Morocco Odyssey
Education 461/MENAS 461
Fall Term 2015   Wednesdays 2-5, 2310 School of Education Bldg.

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CTools site: “Morocco Odyssey Mentor Seminar” (all assigned readings will be available at our CTools site, or will be distributed in class)

COURSE OVERVIEW
This seminar will provide an opportunity for you to share your knowledge and experience as you seek to engage a diverse network of students in web-based discussions of social and cultural issues. It will also provide a place where you can become acquainted with aspects of the history and culture of Morocco, and the social practices and cultural mores observed by our traveler, Nadia Selim, in her ongoing explorations of Morocco.

Earth Odysseys is a work-in-progress. Each term we ask university students to guide high school and middle school students through a process of reflective thought as they consider (and perhaps reconsider) their own cultural practices and viewpoints through looking at those of others. This will be a challenge for the students (as well it should be!) and supporting the students will require patience and understanding on your part, as well as hard work. It is also a process, like most good teaching, of trial and error. Perhaps the single most advantageous trait for an Odysseys Mentor to possess, or to cultivate, is a willingness to experiment with an idea, and to continually adjust your mentoring based on your interpretation of the work done by the students, and the challenges you think they encountered. We hope that in the process of doing this work, you will further explore your own educational beliefs and broaden your intellectual perspective. It has been said that a significant portion of what is labeled as teaching is actually learning—we welcome you to what we hope will be a challenging and enjoyable learning experience.
**COURSE GRADING**

Virtually every mentor in the history of Earth Odysseys chose this class because of their enthusiasm for helping kids to learn about more about their world, to sharpen their thinking, and to feel more confident in their writing and in articulating their point-of-view. As a consequence of this intrinsic motivation, most mentors do top quality work. Still, you should know the criteria upon which your grade will be decided:

1) Diligence and the quality of thought as shown by your participation in, and preparation for seminar.

2) Staying current with course readings, and all written assignments.

3) The quality of your research paper and other class assignments.

4) Most Importantly...the quality and frequency of your on-line interactions with the students, and your demonstrated engagement with doing this mentoring work, and with your reflection on this work. You will have a key role in supporting the students as they seek to engage with ideas and to conduct a rich and respectful discourse. Your mentoring work constitutes the most important aspect of the course. The general rule is that you’re expected to spend 5 hours per week doing your online work (or other out-of-class assignments), and to be consistent in responding to the students, as well as completing reading and other course assignments. We expect that each of you will be making an average of ten substantive postings per week once the online discussions with the students begin in October.

Grades will be determined based on the following:

Quality and consistency of online mentoring work (30%)
Seminar participation, engagement with readings, attendance; in-class presentations (20%)
Journal writing (15%)
Odyssey activity project (20%)
Final reflection (15%)

**READINGS**

*Readings for the early sessions of class are listed below—other readings will be assigned on a week-by-week basis. All course readings will be distributed via CTools or in class.*
READING THE ODYSSEY REPORTS
Once the online project begins on September 21st, two reports are posted each week for discussion. So that you have some background on and context for the reports, we ask that you read each week’s reports for class, and that you come prepared with questions about the reports (what doesn’t make sense, or what would you like to know more about?) and thoughts about what the richest discussion issues are that are framed or suggested by the reports.

JOURNAL REFLECTIONS
We will ask you to keep an online journal in which you alternately chronicle the process by which you conceive of, research, and put together your Odyssey activity, and share some thoughts about your experiences as a mentor. Your journal reflections should be posted on our Odyssey site, as responses to prompts in the Teach section, and the reflections are due the day before class at 5 p.m. The prompts are listed on the weekly schedule below for each week that we would like you to do a journal reflection. The first reflection, due on September 22nd at 5 p.m., will require that you read through the Odyssey reports. To do this, look for a document in the RESOURCES section on CTools called “All Nadia’s Morocco Reports” that contains the full text of each of our reports.

DOMAINS OF INQUIRY PROJECT
For this project, each of you will be assigned a broad area of inquiry relative to Morocco (geography and climate, for example) and we will ask you to give an in-class presentation on the subject, informing your classmates about important information in your specific area, but also framing the kinds of broader questions, and ways of seeing, that we and our students might profitably consider. You’ll meet with us to help you plan and shape this presentation. More details on this assignment, including topics and presentation dates, will be provided in class.

