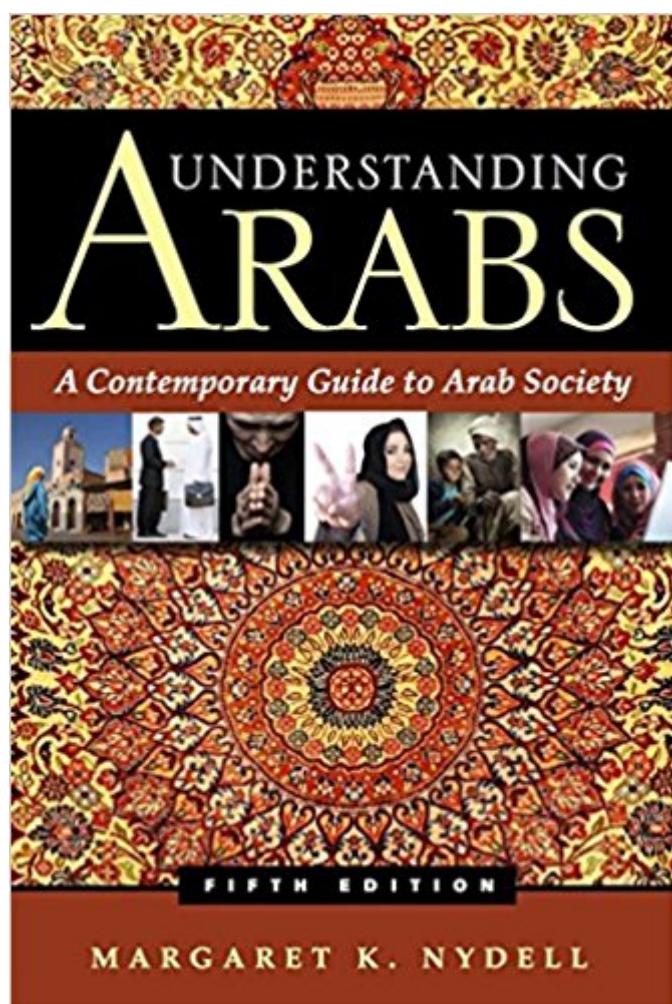


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# Understanding Arabs: A Contemporary Guide To Arab Society



## **Synopsis**

The Fifth Edition of the highly successful guide to Arab society - publishing in line with the Arab Spring. The perfect introduction to contemporary Arab culture for those who want to understand today's headlines and the complex events playing out on the world stage. From the rise of fundamentalism to the historically uneasy relationship between the Arab World and the West, Margaret Nydell has expanded her highly respected book to bring today's complex issues into clearer focus. Understanding Arabs introduces the elements of Arab culture and Islam in an even-handed, unbiased style. The book covers such topics as beliefs and values; religion and society; the role of the family; friends and strangers; men and women; social formalities and etiquette; and communication styles.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Middle East specialists have long relied on their worn copies of Understanding Arabs for insights about Arab social behaviour. A whole generation of U.S. diplomats were introduced to the subject by Dr. Nydell in the 1970s and 1980s. In this concise and practical guide, she shares her wealth of scholarly and real-world experience, and she does so without the psycho-babble that too often dominates the other surveys of the subject. *Ambassador David L. Mack, Vice President, Middle East Institute* This latest edition of Understanding Arabs is a great introduction to the Arab world for both the general public and college students who wish to expand their knowledge of the region. Nydell's book is of tremendous use in the classroom, as it engages the cultural, linguistic, religious and political diversity of the Arab people and the Arab lands. *Douja Mariem*

Mamelouk, Assistant Professor, French and Arabic Literatures, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

This is an important and fascinating book, especially for Americans in the crucial time in U.S.-Arab relations. Dr. Nydell presents a timely, lucid, and engaging guide to the values and cultures of the Arab world, based on her many years of working and living there, and on her training as a professional linguist. This candid and wonderfully readable book captures the contrasts and the characteristics of this great civilization and brings them vividly to life for a Western audience.

—Karin Ryding, PhD, Sultan Qaboos bin Said Professor of Arabic, and Chair of the Department of Arabic Language, Georgetown University

This book is a must-read for anyone wanting to comprehend the Middle East. The writing is fluid, full of examples, and updated to include the Arab Spring. Dr. Nydell, a world renowned linguist with decades of practical experience in the field, is an authoritative voice. She provides profound insights into Arabs' perceptions underlying political events, and our interactions with each other.

