

Film Literature of Middle Eastern Women: Explorations from Egypt, Iran, and Turkey

Bonnee Breese
Overbrook High School

Overview

Rationale

Objectives

Background

Women's Visual Interpretations Represent

Political & Religious Influences

Social & Cultural Inspirations

Dynamics of Social Change in the lens of Turkish Women

Iranian Artistic Expression a Marker of Feminine Agency

Images of Enchantment from Egypt

Classroom Activities

Annotated Bibliography

Student Resources

Annotated Filmography

Appendices

Overview

This curriculum unit is designed for use in a high school setting English Language Arts classroom, but can also be used in part in a World History class. In recent years, United States television viewers and frequent web surfers have increasingly been exposed to media that far reaches the borders of the States. With this in mind, American youth must increase their knowledge base of peoples from around the globe. Students must be able to absorb information from varied multimedia and technological pathways to understand the global interworking of us all. Increasingly, students have to read beyond the spoken and/or printed words to understand visual cues as experienced aesthetically and culturally in body language, clothing styles, physical adornments and more. In order for our students to compete in the global economy, it is important that they have a breadth of knowledge that allows them the opportunity to be competent in the world market.

This unit will assist in expanding students' knowledge and understanding of traditions, language and culture of Turkey, Iran, and Egypt from the female perspective. In this way, students will be challenged to question and/or reevaluate representation of Middle Eastern traditions by provoking thought via women in film, the news, and in their

communities. The three countries, Turkey, Iran and Egypt, were chosen because of the proximity of its land mass geographic placement. However, it is understood for this unit and will be discussed with students that Iraq, and Syria separate Iran and Egypt. Therefore, this unit will also increase student knowledge surrounding these countries as U.S. news accounts occur in the Middle East, giving students reason to increase their use of new technology in map browsing, analysis, and geographic understanding via mobile devices, recent software technologies, and the Internet.

The curriculum unit will also be used to enhance and support my English Language Arts classroom in areas concerning Middle Eastern peoples, more specifically women of these regions. For this purpose, students will interact with many informational text readings, some documentary and political commentary films. Students will also learn to scrutinize meaning from films that show class differences that visually capture day-to-day social norms. Cinematic sources can be very useful in exploring notions of gender in popular culture, elaborating upon themes introduced in modern literature and illustrating competing sociopolitical agendas in [a] society.” (Amin) Therefore, this unit focuses its attention to the details of society through observation of varied films as directed by women.

In choosing Iran, I researched and studied for its diversity in treatment of people based on gender, race, religious practices and the influence of the arts in warring communities. Women, as an important part of Iranian life, offer students a clear study for the components of language, religion, and other characteristics of society. Iraq cannot realistically be ignored in this study. Iraqi women have created many films that include commentary from Iran and vice versa; a compelling context to study gender ideology both in war propaganda films and in serious film observations. For this reason, students will be allowed to evaluate emotional ideals in these countries in wartimes – love, hate, and honor - as well, in times of peace.

Egypt will be studied because it is the only country on African continent as being encompassed in the Middle Eastern region. Students will note its inclusion in respect to its geographic place as reflected on many modern-day maps. Students will study the various social trends of the people as reflected in film and television. Egyptian women, being a timely topic, will be researched on the basis of their part in the political process. Are their voices heard in such a male-dominated political arena? Are mothers, aunts, grandmothers behind the scenes of the decision-making processes of men? Furthermore, since Egyptian women have not taken hold of the camera, we will view them from their place in front of the camera lens. Through the use of film, students will be exposed to varied messages other than the messages of network television.

Turkey will be studied because of its long history of Islamic tradition that has enveloped much of the Middle East long ago as it is seen to still be the dominate religious practice to date. We will delve into the Ottoman Empire tradition, particularly its passing

of generational lifestyles and rights of women, as it has left its imprint on present-day lifestyles and political practice of women in this region. Women occupying the same spaces and places as men will be put to question.

Rationale

With the experience in this seminar, *The Middle East through the Eyes of Women*, I want to enhance my students' lives by connecting them to aspects of the Middle East through film, written and spoken literature. The unit will also give consideration to oral histories through the introduction of Middle Eastern women's memoirs, and film documentaries. In this framework, the curriculum unit will consider how Middle Eastern women continue to grapple with the perpetuation of gender discrimination in modern societies. In a feminist category of study, we will delve into studying the imagery of the veil (in film), the ideas and identities it purports within the society and to us in the West. This work directly focuses on women and prioritizes women's experiences as deserving for investigation.

Cinema gives its audience a glimpse of gender socio-cultural norms that might not otherwise be voiced or seen in societies dominated by male discourse and strict behavioral customs. As a result, we will pay close attention to three country's historical heritage, cultural trends in education, oral and non-verbal languages, management of religious practices and diversity within Islam, colloquialisms – all within the role of gender expression. In comparing the life of women from Turkey, Egypt, and Iran whether literary or for the film screen, it is the goal to expand students' knowledge base in the global marketing of social distinction. Female identities, as expressed by women filmmakers and directors, impart authenticity and legitimacy on the story as told through the cinematic lens.

In looking at films from these regions, we will use documentaries, video commentaries, “block-busters” and short films from the 20th and 21st centuries. This gives students a cross-section of viewing while studying throughout the unit. I will show at least two or three films which focus on women's issues that were directed by a man, specifically Abbas Kiarostami, Bahram Beizai, Eran Riklis, and maybe a few others.

