

ADFA300301- Ways of Seeing Iran and the Arab World, 4 credit
Woods College of Advancing Studies
Fall 2017 Semester, August 28 - Dec 16, 2017
Wednesdays, 6:15 pm - 9:15 pm

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Boston College Mission Statement

Strengthened by more than a century and a half of dedication to academic excellence, Boston College commits itself to the highest standards of teaching and research in undergraduate, graduate and professional programs and to the pursuit of a just society through its own accomplishments, the work of its faculty and staff, and the achievements of its graduates. It seeks both to advance its place among the nation's finest universities and to bring to the company of its distinguished peers and to contemporary society the richness of the Catholic intellectual ideal of a mutually illuminating relationship between religious faith and free intellectual inquiry.

Boston College draws inspiration for its academic societal mission from its distinctive religious tradition. As a Catholic and Jesuit university, it is rooted in a world view that encounters God in all creation and through all human activity, especially in the search for truth in every discipline, in the desire to learn, and in the call to live justly together. In this spirit, the University regards the contribution of different religious traditions and value systems as essential to the fullness of its intellectual life and to the continuous development of its distinctive intellectual heritage.

Course Description

This course will familiarize the student with various *Ways of Seeing Iran and the Arab World*. Highly interactive, the class is purposely expansive in its approach and based on Iranian contemporary art, contemporary art from the Arab world, and contemporary Western/Eastern views of Iran and the Arab world. Heavily based on images, we will touch on topics such as "Ways of Seeing"¹, the Iranian Revolution(s), the Arab Spring, women, wars, destruction and looting, refugees, immigration, exile, Islamic art, travelers' views, climate change, and the marginalized in order to expose you to different *ways of seeing* Iran and the Arab world. A primary focus of this class concerns the roles of seeing and perception, and as we explore each one of these topics, we will pay attention to our assumptions, what surprised us, the feelings generated, if there is any need to contribute to the topic and if any questions are raised that remain unanswered.²

Textbooks, Readings and Other Resources (Required)

Most of the required materials can be found online or on Canvas, with the following exception:

Amir & Khalil, "Zahra's Paradise", Publisher: First Second (2011), ISBN-10: 1596436425.

Students need a copy of the above mentioned book. A copy can be found on reserve at the O'Neil library or can be purchased.

¹"Ways of Seeing" is a 1972 television series created by John Berger and produced by Mike Dibb for BBC and, later adapted into a book. In this series, John Berger, in his words, "questions some of the assumptions made about the tradition of European paintings" and, to do so, he concentrates on *how we see* those paintings.

²These inquiries are adapted from the exercise "sensing journey" found on www.presencing.org and in C. Otto Scharmer, (2009) "Theory U: Learning from the Future as it Emerges." Berrett- Koehler: San Francisco. Chapter 21.

Textbooks, Readings and Other Resources (Recommended)

You will find on Canvas a list of recommended resources that includes a reading list as well as a visual list. This list is intended to serve as a resource. As we begin each section, I will give you guidance about how to prepare for the following class.

Canvas

Canvas is the Learning Management System (LMS) at Boston College, designed to help faculty and students share ideas, collaborate on assignments, discuss course readings and materials, submit assignments, and much more - all online. As a Boston College student, you should familiarize yourself with this important tool. For more information and training resources for using Canvas, click [here](#). In the case of any technical difficulties or concerns, please contact canvas@bc.edu or 617-552-HELP (4357) for immediate assistance.

NOTE: Canvas requires particular computer specifications and wifi access. It is important that you plan accordingly, particularly for courses that have online components.

Course Objectives

1. Students will develop skills to perceive art and artists as a platform to see from multiple perspectives as demonstrated by their contribution to class discussion, their observations in regard their assumptions, their projects and presentations in regard to the specific topic of the week.
2. Students will be able to engage in meaningful, constructive exchanges with others, as demonstrated by contributions to class discussion.
3. Students will acquire knowledge across cultural settings and will familiarize themselves with their role in connecting world cultures, gender, and age, in particular in regards with Iran and the Arab world as demonstrated by their class discussion, their observation in regard their assumptions, their projects and presentations in regard to the specific topic of the week.
4. Students will demonstrate ethical skills to help them expand their horizons and increase empathy as demonstrated by contribution to the class discussion, their observations in regard their assumptions, and their projects and presentations in regard to the specific topic of the week.

