

PS186 Culture and Resistance

Prof. Hanan Toukan
Email: h.toukan@berlin.bard.edu
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:00-2:00
Seminar times: 9:00-10:30
Seminar venue: TBD

Course Description:

This Course Critically examines the various manifestations of counter-hegemony, resistance and dissent with particular focus on the Arab region. Taking as its starting point the fact that much of the literature on politics, culture and society in the region emphasizes the region's various hierarchies of power, dogged ideologies and prevailing hegemony in ordering identities and experiences, the course proceeds to study the ways in which these dominant forms are in reality countered in cultural production and every day cultural practices. The course will analyse how subcultures, social movements and individuals throughout the region have tried to negotiate with, subvert and resist these forms of social and political hegemonies through the use of various art forms such as writing, poetry, music, political film, political posters and pamphlets, performance art and public art. The readings are organized thematically covering major issues in postcolonial studies, cultural theory, decolonization theory, cultural studies, subaltern studies, and many of the key readings in Middle Eastern Studies.

Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the staunchest regard for academic integrity and expects good academic practice from students in their studies. Syllabi should note that, instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section III Academic Misconduct.

Attendance

Attendance at ALL classes is expected. More than two absences (that is absences from two sessions of 90 minutes) in a semester will significantly affect the participation grade for the course. Also please to consult the BCB Student Handbook for regulations governing periods of illness or leaves of absence.

Class Conduct

“Active” participation is a significant component of your grade; you should come to class prepared to discuss the readings.

This means bringing a copy of your weekly diary response as well as any questions you may have.

Your contribution to the discussion should be based on the material you have read (and thought about). Identify important passages while reading for closer examination in class.

Do not take out your cell phones, laptops or other devices and do not allow them to interrupt class.

Assessment and Grade Breakdown

Class Participation and attendance (20%): Participation will be evaluated at the end of each session. Students will be assessed based on the general enthusiasm, frequency and quality of the questions they raise. Regular attendance and completion of all reading assignments is also required. Recurrent absences will substantially decrease the final grade. (up to two unexcused absences are allowed).

Class Presentations (20%): Each student will be expected to make at least one 15-20 minute presentation about a particular week's readings of their own choice. Presentations should address the author, central question and argument of the work, methodology used, and three critically engaging questions and concluding thoughts posed to the class to spark discussion. The class presentations are not only to reiterate what is in the readings but also to engage critically with them through a powerpoint presentation and relevant examples from contemporary cultural production.

Video work: (15%):

Creative group Video presentations to be shown in class that summarize key readings and thematic areas that focus on cultural production from one or several countries in the region.

Final essay: (45%)

The final paper for the class consists of a 12-15 page paper that addresses a particular theme or concept related to the readings and/or artworks discussed. Written assignments should include a creative title followed by your name, date, and course number and should be submitted in both hard copy and by email in word format. Pages should be double-spaced with 12-pt. font and one-inch margins. **Due Date: THURSDAY MAY 14, 2020.**

READINGS

1 WEEK 1- January 28,20

What does the term cultural resistance mean? What does it entail? Is cultural resistance an act of resistance or an expression of resistance? What are the possible outcomes of resistance as an act or resistance as an expression?

Readings:

Tuesday Seminar

Howard Zinn. "Artists in Times of War". 2003. Republished in *Comparative Literature and Culture Commons* Volume 9 Issue 1 (March 2007).
<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1033&context=clweb>

Mark Levine, "When Art Is the Weapon: Culture and Resistance Confronting Violence in the Post-Uprisings Arab" in *Religions* vol. 6 (2015) 1277-1313

Thursday Seminar

Sophie Devroe Richter and Rubal Salih (2014). "Cultures of Resistance in Palestine and Beyond: On the Politics of Art, Aesthetics and Affect" in *Arab Studies Journal* Vol. 22 Issue 1 (2014). P. 8-24

Harlow Barbara, "Resistance Literature Revisited: From Basra to Guantánamo" in *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*. Vol 32 (2012), pp. 10-29

2 WEEK 2-February 4, 6

Is there a relationship between culture and politics? How can we read politics through culture as both praxis and product? What is the role of artists and writers in times of social and political change? What tools and methods can we use to assess culture and its relationship to politics?

Tuesday Seminar

Readings:

Stephen Duncome ed. *The Cultural Resistance Reader*. (London: Verso Books, 2002). Read "Walter Benjamin. The Author as Producer".

Stephen Duncome ed. *The Cultural Resistance Reader*. (London: Verso Books, 2002). Read Antonio Gramsci. "The Prison Notebooks".

Adorno, Theodor, and Max Horkheimer. "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception." In *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 1-24. New York: Continuum, 1993. Accessed November 26, 2018. <http://faculty.georgetown.edu/irvinem/theory/Adorno-Horkheimer-Culture-Industry.pdf>.

