

January 2004

Volume 3, Number 1

Newsletter of the Schoolcraft College International Institute (SCII)

International Agenda

Institute Launches Theme Semester on the Middle East

The International Institute at Schoolcraft College (SCII) has initiated a campus-wide project this Winter to focus attention on the culture, history, and politics of the Middle East region (Southwest Asia and North Africa).

Students and others on campus will be learning about this region through special coursework and campus events. Instructors in a range of departments will be introducing course activities related to the Middle East at various points during the semester, and also encouraging their students to attend a series of campus talks to be given by Schoolcraft instructors and students as well as experts from the area.

The Middle East Theme Semester is the first in what the SCII hopes will be a frequent focus on selected cultural regions of the world in designated semesters at the College. The idea has been adapted from Macomb Community College, which recently used a Caribbean Festival theme.

It is natural to select the Middle East as our first regional focus because of its importance in world events at this time. The tragedies of September 11, 2001, the subsequent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the escalating violence in Israel and Palestine have raised burning questions, not only about the military and political situations in these countries but about the whole culture and history of this region. Millions of people in the U.S. want to know why a land so rich in human and natural resources should be so torn by strife and oppression.

For educators, the complexity of the Middle East makes it an ambitious but very fertile topic. Understanding this region entails learning about the people and geography of more than two dozen countries on two different continents, countries where a range of languages are spoken (Arabic, Berber, Hebrew, Turkish, Kurdish, Persian, Pashto, etc.), where some of the first civilizations arose (in the Nile Valley and Mesopotamia), where three major religious cultures were born (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), and where several different political systems thrive today (monarchy, military rule, elective democracy, etc.).

Ideas and Resources

A good example of how SC instructors can participate in the theme semester comes from Sam Hays, an adjunct assistant professor of English. For his two sections this Winter in English 102 (English Composition), Sam has prepared a list of 36 suggested topics that students can write about for their first paper, a “compare and contrast” essay. All 36 topics are related to the Middle East. For example, a student could compare and contrast any of the following: Islamic Law and the U.S. Constitution; Sunni and Shi’a Muslims; Moroccan and French Cuisine; Turkish and American Music; etc. Sam has also compiled a list of online Middle East resources for his students to use in doing their research.

The annotated list of a dozen acclaimed books about the Middle East that appears on pages 6-9 should be useful to instructors and students. Janet Schneider (Bradner Library) has offered to help locate further sources of information about this region. Sandy Roney-Hays, an adjunct assistant professor of anthropology, is organizing a faculty book club which will select, read, and discuss a Middle East book this semester (see the Jan. 20 listing in our calendar on page 12).

We have also collaborated with the Writing Fellows Program to create a website on “Writing Papers About the Middle East.” Located at <http://www.schoolcraft.edu/fellows/middle>, the website features a bibliography of resources and other instructional materials on the Middle East that will continue to grow throughout the semester; already, for example, Wayne Pricer (Bradner Library) has turned over his extensive list of resources to be added to what we have compiled. The website also includes a link to step-by-step instructions for Writing About the Middle East,

continued on next page

Theme Semester *continued from page 1*

including writing-tips specifically geared to this region. The “Faculty Showcase” section of the website highlights how SC faculty are integrating Middle East studies into their classes, while “Student Showcase” is a section where we’ll be able to highlight student research as it becomes available. Finally, the “Presentations” section of the website will include an up-to-date listing of the on-campus speaker series that we are organizing.

Presentations on Campus

Instructors are encouraged to commend our speaker series to their students as an excellent way to gather insight and information about the Middle East. Some might want to require an entire class to attend a given talk; others might want to fold these talks into extra-credit opportunities for their students.

Our speaker series begins on January 21 with a presentation by Fatih Turkmenoglu, “The Last 10 Years of Turkey Through a Journalist’s Eyes.” Fatih, 35, recently resigned his position as a CNN producer and reporter in Istanbul in order to come to Ann Arbor for one year as a Knight-Wallace Journalism Fellow at the

University of Michigan. In Fatih’s presentation, which will include actual video footage from Turkey, he will share with us his true stories about people there, from factory owners to jazz musicians; stories of the minority nationalities of Turkey, from Kurdish and Assyrian to Armenian, Greek, and Jewish; the story of Turkey’s struggle to join the European Union and how this has prodded the government to loosen strictures on media and citizen’s organizations; and stories of daily life in the capital today, from “urban chic” observances of Ramadan to fear of terrorist attacks.

The series continues on Jan. 29 with a PowerPoint presentation by SC professor Randy Schwartz, “Islam and Mathematics: A Hidden History,” and in February when a speaker from a local mosque, the Islamic Center of Ann Arbor, will explain “Islam as a Complete Way of Life.” Presenters scheduled later in the semester (dates not yet selected) include Diane O’Connell, SC geography professor, on “Exotic International Rivers in the Middle East: Opportunities for Cooperation?”; SC student Tracey Speiss on “Understanding Islam,” her research project in English 102 this past Fall; Omar Addi, SC English professor, on “Arab and Berber Music from Morocco”; and Randy Schwartz on “From Porridges to Imperial Feasts: Islam and the Foods of North Africa.” There will be additional speakers from local universities; check the Writing Fellows website mentioned above for the most up-to-date information.

The presentation on “Islam as a Complete Way of Life” should be especially eye-opening for students and others who attend. In the modern West, every attempt is made to segregate religion from public life, and most of us have little or no experience with a culture like that of Islam where the sacred and secular are considered indistinguishable. Our mass media have luridly highlighted only the most extreme distortions of this, from the Taliban’s destruction of artwork at Bamiyan to the sentencing of an adulterous Nigerian woman to death by stoning. However, the larger picture of a religious faith that strives to explain all phenomena in the universe and to embrace and guide people throughout their daily lives— this story, which we have scarcely heard, is one that we should seek to understand.

The International Institute takes pleasure in inviting all instructors on campus to take advantage of this theme semester; to take creative initiative in guiding your students to a deeper understanding of the Middle East and its peoples; and to take the opportunity provided by this newsletter, by the website, and by the other means mentioned above, to collaborate with your colleagues across many disciplines and to share with us what you and your students are learning. •

International Agenda

Editor: Randy Schwartz (Mathematics Dept.)