LECTURES, READINGS, ASSIGNMENTS, ODYSSEY REPORTS & CLASS TOPICS (subject to change):

September 9th
Introduction to the 2015 Morocco Odyssey
What does it mean to be an Odyssey Mentor; Morocco in its Contexts; Situated Nature of Research; General survey of the History of Morocco, part one.
September 16th

Ethnology of Morocco

Thinking critically about Traditional” vs. “Modern” societies, and the relation of tribes and states; Exploring the mentoring work.

Readings for Week Two: Berger & “Food for Thought” readings

Other Assignments due:
Mentoring Assignment (to be distributed in class on 9-9)

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September 23rd (Online Project begins on 9-21)

Nadia Selim and her Odyssey; exploring the idea of an Odyssey

Readings for Week Three: Mortimer, Porch, and Eickelman readings

Odyssey Reports to be read for today: Meet Nadia; Fitting Your Life into a Suitcase

Other Assignments due:
Mentoring Assignment (to be distributed in class on 9-16, and due on CTools by class time on the 23rd)

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September 30th

Morocco’s Cultural Context; Legacy of Colonialism

Guest Speaker (tent.): Mohammad Abarsham

Odyssey Reports to be read for today: Cairo; From Medina to Ville Nouvelle

Other Assignments due:
First Journal Reflection (Due the night before class at 5 p.m. in the TEACH space): Which report interests me as a focal point for my project, and why? What do I need to learn more about so that I can create a good activity?

October 7th

Language

Odyssey Reports to be read for today: Language in Morocco; Language—
Part Deux

Other Assignments due:
Second Journal Reflection (Due the night before class at 5 p.m. in the TEACH space): Share some thoughts about the inquiry questions you'll be exploring for your activity project, and about what you want to provide for the teachers to help them get the most out of your project for their students.

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October 14th
Education in Context

Odyssey Reports to be read for today: Student Protest, Censoring in Class

Other Assignments due:
Third Journal Reflection (Due the night before class at 5 p.m.): Discuss your understanding of a student posting to which you were responding, what you felt was needed by way of a response, and why you thought so. You could also talk about what a particular student response evoked for you personally, or about a choice you faced as you thought about responding.

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October 21st
Self & Society
Guest Speaker (tent.): Nadia Selim
Odyssey Reports to be read for today: Trust; An Unexpected Day

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October 28th
Private & Public Space

Odyssey Reports to be read for today: Parking; 9 Things I Learned My First Week in Morocco

Other Assignments due today:
Fourth Journal Reflection (Due the night before class at 5 p.m. in the TEACH space):
Post your Project Statement, which includes a) your "driving question"--your succinct framing of the issue you want the kids to think about, and b) a succinct statement connecting your driving question to a specific report and C) your "scope of work," a brief summary of the specific pieces that will
make up your completed activity. You will be giving a brief oral presentation about your presentation in class on October 29th.

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November 4th  
Domestic Life & Family; The Many Meanings of Food  
Activity Project Oral Presentations

*Odyssey Reports to be read for today:* Shopping; Couscous Friday

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November 11th  
Gender Issues

*Odyssey Reports to be read for today:* Girl in the Classroom; Another Point of View

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November 18th  
Islam and religious Life

*Odyssey Reports to be read for today:* Inshallah; Eid Al-Adha

*Other Assignments due:*

**Final Journal Reflection (Due the night before class at 5 p.m. in the TEACH space):** Looking back at the mentoring work so far, tell us about a learning moment you had. Perhaps it had to do with teaching and mentoring, perhaps it had to do with a cultural issue, or perhaps you learned something about yourself (either as a teacher or as a global citizen)

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November 25th  
NO CLASS MEETING

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December 2nd  
Popular Culture

*Odyssey Report to be read for today:* C'est La Vie; Road to Cueta

*Assignment due:*
Odyssey Activity Project due on CTools by class time today

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December 9th (Final class session)
Reflection on the Morocco Odyssey

Limnality & Identity

*Odyssey Reports to be read for today:* But where are you from?