Grading

Grading is based on class discussion (25%), the written notes/papers (25%), a project (25%), and a class presentation of the project (25%).

The undergraduate grading system for Woods College is as follows:

A (4.00), A- (3.67)
B+ (3.33), B (3.00), B- (2.67)
C+ (2.33), C (2.00), C- (1.67)
D+ (1.33), D (1.00), D- (.67)
F (.00)

The graduate grading system for Woods College is as follows:

A (4.00), A- (3.67)
B+ (3.33), B (3.00)
B- (2.67), passing but does not count toward degree
C (2.00), passing but not for degree credit
F (.00)

All students can access final grades through Agora after the grading deadline each semester. Students who complete course evaluations can access grades earlier, as they are posted.

Deadlines and Late Work

No late work will be accepted unless a valid medical or personal reason are presented within 24 hours of the due date.

Course Assignments³

It is expected that you will spend 6 hours per week on out-of-class assignments and exercises. These are listed below. Please note that some weeks will require more time and some weeks less time but the average is approximately 6 hours per week over the semester.

Note on your intention: After class 1 I will ask you to submit on CANVAS a note in regard to your intention: why are you taking this class, what are your key questions, what are you hoping to learn, achieve, or understand?

Project and Presentation: Between classes 2 and 3, you will have to commit to a topic for your project, chosen among those listed in the syllabus. Each student is required to make one class presentation on that topic. The idea is to gain experience for academic presentations/discussions. The project will be presented to the class during the week dedicated to that specific topic.

The project needs to include the following: 1) your intention; 2) your assumption(s) about the subject (before investigating it); 3) a description of the materials used to investigate the topic; an answer to the following questions: 4) what struck me most? What surprised me? 5) What touched me? 6) What ideas does this experience spark for possible initiatives that I may want to take on? 7) What questions do this material raise for me?⁴

The project can take any form, examples are: an interview, a comic book, an essay, a poem, a song, a video...NOTE: Typically you will have 15-20 minutes for the presentation of your work, a 5-10 minute critical discussion, and 15-20 minutes of class discussion. The other students are required to participate in the class discussion.

Assumptions: From class 2 on, each week, before going through the assignments, you need to submit on Canvas a brief note about your assumption(s) on the topic of the following week. This note is due by Friday before the class on that specific topic.

Notes in regard to the specific topic of the week: A note in regard to the specific topic of the week needs to be submitted on Canvas to me after the class by Friday of the same week.

In this note, you have to re-state: 1) what were your assumptions specific to the topic of the week; and answer the following questions: 2) what surprised me? 3) What touched me? 4) What ideas does this experience spark for possible initiatives that I may want to take on? What questions do this material raise for me?⁵

Class participation: All students are expected to contribute to class discussion. You must read/watch the materials announced before each class meeting.

I encourage you to work in groups and exchange thoughts as well as to take individual time to process your personal point of view.

³"Ways of Seeing Iran and the Arab World" is a class that will rely on assignments that are adapted from the work of Dr. Otto Scharmer and his colleagues at MIT called "Theory U". For more information on "Theory U" go to www.presencing.org.

⁴ These questions are adapted from the exercise "sensing journey" found on www.presencing.org and in C. Otto Scharmer, (2009) "Theory U: Learning from the Future as it Emerges." Berrett-Koehler: San Francisco. Chapter 21.

⁵ Please refer to footnote 4 above.