In addition, film is not normally viewed as being literature that is to be read for understanding. Yet, students will undoubtedly have to read the subtitles while viewing human images and geographic landscapes they must find comfort levels in understanding body language in other countries. Students will have to delve into researching foreign languages, terms, and colloquialisms. Students will also have to view film with a keen eye as to how filmmakers, directors, and authors use the landscape to paint predetermined pictures that either support or denigrate lifestyles, messages, or political processes for women in that country.

Objectives

This curriculum unit is specifically designed for a high school English Language Arts Honors, gifted or advanced classroom setting. This unit can also be used in the English Language Learners setting. It uses Pennsylvania State Standards from the 11th grade Reading, Writing, and Speaking; and standards from 11th grade History, Geography, and Civics & Government. We will also use various standards from Arts and Humanities in the realm of film. As a result, students will be competent in encountering and including cultural/historical knowledge and inquiry in film in varied English Language Arts subject areas while applying these standards to the study of literature in foreign languages. Students will be encouraged to become partial to the study of communication via politics, propaganda, war and cultural/religious trends through the perspective of women in the Middle East.

Students will also become familiar with film literary terms and film technological uses to expand their base of understanding the visual purposes of films seen that we will analyze. Basic film terms will introduce the unit for ease of transition in the study of literature using films. Students will find familiarity in hearing and reading film terminology, but will find how the uses/meanings of certain textual literary terms differ significantly in film literature. This use will increase students' knowledge base of cinematography through exploring the construction of a shot within the story plot. Students will delve into seeing how Middle Eastern women as per their social groups are represented on screen (role in front of the camera) and its position in the film industry (role behind the camera).

There are many special aspects to film study, because of the varied strategies and resources, students will be required to cover major topics using PA Arts & Humanities Standards for basic knowledge in performing arts and media relationships. Films are often based on novels, short stories, and plays. However, throughout the instructional portion of the unit, we will also use film documentaries, cinematic historical adaptations, and some autobiographical film accounts directed, written and/or filmed by women of the Middle East.

Additionally for this unit, we will use academic standards from Pennsylvania's Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening; Arts and Humanities; Geography; and History. We will also incorporate within film literature study the use of media and technology resources for research, information, communications analysis, problem solving, and decision making in content learning via film. This type of study will give room for students to identify complexities and inconsistencies in the information and the different perspectives¹ found in Middle Eastern film. It is important to note that at times it will be important to show the visual perception comparison of men's films to provide perspective of contrasting views and/or opinion in the social framework of the art.

Background

Women's Visual Interpretations Represent

Films of the Middle East illustrated on the screen by women are developed for various reasons: to challenge, support, question, reveal, and/or express ideas and lifestyles across the regions. A number of films from Middle Eastern countries are marketed specifically to Muslim women for purpose of advertising, carving a new market in specific commodities, and edifying certain stereotypes. Other films of these regions have portrayed a more realistic visual story of the plight of women, triggering female filmmakers and directors to sometimes either be imprisoned or exiled from their homelands. Still more films of these regions celebrate the empowerment of women through feminist self-expression, on-screen management of differences and diversity among Muslim women, as well, women's films allow for circulation of authenticity and legitimacy of Middle Eastern women in the public sphere.

Traditionally, women were excluded from almost all public forms of entertainment; Middle Eastern women did author poetry, recite religious verses and songs (*madḥ*), and work as secular singers and dancers for weddings and other celebrations. Yet, until the late twentieth century, women except in Egypt were not given access to filmmaking and the film industry. There was reluctance to admit women to the world of film, both in front of and behind the camera. Nevertheless, women soon supported and began working for the new medium. The speed of this development, however, differed considerably from one Middle Eastern region to another.²

Actresses were seen as being similar to prostitutes, not only as film stars, but also in cartoon caricatures. These images were profound statements that carried throughout the Middle East. Egyptian films were viewed in the public sphere while their women did not have to endure as many hardships because of their participation in the film industry.

More recently, in films coming from Middle East, its people's views of actresses has changed. During the discussion that will be brought about at this point in the unit, students will be instructed to find supporting evidence to the aforementioned claim. It will be suggested they use Wikipedia, the MEC³, and search engines – Dogpile and Google.

The cinema of Iran, Egypt and Turkey while different in many ways share a number of common characteristics. In the last three decades, the most important common characteristic of serious filmmaking in all these countries is its politicization on the one hand and its commitment to depicting social ills and cultural anomalies, on the other⁴. For these reasons, students will learn to compare, contrast and analyze the story form fact or fiction to the reality of each countries society. The overarching question as we go throughout the lessons will be- is the film telling a story that is a reflection of life in the country?

Political & Religious Influences

Islamic piety circulates in the public sphere via written and spoken word; TV; print media; video and audio, Internet. The critical role of gender in the Islamic culture industry, such as the role of veiled women in film & TV (*al-fannanat al-islamiyya*), students will analyze and discuss its role in the West and in the homelands of the filmmakers. These factors have made a great impact on political and social inclusion in the film market. Many women of the film industry have been in exile or have left their homeland because of the cultural infrastructure and insufficient opportunities for training and funding.

The image of women in the Middle East through the lens of culture, politics, and economics, is sometimes thought to be explainable in terms of an undifferentiated Islam. The Middle Eastern woman, whether Sunni, Shi'ite, Christian, Jewish, Armenian, Druze, or Baha'i, is *imagined* as always veiled, recalling the pseudo-religious taboo in Islam against depicting living forms of women. These images of women are usually influenced by eighteenth and nineteenth century western literature, travelogues, and commercial visual sources. As students come across these factors, I will introduce into the reading portion of the unit the memoirs of Huda Shaarawi of Egypt and Halidé Edib of Turkey.

