Dr. Shabout
Office hours: Tuesday 2:20-3:20 pm, and Wednesday 4-5pm or e-mail me
E-mail: nada.shabout@unt.edu

Teaching Assistant: Emma Ahmad (emmaahmad@my.unt.edu)

Course Description:
Art is always political. And so is food! However, art from the Arab world and the Middle East is generally received in the West in connection to wars and conflicts. This notion assumes a direct correlation in the production of this art to politics, war and terrorism. Food is also often conflicted by the politics of the region in connection to colonialism and identity. It, thus, finds its way into art production by a number of contemporary artists for different reasons. Meanwhile the new discourse is rethinking contemporary art during what it perceives as a global crisis considering recent geopolitical, economic and health crises and their impact on visual culture and artistic practice. This course investigates the relationship between culture, power, food and politics, drawing on a wide range of comparative cases. The course provides the context for modern and contemporary arts and cultures of mostly the Arab part of the region, as they were formed in connection to Islam and secular modern history. We will start by formulating an understanding of Arab art in terms of production, reception, exhibition and value, in both local and global markets, through exploring and reevaluating discourses of culture, identity, and globalization. The course explores specific case studies of cultural policy, national ideology, and historical patrimony and the political role of the arts in a transnational context through the work of specific artists.

Course Requirements:
All required readings are on Canvas. Given that this course is taught remotely, you do need to have access to a computer with internet access. You will need to upload and download text and images on Canvas for asynchronous meetings. At times you will need a digital camera--your smartphone camera is fine. You will also need Zoom for synchronous meetings. You are required to be seen as part of zoom discussion sessions. For that You’ll need a webcam.

A Note on Remote Learning
I understand that each of you is living in a very different situation under the pandemic restrictions, and this may very well include more responsibilities and distractions than before. I am also aware that the current situation is emotionally draining and that you may have friends and family that depend on you for emotional and/or physical support. It is my goal for this course to provide some relief, not to cause you further stress or anxiety. Don’t hesitate to reach out if
you feel overwhelmed because we can adjust this course and its requirements in ways that are beneficial to you, as an individual and as a class community.

Because the situation we face is changing daily - within both our communities and our individual lives- I will adjust the syllabus if necessary to account for unexpected changes. To the best of your ability, I ask that you keep me posted if you are no longer able to participate in the course for a period of time, for whatever reason, so that together we can make this semester successful for you academically. I am here to make sure that happens for all of you.

As with any group technology effort, there will be kinks. Don’t panic if something simply doesn’t work and you miss an entire class or can’t upload an assignment. This is going to happen, so relax and know that it’s going to take time to sort out all the inevitable kinks of remote learning. I am here to catch you up on anything you miss.

Course Objectives:
The following are the objectives and outcomes of this course:

- To introduce students to the discourse surrounding art in the Middle east and the ways in which the discipline of art history has engaged with the conceptual strategies of post-colonial studies.
- Further develop your critical thinking, speaking, writing and research skills.
- Achieve a better understanding of a culture that is exceedingly in the daily headlines.
- To provide students with the analytical tools necessary for examining the political underpinnings of visual culture, particularly images representing cross-cultural encounters.
- To develop a language through which to engage with contemporary cultural politics.
- To become familiar with foundations and biases that inform the ways in which exhibitions construct narratives of artistic practice in a global context.

Requirements and Grading System:
The course is divided into lectures, assignments and discussions. You will be evaluated on your preparedness for each class. You will also be evaluated on the organization, thoughtfulness, and resourcefulness of your writing assignments. Every student is expected to fully participate in the preparation and execution of group presentations and any accompanying written materials.

Check Canvas regularly for announcements and syllabus updates. If I or Emma email you, please reply within 3 days and we will do the same.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion Board Forums</td>
<td>40 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>35 points</td>
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Course Structure:
This class is scheduled to meet twice every week during the semester. In our current alternative universe, we will have synchronous live zoom meetings and asynchronous exercises.
assignments and discussion board forums) on Canvas. Meeting days might shift from Tuesday to Thursday during the course based on specific events. All readings (you will have essays to read, videos to watch and PowerPoint lectures) assignments and discussion board forums are due on the date assigned in the course schedule below. Discussions (both live and on Canvas) are important as they provide opportunities for each of you to pose questions and to compare responses and observations.

