

Teaching Literature of the Greater Middle East

NCTE Panel Resource

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TEXTS TO GET YOU STARTED

"Literature from the Modern Middle East: Making a Living Connection" by Allen Webb

- Link: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/40503513?ref=no-x-route:401649fad36dd0300d8e7ad5bb1d17ab>
- Description: Webb and his students recommend contemporary Middle Eastern texts and other resources that will help American students learn more about the Middle East.

***Teaching the Literature of Today's Middle East* by Allen Webb and David Edward Alvarez**

- Description: This book introduces teachers to literature from the Middle East and presents a wide array of teachable texts, materials, and lessons.

***Middle Ground: Exploring Selected Literature from and About the Middle East* by Sheryl L. Finkle and Tamara J. Lilly**

- Description from NCTE: A book that “[r]eviews principles of cross-cultural pedagogy and offers both novice and experienced grade 6-12 teachers multiple activities for studying selected texts from and about the Middle East.” Available for purchase on the NCTE website.

DEFINING & UNDERSTANDING THE MIDDLE EAST

Readings

"An Introduction to Islam" by Susan Douglas

- Link: http://ccas.georgetown.edu/document/1242771122737/Intro_to_Islam.pdf
- Description: Thorough introduction to Islam from the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies at Georgetown University. *The Arab World in the Classroom* Teaching Module No. 7.

Orientalism by Edward Said

- Description from Wikipedia: “*Orientalism*... is a foundational text for the academic field of Post-colonial Studies. In it, Said analyzes the cultural representations that are the basis of Orientalism, a term he redefined to refer to the West's patronizing perceptions and depictions of Middle Eastern, Asian and North African societies—‘the East’.”
Recommended reading: Introduction, p.1-15 “historical circumstances” & p.20 “my principal”-28.
- Supplemental Video: *On Orientalism: An interview with Edward Said*
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwCOSkXR_Cw (This link is the first part of a four clip series.)
- Supplemental Article: “What is Orientalism?” <http://www.arabstereotypes.org/why-stereotypes/what-orientalism>

Reclaiming Identity: Dismantling Arab Stereotypes

- Website: <http://www.arabstereotypes.org/>
- Description: An “online exhibit [that] dismantles stereotypes by tracing their origins and impacts, while offering a more realistic portrait of Arab and Arab American identities.”
Storycorps Oral Histories from Arab-Americans available on the website:
<http://www.arabstereotypes.org/resources/storycorps>

"The Middle East as Seen Through Foreign Eyes" by John Woods and Alexander Barna

- Link: <http://teachmiddleeast.lib.uchicago.edu/historical-perspectives/middle-east-seen-through-foreign-eyes/>
- Description: Teaching module located on the Teaching the Middle East: A Resource for Educators website hosted by The Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago (<http://teachmiddleeast.lib.uchicago.edu/index.html>). This module encourages students to “[l]earn about America’s continued imagining and stereotyping of the Middle East in the context of the political machinations of the cold war and with advances in telecommunications, which changed the ways people observed and perceived the post-war world.”

“Writers Offer Alternate Lens On Modern Middle East” *NPR* Interview by Neal Conan with Reza Aslan, Firoozeh Dumas, and Asaf Gavron

- Link: <http://www.npr.org/2012/06/26/155777838/writers-offer-alternate-lens-on-modern-middle-east>
- Description: In this 2012 *NPR* interview, Neal Conan speaks with authors Reza Aslan, Firoozeh Dumas, and Asaf Gavron on the following topic: “while newscasts can tell us a

little bit about what's happening to states and movements, we learn about the people behind those headlines in stories and poems, in books by scholars and journalists and in the humor that skewers authority or humanizes people we might think of as strangers.”

Ideas for the Classroom

- Use the *NPR* interview “Writers Offer Alternate Lens On Modern Middle East” as a framing article for why it’s important to study Middle Eastern literature.
- Ask students to list out Middle Eastern stereotypes on the board. Then discuss those stereotypes. Where do those stereotypes come from? How do they affect us?
- Listen to Storycorps oral histories from Arab-Americans (<http://www.arabsstereotypes.org/resources/storycorps>) and discuss how these oral histories challenge stereotypes.
- Look at the website: <http://www.arabsstereotypes.org/why-stereotypes/what-orientalism>. Read the text and watch the several short clips on the page about Western perceptions of the Middle East. Then watch clip of *The Thief of Baghdad* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dT_YVxg6JRw). Discuss what this text and these film clips add to our understanding of Orientalism and the pitfalls of applying stereotypes to peoples who are unfamiliar to us.
- View and discuss the Youtube clip “Planet of the Arabs” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ml1ZNEjEarw>). Based on this clip, how does Hollywood represent Middle Eastern people? Who is the intended audience? What is the potential impact of such imagery in film?
- From “Teaching The Arabian Nights in Wisconsin A Resource Guide by Sofia Samatar” (http://humanities.wisc.edu/assets/misc/Arabian_Nights_Guide_for_Educators.pdf): Listen to the old and new versions of the song “Arabian Nights” from Disney’s *Aladdin*. (Old version: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hPUAhSGZtvU>. Revised version: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VqElJnsUvtE>). Discuss the lyrics and the impact of those lyrics. Who is the intended audience? How do the lyrics, and the film as a whole, impact audience perception of the Middle East?
- While reading Said’s excerpt from *Orientalism*, take notes on Said's comments about the following: Orient vs. Occident, The Oriental / Orientalist Fantasies, Orientalism, Expression vs. Representation, Interested vs. Disinterested Scholarship, and Pure Knowledge vs. Political Knowledge.

CLASSICAL MIDDLE EASTERN LITERATURE

Gilgamesh

Gilgamesh translated by Stephen Mitchell (Epic Poem)

The epic of Gilgamesh is an ancient Mesopotamian epic poem that traces the story of Gilgamesh and Enkidu. From Amazon: “Gilgamesh is considered one of the masterpieces of world literature... Acclaimed by critics and scholars, Stephen Mitchell's version allows us to enter an ancient masterpiece as if for the first time, to see how startlingly beautiful, intelligent, and alive it is.”

Teaching Resources:

- *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (video, 30 mins)
 - Link: <http://www.learner.org/courses/worldlit/gilgamesh/watch/>
 - Description: “This video introduces the earliest work of literature—*The Epic of Gilgamesh*,” and examines “how this ancient story still inspires readers and artists today, and how its themes of power and leadership, and friendship still resonate.”
- “The Epic of Gilgamesh: An Animation” (video, 11 mins)
 - Link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qOrfrHys8g8>
 - Description: Entertaining animated short film about the story of *Gilgamesh*. The narrative doesn’t fully line up with Stephen Mitchell’s text.
- “Stephen Mitchell on Gilgamesh”
 - Link: <http://www.strippedbooks.com/comics/stripped03/gilgamesh01.html>
 - Description: Informative comic illustrated by Gordon McAlpin about a talk Stephen Mitchell gave about his translation of *Gilgamesh* on November 15, 2004 at the Michigan Ave. Borders.

Ideas for the Classroom:

- Focus topics for discussion: gender roles, friendship, purpose of life / quest for eternal life, Mesopotamian society attitudes towards nature & environmentalism, role of Gods, use & abuse of power, and the great flood.
- After reading Utnapishtim’s flood narrative in Book 11, watch “The Epic of Gilgamesh and the Great Flood” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CmJEAw6LUxk>), and have students compare and contrast the flood narrative in *Gilgamesh* to flood narratives in the Bible (Genesis 6), the Torah (Genesis 6), and the Qur’an (Surah 11). Have students explore the potential implications of Noah’s flood narrative appearing in *Gilgamesh*.
- After reading books 10-11, have students journal: “What is the purpose of life? Reflect on your own personal response to this question and the response(s) provided in *Gilgamesh*.” Discuss answers.
- Just for fun: entertain students with “The Mesopotamians” by They Might Be Giants (music video, 3:05 mins): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jAMRTGv82Zo>

Classical Arabic Poetry

Nights & Horses & The Desert: An Anthology of Classical Arabic Literature by Robert Irwin
From Library Journal: This “anthology presents a wide range of classical Arabic poetry and prose, covering the fifth to the 16th centuries from Afghanistan to Andalusia, Spain, in a single volume.”