Historically, the veil has been related to social class, not religion. However, for purposes of study in this unit, we will consider its first adoption from pre-Islamic Byzantine and Persian customs⁵. In most areas, poor and rural women have covered themselves less than urban and elite women have. More recently, women have made decisions to veil or not for varied reasons. The hijab, burqa, khimār, and niqāb (Arabic) as the veil is called in many Middle Eastern countries, is required of Muslim women to be worn in public places. Students will delve into the reasons of choice for wearing a veil or not – for the 20th and 21st century woman. The perceptions of a certain style of veil show film viewers a disciplinary practice crucial to piety and gender performance of social distinction of class, taste, urbanity and/or ethnicity and race. In film, this “aura” of Islam imparts authenticity and legitimacy in its uses throughout Middle Eastern films.

Additionally, images of the Middle Eastern woman, a mixture of often contradictory concepts, sometimes interpreted to represent a vast area vaguely referred to as “the Orient,” stretching from Iran in the east to Morocco in the west, and including Turkey and the entire Arab world. In this way, images of women are viewed and interpreted in the motif of a sexually charged veiled woman of the harem - oppressed, backward, superstitious, licentious, and other “foreign” (non-European) attributes.

This section consists of a broad survey of the position of women from the point of view of history. Students will be asked a series of questions⁶ that will probe prior knowledge of Middle Eastern women and concerning the region. This will give a baseline to work from for the remainder of the unit.

In recent times, a new generation of women film- and video-makers, “whose personal histories unfold within a specifically public sphere or for whom ethnicity, race and nationality casts their own history as an allegory for a community...” There is varied research of screen practices of women working in the geopolitical, cultural, and aesthetic context of the Middle East and Northern Africa and its diasporas. Due to the interests in the stories of women, students will have the opportunity to use few primary source documents and films.

Questions for students to respond to when viewing films regarding cultural identity through wartime and occupation: How to preserve one’s humanity in the midst of oppression? How to resist being consummated by hate and anger, caught up in the cycle of victim and victimizer? How to love one’s homeland without laying exclusive claim to it? How can one be free to move throughout filming without having censorship as an obstacle of production?

Social & Cultural Inspirations

Through reading memoirs of feminist women of the Middle East, students will be able to develop a base of knowledge, which will provide a path for their understanding of women’s film perspectives. Students will learn the differences presented in discussing a cinema and the male gaze – contrasted to cinema and the veil. As is shown and expressed in the film, *The Day I Became A Woman*. This film exposes social order and gender chaos through its annoyance of the male dominance and patriarchal systems.

While researching for the design of this unit, not much of the scholarship brings issues of race into the visual perspective. However, films directed by women celebrate the cinematic visions and life stories of Middle Eastern women from varied walks of life. Women directors such as Iranian cine-poet Forough Farrokhzad, Turkish filmmaker Yasmin Ustagolu, Iranian expatriate director Shohreh Aghdashloo, Tunisian Moufida Tlatli, Egyptian ethnographic filmmaker Ateyaat El-Abnoudi, Palestinian-Lebanese documentary filmmaker Mai Masri, to name only the most prominent figures of women's filmmaking, achieved more visibility through the numerous Arab, Iranian, and Turkish touring film packages around the world.⁷

The Women of the Middle East Film Festival celebrated the cinematic visions and life stories of Middle Eastern women.⁸ Questions to consider: Why was women's liberation from the veil forced? How did the meaning of the veil change over time?

Dynamics of Social Change in the lens of Turkish Women

A project of modernity, 1923, the establishment set a primary goal of Westernizing secular nation-state in Turkey. The adoption of a secular civil code in which women had

rights equal to men in marriage, divorce, inheritance, and the granting of suffrage to women were the founding blocks of this modernization project. Prior to this time, it was forbidden for Muslim women to perform in theater or film; most of the theater and early film actresses were thus non-Muslims. In 1923, a law was passed allowing women to perform.

Reforms such as the abolition of Sharīa, the adoption of a secular civil code in which women had rights equal to men in marriage, divorce, and inheritance, and the granting of suffrage to women were the founding blocks of this modernization project. Interest in the study of Turkish women, rural and elite, was organically linked with these reforms. In this context, there was a conscious effort to resuscitate the pre-Islamic Turkish past and use it to legitimize the new project. Literature, photography, film, and arts undertaken by women or about women in Turkey still need to be critically evaluated or even women in cinema. This poses a wide scope for students to delve in as they discover gender dynamics for Muslim, Kurdish or non-Muslim women of Turkey.⁹

Westernized urban bourgeois intellectuals in cities such as Istanbul and Izmir introduced film in Turkey. Many of them were educated at foreign private secondary schools in Turkey, and had the traditional Muslim educational background, as well. Because of this, women were to be educated, but not working outside the home. Careers in theater or film were thought of as inappropriate for a Muslim woman. Yet, many women began participating in the film industry in the early 1920's after the modernity project.

One of the earlier Turkish feature films was based on a novel by Halide Edip, *The Shirt of Flame*, 1923. Still, film production in Turkey reached its zenith in the 1970's and has been in decline since 1980, a result of the American management of Turkish movie theaters and the flood of American films in the country.