Founding Editor: Don Ryktarsyk (Business Dept.)

voice: 734/ 462-4400 ext. 5290

fax: 734/ 462-4558

e-mail: rschwart@schoolcraft.edu

Material contained in International Agenda may be reproduced or quoted provided that the source is credited.

Published once per semester by

International Institute (SCII)

Schoolcraft College

18600 Haggerty Road

Livonia, MI 48152-2696

SCII Faculty Chairperson:

Josselyn Moore (Sociology/ Anthropology Depts.)

SCII Administrative Director:

Asst. Dean Dominic Aquila (Liberal Arts Divn.)

The mission of the Schoolcraft College International Institute is to coordinate activities and offerings that promote cross-cultural understanding for the community, students, faculty, and staff. Internationalizing programs and activities will assist participants in acquiring appreciation for the diversities and commonalities of world cultures and global issues providing opportunities for success in an evolving world community.

Theo Sypris' Visit Energizes Our Campus

We were very pleased to host a November 12 visit to our campus by Theo Sypris, director of the Midwest Institute for International/ Intercultural Education (MIIE). Schoolcraft College is one of 92 schools participating in the MIIE consortium, which is based at Kalamazoo Valley Community College. Theo also teaches social sciences at KVCC and directs the International Studies degree program there. His visit to Schoolcraft was designed to enable our faculty and administration to heighten their awareness of the importance of international and intercultural studies, to help us learn more about how such studies are carried out at KVCC and at other schools, and to encourage our participation in similar efforts at the College.

Theo and his wife Eva met with activists from our own Institute for lunch at the American Harvest Restaurant followed by an informal roundtable discussion in the Liberal Arts Building. Theo also made a major presentation that afternoon in the amphitheater of the Forum Building, in the context of a meeting of the Liberal Arts Division to which all instructors and key administrators were invited.

International Studies are Here to Stay

Theo made the important point that all academic disciplines have a stake in international education. It's a necessity because of rising challenges related to the globalization of markets and scientific networks, heightened international conflict and competition, the effects of immigration, the shortage of language and geography skills and of intercultural understanding and communication, the persistence of worldwide environmental, health, and human rights problems, and the need for greater knowledge of international organizations.

Some people might worry that international education at the community college level is just a "fad." Theo pointed out, however, that clearly it has staying power— take KVCC itself as an example, where the program has thrived for more than 20 years. We've gone beyond saying that community colleges exist to serve only *local* areas, issues, and needs. Yes, community college students are fairly pragmatic— in general, they will need to be convinced that international studies have a career tie-in. But such career tie-ins are fairly easy to establish for students majoring in such fields as teaching, marketing, finance, accounting, management, government service (embassy personnel, security and intelligence workers, etc.), social sciences professions, mass media, etc.

What are the *educational* benefits of internationalized learning? Theo listed some of them for us:

- it empowers students to function in a diverse and interdependent world
- it enriches students' understanding of the human and natural environment
- it enhances both rational and affective skills of students

- it increases students' job prospects
- it encourages the teaching of values, ethics, and ways of life
- it supports usage of the Internet and multimedia resources
- it encourages cross-disciplinary student learning and instructor collaboration
- it helps develop broad-minded, sensitive, and tolerant individuals.

How the KVCC Program Works

Theo also described the International Studies degree program at KVCC, which involves about 300 students at any given time. Roughly 90% of these students are American-born. Although the degree program is the highest expression of international studies at KVCC, it plays a role beyond its own numbers, since it has encouraged broad circles of faculty to internationalize their coursework. About 30-40 academic disciplines have some degree of international infusion in their curricula, with roughly 65 full-time and 35 part-time instructors involved in teaching these courses. The degree program provides an anchor or base in support of the whole international curriculum.

In any given semester at KVCC, approximately 200 class sections are designated "G" ("global") for their international content. Class sections receive this official designation only if they pass a set of requirements; for example, at least 2 of the 16 weeks of content must address international subject matter. For a given course, some sections might be "G" and others not. Thus, each instructor faces the same question as did Hamlet: to "G" or not to "G"? For those who choose to "G," a mentoring system assists them in infusing international content into their instruction. This has an impact, of course, on their individual syllabus, but not on the common syllabus.

KVCC instructors themselves are involved in the promotion of their "G" sections and the recruitment of students. Notwithstanding this, most students who end up in a "G" section have not consciously selected for that (the same has been the case at Schoolcraft College with sections designated "CBI" for computer-based instruction).

Theo pointed out that this form of internationalization needs no institutional restructuring and very little additional resources. Infusing, say, 3 weeks of international content into a course does not typically add 3 "new" weeks of material to the syllabus or necessitate the deletion of 3 "old" weeks of material, since the "old" material can usually be reformulated to be taught in an international context.

We are grateful for Theo Sypris' energy and spirit of collaboration in educating us about international studies, and to Schoolcraft College for making his visit possible. •

A Year of Rejuvenation for Our Institute

In January 2003, as part of the reorganization that followed the retirement of Midge Carleton as Assoc. Dean of Sciences, the International Institute at Schoolcraft College (SCII) was placed under the administrative direction of Dominic Aquila, Asst. Dean of Liberal Arts. Prof. Josselyn Moore (Sociology/Anthropology) is SCII's faculty chairperson, who organizes and presides over our meetings and day-to-day activities. Josselyn has also succeeded Midge as the representative to our parent group, the Midwest Institute for International/ Intercultural Education (MIIE).

These changes gave us a much-needed opportunity to take stock of our Institute, review what we have done, and decide where we want to go and how we will get there. A summary of our decisions and activities appears below. We met five times during 2003 (in March, May, September, October, and December) on selected Fridays in conference room LA-130, typically with 6-15 people attending.

All interested faculty and staff are encouraged to participate in the Institute. Our next scheduled meetings are as follows:

Fri. Jan. 23 12:00 pm LA-130
Fri. Mar. 26 12:00 pm LA-130

Embarking on a Vision Quest

To solicit ideas and input, a Vision Quest was held on March 28 with 15 people participating. In the first segment of the quest, Evan Garrett (History) facilitated a brainstorming session in which we all shared thoughts about how the Institute might carry out its goals. It was agreed that we want and need to:

- promote greater cultural awareness among students and faculty through curricular reform and campus programming
- welcome and involve international students
- foster campus-wide communication and collaboration across disciplines
- explore and expand international connections by such means as study abroad, exchange programs, and collaboration with sister colleges and MIIE.