The class might be divided into groups for discussions and projects when needed.

**Zoom Classes:**
- We will hold a zoom class mostly on Tuesdays with shifts to Thursdays when necessary, for live discussion.
- Class time might include short lectures, student presentations, and discussions. The material to be covered in the zoom class are noted in throughout the course schedule so that students can “come to class” prepared and ready to discuss and ask questions.
- If you are unable to attend the zoom class, please email me to work on an alternative solution.

**Discussion Threads**
For each discussion thread, there will be a guiding topic and/or question. You are required to submit 2 entries (100-250 words/per response) for each one in response to the prompt and second that engages with another student. You are meant to read the other posts and form opinions accordingly. The course discussion thread will be open till Thursday 11:59 pm. The goal is to have your response available for our discussion during class but allowing you to revise or add after class. Your responses will be collectively graded based on their thoughtfulness, thoroughness, and ability to make connections across course material.

**Criteria:**
- Read the postings submitted by other students. Threaded discussions provide the opportunity for interaction and learning from one another. This requires you to follow the posts of other students in your discussion group.
- Make reference to the relevant material from the text and other assigned readings.
- Make reference to information or ideas expressed by your classmates in their posts.

**Assignments:** Each prompt draws on the readings for that week. These are intended as visual and textual analyses. They require you to capture an argument in a concise manner. Responses should be no less than 250 words and no more than 350 words.

**Final Project:**
For the final project, students have an option between a paper or a studio project. *In this final assignment, I want you to take a critical or theoretical stand with regard to your chosen artist and related topics.* This is your opportunity to grapple with serious questions about the role of art and culture in our lives.

**Artist Project:** This assignment is based on an artist-biography methodology. You must make an argument based on biographical and cultural contexts and in reference to what you have been learning this semester. Choose an artist from the posted list (you can suggest an artist that is not on this list in consultation with me). Your artist should be chosen in consultation with me, and a
short abstract/proposal and preliminary bibliography will be due beforehand (see course schedule). You will also present your artist to class during the last 2 weeks.

1. **Art History Paper**: In this paper, you will critically explore the artist career within historical, cultural, and personal contexts. *Length: 4-5 typed, double spaced pages with proper footnotes and bibliography of 3-5 sources.*

2. **Studio Project**: students may choose to complete a studio project in lieu of the Research Paper. You will still have to choose an artist and provide an abstract by listed dates listed. For the studio project you will engage with the artist of your choice in a manner you choose (reflect, refute, etc.). This can be interpreted in many different ways and you are encouraged to be creative. You will then write a paper outlining the arguments and motivations behind your created work. *Length: 2 typed, double spaced pages with proper footnotes and bibliography of 3-5 sources.*

**Policy on Quality of Written Work**: Translating visual signs into verbal language is not an easy task. Thus, in the visual and subjective realm of art history, clarity of presented ideas is vital. Therefore, your written work will be evaluated in terms of proper grammar, syntax, and spelling, as well as the clear and logical presentation of ideas and argument. If you make errors in any of these areas consistently, your grade will be lowered.

**Cheating and Plagiarism Policy:**
Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses and violate UNT’s Code of Student Conduct. Any suspected act of dishonesty will result in a grade of “F” in the course. Further, the professor will write a letter to the Dean of the School of Visual Arts and the Dean of Students, who will pursue disciplinary actions at their discretion. Cheating in this class includes not participating in your group assignments. Each group will have a group leader to ensure participation. It will be the group’s leader responsibility to inform the professor of unproductive members.

You cannot use a paper or project from another class or from this class in another without consulting both professors.

According to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities, plagiarism is defined as “the deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas, words or statements of another person as one’s own without acknowledgement” (www.unt.edu/csrr). Copying material from any source without providing a citation (footnote or endnote) is a form of plagiarism. Likewise, if you paraphrase another author’s words or ideas, you must credit that person with a citation. While most incidents of plagiarism at the graduate level are unintentional, it is your responsibility to ensure that you accurately indicate which words and ideas are those of others.

**Acceptable Student Behavior:**
Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at [www.unt.edu/csrr](http://www.unt.edu/csrr).
Sexual Discrimination, Harassment, Assault:
UNT is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these acts of aggression, please know that you are not alone. The federal Title IX law makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses. UNT has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

American Disabilities Act:
The College of Visual Arts and Design is committed to full academic access for all qualified students, including those with disabilities. In keeping with this commitment and in order to facilitate equality of educational access, faculty members in the College will make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with a disability, such as appropriate adjustments to the classroom environment and the teaching, testing, or learning methodologies when doing so does not fundamentally alter the course.

