

**ENGL 3730/MENG 5730: Literature of Cultures and Places:
Middle Eastern Women Writers**

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Office Hours: TR, 9:00 and by appointment

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TH, 10:30
EH 403

Overview of the Course: This course is designed to introduce students to various works written by Middle Eastern women. Because I lived in the Middle East for ten years, I have an interest in the writings of women from that region. I am eager for students to make connections between the common experiences of Middle Eastern and Western women. All of the literary works assigned for this course will be translations from the original languages: Farsi, Arabic, Turkish, or Hebrew. The writers speak of their experiences in ways that dispel the stereotypes many Westerners hold of the region, religions, and cultures.

Required Texts:

Attar, Samar. *Lina: A Portrait of a Damascene Girl*. Colorado Springs, CO: Three Continents Press, 1994.

Daneshvar, Simin. *Savushun*. Washington, D.C.: Mage Publishers, 1990.

Khouri, Norma. *Honor Lost: Love and Death in Modern-Day Jordan*. NY: Washington Square Press, 2003.

Mernissi, Fatima. *Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1994.

Shah, Saira, *The Storyteller's Daughter*. NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003.

Additional Materials: The Stewart Library has a collection of videos dealing with topics related to the Middle East. These materials will be useful in completing some of the assignments for this course. Materials are also available in the periodicals collection and in the general collection. Supplementary materials may be distributed during the course of the semester. Read the *New York Times* on a daily basis to find articles about women and the Middle East. This will enrich your understanding of the region and will supplement class discussion.

Course Objectives:

1. Become skilled at reading new and unfamiliar texts.
2. Develop literary analytical skills that can be applied to other courses.
3. Apply literary theories to the reading of unfamiliar texts.
4. Write analytically about texts.
5. Plan a presentation, either singly or in a small group, on a topic connected to the culture of the Middle East.
6. Participate actively in class discussion.

Course Requirements:

Attendance and Contributions: You are expected to take an active role in this class. My intention is to rely a great deal on student responses for the content of individual class sessions. Because of the collaborative and cumulative nature of this class, regular attendance is crucial and expected. A significant portion of your final grade will be determined by your attendance and contributions to class. You will be allowed two (2) free absences during the semester. Each absence after the “free two” will cost you 10 attendance points. I define class contribution as cooperation in all class activities, a willingness to make pertinent and valuable comments during whole class and small group discussion, and an eagerness to try out new ideas and points of view. **Class contribution: 50 points; Attendance: 30 points.**

Reflective Journal: You will be expected to submit a reflective journal for each of the five (5) novels read in class. Specific details re attached to this syllabus. **25 points each** This assignment will fulfill objectives 2, 3, and 4

Critical Paper: One critical paper will be required during the semester. Specific details are attached to this syllabus. **100 points** This assignment will fulfill objectives 2,3, and 4

Project and Oral Presentation: You will have the opportunity to form a small group or work individually on a project which reflects a specific area of interest in a topic related to the themes and ideas of this course. This is a major assignment so be sure to form a group of individuals you feel comfortable with and can collaborate with over several weeks. Specific details are attached to this syllabus. **100 points** This assignment will fulfill objective 5.

Final Examination: The final examination in this course is an open-book, open notebook, examination. The questions will be general in nature and will focus on your personal development in reading, analysis, and understanding of the literature and culture from which it comes. Frequently students prefer a take-home final to an in-class final. A group decision will be made by week 13. **100 points**

MENG 5730 Student will complete the following additional assignments.

Annotated Bibliography: Select a topic of personal interest, i.e. one of the authors studied in class, a different author, a cultural practice, a social pattern, a historical trend, etc. Compile an annotated bibliography of 20 titles in which you summarize the source and comment in its usefulness or reliability in providing information on the selected topic. It will be necessary to investigate more than 20 sources in order to compile a bibliography of the best sources. You may find it useful to investigate materials in the Middle Eastern Studies collection at the University of Utah. The purpose of this assignment is do develop a familiarity with sources in the specific topic you have selected. Use MLA format. Include a brief introduction in which you describe your interest and motivation for exploring your topic.

Class Presentation and Guided Discussion: Design a presentation for the class on a theme, literary technique, close reading, or critical analysis of one of the required novels. Other options could be a presentation on a social issue or historical topic connected to one of the novels. You may also select an article or short literary selection, i.e. poem or short story that makes a connection with one of the novels. Your presentation will be scheduled in coordination with the instructor. Plan for a presentation of at least 25 minutes followed by a whole-class guided discussion. You may use power point audio-visual equipment, lecture and/or advanced assigned readings. The purpose of this assignment is for you to share your advanced analytical skills with the rest of the class and to serve as a model of graduate study for the undergraduate students in the class. Adjustments to the schedule may be necessary for the completion of this assignment.

