Course Logistics:

Instructor: Dr. Mohamed Zayani
Office Location: 1D27
Office Telephone: 4457-8314
Email Address: mz92@georgetown.edu
Office Hours: M 11:00-13:00 and by appointment

Academic Year: 2013-2014
Semester: Fall
Class Location: 1D03
Class Periods: UT 2:05-16:10

Course Description: This course examines the various ways in which media, culture and politics intersect in the contemporary Arab Middle East. It is designed to assist students in understanding the role of the evolving Arab mediascape in shaping the socio-political information environment of a fast changing region. Students will be exposed to and engage in discussions about various media theories, issues, forms and practices. A broad range of topics will be covered including the history and development of the Arab press, the rise of satellite television, the political economy of Arab media, the mission of Arab journalism, the Al Jazeera phenomenon, and the advent of new and alternative media. Special attention will be paid to the role social media and satellite television has played in the momentous changes which shook the region during the Arab Spring. Equally of interest is the uneven role of media in the Arab world’s transformation process, particularly the disjunction between the liberating potential of transnational and new media which teem with censor-free content, on the one hand, and the authoritarian political culture of the region, on the other hand. We will also dwell on the relationship between media and state security and reflect the contribution of political communication to the emergence of an Arab public sphere, the consolidation of a transnational identity, and the reconfiguration of citizenship. We will consider the extent to which both news and entertainment media create new communicative spaces for social action and engender contestatory politics. Equally relevant are the ways in which locally-produced media in the Arab world respond and adapt to globalization.

Class Format: Mini-lectures, class discussions, presentations, group work, personal conferences, and computer-assisted instruction. The course will also be enriched—to the extent that it is possible—with occasional screenings, field trips to media organizations, and interactions with guest speakers.

Textbook: In terms of readings, and in the absence of a suitable textbook on the topic, a course packet will be made available to the students (most conveniently on electronic reserve in the library and/or on blackboard) which contains select articles and readings from key contributors to the field, including William Rugh, John Alterman, Marwan Kraidy, Annabelle Sreberny, Muhammad Ayish, Noha Mellor, Lila Abu-Lughod, Christa Salamandra, Majid Tehranian, Galal Amin, Kai Hafez, Philip Seib, Dale Eickelman, Jon Anderson, Tarik Sabry, Marc Lynch, Helga Souri-Tawil, Adel Iskander, Mohammed El Nawawy, Douglas Boyd, Dina Matar, Larbi Sadiki, Joe Khalil, Naomi Sakr, Philip Howard, Fatema Mernissi, Deborah Wheeler, Walter Armbrust, Charles Hirschkind, Andrew Hammond and Ami Ayalon. I expect you to bring a hard copy of the assigned reading to class, with your annotations indicated on the margins.

Course Objectives: This course is designed

• To provide students with an understanding of important media issues and trends in the Middle East
• To assist students in understanding the role media play in Middle Eastern culture and politics
• To help student reflect on the paradoxes ensuing from recent transformations in the Arab media scene
• To introduce students to a growing and diverse body of literature and scholarship on Arab media
• To familiarize students with various approaches to the study of contemporary Arab media, culture and politics
• To expose students to current media research drawn from inter-disciplinary sources
• To expose students to the range of cultural, theoretical and comparative research undertaken in the field
Course Assessment:

- Take-home Assignment i 20 % Due on 6 October
- Take-home Assignment ii 20 % Due on 17 November
- Examination i 20 % Due on 6 October
- Examination ii 20 % On December 12
- Attendance, Participation, Presentation & Other 20 %

Attendance and Punctuality: Signing up for this course means that you have committed yourself to attendance. Except for extreme or unusual circumstances, excessive absences will negatively affect your grade and may result in a withdrawal. Excused absences must be documented. You are responsible for all course material even when you are not in class. If you miss one of the normal class days, it is your responsibility to get the notes, assignments, and any additional important information given out on the day you were absent. Note also that being late and/or leaving class early are not acceptable practices as they tend to be disruptive to whatever activity is being performed in class. You are expected to arrive on time. The University guidelines for attendance are defined in the Undergraduate Bulletin. For more on this point, please consult the following university link: <http://www12.georgetown.edu/undergrad/bulletin/regulations1.html#attendance>

Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism: You are expected to abide by the Georgetown Honor Code. Violations of this code will not be tolerated. Broadly speaking, academic misconduct refers to any act that violates the rights of another student in academic work or that involves misrepresentation of your own work. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to the following: cheating on assignments or examinations; obtaining or giving aid on an examination; having unauthorized prior knowledge of an examination; doing work for another student; submitting the same paper or substantially similar projects to meet the requirements of more than one course without the approval of all instructors concerned; depriving another student of necessary course material; interfering with another student’s work; and plagiarism. Plagiarism is the intentional or unintentional unacknowledged use of others' materials (which includes published work in books, journals, brochures, and material posted on the internet). Any paper with your name on it signifies that you are the author—that the wording and the major ideas are yours, with exceptions indicated by quotation marks and citations. You can avoid plagiarism by carefully following accepted scholarly practices. Notes taken for papers and research projects should accurately record sources of material to be cited, quoted, paraphrased or summarized, and research or critical papers should acknowledge these sources in footnotes or by using direct quotations (in accordance with a manual of style). Please note that papers may be checked by <turnitin.com> for unoriginal material. For more details on academic misconduct, you are encouraged to consult the following website: <http://webster.commnet.edu/MLA/plagiarism.htm>.

