

Syllabus for first-year critical thinking seminar, Fall 2014 Texas A&M University at Qatar

Life in Qatar is changing rapidly – new skyscrapers rise up from the ground, new roads are built everywhere, and new people from other cultures bring their own fascinating traditions with them to Qatar. Interviewing older people about their ways of life in the past can help us understand the impact of all of these changes. This seminar will explore the worlds we live in through interviewing people about their past, which is a process also known as curating oral history. Students will present their findings at an oral history exhibition at the end of the semester.

This seminar focuses on understanding and applying critical thinking skills, especially in support of integrative and lifelong learning. Small course size allows a high level of interactivity via discussion and other group activities.

By the end of the term, students should be able to:

- Define oral history.
- Describe and implement techniques used to collect oral histories.
- Listen thoughtfully and objectively to stories of life in the past.
- Identify and discuss key themes in others’ oral histories.
- Evaluate source materials from one or more communities in Qatar.
- Explain how oral history relates to particular problems or issues in Qatar.

Course Assignments

Participation and Attendance	10%
In-Class Activities and Homework	25%
Oral Histories	30%
Poster Project	10%
Poster Presentation at Oral History Exhibition	25%
Total	100%

Schedule for Fall 2014

	Topic	Assignment Due
28.08.14	Course Introduction	
04.09.14	Oral History	Oral history worksheet
11.09.14	University Circles	3 project questions
18.09.14	Circles of Honor	Honor worksheet
25.09.14	Interview Practice	Pre-interview worksheet
02.10.14	Family Circles	Oral History 1
	Eid Mubarak!	
16.10.14	Friend Circles	Pre-interview worksheet
23.10.14	Religion and Culture Circles	Oral History 2
30.10.14	The Codes We Live By	Critical thinking worksheet
06.11.14	Poster Design	Pre-interview worksheet
13.11.14	New Circles	Oral History 3
20.11.14	The Worlds We Live In	Poster worksheet
27.11.14	Presentation Practice	Draft of poster
04.12.14	Oral History Exhibition	Poster Presentation
11.12.14	No Meeting and No Final Exam	Final essay assessment