**Lesson Plan Format**

Bimson Humanities Seminar:

Challenging Student Perceptions of the Middle East and North Africa

Teacher: B. Mayfield Grade Level: 10-12 Content Area: Human Geography

Content Standards Addressed by this lesson:

Inquiry Questions:

1. What are some shared/diverse cultural and political characteristic of MENA?
2. What are some myths about the Muslim/Arab world? How might those myths impact global perspectives on the regions?
3. Differentiate between the political/diplomatic characteristics of a nation and the attitudes/characteristics of the people.

Concepts and Skills related to this lesson:

1. Critical thinking regarding other cultures
2. Awareness of implicit bias

Evidence Outcomes:

1. Students will be able to critically analyze their own biases and how that impacts how they view news articles and personal interactions with minorities.
2. Students will be able to recognize some common misconceptions of the MENA region and Islamic and Muslim culture in media and conversations.

Activities:

Reveal misconceptions

1. Have students brain storm what they think of (or what they think the average American thinks of) regarding Islam and Arabs?
2. Show slide show of Fact or Fiction questions with statements about the Arab world. Complete all questions before revealing answers. Discussion as we go through each answer and data behind them.
3. Which religious text is each quote from? Worksheet, share out

Focus on people

1. Focus on “do all MENA Muslims hate the U.S.?”
   1. Survey students about what they think Muslims/Arabs think of the U.S. Differentiate political and personal/cultural attitudes.
   2. Show clip from Rick Steves’ Iran of interviews with MENA citizens about attitudes towards Americans.
   3. Show some videos from Betsey’s website with Muslims telling their stories. (No discussion)

Creating a more realistic picture

1. Brief lecture on major events in MENA history (Ottomans, mandates, arbitrary national divisions, strategic use of nationalism by European powers)
2. PowerPoint/Lecture/Discussion surveying types of government, political freedom (hijab, free speech) and ethnic makeup of MENA nations.
3. Show some videos from Betsey’s site and pause to discuss commonalities and differences and to notice how the subjects interacted with Betsey.

Final Project: Essay for each student, guidelines on and assignment submitted on Canvas. Focused on specific similarities between MENA cultures and our local/national culture with a conclusion focused on universal values that can be identified.

Other lessons to integrate:

Religious Unit: Islam vs. Islamism, Interpretations of the Quran

Urban Geography Unit: Use photos of skylines of various cities (include Middle East) and have students identify/guess what countries are represented by those cities.

Culture Unit: Use Persian Miniatures as example of local/folk culture and cultural migration, Use pictures of pop culture (Starbucks and other restaurants, music, fashion)