Thursday Seminar

Fieldtrip

3.WEEK 3-February 11, 13

Pahwa, Sonali and Winegar, Jessica. "Culture the State and Revolution" in *Middle East Report*, No. 263, *The Art and Culture of the Arab Revolts* (Summer 2012), pp. 2-7

James C. Scott, *Weapons of the weak* in Stephen Duncome ed. *The Cultural Resistance Reader*. (London: Verso Books, 2002)

4. WEEK 4-February 18, 20

"Where there is Power there is Resistance", if this famous statement made by Michel Foucault is true then how does the resistance manifest itself and does the kind of resistance tell us anything about the kind of power at play? And is romanticizing resistance possible?

Tuesday Seminar

*Chalcraft, John. *Popular Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East*. (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2016). Introduction.

Thursday Seminar

Pickett, Brent L. "Foucault and the Politics of Resistance" in *Polity* Vol. 28, No. 4 (Summer, 1996), pp. 445-466

Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak" in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg's *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (1988)
http://abahlali.org/files/Can_the_subaltern_speak.pdf

5. WEEK 5-February 25, 27

How has resistance been manifested in the face of colonial violence and what means has anti-colonial struggle resorted to in order to counter this violence? Can this experience ever be represented?

Tuesday Seminar

Chalcraft, John. *Popular Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East*. (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2016). Chapter 3 National Independence, Guerilla War and Social Revolution. Pp. 312-319; 328-342; 365-385

Thursday Seminar

Stam, Robert "Franon, Algeria and the Cinema: The Politics of Identification" in Martin Jay and Sumathi Ramaswamy eds. *Empires of Vision: A Reader* (Duke University Press, 2014) pp. 503-538

Film: Battle of Algiers.

6. WEEK 6-March 3, 5

How are contemporary identities in the Middle East being formed? How do they negotiate between the local and the global? And how are global aesthetics and media in the context of neoliberal global economies providing the platform for people to resist the western frameworks used to represent them and frame them ?

Tuesday Seminar

[Gökariksel, Banu and McLarney, Ellen McLarney](#)
"Muslim Women, Consumer Capitalism, and the Islamic Culture Industry" in [Journal of Middle East Women's Studies](#). Vol. 6, No. 2 (Fall 2010)

[Kraidy, Marwan M. Youth, Media and Culture in the Arab World. Departmental Papers. Annenberg School of Communication.](#)
http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1312&context=asc_papers

Thursday Seminar

Slour Nemesis, “Deterritorialization of the image: Dissonances in the imagery of Arab identity?” In Dislocating Globality: Deterritorialization, Difference and Resistance Šarūnas Paunksnis (ed.) (2015)

https://books.google.com/books?id=AHDsCgAAQBAJ&pg=PA77&lpg=PA77&dq=Deterritorialization+of+the+image:+Dissonances+in+the+imagery+of+arab+identity?&source=bl&ots=UpPX5vIKq7&sig=f-HvRzqlggwveYwV3j88W9iiPk8&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiT w8XUsJ_SAhVBjFQKHXYRBnQQ6AEIJjAD#v=onepage&q=Deterritorialization%20of%20the%20image%3A%20Dissonances%20in%20the%20imagery%20of%20arab%20identity%3F&f=false

Recommended:

Herding, Maruta. *Inventing the Muslim Cool: Islamic Youth Culture in Western Europe*. (Transcript: Germany, 2014). Chapter 3.

https://www.academia.edu/5201470/Inventing_the_Muslim_Cool_Islamic_Youth_Culture_in_Western_Europe

Film. Caramel. Dir Nadine Labaki.

7. WEEK 7-March 10, 12

What does it mean to “decolonize” knowledge? What does decolonization in the contexts of cultural and educational institutions entail? Is it a form of political resistance or a political act?

Tuesday Seminar

Class Trip: Jewish Museum of Berlin to see the show “This Place”.

Thursday Seminar

“‘Decolonize This Place’: Realism and Humanism in Photography of Israel-Palestine,” in *“Disassembled” Images: Allan Sekula and Contemporary Art*, ed. Alexander Streitberger and Hilde Van Gelder (Leuven University Press, 2019)

Mirzoeff, N. (2017). Empty the museum, decolonize the curriculum, open theory. *Nordic Journal of Aesthetics*, 25(53), 6-22.

<https://icamiامي-org.storage.googleapis.com/2017/06/ef8570cc-mirzoeff-empty-the-museum-open-theory-decolonize-learning-.pdf>

8. WEEK 8-March 17,19

How and why does urban space contribute to public action and social movements? What is the relationship between power, space both virtual and real, and resistance? How do different groups utilize public space to mobilize and facilitate collective action? Which forces that shape space (physical and technological, as well as social, historical, political and economic) are combined to guide this action?

Readings

Tuesday Seminar

Chantal Mouffe. "Artistic Activism and Agonistic Spaces" in *Art and Research*. Volume 1. No. 2, Summer 2002.

Bayat, Asef. "Politics in the City-Inside-Out." *City and Society* 24, no. 2 (2012): 110–128.

