TEACHING ABOUT THE MIDDLE EAST
IN A TIME OF TRANSITION

Dr. Steve Niva, Professor of Middle East Studies at the Evergreen State College

Dr. Niva will lead a two-part discussion about the contemporary Middle East designed to help teachers formulate their own approaches to introducing students to the region and its current political transformations, particularly the democracy uprisings we see in the region today. The first part will introduce participants to the contemporary political and cultural geography of the region through maps and map exercises, with a focus on the emergence of modern states, peoples and religions we find in the region. This will include a discussion of Islam and the differences between branches of Islam (Sunni and Shiite) as well as other religions. The second part will focus on the contemporary period that has captivated many following today’s news, including the factors that led to the current democracy uprisings across the region in such countries as Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, among others. This part will include a discussion of the key social, economic and political factors behind these uprisings and how these movements are transforming the region.

Dr. STEVE NIVA teaches international politics and Middle East Studies at The Evergreen State College, Olympia, Washington. He holds a Ph.D. in Political Science (International Politics) and Middle East Studies from Columbia University, is an editorial associate of The Middle East Research and Information Project (merip.org), and has had articles published, among other places, in the Seattle Times, Seattle Post-Intelligencer, Middle East International, the Egyptian English language publication Al-Ahram Weekly, Middle East Policy, The Jordan Times and Peace Review. He has written extensively on the history and politics of regional conflicts, radical Islamic movements, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He has lived and worked in Egypt, Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories, and leads students on study abroad programs to Turkey and Egypt every three years.
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