Makeup & Final Exams: Except for extreme or unusual circumstances, make up exams are not available. If you miss an exam without prior approval from the instructor, you may receive a “0” score. Finally, note that registering for this class means that you are available to take the final exam as per the university exam schedule. There will be no rescheduling or individual arrangements for the final exam. Alternative arrangements pertaining to conflict exams need to be authorized by the Assistant Deans.

Mobile Phones & Laptops: Mobile phones are a nuisance; they are to be switched off during class time and kept out of sight. Similarly, laptops should not be used in class to surf the Net or to engage in email exchanges or other personal communication.

Grade Definitions and Guidelines: It is important to recognize that a grade reflects another's judgment of your work. In this sense, all grading is subjective and different reviewers might view a paper, exam, or presentation differently.
However, subjectivity is not the same as arbitrariness. I put a lot of time and effort into grading fairly. Your grade is based on the quality of your work. My standards and expectations for assigned work are high. Generally speaking, I expect all final course deliverables be of professional quality. The following will give you a sense of how work produced in this course will be evaluated:

A. **Exemplary**: Exceeds meritoriousness to the extent that it may serve as an example or model for excellence to others.
B. **Meritorious**: Fully meets all requirements and exceeds basic competence, giving the work distinction.
C. **Satisfactory**: Fully meets all requirements of the assignment or course with a basic level of competence for students entering college.
D. **Marginal**: Fails to meet all requirements; what has been completed may be considered at least competent; or meets all requirements but below a basic level of competence, but is not considered failing.
E. **Failing**: Falls significantly short of requirements or basic competence, or both.

Occasionally, grades A/B, B/C, C/D may be used to recognize performance slightly different from these interpretations. In terms of grades, the comments above refer to the work produced by the student and not to the student personally. An "F" does not mean that you are a failure, but that the work you produced for this particular class was inadequate.

**Participation**: Attendance is required but not sufficient by itself. You are expected to come to class regularly with your reading assignments completed, prepared to engage in discussion and to actively participate in group work. To the extent that the ability to communicate clearly and effectively is a critical skill today, both written and oral communication skills will be particularly emphasized in this course. The course presents multiple opportunities for you to practice and receive feedback on your communication skills. You will present and defend your ideas during class sessions. Team work and peer review sessions will encourage you to practice your written and oral communication skills, to seek feedback about your communication skills from other people, and to provide feedback about written reports and oral presentations to other people. Failure to participate is likely to adversely affect your grade.

**Submitted Work & Timely Completion of Assignments**: All of your papers must be typed, double spaced, and reasonably free of typos and mechanical or grammatical errors. If your paper is full of typographical or grammatical errors, the reader’s attention will be diverted from the more important consideration of content. I expect you to keep the papers I give back to you along with the drafts you may have produced in a folder. Similarly, you need to keep an electronic and a hard copy of all the work you submit for this class for your own record. Although in this class the emphasis is on quality rather than quantity, papers should attempt to meet the specified length requirement. Within the specified range, your papers should be long enough to respond to the assignment and short enough to avoid verbosity. As for late papers, these are no fun for me to keep track of and only put you behind. To prepare you for the actual work world, all assignments must be turned in on time and in class. You will lose one third of a letter grade for each calendar day your paper is late. Papers that are more than a week late will receive a failing grade. Students will be held to the same standards and deadlines. There will be no make-ups available for non-submitted projects. If you become ill or the victim of emergency circumstances, please stay in touch. As a rule, an incomplete is not permitted.

**Collaboration**: If so you wish, you may discuss assignments with your classmates before they are due. However, you are expected to work independently when you actually write up your work. It is essential that you individually understand the assignments and do them in order to do well.

**Students with Learning Differences**: If you are in need of academic accommodation due to a documented learning difference, please provide the appropriate university documentation at the beginning of the semester to make the necessary arrangements.

**Blackboard**: The syllabus, assignments and relevant handouts for this class are usually posted on Blackboard <https://campus.georgetown.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp>.