Teaching Resource:

- Princeton Online Arabic Poetry Project
 - Website: <http://www.princeton.edu/~arabic/poetry/>
 - Description: Poems in Arabic (with audio) and English by Imru'l-Qays Yazid, Rabi'a al-'Adawiyya, Abu Nuwas, and al-Mutanabbi.

Idea for the Classroom:

- Read selections from Chapter 1 “Pagan Poets” and cover the following terms: jahiliyya, sh'ir, qasida, ritha, ghazal, khamriyya.

The Qur'an

Nights & Horses & The Desert: An Anthology of Classical Arabic Literature by Robert Irwin

Teaching Resources:

- "An Introduction to Islam" by Susan Douglas (Primer):
 - Link: http://ccas.georgetown.edu/document/1242771122737/Intro_to_Islam.pdf
- *Islam: Empire of Faith* PBS film
- “Qur'an: Sacred Scripture of Islam” (PBS Lesson)
 - Website: <http://www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/islam08.socst.world.glob.lpquran/quran-sacred-scripture-of-islam/>
 - Description: “In this lesson, students learn about the Qur'an and its rich history of promoting learning and providing Muslims with guidance in their lives.”
- Resources for the study of the Qur'an
 - Website: <http://www.unc.edu/~cernst/quranstudy.htm>
 - Description: Resources gathered by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Ideas for the Classroom:

- Read and discuss Chapter 2 “The Qur'an” (pages 30-33 & 40-41) of *Nights & Horses & The Desert: An Anthology of Classical Arabic Literature*
- Complete Qur'an translation comparative analysis activity designed by Michelle Ramadan for City Lore's *A Reverence for Words*:
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1i0ieZ8rPA9WwdpaTf0O28JEiSZvpNbb4QtijDVfFheA/edit?usp=sharing>

Poetry of Rumi and Hafez

The Rumi Collection edited by Kabir Helminski

Translations of Rumi's poetry. Translators include Coleman Barks, Robert Bly, Andrew Harvey, Kabir Helminski, Camille Helminski, Daniel Liebert, and Peter Lamborn Wilson.

The Essential Rumi by Rumi and translated by Coleman Barks

Coleman Barks's renderings of Rumi poems.

The Gift by Hafez and translated by Daniel Ladinsky

Daniel Ladinsky's renderings of Hafez poems.

Teaching Resources:

- "Jalal al-Din Rumi" (short biography)
 - Link: <http://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/jalal-al-din-rumi>
- "Hafez" (short biography)
 - Link: <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/hafez>
- "Poet Robert Bly on The Great Persian Poets: Hafez and Rumi" (video, 27 mins)
 - Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e9by9LB-tqY>
 - Description: Interview by Bill Moyers with poet Robert Bly about Hafez and Rumi.

Ideas for the Classroom:

- Read and discuss selected poems by Rumi and Hafez. Recommendations:
 - Rumi: "Everyone is Dying"; "Ask the Rose about the Rose"; "Intelligence and Tears"; "Sifter of Dust"; "The Name" in *The Rumi Collection*.
 - Hafez: "I have learned so much"; "It happens all the time in heaven"; "Stop Being So Religious"; "The Only Sin I know"; "Not loving is a letting go" (all searchable online).
- Students can pick a poem from either Rumi or Hafez and complete an explication of that poem. In their response, students should explore and unpack the ideas in the poem as well as the language, structure, etc.

Ottoman Lyric Poetry

Süleyman the Magnificent Poet: The Sultan's Selected Poems translated by Talat S. Halman

Recommended poems by Danita Dodson: "My very own queen," "I am the Sultan of Love," "Till the day I die," "The sparkle of my sighs," and "Out of the cup of love we drink wine."

Ottoman Lyric Poetry: An Anthology edited by Walter Andrews, Najaat Black, and Mehmet Kalpaklı

Recommended poems: Hayreti's "We are not the slaves of Süleyman," Mihri Hatun's "My heart burns in flames of sorrow," Zati's "Oh heavens, why do you cry," Fuzuli's "If my heart were a wild bird," "The Story of Leyla and Mejnun," Bâkî's "Your rebellious

glance,” Nabi's “When we watch the spinning of the sky,” Sheyh Galib’s “You are my effendi.”

Teaching Resources:

- Danita Dodson’s “Ottoman Lyric Poetry: Teach Turkey Lesson”
 - Link:
<http://cmes.arizona.edu/sites/cmes.arizona.edu/files/Ottoman%20Lyric%20Poetry.pdf>
 - Description: “This unit exposes students to [Ottoman lyric poetry], involving them in the examination of selected aspects of Turkish culture and history. Understanding both that students have varied learning styles and that literary imagery is multi-sensory, this unit is interdisciplinary, integrating Ottoman literature with art, music, and history.”
- Discover the Ottomans
 - Website: <http://www.theottomans.org/english/index.asp>
 - Description: The website “aims to become the leading information portal regarding the history, military, culture and arts of the Ottoman Empire that has once dominated a large territory from Egypt to Russia, from India to Austria.”
- “Suleiman the Magnificent” (video, 7:43 mins):
 - Link:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RdWZvq4yvLU&index=5&list=PL09U128MbAED4kKCKVlyjTFu4cV22Qxat>

Ideas for the Classroom:

- Examine the Ottoman lyric poetry and identify its recurring imagery. Is there an equivalent in Western literature? Have students share what they perceive to be the clichés of Western literature.
- Discuss the elements and style of the Ottoman Lyric.
- See Danita Dodson’s thorough lesson plan for activities and ideas.

The 1001 Nights / The Arabian Nights

The Arabian Nights edited by Muhsin Mahdi and translated by Husain Haddawy

From Amazon: “Collected over the centuries from India, Persia, and Arabia, and ranging from adventure fantasies, vivacious erotica, and animal fables, to pointed Sufi tales, these stories provided the daily entertainment of the medieval Islamic world at the height of its glory.” Recommended stories: "The Story of King Shahrayar and Shahrazad, the Vizier's Daughter," "The Tale of the Ox and the Donkey," & "The Tale of the Merchant and his Wife."

Teaching Resources:

- Overview of *The Arabian Nights* PowerPoint
 - Link:
<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/159QoaNh9M9wjk6TkwLRUhdkdjZp-1gG7RaSsoj3uczY/edit?usp=sharing>
- For ideas for the classroom, see: “Teaching The Arabian Nights in Wisconsin A Resource Guide” by Sofia Samatar

- Link:
http://humanities.wisc.edu/assets/misc/Arabian_Nights_Guide_for_Educators.pdf
- Description: The “lesson plans and activities provided in this guide are designed to allow [teachers] the opportunity to tailor the way [they] teach [*The Arabian Nights*] to [their] own course[s], interests, and goals...Each section includes project ideas, study/discussion questions, and...recommendations for material and concepts to be covered in lecture.” Recommended web resources, teaching materials and study guides:
http://humanities.wisc.edu/assets/misc/The_Arabian_Nights_Online.pdf
- *The Thousand and One Nights* (video, 30 mins):
 - Link: <http://www.learner.org/courses/worldlit/the-thousand-and-one-nights/>
 - Description: “This video introduces the world of high Islamic culture, lowbrow comedy, and encounters with the spirit world, all through the stories of the brave Shahrazad, who saves her own life, her husband's sanity, the kingdom, and all of her readers from the evils of life with her stories.”

AFGHANISTAN

Readings

A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini (Fiction)

Hosseini's second novel again set in the dramatic recent history of Afghanistan, explores life in this war-torn country from the perspective of several women whose lives intersect in dramatic, tragic and ultimately redemptive situations. Hosseini explores themes of the role of women, social class, the family in war and the price of conflict in a struggling country in this carefully crafted and fast-paced novel.

The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini (Fiction)

This novel, which follows two boys from different socioeconomic classes through the challenging recent fifty years is an in-depth look at Afghan society as well as a gripping and sometimes very touching good read.

The Pearl That Broke Its Shell by Nadia Hashimi (Fiction)

From a review by Shilpi Somaya Gowda: "A fascinating look at the unspoken lives of Afghan women, separated by generations and miles, yet achingly similar. This is a story to transport you and make you think."

