

MØNA 2506 – Mass Media in the Middle East – Spring 2026

Exam Description and Censoring Guidelines

Main instructor: Teresa Pepe

In this exam, students shall demonstrate that they have read academic research on the historical development of mass media in the Arab Middle East. They shall also demonstrate that they have read and watched excerpts of Arab mass media content in English, and that they are able to analyse and interpret them in relation to its historical and political context and to specific media theories.

Evaluating students

Part of the students belong to the BA programme in Middle Eastern Studies; others belong to other UiO study programme or are exchange students from abroad.

Teaching:

The Teaching has taken the form of frontal lectures, seminar discussions; class excursions, and meeting with professional actors (es. director of Arabisk Film Dager). Students have passed three obligatory quizzes (a quiz, a wiki-entry a video-poster) and have submitted three drafts of the essay to be admitted to the exam.

Examination

Due date: November 07th at 11:00 a.m. on Inspira

Format: The portfolio must be a combination of 3 separate essay; Length: 9-10 pages (excluding notes and bibliography), circa 3500 words, font 12. Each paper should have a bibliography.

Citation style: Chicago author-date, or APA. Consistency is key.

The examination text is given in English. Students may submit their response in English, Norwegian, Swedish, Danish.

The essays should be well organized, written with correct grammar and spelling

They should integrate at least 9 sources from the reading list (at least three sources each essay).

Students have submitted previous drafts of the three essays (see below) and have received by the instructor both in writing and during office hours.

The portfolio should be evaluated and graded on the basis of the following (this is not a hierarchical list; all issues should be considered):

1. Does the paper answer the questions? How does it so (degree of coherence, internal consistency)?
2. Does the paper show a good grasp of the historical development of mass media in the region?
3. Does the paper connect media uses and trends to the political and cultural context, and specific historical events?
4. Are the case studies and media texts connected to more general theoretical questions and if so, how?
5. Are sources from the reading list used and if so, to which extent (and is it understood, i.e., used correctly/convincingly)?
6. Does the paper follow a clear structure? Is it written in a comprehensible way?
7. Does the paper show a good master of academic writing (references, bibliography, notes)?
8. Are there indications of independent work and thinking? Is the student able to evaluate existing research on the field or media texts from a critical standpoint?

As for formal aspects, papers should not be messy-- if they are, that means students did not heed advice, edits, re-edits, etc.

Uses of idiomatic English or Norwegian, and grammatical mistakes will not by themselves be sufficient to lower the grade significantly, but in conjunction with other flaws and weaknesses, they may be given weight in the overall grading assessment.

Each text provided in the portfolio will be individually graded via A thru F grading system --- and the average of the three grades will determine their final grade.

For the overall assessment, the grading should follow UiO's general definitions, which can be found here: <https://www.uio.no/english/studies/examinations/grading-system/index.html>

A – An **excellent** performance, clearly outstanding. The candidate demonstrates excellent judgement and a high degree of independent thinking.

B – A **very good** performance. The candidate demonstrates sound judgement and a very good degree of independent thinking.

C – A **good** performance in most areas. The candidate demonstrates a reasonable degree of judgement and independent thinking in the most important areas.

D – A **satisfactory** performance, but with significant shortcomings. The candidate demonstrates a limited degree of judgement and independent thinking.

E – Grade “E” (**Sufficient**) is given for a performance that meets the minimum criteria, but no more. The candidate demonstrates a very limited degree of judgement and independent thinking.

F – (**Fail**) A performance that does not meet the minimum academic criteria. The candidate demonstrates an absence of both judgement and independent thinking.

Essay 1: Media, Modernity and Nationalism (due 20th February 2026)
Referring to the issues and debates addressed in the readings from class 1 to class 4, and keeping in mind our discussions in class, provide a critical, in-depth analysis of (1) ONE of the two examples below, referencing the course material, class themes, and discussions.

1. Discuss the advent of printing in the Arab Middle East. And what was the nature of the social change precipitated by the printing press once it came into widespread use in the Middle East? And what were the continuities with the early-modern scribal chronicle produced by "commoner authors" like barbers and soldiers?
2. How does Fahmy's concept of "media-capitalism" challenge Anderson's theory of "imagined communities?"

Formal Guidelines:

Use 12-size font; single-spaced; length: 2 pages (circa 1000 words). Notes and bibliography can be added in a third page if required.