**Assignment due:**
*Due on CTools by December 16th:* Final Reflection Paper

**ODYSSEY ACTIVITY PROJECT**

Each of you will create an activity to be used by future Odyssey teachers and students. This activity must be linked to one of the Odyssey reports, and you will be charged with coming up with the activity idea, describing that activity so that a teacher can use it with her students, and assembling all of the other resources (readings, maps, web URLs, worksheets, discussion questions) that a teacher would need to do your activity, including your description of the activity, how it links to a particular Odyssey report, and what the larger idea(s) are that your activity is designed to frame for the students. This larger idea will be your driving question(s)—what do you most want the students to be thinking about or otherwise exploring as a consequence of doing your activity. We will be asking you to write a series of entries in your online journal that take you through the various steps of pulling your project together, and we will also discuss the project in class.

*Your finished activity is due by the time of our class meeting on December 2nd* (on CTools) and should include the following elements:

1) An introductory (one-page) essay for the teachers and students that includes your driving question, how you derived it, why you feel it is important, and how you are connecting all of this to your activity.

2) Which report is your project linked to, how and why?
   e.g. “Trust”: Nadia’s report illustrated how people could be much more actively engaged in the affairs of others than I was accustomed to. I was interested in how social pressures impact our ability or our willingness to engage with other people and even to cross certain social barriers to offer help. I decided to create an activity in students would be asked to consider look at situations, consider whether or not they would intervene in the situation, and then to write about their decision...”
3) Detailed description of the activity
A step-by-step sequence of what will happen, from preparation to conclusion. This should include descriptions of discussions necessary before the activity, orientation to the activity, directions for both teacher and students, description of what will take place, questions you want the students to consider, possible connections to the student’s lives, and debriefing/post-activity discussion topics and prompts.

4) “What does a teacher need?”
This should include actual materials needed, discussion questions, a list of activity prompts a teacher could use, or debriefing questions. It should also include the readings or resources you would want the kids to read (with annotated descriptions).

5) Complete list of references used.

In summary, we want you to give the teacher a finished activity including everything you think s/he will need to actually conduct your activity in their classroom. Your work will then become a part of our Odyssey teacher resources.

FINAL REFLECTION
At our final class on December 9th, we would like to talk about your experience as a mentor...what you learned, what you think that the student’s learned, how the experience could be improved, etc.

We will also ask that you prepare a written reflection on aspects of your mentoring experience in a 5-6 page reflection (double spaced, to be handed in no later than Tuesday, December 15th on our CTools site) that responds to these prompts:

A) Select two postings made by the same student over the course of the Odyssey that indicate progress made by the student in question. Talk about what you see in the two posts, identifying their strengths and their shortcomings (if applicable), and discuss how the second post indicates progress made by the student. Please be specific about breaking down the qualities of the posts and describing the measure(s) of progress by which you’ve measuring the work. Please also include the text of the actual postings.

B) Discuss some of what you’ve discovered about yourself as a teacher and learner from your Odyssey experience as you engaged in and made sense of
the mentoring work. Draw from your experience at supporting the intellectual work of younger people and challenging them to think more deeply, as well as your engagement with the broad set of cultural issues that were evoked by the reports and discussions. Be sure to illustrate your insights by excerpting particular interactions from the Odyssey that support and illustrate your points. Please also don’t be shy about speaking of lingering challenges and uncertainties—you’ve tackled some challenging issues in your mentoring, and we do need you to pretend that you have everything figured out.

C) Offer one piece of concrete advice for a future mentor....a strategy you’ve employed, or something you’ve figured out that you think they would find helpful...and write about it. Be sure to not only identify the strategy and explain it, but also make a case for why it’s worthwhile and illustrate your points with specific references/multiple instances drawn from your mentoring work.

WEB RESOURCES
We’ve listed some good information resources here—we’ll share others in class:

National Geographic’s “Morocco” website:

Portland State University’s Middle East Teaching Tools “Morocco” page:
http://www.middleeastpdx.org/resources/countries/morocco/

Among the Berbers (National Geographic)

Looklex Encyclopædia—Morocco (follow Travel Guides to Morocco, then Tetuoan)
http://looklex.com/e.o/morocco.htm

SOS Children’s Village—Teaching about Morocco
http://www.sos-schools.org/our-africa-teaching-resources/choose-a-country/morocco-teaching-resources

University of Pennnsylvania Middle East Center’s “Useful Links, Resources, and Lesson Plans for K-12 Teachers” website:
http://www.sas.upenn.edu/mec/resources/teachers