Female space has been constructed in modern Turkey is related to a historical negotiation between traditions dating back to the Ottoman era and the Republican reforms regarding women's emancipation and secularism. Even after the social practice of the Ottoman Empire, women's interests had to be re-visited since having lost all many public rights from previous generations. Reforms increased women's visibility and mobility in public spaces, both in urban and elite places. Yet, in many rural areas, female space in social life continued to follow traditionally gendered patterns. This means film theaters as well as other spaces were gender segregated.¹⁰

Iranian Artistic Expression a Marker of Feminine Agency

Iranian film was used primarily for war mobilization in the early days. The government has always closely controlled film exhibition and film production in Iran. Objections against films have been voiced by religious authorities, professional groups, and,

ironically, film distributors as well¹¹. However, there are so many Iranian films to choose from, this unit is heavy in its contributions of artistic film creations. From the perspective of both male and female, Iran is a leader in the film industry in the Middle East.

An increasing number of women from Iran are producing alternative discourse and images about womanhood, citizenship, and political participation. The message in many of the narratives in film shows that women are not passive, but active, opposite Western thoughts and the dominant image. This will be seen in the films, *The Day I Became a Woman*; *Ten*; *Sara*; and *Bashu*. Artistic expression in films from Iran in recent years, veiled female figures still dominate. Students will be moved into small group inquiry sessions to question its legitimacy of use or purporting of a specific moral ideal or religious domination while in this section of the unit. Students will also be asked to note whether films, by either gender, carry the veiled expression more than the other does and why that might be the case.

Since the release of *Bashu*, Iranian art films have become a hot commodity in the international film market¹². However, Iran's political structure bans most U.S. imports into the country because of constraints on how women are to appear in film.

Images of Enchantment from Egypt

The earliest Egyptian female theater performers appeared in the developing, European-inspired, classical Arab theater, and at the end of the nineteenth century were either Jewesses or Christian Syrians. Muslim women did not participate until they became comfortable in the struggle with their religious belief and public performance.

The “Oriental” type of Arab woman was portrayed in film representing the region’s “essential characteristics” through public formal innovations and the promotion of nationalist imagery and values. Female performers were usually unable to attain star status that extended to other parts of the Arab world unless they worked in the Egyptian film industry. The earliest female theater performers appeared in the developing, European-inspired, classical Arab theater, and at the beginning of the 20th century were either Jewish or Christian Syrians.

Women filmmakers and directors used a feminine lens to capture and articulate distinctive angles of women’s realities and sensibilities. Sometimes this allowed them to base their stories reflecting society, social groups and environment. This proved to be lethal for some women, needing financing and film production – female filmmakers were oft times ostracized from their community and even the best ideas may not have been financed. However, in Egypt many women were the forerunners of bringing that gender-biased wall crashing down.

Classroom Activities

Activity I

Geographic Explorer

Goals: This lesson is prepared for the purpose of students being able to identify specific land mass in the Middle East. Students will be able to, by the end of this lesson, create, point out, describe and compare targeted countries in the Middle East for the purpose of mapping. They will also become comfortable with maps using Google Earth and National Geographic online. Students will be involved in organizing facts, spatial data, social and political issues with regard to climate and land mass. They will use that information along with their own female social knowledge to make comparisons between the three countries. Students will be challenged in being required to read comprehensive informational materials about each country using online library resources. Students will become organizers to collect facts for multimedia dissemination to prospective female travelers.

Objectives: PA State Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening 1.1.11. C; 1.1.11.H; 1.3.11.C; 1.3.11.D; 1.3.11.E; 1.3.11.F; 1.4.11.B; 1.6.11.A; 1.6.11.B; 1.6.11.C; 1.6.11.D; 1.6.11.E; 1.6.11.F; 1.7.11.A; 1.7.11.C. 1.8.11. History 8.4.12.B. Arts and Humanities 9.2.12.A; 9.2.12.B; 9.2.12.C; 9.2.12.F; 9.12.K; 9.3.12.A. Civics & Government 5.4.12.A, .B, .C.

Materials: Mac computers, interactive whiteboard, writing paper, Internet access, camcorders or video-capable digital cameras, projection

Audience: There are several ways to approach this lesson using computers. If you have class in a computer lab setting, all students can work on the activity at the same time. If you are in a classroom with limited computer access, have students sign up for a 30-minute block of time or pair/group students to complete the activity.

Approach the computer use part of the lesson as whole-class activity, only if your computer is equipped with projection capabilities and is the only computer available. However, this is the most impractical design of use for this lesson, but it can be done. Students can then use their Internet capable mobile devices in groups.

Procedure: Introduce lesson to class, inform students about the final assessment required. All students will be responsible to create a multimedia infomercial that will attract women to the country of choice- Iran, Turkey, or Egypt. Students will use computers, mobile devices, digital cameras, and mapping software to create their projects. Continue with showing students on the projection, Google Earth software (some students might have it uploaded on their mobile device) and National Geographic map website.

Demonstrate the search steps using another country in the Middle East, (i.e. Iraq, Syria, Israel), finding climate (Weather Channel online or www.ncdc.noaa.gov/oa/wdc/index.php), social status of women, political climate, entertainment and shopping options, landscapes for touring (geographical data), placement on map for world travel.

Students will find several ways to approach complete this 2 to 4 day (45-50 minutes) assignment. Allow students time to browse several sites on the Internet to complete the task. The lesson can be performed for individual students (this will take them 2 days longer) to focus in-depth on one country (then place individual students in like-country groups later). On the other hand, assign groups of 3-5 students to work together in teams to compile the information needed to complete the first day tasks. Students must record information found about each country. Thereafter, they must formulate a plan of action for the show. Every plan must be approved by the teacher. Provide students with a checklist of items that must be covered in the show, see previous paragraph.

