As events have unfolded across the Middle East and North Africa, the CHOICES Program at Brown University has rolled out a series of three (so far) compelling lessons that pull together background information, media resources, academic expertise, and suggestions for classroom activities. The newest of the three lessons, *Protests, Revolutions, and Democratic Change*, helps students consider the potential effects of the protests on democracy and stability in the Middle East and North Africa. A second unit, *After Mubarak: A New Middle East*, helps students consider the implications of a leadership change in Egypt on the prospects for democracy throughout the Middle East and North Africa. The initial unit, *Egypt’s Uprising*, provides students with fundamental information about the causes of the uprising, the role of new media, and the U.S. response.

“Domino Effect” cartoon by Carlos Latuff. The CHOICES lesson plans offer advice on analyzing political cartoons.
Dear MEOC Members and Perspectives Readers,

What a fascinating time to be teaching about the Middle East! The rapidly changing political and social landscapes require a nimble touch as we all grapple with our students and colleagues to define the essential issues that will help us make sense of a very different Middle East than the one we saw a year ago.

Many of us have been teaching about the underlying tensions that come to a head this spring for a long-time—penny-pinching demographics pressures, stultifying autocratic systems, stagnant economies and tensions over secular and Islamist paths to reform and national identity. But it would have been very difficult indeed to predict that this powder keg of issues would explode in a series of popular conflagrations, building upon and reinforcing one another across the region.

A host of questions for study arise as we watch these events continue to unfold:

• How dramatically and how permanently will these societies and their governments change?
• Will new administrations have any better success than the old regimes in dealing with the intractable economic, demographic and environmental challenges facing these nations?
• In countries that open their political systems to free elections, will the necessarily messy and contentious democratic process provide a release for social tensions, or touch off more clashes and more violence?
• Will Islamic movements be best placed to take advantage of the overturning of the old guard, given their long-held opposition status and constituencies built over time? If so, with what results?
• How can the US define and pursue its own national interests in a rapidly changing Middle Eastern region, especially given widespread popular mistrust of our aims and policies?

No one should expect that the answers to these questions will be immediately obvious or that they will be the same in the many countries of the Middle East, each of which are evolving within a particular set of historical, social and economic circumstances. What has always been a diverse region is becoming even more so while we watch, and I predict that the best teaching resources that we will see in the near future are those that recognize and focus on this diversity, or that “go deep” in examining change and continuity in a specific country or context.

I am also very interested to watch how the very active arts scene across the Middle East begins to reflect and interpret this new Arab Spring. It will be fascinating to see the new novels (graphic and text), music, film, poetry and visual art that are inspired by these historic events. And of course, social media from blogs to Facebook and Twitter and beyond have become a much more widely acknowledged window into what’s happening in the region from a host of insider perspectives.

In this issue, we introduce profiles of MEOC member educators whose innovative strategies and projects can inspire all of us to find new ways of engaging with the complexities of the Middle East, its history, cultures and current issues.

Finally, our new membership categories, including free access membership for K-12 teachers, will make everything we do more wide-reaching and relevant as our base grows. I’m particularly excited and hopeful that with all our new members, our listserv conversations (at meoc@utlists.utexas.edu) will become even more lively.

If you haven’t checked out our new website at www.meoc.us, stop by! Past issues of Perspectives, our blog about new resources and opportunities, news from our institutional members, a huge gallery of copyright-free images, and more await you there.

Barbara Petzen
MEOC President
CHOICES Continued from p. 1

Part of the CHOICES Program’s *Teaching with the News* initiative, these three lessons provide online curriculum materials, video interviews with scholars and policy experts, and ideas to connect the content of the classroom to the headlines in the news. The resources provided encourage context-based discussion of the popular uprisings and democracy movements in the Middle East and North Africa, raising the following questions and more:

- What do the different protests have in common? What makes each of them unique?
- Do students feel that the examples of Egypt and Tunisia have inspired protesters in other parts of the region?
- What factors have contributed to the success of different protests?
- Why have some governments reacted more violently to the protests than others?
- How could these protests change the lives of everyday people in the region?
- In which countries has the U.S. historically supported authoritarian regimes?
- Has the U.S. response to the protests been consistent, or has it varied from country to country?
- Do the protests present students with a new image of the Middle East?
- Why should people in the United States care about people struggling for democracy halfway around the world?
- What role do students feel they can play in these events?
- Many of those organizing these protests are young people. Do students feel any connection between what’s happening in the Middle East and their own lives?
- Do they feel that there are problems in their own country, state, or community worth protesting over?
- By supporting democracy, does the United States run the risk of harming its own security and economic interests?
- Is there a conflict between the United States’ economic and security interests and its desire to support democracy? Does there have to be?
- What effect might the protests have on human rights in the region? In the short term? In the long term?
- How might democratic change in the Middle East and North Africa impact the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians?