Course Schedule

Date/Week	Topic	Reading/Assignments	Due Date
08/30/17	Introduction	No assignment.	Note on your intention (why are you taking this class, what are your key questions, what are you hoping to learn, achieve or understand?) due on Friday 09/1/2017
09/06/17	Ways of Seeing	<p>Friedrich Duerenmatt, "The Dying of the Pythia"</p> <p>"The Danger of a Single Story" by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Ted Talk</p> <p>Watch the movie by Paul Wyatt who documented the Empathy Museum story and listen to some of the sound tracks of the exhibition "A Mile in your Shoes" while walking in someone else's shoes.</p> <p>"Ai Weiwei's lego art portrays dissidents" The BBC's Jane O'Brien spoke to him, June 28, 2017.</p> <p>Costica Bradatan, "Born Again in a Second Language", New York Times, August 4, 2013.</p>	<p>Topic for projects are due by 09/08/17.</p> <p>Note on "Ways of Seeing": 1) What struck me most? 2) What surprised me? 3) What touched me? 4) What ideas does this experience spark? 4) What questions these materials raise?</p> <p>Due by 09/08/17 midnight.</p> <p>Assumptions on "Ways of seeing 2" is due by Friday 09/08/17 midnight.</p>
09/13/17	Ways of Seeing 2	<p>Abdalla AL OMARI "THE VULNERABILITY SERIES"</p> <p>Sohrab Kashani, "The Foreigner"</p> <p>Majzoub Raafat, "Territorism" And "Castration in the Name of Precaution" in Al-Akhbar</p> <p>Diego Bunuel, "Don't Tell My Mother I am in Iran", National Geography.</p> <p>Haleh Anvari, "Bright lights and a bidet chandelier: Iran gets a blast of shocking colour", 2017 for the Guardian.</p>	<p>Note on "Ways of seeing 2". Due by 09/15/17 midnight.</p> <p>Assumptions on "The Iranian Revolution(s)" is due by Friday 09/15/17 midnight.</p> <p>Projects on "The Iranian Revolution(s)" due by Friday 09/15/17 midnight.</p>

09/20/17	The Iranian Revolution(s)	<p>Note on assumptions</p> <p>Abou Farman, "Clerks of The Passage", p. 9.</p> <p>"Last Scene Underground: An Ethnographic Novel of Iran" by Roxanne Varzi, "A note to the Reader".</p> <p>"Zahra's Paradise" by Amir & Khalil.</p> <p>"Iran: a Cinematographic Revolution", a documentary movie by Nader Takmil Homayou.</p> <p>"What makes a piece of writing fictional or nonfictional?" By Roxanne Varzi.</p> <p>Kurosh ValaNejad & Peter Brinson, "The Cat and The Coup".</p>	<p>Note on the "Iranian Revolution(s)" due by Friday 09/22/2017 midnight.</p> <p>Assumptions on "The Arab Spring" is due by Friday 9/22/17 midnight.</p> <p>Project on "The Arab Spring" due by Friday 9/22/17 midnight.</p>
09/27/17	The Arab Spring	<p>Note on assumptions.</p> <p>"Creative Dissent: Arts of the Arab World Uprisings" a collaboration between the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor and the Arab American National Museum, Dearborn, curated by Christiane Gruber and Nama Khalil.</p> <p>"Art Revolution Blooms After Arab Spring" November 7, 2013 heard on "Tell me more"</p> <p>"The Sun's Incubator", short film by Syrian artist Ammar al-Beik about the Arab Spring in Syria (and Egypt)</p> <p>"Bahia Shehab: A thousand times no"</p> <p>"The Death of a Syrian Dream" by Nasser Rabbat, The Atlantic, March 4, 2014</p> <p>"Stories of Change", World Press Photo</p> <p>"OUROUBA, THE EYE OF LEBANON" CURATED BY ROSE ISSA, upcoming in September 2017</p>	<p>Note on "The Arab Spring" due by Friday 09/29/17 midnight.</p> <p>Assumptions on "Women" is due by Friday 09/29/17 midnight.</p> <p>Project on "Women" due by Friday 09/29/17 midnight.</p>