The fifth day of the lesson, have students check their progress and give computer time to fix any errors or missing documentation. If students are working in groups, make sure that the work is evenly distributed amongst them all. Students at this point need to consider if they report information from a geographic perspective. They have considered the physical and human characteristics of places. They need to be able to describe culture and experience which will influence a woman's perceptions of the country. Students must be prepared to present information to female prospects about the characteristics, distribution, and complexity of the Earth's cultural mosaics in their specified country. Remind students when traveling people want to know where to go – eat, tour, sleep, pray, and see the monuments or country's hot spots.

The sixth day, students should begin to frame their multimedia project including Google Earth pictorial features and remembering to highlight women of the region. The show will need an anchor, reporter, producer, writer(s), and cameraperson. Each person can take a turn at a specific job. After they practice, groups can then choose who is best at what job for a quality final project.

Day seven, distribute cameras giving explicit instructions on uses and safety from damage. Students can be the narration portion of the show while others can continue working on the pictures, mock interviews, informational data that must be used on screen or via the show host. This exercise can be performed in a plethora of manners. Give students permission to go beyond your basic instructions, so that they can produce award-winning infomercials.

Assessment: Students will present their project using the projection and the classroom computer. Other students will be given a rubric to grade specific areas while viewing their multimedia document.

Activity II

Women of Turkey & Iran behind the Lens

Goals: Students will view films from each of the countries, and then create postcards representing characterizations of specified women seen in the films. Use the following suggested films in this lesson (Iranian & Turkish): *The Day I Became a Woman*; *Sara, Bashu...*; *Times & Winds* and *I Named Her Angel*. This lesson can be completed in a two-week time frame or in 5 to 7 classes of 45 to 50 minutes each. This lesson will activate prior knowledge gained from previous lectures and activities from this unit. Its focus is for students to be able to analyze character traits in the roles of women as depicted in film. Additionally, students will have to determine whether films are of social commentary, documentary, or for the sole purpose of entertainment.

Objectives: PA State Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening 1.4.11.B & C; 1.5.11.A, .B, .C, .D, .E, .F, & .G; 1.6.11.A, .C, .D, .E, & .F; 1.8.11.B & .C. Arts and Humanities 9.1.12.A, .C., .F, & .J; 9.2.12.A, .D, .F, .G, & .L; 9.3.12.A, .C, & .D; 9.4.12.B. Civics & Government 5.4.12.A, .B, .C. Geography 7.2.12.B; 7.4.12.A. History 8.4.12.C, .D; 8.1.12.C.

Materials: films, DVD player or computer with DVD drive and software, projector, whiteboard or screen, paper, writing utensils, colored pencils, manila paper (5x7 and/or 4x6) cards.

Audience: This lesson is designed to use in whole-class format.

Procedure: Prior to showing the first film, prepare a questionnaire form or write questions on board to have students answer/consider while they are viewing. This will provide opportunity for students to be actively involved in the lesson throughout its duration. Some questions to be answered during viewing: Sometimes many different ethnic and racial groups live together. What problems might this cause? What are some advantages to this situation? How are women viewed by the groups? Which character(s) do you identify mostly (female characters only)? What are the main personality traits of that character? What type of neighborhood is seen in the film, as related to the character? Is climate/landscape/politics a factor in the attitudes of the people? How could you tell? Water as a symbolic reference means...? How is religious imagery used in the film? How does religion relate to the character? Do you think the filmmaker wants viewers to come away with a particular viewpoint? Are there any political issues embedded within the film? How does the film relate to its country's culture? Specifically, how does it relate to the era in which it was made?

Always allow students to give their opinion of the film, justifying their reasoning with specific examples from the film. Finally, ask students after constructing a film analysis to give the film "thumbs up" or "thumb down."

Next, on the following day - give students the film's overview in an outline way. Show film in its entirety or in clip segments. Use your own judgment here. It will be best for teachers to preview films, and then pick out clips that highlight focus areas for classroom discussion and student analyzation. Leave time at the end of the class session (5-7 minutes) for students to gather thoughts on paper and to begin questioning each other about scenes, characters, dialogue, landscape, social and political environment.

Assign homework – write completed sentences using your structured notes also taken while viewing film. Notes can also consist of – scenes that jump out in my mind; how does it make me feel; what ideas come to mind; I questioned¹³.

The next day, check to see who has completed their homework and the discussion should begin thereafter.

Assessment: Using notes, discussion memories, and film clip rewinds students can create the character on the manila paper you will provide. Assign students specific parts of the body. Tell them they have to describe the character by that part of the body, i.e. - hand, face, torso, feet, arms, nose, etc. They must use segments of the film(s) that spotlighted information that correspond with that body part. You can even place students in groups for this activity. Then put the manila cards together on the wall or bulletin board to form the entire body. Groups or individuals must explain their reasoning for analyzation choices.

Activity III

Egyptian Women Filmed

Goals: This lesson is created to expose students to a small sampling of females in Egypt – superstars and the politically active. This lesson can also be used for a classroom film festival¹⁴, invite area college/university students¹⁵ from Egypt to join the viewing and the open discussion to follow.

Objectives: PA State Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening 1.4.11.B & C; 1.5.11.A, .B, .C, .D, .E, .F, & .G; 1.6.11.A, .C, .D, .E, & .F; 1.7.11.C. Arts and Humanities 9.1.12.A, .C., .F, & .J; 9.2.12.A, .D, .F, .G, & .L; 9.3.12.A, .C, & .D; 9.4.12.B. Civics & Government 5.4.12.A; .D; .E. Geography 7.3.12.B; .F. History 8.4.12.C, .D; 8.1.12.C.

Materials: films, converted (zamzar.com) YouTube files for school viewing, DVD player, projection, 5x8 note cards, pencils, juice and popcorn, paper goods, poster boards.