If you have a disability, it is your responsibility to obtain verifying information from the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) and to inform me of your need for an accommodation. Requests for accommodation must be given to me no later than the first week of classes for students registered with the ODA as of the beginning of the current semester. If you register with the ODA after the first week of classes, your accommodation requests will be considered after this deadline.

Grades assigned before an accommodation is provided will not be changed. Information about how to obtain academic accommodations can be found in UNT Policy 18.1.14, at www.unt.edu/oda, and by visiting the ODA in Room 321 of the University Union. You also may call the ODA at 940.565.4323.

Course Risk Factor:
According to University Policy, this course is classified as a category one course. Students enrolled in this course will not be exposed to any significant hazards and are not likely to suffer any bodily injury. Students will be informed of any potential health hazards or potential bodily injury connected with the use of any materials and/or processes and will be instructed how to proceed without danger to themselves and others.

Center for Students Rights and Responsibilities:
Each student at UNT is entitled to certain rights associated with higher education institutions. See www.unt.edu/csrr for further information.

Online Resources:
Aramco World: We produce AramcoWorld to increase cross-cultural understanding by broadening knowledge of the histories, cultures and geography of the Arab and Muslim worlds and their global interconnections, past and present. In print, AramcoWorld is distributed six times a year, without charge, to a limited number of interested readers; online, it is published on this site and available in tablet and mobile editions using the AramcoWorld app. Back issues from 1960 are searchable, and texts are available in full; photographs from archival articles are online from 2004 to the present.

Artsy: features the world’s leading galleries, museum collections, foundations, artist estates, art fairs, and benefit auctions, all in one place. Our growing database of 800,000 images of art, architecture, and design by 70,000 artists spans historical, modern, and contemporary works, and includes the largest online database of contemporary art. Artsy is used by art lovers, museum-goers, patrons, collectors, students, and educators to discover, learn about, and collect art. https://www.artsy.net/artists.

Culturunners: an independent arts organisation which supports artists journeys and production across physical and ideological borders: http://culturunners.com/#


Hyperallergic: a daily online art publication on art and the art world: http://hyperallergic.com

Ibraaz: Initiated by the Kamel Lazaar Foundation in 2011, Ibraaz is the leading critical forum on visual culture in North Africa and the Middle East. We publish an annual online platform – consisting of essays, interviews, artists' projects, and platform responses – that focuses on research questions conceived through a network of editorial contributors based in the Middle East and beyond. Our key editorial aim is to publish, alongside work by internationally renowned writers, academics, curators, activists, and filmmakers, emerging writers and artists: https://www.ibraaz.org.

The Mathaf Encyclopedia of Modernism and the Arab World: The bilingual Mathaf Encyclopedia is a free online scholarly resource providing basic facts and in depth information on modern art of the Arab world: http://www.encyclopedia.mathaf.org.qa/en/Pages/default.aspx

Nafas Art Magazine: Nafas was developed by Universes in Universe - Worlds of Art (UiU) commissioned by the ifa, and published since March 2003 as one of the first online magazines for contemporary art from the Maghreb to the Middle East, from Central to Southeast Asia: http://u-in-u.com/nafas/.

Routledge Encyclopedia of Modernism: An accessible and intuitive online platform, Routledge Encyclopedia of Modernism brings together a wealth of interdisciplinary content about the Modernist period, and is the ideal starting point for any research in modernism. Access through UNT Library: https://libproxy.library.unt.edu:4199

Selections: a bi-monthly magazine with high quality content on all subjects related to Art, Culture, Design, and Style: http://www.selectionsarts.com/category/art/

Disclaimers

Content in the arts can sometimes include works, situations, actions, and language that can be personally challenging or offensive to some students on the grounds, for example, of sexual
explicitness, violence, or blasphemy. The College of Visual Arts and Design is devoted to the principle of freedom of expression, artistic and otherwise, and it is not the college’s practice to censor these works or ideas on any of these grounds. Students who might feel unduly distressed or made uncomfortable by such expressions should withdraw at the start of the term and seek another course.