Sumita Chaudhery (English) shared the fact that Ma-

comb Community College recently held a cross-disciplinary Caribbean Festival, and she suggested that Schoolcraft might similarly focus on one culture or region in selected semesters. Dominic Aquila mentioned that he is working on a request from Pres. Jeffress to initiate a Fulbright Scholar exchange program at the College. Later, Dominic reported that there is also institutional support for finding immersive or other alternative delivery methods for foreign-language instruction.

In the second segment of our Vision Quest, Josselyn Moore reviewed the history of our Institute. It was created in 1994 through an International Education grant from the U.S. Dept. of Education procured by Bruce Sweet, now our Assoc. Dean of Corporate Services and Technology. Highlights since then have included the internationalization of over two dozen courses with revised content and objectives; participation in the MIIE and its conferences and workshops; the annual Multicultural Fair; the newsletter *International Agenda*; and a two-day Arts of India Conference (2000).

As the concluding segment of our Vision Quest, Dr. Aquila led a discussion based on two readings, most importantly the article "Global Culture and the Community College" (*Community College Journal of Research and Practice* vol. 26 [2002]) in which John S. Levin reports on his study of seven community colleges (his book-length treatment *Globalizing the Community College* is also available at Bradner Library). Levin concludes that community college leaders have increasingly embraced globalization and they have done so with one of two related ideologies: neoliberalism (with its emphasis on rational and efficient management) and corporatism (with its emphasis on productivity and customer satisfaction). There's a degree of tension between these impulses toward globalization, on the one hand, and certain traditional features of community colleges, on the other hand: such colleges' orientation toward local rather than international needs, their emphasis on personal choice and equality rather than market imperatives, and their focus on knowledge rather than customer satisfaction as evaluative measures. Dominic pointed out that this tension, while important, should not bar colleges such as Schoolcraft from internationalizing their missions. In fact, doing so can foster positive social change: we can teach our students to value and respect both aspects of our multicultural society—commonality and diversity. This approach is supplanting older assimilationist and melting-pot views of America.

Contemplating an International Degree

At our May 16 meeting, we began to explore the possibility of creating an international degree and/or certificate program at the College. A committee that had met with the Counseling Dept. about this reported what types of information would need to be gathered to launch such an effort. We discussed emulating one of two possible models: the Schoolcraft Scholars (Honors) program, which incorporates introductory and capstone courses and service learning; and the International Studies program at Kalamazoo Valley Community College, which involves dozens of courses and hundreds of students.

Dominic Aquila further elaborated the possibility of structuring such a program on the Honors model. A student could opt to earn an existing degree with an "international enrichment" designation, which might entail a colloquium introductory course, a series of electives having significant international content, and a capstone completion course synthesizing all coursework and executed as a group project. However, Evan Garrett (History) argued that it's important to internationalize *all* courses on our campus, and that creating a specifically international degree might create an undesirable dichotomy between "domestic" and "international" (us and them) programs of study. Instead, we decided for now to experiment with the concept borrowed from Macomb C.C., whereby selected course content and campus programs are used to highlight a particular cultural region of the world in a designated semester. We chose the Middle East as focus region for this pilot project in Winter 2004. Planning for this has advanced well (see page 1).

We placed the international degree concept on hold pending further study. As one aspect of our study, we decided to invite Theo Sypris of Kalamazoo Valley Community College, who is director of our parent group MIIIE, to visit our campus in November, meeting with faculty and with our Institute and sharing his knowledge and experience regarding international education.

As another aspect of our study, we investigated which College course syllabi and instructors already include an international and/or intercultural component. Discipline areas were parceled out to committee members, who reported back with their findings. We discovered that some Schoolcraft instructors are still skeptical that their discipline might lend itself to international or intercultural perspective, while others are ready to move in this direction and simply need to know how to go about doing so. In this regard, in many departments there is great variation from one instructor

to the next; often, for a given course, the extent of or potential for international infusion has depended more on the interest and enthusiasm of the instructor than on the common syllabus. This raises questions as to whether such internationalization might better be carried out at the level of the individual instructor's syllabus rather than at the level of the course common syllabus, and how much international content is required to deem a particular course or section of a course "internationalized." These questions were later addressed in Sypris' presentation.

Getting Up on People's Radar Screens

In the wake of Theo Sypris' highly successful campus visit in November (see summary on page 3), we discussed how to build on the enthusiasm that he'd helped to generate for international studies. Anna Maheshwari (English) had been so inspired by Theo's presentation that she'd marched right back to her office and put together a PowerPoint slideshow "Internationalizing Curricula," to be presented on Faculty Professional Development Day, January 9. The slideshow proposes that the College take a leading role in international studies in Southeast Michigan. The Middle East Theme Semester was also given greater impetus by Theo's visit.

As part of rejuvenating our Institute, we considered what other activities, publicity, and forms of communication would help get us up on people's "radar screens." Over the summer, a committee had produced an SCII informational brochure; this was evaluated and further revised by our group prior to its circulation on campus. In addition to a brochure, the need for a regular newsletter had become apparent, and so it was decided to revive *International Agenda* after a five-year hiatus. We even considered a possible name change for our group, but ultimately decided to retain the designation "International Institute."

Dominic Aquila and Josselyn Moore have kept us apprised of various Fulbright scholarship opportunities. Notably, Sumita Chaudhery (English) and Ida Simmons-Short (English) were selected as co-leaders of proposed study trips this summer to India and Cuba, respectively. Our parent group, MIIIE, has coordinated a request to fund these trips through the federal Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad (GPA) program, with decisions expected by the end of March. Each trip involves one month of overseas travel and learning by a small group of instructors drawn from MIIIE member institutions. Instructors commit to infuse knowledge gained from their travel into their coursework, as well as to share it with colleagues and at conferences. •

Books that Open Windows to the Middle East

I have selected these twelve books— and recommend them to all readers— because of the insights they provide into aspects of the culture, history, and politics of the Middle East. Following each listing, I have included remarks by commentators that provide a sense of the content of the book.

The first six books listed are novels from the Arab world, now republished in English translations that have received widespread critical acclaim. (Next to each novel's author and title, I have listed the nationality of the author, and the date when the novel first appeared in its original language.) The final six books that I have listed are nonfiction works about the region.

