

Morocco Odyssey

Education 461/Middle Eastern & North African Studies (MENAS) 461

Fall Term 2020 Mon/Wed 2:30-4

Course Meetings on Zoom:

<https://umich.zoom.us/j/5283229483>

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Canvas site: “EDUC 461 001 FA 2020” (*all readings will be on Canvas, or will be distributed in class*)

COURSE OVERVIEW

This seminar will provide an opportunity for you to share your knowledge and experience as you seek to engage a diverse network of students in web-based discussions of social and cultural issues. It will also provide a place where you can become acquainted with aspects of the history and culture of Morocco, and the social practices and cultural mores observed by our traveler, Nadia Selim, in her ongoing explorations of Morocco.

Earth Odysseys is a work-in-progress. Each term we ask university students to guide high school and middle school students through a process of reflective thought as they consider (and perhaps reconsider) their own cultural practices and viewpoints through looking at those of others. This will be a challenge for the students (as well it should be!) and supporting the students will require patience and understanding on your part, as well as hard work. It is also a process, like most good teaching, of trial and error. Perhaps the single most advantageous trait for an Odysseys Mentor to possess, or to cultivate, is a willingness to experiment with an idea, and to continually adjust your mentoring based on your interpretation of the work done by the students, and the challenges you think they encountered. We hope that in the process of doing this work, you will further explore your own educational beliefs and broaden your intellectual perspective. It has been said that a significant portion of what is labeled as teaching is actually learning--we welcome you to what we hope

will be a challenging and enjoyable learning experience.

READINGS

We will read excerpts (all available on Canvas) from the books listed below. Other readings will be assigned on a week-by-week basis. *All course readings will be distributed via Canvas or in class.*

Alami, Aida. *Gender Inequality in Morocco Continues, Despite Amendments to Family Law*. *New York Times*, March 16, 2014
<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/17/world/africa/gender-inequality-in-morocco-continues-despite-amendments-to-family-law.html>

Baumann, Gerd (1996). *Contesting Culture: Discourses of Identity in Multi-Ethnic London* (pages 2-21). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Berger, John (1992). *Pig Earth: Book One of the Into Their Labours Trilogy*. (Introduction, pages xi-xxvii). New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Combs-Schilling, Elaine (1989). *Sacred Performances*. (Chapter 6, "Bubonic Plague," pages 115-127). New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Eickelman, Dale (1988). *The Middle East and Central Asia: An Anthropological Approach*. (Chapter 5, "Cities in Their Place," pages 95-112). Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall.

Hanafi, Leila and Hites, Danielle. *Women's rights in Morocco: Balancing Domestic and International Law*. Atlantic Council, October 12, 2017
<http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/women-s-rights-in-morocco-balancing-domestic-and-international-law>

Hariri, Yuval Noah (2018). *Sapiens*. (pages 112-118) New York, NY: Harper Perennial.

Humphreys, R. Stephen (1999). *Between Memory and Desire: The Middle East in a Troubled Age*. (Chapter 7, "Islam as a Political System," pages 148-173). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Lalami, Laila (2006). *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*. (Pages 106-107, "The Trip"). Chapel Hill, N.C. : Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill.

Mask, Deirdre (2020). *The Address Book: What Street Addresses Reveal about Identity, Race, Wealth and Power*. (Chapter 6, “Philadelphia: Why do Americans Love Numbered Streets?” pp. 110-128). New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press.

Mortimer, Edward (1982). *Faith and Power: The Politics of Islam*. (Chapter 1, “Traditional Muslim Attitudes to Political Power,” pages 31-37). New York, NY: Vintage Books.

O’Neill, Zora (2016). *All Strangers Are Kin: Adventures in Arabic and the Arab World*. (“The Place Where the Sun Sets,” pages 240-246). Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Porch, Douglass (2005). *Conquest of Morocco*. (Chapter 3, “The Country,” pages 29-37). New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Rabinow, Paul (1977). Reflections on Field Work in Morocco (excerpts from introduction). Berkeley, CA : University of California Press.

Sadiqi, Fatima. “The Shifting Gender Roles in North Africa: The crisis of patriarchy in the digital age.” University of Fez, Morocco
http://www.assisztencia.hu/gender/down/keynote_sadiqi.pdf

READING THE ODYSSEY REPORTS

Starting the week of September 14th, two reports will be posted each week for discussion. So that you have some background on and context for the reports, we ask that you read the coming week’s reports for class each week, and that you come prepared with questions about the reports (what doesn’t make sense, or what would you like to know more about?) and thoughts about what the richest discussion issues are that are framed or suggested by the reports.

