



Practicing Transnationalism: American Studies in the Middle East

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In the first decade of the twenty-first century, American studies programs began to spread in the Middle East. During a time of rising anti-American sentiment, ten major programs were established in the region. What impulses propelled universities in the Middle East to establish these centers and programs? What motivated students to take courses and pursue degrees in American studies? In part, American studies programs developed as a way to “know the enemy,” to better understand America’s ubiquitous influence in foreign relations, technology, and culture; however, some programs grew because residents admired the ideals set forth as American, including democracy and free speech.

Practicing Transnationalism investigates these issues and others, using the experiences and research of the editors and contributors, who worked either directly in these programs or as adjunct to them. These scholars seek to understand what American power means to people in the Middle East. They examine the challenge of developing American studies programs in a transnational paradigm, striving to build programs that are separate from and critical of American imperialism without simply becoming anti-American. In the essays, the contributors provide context for how the field of American studies has grown and developed, and they offer views of cultural interactions and classroom situations, demonstrating the problems instructors faced and how they worked to address them.

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