RECOMMENDED NEWS RESOURCES

The following news outlets are helpful in keeping up to date with what is happening in the Middle East and North Africa.

**Al Jazeera: Region in Turmoil**
http://english.aljazeera.net/indepth/spotlight/2011/02/20112221213770475.html

Provides an interactive map with summaries of recent demonstrations, as well as in-depth reporting on several countries.


Provides a summary of the latest major events in the countries experiencing protests, a compilation of related articles, and a range of multimedia resources.

**BBC: Mid-East and Arab Unrest**
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-12480844

Provides up-to-date reporting on events in the region, including photos and maps.

**The Guardian**
**Arab and Middle East Revolt—An Interactive Map**
http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/interactive/2011/feb/17/arab-world-protests-bahrain-map

A country-by-country guide to protests in the region.

**The Washington Post: Middle East in Turmoil**
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/special/world/middle-east-protests/

Provides a timeline of major events and additional coverage on the protests. Organized by country.

**Al Masry Al Youm**
www.almasryalyoum.com/en

An English language edition of an independent Egyptian newspaper and media outlet. Includes videos.

This feature was excerpted from materials compiled by the CHOICES program at Brown University (www.choices.edu).
Studying Egypt During the Egyptian Spring

By Lorne Swarthout, Berkeley Carroll School, New York, NY

What would it have been like to study Russian history in 1917 or Israeli history in 1948 or Cuban history in 1959? It would have been exciting! And confusing! At least that’s what my Modern Middle East history class discovered as we dove into a study of Egyptian history in the midst of the Tahrir Square uprising in February 2011. Our one-semester elective for 10th graders began in mid-January. We spent the next six weeks with one eye on the CNN breaking news and one eye on our textbooks. It was very exciting, a little bit ragged, and certainly unforgettable. Some day, hopefully, these students will be able to say that they watched as Egypt threw off an authoritarian regime and became a democratic state.

In past years I have begun this class with a long unit on the origins of Islamic civilization in the Middle East. Later in the course we would get to Egypt. This year I tore up the old syllabus in order to get straight to Egypt. I decided to take a more country-centric approach. We would learn all about Egypt, and then follow the loose ends and half-told stories later in the course as we zeroed in on Turkey, Israel/Palestine, and Iran. I was also determined to use some new technology to try to make a very complex national narrative more accessible to 15 year olds.

In order to get this new class comfortable with the region and its geography, we began with a week of reading about the current Middle East. And we made big maps. The articles focused on the challenges that young people face in getting an education, getting a job, finding a spouse, and expressing their faith in a rapidly changing, religiously turbulent world. Each day as we discussed unemployment of college grads or travails of young wives we checked in on the events in Egypt. Photos and videos of the protestors in Tahrir Square put real faces on our abstract lessons. Meanwhile, the days of map-making let the new class bond as the seven teams discovered rivers and coastlines and oil fields and cities.

On February 2nd, the day after President Mubarak announced he would not run for re-election, we began talking about Egyptian history. Rather arbitrarily we started with Napoleon and Mehmet Ali, two very influential 19th-century military men, neither of whom were Egyptians. They helped us learn about the importance of Egypt’s position in the Mediterranean/Asian/African worlds, about its agricultural abundance, about its unique population distribution and about its long history of military rulers. It was especially interesting to compare Mehmet Ali’s dreams of reform and resurgence with the aspirations of the young people who were interviewed by Richard Engel (NBC) and Nicholas Kristof (New York Times).

We continued our trek through Egyptian history, learning next about Ismail, the Suez Canal, and the coming of British colonialism. The authentic voice of the Egyptian people is first heard loud
and clear in the 1919 Revolution led by Saad Zaghlul and the Wafd. That voice becomes a lot less clear during the interwar period as King and Wafd and British play three-corner catch (or even “keep-away”) with the Egyptian political system. The arrival of Nasser on the Egyptian—and world—stage is a momentous turning point. For the first time Egypt has an authentically Egyptian president. For the first time it is truly independent of colonial interference. Or is it? The Cold War ensnares Egypt despite Nasser’s ambition to find a Third Way, and futile wars with Israel drain precious resources and high hopes.