Audience: This lesson is designed for whole-class or as a festival, inviting community and families to come to the class and school. Teachers and school staff can also use this lesson as a fundraiser activity.

Procedure: Prior to showing any of the films, talk about what the discussion highlights will be following the film. Did you notice differences in gender roles? Does the film's soundtrack reflect the culture, sentiment, or plot sequencing? What female characters were of particular spotlighting? Do Egyptian men/women consider themselves as African? During the viewing, notice aloud subtitle differences (culture, speaking patterns, body movements). Show one or two films on the first through third day.

Prepare room for guests and serving refreshments prior to the start of the first film. Contact families and administrators of film showings, have students create an itinerary using film titles, making distinction of the class' unit focus on women in the Middle East.

At the end of each viewing day, have students discuss films in a question and answer format, open dialogue, or allow them to respond in writing. If visitors from the university scene attend, you will most likely have a great discussion to follow. Remind participants that high school aged students are in the room.

Assessments: Students can create billboard posters for film festival use and promotion in the future. Students can write a reflective essay of the experience of viewing Egyptian film, with a focus on the contributions of women to the country and/or film industry. Students can write a film festival review. Students can conduct a movie review broadcast show featuring film discussion footage and video clips that can later be placed on a podcast site.

Annotated Bibliography

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Ahmed, Leila. *Women and Gender in Islam*. Yale University Press: New Haven, 1992. A great resource that reads almost like a first person historical account. It engages readers beyond the male perspective.

Amin, Camron M. *The Making of the Modern Iranian Woman. Gender, State Policy and Popular Culture, 1865–1946*. Gainesville, Fla. 2002. A great read and article that is clear and concise in its information about Iranian women's studies.

Atakav, Eylem. Representations and/or Interpretations: Women in Middle Eastern Film. Near East Quarterly. 2010. A great article for the unit study topic.

Baron, Beth. Egypt as a Woman: Nationalism, Gender, and Politics. University of California Press. 2005. A good resource book filled with great images that are all cited for further use.

Capp, Rose. Middle Eastern Film: Women in Focus. Real Time Arts. www.realttimearts.net/article/63/7576. Oct - Nov 2004: 20. A short article, which stemmed from the authors participation in the Melbourne International Film Festival.

Cleveland, William L. and Martin Bunton. A History of the Modern Middle East. Fourth ed. Westview Press: Colorado. 2009. A good overview of the last three centuries of Middle Eastern history. This text can be used as a cross reference for study and validity. However, in its pages you will not find the voice of women.

Dönmez-Colin, Gönül. "Women in Turkish Cinema: Their Presence and Absence as Images and as Image-Makers" Third Text 24.1 (2010). 27 Mar. 2011. <http://proxy.library.upenn.edu:2311/10.1080/09528820903488976>. A good research article.

Elia, Nada. This is Not Living, Women in Struggle, Soraida, a Woman of Palestine. Journal of Middle East Women's Studies, Volume 2, Number 3, Fall 2006: 125-130. A short article about the film.

Gökarıksel, Banu and Ellen McLarney. Muslim Women, Consumer Capitalism, and the Islamic Culture Industry. Journal of Middle East Women's Studies, Volume 6, Number 3, Fall 2010: 1-18. An interesting article, students can read this information gaining deeper understanding of feminine issues of the time.

GELessons. <http://gelessons.com>. 2006. The site gives tutorials on how to use Google Earth in the classroom for various reasons. A must have bookmarked website for teachers of varied subjects.

Gushahgir, Izzat al-Sadat. Journal of Middle East Women's Studies, Volume 2, Number 1, Winter 2006: 138-140. A short article reviewing Hekmat's film.

Harman, Danna. Middle Eastern Female filmmakers Give Glimpse of Once-Veiled Worlds. Christian Science Monitor. Mar 2008. www.alternet.org/story/78653. This article reviews several films, some of which are covered in this unit. An easy read.

- Hillauer, R. *Encyclopedia of Arab Women Filmmakers*. The American University in Cairo Press. 2005. An in depth compilation of information about the subject. It assists in finding the women, following the timelines, studying the social contributions to women making particular films. A must have.
- Joseph, Suad. Ed. *Encyclopedia of Women & Islamic Cultures*. Brill Online. University of Pennsylvania.
http://proxy.library.upenn.edu:2403/subscriber/entry?entry=ewic_COM-0281.
February 2011. A great resource to use in the classroom. Students can learn to use information and documentation while in the online pages.
- Matthie, Rudi. *The Safavids under Western Eyes: Seventeenth-Century European Travelers to Iran*. *Journal of Early Modern History* 13: 2009. 137-171. This essay takes a fresh look at the voluminous yet understudied Western travel writing about 17th-century Iran. It argues that, after this material is properly subjected to close scrutiny for authorial bias, interest and intertextuality, it remains exceedingly valuable for the information it provides on Safavid Iran.
- Naficy, Hamid. Ed. *Home, Exile, Homeland: Film, Media, and the Politics of Place*. New York: Routledge, 1999. This book is a must have for researching film and media. Naficy is one of the groundbreaking researchers in the area of film and media of the Middle East.
- Nouraiie-Simone, Fereshteh. Ed. *On Shifting Ground: Muslim Women in the Global Era*. New York: Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2005. A collection of essays, great for research work.
- Pennsylvania Department of Education. *Standards Aligned System*. 3 Apr. 2011.
<http://www.pdesas.org/Standard/Views>. This site provides detailed explanations of all the new Pennsylvania subject standards for grades K through 12.
- Skalli, Loubna H. *Communicating Gender in the Public Sphere: Women and Information Technologies in the MENA*. 1962-*Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, Volume 2, Number 2, Spring 2006: 35-59.
- Tavangar, Homa Sabet. *Growing Up Global: Raising Children to Be at Home in the World*. Ballantine Books: New York. 2009. A great book to use giving readers a plethora of resources to use at school, home or even in the community.
- Zarinebaf-Shahr, Fariba. 1998. *Economic Activities of Safavid Women in the Shrine City of Ardabil*. *Iranian Studies*, 31: 2, 247 — 261. A good article, easy to read.