— Randy Schwartz

Abdelrahman Munif, *Cities of Salt* (Jordanian; 1984)

Comments from *Publisher's Weekly* (1987):

Originally published in Beirut in 1984, this multipage epic brings to life many of the political issues that have plagued the Mideast for most of this century. Set in an unnamed gulf country that could be Jordan sometime in the 1930s, the novel relates what happens to the bedouin inhabitants of the small oasis community of Wadi al-Uyoun when oil is discovered by Americans. Seen through the eyes of a large and varied cast of bedouin characters, the upheaval caused by the American colonization is shown in various manifestations, from the first contact with the strange foreigners ("Their smell could kill birds!" observes Miteb al-Hathal, who later leads a rebellion of Arab workers when the village of Harran has been made into an American port city) to confused and suspicious descriptions of the sinister "magic" tools brought by the Americans which are in fact bulldozers, automobiles, radios and telephones. The story unfolds at a stately pace over a timespan of many years and provides an endless stream of characters and events, each connected to the next by many threads of plot. Theroux's sensitive translation conveys the subtleties of ambiguity and nuance inherent to the Arab language and culture. Banned in several Mideast countries including Saudi Arabia, this is the first volume of a planned trilogy by a Paris-based Jordanian novelist who holds a law degree from the Sorbonne and a Ph.D. in oil economics from the University of Belgrade. Despite the Lawrence of Arabia setting, Munif writes from a unique vantage point; English-language readers have been given few opportunities before now to look at this situation through native eyes.

Comments from Joyce Appleby in the *Los Angeles Times* (Jan. 19, 2003):

As Americans grapple with the war on terrorism, the Arab world keeps a wary watch. Americans have invaded the lands of the Middle East before— often. Not with Humvees and Black Hawks, but rather with bulldozers and derricks.

Although it received considerable acclaim when it was published in 1987, "Cities of Salt" deserves to be more widely known. It captures with treacherous fidelity one of those many incursions as it follows the shock waves coursing through a cluster of oasis towns in the Arabian Peninsula after an American oil company arrives in the 1930s with money, jobs and personal habits of unbelievable barbarity. Unbelievable, that is, to the faithful Muslims whose lives conform more to the 7th century mores of Muhammad than the tempos of the 20th...

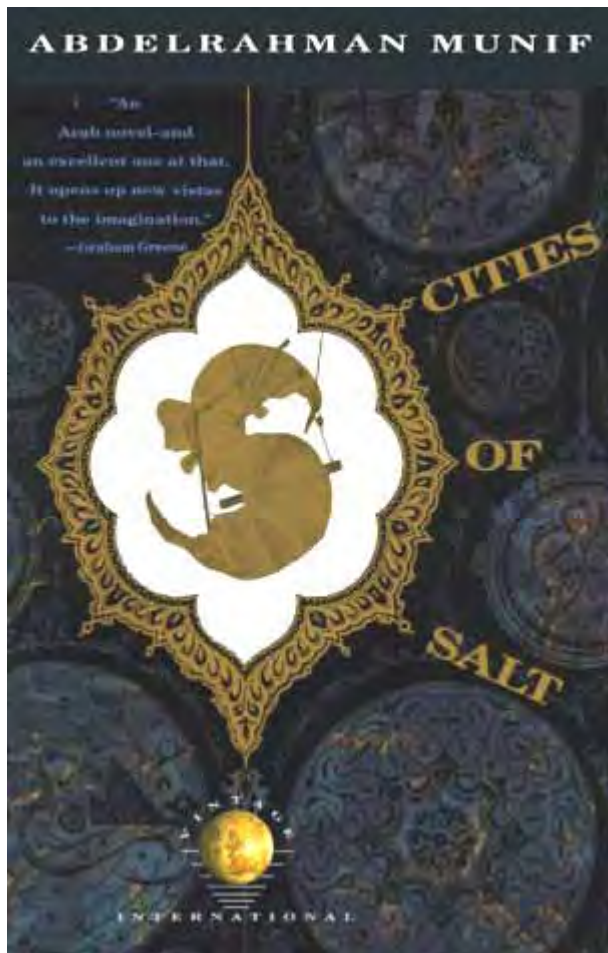
"Cities of Salt" derives its insidious effect from being at the same time a part and apart from the modern perspective, a hybrid conspicuous in the Middle East today. Yet it would be a big mistake to leave the impression that one ought to read "Cities of Salt" solely because of current events. The imperative here springs from the scarcity of truly great novels. "Cities of Salt" mixes the shock of recognition with the pain of discovery that comes from yielding to values utterly unfamiliar and often distasteful. Its treachery lies in inducing strong doubts about the modern enterprise.

Nawal el-Saadawi, *Woman at Point Zero* (Egyptian; 1975)

Comments from a reader in Honolulu, HI on the Amazon.com website (Dec. 15, 2003):

Woman at Point Zero is a thin little book, yet its message for the audience is incredible. From an interview with Firdaus, a prisoner who was charged with murdering a pimp, we can see the Egyptian women's lives and how they manage to survive in a male dominant society. Firdaus is executed in the evening on the same day of interview.

I think the book's name reveals the emotional situation of Firdaus as a woman who withdraws from human beings. She simply has neither love and hate nor fear and her heart is empty. In other words, there is no positive and negative, she is at point zero. Firdaus is different from other prisoners; she neither shows a great response to the execution nor tries to



Sahar Khalifeh, *Wild Thorns* (Palestinian; 1976)

Comments from a reader in Milpitas, CA on the Amazon.com website (July 12, 2003):

Guess what? Palestinians are people, too. If that sentence makes you angry, then you probably won't want to read this book— but if you're willing to read with an open mind, you may come away from the book with an enriched understanding of "the other side." On the other hand, even if you already are sympathetic to the plight of the Palestinians, but from the remote perspective of news reports, then this book will make it all more real to you.

The tale is already twenty-six years old, set just a few years into the Israeli occupation of the West Bank. Written by a Palestinian, about Palestinians, it is sympathetic to them, but it's not a propaganda piece. We get only rare glimpses of Israelis in this book, but when they do appear, they are shown in the same humane light that shines on the main characters. When a five year old Syrian boy meets his imprisoned father for the first time, the Israeli guards turn away with tears in their eyes. This is not the only scene in which someone on one side of the conflict responds compassionately to the suffering of someone on the other side.