The Places in Between by Rory Stewart (Non-fiction)

This is the fascinating story of a walk across Afghanistan by a retired British Foreign Service officer, Rory Stewart. From Amazon: "In January 2002 Rory Stewart walked across Afghanistan-surviving by his wits, his knowledge of Persian dialects and Muslim customs, and the kindness of strangers. By day he passed through mountains covered in nine feet of snow, hamlets burned and emptied by the Taliban, and communities thriving amid the remains of medieval civilizations. By night he slept on villagers' floors, shared their meals, and listened to their stories of the recent and ancient past.

Films

Osama by Siddiq Barmak. 2003.

From *Wikipedia*: The film follows a pre-teen girl living in Afghanistan under the Taliban regime who disguises herself as a boy, Osama, to support her family.

Kandahar by Mohsen Makhmalbaf. 2001

From *IMDb*: After an Afghanistan-born woman who lives in Canada receives a letter from her suicidal sister, she takes a perilous journey through Afghanistan to try to find her.

Teaching Resources

- Homeland Afghanistan
 - Website: <http://afghanistan.asiasociety.org/>
 - Description: This interactive site explores the geopolitical and cultural heritage of Afghanistan through a humanities perspective. Includes videos.
- *New York Times* "Afghanistan"

- Website: <http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/afghanistan/index.html>
- Description: Basic information about Afghanistan.
- NPR “Restoring Poetry to Afghanistan”
 - Link: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4464341>
 - Description: NPR piece about poetry in Afghanistan.

Ideas for the Classroom

- Have students watch the first half hour of the film *Osama* and identify the cinematic techniques that are so effective in conveying the message of the story. Have them do a writing exercise in which they try to describe in words the background and action in one scene of the film. After some students have shared their words, discuss the essential differences between film and literature in telling the story of a people.
- After students read *A Thousand Splendid Suns* have them write journal entries for different characters and then discuss the completeness or one-dimensionality of the characters as drawn by Hosseini.
- Assign several students to research recent history and current events in Afghanistan, and have them present them in class. Have students connect the events of the novel with the recent history, and then discuss what knowing the historical realities adds to the novel.
- Assign students to see what they can find out about the writer Khaled Hosseini and discuss how he came to write his novels and what he says in interviews about the tremendous response of the world to his works. What is his vision of Afghanistan’s future? How does his telling several stories about Afghanistan play into his vision?

IRAN

Readings

Funny in Farsi: A Memoir of Growing Up Iranian in America by Firoozeh Dumas (Memoir)
Dumas chronicles her and her family's experiences living in the US before and after the Iran hostage crisis. Her chapters are accessible and humorous.

Iran Awakening: A Memoir of Revolution and Hope by Shirin Ebadi (Non-fiction)
From Amazon: "The moving, inspiring memoir of one of the great women of our times, Shirin Ebadi, winner of the 2003 Nobel Peace Prize and advocate for the oppressed, whose spirit has remained strong in the face of political persecution and despite the challenges she has faced raising a family while pursuing her work."

Journey from the Land of No by Roya Hakakian (Non-fiction)
An account of the travails of a Iranian Jewish family during and after the Iranian Revolution, this beautifully descriptive coming of age memoir provides both an affectionate and a critical look at family life as it is affected by turbulent events outside the family home.

Persepolis by Marjane Satrapi (Graphic Novel/Non-Fiction)
From Amazon: "Wise, funny, and heartbreaking, *Persepolis* is Marjane Satrapi's memoir of growing up in Iran during the Islamic Revolution. In powerful black-and-white comic strip images, Satrapi tells the story of her life in Tehran from ages six to fourteen, years that saw the overthrow of the Shah's regime, the triumph of the Islamic Revolution, and the devastating effects of war with Iraq...Marjane bears witness to a childhood uniquely entwined with the history of her country."

Reading Lolita in Tehran by Azar Nafisi (Non-fiction)
A memoir by an American educated Iranian woman who returns to her country after the Iranian Revolution to teach literature in Tehran University, this is an examination of the importance of literature, a poignant comment on the difficulty of change and a personal account of the difficulty of returning home to a dramatically changed reality.

Rooftops of Tehran by Mahbod Seraji (Fiction)
From Amazon: "In this poignant, eye-opening and emotionally vivid novel, Mahbod Seraji lays bare the beauty and brutality of the centuries-old Persian culture, while reaffirming the human experiences we all share. In a middle-class neighborhood of Iran's sprawling capital city, 17-year-old Pasha Shahed spends the summer of 1973 on his rooftop with his best friend Ahmed, joking around one minute and asking burning questions about life the next..."

Women without Men: A Novel of Modern Iran by Shahrnush Parsipur (Fiction)
From Amazon: "*Women Without Men* creates an evocative and powerfully drawn allegory of life in contemporary Iran...Parsipur follows the interwoven destinies of five women—including a prostitute, a wealthy middle-aged housewife, and a schoolteacher—as they arrive by different paths to live together in a garden in Tehran."

Zahra's Paradise by Amir and Khalil (Graphic Novel)

From Amazon: "Set in the aftermath of Iran's fraudulent elections of 2009, *Zahra's Paradise* is the fictional story of the search for Mehdi, a young protester who has vanished into an extrajudicial twilight zone. What's keeping his memory from being obliterated is not the law. It is the grit and guts of his mother, who refuses to surrender her son to fate, and the tenacity of his brother, a blogger, who fuses tradition and technology to explore and explode the void in which Mehdi has vanished. *Zahra's Paradise* weaves together fiction and real people and events."

Poetry

Parvin E'Tesami: "A Woman's Place" & "Iranian Women"

Published in *Tablet & Pen: Literary Landscapes from the Modern Middle East* edited by Reza Aslan.

Films

Blackboards by Samira Makhmalbaf. 2000.

From IMDb: "Itinerant Kurdish teachers, carrying blackboards on their backs, look for students in the hills and villages of Iran, near the Iraqi border during the Iran-Iraq war....Danger is close; armed soldiers patrol the skies, the roads, and the border. Is there a role for a teacher? Is there hope?"

Children of Heaven by Majid Majidi. 1997.

This is a gentle and beautiful film about family life and specifically the lives of children in Iran of the 1990's. It combines sensitive social commentary and perceptive attention to detail.

Persepolis by Marjane Satrapi. 2007.

From Portland State University's Middle East Teaching Tools: "This animated true story includes both the author's graphic novels in the *Persepolis* series. It tells of the author's youth in Iran just before and during the revolution, her struggle to adapt to life in Vienna when her parents send her to study abroad during the Iran-Iraq War, and her return to Iran as a young adult."

The Color of Paradise by Majid Majidi. 1999.

This film, set mostly in rural Iran, explores the issue of physical handicaps, societal expectations and family pressures. It is a revealing and positive look at the strength of children in dealing with challenges in their lives, at the same time as it explores village life in modern Iran.

Teaching Resources

- *The New Yorker* "Voice of the Veil"
 - Link: <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2007/10/22/voice-of-the-veil>
 - Description: an article about an Iranian artist and work she has done focussing on the lives of Iranian women

- *The New York Times* “Designer’s Rainbow Brightens Iranian Women’s Look”
 - Link: http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/02/world/middleeast/02designer.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0
 - Description: an article about fashion in Iran “within the religious authorities strictly enforced boundaries of propriety”
- “The History of Female Storywriters” by Hassan Mirabedini
 - Link: http://www.iranchamber.com/literature/articles/history_female_storywriters.php
 - Description: a look at prominent Persian writers since 1931
- *The Guardian* “Kamin Mohammadi’s top 10 Iranian books”
 - Link: <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2011/jul/20/kamin-mohammadi-top-10-iranian-books>
 - Description: A list compiling top ten Iranian works

Ideas for the Classroom

- Grades 9-12 lesson plan: “Pictures Tell the Story: Improving Comprehension with Persepolis”
 - Link: <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/pictures-tell-story-improving-1102.html>
- As the class is reading *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, assign individual students to read parts of the novels the Tehran class is reading and discussing. These students will be responsible for sharing their expertise on the works cited and enriching the class understanding of what it means for the young women to be reading these seminal works.
- Have students read chapters 1-5 of *Reading Lolita in Tehran* and discuss the work as memoir, the enthusiasm the students bring to their study of literature, the picture we get of modern Iranian society and the importance of stories in their lives.
- Have students watch the two films, *Children of Heaven* and *The Color of Paradise*, about childhood in Iran and write a paper comparing and contrasting the filmmakers’ views of life in the Islamic Republic.
- In order to get Dumas’s stories in *Funny in Farsi* to further resonate with students, after reading certain *Funny in Farsi* chapters, have students journal. See journal prompts inspired by *Funny in Farsi* here: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1YTDHx8WvQak5LHqxyVgoBZ2s-nJ7ag3klbvM2AjRtTE/edit?usp=sharing>
- Show clips of comedian Maz Jobrani.

