Thematic Questions: Cities of Salt (pp. 96-222)

Instructions: names in **bold** will prepare a 3-4 minutes response to the question.

1. What descriptive or narrative elements of this novel resonate with the pre-Islamic *qasida*? *(Tom, Laura)*

2. How does the capacity for speech - and the lack thereof – define the rupture between traditional life in Wadi al-Uyoun and the new social, political, and economic order? *(Salma, Jack)*

3. How many “points of no return” occur in this portion of the novel? Is this merely a literary-aesthetic device, or is each “end of the world” moment unique and meaningful in its own right? *(Cameron, Allie)*

4. What is it about the Americans that inspires such animus amongst the people of Wadi al-Uyoun, and in Miteb in particular? Are they justified in their feelings of loathing and anger towards the Americans? *(Alex, Kent)*

5. How does Miteb undergo a metamorphosis from a human figure into a mythological one? What cultural and social practices amongst the Arabs enable this transfiguration? *(Firas, Vivian)*

6. After the Arabs’ dispersal from Wadi al-Uyoun, how does Miteb’s son, Shaalan, encapsulate the development of an industrialized Arabian society? *(Freshta, Katie)*

7. In what way are Wadi al-Uyoun and Harran parallel settings? Where in their respective histories and transformations do they diverge? *(Alia, Caroline)*