Following defeat in 1967 and (political) victory in 1973, Nasser’s successor, Anwar Sadat, strikes a peace deal with Israel at Camp David. Religious hard-liners who are furious at this bargain assassinate Sadat, setting the stage for the long twilight of the Mubarak years. That was the trajectory of our history study over four weeks. Part of one week was devoted to reading Naguib Mahfouz short stories and discussing the environmental challenges to the Nile basin. The twin goals were to make the history as complete as possible (given the time available and the reading level of my students) and to raise significant questions about Egyptian politics and society that would help us understand what we were seeing live on Al Jazeera English every night from the center of Cairo.

I tried to direct the students to the essential questions with daily homework assignments using Google docs. This is a new wrinkle, something I had never tried before, which was quite successful. I created an assignment sheet with readings (mostly from Goldschmidt) and one or two leading questions. I shared this assignment sheet with each student and asked them to copy it into a Google doc of their own. As they answered the reading questions every night they created one easily retrievable study guide. And, since they shared the document (and editing rights) with me, it also meant that I could easily check their answers and add my comments using the “Insert/Comment” feature.

This homework “in the cloud” provided an immediate access point to the lesson when I put the answers of one or two students up on the screen for us all to read together. This not only shifted some of the teaching to the students themselves, it also meant that I could easily check their answers and add my comments using the “Insert/Comment” feature.

An additional assignment was to create a poster pulling together key events in Egyptian history under specific topics, Egypt and Islam, Egypt and democracy, Egypt and the Arab world, etc. Poster making was certainly a throwback activity for such a tech savvy class, rather like a GPS in a ’57 Chevy, but it was something students were familiar with and they took to it with a will. For two days the room was abuzz with paste and scissors and sharpies and little pictures of Nasser. One of the most valuable parts of these posters (which now line the walls of our classroom) I owe to a colleague. She suggested that each poster, just like a good essay, should have a thesis statement. The creation and wording of these statements forced serious thinking by the team members and was a big topic of conversation when they explained their posters to the class.

On the afternoon of March 2, the last day of our Egypt unit, I went up to Columbia University for a special program on the Egyptian revolt. There was a standing room only crowd for the panel of academic notables. Earlier in the day there had been a rumor that Mubarak was going to step down. Suddenly a whisper went down the line, “He’s not leaving!” The old man was not yet ready to leave the stage. Our panel had one more imponderable to ponder. But not for long. The next day as I passed back student essays we watched a clip of ecstatic crowds in the center of Cairo. They were celebrating the end of the Mubarak era and, hopefully, the beginning of a new democratic chapter in Egyptian history. It was a momentous month for Egypt and a remarkable learning experience for some 10th grade history students.

List of sources/resources for classroom use:
MEOC Announces 2010 Middle East Book Award Recipients

The Middle East Outreach Council (MEOC) announced its 2010 Middle East book awards recipients at the Middle East Studies Association conference held in San Diego, CA, in November 2010. Established in 1999, the Middle East Book Award recognizes quality books for children and young adults that contribute meaningfully to an understanding of the Middle East and its component societies and cultures. Books are judged on the authenticity of their portrayal of a Middle Eastern subject, as well as on their characterization, plot, and appeal for the intended audience. For the purposes of this award, “The Middle East” is defined as the Arab World, Iran, Israel, Turkey, and Afghanistan.

PICTURE BOOK WINNER
How Many Donkeys? An Arabic Counting Tale
by Margaret Read McDonald, Nadia Jameel Taibah (authors) and Carol Liddiment (Illustrator)

In this Saudi folktale, Jouha loads ten donkeys with dates to sell at the market. As he rides along, he counts nine and believes one is lost. Yet when he walks, he counts all ten and is grateful that the missing donkey is back. Alternately lucky and unlucky, depending on whether he walks or rides, Jouha sells his dates and returns home with all of his donkeys. Arabic numbers from one to ten are written from right to left at the bottom of the pages, both in Arabic and in English transliteration, and invite youngsters to count along with the silly date merchant. A great introduction to Arabic numbers for younger readers, as well as the Joha/Goha/Hoca character known throughout the region.