IRAQ

Readings

9 Parts of Desire by Heather Raffo (Play)

From Amazon: “rich monologues [that] bring to life nine distinct Iraqi women whose very different stories convey the complex and harrowing reality of being female in modern-day Iraq.”

I'jaam: An Iraqi Rhapsody by Sinan Antoon (Fiction)

Set in Baghdad during the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988), the novel traces the experience of Furat, a male student who, to quote Sinan Antoon, “happens to be against dictatorship and oppression, like most young people were in Iraq at the time” (<http://electronicintifada.net/content/sinan-antoon-i-think-myself-global-citizen/8760>). From *Poets and Writers Magazine*: “In less than a hundred pages, Antoon provides a moving portrait of life in Saddam's Iraq.” Contains mature content.

Pride of Baghdad by Brian K. Vaughan and Niko Henrichon (Graphic Novel)

From Harvard’s Center for Middle East Studies: “Inspired by true events, *Pride of Baghdad* follows the story of four lions that escape from the Baghdad Zoo during a bombing raid in 2003. Humans are absent and dialogue is voiced entirely by non-human characters populating the war-torn city. A highly allegorical narrative about life following military intervention in Iraq, their travels through this unfamiliar landscape focus on themes of captivity, freedom, and security.”

Films

Turtles Can Fly by Bahman Ghobadi. 2004.

From IMDb: “Near the Iraqi-Turkish border on the eve of an American invasion, refugee children like 13-year-old Kak (Ebrahim), gauge and await their fate.”

Teaching Resources

- *A Global Controversy: The U.S. Invasion of Iraq* by The Choices Program at Brown University
 - Link: <http://www.choices.edu/resources/detail.php?id=200>
 - Description: “*A Global Controversy: The U.S. Invasion of Iraq* provides an overview of Iraqi history and draws students into the public debate over the U.S. government's decision to invade Iraq in 2003. Students assess the war's effects on the United States, Iraq, and beyond, and consider the public's role in foreign policy decisions.”

Ideas for the Classroom

- Prior to reading *I'jaam*, have students read excerpt from Dina Omar’s interview with Sinan Antoon for *The Electronic Intifada* on 7 April 2010. Not everything in the interview is relevant to *I'jaam*.
 - Link: <http://electronicintifada.net/content/sinan-antoon-i-think-myself-global-citizen/8760>

- Potential topics for discussion while reading *I'jaam*: the role of prison literature in the Arab literary scene ; the Iraqi man's experience & psyche ; how the political landscape of Iraq (regime, war, etc.) affects Iraqi men's lives ; how men in the middle of war live their lives ; the world of *I'jaam* vs. *1984* by George Orwell ; views on censorship ; the role of language and writing ; perceptions of Saddam Hussein (The Father-Leader) ; the role of the women in the book ; lack of control in the face of authority / resistance to authority ; Iraqi prison experience and torture ; memory (style of writing reflects memory) ; the ending of Furat's writing--real or imagined? ; sense of Iraq in *I'jaam* compared to the Iraq seen on TV, films, online and in print news.
- Prior to reading *Pride of Baghdad*, review some of the history of USA's involvement in Iraq. Read the BBC article "US Troops Kill Baghdad Lions" (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/2966107.stm) after which the graphic novel was based. While reading *Pride of Baghdad*, discuss how the text is an allegorical narrative about life following military intervention in Iraq and explore the themes of captivity, freedom, and security. Also, ponder the following questions raised by Amazon's book review of the graphic novel: "*Pride of Baghdad* raises questions about the true meaning of liberation--can it be given, or is it earned only through self-determination and sacrifice? And in the end, is it truly better to die free than to live in captivity?"
- Prior to reading *9 Parts of Desire*, have students do research and report back on the lives of Iraq women before, during, and after Saddam Hussein's regime.
- Discussion questions for *9 Parts of Desire* by Michelle Ramadan and Arlynn Polletta: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ocrwMbewHQQgzLUAQ6ynwbwnw5WteUS4YygJbA9reqq4/edit?usp=sharing>
- Write a monologue to the style of Raffo's *9 Parts of Desire*.

ISRAEL & PALESTINE

Israel Readings

Dancing Arabs by Sayed Kashua (Fiction)

From *Publishers Weekly*: “Kashua resists stereotype in this slyly subversive, semi-autobiographical account of Arab Israeli life, telling the story of a Palestinian boy who wins a prestigious scholarship to a Jewish high school, but slips into listless malaise as an adult, despising himself, scorning his fellow Arabs and resenting the Israelis.”

“Facing the Forest” by A.B. Yehoshua (Short Story)

How to Understand Israel in 60 Days or Less by Sarah Glidden (Graphic Novel/ Non-Fiction)

From *School Library Journal*: “Glidden travels to Israel on a program that offers Jewish young adults first-time trips to the country. She details her two-month excursion through cities and deserts, seeking to view Israel with an objective eye.”

In the Land of Israel by Amos Oz (Non-fiction)

A collection of political essays. From *The New York Times*: “An exemplary instance of a writer using his craft to come to grips with what is happening politically and to illuminate certain aspects of Israeli society that have generally been concealed by polemical formulas.”

“Means of Suppressing Demonstrations” by Shani Boianjiu (Short Story)

Link: <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/06/25/means-of-suppressing-demonstrations>

Missing Kissinger by Etgar Keret (Short Stories)

A collection of short stories.

The Bus Driver Who Wanted to Be God & Other Stories by Etgar Keret (Short Stories)

A collection of short stories. Recommended story: “Shoes” (A Jewish Israeli boy on remembering the Holocaust) and “Cocked and Locked” (A heated confrontation between a Palestinian fighter and an Israeli soldier—contains explicit language).

“Until the Entire Guard Has Passed” by Lea Aini (Short Story)

Published in *Nothing Makes You Free: Writings by Descendants of Jewish Holocaust Survivors* edited by Melvin Jules. Also located at:

http://www.pascack.k12.nj.us/cms/lib5/NJ01000238/Centricity/Domain/111/Holocaust_Until_the_Guard_has_passed_.pdf

“Just a Peace” by Amos Oz (Non-fiction)

Published in *In the Land of Israel*. About the book from Amazon: “Notebook in hand, Amos Oz traveled throughout Israel and the West Bank in the early 1980s to talk with workers, soldiers, religious zealots, aging pioneers, new immigrants, desperate Arabs, and visionaries, asking them questions about Israel’s past, present, and future. What he heard is set down here in those distinctive voices, alongside Oz’s observations and

reflections. A classic insider's view of a land whose complex past and troubled present make for an uncertain future." "Just a Peace" is available in its entirety for preview on Google Books: http://books.google.com/books?id=ylyyiug-z74C&pg=PT90&source=gb_s_toc_r&cad=4#v=onepage&q&f=false
Additional resource: *New Yorker* profile on Amos Oz:
<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2004/11/08/the-spirit-level>.

"The Prisoner" by S. Yizhar (Short Story)

Published in *Sleepwalkers and Other Stories: The Arab in Hebrew Fiction* edited by Ehud Ben-'Ezer. Also located at:
<http://www2.trincoll.edu/~kiener/YizharThePrisoner.pdf>

Palestine Readings

Footnotes in Gaza by Joe Sacco (Graphic Novel/Non-Fiction)

From Amazon: "Rafah is today and has always been a notorious flashpoint in this bitterest of conflicts. Buried deep in the archives is one bloody incident in 1956 that left 111 Palestinians dead, shot by Israeli soldiers...In a quest to get to the heart of what happened, Joe Sacco immerses himself in daily life of Rafah and the neighboring town of Khan Younis, uncovering Gaza past and present."