Student Resources

Edib, Halidé. *House with Wisteria: Memoirs of Turkey Old and New*. Leopolis Press: Virginia. 2003. This is a lovely memoir that students will be able to read with ease. I love this book and her story.

Foundation for Iranian Studies. Maryland. 2011. Accessed March 2011. This site was built as a warehouse of information for a non-profit educational and research institution to preserve, study, and transmit Iran's cultural heritage; to study contemporary issues in Iranian government and society; and to point to the probable social, economic, political, and military directions Iran might take in the 21st century.

Global Connections: The Middle East. PBS Educational Foundation. 2002. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/globalconnections/mideast/index.html>. The website integrates and contextualizes a rich body of resources to provide a global and historical perspective that will help teachers, students, and the public explore and understand seminal events of national and international significance. The Middle East section of the site is multiethnic and multicultural. The resources gathered here, and the topics explored, reflect this diversity.

Graham-Brown, Sarah. *Images of Women: The Portrayal of Women in Photography of the Middle East 1860-1950*. Columbia University Press: New York. 1988. A great text that students will enjoy reading its articles written in vignette forms and it is loaded with images of women from various countries in the Middle East.

Library of Congress. Washington, DC. <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/gmdhtml/> 02 Apr. 2011. An unparalleled world resource. This site houses several variations of Middle Eastern maps for students to use and interact with in and out of the classroom.

Middle East Center. University of Pennsylvania, School of Arts and Sciences. <http://www.sas.upenn.edu/mec>. 2011. This resource provides ongoing information and support tools for both teachers and students. Connect with staff via telephone or email for events, programs and other resources available to K-12 teachers.

National Geographic. National Geographic Society. <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/>. 1996-2011. The National Geographic Society has been inspiring people to care about the planet. It is one of the largest non-profit scientific and educational institutions in the world. Its interests include geography, archaeology and natural science, the promotion of environmental and historical conservation. This site will give you more than you could possibly use, take advantage of its wealth. Also, know that they are in the process of building a teachers' area on the site.

Shaarawi, Huda. *Harem Years: The Memoirs of an Egyptian Feminist*. The Feminist Press: New York. 1987. Translated by Margot Badran. This is a great book; students will find that it is easy to grasp an understanding of the woman and the times in Egypt.

Annotated Filmography

A Glass and a Cigarette. 1955. Dir. Niazi Mostafa. Former Miss Egypt and international recording artist Dalida sings and stars in this steamy 1950's drama, following a conniving nurse's attempts to seduce a married doctor and his jealous wife's subsequent downfall. Students will take interest in what a 1950's steamy film was like and the way in which portray women in film. (Egypt)

Bashu, the Little Stranger (Bashu, gharibeye koochak) 1989 Dir. Bahram Beizai. This film though directed by a man is chosen for this unit because of its social and racial implications that students can study. A beautiful story about a woman who stands for a child. It has fantastic cinematography. Farsi with English and Chinese subtitles. (Iran)

Four Women of Egypt. 1997. Dir. Tahini Rached. Four Egyptian women are the subject of this impressive documentary exploration of opposing religious, social, and political views in modern-day Egypt. A great film that will springboard lots of discussion in the classroom. (Egypt)

I Named Her Angel (Ismini Melek Koydum). 2006. Dir. Nefin Dinç. This documentary film tells the story of a 12 year-old Turkish girl, Elif, learning the basics of her religion, Mevlevism. Mevlevis also known as Whirling Dervishes in the Western World, a part of a heterodox tradition of Islam. A very short film that students can embrace. Turkish with English subtitles. (Turkey)

Lemon Tree. 2008. Dir. Eran Riklis. A Palestinian widow fights to keep her lemon grove from being uprooted when Israeli security forces declare it a threat to the Israeli defense minister living next door in this foreign-language drama. Teaming with a young lawyer, the widow takes her case to the Israeli Supreme Court. A good film to bring about discussions on women's rights in several countries, foreign and domestic. (Israel)

Rebetiko: The Song of Two Cities. 2006. Dir. Nefin Dinç. The film is about a musical form called "Rebetiko" that was created by the Greeks and Turks at the beginning of the 20th century. Resulting from war between Greece and Turkey, refugees who had to leave Turkey brought this music with them to Greece in the 1920's. A great documentary film discussing the socioeconomics of geographical changes,