Critical Paper: Write a critical paper in which you apply a critical theory to one of the novels or explore the social, religious, cultural, political influences on one of the authors used in this class. If you find it difficult to find material on the author of your choice you may select an author not included in this course. The purpose of this assignment is to provide the opportunity to explore either the theoretical underpinnings of one of the novels or explore the philosophy of a Middle Eastern author. This will also demonstrate your abilities as literary critic or researcher.

Important Additional Information:

Academic Dishonesty: As specified in PPM 6-22, Iv, D, cheating and plagiarism violate the Student code. Plagiarism is “the unacknowledged (uncited) use of any other person’s or group’s ideas or work.” Students found guilty of cheating or plagiarism are subject to failure of a specific assignment, or, in more serious cases, failure of the entire course.

Core Beliefs: According to PPM 6-22, IV, students are to “determine, before the last day to drop courses without penalty, when course requirements conflict with a student’s core beliefs. If there is such a conflict, the student should consider dropping the class. A student who finds this solution impracticable may request a resolution from the instructor. This policy does not oblige the instructor to grant the request, except in those cases when a denial would be arbitrary and capricious or illegal. The request must be made to the instructor in writing and the student must deliver a copy of the request to the office or department head. The student’s request must articulate the burden the requirement would place on the student’s beliefs.”

University Emergency Closure: If for any reason the University is forced to close for an extended period of time, we will conduct class via WSU Online. You will be contacted through your Weber e-mail address.

Students with Disabilities: Any student requiring accommodations or services due to a disability must contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) in Student Services Center #181. SSD can also arrange to provide course materials (including this syllabus) in alternative formats if necessary.

Late Assignments: Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the dates indicated. Alternate dates may be arranged **if you speak with the instructor before the due date.** Late assignments without prior arrangements will be reduced 10% for each late day up to a total of three (30 days which equals 30%)

Class Preparation: You are expected to be prepared to discuss any and all of the reading beginning on the day for which they were assigned. The same expectation holds for paper and project development draft deadlines.

Class Contribution: You will see from the class schedule, assignment deadlines are not indicated for every class session. On these days we will be working in groups discussing the readings, sharing ideas for papers and projects, examining supplementary materials, etc. these activities are designed to help you learn new ideas and work with new concepts. Active contribution to these activities, along with meeting deadlines, will count toward your contribution points.

Additional Spontaneous Assignments: From time to time during the course of the semester you may be asked to complete a focused quick write or an exploratory journal-style response either in or out of class. These short assignments may be individual or collaborative. These may be assigned a number of points. **The spontaneous assignments will not exceed a total of 50 points.**

Grading

Assignments will be graded according to the following point allotments:

Attendance	30 points
Contribution	50
Reflective Journal 5 @ 25 points each	250
Critical Paper	100
Project and Oral Presentation	100
Final Examination	<u>100</u>
	630
Spontaneous Assignments	50 points maximum

Grades will be assigned according to the following percentages:

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

Class Schedule: Any changes to this schedule will be discussed by the full class and agreed upon by both students and instructor. A group of Weber State Faculty have been invited to make guest presentations to the class on areas of their special expertise. Adjustments to the class schedule will be made to accommodate their needs.

Class Schedule

Week 1:	January 8	Introduction to the class Introduction to the Middle East
	January 10	Introduction to Islam
Week 2:	January 15	<i>Dreams of Trespass</i>
	January 17	Meet in Library for orientation
Week 3:	January 22	<i>Dreams of Trespass</i>
	January 24	<i>Dreams of Trespass</i> Accompanying poems
Week 4:	January 29	Due: Journal: <i>Dreams of Trespass</i> Film, to be announced
	January 31	<i>Lina: A Portrait of a Damascene Girl</i>
Week 5:	February 5	<i>Lina</i>
	February 7	<i>Lina</i> Accompanying poems
Week 6:	February 12	Due: Journal: <i>Lina</i> Possible Guest speaker
	February 14	<i>The Storyteller's Daughter</i>
Week 7:	February 19	<i>The Storyteller's Daughter</i>
	February 21	<i>The Storyteller's Daughter</i>
Week 8:	February 26	Due: Journal: <i>The Storyteller's Daughter</i>

	February 28	<i>Honor Lost</i>
Spring Break March 4-9		
Week 9:	March 12	<i>Honor Lost</i>
	March 14	<i>Honor Lost</i> Due: Critical Paper
Week 10:	March 19	Due: Journal: <i>Honor Lost</i>
	March 20	Film or Guest Speaker
Week 11:	March 26	<i>Savushun</i>
	March 28	<i>Savushun</i>
Week 12:	April 2	<i>Savushun</i>
	April 4	<i>Savushun</i>
Week 13:	April 9	<i>Savushun</i>
	April 11	Due: Journal: <i>Savushun</i> Possible Guest speaker
Week 14:	April 16	Oral Project Presentations Project Presentations may be re-scheduled for Finals Week if it is determined that more class time for discussion is needed. Take Home Final Exam accepted all week. Last date accepted, April 17, 3:00 pm
	April 18	Oral Project Presentations
Finals:	April 22-24	Oral Project Presentations

