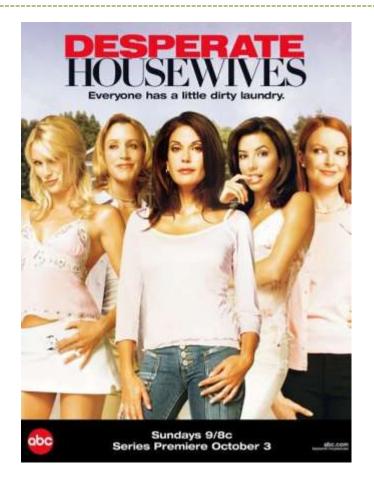
# **Cross Cultural Perceptions**

HOW AMERICANS AND ARABS SEE EACH OTHER...AND HOW IT ACTUALLY IS



"It's like a scene from Desperate Housewives."



**Arab Perceptions of the American Family** 

## A Look at the American Family

### **Arab Perceptions**

- Upper Middle Class
- 2 Parents, 3 Children
- Disconnected from Religion
- Focus on Education

### **American Reality**

- Median Income: \$63,211
- Average Household: 2.61
  people; 21.4% married parents
  with children
- 51% attend religious services at least once a month; 84% say religion is important
- 84.5% have a high school degree or higher

"Tight knit, larger than Western families, almost clan or tribal in basis."



**American Perceptions of the Arab Family** 

## A Look at the Arab Family

### **American Perceptions**

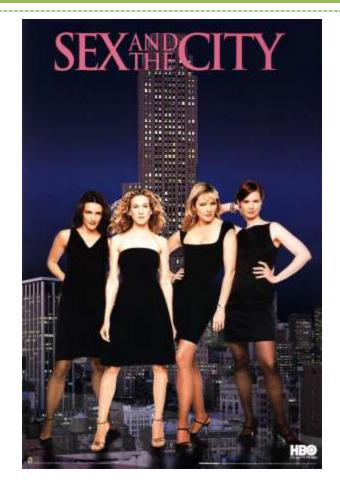
- Very traditional and patriarchal
- Tight-knit and very close
- Religion oriented

### **Arab Reality**

- Father is "always the provider;" sons have more freedom than daughters
- Women are housewives, with hired help to run the household
- Close relationships among siblings; meals with extended family weekly



"Women are empowered in America, but not to their full potential."



**Arab Views of American Women's Rights** 

### American Women

### **Arab Perceptions**

- Legally, women are equal to men
- Women are mostly empowered
- Some belief that it's still a male dominated nation

### **American Reality**

- Men and women are legally equal
- 55.4% of women have at least some college education; 54.4% of men do
- 72.1% of women and 83.5% of men are in the work force

"They have the right to get married and have kids. And get stoned to death."



**American's Views of Arab Women's Rights** 

### **Arab Women**

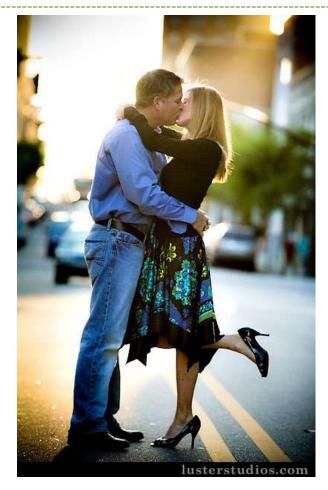
#### **American Views**

- Forced to dress conservatively, often covering faces
- Can't work, go to school, drive
- Dependent on country

### **Arab Reality**

- Dependent on country, but in the UAE covering is a choice
- Women's universities are present in the UAE; women can work and keep the money they make
- Rights are drastically increasing in the UAE

"It is considered a 'shame' if a female graduates high school and is still a virgin."



**Arab's Views of American Romantic Relationships** 

## American Relationships

#### **Arab Views**

- Sex dictates American relationships
- Relationships start early and teens are sexually promiscuous
- Marriage and love are secondary to physical attraction

### **American Reality**

- Only 2% say sex is the key component in a successful relationship
- 48% of teens have sex before graduating high school
- 50.2% of people 15 and older are married; over 34% of people between 20 and 34 are married

"As far as I know, most relationships are arranged. The father of a female will search for a male partner for his daughter. She does not really have a say in who she marries."



**American's Views of Arab Romantic Relationships** 

## **Arab Relationships**

#### **American Views**

- Arranged marriages
- Dating is prohibited or secret
- "Love" is absent

### **Arab Reality**

- Mostly arranged marriages, increasingly for love
- Dating occurs, but privately; can bring "shame" to the family
- Love is increasingly a reason for marriage

### **Information Sources**

 Quotes were collected in the open-ended surveys that were distributed in the USA and the UAE

 Statistics were collected using the Roper Center's iPoll and the US Census Bureau website