Submit a Word Document .

Integrate at least 3 sources from the reading list.

Use Chicago Style for Notes and

Bibliography https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-

[1.html \(Links to an external site.\)](#)[Links to an external site.](#)

Make sure the essay is well organized; use correct grammar and spelling. You can reply in English or Norwegian.

Essay 2: Media Beyond Borders

Referring to the issues and debates addressed in the readings and keeping in mind our discussions in class, provide a critical, in-depth analysis of (1) ONE of the two examples below, referencing the course material, class themes, and discussions.

1. To what extent has satellite television disrupted the nationalist agendas that dominated Arab media in the era of radio and terrestrial broadcasting? Develop a clear argument and support it with concrete examples from both news channels (ex. Al-Jazeera, Al-Arabiya) and entertainment channels or TV dramas (ex. Ramadan musalsalāt, pan-Arab reality shows). In your essay, use clear and simple language, explain key concepts in your own words and support your claims with specific examples and historical facts from the course readings. Use collateral academic readings if needed. (keywords: *media-etatism*; *trans-national media*).

2. Write a critical review of Annemarie Jacir's film *Salt of This Sea* (2008), connecting your analysis to key themes from the course. Your review should analyze the film's setting, main characters, plot, style and reflect how the movie moves from national, regional framework to global ones. In your review, you should address the following points (you may organize them in your own way, but try to cover them all):

1. How does the film represent the impact of the 1948 Nakba and the 1993 Oslo Accords on Palestinians everyday life, mobility, borders, hope or disillusionment?
2. How does the movie relate to the history of Arab and Palestinian cinema?
3. Drawing on Noha Mellor's definition of 'diaspora film-making' (2024), could the movie be considered a "diaspora film" (in terms of director, characters, settings, language, funding, or audience)?

In your review, use clear and simple language, explain key concepts and key historical events, and support your claims with specific examples from the film and relevant course readings. Use collateral academic readings if needed.

Formal Guidelines:

Use 12-size font; single-spaced; length: 2-3 pages (1000-1500 words). Notes and bibliography can be added in an extra page if required.

Submit a Word Document.

Integrate at least 3 sources from the reading list.

Use Chicago Style for Notes and

Bibliography https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.

Make sure the essay is well organized; use correct grammar and spelling.

You can reply in English or Norwegian.

Essay 3 – Youth, Digital Media and Activism

How do young people in the Middle East use specific digital platforms to represent their experiences and struggles, and in what ways can course readings help you analyse this form of online content?

- Choose **ONE** concrete example of digital media activism and analyse it in depth. Your case must be related to social or political issues in the Middle East.

You may choose, for example:

- a specific blog (personal or collective)
- a Facebook group or page
- a YouTube channel
- or a similar, clearly defined profile (e.g. Instagram, X/Twitter) **ASK YOUR TEACHER IF YOU NEED ADVICE!**
- The source can be in Middle Eastern languages, English, Norwegian or other European languages.

In your essay, you should describe and analyze the platform and make a clear argument (es. "it is an example of cyberactivism", or "it turns personal experiences into political issues") supported by at least three course readings.

- Introduce the example and state a clear main argument in the introduction.
The rest of the essay should support this argument combining an analysis of the source with the course readings.
- Do a close analysis of the platform. Your goal is to show *how* this concrete content supports your main argument.
 1. Focus on **specific posts or pieces of content** (e.g. 3–5 posts/videos/threads).
 2. Analyse: topics and themes; visual elements, style

3. how identity, gender, nation, religion, memory, historical and political events are represented
 4. how comments, likes and shares shape the meaning
- Use course readings actively. Briefly explain the key concepts you use, and show how they help you understand your chosen platform. The readings should be tools for your own analysis, not just summaries.

Formal Guidelines:

- Use 12-size font; single-spaced; length: 3-4 pages (1000-1500 words + images). Include screenshots or brief quotations or relevant images (with dates). Notes and bibliography can be added in an extra page if required.
- Submit a Word Document .
- Integrate at least 3 sources from the reading list.
- Use Chicago Style for Notes and Bibliography[Links to an external site.](#) Check how to cite electronic sources
- Make sure the essay is well organized; use correct grammar and spelling.
- You can reply in English or Norwegian.