—Elizabeth McKune, Executive Director, Sultan Qaboos Cultural Center, and Former US Ambassador to the State of Qatar

Still the only volume of its kind. This timely and needed volume supports serious-minded efforts to learn, understand, and communicate with Arabs and Muslims. Nydell combines her many years of experience living in the region with her special linguistic expertise to offer today's students insights they are obliged to critically consider before study or research abroad. The accessible presentation succeeds in humanizing as it reveals both the difficult issues and the abiding values that govern people's experiences. Nydell reminds us that in the Middle East and North Africa there will be much more to grasp as continued rapid change alters those lives daily.

—Terrence M. Potter, Visiting Associate Professor, Georgetown University

For fifteen years, Margaret Nydell's *Understanding Arabs* has been used by countless Americans preparing to work or live in the Arab world. It is a unique source; there is nothing like it. Written with wit as well as seriousness, it provides a sound cultural appreciation and basic data on the region... Her personal message of the tragic events of September 11 should be required reading by all who make decisions or write commentary on the Arab world.

—Max L. Gross, Joint Military Intelligence College

Margaret Nydell blends her informed understanding of Arab history and contemporary politics with deep and thoughtful insight into Arab culture and psychology. Many authors know much about the former, and a few know much about the latter, but only *Understanding Arabs* conveys a deep understanding of the synergies of both. This is essential reading for those working in - or with - Arab countries, or seeking to understand Arab society.

—Lawrence R. Velte Associate Professor of Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies, National Defense University, and Associate, Washington Center for Protocol, Inc.

For her understanding of the Arab mind, her expertise in teaching, and her

skill in crafting this book, Dr. Nydell is truly a national treasure. Understanding Arabs should be required reading for any professional or policy maker who is involved in any way with working with Arabs or on matters impacting the Middle East. F.L. Rusty Capps, former FBI Supervisory Special Agent, and President of Counterterrorism, Counterintelligence Training Partners, LLC.

Dr. Margaret Nydell is a widely respected scholar and professor of Modern Standard Arabic, Arabic dialectology, and many Arabic regional dialects. She was an Arabic linguist for the Foreign Service Institute and the U.S. Department of State, and has directed the latter's School of Advanced Arabic Training in Tunisia. The author of ten books, she currently lectures on Arab cultural orientation for numerous government and private organizations. Dr. Nydell holds a master's degree in Arabic and a PhD in applied linguistics, both from Georgetown University. She has lived and worked in Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, and Cairo.

While it was great to read about Arab culture, this book felt repetitive. Just reading the first five chapters would have been enough, the rest are just filler.

This book is a great elementary lesson in Arab culture. It was purchased for a class in the MA program and too simple for my needs. It would be a wonderful addition for someone entering a BA or for anyone who wishes to have a basic understanding of culture. I would suggest advertising it in this manner.

Came in good condition and was the right book for the course.

Recommend this book as required reading before moving to MENA region.

This is the most complete and understandable book on Arabic culture I have ever read. I am a International Relations student specializing in the Middle East. Understanding Arabs helped me to identify my cultural differences and similarities with Arabs. It helped me understand the difference between Arab culture and Muslim culture. It helped me understand the developments and decline of movements in Arabic cultures, such as Feminism, Arab Christians, Democratic values, Western values, and other things dear to me. It is a helpful book for anyone wanting to get a brief overview of Arabic culture or wants to deepen their understanding of another aspect of humanity.

I have friends who live in a Arab country and the things they have told me about building relationships now make sense. It takes time and it is important to know the customs to avoid setbacks. I knew of the hospitality, and it is wonderful. A completely different way of looking at time and what is important at the moment. And in the long run.

I have accepted a job in the Middle East and have been trying to prepare myself. This book has been the greatest help yet! I feel much more prepared and comfortable about my decision since reading it. I can see where I could have made some major blunders or completely misread situations without the guidance offered here. Plus, it is just good reading.

Though I am in the middle east for many years and continue to live, , this book has been an eye opener to the many important sensitive cultural differences and way of life of an Arab which I was not able to see due to the lack of interaction with an Arab. many in the west expect an Arab to be like a westerner and Arabic people are misunderstood because they may not have the western mindset but choose to exhibit their traditional life style than the western in many ways. I have enjoyed reading this book and have acquired a more clearer picture Arabic culture. it is excellent book

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