10/04/17	Women/veil	<p>Note on assumptions</p> <p>Sadegh Hedayat/Deborah Miller Mostachel, "Hajji Morad"</p> <p>Randa Mirza, "Arab Women at Home"</p> <p>"Turbulent" by Shirin Neshat</p> <p>'A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night' - by Ana Lily Amirpour. <u>or</u> "The day I became a woman", by Marziyeh Meshkini <u>or</u> "Sepideh - Reaching for the Stars" by Berit Madsen.</p> <p>"Secret Dreams of Teenage Girls in Iran", by Susie Kahlich for Atipeous - Art you can hear</p> <p>Hassan Hajjaj</p> <p>"Power of a Cliché", Haleh Anvari</p> <p>Rapper Mona Haydar, Mona Hejabi</p> <p>"PLEASE KEEP YOUR AMERICAN FLAGS OFF MY HIJAB", by Hoda Katebi</p>	<p>Note on "Women" due by Friday 10/06/2017 midnight.</p> <p>Assumptions on "War" due by Friday 10/06/2017 midnight.</p> <p>Project on "War" due by Friday 10/06/2017 midnight.</p>
10/11/17	War	<p>Note on assumptions</p> <p>"Reza: War + Peace", by Reza Deghati (Author), Sebastian Junger. Preface, Introduction, and Afterward.</p> <p>"Photographs of Agony" - John Berger in "About Looking"</p> <p>Bashar Murad - "The Door" (Short Film) - (فيلم قصير) "الباب" - بشار مراد</p> <p>The Walled off Hotel, Betlehem, West Bank</p> <p>Solmaz Sharif, reading from her poetry book "Look".</p> <p>"The Primordial Cry", caraballo-farman</p> <p>"Beirut I love you" a book trailer for Zena el Khalil</p> <p>"Plastic Flowers Never Die", Roxanne Varzi.</p>	<p>Note on "War" due by Friday 10/13/17 midnight.</p> <p>Assumptions on "Destruction and Looting" is due by Friday 10/13/17 midnight.</p> <p>Project on "Destruction and looting" due by Friday 10/13/17 midnight.</p>

<p>10/18/17</p>	<p>Destruction and Looting</p>	<p>Note on assumptions.</p> <p>"The art born of destruction" by I.S. For the Economist, June 2017</p> <p>"El Seed: A project of peace, painted across 50 buildings." TedTalk</p> <p>"Civilization" by Ginane Makki Bacho, 2017</p> <p>"After Banksy: the parkour guide to Gaza", The Guardian</p> <p>"In Damascus", a short film by Waref Abu Quba</p> <p>Tammam Azzam at Ayyam Gallery</p> <p>"The Socio-Political Art of the Syrian Civil War" by Vice, March 13, 2014</p> <p>apr 27 \ michael rakowitz \ on redirective practice, problem-solving and trouble-making.</p> <p>Ali Cherri, "A Taxonomy of Fallacies: The Life of Dead Objects", 2016 Sursock Museum</p> <p>"MOUNTING RESISTANCE: NEW ART IN BEIRUT" by NASSER RABBAT for ArtForum, March 2017</p>	<p>Note on "Destruction and Looting" due by Friday 10/20/17 midnight.</p> <p>Assumptions on "Refugees" due by Friday 10/20/17 midnight.</p> <p>Project on "Refugees" due by Friday 10/20/17 midnight.</p>
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10/25/17	Refugees	<p>Note on assumptions</p> <p>"The ungrateful refugee: We have no debt to repay", Dyna Nayeri for the Guardian, April 4th 2017</p> <p>Abou Farman, <i>Clerks of The Passage</i>.</p> <p><i>The Afghan Alphabet</i>, Mohsen Makhmalbaf</p> <p>"FATIMA'S DRAWINGS" and "Where The Children Sleep" by Magnus Wennman</p> <p>Human Flow Message from Filmmaker Ai Weiwei Participant Media</p> <p>"The Mapping Project", Bouchra Khalili</p> <p>"Banksy art criticizes treatment of Calais refugees" - BBC News</p> <p>"Can art effect change? Kirsty Wark meets choreographer Crystal Pite" BBC Newsnight</p> <p>Sergey Ponomarev on 'Reporting Europe's Refugee Crisis'</p>	<p>Note on "Refugees" due by Friday 10/27/17 midnight.</p> <p>Assumptions on "Immigration" is due by Friday 10/27/17 midnight.</p> <p>Project on "Immigration" due by Friday 10/27/17 midnight.</p>
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11/01/17	Immigration	<p>Note on assumptions.</p> <p>Abou Farman, <i>Clerks of The Passage</i>.</p> <p>"Home Land", San Francisco</p> <p>"MoMA Protests Trump Entry Ban by Rehangng Work by Artists from Muslim Nations", Jason Farago, February 13, 2017, New York Times</p> <p>"Wellesley College museum removes artwork created by immigrants in protest against refugee ban", by Roisin O' Connor for The Independent, February 18th, 2017</p> <p>"Am I an Immigrant?" By Roxanne Varzi 21 February 2017</p> <p>Kourosch ValaNejad, "Duel Citizen, Dual to the Death"</p> <p>Amir Soltani, "Pilgrims and passages", Harvard Divinity Bulletin, April 2003</p> <p>"WRITERS URGE TRUMP TO RECONSIDER IMMIGRATION BAN", February 21st 2017</p> <p>"Persepolis" by Marjan Satrapi</p>	<p>Note on "Immigration" due by Friday 11/03/17 midnight.</p> <p>Assumptions on "Exile" is due by Friday 11/03/17 midnight.</p> <p>Project on "Exile" due by Friday 11/03/17 midnight.</p>
11/08/17	Exile	<p>Note on assumptions</p> <p>"Art in Exile", Ted Talk, Shirin Neshat, 2010.</p> <p>"The Gift of Exile", Niloofar Razi Howe, TEDx</p> <p>TateShots: Zarina Hashmi - Studio Visit</p> <p>"Fifi: Howls from Happiness", a film by Mitra Farahani.</p>	<p>Note on "Exile" due by Friday 11/10/17 midnight.</p> <p>Assumptions on "Islamic Art" is due by Friday 11/10/17 midnight.</p> <p>Project on "Islamic Art" due by Friday 11/10/17 midnight.</p>