JOURNAL REFLECTIONS

We will ask you to keep an online journal in which you alternately chronicle the process by which you conceive of, research, and put together your Odyssey activity, and share some thoughts about your experiences as a mentor. Your journal reflections should be posted on our Odyssey site, as responses to prompts in the **Teach** section, and the reflections are due the **Friday before** class at 5 p.m. The prompts are listed on the weekly schedule below for each week that we would like you to do a journal reflection. The first reflection, due

on Sunday, September 20th, will require that you read through the Odyssey reports. *To do this, look for a document in the **FILES** section on Canvas entitled “All Nadia’s Morocco Reports” that contains the full text of each of our reports.*

“SIGNIFICANT OBJECTS” PROJECT

For this project, each of you will be assigned a significant object, event, or piece of information relative to a *domain of inquiry* about Morocco, and we will ask you to give an *in-class presentation* about your object, informing your classmates about its significance, but also framing the kinds of broader questions, and ways of seeing, that can inform our in-class and online conversations. *More details on this assignment, including topics and presentation dates, will be provided in class during the week of **September 21st**, and we will discuss each object and possible avenues/angles for research together in class.*

LECTURES, READINGS, ASSIGNMENTS, ODYSSEY REPORTS & CLASS TOPICS (subject to change):

August 31st

Introduction to the 2020 Morocco Odyssey, Part One

Morocco in its Contexts; Situated Nature of Research; General survey of the History of Morocco;

September 2nd

Introduction to the 2020 Morocco Odyssey, Part Two

Introduction to the mentoring work; What does it mean to be an Odyssey Mentor?; More Background on Morocco

Upcoming Assignment:

Mentoring Assignment #1 (assignment will be distributed in class today, **is due on Canvas on Sunday, September 6th**)

September 7th

No Class—Labor Day

September 9th

Exploring Mentoring/Reviewing Mentoring Assignment #1; How

Morocco is portrayed for visitors

Reading:

Please find and review one web or documentary resource oriented to travelers visiting Morocco (some such resources are listed at the end of this syllabus). Come to class ready to talk about what you notice about the advice that is offered? Cautions? Based on what you read, what would you be most excited to see on your trip to Morocco?

Upcoming Assignment:

Mentoring Assignment #2 (to be distributed in class today, **due on Canvas on Sunday, September 13th**)

September 14th

Introduction to Odyssey website; Review Mentoring Assignment #2

September 16th

Discuss Nadia's first reports; Odyssey Activity Project; Mentoring Journal

Odyssey Reports to be read for today: Meet Nadia, Fitting Your Life into a Suitcase (*the reports are located in a document entitled "All Nadia's Morocco Reports" in the FILES section on Canvas that contains the full text of each of our reports*).

Upcoming Assignment:

First Journal Reflection (Due on Sunday, September 20th in the TEACH space of the Odyssey website):

Which report interests me as a focal point for my project, and why? What do I need to learn more about so that I can create a good activity?

September 21st

Ethnology of Morocco

Thinking critically about "Traditional" vs. "Modern" societies, and the relation of tribes and states; Exploring the mentoring work and outlining expectations; Introducing the "Significant Objects" presentations.

Supplemental Readings for Today's Class: Berger, Hariri, Lalami, and Rabinow Readings.

As you read the introduction of John Berger's "Pig Earth" for class on Sept. 23rd, please come to class prepared to talk about what Berger means when he talks about the peasant's cyclic view of time, and later

when he contrasts a culture of survival with a culture of progress. In addition, knowing what you know about the Odyssey project (in which our American friend, Nadia, shares her accounts of what she saw and experienced while living and working in Morocco), think about why we would assign you this reading for class...what are your conjectures about this?

September 23rd

Mentor Journal; Discuss Nadia's Reports, Significant Objects Report

Odyssey Reports to be read for today: Cairo; From Medina to Ville Nouvelle

Supplemental Reading for this week: Mask (on Canvas).

