



MOSP60, The Politics of Aesthetics and Communication in the Middle East, 7.5 credits

Mellanösternstudier: Politik, estetik och kommunikation, 7,5 högskolepoäng

Second Cycle / Avancerad nivå

Details of approval

The syllabus was approved by The pro-dean for First-Cycle Studies at the Faculties of Humanities and Theology on 2011-06-22 to be valid from 2011-06-22, autumn semester 2011.

General Information

The course is offered as part of the Master of Arts programme in Middle Eastern Studies (MESLU) at the Centre for Middle Eastern Studies and as a free-standing course.

Language of instruction: English

Main field of studies

Middle Eastern Studies

Depth of study relative to the degree requirements

A1N, Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements

Learning outcomes

On completion of the course the student shall

Knowledge and understanding

- be able to give an account of examples of current research and theories of power aspects, economics and political dynamics associated with entertainment, communication and aesthetic representation, especially with regard to film studies research
- be able to exemplify and describe how film and information technology are used in the present-day Middle East in the discussions and representation of gender, sexuality, ethnicity and human rights, of cultural, religious and national identity and of political and economic power

Competence and skills

- be able to participate in, organise and lead discussions on modern and late modern film produced in the Middle East
- be able, orally and in writing, to reflect critically on the position of film and IT media in the present-day Middle East and illustrate how film and media have commercial, political, regulatory and politically subversive functions
- be able to complete a detailed analysis of a specific film produced in the Middle East, applying film and media studies theories on representation, orientalism, postcolonialism, gender, sexuality, migration and ethnicity

Judgement and approach

- be able to assess and judge the applicability of current film and media theories to film and media expressions produced in the Middle East, with regard to concepts such as exoticism, orientalism and ethnocentricity
- be able to assess the impact of socioeconomic and political factors related to the colonial and postcolonial history of the Middle East and globalisation on film and media produced in the Middle East, with regard to both political aims and aesthetic means
- be able to judge the social and political forces behind film production in diaspora and exile, and the distinctive communicative and aesthetic traits of such productions.

Course content

The aim of the course is to provide students with practice in reviewing power aspects, especially in present-day film produced in the Middle East. A second aim is to highlight online media expression, films produced in diaspora and exile, and film and media productions in Europe and North America professing to represent the social, religious and political realities of the Middle East.

In terms of theory the course is based on a multidisciplinary approach informed by research in film and media studies, anthropology, political science and religious studies. The regulatory and subversive potential in aesthetic expressions is highlighted, as are the power aspects and cultural norms in aesthetic representations associated with orientalism, sexism and heteronormativity. Furthermore, the economic aspects of image flows as commodities and analyses of religious symbolism and its political aims and effects in films and other media expressions produced in and about the Middle East are highlighted. The examples are primarily taken from films produced in the Middle East in the 20th and 21st centuries, focusing on recent decades.

Films produced in Iran are a special focus area for the course. The way in which political and religious control determine film production in Iran is examined, but also the way in which film imagery and ambiguity serve as a forum for a political questioning of norms regarding democracy, gender relations, sexuality and power.

A second focus area deals with online material produced in both the Middle East and in Europe and North America and the way in which online aesthetics work as expressions of a political and religious questioning of political power and cultural norms but also as a conduit for political values.

The course is structured around lectures and film screenings but there are opportunities for students, supervised by lecturers, to organise, conduct and lead discussions on film and media expressions, applying theories of power, politics and aesthetics.

Course design

The teaching consists of lectures, compulsory seminars and a number of screenings of films and other examples of media expression.

Assessment

The assessment is based on the students' individual and active participation in the seminars, in which students organise and lead at least one seminar, and a final written assignment. All examinations are conducted in English.

Subcourses that are part of this course can be found in an appendix at the end of this document.

Grades

Marking scale: Fail, Pass, Pass with distinction.

To be awarded a Pass on the course, students must have completed all assignments within the time span allotted to each.

Entry requirements

To be admitted to course, students must have at least a Bachelor's degree.

Subcourses in MOSP60, The Politics of Aesthetics and Communication in the Middle East

Applies from V11

1101 Final Assignment: Politics, Aesthetics and Communication, 7,5 hp
Grading scale: Fail, Pass, Pass with distinction