Men in the Sun and Other Palestinian Stories by Ghassan Kanafani (Short Stories)

Recommended stories: "Men in the Sun" and "Land of Sad Oranges." About "Men in the Sun" from a customer review on Amazon: "Kanafani weaves memory with an intense meta-narrative in "Men In the Sun", through three primary characters that reflect the vulnerability, hardship, and loss of Palestinian refugees. Set in 1958, these characters, a young boy of sixteen, a resistance fighter in his twenties, and an old peasant, all dream of leaving behind their painful past and finding new hope in Kuwait. Their destinies collide when they meet a smuggler who promises a safe journey across the border to a new, happier life. Although his greedy attitude and method of transportation frightens the lot, desperation places the three men in his care."

Palestine by Joe Sacco (Graphic Novel/Non-Fiction)

From Wikipedia: "*Palestine* is a graphic novel written and drawn by Joe Sacco about his experiences in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in December 1991 and January 1992. Sacco gives a portrayal which emphasizes the history and plight of the Palestinian people, as a group and as individuals." Recommended chapters: "Black Coffee," "Return," "Remind Me," "Refugeeland," "Sons of Curfew," "The Bucket," "Through Other Eyes," "Tel Aviv," "A Boy in the Rain."

Palestine's Children: Returning to Haifa and Other Stories by Ghassan Kanafani (Short Stories)

Recommended stories: "Paper from Ramleh" and "Returning to Haifa." About "Returning to Haifa" from *Book Dragon*: "Almost 20 years since Said and Safiyya were driven out of Haifa, they now return and find Miriam, a widowed Jew, living in their home. When the Palestinian couple fled amidst violent confusion, they somehow left their infant son Khaldun behind. Returning to their Haifa home for the first time, Said and Safiyya hope for news of their lost son. Miriam has been waiting for almost two

decades, dreading the future of her adopted son Dov ... The Solomon-like confrontation between the two sets of parents and the one son that they share by blood and by nurture is a paralyzing situation that will chill every parent, any child."

Wild Thorns by Sahar Khalifeh (Fiction)

From the hardcover edition: "Wild Thorns is a chronicle of life in the Israeli-occupied West Bank" in the early 1970s.

Poetry

- Nathan Alterman: "The Killers of the Fields" & "On the High Road" (Israel)
 - "The Killers of the Fields":
<http://www.poetryinternationalweb.net/pi/site/poem/item/3439/auto/The-Killers-of-the-Fields>
 - "On the High Road":
<http://www.poetryinternationalweb.net/pi/site/poem/item/3437>
- Yehuda Amichai: "Temporary Poem of My Time," "Love of the Land," "My Child is Fragrant with Peace," "If I Forget Thee Jerusalem," & "A Meeting with My Father" (Israel)
 - About Yehuda Amichai: <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/yehuda-amichai>
 - "Temporary Poem of My Time": <http://www.poemhunter.com/best-poems/yehuda-amichai/temporary-poem-of-my-time/>
 - "Love of the Land" and other poems:
<http://cms.education.gov.il/NR/rdonlyres/4A95A475-6ACF-490B-8DD7-C9DFB8FE2B01/75461/aYehudaAmichaipoetry.doc>
 - "My Child is Fragrant with Peace":
<http://www.cortlandreview.com/features/13/summer/bloch.php>
 - "If I Forget Thee, Jerusalem": <http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/if-i-forget-thee-jerusalem/>
 - "A Meeting with My Father":
<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/browse/138/3#!/20594247>
- Rachel Bluwstein: "To My Land" (Israel)
 - Link: <http://www.pij.org/details.php?id=536>
- Yitzhak Laor: "Shut Door" (Israel)
 - Link: <http://www.tabletmag.com/news-and-politics/75625/war-poet/print/>
- Agi Mishol: "Woman Martyr" (Israel)
 - Link: <http://www.poetryinternationalweb.net/pi/site/poem/item/3291/auto/WOMAN-MARTYR>
 - Video interview on PBS NewsHour with Agi Mishol & Agi Mishol reading "Woman Martyr" (from 0:00-3:48):
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/entertainment-jan-june07-poetry_03-21/
- Aharon Shabtai: "As We Were Marching" & "Lotem Abdel Shafi" (Israel)
 - About Aharon Shabtai: <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/aharon-shabtai>
 - "As We Were Marching": http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/entertainment-jan-june07-poetry_03-21/
 - Video interview on PBS NewsHour with Aharon Shabtai & Aharon Shabtai reading "As We Were Marching" (from 7:35-11:13):

- ## Films

From IMDb: “Ajami is the religiously mixed community of Muslims and Christians in Tel Aviv. These are five stories about the everyday life in Ajami.”

An Israeli sitcom television series exploring the Arab-Israeli experience.

This film follows the recruitment of two suicide bombers in Tel Aviv.

Teaching Resources

- One Voice Movement
 - Link: <http://www.onevoicemovement.org/>
 - Description: “OneVoice is an international grassroots movement that amplifies the voice of mainstream Israelis and Palestinians, empowering them to propel their elected representatives toward the two-state solution.” The One Voice Movement hosts annual tours which involve a Palestinian youth and an Israeli youth engaging in dialogue at various institutions in the U.S.
- “Background to the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict” by the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Arizona:
 - Link: http://cmes.arizona.edu/sites/cmes.arizona.edu/files/High%20School%20English%20-%20-%20Background%20to%20the%20conflict_0.pdf
 - Description: A concise yet thorough 2 page overview of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.
- “Palestinian-Israeli Conflict: A Primer” by The Middle East Research and Information Project:
 - Link: <http://www.merip.org/primer-palestine-israel-arab-israeli-conflict-new#TheOccupiedTerritories>
 - PDF: [http://www.merip.org/sites/default/files/Primer_on_Palestine-Israel\(MERIP_February2014\)final.pdf](http://www.merip.org/sites/default/files/Primer_on_Palestine-Israel(MERIP_February2014)final.pdf)
 - Description: 16 page overview of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.
- “Simulation on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict” by the United States Institute of Peace:
 - Link: http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/israeli_conflict.pdf
 - Description: “This simulation focuses on a U.S.-led effort to bring together many elements of both Israeli and Palestinian society to hold discussions about the needs and interests of both sides before entering into formal negotiations.” This great role-playing activity “provides an opportunity to view this longstanding conflict from the perspectives of those immediately impacted by it: in particular, the communities of ordinary Israelis and Palestinians who have yet to see much benefit in their own lives from the peace process.” Though a bit dated, this simulation can be modified to reflect the issues of the current conflict. Some roles still apply today.
- *Al Nakba* by AlJazeera
 - Link: <http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/specialseries/2013/05/20135612348774619.html>
 - Description: A series produced by AlJazeera on “the Palestinian 'catastrophe' of 1948 that led to dispossession and conflict that still endures” in the region. A resource for teachers looking to learn more about the history of the events of 1948 from a Palestinian perspective.
- “Hebrew Literature: An Introduction” by the University of Arizona:
 - Link: <http://www.u.arizona.edu/~talattof/women-lit/hebrewarticles/hebrewliterature.htm>
- BBC News “Israel Profile”:
 - Link: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14628835>
- “Israel’s Poetry Reflects Story of a Nation” by PBS NewsHour (video, 11:12 mins):
 - Link: http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/entertainment-jan-june07-poetry_03-21/

- “For Palestinians, Identity Is Regained Through Poetry” by PBS NewsHour (video, 12:33 mins)
 - Link: http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/entertainment-jan-june07-poetry_03-22/

Ideas for the Classroom

- See a breakdown of Michelle Ramadan’s Palestinian & Israeli Literature units here: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZFVhTLsAN6dcxqHv-phe-brkgO6hdg6OMOzbvW8PzDY/edit?usp=sharing>
- Invite speakers from Palestine and Israel to your classroom.
- Play “Oh this World” (video, 6:14 mins), a song sung by Palestinian kids. The video features Palestinian kids in non-warlike situations playing music, taking photos, flying kites, etc. Discuss the impact of the music video on students.
 - Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QDZ_Dm6yyhA
 - For more information about the music program (operating in Palestinian refugee camps and villages), visit: <http://www.alkamandjati.com/en/actions/palestine/>
- From Kaye Peters at the American Embassy School, New Delhi: Darwish is challenging and he is obviously controversial because he is situated directly in the middle of a current and ongoing conflict. Begin by looking at some of his poetry on home and war alongside that of the Jewish Israeli poet Yehuda Amichai. Make copies of the poems for students and remove the poets’ names. Students then study the poems in class, marking them up and discussing one at a time. Afterward, discuss common and differing themes and subjects in the poems. Finally, reveal who has written each poem. That brings students into an awareness of the perspectives of each side.

