for the term work has been made available to them.
- ❖ Uncollected term work will become the property of the Faculty of Arts and will be subject to confidential destruction.

Regarding Plagiarism:

This point is simple and serious. Be honest. If you use someone else's ideas, acknowledge them. Be forewarned that the consequences are severe if you do not.

Lest there was any doubt, the University's regulations re: plagiarism, cheating and impersonation may be found in the section on "Academic Integrity" of the General Academic Regulations in the online Academic Calendar, and Catalog and the Faculty of Arts regulation at:

http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/student/student_responsibilities.html, which reads:

The common penalty in Arts for plagiarism on a written assignment is a grade of F on the paper and a final grade of F (DISC) (for Disciplinary Action) for the course. For the most serious acts of plagiarism, such as purchase of an essay and repeat violations, this penalty can also include suspension for a period of up to five (5) years from registration in courses taught in a particular department/program in Arts or from all courses taught in this Faculty.

The Faculty also reserves the right to submit student work that is suspected of being plagiarized to Internet sites designed to detect plagiarism or to other experts for authentication.

The common penalty in Arts for academic dishonesty on a test or examination is F for the paper, F (DISC) for the course, and a one-year suspension from courses acceptable for credit in the Faculty.

For more serious acts of academic dishonesty on a test or examination, such as repeat violations, this penalty can also include suspension for a period of up to five years from registration in courses taught in a particular department or program in Arts or from all courses taught in or accepted for credit by this Faculty.

And resources beyond...

While I will do my best to facilitate your learning, there are further resources available to you.

Notably, there are **writing tutors** available to help you with your essays through the Academic Learning Centre (ALC): <http://umanitoba.ca/student/academiclearning/> The ALC page also has resources to help you with **study skills, organization**, as well as assistance for students using **English as an Additional Language (EAL)**. The History department will also make a writing tutor available **exclusively to History students** in the department on two days of the week.

Other issues, including **accessibility services**, workshops, and tips about **academic integrity** are addressed at the Student Advocacy Services webpage (http://umanitoba.ca/student/resource/student_advocacy/).

All of the above services can also be accessed through this link: <http://umanitoba.ca/student/saa/accessibility/student-resources.html>

History students can also take advantage of the huge range of academic materials (including primary and secondary sources, as well as pages to help with writing and referencing) made available by the History subject librarian, Kyle Feenstra, tailored just for you! They are available on the Libraries page at this link: <http://libguides.lib.umanitoba.ca/content.php?pid=219304>