**Tentative Syllabus for Readings and Schedule of Assignments**: The following syllabus, including the dates of the assignments, is subject to revision if I see the need for modification:
WEEK 1: 8/25-27

Introductory Session

Understanding the Arab Mediascape: Methodological Issues for Theorizing the Field


Media Resources


Suggested further Readings


WEEK 2: 9/1-3

Written in Cairo, Published in Beirut and Read in Baghdad: A Brief History of the Arab Press


Suggested further Readings


Radio in the Arab World: Nasser’s ‘Voice of the Arabs’


**Suggested further Readings**


**WEEK 3: 9/8-10**

**TV Broadcasting and the Satellite Revolution**


**Arab Media: Recent Trends**


**Media Resources**

“Media Hubs of the Middle East.” <http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/newswar/war_hubs.html>

**Suggested further Readings**


**WEEK 4: 9/15-17**

**Mapping the Contemporary Arab Media Scene: Typologies and Patterns**


**Media Resources**


**Suggested further Readings**


Arab Media Practices: An Eye on the Profession


**Media Resources**


**Hand Out**


**Suggested further Readings**

El-Nawawy, Mohammed. “Arab Media and Terrorism: Is an Objective Journalism Possible.”

WEEK 5: 9/22-24

**Arab Media from Inside: Journalists, Political Communication and Change**


**Media Resources**


**Suggested further Readings**
Mohamed Zayani


Arab Media between Institutional Problems and Professional Challenges


(Self-)Censorship and Freedom of Speech in the Arab World


Suggested further Readings


“That which is not Obligatory is Prohibited: Censorship and Incitement in the Arab World.” Hearing Before the Subcommittee on the Middle East, and South Asia of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, 22 January 2008.


WEEK 6: 9/29 – 10/1

Arab Public Opinion in the Age of Media Plenty


Suggested further Readings


Midterm Exam: On October 1. (The exam will be on the assigned readings up to this point in the semester).

WEEK 7: 1/6-8

A Media-Mediated Arab Public Sphere


Eickelman, Dale, F. “The Public Sphere, the Arab Street and the Middle East’s Democracy Deficit.” Global Media Journal 2.2 (2003), <http://lass.calumet.purdue.edu/cca/gmj/fa03/gmj-fa03-eickelman.htm>.


Suggested further Readings


The Expansion of the Information Economy and the Rise of Arab Media Cities & Clusters / Modalities of Governance

Guest Speaker

TBA

Suggested further Readings


The Al Jazeera Phenomenon

Guest Speaker

TBA

Media Resources


Suggested further Readings


Miles, Hughes. Al Jazeera: The Inside Story of the News channel that is Challenging the West (New York: Grove Press, 2005).


Taham, Steve. Loosing the Arab Hearts and Minds: The Coalition, Al Jazeera and Arab Public Opinion (Rockville Center: Front Street Press, 2006).


Assignment 1: A 5-6 page paper on a topic that relates to media culture and politics in the Arab world. Due on Oct. 6.

WEEK 8: 10/13-15

----- Holiday: Eid Al Adha -----

WEEK 9: 10/20-22

Arab Media and the Disjunction between the State and its Subjects


**Suggested further Readings**


**Arab Media and Democratization**


**Suggested further Readings**


**Media Resources**


**WEEK 10: 10/27-29**

**The Empowerment Potential of the Information Revolution: Technology Optimists & Technological Determinism**


**Suggested further Readings**
Iran, Media and Revolution


Media Resources


Suggested further Readings


WEEK 11: 11/3-5

New Media in the Arab World


Media Resources


The Arab Spring: Revolution in the Age of New & Social Media


Suggested further Readings


WEEK 12: 11/10-12

Media and State Security


Suggested further Readings


Transnational Media in the Middle East: The Saudi Media Hegemony


Suggested further Readings


WEEK 13: 11/17-19

Entertainment Media, Culture and Contestatory Politics


**Arab Media between Audiences and Counter-Publics**


**Media Resources**


**Suggested further Readings**


**Assignment 2:** A 5-6 page paper on a topic that relates to media culture and politics in the Arab world. Due on Nov. 17.

**WEEK 14: 11/24-26**

**Popular Culture, Modernity and Media Consumerism**


**Media Resources**


**Suggested further Readings**


**Media, Alternative Voices and Oppositional Culture**


**Suggested further Readings**


**WEEK 15: 12/1-3**

**Arab Media and the Discourse on Religion**


Anderson, Jon W. “The Internet and Islam’s new Interpreters.” In Dale Eickelman and Jon Anderson (eds), *New Media in the Muslim World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), pp. 45-60. (Presentation)


**Media Resources**


Suggested further Readings


Ibrahime, Mohammed. New Media and Neo-Islamism: New Media’s Impact on the Political Culture in the Islamic World (Saarbrücken, Germany: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller, 2007).


Arab Media and the Dynamics of Global Flows & Contra-Flows


Media Resources


Suggested further Readings

Final Exam: On December 12, 9:00-11:00. (The final exam will be on the assigned readings since the midterm exam).

ADDITIONAL TOPICS FOR CONSIDERATION:

Media and Transnational Identity


Guest Speaker

Laurie E. King, Editor of Electronic Intifada and professor of Anthropology at GU

Suggested further Readings


Arab Media and Gender


Media and Civil Society


**Suggested Further Readings**


**The Political Economy of Arab Media**


**Arab Media and the Discourse on Transparency**


**Visual Culture in the Arab World**


**News Media in the Arab World**