PAKISTAN

Readings

In the City by the Sea by Kamila Shamsie (Fiction)

“It is an endearing tale of a young boy’s coming-of-age in a murky neighbourhood, set amidst a palpable political instability that touches his life”
(<http://theculturetrip.com/asia/pakistan/articles/emerging-from-obscurity-the-rise-of-pakistani-literature-/>).

Moth Smoke by Mohsin Hamid (Fiction)

From Hamid’s website: “Darashikoh Shezad is an ex-banker, pot-smoker, and downwardly mobile heroin addict who also happens to have fallen for his best friend's wife. He is on trial. You are to be his judge.” This is a blunt examination of the society of the young and affluent middle and upper classes of Lahore and their struggle to find their way.

The Reluctant Fundamentalist by Mohsin Hamid (Fiction)

From Hamid’s website: “Tense and possibly American, you encounter a bearded stranger at a cafe in Lahore. His name is Changez. He left behind a high-flying career and love affair in New York. And night has begun to fall.” This is an innovative, dense and complex look at the tensions inherent in the relationships of Pakistan and the United States from the point of view of a young Pakistani.

Short Stories

“The Price of Hubris” by Humera Afridi

“A Fair Exchange” by Tahira Naqvi

“Daughters of Aai” by Fahmida Riaz

“Defend Yourself Against Me” by Bapsi Sidwa

Films

Earth by Deepa Mehta. 1998.

From IMDb: The movie opens in Lahore of 1947 before India and Pakistan became independent. It is a cosmopolitan city, depicted by the coterie of working class friends who are from different religions. The rest of the movie chronicles the fate of this group and the maddening religious that sweeps even this city as the partition of the two countries is decided and Lahore is given to Pakistan.

The Reluctant Fundamentalist by Mira Nair. 2012.

From IMDb: A young Pakistani man is chasing corporate success on Wall Street. He finds himself embroiled in a conflict between his American Dream, a hostage crisis, and the enduring call of his family's homeland.

Teaching Resources

- Basic Information About Pakistan

- Link: <http://www.infoplease.com/country/pakistan.html>
- Fort and Shalamar Gardens in Lahore
 - Website: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/171>
 - Description: Information about important sites in Pakistan.
- Pakistan Profile
 - Website: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-south-asia-12966786>
 - Description: useful but very extensive timeline from BBC.
- Emerging From Obscurity: The Rise of Pakistani Literature
 - Link: <http://theculturetrip.com/asia/pakistan/articles/emerging-from-obscurity-the-rise-of-pakistani-literature-/>
 - Description: fine overview (though somewhat sycophantic) of literature in Pakistan.
- “In Pakistan, Literary Spring Is Both Renaissance And Resistance” by Bilal Qureshir
 - Link: <http://www.npr.org/2014/04/15/301458738/in-pakistan-literary-spring-is-both-renaissance-and-resistance>
 - Description: Spring 2014 NPR recording exploring how “despite enduring violence and instability in Pakistan, ...[f]or many... [artists and authors], culture has become a kind of resistance.”

Ideas for the Classroom

- Have students look very carefully at the narration in the novel *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and take notes on how often the narrator, Changez, interrupts himself in his story to address the American directly. Discuss what this changes in the story and have students write a paper about what these accumulating interruptions do to the overall impact of the work.
- Have students read the four stories listed and compare and contrast the view of modern Pakistan. Discuss the different pockets of Pakistani society represented in each story and how they overlap and complement each other.
- The students should watch the film *Earth* and read the story “Defend Yourself against Me,” discuss each work in class and then write an essay about the differing perspectives of the formation of Modern Pakistan in these works. How do the differing details of style and narration combine to create a fairly complete picture of this tumultuous time in Pakistani history?

TURKEY

Readings

Beyond the Walls by Nazim Hikmet and translated by Ruth Christie, Richard McKane, and Talat S. Halman (Poetry)

Translations of Nazim Hikmet's poetry.

Forty Thorns by Judy Light Ayyildiz (Fiction)

This is a long and complex novel following a family through many fascinating years in Turkey's history. With the starting point a funeral for an elderly matriarch who has lived through the changes in Turkey that have brought the country to modern times.

Honor: A Novel by Elif Shafak (Fiction)

The story of a Turkish emigrant family living in London is juxtaposed with the life of a family member who has stayed in Turkey and is living a life clearly defined by the expectations and traditional culture of her rural environment. Shafak explores what happens when the emigrant family begins to incorporate some of the mores and behaviors of their new environment, and how the clash between change and tradition plays out for the extended family.

Istanbul: Memories and the City by Orhan Pamuk (Non-fiction)

From Amazon: "A shimmering evocation, by turns intimate and panoramic, of one of the world's great cities, by its foremost writer. Orhan Pamuk was born in Istanbul and still lives in the family apartment building where his mother first held him in her arms. His portrait of his city is thus also a self-portrait, refracted by memory and the melancholy—or *hüzün*—that all *Istanbullus* share: the sadness that comes of living amid the ruins of a lost empire."

Mehmed, My Hawk by Yashar Kemal (Fiction)

From Amazon: "A tale of high adventure and lyrical celebration, tenderness and violence, generosity and ruthlessness, *Mehmed, My Hawk* is the defining achievement of one of the greatest and most beloved of living writers, Yashar Kemal. Mehmed, a high-spirited, kindhearted boy, grows up in a desperately poor mountain village whose inhabitants are kept in virtual slavery by the local landlord. Determined to escape from the life of toil and humiliation to which he has been born, he flees but is caught, tortured, and nearly killed. When at last he does get away, it is to set up as a roving brigand, celebrated in song, who could be a liberator to his people."

Snow by Orhan Pamuk (Fiction)

From Pamuk's website: On the fourth day after his return to Turkey, Ka, a Turkish poet who has been an exile in Germany since twelve years, finds himself in the city of Kars for an interview. Walking under the slow and ceaseless snow, street by street, store by store, he tries to get to know this melancholic and beautiful city and its people. In Kars there are teahouses full of unemployed people, a snowbound traveling theatrical company, girls who protest and commit suicide for the headscarf banning, various

political groups, gossips, rumors, Karpalas Hotel and its owner Turgut Bey, his daughters İpek and Kadife and a promise of love and happiness for Ka.

The Bastard of Istanbul by Elif Shafak (Fiction)

From Amazon: “Populated with vibrant characters, *The Bastard of Istanbul* is the story of two families, one Turkish and one Armenian American, and their struggle to forge their unique identities against the backdrop of Turkey's violent history. Filled with humor and understanding, this exuberant, dramatic novel is about memory and forgetting, about the tension between the need to examine the past and the desire to erase it.”

The Penguin Book of Turkish Verse edited by Nermin Menemencioğlu and Fahir İz (Poetry)

Recommended poems by the Transition Poets: Namik Kemal's "From the Kaside to the Fatherland," Tevfik Fikret's "Farewell to Haluk," Mehmet Akif Ersoy's "The Secret of Progress." Recommended poems by Nazim Hikmet: “Today is Sunday,” and “Perhaps.”

Films

Bal by Semih Kaplanoglu. 2010.

From IMDb: The quiet life of a boy and his family is endangered when his father does not return home from his work collecting honey in the forest.

Bliss by Abdullah Oguz. 2007.