11/15/17	Islamic Art	<p>Note on assumptions.</p> <p>Daftari, Fereshteh and Homi Bhabha, "Without Boundary: Seventeen ways of looking."</p> <p>"Arts of the Islamic World", Khan Academy</p> <p>"Geometric Patterns in Islamic Art", Department of Islamic Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, October 2001</p> <p>"Exhibition 1", The Institute of Arab and Islamic Art (IAIA)</p> <p>"(IN)VISIBLE"- SANAZ MAZINANI</p> <p>"Calligraphy in Islamic Art", Department of Islamic Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, October 2001</p> <p>See the works of Karim Jabbouri, Charles Hossein Zenderoudi, ZARINA Hashimi</p> <p>"Vegetal Patterns in Islamic Art", Department of Islamic Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, October 2001</p> <p>See the works of Shirana Shahbazi, Duo Caraballo-Farman: "Object: Breast Cancer"</p> <p>"Figural Representation in Islamic Art", The Metropolitan Museum of Art, October 2001</p> <p>See the work of Ardeshir Mohasses, Tala Madani, Hada Amer, Y.Z. Kami</p> <p>Tala Madani</p>	<p>Note on "Islamic Art" due by Friday 11/17/17 midnight.</p> <p>Assumptions on "Museum visit or the reproduction of Sohrab Kashani's "The Foreigner" is due by Friday 12/01/2017 midnight.</p> <p>Project on Kashani's "The Foreigner" due by Friday 12/01/2017 midnight.</p>
11/22/17	No Class (Thanksgiving)	No assignments.	