Upcoming Assignment:

Second Journal Reflection (Due on Sunday, September 27th in the TEACH space of the Odyssey website):

Share some thoughts about the inquiry questions you'll be exploring for your activity project, and about what you want to provide for the teachers to help them get the most out of your project for their students.

September 28th

Language

Examination of Morocco's language diversity, and the cultural dimensions of language; More exploration of the mentoring work.

Supplemental Reading for this week: O'Neill (on Canvas).

In Nadia's reports and in the O'Neill reading we learn about Moroccan Arabic, known as Darija. We'll read about how language (or dialect) can be associated with status, with identity, and with culture, and we'll talk about all of this in class today, as well as discussing what makes Darija distinctive. Think about whether you've had any experiences where language seemed to be associated with status or social identity.

September 30th

Continued discussion of language in Morocco; Nadia's Reports; Mentoring so far

Odyssey Reports to be read for today: Language in Morocco;
Language—Part Deux

Upcoming Assignment:

Third Journal Reflection (Due on Sunday, October 4th in the TEACH space of the Odyssey website):

Discuss your understanding of a student posting to which you responded, what you felt was needed by way of a response, and why you thought so. You might talk about what a particular student response evoked for you personally, or about a choice you faced as you considered your response.

October 5th

Defining our Terms: Culture, Community, and Ethnicity.

Supplemental Readings for this week: Baumann Reading.

The course requires that you (and your mentees) become ethnographer /anthropologists, not of Morocco and Moroccan culture, but of yourselves. Any time anthropologists ask their subjects such questions as, “Why do you ___?” or “What is the meaning behind this celebration?” or “Why is this unacceptable or taboo?” they ineluctably pose the same questions to themselves and, in the process, discover similarities and differences, convergences and divergences. And, in the process of doing this, they often have recourse to certain recurrent terms: “culture,” “community” and “ethnicity” to account for what they are dealing with—and it is all but certain that we will too.

In this reading, Baumann effectively confesses that, in setting out to undertake an ethnographic study of the culture of ethnic communities in a London suburb, every one of those terms became somehow more elusive and complex than he had first imagined. His argument is not to do away with terms that seem to be stubbornly indispensable, but to problematize them: in other words, an invitation to critical reflection. We’ll consider questions like: What exactly do we mean when we use this word “culture?” Precisely how distinct or coherent is any group of people designated as “a community?”

October 7th

Continuation of Monday’s Conversation; Discuss Mentor Journal #3; Nadia’s Reports

Odyssey Reports to be read for today: (3 reports) Student Protest, Censoring in Class

October 12th

Morocco's Cultural Context; Legacy of Colonialism

Supplemental Readings for Today's Class: Eickelman

October 14th

Mentoring Work; Nadia's Reports

Odyssey Reports to be read for today: Trust, Parking

Upcoming Assignment:

Fourth Journal Reflection (Due by Sunday, October 18th in the TEACH space of the Odyssey website):

Post your Project Statement, which includes a) your "driving question"-- your succinct framing of the issue you want the kids to think about, and b) a succinct statement connecting your driving question to a specific report and C) your "scope of work," a brief summary of the specific pieces that will make up your completed activity. You will be giving a brief oral presentation about your presentation in class on October 21st.

October 19th

Domestic Life & Family; The Many Meanings of Food

Odyssey Reports to be read for today: Shopping; Couscous Friday

October 21st

Odyssey Project oral presentations: Today in class, each of you will give a short (5-10 minute) presentation today in which you share your "ideas in process" about your activity. Use the opportunity to not only share your ideas but to ask for help and feedback from your classmates and professors. *What kind of experience do you want to provide for your students? What are you interested in having the students think about, or think about differently?*

October 26th

Morocco's history and its relationship with the West

Supplemental Readings for Today's Class: Porch & Combs-Schilling Readings.