PICTURE BOOK HONORABLE MENTION
Kings and Carpenters: One Hundred Bible Land Jobs You Might have Praised or Panned
by Laurie Coulter and Mary Newbigging

Life was tough in the time of the Old Testament! A fact-filled introduction, detailed timeline and thorough index make this book perfect for research projects, while the humorous illustrations and snappy text provide an entertaining read. Kids will look at history in a whole new way thanks to this unique approach.

YOUTH LITERATURE WINNER
Shooting Kabul
by N. H. Senzai

In July 2001, as 11-year-old Fadi and his family hastily board a truck to begin their escape from Afghanistan, six-year-old Mariam lets go of her brother’s hand and is tragically left behind. Their arrival in San Francisco is bittersweet as they are all too concerned about Mariam to appreciate their newfound safety and freedom. Fadi struggles with integrating himself into American middle school culture, eventually finding solace in the photography club. Still, he is most concerned with the part he played in losing Mariam and getting her back. A photography contest with the prize of a trip to India seems to be his best means of finding a way back to Afghanistan to help in the search for his sister. An age-appropriate tale relevant to current events.
YOUTH NON-FICTION WINNER

A Brief History of Saudi Arabia
by James Wynbrandt

In recent years, Saudi Arabia has experienced changes that have both altered the internal structure of the country and affected its foreign relations, and many works continue to propagate stereotypes about what the Kingdom was, while paying little attention to recent developments. This title is written in a clear, concise style that is approachable to the younger reader (but informative enough for older readers as well), and manages to steer an even course through a subject that is often treated with skepticism or defensiveness.

YOUTH NON-FICTION HONORABLE MENTION

Encyclopedia of Muslim-American History
by Edward E. Curtis IV, editor

This illustrated two-volume encyclopedia includes some 300 articles covering historical and contemporary issues, events, people, court cases, themes, and activism relating to Muslim-American history. The reference also includes 50 original documents, a master chronology and an extensive bibliography. Given the little that has been published on the topic, especially for a younger audience, this book is a welcome addition to the field.

Jasmine Revolution
Analyzing Revolutionary Movements in the Classroom
By Joan Brodsky Schur, Village Community School

Whatever the future holds for Tunisia, the Jasmine Revolution will go down in history as the first blossom of the Arab Spring – a series of revolutionary uprisings that spread from tiny Tunisia, to giant Egypt and far beyond. In Tunisia the Jasmine Revolution (so dubbed by the Western press) is known as the Sidi Bouzid Revolt, named after the hometown of Mohamed Bouazizi, the street vendor who immolated himself to protest his thwarted dreams of making even a meager living in Tunisia. Today the news media are focused on the bigger stories of Egypt, Libya and Syria, making it difficult to get updated information about Tunisia, “the little engine that could.” But Tunisia is still far from completing its revolution, and what happens down the line will determine whether historians will call the Jasmine Revolution a true revolution or not.

Having spent two weeks in Tunisia in the summer of 2010 on a GEEO educator’s tour of Tunisia, I was surprised that this seemingly calm country erupted in a massive protest movement just months after we left. What had our group missed about what we experienced there? In our perplexity we were apparently not alone; most news commentators were also surprised. Yet in retrospect, the signs that Tunisia could harbor a revolutionary movement were there.

European thinkers laid the theoretical framework for studying revolutions primarily in response to the French Revolution. It was Alexis de Tocqueville who first observed that people exhibited the most revolutionary fervor in regions of France where the quality of life was rising—not falling, as might be expected. Regarding the Jasmine Revolution, Fatma Bouvet de la Maisonneuve commented, “It’s no coincidence that the revolution first started in Tunisia, where we have a high level of education, a sizeable middle class and a greater degree of gender equality” (New York Times of February 22, 2011). Thus it was Tunisians–primed for a better life, but thwarted by their lack of political rights and economic prospects, and aware of their “relative deprivation” vis-à-vis the Europeans who flock to Tunisia’s beautiful Mediter-

Jasmine Continued on p. 8
The following lesson plan takes the definition of revolution as its starting point, and then asks the question: When can we decide whether or not the Sidi Bouzid revolt led to a successful revolution? By engaging students in ongoing assessments of unfolding events, they must not only “stay tuned” to what happens, but also make critical judgments about their meaning.