Parents and grandparents want their boys and young men to study and become professionals with good incomes, and they hope for their daughters to marry successful daughters. Men struggle to feed their families and to negotiate a little self respect in spite of the compromises they find themselves making. Other men (and boys) alternate between pride, fear, and shame as they try to respond to the humiliations and oppression of their people with costly courage.

One of the great functions of literature is to let the reader walk in another's shoes. That is what I had in mind when I chose to read this book. I have not been disappointed.

Ali Ghalem, *A Wife for My Son* (Algerian; 1979)

Comments from the U.S. publisher Banner Press:

An award-winning novel describing the conditions of women in contemporary Algeria. The central character is Fatiha, a young woman who is forced to submit to a traditional Moslem arranged marriage with a man she has never met. Her husband, an Algerian worker who has emigrated to France, returns home to obtain a wife in order to please his parents. The novel describes in simple but elegant style the conflict between the weight of thousands of years of tradition and the reality of modern life.

appeal for clemency. She was sitting in the prison quietly and waiting for the time to come.

It is understandable. In Firdaus' experience, frustrations and disappointments happened again and again as if a cycle of her life. As a child Firdaus was sexually abused by her uncle and a boy. Since sex is a forbidden topic in the society, she did not know what was going on. Growing up as a submissive girl, she was coerced into an arranged marriage with an old man, and life gets worse from that point. Firdaus experienced sexual and physical abuse from different men and eventually become a prostitute. As a prostitute, the novel shows us, her life is better. Even though prostituting is not a respectable job, Firdaus earned freedom and a degree of respect from it. She learnt about the price of her body.

In all parts of the world, there are a lot of women who are doing the same thing in order to survive in the world or in the work place. At the end of the story,— well, you'll just have to read it yourself to find out what happens. We may think terrible misogynist things will only happen somewhere far away from us. I recommend this book because if we think again, we see the disrespectful attitudes and immoral trade everywhere around us. Immoral trades are waiting for women who are not able to realize the existence of the traps in our societies. As a result, we too may pay "the highest price for things of the lowest value" (p.76).

continued on next page

Books That Open Windows *continued from page 7***Tahar Ben Jelloun, *The Sacred Night* (Moroccan; 1987)**

Comments from *Publishers Weekly* (1989):

Winner of 1987's Prix Goncourt, Ben Jelloun's powerfully imagined, hallucinatory tale of Zahra, "flower of flowers," fraudulently raised in contemporary Morocco as the boy Ahmed by a father ashamed of his brood of daughters, has affinities with the magic realism of Garcia Marquez, Rushdie and others. A victim of what is to her the hypocritical misogyny of Bedouin culture that betrays Islam while piously invoking it, Zahra/Ahmed is afforded rebirth as a beautiful woman by her father at the moment of his death. During his burial, a magnificent stranger riding on horseback—"the Sheikh"—spirits Zahra away, clothed in a bride's golden burnoose, starting her both joyous and tormented odyssey as a woman in a Moslem land. Suffering as both man and woman, Zahra transcends the confining sexism of her culture and reaches an understanding of others' anguish, aided by the blind "Consul," whose lack of sight enables him to see beyond society's categories and appearances. Told in a declamatory, incisive style, Ben Jalloun's perplexing, poetic narrative challenges the reader to see and feel deeply.

Naguib Mahfouz, *Midaq Alley* (Egyptian; 1940s)

Comments from Ali Houissa (Cornell Univ.) in *Library Journal* (1991):

Written in the 1940s, this novel by the Egyptian Nobel laureate Mahfouz deals with the plight of impoverished classes in an old quarter of Cairo. The lives and situations depicted create an atmosphere of sadness and tragic realism. Indeed, few of the characters are happy or successful. Protagonist Hamida, an orphan raised by a foster mother, is drawn into prostitution. Kirsha, the owner of a cafe in the alley, is a drug addict and a lustful homosexual. Zaita makes a living by disfiguring people so that they can become successful beggars. Transcending time and place, the social issues treated here are relevant to many Arab countries today. With this satisfying tale, Mahfouz, often called the Charles Dickens of Arabic literature, achieves a high level of excellence as a novelist and storyteller. Highly recommended.

John L Esposito, *What Everyone Needs to Know About Islam* (Oxford Univ. Press, 2002)

Comments from *Publishers Weekly* (2002):

Georgetown professor Esposito has written an excellent primer on all aspects of Islam. The question-and-answer format allows readers to skip ahead to areas that interest them, including hot-button issues such as "Why are Muslims so violent?" or "Why do Muslim women wear veils and long garments?" In his

answers, which are anywhere from a paragraph to several pages long, Esposito elegantly educates the reader through what the Qur'an says, how Muslims are influenced by their local cultures, and how the unique politics of Islamic countries affects Muslims' views.

Queen Noor, *Leap of Faith: Memoirs of an Unexpected Life* (Miramax, 2003)

Comments from the editors of the Bookbabes pages at myirony.com:

The dramatic story of an emancipated young woman who became the fourth wife of a powerful Arab monarch, Leap of Faith is the intriguing autobiography of Jordan's American-born Queen Noor. In it, the former Lisa Halaby discusses her late husband, King Hussein I (1935–99), and his tireless quest for peace in the Middle East; her conversion to Islam and her love for the people of Jordan; her difficult adjustment to royal life and her evolving role as a humanitarian activist; and her political and personal views on Islam and the West. This fascinating memoir provides a unique perspective on three eventful decades of world history and on relations between the United States and the Arab world.

