



# Marwan Kraidy

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## Music Videos and Arab Public Life Contention and Circulation

Music videos are ubiquitous in contemporary Arab public life. They are a lucrative staple for a 500-channel strong pan-Arab commercial television industry. Fans access various kinds of commercial videos, but also patriotic, religious, institutional, martial and cosmopolitan clips, on mobile phones, singers' websites, iTunes, YouTube and countless blogs and Facebook pages. It seems that there is a music video that speaks to every conceivable Arab group identity. Yet, the phenomenon has so far eluded serious study. As captivating audio-visual blurbs, music videos attract attention; they are interesting not only because of their provocative aesthetics, but because they spotlight controversial issues and elicit impassioned reactions from public figures and ordinary people alike. Videos also reflect fraught cultural encounters: local versions of a global, mostly American form, they bespeak enmities and affinities between Arab and US cultures. This lecture considers music videos as instruments of visibility in a saturated media economy suffering from attention scarcity, and discussed the theoretical implications of this approach.

21<sup>st</sup>

is a series of lectures and seminars sponsored by the Mellichamp Professors of Global Studies (Janet Afary, Allison Brysk, Michael Curtin, & Jan Nederveen Pieterse) and the Orfalea Center. The series, with two or three speakers each quarter, will focus on themes and issues of the global 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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ROOM 2135

**Marwan M. Kraidy** is Associate Professor of Global Communication at the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania. His publications include *Reality Television and Arab Politics: Contention in Public Life* (Cambridge, 2009), which won the 2010 Best Book Award in Global Communication and Social Change, from the International Communication Association, *Arab Television Industries* (BFI/Palgrave, 2009, with J. Khalil), *Hybridity, or, The Cultural Logic of Globalization* (Temple, 2005), and the edited volumes *Global Media Studies: Ethnographic Perspectives* (Routledge, 2003), and *The Politics of Reality Television: Global Perspectives* (Routledge, 2010).

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