*In preparation for today's class we ask that you to take the unusual approach of reading these two historical accounts in reverse chronological order: please read the excerpt from *The Conquest of Morocco* by Douglas Porch first, then read the chapter from Elaine Combs-Schilling's *Sacred Performances*, which addresses a period in Moroccan history that antedates the topic of Porch's account by over 500 years. As you read both accounts, we would like you to think not only about the "historical information" that each author provides, but also the style in which that information is conveyed. Please come to class prepared to discuss your response to the two accounts, thinking about the language, tone and points of emphasis that each author employs, and taking note of any similarities or contrasts you observe. What did you learn about Morocco from the respective readings, if anything, that was surprising or otherwise made you think about the country and its relationship to the Western World in a different way?*

October 28th

Odyssey Reports to be read for today: Girl in the Classroom;
Another Point of View

November 2nd

Islam and Religious Life

Supplemental Reading for Today's Class: Mortimer & Humphreys

November 4th

Video Conference with a teacher (tent.); Nadia's Reports

Odyssey Reports to be read for today: Inshallah; Eid Al-Adha

Upcoming Assignment:

Final Journal Reflection (Due by Sunday, November 8th in the TEACH space of the Odyssey website):

Looking back at the mentoring work so far, tell us about a learning moment you had. Perhaps it had to do with teaching and mentoring, perhaps it had to do with a cultural issue, or perhaps you learned something about yourself (either as a teacher or as a global citizen).

November 9th

Gender Issues

Supplemental Readings (4) for Today's Class: Alami, Hanafi & Hites, Hargraves, Sadiqi

November 11th

Continuation of Monday's Conversation on Gender Issues; Discuss Mentor Journal #5; Nadia's Reports

Odyssey Report to be read for today: C'est La Vie; Road to Cueta

November 16th

Liminality & Identity

Supplemental Readings tba

November 18th

Mentoring Check-In; Nadia's Reports; Discuss Odyssey Activities in-process

Odyssey Reports to be read for today: But where are you from from?; Strike, 9 Things I Learned My First Week in Morocco

Upcoming Assignments:

Odyssey Activity Project due on Canvas by Friday, December 4th.

November 23rd/ November 25th: No Class

November 30th

Popular Culture; Brief In-Class Presentations of your Odyssey Activities

Other Assignments due:

Each of you will also give a short presentation today about your finished activity, letting your classmates know what you created, and what you're hoping your activity will make possible for your students to do and to think about.

December 2nd

***Nadia's Reports; Review Final Reflection Assignment;
Reflection on the Morocco Odyssey***

Odyssey Reports to be read for today: Unexpected Day, Farewell

December 7th (Final class session)

Video Conference with some of your students (tent.)

Other Assignments:

Final Reflection Paper *Due on Canvas by December 16th*

ODYSSEY ACTIVITY PROJECT

Each of you will create an activity to be used by future Odyssey teachers and students. This activity must be linked to one of the Odyssey reports, and you will be charged with coming up with the activity idea, describing that activity so that a teacher can use it with her students, and assembling all of the other resources (readings, maps, web URLs, worksheets, discussion questions) that a teacher would need to do your activity, including your description of the activity, how it links to a particular Odyssey report, and what the larger idea(s) are that your activity is designed to frame for the students. This larger idea will be your driving question(s)--what do you most want the students to be thinking about or otherwise exploring as a consequence of doing your activity. We will be asking you to write a series of entries in your online journal that take you through the various steps of pulling your project together, and we will also discuss the project in class.

Your finished activity is due on December 4th (on Canvas) and should include the following elements:

- 1) An introductory (one-page) essay for the teachers and students that includes your driving question, how you derived it, why you feel it is important, and how you are connecting all of this to your activity.
- 2) Which report is your project linked to, how and why?
e.g. *"Trust": Nadia's report illustrated how people could be much more actively engaged in the affairs of others than I was accustomed to. I was interested in how social pressures impact our ability or our willingness to*

gage with other people and even to cross certain social barriers to offer help. I decided to create an activity in students would be asked to consider look at situations, consider whether or not they would intervene in the situation, and then to write about their decision..."

3) Detailed description of the activity

A step-by step sequence of what will happen, from preparation to conclusion. This should include descriptions of discussions necessary before the activity, orientation to the activity, directions for both teacher and students, description of what will take place, questions you want the students to consider, possible connections to the student's lives, and debriefing/post-activity discussion topics and prompts.

4) "What does a teacher need?"

This should include actual materials needed, discussion questions, a list of activity prompts a teacher could use, or debriefing questions. It should also include the readings or resources you would want to the kids to read (with annotated descriptions).

5) Complete list of references used.

In summary, we want you to give the teacher a finished activity including everything you think s/he will need to actually conduct your activity in their classroom. Your work will then become a part of our Odyssey teacher resources.