- social and cultural nuances, political upheaval and its effects on generations. (Turkey)
- Sara*. 1993. Dir. Dariush Mehrjui. Docile and friendly Sara has been hiding a secret from her banker husband, Hessam for many years in this contemporary Iranian take on Henrik Ibsen's renowned play "A Doll's House." This film will give students a comparison to literature that is familiar. (Iran)
- Soraida, Woman of Palestine*. http://www.nfb.ca/film/soraida_a_woman_of_palestine# Dir. Tahani Rached, 2004. 26 Mar. 2011. A full-length film on the Internet. This is a wonderful documentary. It was filmed in interview style of women who are captive in occupied Palestine. Arabic spoken with English subtitles. (Israel)
- Ten*. 2002. Abbas Kiarostami. Ten sequences examine the emotional lives of women at significant junctures. Students will get a great deal of background information after watching this film. It can be viewed in its entirety or either broken into viewing segments for classroom use. A great film about women by a man. (Iran)
- The Day I Became a Woman*. 2000. Dir. Marzieh Meshkini. An unsettling vision of what it means to be female in Iran. Tracing the stories of three characters - a 9-year-old girl; a young wife who defies her husband; and an elderly woman seeking material comfort. An award-winning film that is a powerful, poetic exploration of the struggle to maintain dignity in the face of second-class status. Farsi spoken with English subtitles. (Iran)
- Times & Winds*. 2006. Dir. Reha Erdem. A Northwest Turkish village is the setting of this film, which focuses on Mother Nature. Students will be captivated by the landscape scenes in this film. (Turkey)
- Umm Kulthum in Paris - Interview*. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mPI_v3SBad0. Posted in Aug. 2009. This nine-minute video clip offers a glimpse at the Egypt's great female singer. This posting English subtitles, after viewing the interview, search for a video that has her in concert. Hint: search for "Umm Kulthum A Voice like Egypt, you will find the film in parts. You and your students will be pleased. (Egypt)
- Women's Prison*. 2002. Dir. Manijeh Hekmat. Composed of three segments (set in 1984, 1992 and 2001), The film deals with turbulent times in Iranian history and sensitive topics such as crime, corruption, prostitution, drug addiction and homosexuality. Farsi spoken with English subtitles. (Iran)
- Women Without Men (Zanan-e Bedun-e Mardan)*. 2009. Dir. Shirin Neshat. Amid the tumult of the American- and British-backed coup that reinstated the Shah in early

1950's Tehran, the heart-wrenching tales of five very different Iranian women converge in a lovely orchard garden, where they find both freedom and friendship. An adaptation of the magical-realist novella by Shahrnosh Parsipour. Persian spoken with English subtitles. (Iran)

¹ PA Dept. of Education Standards

² Hillauer.

³ Middle East Center.

⁴ Foundation of Iranian Studies, Kay.

⁵ Cleveland.

⁶ See Appendix B.

⁷ Hillauer.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Joseph.

¹¹ Foundation of Iranian Studies.

¹² Amin.

¹³ Window box notes. Students draw a large cross on the page and fill in the blanks with information.

¹⁴ Check public performance rights prior to charging an admission.

¹⁵ MEC at University of Pennsylvania.

Appendix A

PA Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening

- 1.1 Learning to Read Independent*
- 1.2 Reading Critically in All Content Areas*
- 1.3 Reading, Analyzing and Interpreting Literature*
- 1.4 Types of Writing*
- 1.5 Quality of Writing*
- 1.6 Speaking and Listening*
- 1.7 Characteristics and Functions of the English Language*
- 1.8 Research*

PA Academic Standards for Civics & Government

- 5.4 How International Relationships Function*

PA Academic Standards for Geography

- 7.1 Basic Geographic Literacy*
- 7.2 Physical Characteristics of Places and Regions*
- 7.3 Human Characteristics of Place and Regions*
- 7.4 Interactions between People and Places*

PA Academic Standards for History

- 8.1 Historical Analysis and Skills Development*
- 8.4 World History*

PA Standards for Arts & Humanities

- 9.2 Historical and Cultural Contexts*
- 9.4 Aesthetic Response*

Appendix B

Student Probing Questions for Middle Eastern Study-

Use the following questions to begin constructive dialogue with your students. There can be many more questions added to this list, use your own judgment.

1. Is Islam an oppressive religious practice toward women? (Yes or No)
2. I know that in the Middle East there is one big sandy desert with lots of camels, populated by men in turbans and long white robes; women in black with their faces covered; men waving long curved swords; harems with scantily clad women serving one man; husbands with four wives; rich oil sheikhs, and terrorists. (True or False)
3. What is a harem? (Briefly describe.)
4. Only men are politically involved in the Middle East. (True or False)
5. All women in the Middle East are veiled. (True or False)

6. Do you know the name for a female's veil? (Yes or No)
7. Describe the veil. (Briefly)
8. Have you noticed women's roles changing in the Middle East via TV and the Internet?
9. List at least three stereotypes you hold about Islam as practiced in the Middle East.
10. What is a woman's role in the Middle East? (Choose a country to discuss.)
11. Are women in leadership roles at home in the Middle East or abroad?

Use these questions later in the discussion: Students should consider ways in which thinking is influenced by ideas in a culture, use the following questions to stimulate convergent, divergent, and evaluative thinking:

1. How does culture influence the social structure?
2. What expectations are placed upon women within the culture? Are there any differences in respect to men and women?
3. What is the role of the filmmaker or director in Middle Eastern society?

Appendix C

U.S. Copyright Law – Film and Video Guidelines for Educator Use

Section 110(1), the “face to face teaching” exception and Section 110(2), the TEACH Act (Technology, Education and Copyright Harmonization Act). These sections provide for the performance or display of copyrighted material in the classroom (“Face to face” exception) or for its use in an analogous fashion in online or hybrid courses (TEACH).

Classroom Use

Use of film and video is permitted in an educational institution so long as all of the following conditions are met:

1. The film must be shown as part of the instructional program.
2. The film must be shown by students, instructors, or guest lecturers, and can only be shown to students and educators.
3. The film must be shown in either a classroom or other school location devoted to instruction.
4. The film must be shown either in a face-to-face setting or where students and teacher(s) are in the same building or general area.
5. The film shown must be a legitimate copy, with the copyright notice included.
6. Films or videos may not be used for entertainment or recreation.