MODULE DESCRIPTION

Module title	Code
Understanding the Middle East: Society, Culture and Everyday Life Artimieji Rytai: visuomenė, kultūra ir kasdienis gyvenimas	

Teacher(s)	Unit
Co-ordinating: Dr. Dalia Sabaliauskienė	Institute of Asian and Transcultural Studies

Cycle of studies	Level of module	Type of module
1st cycle	1/1	Optional

Mode of implementation	Period of instruction	Language(s) of instruction
Lectures and seminars	Spring semester	English

Requiremen ts for students	
Prerequisites: none	**Additional requirements (if any):** none

Module volume in credits	Total student workload	Contact hours	Independent study hours
5	133	32	101

Aim of module: competences developed by the study programme		
The aim of the module is to introduce students to the social and cultural diversity of Middle Eastern societies from the perspective of cultural anthropology. The module explores everyday life, social relations and identities through ethnographic research. It draws on case studies from across the Middle East, with Iran as one of the recurring comparative cases. The module develops students' ability to analyse social and cultural phenomena in context, critically engage with ethnographic material and academic literature, and compare different Middle Eastern societies. It also encourages a critical approach to generalised representations of the region.		
Learning outcomes of the module	**Study methods**	**Assessment methods**
Demonstrate foundational knowledge of the social and cultural diversity of Middle Eastern societies and key processes shaping everyday life.		

Explain and apply key concepts of cultural anthropology to Middle Eastern societies. Analyse social and cultural practices within their specific contexts. Critically analyse ethnographic material and academic literature, relating specific cases to broader social and cultural processes. Compare ethnographic cases from different Middle Eastern societies while recognising the diversity of the region. Critically assess generalised and essentialising representations of Middle Present and discuss social and cultural issues clearly and coherently, both individually and collaboratively, using relevant academic sources.	Lectures, seminars, individual presentations of assigned academic texts, group presentations, discussions, study and critical analysis of academic and ethnographic literature, film screenings and analysis, comparative analysis of ethnographic cases.	Participation in seminar discussions and analysis of assigned academic and ethnographic literature; individual oral presentation and critical analysis of an assigned academic text during the course; final group oral presentation.

Topics	Contact hours							Independent study time and assignments	
	Lectures	Consultations	*Seminars	Exercises	Laboratory work	Practice	Total contact hours	Independent work	Assignments
1. The Middle East: Defining the Region and Its Diversity	2							6	Gelvin 2024, p. 1–11; Eickelman 2002, p. 1–21.
2. Ethnographic Approaches to Middle Eastern Societies	2							6	Hafez & Slyomovics 2013, p. 3–22; Abu-Lughod 1991, p. 137–162.
3. Family, Kinship and Intimacy	2							6	Eickelman 2002, p. 140-167; Joseph 1994, p. 50–73.
4. Hospitality, Politeness and Social Obligations: Iranian *Ta'arof* in Comparative Perspective	2		2					9	Eickelman 2002, p. 215-240; Grainger et al. 2015, p. 41–70; Koutlaki 2010, p. 35–52.

5. Religion in Everyday Life	1		1					6	Eickelman 2002, p. 241-265; Shoham 2013, p. 175–196.
6. Gender, Sexuality and Social Norms	2		2					9	Eickelman 2002, p. 176-192; Wynn & Foster 2022, p. 33–54; 131–152; 113–130.
7. Youth, Education and Future Aspirations	2							6	Hafez & Slyomovics 2013, p. 105–124; Gelvin 2024, p. 144–153.
8. Ethnicity, Minorities and Belonging	1		1					7	Eickelman 2002, p. 192-211; Schmidinger 2018, p.13-18; 48-52; 60-62.
9. Digital Media and Everyday Life	2							6	Hafez & Slyomovics 2013, p. 285-300; Bourdeloie et al. 2017, p. 28–53.
10. Urban Life and Public Space	2							6	Eickelman 2002, p. 84-114; Parkes 2021, Article 904 (25 pp.).
11. Migration, Diaspora and Transnational Lives	2		2					9	Hafez & Slyomovics 2013, p. 223-238; Jalali 2024, Article 39 (18 pp.); Lenehan 2022, p. 238–253.
12. Final Group Oral Presentations			4					25	
Total	20		12				32	101	

Assessment strategy	**Weight,%**	**Assessment time**	**Assessment criteria**
Participation in seminars and discussions	20	Throughout the semester	Preparation for seminars based on assigned academic and ethnographic literature; active and constructive participation in discussions; ability to formulate relevant questions, present reasoned arguments, and critically analyse ethnographic cases and social and cultural practices.