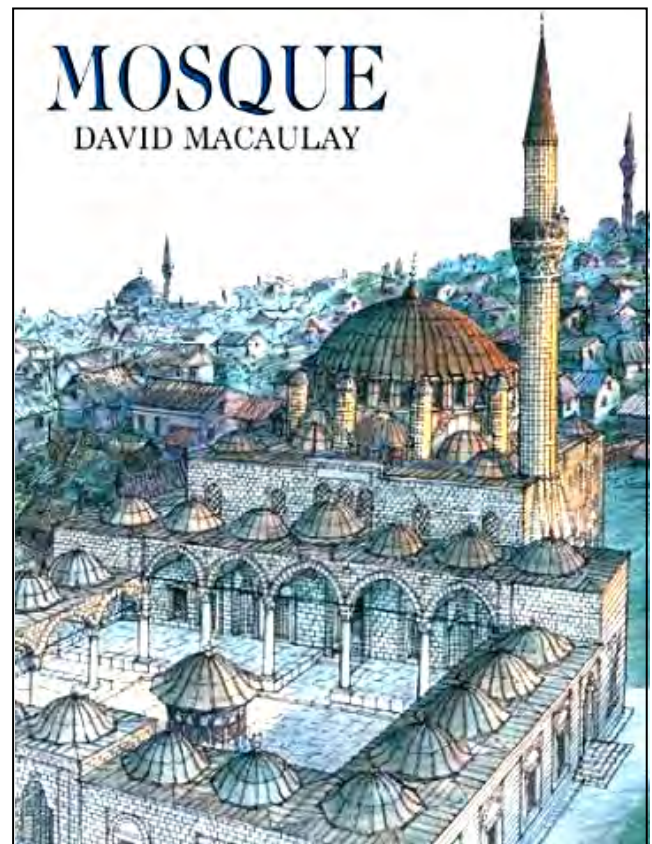
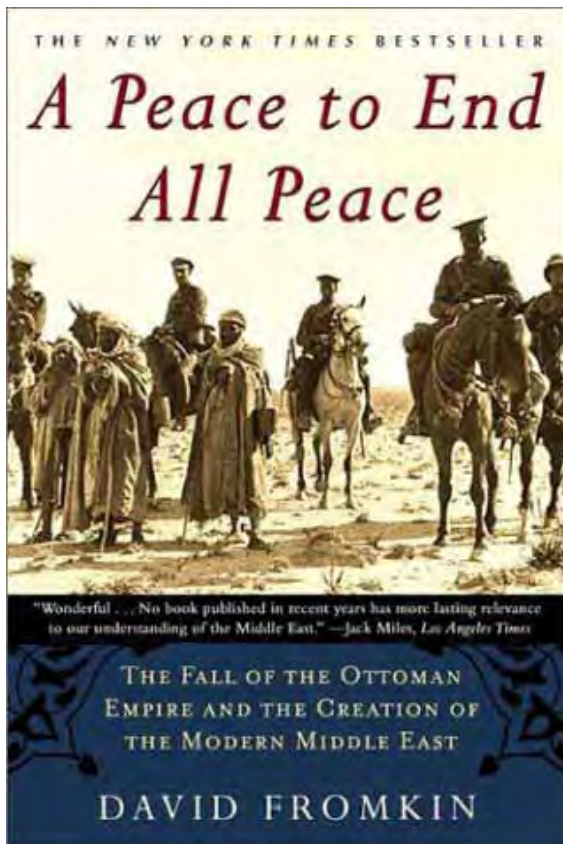
David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East* (Henry Holt, 1989; Owl Books, 2001)

Comments from the publisher:

The Middle East has long been a battleground of rival religions, ideologies, nationalisms, and dynasties. All of these conflicts—including the hostilities between Arabs and Israelis that have flared up yet again—stem from its political inheritance: the arrangements, unities, and divisions imposed upon the region by the Allies after the First World War. In *A Peace to End All Peace*, David Fromkin reveals how and why the Allies came to remake the geography and politics of the Middle East, drawing lines on an empty map that eventually became the new countries of Iraq, Israel, Jordan, and Lebanon. Focusing on the formative years of 1914 to 1922, when everything—even an alliance between Arab nationalism and Zionism—seemed possible, Fromkin raises questions about what might have been done differently and answers questions about why things were done as they were.

Amin Maalouf, *The Crusades Through Arab Eyes* (Schocken Books, 1984, 1989)

Comments from Jon West in *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, Feb. 1989:



The Crusades fueled Western myths of the “Orient” as a place of decadent splendor, and the Arabs as rapacious, cunning thugs—myths which endure in the minds of millions in the West today. One of the reasons for the persistence of these images is their existence in an intellectual vacuum, devoid of the corrective influence of different opinions. At Oxford University, for example, no Arab authors can be found on the reading lists of students of the Crusader era. Amin Maalouf, in his outstanding and thoroughly researched work, *The Crusades Through Arab Eyes*, sets out to redress the balance by presenting the Arab side of the Crusades in their own words. Lengthy quotations from original sources are incorporated into an exciting narrative packed with fresh insights, off-beat details, and succinct commentary. It will not surprise the reader to learn that Maalouf is a highly regarded journalist and former editor of the respected Lebanese daily *An-Nahar*, as well as an award-winning novelist. This book harnesses these talents to the task of letting Arab historians speak for themselves, while condensing 200 years of action-filled history into one volume and never losing the interest of the general reader. *The Crusades Through Arab Eyes* is a story and a historical discussion rolled into one.

David Macaulay, *Mosque* (Houghton Mifflin, 2003)

Comments from Nicholas D. Kristof in *The New York Times* (Dec. 21, 2003):

Frankly, I had no idea that I was interested in how mosques were put together, but I found the subject fascinating. And I learned

how to make a brick and build a dome, and also a good deal about the economics of the Ottoman Empire and the role of the mosque in society. [Caldecott Medal-winning artist and author] Macaulay’s mosque is fictional, but loosely based on those built around Istanbul (then Constantinople) in the late 16th century by Sinan, the great architect of the Ottoman Empire.

Barbara Brend, *Islamic Art* (Harvard University Press, 1991)

Comments from Frederick M. Denny in *Religious Studies Review*:

A sumptuously illustrated, accurate, balanced and critically aware historical survey of Islamic art and architecture from the beginnings until modern times, this work... provides clear, informative treatments of architecture, pottery and tilework, textiles and carpets, painting, glass, jade, metal work, calligraphy, and the arts of the book.

Comments from *Midwest Book Review*:

The intense blend of history and art insights makes for a volume which is scholarly and weighty, yet spellbinding. Discussions of dynasty changes, political influences on the development of Islam and Islamic art style, and transition points which fostered new Islamic art traditions accompany excellent, bright color illustrations of architectural and artistic Islamic heritage. •

Accounting: A Level Playing Field?

The Accounting Department at Schoolcraft College was one of the first on campus to begin internationalizing its course content. That makes sense in light of the fact that accounting practices can vary significantly from nation to nation.

Accounting professor La Vonda Ramey pointed out, in her rationale for these course revisions, that “Enhanced world-wide communications, reductions in trade barriers, increased access to foreign capital and labor markets, as well as global competition have caused modern businesses of all sizes to create products, provide services and issue financial reports with an international perspective.” When national economies come into contact with one another, differences in accounting standards have to be “accounted for,” a problem that has caused increasing friction as globalization has accelerated.

An interesting example of this friction came to light in a recent article “Grudge Match: Italy vs. the Bean Counters” (*New York Times* 11 November 2003). In Italy football (soccer) is a huge industry, with the top teams paying sky-high salaries to procure players from all over the world. The club AC Milan, for instance, which won Europe’s most recent Champions League tournament, had only 5 Italians on its starting team of 11 players in a recent match, and it won that match on a goal by a player from Brazil. Bidding wars for these star players have meant that many teams operate “in the red” for extended periods. Under a law enacted last year by Italy, if a team buys a player for 50 million euros and later sells him for 10 million, the team’s accountants are permitted to spread the loss over a 10-year period. Without this measure, it is likely that several teams would have gone bankrupt.

But the Italian law, known as the “save soccer law,” has enraged European Union officials. They claim it unfairly violates EU regulations, and in November Mario Monti, EU Commissioner of Competition, launched a formal investigation. The Italian government will be given one month to respond to the findings, and the case could well end up in the European Court where adjudication would likely take more than a year.

How ironic that Italy, the birthplace of double-entry bookkeeping and many other accounting principles in the Middle Ages, today is the target of EU “bean counters”! But as the *Times* article commented, the dispute “is embarrassing for Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, not just because it calls into question Italian accounting principles, but because the prime minister owns AC Milan and is the club’s chairman.” •



Assessing the Tasks Before Us

A recent report from the American Council on Education, based on a study of 752 colleges and universities, found that progress made in internationalizing curricula has been limited and contradictory. The report, *Mapping Internationalization on U.S. Campuses*, concludes that “While some bright spots exist, U.S. higher-education institutions have a long way to go before all students graduate with international skills and knowledge.” The findings were recently publicized in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (7 November 2003); an executive summary is available on the American Council on Education (ACE) website at http://www.acenet.edu/bookstore/pdf/2003_mapping_summary.pdf.

Madeleine F. Green, director of ACE’s Center for Institutional and International Initiatives, commented that “It’s a very mixed picture.” While two-thirds of the faculty and students who were surveyed expressed support for international-education requirements, she said, only one-quarter of the institutions included internationalization as a top strategic priority, and just over one-third had made it a part of their mission statements.

Although more colleges (27%) are now requiring foreign-language courses in their undergraduate curricula, few students are choosing to study the languages of Africa, Asia, or the Middle East, which poses “a serious danger to U.S. ability to communicate effectively with other nations,” the report says. ACE president David Ward added that the events of September 11, 2001 had highlighted “a problem that has been developing since the end of the cold war” when, he said, interest in international affairs on college campuses began to decline.

The report found that community colleges were the least likely of those studied to include internationalization in their mission statement, to list it as a priority in their strategic plan, or to have assessed their efforts in the last five years. Undeniably, some significant progress has been made at community colleges, which were the schools that most frequently offered faculty workshops on internationalization and where foreign language requirements and study abroad opportunities have increased lately. However, Green cautioned, “you can’t count study abroad as the major vehicle of internationalization. The major focus of international learning has to be internationalizing the curriculum.”

Among the report’s five major recommendations is that “institutions should make internationalization an institutional priority— include it in their mission statements, make it visible in their strategic plan, and assess their institutional efforts.” •



Kudos

To what extent should the historical enslavement of Africans and the genocide of Indian people in the U.S. be thought of as central to the narrative of America? **Dominic Aquila** (Liberal Arts) posed such questions in his review essay “Deepening Historical Understanding in a Transnational World” in the Schoolcraft-based national journal *The Community College Enterprise* (Fall 2003). Dr. Aquila trained his sights on several recent works that situate U.S. history within an international context. He found that these works exemplify a new stage in the evolution of views regarding an historian’s proper relation to “his own” nation. Multiculturalist history, he concluded, is a response to the modern era, in which the forces of globalization have generally weakened nation-states even as the ideology of nationalism has, at least for now, gained momentum.

Diane O’Connell (Geography) made a presentation on “Allocation of International Waters” at the 10th Annual Conference of the Midwest Institute for International/Intercultural Education (MIIE), held at Lorain County Community College in Ohio on April 4-5, 2003. Diane also presented a two-hour workshop, “Introduction to Geographic Information Systems,” at Schoolcraft’s Faculty Professional Development Day on Jan. 9, 2004.

Laura Leshok (Counseling) has become Chairperson of the Michigan Association of International Educators, formerly known as the Michigan Association of Foreign Student Advisors (MAFSA).

Natasha Malinky, who has been working at the Learning Assistance Center tutoring English as a Second Language, was appointed to establish an English Language Institute (ELI) at the College. In Fall 2003 the ELI offered, through the Continuing Education program, a roster of 9 different noncredit workshops with 6-, 8-, and 12-week durations. Natasha, a Schoolcraft graduate, is an immigrant from Latvia who is fluent in both Latvian and Russian.

Anna Maheshwari (English) led in initiating Schoolcraft’s new for-credit program in English as a Second Language (ESL). Communication and Cultural

Skills (ESL 50), a 4-credit course in conversational English based on situational activities, was piloted as an evening class in the Fall 2003 semester. The course is designed to help launch international students on successful careers in higher education. Anna also led in putting together the presentation on “Internationalizing Curricula” at Schoolcraft’s Faculty Professional Development Day on Jan. 9, 2004.

Ida Simmons-Short (English) has been working to establish sister-college relationships with the University of Oriente and Medical School No. 2, two schools in Santiago de Cuba (a city near the eastern tip of Cuba). Ida has long been involved in Detroit sister-city initiatives.

Randy Schwartz (Mathematics) published an article “Embracing Arab and Other Cultures in the Mathematics Classroom” in the November 2003 issue of the *Equal Opportunity in Mathematics Committee Newsletter*, published by the American Mathematical Association of Two-Year Colleges. The article reports on original course materials regarding the mathematical contributions of Arab, Indian, and Chinese cultures, and describes how such materials can be developed and for what purpose.

Readers: send to *International Agenda* your latest news about the international and multicultural activities in which you are involved, whether they relate to instruction or to professional development. Such news inspires your colleagues on campus and encourages the formation of collaborative networks.

Also, we would very much appreciate your contributions of articles, story ideas, events, word of interesting books, articles, and movies— or other items that could be considered for inclusion in this newsletter.

Calendar of Events

- Jan. 19, 2004: Sr. Joan Kusak et al., "Martin Luther King, Jr.: A Man for All Seasons." Presented by the Committee for a Season for Non-Violence. 12 noon, room LA-130, Schoolcraft College.
- Jan. 20, 2004: Organizing meeting to set up an "Internationalizing the Curriculum" Book Club for faculty and to select a Middle East book to read. Contact person: Sandy Roney-Hays (Dept. of Anthropology), e-mail srh.online@comcast.net. 3-4 pm, room LA-130, Schoolcraft College.
- Jan. 21, 2004: Fatih Turkmenoglu, Turkish former CNN correspondent and current UM Knight-Wallace Journalism Fellow, "The Last 10 Years of Turkey Through a Journalist's Eyes." Includes video footage from Istanbul. Presented by SCII. 4-5 pm, room MC-200, Schoolcraft College.
- Jan. 23, 2004: SCII meeting, 12:00-2:00 pm, room LA-130, Schoolcraft College.
- Jan. 25, 2004: The Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice presents a discussion about ending the occupation of the Palestinian territories, featuring Cindy and Craig Corrie, parents of Rachel Corrie, an American student killed in the occupied territories. 7:30 pm, Ballroom of the Michigan League, UM, 911 N. University Ave., Ann Arbor.
- Jan. 29, 2004: PowerPoint presentation by SC Prof. Randy Schwartz, "Islam and Mathematics: A Hidden History." Presented by SCII. 3-4 pm, room LA-200, Schoolcraft College.
- Jan. 31, 2004: Concert by the Palestinian *oud* and violin virtuoso Simon Shaheen and his ensemble Qantara. Presented by the *Metro Times* and the Univ. of Michigan's University Musical Society (UMS) and Center for Middle Eastern and North African Studies (CMENAS). For info or tickets, see www.ums.org. 8:00 pm, Michigan Theater, Ann Arbor.
- Feb. 1, 2004: Sprit of Islam: Experiencing Islam Through Calligraphy (<http://www.moa.ubc.ca/spiritofislam>) is a website introducing visitors to the esthetics, spirituality, and educational principles of the Muslim world, with links to many other online resources. Additions to the website, including lesson packages for teachers, are expected by Feb. 1.
- Feb. 4, 2004: Panel discussion, "Is Israeli/ Palestinian Peace Still Possible?" Speakers include Prof. Khalil Shikaki (Bir Zeit Univ., West Bank), Prof. Ze'ev Maoz (Hebrew Univ., Jerusalem), Gaby Schaefer (Israeli), Tarik Kana'ana (Palestinian-American). Presented by the Univ. of Michigan Center for Middle Eastern and North African Studies (CMENAS). 7-9 pm, Vandenberg Room, Michigan League, UM, 911 N. University Ave., Ann Arbor.
- Feb. 23, 2004: Mohammad Reza Ghanoonparvar (Prof. of Persian Literature, Univ. of Texas-Austin) speaks on Simin Daneshvar's novel *Savushun*, which he has translated into English. 4-6 pm, room 1030 CASL Building, UM-Dearborn.
- Mar. 11, 2004. John Titus (SC Director for Career Planning and Placement and member of September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows), "Turning Grief into Action for Peace." Includes video footage from Peaceful Tomorrows trips to Afghanistan and Iraq. Presented by the Committee for a Season for Non-Violence. 5-6:30 pm, room LA-200, Schoolcraft College.
- Mar. 18, 2004: Multicultural Fair. Over two dozen cultural exhibits prepared by SC students. 10:00 am – 3:00 pm, Multipurpose Room, VisTaTech Center, Schoolcraft College.
- Mar. 20, 2004: Concert by the Israel Philharmonic. Presented by the *Metro Times* and the Univ. of Michigan's University Musical Society (UMS) and Center for Middle Eastern and North African Studies (CMENAS). For info or tickets, see www.ums.org. 8:00 pm, Hill Auditorium, UM, Ann Arbor.
- Mar. 25-26, 2004: Annual Conference of the Michigan Association of International Educators (formerly Michigan Association of Foreign Student Advisors, MAFSA). Schoolcraft College.
- Mar. 26, 2004: SCII meeting, 12:00-2:00 pm, room LA-130, Schoolcraft College.
- Apr. 1-3, 2004: 11th Annual Conference of the Midwest Institute for International/ Intercultural Education (MIIE). St. Louis Community College-Forest Park, St. Louis, MO.
- Apr. 7-8, 2004: Conference on Islam in America. Presented by the Department of Near Eastern and Asian Studies and several other units at WSU. Keynote Speakers: Dr. Yvonne Haddad and Dr. Marcia Hermansen. McGregor Conference Center, Wayne State Univ., Detroit.
- Apr. 18, 2004: Concert by the Armenian folk music troupe Shoghaken Ensemble. Presented by the *Metro Times* and the Univ. of Michigan's University Musical Society (UMS) and Center for Middle Eastern and North African Studies (CMENAS). For info or tickets, see www.ums.org. 6:00 p.m., Rackham Auditorium, UM, Ann Arbor.

SCII chairperson Josselyn Moore invites you to join her in attending the 11th Annual Conference of the Midwest Institute for International/ Intercultural Education (MIIE), to be held April 1-3 in St. Louis, MO. The conference will feature a wide variety of concurrent sessions, from "The American Immigrant Experience and Diversity" to "International Issues and Ethics in the Classroom," and from "Infusing Southern Africa into the Curriculum" to "Internationalizing Allied Health Courses." In addition, there will be workshops on how to organize foreign study for instructors or students. In the past, Schoolcraft as an MIIE participant has been able to provide generous funding for attending this conference. Complete information, including forms for registering or for proposing a conference presentation, are available at <http://puma.kvcc.edu/MIIDWEST/>.