**DIRECTIONS:**
1. Distribute to the class or project the following two quotations:

   “Revolutions entail not only mass mobilization and regime change, but also more or less rapid and fundamental social, economic and/or cultural change, during or soon after the struggle for state power.”
   - Jeff Goodwin in *No Other Way Out: States and Revolutionary Movements 1945-1991*.

   “Few revolutionary situations have revolutionary outcomes.”
   - Charles Tilly in *European Revolutions 1492-1992*.

Tell students that the purpose of the lesson is for them to determine whether or not Tunisia has achieved a successful revolution, using the definition of sociologist Jeff Goodwin, or other definitions they research.

2. Distribute the Timeline of the Jasmine Revolution. Tell students that as the school year continues they will be expected to follow the news coming out of Tunisia, to add events to the timeline, and to evaluate whether Tunisia is moving away from or closer to achieving a revolutionary outcome.

   *You can also ask students to research events before the Jasmine Revolution in order to answer the question: Why was Tunisia the first Arab country to try to overthrow its government?*

3. Distribute the following list of political science terms. Elicit from the class the definitions they already know; assign students to look up the others until the class has a working definition of each of them.

4. Ask students working alone, or in small groups, to use the Jasmine Revolution Timeline and their list of terms to fill in the chart. Share results and hold an open discussion to try to reach consensus on how these terms apply or do not apply to Tunisia.

5. As events unfold, ask students to update the timelines as well as their charts. For example, six months from now we might find that Tunisia’s revolution was aborted, stolen, or completed.

**EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:**
1. Ibn Khaldun, the great Tunisian historian of the fourteenth century, hypothesizes about why leaders lose power. Apply the theories he formulated in *The Muqaddimah* to current-day Tunisia.

2. Compare the Jasmine Revolution to events unfolding in another Arab country, or European revolutionary movements that failed or succeeded.

3. Compare the Arab Spring to the revolutionary ferment that swept through Europe in 1848.
## Timeline: The Jasmine Revolution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Tunisia becomes an independent state and wins recognition by France (its former colonizer) as such.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Tunisia becomes a republic. The monarchy is abolished and President Habib Bourguiba establishes a secular state, abolishing polygamy and giving women the vote.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali comes to power as successor of Habib Bourguiba, the founder of modern Tunisia. Note: Students can add to this timeline events from 1956 to 2010 and then hypothesize why the Arab Spring began in Tunisia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>WikiLeaks releases documents that expose the extravagant lifestyle of President Ben Ali. The worldwide economic slump exacerbates Tunisia’s already high rate of unemployment, especially among its populous, well-trained and educated youth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 17, 2010</td>
<td>Mohamed Bouazizi, a street vendor from Sidi Bouzid, immolates himself to protest a life made futile by a lack of jobs in Tunisia and the harassment of street vendors by government officials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 2010-Jan. 2011</td>
<td>Facebook and Twitter are used by educated Tunisians to organize massive and continuing demonstrations against the Ben Ali government and his family, which they believe is enriching itself at the expense of Tunisians. Demonstrations are held in major cities throughout the country. The Tunisian military holds its fire, protecting demonstrators from the Ben Ali police and security forces.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 12, 2011</td>
<td>Ben Ali says that he will remove restrictions on the press and that he will resign at the end of his term in 2014. Protests continue, after which Ben Ali announces that he will hold elections in six months. The protestors, which include lawyers and trade unionists, do not give up; at least 78 Tunisians die.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 14, 2011</td>
<td>President Ben Ali leaves Tunisia after a twenty-three year dictatorship. Some Tunisians begin to flee for Italy and Libya, fearing that their country has fallen into a state of anarchy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 15, 2011</td>
<td>Fouad Mebazaa becomes interim president. According to the old constitution this position can only be maintained for six months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 27, 2011</td>
<td>Mohamed Gannouchi, prime minister for 11 years under Ben Ali, resigns. Having tried to form a unity government, he is forced out by protestors who insist that he is too closely allied with the former government of Ben Ali and his party, the RCD (Constitutional Democratic Rally).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 3, 2011</td>
<td>Fouad Mebazaa announces that elections will be held on July 24 for members of a council of representatives empowered to rewrite the Tunisian constitution. According to Reuters, “Once elected the constitutional council could either appoint a new government or ask the current executive to carry on until presidential or parliamentary elections are held.” Mebazaa announces that he plans to remain in power beyond the six-month period stipulated in the old constitution because the former government is no longer relevant. General elections are postponed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 7, 2011</td>
<td>The interim government announces plans to disband the secret police, the terror weapon of Ben Ali’s rule.</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 9, 2011</td>
<td>The party of the Ben Ali government, the RCD, is officially dissolved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing 2011—</td>
<td>Debate is unresolved as to whether the Tunisian government should empower the private sector and put in place laissez-faire market reforms, or to the contrary empower the state to intervene more in the economy. Methods to fight corruption and to establish judicial and administrative reforms are not yet in place. The role of Islam in formerly secular Tunisia is yet to be decided.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: This timeline should be extended as students research further developments.
Where, what and who do you teach?
Currently, I teach a grade nine class called Coming of Age in the World which is a language arts class with a lot of history. I am English Department Chair at Colorado Academy in Denver and coordinate a playwriting Institute. I work with grades 9-12 through my classes, playwriting institute and advisory. I have been teaching (in Canada and the US) since 1974.