The professors reserve the right to alter this syllabus if and when necessary

Course Outline

Week 1

Introduction and Terminologies

Tuesday January 12: Zoom Meeting
Course Overview. What is the Middle East? North Africa? The Arab World? Who are the Arab? Who are the Muslims? What is the Muslim World? Countries? How are they different than the Arab?

Thursday January 14: Discussion post

Read


Watch

Documentary: Broken Records: https://vimeo.com/20067860
Broken Records is a documentary on the rise of Arab Hip-Hop, directed and produced by NU-Q juniors - Rana Khaled, Shannon Farhoud and Ashlene Ramadan. The documentary is about Arab Artists and their cultivation of western art into modern Arab culture. It's about hip-hop and western culture influencing and creating a new Arab culture. The documentary features two globally recognized Arab Hip-hop artists, Omar Offendum and The Narcicyst.

Discussion Board Forum

What is and where is the Middle East? Compare what you knew before reading Scharnweber and what you learned since? How has media shaped your understanding of the region?

Week 2

Civic and Cultural Destruction

Tuesday January 19: Zoom meeting

Read
Rebecca Anne Proctor, “Huge explosion in Beirut decimates city and leaves art scene in disarray,” August 5, 2020, https://www.theartnewspaper.com/news/beirut-explosion?fbclid=IwAR1Aae8x2WOCxAvvRAY-bgnqANJA9_oZfD1els-InpFxUul7y8YygCc0pdl (Links to an external site.)

Naomi Rea, ‘I Doubt It Is Worth Reopening’: Art Spaces in Beirut Are Decimated by the City’s Deadly Explosions: https://news.artnet.com/market/beirut-explosion-galleries-1899782?fbclid=IwAR3WJIciWyuq4tsPoQBhi6GuzIN2kmEmIdLU65ZEpmu2D8j5nh_FxwHXP34

**Thursday January 21: Discussion post**

**Read**

Christiane Gruber, “We can’t breathe”—how George Floyd’s killing is shaping Middle Eastern protest: Activists are using the iconography of the “American martyr” to fight their own political battles, August 5, 2020.


“Why do we care about statues?,” https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/w3cszl3k?fbclid=IwAR0iopfqr31FO-3079rf20AfOHNikKtf dnUJXvJUs0U7fYBJ9wv0.

**Watch**

Once upon a Time in Iraq, Frontline, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T2L4jcVqo8s

**Discussion Board Forum**

**Week 3 The Discourse of Orientalism**

**Tuesday January 26: Zoom meeting**

**Read**


**Thursday January 28: Discussion Board**

**Read**


**Discussion Board Forum**
Week 4

**Tuesday February 2: Zoom Meeting**

In class Assignment

**Thursday February 4: Discussion Board**

Read


Salwa Mikdadi, “Gender and Politics in Contemporary Art: Arab Women Empower the Image.”


Watch

"Review: Totalitarian Art by Igor Golomstock"
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pXZnXUZcDE4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pXZnXUZcDE4)

**Discussion Board Forum**

Week 5

**Contemporary Voices**

**Tuesday February 9: Zoom Meeting- Guest Artist Ambreen Butt**


**Thursday February 11: Discussion Board**

**Discussion Board Forum**

Week 6

**Art, statelessness, and transnational communities**

**Tuesday February 16: Zoom Meeting-Guest Artist Samia Halaby**

Read


Thursday February 18: Discussion Board

Read

Watch
Online Cultural Majlis: Samia Halaby 8th April 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yoNkM5kQGG4&list=PLICdXXQFLLfWVaQzjnZV5MlM5LInFxBdg&index=3&t=0s

Discussion Board Forum

Week 7 Food and Colonialism

Tuesday February 23
Time Change: Thursday February 25: Zoom meeting starting at 7 pm. Shabout’s Lecture at SJSU on contemporary Iraqi art.

Watch
Soup Over Bethlehem depicts an ordinary Palestinian family, Sansour's own, around a dinner table on a rooftop overlooking the West Bank city of Bethlehem. What starts as a culinary discussion about the national dish 'mloukhieh' soon evolves into a personal and engaging conversation about politics - thereby emphasizing the symbiosis of food and politics so indicative of the Palestinian experience.
For more explore: https://larissasansour.com

This video work produced by artist Larissa Sansour in collaboration with Søren Lind narrates the visions of a figure who buries porcelain in the ground in order to present a fictional civilization to future archeologists. Her work urges viewers to consider the speculative futures of regions that have been subjected to warfare. While the landscape presented in the video is visually dystopic, it nevertheless builds on the political potentiality of futurism as a political stance.