Individual presentation	30	During the semester	Ability to critically analyse an assigned academic text and its ethnographic case; identify and explain its key arguments, concepts and findings; relate the text to the themes and concepts of the course; consider its specific social and cultural context; and present the analysis clearly, coherently and analytically.
Final group oral presentation	50	End of the semester	Ability to develop and present a coherent comparative analysis of a selected social or cultural issue in Middle Eastern societies; apply relevant anthropological concepts; critically use academic literature and ethnographic evidence; recognise contextual differences and the diversity of the region; and present the analysis clearly and

Author	**Year of publication**	**Title**	**Issue of a periodical or volume of a publication**	**Publishing place and house or a web link**
Compulsory reading list				
Abu-Lughod, Lila	1991	Writing Against Culture	In Richard G. Fox (ed.), Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present, pp. 137–162	Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press
Bourdeloie, Hélène; Gentiloni Silveri, Caterina; Houmair, Sara	2017	Saudi Women and Socio-Digital Technologies: Reconfiguring Identities	CyberOrient, 11(1), 28–53	American Anthropological Association / Charles University
Eickelman, Dale F.	2002	The Middle East and Central Asia: An Anthropological Approach	4th ed.	Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall
Gelvin, James L.	2024	The New Middle East: What Everyone Needs to Know	2nd ed.	New York: Oxford University Press
Grainger, Karen; Kerkam, Zainab; Mansor, Fathia; Mills, Sara	2015	Offering and Hospitality in Arabic and English	Journal of Politeness Research, 11(1), 41–70	Walter de Gruyter
Hafez, Sherine; Slyomovics, Susan (eds.)	2013	Anthropology of the Middle East and North Africa: Into the New Millennium		Bloomington: Indiana University Press

Jalali, Mohsen	2024	Narratives of Pride: Afghan Migrant Laborers in Iran	Comparative Migration Studies, 12, Article 39	Springer Nature
Joseph, Suad	1994	Brother/Sister Relationships: Connectivity, Love, and Power in the Reproduction of Patriarchy in Lebanon	American Ethnologist, 21(1), 50–73	Wiley / American Anthropological Association
Lenehan, Sara	2022	In Search of a Caring State: Migrations of Afghans from Iran to Germany	Critique of Anthropology, 42(3), 238–253	SAGE Publications
Parkes, Aidan	2021	The Ashura Assemblage: Karbala's Religious Urban Fabric and Reproduction of Collective Shi'i Identity	Religions, 12(10), Article 904	MDPI
Schmidinger, Thomas	2018	Rojava: Revolution, War and the Future of Syria's Kurds		London: Pluto Press
Shoham, Hizky	2013	Yom Kippur and Jewish Public Culture in Israel	Journal of Israeli History, 32(2), 175–196	Routledge
Wynn, L. L.; Foster, Angel M. (eds.)	2022	Sex in the Middle East and North Africa		Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press
Additional reading list				
Bajoghli, Narges	2019	Iran Reframed: Anxieties of Power in the Islamic Republic		Redwood City: Stanford University Press
Bowen, Donna Lee; Early, Evelyn A.; Schulthies, Becky (eds.)	2014	Everyday Life in the Muslim Middle East	3rd ed.	Bloomington: Indiana University Press
Herrera, Linda; Bayat, Asef (eds.)	2010	Being Young and Muslim: New Cultural Politics in the Global South and North		New York: Oxford University Press
Hourani, Albert	2002	A History of the Arab Peoples		London: Faber and Faber
Sreberny, Annabelle; Torfeh, Massoumeh (eds.)	2017	Cultural Revolution in Iran: Contemporary Popular Culture in the Islamic Republic		London: I.B. Tauris