How did you first become interested in learning and teaching about the Middle East?
I came to my interest in teaching about the Middle East through literature: Persepolis, Maus, The Kite Runner and such films as The Syrian Bride, The Lemon Tree, Waltz with Bahsir; Promises, The Band’s Visit, Jellyfish… Then I developed a multigenre portfolio project and invited speakers to the school. I went to Hebrew University and took a 4-week course on the Modern Middle East and spent 4 weeks in Damascus doing community service and taking Arabic. Somewhere along the way, I met Barbara Petzen and Jonathan Friedlander at ISSA in Chicago. Since then, Barbara has visited and presented at my school for 4 years--she is the one that got me involved in MEOC.

What activities are most successful in introducing Middle East-related material?
Gallery walks, movies (Summer in Tehran, A Land Called Paradise, Promises), multi-genre portfolio: art and writing based on Persian miniature creation. My most impactful project: kids study Persian miniatures and create their own personal miniatures (seephotos). I also have students do research and creative writing on “youth in the Middle East,” a current story about teenagers in the Middle East from a newspaper. The kids turn the premise of the journalistic story into a piece of historical fiction. Other successful activities I have carried out include a speaker from the community on Afghanistan, having kids write monologues from the point of view of a Promises character, reading poetry of witness, video conferences with a poet from Nablus, using Project Look Sharp for media literacy and the Middle East, and projects on Middle Eastern rap.

What are the challenges and the rewards of teaching about the Middle East?
The challenges and the rewards really go hand in hand. I find it challenging to worry about teaching multiple perspectives and having the parents react negatively. It doesn’t happen often but it has. On the other hand, when things go well, students really do learn that there are multiple perspectives and they are able to open their minds to those perspectives.

What will be your next Middle East-related project?
Probably something about teaching the Palestinian-Israeli conflict through the arts: poetry, song, theatre--even circus! Perhaps something drawing upon Primary Source’s new Asia Society Afghanistan resource. Next year, I have received a Fulbright Teaching award to go to Israel, where I will carry out a project on “Teaching the Israeli-Palestinian Relationship through the Multiple Lenses and Voices of Popular and Traditional Arts.”

What kinds of professional development do you seek out?
This summer, I am attending Georgetown’s week-long class on the Middle East, and I hope to attend Dar Al Islam’s 2-week retreat at some point. I recently took Harvard’s online course on Middle Eastern graphic novels. I have traveled frequently to the Middle East with programs like Fulbright-Hays --so far my travels have taken me to Syria, Israel and Palestine, Turkey, Egypt, and Jordan. I also participate in conferences like ISSA and MESA when I can present my work and exchange ideas with colleagues.

Betsey Coleman with two of her Colorado Academy students

Betsey Coleman's Persian Miniatures as created by her students.
Jean Campbell
Education and Evaluation Consultant (Eugene, Oregon)

When did you become interested in learning and teaching about the Middle East?
In 1980, I began tutoring a University of Oregon (UO) graduate student in Education from Saudi Arabia. I was fascinated as he and his wife, other students, and local Muslims introduced me to their cultural patterns and religion. During my doctoral courses in Anthropology and Education, I conducted research on Middle East cultural identity, social organization, cultural change, stereotypes, and education. My advisor predicted, “Looks like the beginning of a life’s work!”