Thursday Seminar

Art Project: This Sea is Mine. Dictaphone Group (2012)
<http://www.dictaphonegroup.com/work/the-sea-is-mine/>

Art Collective: Decolonizing Architecture

WATCH THE FILM THE SQUARE

9. Week 9- March 24, 26

What does music tell us about how societies resist hegemony? What languages, tools, methods and forms have historically been used to disrupt hegemonic sites of cultural production?

Tuesday Seminar

Thomas Burkhalter, Kay Dickinson, and Benjamin J. Harbert, eds., pp. 89–118. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University press (2013). Read chapter 4 "The people's Artist"

(http://www.magisterseniusu.com/uploads/1/8/0/0/1800340/_music_culture__thomas_burkhalter_kay_dickinson_benjamin_j._harbert-the_arab_avant-garde__music_politics_modernity-wesleyan__2013_.pdf)

Mark Levine, *Heavy Metal Islam* (2008). Introduction.

Thursday Seminar

Abu, Lughod Lila and Mikdashi, Maya "Tadition and the Anti-Politics Machine: DAM Seduced by the Honour Crime". *Jaddaliyya*. November 2012.
http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/8578/tradition-and-the-anti-politics-machine_dam-seduce

Nafaa, Tamer, Suheil Tamer and Mahmoud Jrerry. DAM Responds: On Tradition and the

Anti-Politics Machine. *Jaddaliya*. December 2012.
http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/9181/dam-responds_on-tradition-and-the-anti-politics-of?fb_comment_id=516811011685927_95254654#f3b385394c

WEEK 10- March 31, April 2

How may the histories of the global south become liberated through the archive? How have artists in the Middle East and other areas of the global south utilized and disrupted the function of the archive ?

Readings:

Tuesday Seminar

Godfrey, Mark. "The Artist as Historian." *October* 120 (Spring 2007): 140–72.

Mignolo, Walter D. "Enacting the Archive, Decentering the Muses" in *Ibraaz*.
<http://www.ibraaz.org/essays/77>.

Thursday Seminar

*Alam, Johnny, "Real Archive, Contested Memory: Transnational Representations of Lebanese Trauma" in Deen, Merzon and Prince (ed) in *History, Memory, Performance*

Class case study of the Art Exhibit: Past Disquiet Narratives and Ghosts from the International Art Exhibition for Palestine, 1978

SPRING BREAK

11.WEEK 11- April 14, 16

Can art in the hands of dominant powers become a means to capture or stigmatize or categorize individuals? In what ways can representations of the body reflect a sovereign subject or challenge the imposed limited sovereignty of the subject?

Swedenberg, Ted "Said Sultan: Danna International: Transgender Pop and the Polysemiotics of Sex, Nation, and Ethnicity on the Israeli-Egyptian Border" in Armbrust, Walter, *Mass Mediations: New Approaches to Popular Culture in the Middle East and Beyond*. Chapter 4

12. WEEK 12- April 21, 23

How is the body utilized in resistance? How has the State used the body as a site of oppression? Can we find in the Arab world, films, theater, dance or other artistic works, in which the body is shown and represented in all its 'power' and its complexity?

Kraidy, Marwan, "The Naked Blogger of Cairo: Creative Insurgency in the Arab World". (Harvard University Press, 2016). Chapter 1.

Hochberg. Gil Z. *Visual Occupations: Violence and Visibility in a Conflict Zone*. (Duke

Univeristy Press 2015). Chapter 3.

Class case studies: Film: A Magical Substance Flows Through Me, 2015, dir. Jumana Manaaa, Video Art: Sharif Waked, *Chic Point*

13. WEEK 13-April 28, 30

What role does transnational circulation and global capital play in consolidating and/or coopting transnational solidarities? How are the two intertwined?

Tuesday seminar

Demerdash, Nancy “Consuming Revolution: Ethics, Art and Ambivalence in the Arab Spring” in *New Middle East Studies*. 2 (2012), <<http://www.brismes.ac.uk/nmes/archives/970>>.

Peteet, Julie, (1996) “The Writing on the Walls: The Grafitti of the Intifada” in *Cultural Anthropology* 11(2):139-15

Thursday Seminar

Amal Egeiq (2018) Of Borders and Limits: Comparative Indigeneity in Mexico and Palestine in *Jadaliyya*. <https://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/37898>

14.WEEK 14- May 5, 7

How have artists and writers deconstructed and intervened in nationalist hegemonic discourses over the course of the twentieth and twentieth first centuries? How have representations of these forms of interventions shifted since independence?

Tuesday Seminar

Halabi, Zeina G. “The Literary Lives of Umm Kalthum, Cossery, Ghali, Nejm and the Critique of Nasserism”. *Middle Eastern Literatures*. Vol 19. No. 1:77-98.

El- Ariss, Tarek , 2010 . “Hacking the Modern: Arabic Writing in the Virtual Age.” *Comparative Literature Studies*, 47.4: 533-48.

Thursday Seminar

Toukan, Hanan, “Whatever Happened to Iltizam? Words in Arab Art after the Cold War” in Pannewick, Friederike and Georges Khalil (eds.). *Commitment and Beyond. Reflections on/of the Political in Arabic Literature since the 1940s*. (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag)