

SOSH601 | Issues in the Study of Humanities

School Core Compulsory Course

Fall Semester, 2016 - 2017



كلية العلوم الاجتماعية والانسانية
School of Social Sciences and Humanities

Course Information:

School and program names: School of Social Sciences and Humanities
Academic year and semester: First Year, Fall Semester
Course code, number and title: SOSH 601 Issues in the Study of Humanities
Credit hours: 0

Course Co-requisites:

None, but the course is compulsory along with its sequel, SOSH 602 Issues in the Study of Social Sciences, offered in the Spring Semester of the First Year.

Instructor Contact Information:

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Office hours:
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Class Meeting:

Thursday, 5-6:30 pm

Expected Vacation:

As per DI Academic Calendar

Course Resources:

Moodle course page and DI library holdings and digital resources, as may be provided by the course coordinator and other instructors

Course Description:

The range of interrelated creative and scholarly subjects and academic disciplines broadly categorized under the rubric of “the Humanities” constitutes a multifaceted body of knowledge that have emerged across cultures and over vast spans of time, focusing on what it means to be human. This body of knowledge has emerged from multiple sites of human endeavor to get to know the defining moments of agential self-knowledge, for humans to become humans by virtue of getting to know themselves and their place in the world. At the center of the humanities is the changing and volatile core of the knowing subject—gendered, racialized, classed, historicized—and the visage of a knowable world that this subjection entails.

Similarly, the range of interrelated subjects and academic disciplines broadly categorized under the rubric of “Social Sciences” constitute a formidable body of knowledge that has emerged from a sustained investigative encounter between historical events, social developments, and critical intellect trying to make sense of our worldly location. Today this body of knowledge enables us to read contemporary events at both local and global levels with keen eyes and critical judgment.

Our task in this course is to navigate the historical topography the humanities around a number of thematic topics most pertinent to our world today. To do so the primary mission of this course is twofold: (1) to introduce the students at Doha Institute to a wide ranging spectrum of subjects, themes, and scholarly disciplines within the humanities—including literature, poetry, drama, and the varieties of visual and performing arts, and (2) to interrogate the historical hold of western self-imaginings on the formation of humanistic knowledge and disciplines, which, knowledge-wise has led to the postulates of a posthumanism, while disciplinarily they have opened up to the culturally and historically informed acts of critical humanism.

The two courses, SOSH 601 Issues in the Study of Humanities and SOSH 602 Issues in the Study of Social Sciences, will guide our inquiry into the related fields of social sciences and the humanities as they seek to provide us with ample opportunities critically to reflect on the limits of these interrelated disciplines when applied to critical questions of our time.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs):

In answer to the DI’s and SOSH’s vision of advancing Arab thought and Arabic modes of knowledge production, the course will trace a range of key expressions of the centralizing thought of a knowing subject and a known/knowable or imagined world that forms the core of

humanistic impulses. What will be pursued under ‘Arab’ is not simply an ideologically pre-determined ethnic or cultural or linguistic category. Rather, the ‘Arab’ here will constitute a critical positionality through which to engage the possibilities of humanist thought across linguistic, cultural and historical divides. The course will therefore seek to address the phenomenologically and historically entrenched western-eastern divides in knowledge production, while advancing approaches to the critical humanities. The following will therefore form our guiding theoretical principle: culturally specific critical and theoretical acts posit specific epistemological assumptions through social, political and aesthetic production. The world that emerges from the theoretical act while in filing will be equally interrogated as a site of knowledge production. The course is conceived as a laboratory for critical humanist thought and a critical forum for exploring the conceptual and methodological potential of the DI’s vision and mission. A fundamental organizing principle for the course will be: positioned knowledge in relation to a discipline, its history and to conceptual language and methodology.

Knowledge and understanding:

- Introduce students to the humanities through the most recent debates under the critical humanities and as positioned knowing subjects;
- Introduce students to the scholarly work of DI faculty---and on occasion the work of invited scholars---and the range of disciplinary scholarship in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities;
- Foster a strong interdisciplinary and comparativist research culture, with strong interactions amongst students and faculty and across disciplines.

Intellectual skills:

- Drawing on disciplinary histories and establishing critical dialogue with disciplinary training in the DI programs;
- Establishing critical dialogue on the conceptual level between Arab thought and intellectual production and western methodologies, with the aim of examining the role of conceptual Language in constructing disciplinarity;
- Opening up dimensions of comparativist thought with other non-European traditions of knowledge and cultural production;
- Exploring grounds for activating histories of Arabic concepts and their viability in engaging disciplinary languages of knowledge production;
- Engaging philologically and hermeneutically the epistemological assumptions of theoretical thought.

Practical skills:

- Engage critically with concepts, definitions, and a wide range of sources;
- Formulate topics of inquiry, raise questions, and conduct independent research.

Transferrable/key skills:

- Construct persuasive and well-documented arguments in accordance with scholarly standards;
- Engage constructively with intellectual, cultural and political difference;
- Contribute to group discussions.

CLO Matrix Table

Type of Course Learning Outcome	Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)	SOSH Learning Outcomes (SLOs)
<p><i>Knowledge and Understanding</i></p>	<p>CLO 1: Introduce students to the humanities through the most recent debates under the critical humanities and as positioned knowing subjects;</p> <p>CLO 2: Introduce students to the scholarly work of DI faculty---and on occasion the work of invited scholars---and the range of disciplinary scholarship in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities;</p> <p>CLO 3: Foster a strong interdisciplinary and compativist research culture, with strong interactions amongst students and faculty and across disciplines.</p>	<p>SLO 1: “Train a new generation of engaged and ethically committed scholars and researchers in Arabic.”</p> <p>SLO 2: “Advance Arabic as a conceptual language of disciplinary knowledge production.”</p> <p>SLO 3: “Offer unique interdisciplinary training at graduate level, crossing institutional and historical divides between the humanities and social sciences.”</p> <p>SLO 4: “Offer a strong research environment for inter-linguistic and inter-cultural understanding, drawing on students’ varying backgrounds, and converging in the advancement of knowledge production in Arabic.”</p> <p>SLO 5: “Initiate critical and disciplinary interventions through engagement with recent advances in the humanities and social sciences through inter-regional expertise and comparative methodologies.”</p> <p>SLO 6: “SOSH encourages students to challenge prevailing assumptions through exposing them to the debates that have shaped the social sciences and humanities in the Arab region and the world at large and, further, to realize how these debates are applicable to their societies.”</p> <p>SLO 7: “Graduates of SOSH will be well-equipped to continue with academic study</p>

at PhD level, or to put their training in intellectual independence, critical thinking, and data analysis to service in the public and private sectors.”

SLO 8: “SOSH aims to instill in students a cross-disciplinary approach to the study of its subjects, fostering the diverse and all-encompassing perspectives necessary to understand the world in which we live.”

SLO 9: “Through its programs, SOSH seeks to embolden students to view the issues in their societies critically and holistically, both in diagnosing problems and finding solutions.”

CLO 1 meets **SLO 1** (above) as they are both interrelated. The students’ knowledge of the interrelated disciplines of the humanities will allow them to understand and outline their own position as scholars.

CLO 2 meets **SLO 3** and **SLO 4** as students will be in direct touch with the majority of School faculty and with each, with the opportunity of engaging across their home disciplines and programs.

CLO 3 meets **SLO 4** and **SLO 5** as students will have the opportunity of engaging critically through the limitations of regional and disciplinary scope.

CLO 1-3 aim to systematically fulfill the promise of **SLO 6**.

<p><i>Intellectual Skills</i></p>	<p>CLO 4: Drawing on disciplinary histories and establishing critical dialogue with disciplinary training in the DI programs;</p> <p>CLO 5: Establishing critical dialogue on the conceptual level between Arab thought and intellectual production and western methodologies, with the aim of examining the role of conceptual Language in constructing disciplinarity;</p> <p>CLO 6: Opening up dimensions of comparativist thought with other non-European traditions of knowledge and cultural production;</p> <p>CLO 7: Exploring grounds for activating histories of Arabic concepts and their viability in engaging disciplinary languages of knowledge production;</p> <p>CLO 8: Engaging philologically and hermeneutically the epistemological assumptions of theoretical thought.</p>	<p>CLO 4-6 meet SLO 1-2 and SLO 5-6 as students will be systematically exploring Arab intellectual histories alongside the histories of western disciplinary formations.</p> <p>CLO 7 meets SLO 5, 7 and 9 as students will become more critically aware in engaging the current pressing social, political and cultural issues pertaining to their own societies and to the region, and to examine in their light the increasingly globalized conditions of thought and activism.</p> <p>CLO 8 aims to fulfill the promise of SLO 1-2 and SLO 7-8 as students will learn to question the emergence of key concepts and their epistemological assumptions.</p>
<p><i>Practical Skills</i></p>	<p>CLO 9: Engage critically with concepts, definitions, and a wide range of sources;</p> <p>CLO 10: Formulate topics of inquiry, raise questions, and conduct independent research;</p>	<p>CLO 9-10 aim to fulfill the promise of SLO 6, 7 and 9 as students will be encouraged to articulate the stakes in pursuing certain disciplines, in relating such choices to their sense of current pressing issues and to their decisions to pursue further doctoral training.</p>
<p><i>Transferrable/key skills</i></p>	<p>CLO 11: Construct persuasive and well-documented arguments in accordance with scholarly standards;</p> <p>CLO 12: Engage constructively with intellectual, cultural and political difference;</p>	<p>CLO 11-13 meet SLO 1 and SLO 6, but especially SLO 7 as students will be able to articulate the ways in which they could join public service or pursue their professions independently and critically.</p>

CLO 13: Contribute to group discussions.

Course Format and Teaching Methods:

The course is constituted of weekly lectures (60 minutes), delivered by SOSH faculty members and on occasion by invited scholars, and followed by discussion and critical engagement (30 minutes).

The course will take the form of a guided inquiry into the related fields of the humanities, and will seek to offer sustained critical engagements through which to reflect on the limits of these interrelated disciplines when applied to critical questions of our time. We will read and discuss both those who have a static and functional notion of societies and cultures and those who challenge and seek to alter them, both the creative and the critical texts by way of facilitating our intimacy and facility with these fields. By the end of the semester we will also cover some of the most recent debates in the humanities, before we ask the binary polarity of knowledge and power to explain itself. In each session we read a number of seminal texts in a given field and through these texts examine the larger issues they have raised and continue to entail.

Assessment:

SOSH 601 is a School-wide non-credit course and will be assessed through a single end of term research paper, c. 1000-1500 words. Achieving a Pass grade in the course is a requirement of graduation.

Submission Method of Assessment Items:

All students are required to submit their paper through Turnitin, no later than the end of week 12 of the semester.

Citation:

Students in the School of Social Sciences and Humanities must use the “Chicago Manual of Style” for references and bibliographies in their assignments.

Course Syllabus Plan:

Week 1

Introduction: Critical Humanities and the Social Sciences: Trans-Cultural Interdisciplinarity and the Manufacturing of Crisis

Week 2

Humanities East and West: The Knowing Subject: Reason, Imagination, Language

Towards a global conception of the humanities, first and foremost we need to have a comparative understanding of the idea, in order to avoid the privileging of one particular phase of human history and experience over others. With that in mind we will read some seminal reflections on the matter.

Week 3

Humanism, Posthumanism, Human Rights: Figuring the Human Across Borders

What does it exactly mean to be human, is humanism a universally valid concept, what are the implications of being in a posthumanist era, and what are the implications of all these for the discourse of the human rights? This session of the semester is dedicated to these interrelated questions.

Week 4

Renaissance, Enlightenment, and the Mediterranean World: Knowing Place: Humanity, Civilization & Cartographic Imaginaries

The key thematic periodization of Renaissance and the Enlightenment has had global consequences, while their location in the Mediterranean world has wider historical consequences. We take these European events on face value, but will also critically consider their global implications.

Week 5

Romanticism, Transcendentalism, Liberation Theology: Beyond The Knowing Subject

Both Romanticism and Transcendentalism emerged as major intellectual reactions to the dominant ideologies of their time, with Transcendentalism in particular having wide-ranging theological implications in the social consequences of ideas. In this section we will examine these movements and compare them with the rise of Liberation Theology in the Twentieth century.

Week 6

What is Literature? Textualities of Knowledge: Discursive & Disciplinary Knowing

In this section of the syllabus we will closely examine the narrative institution called “literature” and consider its aesthetic and social implications in the transcultural formation of the humanities.

Week 7

Film, Fiction, and the Real: Constructions of the Real: Discursive & Disciplinary Knowing

In order to have a wider conception of the humanities we will look closer at the related genres of film, fiction, and their implication for what it means to call something real. Our coverage is decidedly comparative and transnational.

Week 8

Poetry, Drama, North and South: Knowing World: Poetics & Form: Language, Self, Action, Thought

Poetry and drama are as definitive to the field of the Humanities as film and fiction. Here we will ask in what particular ways, and as always in comparative and cross-cultural terms.

Week 9

Women without Men: Knowing Woman: Gender & The Gendering of Knowledge

In order to avoid a hidden or manifest masculinist perspective on issues confusing our perspective we will pay closer attention to the factor of gender in reading of the humanities.

Week 10

Islamic Arts and Sciences: Historicities of Knowing: Culture, History and Empire

The related fields of Islamic arts and sciences will take us directly into the critical and integral links between empires and their paraphernalia of power and hegemony, and the forms of knowledge and sentiments of production. Here the field of the humanities assumes a decidedly historical angle.

Week 11

Contemporary Visual and Performing Arts: Knowing Aesthetically, Knowing Ethically and Participatory Acts

Contemporary visual arts are the palpitating domains of where the most sensitive barometers of our humanity are pulsating today. We will consider aspects of such arts closely.

Week 12

In Other Worlds: Knowing World: Knowing Language & Languages of Knowing

In this segment of the syllabus we will look at alternative modalities of worlds and their worldliness—scholars and thinkers who have fielded alternative visions of our worldliness.

Week 13

Cosmopolitanism: Knowing Collectively and Knowing Others

Examination of alternative worlds and worldliness inevitably points to a far richer and more diversified conception of cosmopolitanism, with varied and multiple centers and peripheries.

Week 14

Final Roundtable: From the Humanities to the Social Sciences, Working Across Languages and Cultures and the Materiality of Knowledge

Arabic Conceptual Languages and the Idea of the Humanities: the challenges of developing conceptual languages in critical and hermeneutical engagements with hegemonic, disciplinary and institutional knowledge production.

Indicative Reading List:

Please note that an indicative reading list will be announced on a weekly basis on Moodle prior to the lecture.

NOTES TO LECTURERS---to be emailed separately to participant lecturers

- The lecture should not exceed 60 minutes, to be followed by Q&A.
- The lecturer should offer two short and focused seminal texts (medium-length chapters or sections of long chapters, one Arabic and one English) for reading prior to the lecture and a longer list of background sources in both languages, covering both history of discipline/topic and recent advances in the field---the two assigned readings preferably in PDFs format and the longer list will be included in the longer version of the syllabus to be uploaded on Moodle.
- Lecturers are expected to offer a brief history of the field and/or discipline by way of orientating the students to the relation of the discipline to the humanities in general, and follow it with a guided critical inquiry into the range of relevant research questions and issues. After the introductory part, the lecture could focus on a single problematic/issue.
- Lecturers will kindly extend their office hours to students interested in pursuing certain related issues further.
- Student assignments will be distributed among participant lecturers for first marking.

Course Syllabus Change:

Student workload and course requirements are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor with proper advance notice to the students.

- Schedule and readings are subject to change.
- The professor reserves the right to make changes in the syllabus as necessity dictates.

Class Attendance Policy

“All students are expected to attend all classes regularly without any absence. Records of class attendance are kept by the instructor. For more information, please refer to the DI “Attendance Policy” that defines student, faculty, and DI rights and responsibilities with respect to class attendance at https://www.dohainstitute.edu.qa/Documents/AcademicPolicies/DIAcademicPolicies_Attendance_1015.pdf.”

Grading Policy

“The DI adopts a standardized system for grading and recording the students’ academic progress. The grading scale is as follows:

Numerical Grade	Letter Grade	Grade Points	Course Letter Grade Classification
90-100	A	4.00	<i>Distinction. Outstanding performance showing comprehensive, in-depth understanding of subject matter.</i>
86-89	B+	3.5	<i>Very Good. Clearly above average performance with very good knowledge and understanding of subject matter and with no deficiencies.</i>
80-85	B	3.00	<i>Good. Above average performance with good knowledge of principles and facts at least adequate to communicate intelligently in the discipline.</i>
76-79	C+	2.5	<i>Satisfactory. Basic understanding of knowledge of principles and facts with possible deficiencies.</i>
70-75	C	2.00	<i>Pass. Marginal performance with definite deficiencies.</i>
0-69	F	0.00	<i>Unsatisfactory. Fail</i>

For information on DI grading procedures, such as changing grades or merit classifications in the Grade Point Average, please refer to the DI's full Grading System Policy at https://www.dohainstitute.edu.qa/Documents/AcademicPolicies/DIAcademicPolicies_Grading_1015.pdf."

Course Resits and Repeats and Student Appeals

"Course Resits: At the DI, students who have missed or failed to pass an assessment for a course whether the assessment was an examination or coursework can apply for a resit for that specific assessment. No students are automatically registered for resit assessments, even if they missed an assessment for medical reasons or extenuating circumstances. For more information on the course resit procedures, please refer to the [Resits Policy](https://www.dohainstitute.edu.qa/Documents/AcademicPolicies/DIAcademicPolicies_Resits_1015.pdf) at https://www.dohainstitute.edu.qa/Documents/AcademicPolicies/DIAcademicPolicies_Resits_1015.pdf."

"Course Repeats: Under no circumstances does the DI allow students to repeat a course whether failed or passed. Students will make use of the resit option to pass or improve their grades in a course. For more information on the course repeat procedures, please refer to the [DI Resits Policy](https://www.dohainstitute.edu.qa/Documents/AcademicPolicies/DIAcademicPolicies_Resits_1015.pdf) at https://www.dohainstitute.edu.qa/Documents/AcademicPolicies/DIAcademicPolicies_Resits_1015.pdf."

"Student Appeals: Enrolled students at the DI have the right to appeal against decisions made by an Examination Committee, Disciplinary Committee, or any other equivalent body that may affect their academic progress, provided such appeals are based on grounds stated by the DI in the [Student Academic Appeals Policy](https://www.dohainstitute.edu.qa/Documents/AcademicPolicies/DIAcademicPolicies_StudentAcademicAppeals_1015.pdf). Please refer to the policy for more information about the grounds for appeal, process of the appeal, and outcomes at https://www.dohainstitute.edu.qa/Documents/AcademicPolicies/DIAcademicPolicies_StudentAcademicAppeals_1015.pdf."

Academic Integrity and Misconduct

"The DI expects all its students to comply with the principles of the [DI Academic Code of Good Practice Policy](https://www.dohainstitute.edu.qa/Documents/AcademicPolicies/DIAcademicPolicies_AcademicCodeofGoodPractice_1015.pdf) which include, but are not limited to intellectual honesty; high ethical standards of academic conduct; submitting original work; acknowledging the work and efforts of other individuals and making appropriate references; undertaking honest research; and relying on one's own efforts in completing examinations and all other forms of assessment. The DI takes academic misconduct very seriously and students found guilty of it will be penalized. Students are given the chance to appeal in writing against any decision taken by the disciplinary committee. For more information on managing academic misconduct and its consequences, and student appeals, please refer to the [DI Academic Code of Good Practice Policy](https://www.dohainstitute.edu.qa/Documents/AcademicPolicies/DIAcademicPolicies_AcademicCodeofGoodPractice_1015.pdf) at https://www.dohainstitute.edu.qa/Documents/AcademicPolicies/DIAcademicPolicies_AcademicCodeofGoodPractice_1015.pdf."

Student Course Surveys

"Student course surveys are part of a process by which DI aims to improve teaching and learning. Students are strongly encouraged to participate in providing feedback on their course and its quality of instruction

by completing an online student course survey. The survey is usually open during the last two or three weeks of a semester. Students will be informed of when and how to complete the survey in due time."

Student with Disabilities

"Special needs or any disability-related concerns and requests must be submitted by students to the Enrollment and Student Affairs Department in good time to allow for facilitating such requests. The course instructor must also be previously informed of any requests and accommodations."

Course Readings Access and Library Resources

"Course readings are available at the DI Library and its staff may assist in finding the relevant resources for studies and research. For more information, please visit the library page at <https://www.dohainstitute.edu.qa/EN/Library/Pages/Introduction.aspx>".

Class Conduct: All students are expected to attend all lectures and to be respectfully punctual. The use of cell phones is strictly prohibited. The use of laptops and/or iPads is allowed only for accessing reading material, though students are strongly encouraged to bring printouts of the readings along with them.