

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev  
The Ben-Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Israel & Zionism

The Woodman & Scheller Israel Studies International Program (WSISIP)

*Anthropological Paradigms & Middle Eastern Cultures*

016220010120211

2023-2024 (**draft**)

Tuesday, 08:30 – 12:00

Sde Boker Campus, The Ben-Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Israel & Zionism

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Office hours and location:

1. Beer Sheva, Main Campus, Building: 74, Room: 460 – Wednesday 12:00-13:00
2. Sde Boker Campus, The Ben-Gurion Research Institute – Tuesday 12:00-13:00

**Course Description:**

In this course we read and discuss important sociological and anthropological studies that are highly relevant for understanding Middle Eastern societies past and present. Some of these studies directly deal with Middle Eastern cultures while others emerge from various historical contexts outside the Middle East. Together, we will examine the methods, the theories and the problems of major sociological and anthropological works and their contribution to our understanding of the Middle East.

**Course Objectives:**

The main aim of the course is to provide the necessary theoretical foundations in the field of anthropology for the purpose of interpreting Middle Eastern cultures and societies. Another principal objective of this course is to gain experience in critically reading canonical texts – revealing their premises, studying their weak spots and examining their contribution to our understanding of the cultures of our region.

**Course Structure:**

The course is divided into 26 meetings. In most of the course meetings there will be a discussion of one major study (+ further reading), based on individual reading.

**Total # of Credits:**

4

**Teaching Method:**

The course will be based on individual reading at home and group discussion in class. The students should prepare their weekly assigned readings and come to class with significant questions that stem from the readings. Every student will present two or three studies (Further Reading) in the classroom according to the list of presentations.

**Course Requirements:**

Compulsory attendance – Yes

Pre-requisites – None

**Structure of Final Grade:**

Course grade will be based on class attendance, individual presentations, knowledge of readings and active participation (75%), and on a final paper, which will review a major sociological or anthropological work that is relevant to the understanding of the modern Middle East (25%).

**Course Schedule Layout:**October 17 – Week 1:

Weekly subject title: **Introduction**

1. General Introduction
2. Introduction to the History of Anthropology

October 24 – Week 2:

Weekly subject title: **Sociological Foundations**

3. Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. by Franz Rosenthal, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1967, pp. 249-263.

**Further reading:**

P3. Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, pp. 313-317, 353-355.

Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, pp. lxviii-lxxxvii.

4. Émile Durkheim, *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*, trans. by John Spaulding and George Simpson, London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1952, pp. 41-53.

**Further reading:**

P4. Émile Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method*, trans. by Sarah Solovay and John Mueller, Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1958, pp. 1-13.

Durkheim, *Suicide*, pp. 104-122, 123-142, 152-170.

October 31 – Week 3:

Weekly subject title: **Urban Sociology**

5. Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life”, *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, trans. and ed. By Kurt Wolff, Glencoe, Ill: Free Press, 1950, pp. 409-424.

**Further reading:**

P5. Simmel, "The Stranger", *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, pp. 402-408.

David Frisby and Mike Featherstone (eds.), *Simmel on Culture*, "Sociology of the Meal", London: Sage, 1997, pp. 130-135.

Louis Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life" (1938), A. J. Reiss Jr. (ed.), *On Cities and Social Life: Selected Papers*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press and Phoenix Books, 1964, pp. 60-83.

6a. Fatima Mernissi, *Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood*, Cambridge, Mass.: Perseus Books, 1994, pp. 1-10.

6b. Naguib Mahfouz, *Midaq Alley*, trans. by Trevor Le Gassick, Washington D. C.: Three Continents Press, 1977, pp. 1-11.

**Further reading:**

P6. Huda Shaarawi, *Harem Years: The Memoirs of an Egyptian Feminist, 1879-1924*, trans. and intro. by Margot Badran, Cairo : American University in Cairo Press, 1998, pp. 7-22.

Shaarawi, *Harem Years*, pp. 23-61.

Mernissi, *Dreams of Trespass*, pp. 11-91.

Diane Singerman and Paul Amar (eds.), *Cairo Cosmopolitan: Politics, Culture, and Urban Space in the Globalized Middle East*, Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2006, pp. 193-220.

November 7 – Week 4:

Weekly subject title: **Historical Materialism**

7. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, trans. by Samuel Moore, *The Communist Manifesto*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 3-16.

**Further reading:**

P7. Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction", *The Communist Manifesto: A Modern Edition*, London: Verso, 1998, pp. 1-30.

8. Henry Rosenfeld, "Processes of Structural Change Within the Arab Village Extended Family," *American Anthropologist* 60(6) (1958): 1127-1139.

