

3. Iranian Geography Seminar: An Advanced Persian Course designed and conducted by Michael Craig Hillmann

This Iranian Geography Seminar has evolved from ten years of teaching and lesson-writing for intermediate and advanced students of Persian in Second- and Third-year Persian classes at The University of Texas and in non-academic Persepolis Institute courses and seminars from one to five weeks in duration for American government Persian specialists and advanced university students. Relevant writing on Iranian geography has heretofore appeared in four books: *Persian Fiction Reader: Second Edition* (2000), *Persian Newspaper Reader: Second Edition* (2000), *Persian Vocabulary Acquisition—An Intermediate Reader and Guide to Word Forms and the Arabic Element in Persian: Second Edition* (2003), and *Reading Iran Reading Iranians: Second Edition Revised* (2002).

Iranian Geography Seminar lessons also deal with the front and back covers and selected chapters of a 2010-2011 Iranian textbook on geography. Seminar participants read the whole textbook in self-study and complete exercises in the book as homework.

Iranian Geography Seminar takes place in a communicative (Persian-only) classroom environment and in intensive learning settings of from one to three weeks and non-intensive learning settings of an academic semester in duration. The Iranian Geography Seminar aims primarily to help students increase their knowledge about the land and peoples of Iran and their proficiency in reading and talking about those subjects. Descriptions of Persian morphology and syntax appear in seminar lesson modules, serving a second aim: to stimulate students to reach inductive conclusions about language features through exposure to authentic texts.

The Iranian Geography Seminar Syllabus include these units: (1) comprehensive Persian-English and English-Persian glossaries on geography (adapted from *Hippocrene Practical Farsi Dictionary*, 2012), (2) a glossary of terms on the subject of books and talking about a textbook (adapted from *Hippocrene Practical Farsi Dictionary*, 2012), (3) Gitashenasi Persian maps of the Middle East, Iran, Tehran, and Central Asia, (4) Iranian map exercises, (5) an essay on Iranian geography, (6) an essay on world geography, (7) sample Iranian weather reports, (8) an op-ed statement about the environment, (9) an essay about an Iranian locale and its people, (10) a newspaper report on a new Iranian railroad line (adapted from a lesson in *Persian Grammar and Verbs*, 2011), (11) a newspaper article on walnut production in Iran (adapted from a lesson in *Persian Grammar and Verbs*, 2011), (12) a passage from an Iranian novel about a desert storm near Tabas (adapted from *Persian Fiction Reader: Second Edition*, 2010) and a lesson in *Persian Grammar and Verbs*, 2011), (13) a newspaper report on an earthquake in Bam (adapted from a lesson in *Persian Grammar and Verbs*, 2011), (14) general questions about an Iranian geography textbook, (15–29) glossaries and lessons on lessons in a geography textbook, and (30) a test on Iranian geography.