From IMDb: When a young woman is raped, her village custom requires that she be killed in order for the dishonour to be expunged from her family. A young man is given the task but at the last moment he has doubts.....Adapted from Zülfü Livaneli's international best-selling novel, director Abdullah Oguz's drama is filled with intensity, vivid cultural clash, fine music and some absolutely stunning scenery.

Teaching Resources

- The American Turkish Society
 - Link: www.americanturkishsociety.org
 - Description: This organization, based in NYC, hosts periodic events open to the public interested in Turkey. They also have many teaching resources on their website and offer a number of opportunities for both study and travel for teachers who want to broaden their understanding of the country and present it more completely in the classroom k-12.
- *A Millennium of Turkish Literature: A Concise History* by Talat S. Halman and Jayne Warner
 - Description from Amazon Customer Review: This concise history of Turkish literature is geared “towards a general audience.” A good resource if “you want to delve into Turkish Lit, because it will provide...all the information to go deeper and choose which period/author/works you want to explore.”
- *Empire, Republic, Democracy: A History of Turkey* by The Choices Program at Brown University
 - Link: <http://choices.edu/resources/detail.php?id=207>
 - Description: The curriculum “traces the final years of the Ottoman Empire, the struggle for independence, and Turkish resistance against European imperialism.

Students explore the birth of the Turkish Republic, the emergence of a multiparty democracy, the military coups of the twentieth century, and the Kurdish conflict. The readings conclude by examining current issues in Turkey, including economic development, religion and secularism, human rights, authoritarianism, and foreign affairs. In a culminating simulation, students grapple with the questions and challenges facing people in Turkey today.”

Ideas for the Classroom

- Have students research historical background of Turkey through a variety of online and book sources and then look at a virtual tour of several sites in Turkey, noting the layering of cultures in the villages and cities. Discuss what students have found in class. Then have them go to the site for the National Museum in Ankara and pick one artifact in the museum to focus on. Assign a creative piece written in the first person telling the story of the life of that object, drawing on the known history of the time period.
- In order to better identify with Turkish citizens and give context to some of the literature, prior to reading contemporary Turkish literature, have students participate in the role play activity in “Empire, Republic, Democracy: A History of Turkey” by The Choices Program at Brown University. From the Choices Program Website: “This central activity is a simulation in which students deliberate three options for Turkey's future. Each option is grounded in a clearly defined philosophy about Turkey's place in the world and offers recommendations on Turkey's domestic and foreign policy.”
- As the power of the Ottoman Empire waned so did Ottoman divan poetry (which was the main literary style for over 600 years). European writing gained popularity and Turkish poets adopted the Western literary style. Poetry began to reflect the political & social preoccupations of the time. Writers became the “principal champions of fundamental rights and freedoms—the conveyors of the concepts of nationalism, modernization, social, and political reform” (Halman, *A Millennium of Turkish Literature: A Concise History*, 64). To explore this historical shift through literature, compare and contrast the following poems: Namik Kemal's "From the Kaside to the Fatherland," Tevfik Fikret's "Farewell to Haluk," Mehmet Akif Ersoy's "The Secret of Progress" located in *The Penguin Book of Turkish Verse*. Discuss: What political and/or social preoccupation is each poet reflecting? What is each poet advocating for?
 - From Halman's *A Millennium of Turkish Literature: A Concise History*: Namik Kemal advocated for nationalism. Tevfik Fikret championed for social and government reforms, including secularism & Westernization. Mehmet Akif Ersoy saw Islamic faith as a panacea for the decline of the Ottoman Empire.
- Introduce students to the modern Turkish language, to Nazim Hikmet, and to the poetry of Nazim Hikmet through a translation exercise. First, have students compare and contrast the translations “Maybe I” by Ruth Christie, Richard McKane, and Talat S. Halman and “Perhaps” by Nermin Menemencioglu. Discuss: How do the translations of Hikmet's poem differ? How does the reading of each poem differ? Which do you prefer and why? What impact can translation have on a piece of literature? Then have students translate Nazim Hikmet's *İşte Böyle Laz İsmail* (activity designed by Poetry Inside Out ® for The Center for the Art of Translation). Listen to the poem in song form: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C-RiNQqY23w>. After students have translated their poems (could be assigned for HW), have students compare and contrast each other's

poems. Have students discuss their process and discuss what translations they prefer and why.

- Assign a selection from Orhan Pamuk's *Istanbul* about the relationship between the present and the past in this city. What in his style conveys both the joy and the melancholy of his feelings about his city? Ask student to write a reflection about where they witness *hüzün* in their own lives OR Ask students to write a short essay in which they work to achieve the same tone in a short section of their own memoir.
- Assign several selections from *Memed, My Hawk* and discuss the heroic qualities held up in this classic novel so frequently read in Turkish schools now. What appear to be the personal characteristics celebrated in this work? What American or British works play a similar role for the young citizens of those countries?

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

EGYPT

Arabian Nights and Days by Naguib Mahfouz (Fiction)

From Amazon: “A renowned Nobel Prize-winning novelist refashions the classic tales of Scheherazade in his own imaginative, spellbinding style. Here are genies and flying carpets, Aladdin and Sinbad, Ali Baba, and many other familiar stories, made new by the magical pen of the acknowledged dean of Arabic letters.”

Yacoubian Building by Alaa Al Aswany (Fiction)

From NPR: “The controversial, best-selling Egyptian novel *The Yacoubian Building* describes a country that is corrupt, unfair and thuggish. It follows the lives of residents both rich and poor of the Yacoubian, an actual apartment building in downtown Cairo.”

LEBANON

Beirut Fragments: A War Memoir by Jean Said Makdisi (Non-fiction)

Written by Edward Said’s sister, this memoir traces her life from Jerusalem to Egypt to England to America before finally settling in Beirut with her Lebanese husband and two sons.

Caramel directed by Nadine Labaki. 2007 (Film)

From Amazon: “A Beirut beauty salon becomes a treasured meeting place for several generations of women, from various walks of life, to talk, seek advice and confide in one another.”

I Sweep the Sun Off Rooftops by Hanan al-Shaykh (Short Stories)

From Amazon: “In these seventeen short stories...al-Shaykh expands her horizons beyond the boundaries of Lebanon, taking us throughout the Middle East, to Africa, and finally to London. Stylistically diverse, her stories are often about the shifting and ambiguous power relationships between different cultures--as well as between men and women.”

“Nariman” by Kathryn Abdul-Baki (Short Story/Fiction)

Published in *Fields of Fig and Olive: Ameera and Other Stories of the Middle East* by Kathryn Abdul-Baki. The story is about the experience of a young girl and her girlfriends during the Lebanese civil war. Contains mature content.

Photography by Rania Matar (Art)

- Website: <http://www.raniamatar.com/>
- Description: “Matar's work focuses on girls and women. She documents her life through the lives of those around her, focusing on the personal and the mundane in an attempt to portray the universal within the personal.” Portfolios include: “L'Enfant-Femme,” “A Girl and Her Room,” and “In the Middle East.”

Waltz with Bashir directed by Ari Folman. 2008 (Film)

An animated documentary film that chronicles a soldier’s attempt to piece together his

forgotten experiences in the 1982 Lebanon War.

MOROCCO

Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood by Fatima Mernissi (Non-Fiction)

From *Publishers Weekly*: "This rich, magical and absorbing growing-up tale set in a little-known culture reflects many universals about women. The setting is a "domestic harem" in the 1940s city of Fez, where an extended family arrangement keeps the women mostly apart from society, as opposed to the more stereotypical "imperial harem," which historically provided sex for sultans and other powerful court officials. Moroccan sociologist Mernissi (*Islam and Democracy*) charts the changing social and political frontiers and limns the personalities and quirks of her world..."

Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits by Laila Lalami (Fiction)

From Amazon: "In her exciting debut, Laila Lalami evokes the grit and enduring grace that is modern Morocco and offers an authentic look at the Muslim immigrant experience today."

The Sand Child by Tahar Ben Jelloun (Fiction)

Setting is 1950s Morocco. A father decides to raise his eighth daughter as his son, Ahmed, to carry on the family name and hold onto the family's inheritance. Ahmed's coming of age and sexual awakening spiral him into an isolated and depressed state that coincides with the linear breakdown of the text as several narrators step up and offer up their own versions of the end of Ahmed's story.