When did your involvement with MEOC start?
The Middle East Studies Association held its 1992 conference in Portland and I attended my first MEOC meeting. I was the World Affairs Council of Oregon’s Education Director. Former MEOC president Marta Colburn of PSU’s Middle East Studies Center and I coordinated the teacher workshop on “Cities of the Middle East”, in conjunction with the conference. Later, I served on the board and as Secretary, Book Awards Chair, and President.

How have you obtained first-hand knowledge of the Middle East?
Work and long-term friendships with international students and Middle Eastern Americans provided me with an introduction to the region. Travel in various roles to 11 MENA countries added awareness of its diversity and layers of history. Highlights include: studying Arabic at the American University in Cairo; working on a USAID project for education of Egyptian rural girls; visiting 60 archaeology sites on a Fulbright group trip to Jordan; serving as external evaluator on four Oregon State University-Tunisia projects; and seeing Saudi Arabia through PSU and National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations trips.

How has your work supported the goals of MEOC?
A former elementary teacher, I later worked in the UO international office and teacher education program. I infused Middle East content into social studies methods, global education, and intercultural communication courses. I taught PSU Middle East Anthropology and International Studies courses and involvement in outreach. With the NW Regional Educational Laboratory and PSU, I assisted with training programs in the U.S. for Egyptian, Pakistani, Saudi, and Yemeni educators. For 13 years, I was the PSU Middle East Studies Center Assistant/Associate Director, with outreach responsibilities including: teacher workshops, academic and cultural events, internships, speaker and media referrals, and a resource library. I served as Oregon Council for the Social Studies president, developed curriculum, and presented on the Middle East at many education conferences.

What do you find most challenging and rewarding in teaching and outreach?
Ongoing frustrations are the persistence of stereotypes, sometimes problematic U.S. foreign policy, and media focus on conflict. As seen with the unfolding situations in the diverse countries affected by “Arab Spring”, it is challenging to generalize about the region as a whole. I’ve found it most rewarding when students and participants have gained new perspectives and deepened understanding of the region’s diversity. I like playing a bridge role by bringing people of diverse backgrounds together and providing a forum in which they can interact and develop mutual respect. It has been gratifying when teachers served by MEOC and the organizations for which I have worked have expressed appreciation for up-to-date resources that help them teach about complicated issues. In Oregon, we’ve tried to serve educators throughout the state and to extend learning beyond one-day events. I’m a strong believer in the necessity, benefits, and pleasures of working collaboratively. It has been exciting to see the MEOC book awards become increasingly known and prestigious each year.

What are you up to currently?
I recently retired from PSU and am reflecting on which activities and research questions remain of interest. A student was surprised that I kept so many books; I responded that now I have time to read them! I am working as the external evaluator on a fascinating NEH-funded project co-sponsored by the International Museum of Muslim Cultures and Tougaloo College in Mississippi. I also am treasurer of the American Research Center in Egypt/Oregon chapter.

What will your next projects be?
I have many hopes for the time ahead: returning to Egypt to identify lasting benefits of the training for girls’ schools; publishing earlier research on stereotypes and identity; writing a children’s book and elementary curriculum; visiting additional places in the Middle East; teaching an occasional university course; continuing to support MEOC’s work; trying to revive my Arabic; improving my Middle East cooking skills; and reading my anthropology books!
Join the Middle East Outreach Council!

Members gain access to MEOC’s forum, where you can get timely answers to questions you post about resources, travel opportunities, or other topics; copies of Perspectives, our semi-annual curriculum newsletter; web space to showcase your events and curriculum; and more!

MEOC Enrollment Form

Check your desired membership:
- ___Educator membership ($10.00)*
- ___Outreach Professional membership ($25.00)
- ___Joint MEOC-MESA membership ($35.00)**
- ___Institutional membership ($100.00)

Name:
Institution:
Address:
Phone number:
Fax number:
Email Address:

For teachers enrolling at the joint MEOC-MESA rate:

Grade levels taught:
Subject areas taught:

Return this form with your check made out to the Middle East Outreach Council to:
MEOC
c/o Melinda McClimans
Office of International Affairs
321a Oxley Hall, 1712 Neil Ave.
Columbus, Ohio 43210-1219

*Individual members must pay by personal check; institutional checks will not be accepted for individual memberships

**This joint MEOC-MESA membership is available to K-12 classroom and community college teachers only. If you are enrolling as a joint MEOC-MESA member, you must provide your institution name as well as information on the grade levels and subject areas you teach.