FINAL REFLECTION

In an essay of **at least** 6 pages in length, double-spaced (not including the illustrations of your posting or those of the students), please answer the questions below. *Be careful both to make assertions and to support them...what led you to reach the conclusions you reached, or to ask the questions that linger in your mind?*

We'll discuss your thoughts about these questions during one of our final class meetings. **Your final reflection essay is due on Wednesday, Dec. 16th.**

A) Select two postings made by the same student over the course of the Odyssey that indicate progress made by the student in question. Talk about what you see in the two posts, identifying their strengths and their shortcomings (if applicable), and discuss how the second post indicates progress made by the student. Be specific in breaking down the qualities of the posts and describing the measure(s) of progress you're employing. Please include the text of the actual postings.

B) Please walk us through a "second look" at an interaction that you had earlier in the semester. Start by choosing an interaction you had with a student sometime during the first 2-3 weeks of mentoring. Show us the student work to which you were responding, and the response that you made. Tell us about the thinking that informed the posting you wrote and then, based on what you've learned from the ensuing weeks of mentoring, or perhaps based on your seeing different kinds of opportunities, we'd like for you to *craft and write out* a new response to the same student posting. In addition to showing us this new response, please explain the thinking that went into your new posting, and tell us what it demonstrates about what you've learned about yourself, your students, or about doing the mentoring work.

C) Discuss some of what you've discovered about yourself as a teacher and learner from your Odyssey experience as you engaged in and made sense of the mentoring work. Draw from your experience at supporting the intellectual work of younger people and challenging them to think more deeply, as well as your engagement with the broad set of cultural issues evoked by the reports and discussions. Be sure to illustrate your insights by excerpting particular interactions from the Odyssey that support and illustrate your points. Please also don't be shy about speaking of lingering challenges and uncertainties—you've tackled some challenging issues in your mentoring, and you don't need to pretend that you have everything figured out.

WEB RESOURCES

We have some good information resources here—there are more listed on the Odyssey website, and we'll share others in class:

Portland State University's Middle East Teaching Tools "Morocco" page:

<http://www.middleeastpdx.org/resources/countries/morocco/>

University of Pennsylvania Middle East Center's "Useful Links, Resources, and Lesson Plans for K-12 Teachers" website:

<https://www.sas.upenn.edu/mec/resources/useful-links>

National Geographic's "Morocco" website:

<http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/countries/morocco-guide/>

Looklex Encyclopedia—Morocco (*follow Travel Guides to Morocco, then Tetuoan*): <http://looklex.com/e.o/morocco.htm>

Thrillist—“Everything you need to know about Morocco”

<https://www.thrillist.com/travel/nation/visit-morocco-things-to-know>

Lonely Planet Morocco: <https://www.lonelyplanet.com/morocco>

COURSE GRADING

Virtually every mentor in the history of Earth Odysseys chose this class because of their enthusiasm for helping kids to learn about more about their world, to sharpen their thinking, and to feel more confident in their writing and in articulating their point-of-view. As a consequence of this intrinsic motivation, most mentors do top quality work. Still, you should know the criteria upon which your grade will be decided:

- 1) Diligence and the quality of thought as shown by your participation in, and preparation for seminar.
- 2) Staying current with course readings, and all written assignments.
- 3) The quality of your research paper and other class assignments.
- 4) Most Importantly...the quality and frequency of your on-line interactions with the students, and your demonstrated engagement with doing this mentoring work, and with your reflection on this work.

You will have a key role in supporting the students as they seek to engage with ideas and to conduct a rich and respectful discourse. Your mentoring work constitutes the most important aspect of the course. The general rule is that you're expected to spend 5 hours per week outside of class doing your online work (or other out-of-class assignments), and to be consistent in responding to the students, as well as completing reading and other course assignments. **We expect each of you to make an average of at least ten substantive postings per week for each of the ten weeks** of online discussions.

Grades will be determined based on the following:

Quality and consistency of online mentoring work (25%)
Seminar participation & attendance, engagement with readings, in-class presentations (20%) Journal writing (15%)
Odyssey activity project (20%) Final reflection (20%)

Grade Scale

A	4.0	95 - 100
A-	3.7	90 - 94
B+	3.3	86 - 89
B	3.0	82 - 85
B-	2.7	78 - 81
C+	2.3	74 - 77
C	2.0	70 - 73
C-	1.7	67 - 69
D	1.0	60 - 66
F	0.0	0 - 59