

RETHINKING THE REGION:

New Approaches to 9-12 U.S. Curriculum on the Middle East and North Africa

UNIT: WOMEN AND GENDER

TOPIC	
Women in the Middle East and North Africa: Past and Present	
LESSON OVERVIEW	In this lesson, students will brainstorm what they already know or think about women in MENA, and as a class they will label each characteristic as positive, negative or neutral. Students will create a timeline to highlight significant events and women from MENA. To culminate, students will discuss how the information challenges their previous ideas about women in the region, how women in MENA are portrayed in the media today, and how these images differ from the women featured in the timeline.
ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What roles have women in MENA played, historically and presently, in politics, the economy, and society? • How do images from the media differ or relate to actual women’s realities in the region?
LESSON OBJECTIVES	<p><u>Learners will be able to:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how specific women have influenced historical developments in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). • Challenge common misconceptions about women in MENA. • Understand the diversity of women’s experiences and realities in the MENA region.
STANDARDS	<p><u>Common Core Standards</u></p> <p><i>Common Core Grade 9-10:</i></p> <p>CSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and</p>

	<p>origin of information.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.9 Compare and contrast treatments of the same topics in several primary and secondary sources</p> <p><i>Common Core Grade 11-12:</i></p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.</p> <p><u>New York State Standards</u></p> <p>Performance Indicators Students will:</p> <p><u>Standard 2, Key Idea 1</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the broad patterns, relationships, and interactions of cultures and civilizations during particular eras and across eras • Analyze changing and competing interpretations of issues, events, and developments throughout world history <p><u>Standard 2, Key Idea 2</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguish between the past, present, and future by creating multiple-tier timelines that display important events and developments from world history across time and place <p><u>Standard 2, Key Idea 3</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze the roles and contributions of individuals and groups to social, political, economic, cultural, and religious practices and activities • Examine the social/cultural, political, economic, and religious norms and values of Western and other world cultures
<p>MATERIALS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut-up timeline slips (15 total) • Dates written on the board or on paper, in the format of a timeline from 500 A.D. to the present

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pens/pencils • Post-it notes • Optional: Clothesline and clothespins for the timeline
PROCEDURE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Opening Activity (10 minutes)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On a board at the front of the room, write the phrase “Women in the Middle East and North Africa”. • Ask students to brainstorm any words or phrases that come to mind when they think of what they have learned from school, the media, or other sources about women in this region. • Ask students which perceptions are positive, which are negative, and which are neutral. List the value judgments on the board. • Leave the responses on the board for the remainder of the lesson. 2. <u>Main activity: Timeline (35 minutes)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure that a timeline from the 500s to the present is drawn somewhere in the room. Alternatively, a clothesline can be hung with dates dangling and with clothespins for students to attach their slips of paper to the clothesline. • Divide students into 15 groups, ideally in pairs. • Distribute the cut-ups “Timeline of Women and Gender Relations in the Middle East and North Africa” (one slip per group). [Optional: At the end of the activity, distribute copies of the whole timeline to all students.] • Ask students to discuss the historical event/individual on their slip of paper. • After students have discussed their historical event/individual, have them decide where on the timeline their item goes. • Once all events/individuals are lined up, have students read out chronologically the historical timeline of events and examine the images. [Variations: students can line up with their slips of paper and read out chronologically. Students can do a silent “gallery walk” to read about the events/individuals, and look at the historical timeline.] • If time permits, ask students to take post-its and fill in historical events related to women’s history or key women figures from other parts of the

	<p>world through the period of 500 A.D. to the present (adding the post-its to the timeline). Ask students to compare and contrast historical events/figures, as well as any links that may exist between them.</p> <p>3. <u>Discussion/Closing (15 minutes)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students the following questions and discuss as a class: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. What did you find surprising about any of the women on the historical timeline? b. Did any of the information change the way you think about women in MENA? c. How are women from MENA portrayed in the media? Do these images differ from some of the women you learned about today? If so, how? <p>4. <u>Questions for further reflection/connection to today</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider how women have defied/challenged roles traditionally assigned to them, and what strategies they may have used to overcome barriers. • How have gender roles changed and been re-interpreted over time? What social, political, and economic factors contribute to how gender roles are shaped in a given society?
<p>ADDITIONAL RESOURCES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article and images from photographic archive of Armenian photographer Maryam Şahinyan, online at <i>Hurriyet Daily News</i>' website: http://www.hurriyetaidailynews.com/archive-presents-a-half-century-of-istanbuls-faces.aspx?pageID=238&nID=7906&NewsCatID=385. • PBS's lesson plan and information on free access to the film <i>The Light in her Eyes</i>, about a Qur'anic school for girls in Damascus, Syria. [Scroll down at this link for film clips: http://www.pbs.org/pov/thelightinhereyes/lesson_plan.php.] • Review the following curricular unit, "Restoring Women to World Studies," produced by the center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Texas, Austin, and consider utilizing some of the information/lessons in the section on the Arab World, Islam, and feminism: http://www.utexas.edu/cola/orgs/hemispheres/_files/pdf/women/RestoringWomenFull.pdf.