SUDAN

Season of Migration to the North by Tayeb Salih (Fiction)

From *Publishers Weekly*: "One of the classic themes followed in this complex novel, translated from the Arabic, is cultural dissonance between East and West, particularly the experience of a returned native."

TEACHING RESOURCES ONLINE

Arab Culture Through Literature and Film

- Website: <http://middleeastpdx.org/arabculture/>
- Description: “Arab Culture through Literature and Film is a five unit high school curriculum that provides students with knowledge and tools to analyze and understand the Arab world...Through this curriculum, students will recognize shared themes across the region and gain a sense of the rich diversity inherent to the multidimensional cultures of the Arab world.”

Arabic Literature (In English)

- Link: http://arablit.wordpress.com/2014/09/01/teaching-resources-for-young-readers-a-free-online-list-in-progress/?blogsub=confirming#blog_subscription-4
- Description: A blog offering “[r]esources for teaching translated literature to young readers.”

Are You Listening? Voices From the Middle East

- Link: http://cmes.hmdc.harvard.edu/files/Are_You_Listening_Anthology.pdf
- Description: Excellent anthology of Middle Eastern stories compiled by the The Outreach Center Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University and edited by Carol Johnson Shedd. Includes student activities, thorough background notes, and a glossary.

Bridging Cultures Bookshelf: Muslim Voices

- Website: <http://bridgingcultures.neh.gov/muslimjourneys/>
- Description: Website “offering resources for exploring new and diverse perspectives on the people, places, histories, beliefs, and cultures of Muslims in the United States and around the world.” From Jennifer Nina, program assistant at the New York Council for the Humanities: “Muslim Voices aims to create a space for young people--both Muslim and non-Muslim--to investigate the world around them and recognize what unites them rather than what divides them. Moreover, Muslim Voices provides young Muslims the chance to see themselves reflected in literature.”

Middle Eastern American Resources Online

- Website: <http://www.mearo.org/curriculum.php>
- Description: MEARO provides pre-collegiate teaching materials and educational resources about Middle Eastern Americans. Three instructional modules are featured to date.

Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP)

- Website: <http://www.merip.org/>
- Description: MERIP is a website on Middle East politics, culture, and society. MERIP publishes primers and a magazine called the *Middle East Report*. “*Middle East Report* provides news and perspectives about the Middle East not available from mainstream news sources. The magazine has developed a reputation for independent analysis of events and developments in the Middle East. Understanding of the Middle East in the United States and Europe is limited and plagued by stereotypes and misconceptions. MERIP successfully addresses these limitations by addressing a broad range of social,

political and cultural issues, and by soliciting writings and views from authors from the Middle East not often read in the West.”

Poetic Voices of the Muslim World

- Website: <http://poeticvoicesofthemuslimworld.org/>
- Description: A web exhibit of Muslim poetry (classical to modern) presented by City Lore and Poets House.

Middle East Studies Center at Portland University

- Website: <http://www.middleeastpdx.org/>
- Description: “The Middle East Studies Center at Portland State University promotes understanding of the people, cultures, languages and religions of the Middle East. The Center offers a wide range of resources to promote a critical understanding of the region.” The website includes teaching resources (<http://www.middleeastpdx.org/resources/>) as well as a list of recommended books for high school students (<http://www.middleeastpdx.org/resources/original/recommended-books-for-high-school/>)

The Center for Contemporary Arab Studies at Georgetown University

- Website: <http://ccas.georgetown.edu/k14/resources/>
- Description: Website contains background modules, teaching units, links for educators, and resources from past workshops and seminars “to assist K-12 teachers in introducing information about Arab history and culture.”

The Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES) at the University of Arizona

- Website: <http://cmes.arizona.edu/outreach/lessons>
- Description: A collection of over 100 lesson plans about the Middle East for all content areas and grade levels. There are plenty of handouts and background sheets and powerpoints: <http://cmes.arizona.edu/node/771> . There are other resources such as suggested book lists for K-12 classrooms (by grade level), film guides (for films available at CMES or through Netflix), links to websites to counter Islamophobia, and AP World History resources: <http://cmes.arizona.edu/outreach/resources>. CMES also has a YouTube channel with videos of presentations on a wide variety of topics: <https://www.youtube.com/user/sbscmes/videos>.

Teaching the Middle East: A Resource for Educators

- Website: <http://teachmiddleeast.lib.uchicago.edu/>
- Description: Scholars from the University of Chicago developed this teacher resource to provide an overview of Middle Eastern cultures and their contributions to the world. Includes scholarly essays, lesson plans, videos, etc. Teachers can learn about writing and literature before Islam and during the Islamic period.

Middle East Center at University of Pennsylvania:

- Website: <http://www.sas.upenn.edu/mec/resources/teachers>
- Description: Useful links, resources and lesson plans for K-12 teachers.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

A Reverence for Words: Understanding Muslim Cultures Through Poetry and Song

- Location: New York, NY.
- Website: <http://citylore.org/grassroots-poetry/neh-institute>
- Description: Presented by City Lore in collaboration with Poets House and Teachers and Writers Collaborative, *A Reverence for Words* is a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) summer scholars institute for middle and high school teachers.

Hagop Kevorkian Center of Near Eastern Studies (NYU)

- Location: New York, NY
- Website: <http://neareaststudies.as.nyu.edu/page/outreach>
- Description: The Center sponsors excellent free Saturday Seminars for Teachers on a wide variety of topics relating to the Greater Middle East. It also sponsors many other workshops and activities.

Istanbul Between East and West: Crossroads of History

- Location: Istanbul, Turkey
- Website: <http://ucsdistanbul.org/>
- Description: NEH funded Summer Institute that brings “teachers to Istanbul for a three-week intensive program where they will learn from leading scholars on Roman, Byzantine, Medieval Mediterranean, Ottoman, and modern Turkish history.”

Muslim American Identities, Past and Present

- Location: Indianapolis at Indiana University-Purdue University/Indianapolis (IUPUI).
- Website: <http://www.raac.iupui.edu/professional-development/neh-summer-seminar-teachers-2015/>
- Description: National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) summer scholars institute for K-12 teachers to “study the diverse facets of Muslim American identity, both as grounded in the past and as experienced in the present.”
- Application deadline: March 2, 2014

Teachers as Scholars

- Location: Cambridge, MA
- Website: <http://www.teachersasscholars.org/>
- Description: Seminars sometimes available with a focus on the Greater Middle East.

Teachers for Global Classrooms Program

- Website: <http://www.irex.org/project/teachers-global-classrooms-program-tgc>
- Description: U.S. State Department-sponsored learning and travel opportunities for teachers.

Teaching Connected Histories of the Mediterranean

- Location: Denver, Colorado
- Website: <http://islamicstudiescenter.gmu.edu/connectedhistories>
- Description: A Summer Institute for teachers sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities. “This program offers secondary school teachers of courses such as world

history, world geography, world religions, and global studies the opportunity to focus on the Mediterranean region from a world historical perspective.”

The American Turkish Society

- Website: <http://www.americanturkishsociety.org/>
- Description: Curriculum development grants, ranging from \$250 to \$2,500, available to teach Turkey-related curricula. Possibly have the opportunity to participate in a 1-week exchange to schools in Istanbul, Izmir, or Tarsus to dialogue with Turkish teachers and students.

The Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs: Middle East Initiative (Harvard Kennedy School)

- Location: Cambridge, MA
- Website: http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/project/64/middle_east_initiative.html
- Description from the website: “The Middle East Initiative hosts events on the Harvard campus with the dual objective of familiarizing the community with topics concerning the Middle East and creating the space for conversations about those topics. All events are free and open to the public.”

The Middle East Outreach Council (MEOC)

- Website: <http://www.meoc.us>
- Description: MEOC is a national nonprofit organization working to increase public knowledge about the peoples, places, and cultures of the Middle East. MEOC provides resources and information about the Middle East, and hosts annual workshops on the Middle East at the Middle East Studies Association (MESA) annual meeting.

CONTRIBUTORS

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