11/29/17	No Class	<p>Note on assumptions.</p> <p>Students will be asked to visit an art work, gallery or museum individually. Instruction about the visit will be given closer to the date.</p> <p>And/Or</p> <p>Reproduce Sohrab Kashani, "The Foreigner" project.</p>	<p>Note on your visit to the museum/gallery or the reproduction of Kashani's "The Foreigner" due by Friday 12/01/2017 midnight.</p> <p>Assumptions on "Climate Change and The Marginalized" is due by Friday 12/01/2017 midnight.</p> <p>Project on "Climate Change and the Marginalized" and Kashani's "The Foreigner" is due by Friday 12/01/2017 midnight.</p>
12/06/17	Climate Change and The Marginalized	<p>Note on assumptions.</p> <p>TEDxPresidio - Julie Hanna - Bringing humanity to business, and business to humanity</p> <p>"Dogtown Redemption", by Amir Soltani and Chihiro Wimbush</p> <p>"Crimes Against Humanity, and by Humanity" Kurosh ValaNejad</p> <p>"Plastic Bag", Ramin Bahrani</p> <p>"One Heart, One Tree", Naziha Mestaoui</p> <p>"The Wishing Fountain", Raafat Majzoub</p> <p>"When the Church Says Recycle, You Recycle", Raafat Majzoub</p> <p>"Iranians tackle homelessness and hunger - one refrigerator at a time" Denise Hassanzadeh Ajiri for Tehran Bureau published in The Guardian on December 3, 2015.</p> <p>"Iran's walls of kindness offer help to the homeless" Saeed Kamali Dehghan for The Guardian, January 14, 2016.</p> <p>Shirine Fakhim</p>	<p>Note on "Climate Change and the Marginalized" due on Friday 12/08/17 midnight.</p>
12/13/17	Last Day for Presentations		

Disclaimer

Schedules and topics are subject to change, based on the need of the class. Announcements will be made in class and on Canvas as appropriate.

Written Work

Woods College students are expected to prepare professional, polished written work. Written materials must be typed and submitted in the format required by your instructor. Strive for a thorough yet concise style. Cite literature appropriately, using APA, MLA or CLA style per your instructor's requirements. Develop your thoughts fully, clearly, logically and specifically. Proofread all materials to ensure the use of proper grammar, punctuation and spelling. For writing support, please contact the [Connors Family Learning Center](#).

Attendance

Attending class is an important component of learning. Students are expected to attend all class sessions. When circumstances prevent a student from attending class, the student is responsible for contacting the instructor **before** the class meets. Students who miss class are still expected to complete all assignments and meet all deadlines. Many instructors grade for participation; if you miss class, you cannot make up participation points associated with that class. Makeup work may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor. **If circumstances necessitate excessive absence from class, the student should consider withdrawing from the class.**

Class attendance is required. If, on an occasion, the student cannot attend a class due to: illness, religious holidays, sports, weddings, seriously ill relatives, jury duty, etc, I will ask the student to contact me before class meets. **Failure to attend classes without medical or reasonable excuses will have a negative effect on your final grade.**

Consistent with BC's commitment to creating a learning environment that is respectful of persons of differing backgrounds, we believe that every reasonable effort should be made to allow members of the university community to observe their religious holidays without jeopardizing their academic status. Students are responsible for reviewing course syllabi as soon as possible, and for communicating with the instructor promptly regarding any possible conflicts with observed religious holidays. Students are responsible for completing all class requirements for days missed due to conflicts with religious holidays.

Accommodation and Accessibility

Boston College is committed to providing accommodations to students, faculty, staff and visitors with disabilities. Specific documentation from the appropriate office is required for students seeking accommodation in Woods College courses. Advanced notice and formal registration with the appropriate office is required to facilitate this process. There are two separate offices at BC that coordinate services for students with disabilities:

- [The Connors Family Learning Center \(CFLC\)](#) coordinates services for students with LD and ADHD.
- [The Disabilities Services Office \(DSO\)](#) coordinates services for all other disabilities.

Find out more about BC's commitment to accessibility at www.bc.edu/sites/accessibility.

Scholarship and Academic Integrity

Students in Woods College courses must produce original work and cite references appropriately. Failure to cite references is plagiarism. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not necessarily limited to, plagiarism, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, cheating on exams or assignments, or submitting the same material or substantially similar material to meet the requirements of more than one course without seeking permission of all instructors concerned. Scholastic misconduct may also involve, but is not necessarily limited to, acts

that violate the rights of other students, such as depriving another student of course materials or interfering with another student's work. Please see the [Boston College policy on academic integrity](#) for more information.

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