Read

Elyssa Madden “Cultural Influences on British Cuisine through Colonization”
https://adhc.lib.ua.edu/globalfoodways/cultural-influences-on-british-cuisine-through-colonization/


Discussion Board Forum:

Week 8 Foodways

Tuesday March 2: Zoom Meeting

In class Assignment
Global culture is best represented through foodways. Foodways often refer to the intersection of food in culture, traditions, and history. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines Foodways as "the eating habits and culinary practices of a people, region, or historical period." These habits would necessarily carry much significance and would inform other aspects including the visual. Think of food that has originated from the Middle East, North Africa or South Asia and has been adapted in the US. Would that adaptation be considered Orientalism? Why?

Thursday March 4: Discussion Board

Read

Matthew Jaber Stiffler “CONSUMING ORIENTALISM: PUBLIC FOODWAYS OF ARAB AMERICAN CHRISTIANS”

Discussion Board Forum

**Week 9**

**The Art of Nation**

**Tuesday March 9**

*Introduction of Wafaa Bilal’s Canto III Project in Collaboration with San Jose State University.*

**Time change - Thursday March 11: Zoom Joint Workshop with SJSU**

**Watch**

Nada Shabout – "A New School of Painting:" The Baghdad Group for Modern Art

Nada Shabout introduces "A New School of Painting", focusing on the Baghdad Group of Modern Art, formed in 1951, and its central role in the invention of a specific modern visual identity in Iraq. Symposium, GROUP DYNAMICS: Collectives of the Modernist Period, [https://www.lenbachhaus.de/en/visit/whats-on/date/symposium-1157](https://www.lenbachhaus.de/en/visit/whats-on/date/symposium-1157)

**Read**


Jessica Winegar, Creative Reckonings, ch 5: Collecting A nation, Displaying (A) Culture, 225-267.

**Discussion Board Forum**

**Week 10**

**Art and Torture**

**Tuesday March 16**

**Time change - Thursday March 18: Zoom Joint Workshop with SJSU**

**Read**

Nada Shabout, “Contemporary Trajectories Iraqi Art,”


Lamia Joreige, “What we are left with” 2009.


**Watch**
Wafaa Bilal discusses Shoot an Iraqi, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DcyquvDEe0o

Degenerate Art - 1993, The Nazis vs. Expressionism: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1QE4Ld1mkoM

**Discussion Board Forum**

**Week 11**

**Subverting Politics**

**Tuesday March 23**

**Time change-Thursday March 25: Zoom Joint Workshop with SJSU**

**Read**


Brian Whitaker, Unspeakable Love: Gay & Lesbian Love in the Middle East. European representations, 57-61; Depictions in Arab cinema, 89-97.

**Watch**

AGAINST DISAPPEARANCE: HTTPS://WWW.SHUBBAK.CO.UK/AGAINST-DISAPPEARANCE-DISCUSSION-CULTURAL-HERITAGE/

‘“Mirrors of Diaspora’ With Afifa Aleiby. 7 living artists escaping Iraq in the 90’s. https://vimeo.com/241790911 (Links to an external site.). To watch, the password: Baghdad

**Discussion Board Forum**

**Week 12**

**Art and Healing**

**Tuesday March 30:**

**Thursday April 1: Zoom Meeting**

**Watch**


**Read**

Assignment

Week 13

Time Change: Tuesday April 6: Zoom Meeting-Symposium Canton III with Wafaa Bilal, 7-8 pm

Thursday April 8

Read


Wendy Shaw, Turkey's Summer of Love and the Art of Political Protest: https://www.x-traonline.org/article/turkeys-summer-of-love/?fbclid=IwAR2HABBIMUrOTEC-oTGt_CK4-mJQLDIFEPolsLLsua7-eZEP4hDDW3g0ZM

Discussion Board

Week 14

Final Presentations

Tuesday April 13: Zoom meeting

Thursday April 15: Zoom meeting

Week 15

Final Presentations

Tuesday April 20: Zoom meeting

Thursday April 22: Zoom meeting