**Further Reading:**

P8. Friedrich Engels, "The Great Towns", in: Richard LeGates and Fredric Stout (eds.), *The City Reader*, London and New York: Routledge, 1996, pp. 46-55.

Hilma Granqvist, *Marriage Conditions in a Palestinian Village*, Helsingfors 1935.

November 14 – Week 5:

Weekly subject title: **Functionalism**

9. Bronislaw Malinowski, *Sex and Repression in Savage Society*, London: K. Paul, 1927, 1-17.

**Further reading:**

P9. Malinowski, *Sex and Repression*, pp. 104-134.

Malinowski, *Sex and Repression*, pp. VII-XII, 18-39.

10. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *The Andaman Islanders*, Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1948, pp. 229-246.

**Further reading:**

P10. Radcliffe-Brown, *The Andaman Islanders*, 330-351.

Radcliffe-Brown, *The Andaman Islanders*, vii-x, 1-21.

November 21 – Week 6:

Weekly subject title: **Culture and Personality**

11. Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1946, pp. 195-227.

**Further reading:**

P11. Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, pp. 177-194.

Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, 1-19.

12. Mark Allen, *Arabs*, London: Continuum, 2006, pp. 3-24.

**Further reading:**

P12. Allen, *Arabs*, pp. 43-58.

November 28 – Week 7:

Weekly subject title: **Field Trip**

December 5 – Week 8:

Weekly subject title: **Local Knowledge**

15. Emanuel Marx, *Bedouin of the Negev*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967, pp. 61-80.

**Further reading:**

P15. Marx, *Bedouin of the Negev*, pp. 101-145.

16. Frank H. Stewart, "Tribalism", in: Gerhard Bowering (ed.), *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought*, Princeton: N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2013, pp. 563-567.

**Further reading:**

P16. Lawrence Rubin, "Islamic Political Activism among Israel's Negev Bedouin Population", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 44/3 (2017): 429-446.

December 12 – Week 9:

Weekly subject title: **Self and Society**

17. Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday life*, Garden City, N.Y.: Double Day, 1959, pp. 66-86.

**Further reading:**

P17. Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: the form and reason for exchange in archaic societies*, trans. by W.D. Halls, London: Routledge, 1990, pp. 1-9.

18. Mary Douglas, "A History of Grid and Group Cultural Theory".

**Further reading:**

P18. Mary Douglas, *How Institutions Think*, Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1986, 1-8.

December 19 – Week 10:

Weekly subject title: **Structuralism**

19. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, trans. by Claire Jacobson and Broole Grundfest Schoepf, New York: basic Books, 1963, pp. 206-231.

**Further reading:**

P19. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966, pp. 1-34.

20. Pierre Bourdieu, *Algeria 1960*, trans. by Richard Nice, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979, pp. 133-153.

**Further reading:**

P20. Jane Goodman, "The Proverbial Bourdieu: Habitus and the Politics of Representation in the Ethnography of Kabylia", *American Anthropologist* 105/4 (2003): 782–793.

Edward T. Hall, *The Hidden Dimension*, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966, pp. 139-153.

December 26 – Week 11:

Weekly subject title: **Cultural Anthropology**

21. Victor Turner, “Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in *Rites de Passage*”, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1967, pp. 93-111.

**Further reading:**

P21. Arnold van Gennep, “Betrothal and Marriage”, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. by Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960, pp. 116-145.

22. Clifford Geertz, *The interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, New York: Basic Books, 1973, pp. 3-30.

**Further reading:**

P22. Geertz, *The interpretation of Cultures*, 412-453.

Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*, New York: Basic Books, 1983, pp. 121-146.

January 2 – Week 12:

Weekly subject title: **Critical Anthropology**

23. Renato Rosaldo, “From the Door of his Tent: The Fieldworker and the Inquisitor”, James Clifford and George Marcus (eds.), *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986, pp. 77-97.

**Further reading:**

P23. Talal Asad (ed.), *Anthropology & the Colonial Encounter*, New York: Humanities Books, 1973, pp. 9-19.

24. Lila Abu-Lughud, *Veiled Sentiments: Honor and Poetry in a Bedouin Society*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986, pp. 1-35.

**Further reading:**

P24. Abu-Lughud, *Veiled Sentiments*, 186-207.

January 9 – Week 13:

Weekly subject title: **Social Amnesia**

25. Paul Connerton, “Seven Types of Forgetting”, *Memory Studies* 1/1 (2008): 59-71.

**Further reading:**

P25. Tamir Sorek, *Palestinian Commemoration in Israel: Calendars, Monuments & Matyrs*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2015, pp. 1-18.

26. Kobi Peled, “The Theater of Memory”, *Memory Studies* 13.4 (2020): 633-648.