Department of Arabic and Near Eastern Languages

Chairperson: Orfali, Bilal W.
Professors: Agha, Saleh S.; Baalbaki, Ramzi M. (Margaret Weyerhaeuser Jewett Professor of Arabic); Jarrar, Maher Z.; Khairallah, Assaad I.; P Naimy, Nadeem N.; Tuqan, Fawwaz A.
Associate Professor: Orfali, Bilal W.
Visiting Assistant Professor: Kozah, Mario K.
Senior Lecturers: El-Zein, Abdulfattah H.; Kattourah, George B.
Lecturers: Hosn, Abboud; Abu-Jawdeh, Siham E.; Caland, Brigitte; Daif, Rachid
Instructors: El Horr, Nermine; Hajjar, Olga A.; Malti, Samir; Semaan, Rima; Zein, Raghida M

In addition to the BA degree in Arabic, the Department of Arabic and Near Eastern Languages provides service courses for all Arabic-speaking students at AUB. ARAB 101 and ARAB 102 must be taken in the freshman year in addition to one more Arabic language or literature course (i.e., ARAB 201A, ARAB 201B, ARAB 202, or any other course numbered ARAB 211 or above [ARAB 213, ARAB 214, ARAB 215, ARAB 216, ARAB 217, and ARAB 220/221 excluded]). ARAB 201A requires a placement test (see section on Admissions).

BA in Arabic
Mission Statement

The Department of Arabic and Near Eastern Languages has always possessed a leading role in its own field of learning in the Arab World, while being the only one maintaining a liberal tradition of education and research. The impressive number of diverse prominent scholars, writers and intellectuals who passed through the Department testifies to this remarkable historical achievement. The Department has always sought to train students in the basic tools of the discipline, namely language and research skills, while exposing them to the essentials of the field, and subjecting everything to the curiosity of the inquiring mind.

Part time
Degree Requirements

Major Requirements

Requirements for the BA degree in Arabic are as follows: ARAB 211, ARAB 212, ARAB 224, ARAB 231, ARAB 232, ARAB 233, ARAB 237, ARAB 239, ARAB 241, ARAB 243, and ARAB 245 (total 33 credits). In addition, the student must select one course from within the other courses in the department (36 total credit hours).

Students choosing a minor in Arabic are required to take 15 credits of Arabic courses (ARAB 201A does not count as one of them). These courses should include ARAB 211 or ARAB 212 (or an equivalent language course), one course in classical Arabic literature, one course in modern Arabic literature, and any two courses in the department.

The minor in Semitic Studies requires 15 credits: ARAB 213/214 or Syriac 215/216, a second Semitic language other than Arabic (ARAB 213 or 215), ARAB 222, and one of the following: ARAB 211 or 212, ARAB 216, ARAB 227 or ARAB 228, AROL 293/294, AROL 217, AROL 218, AROL 219/220, AROL 226, AROL 227, AROL 228, AROL 231.

When a required course is not available, it may be replaced by another course within the department provided the student’s advisor gives consent.

University General Education Requirements

The General Education requirements are English Communication Skills (6 credits), Arabic Communication Skills (3 credits), Humanities 12 credits (Required) + Electives (9 credits), Social Sciences (6 credits), Natural Sciences (6 credits), Quantitative Thought (3 credits).

Course Descriptions

ARAB 101/102 Readings in Arabic Heritage I and II 3.0; 3 cr. (each)
A freshman level survey that traces the intellectual, literary, and cultural development of the Arabs from pre-Islamic times up to the age of Ibn Khaldun. Annually.

ARAB 200 Special Arabic 3.0; 3 cr.
A course designed for native speakers of Arabic who had limited pre-college formal study of the Arabic language in Lebanon or abroad. Open to students who are exempted from Arabic. Annually.

ARAB 201A Basic Arabic Grammar and Syntax 3.0; 3 cr.
A training course in the basic elements of Arabic grammar, syntax, and morphology, with special emphasis on oral and writing skills. Each semester.

ARAB 201B Readings in Arabic Literature 3.0; 3 cr.
A close textual and analytical study of a wide variety of selections from modern Arabic literature and thought designed to evoke aesthetic and intellectual discussions of issues of Arab culture. Each semester.

ARAB 202 Arabic Technical Writing 3.0; 3 cr.
The course provides guidance in the production of non-literary texts in modern written Arabic, with attention to structure, stylistics, and diction of letters, memos, emails, resumes, reports, proposals, descriptions, instructions, and various types of documentation. Emphasis is on the analysis and production of appropriate rhetorical styles in the various genres of technical communication used in the workplace. Each semester.

ARAB 203/204 Beginners’ Arabic as a Foreign Language I and II 5.0; 5 cr. (each)
A thorough course in basic literary Arabic with emphasis on the vocabulary of modern literature, the press, and current affairs. This course teaches grammar and structure to enable students to read, understand, and translate, from and into Arabic, within a tightly controlled syntactical milieu. Annually.

ARAB 205/206 Intermediate Arabic as a Foreign Language III and IV 5.0; 5 cr. (each)
A continuation of the carefully graded approach begun in ARAB 203 and ARAB 204, and culminating with the exposition of the derivation system. This course empowers students to use lexica, and to read, understand, and translate, unhampered by any loopholes in their knowledge of basic Arabic syntax and morphology. Prerequisites: ARAB 203 and ARAB 204, or equivalent. Annually.

ARAB 207/208 Advanced Arabic as a Foreign Language I and II 3.0; 3 cr. (each)
The main goal for this level is to move from a superior level of proficiency. Reading texts that contain opinions, hypotheses, and intellectual discussions, in addition to selections from classical Arabic literature. Grammar consists largely of details, such as the full conjugation of irregular verb classes and fine points of complex sentence structure. Instruction is totally in Arabic. Prerequisites: ARAB 205 and ARAB 206, or equivalent. Annually.

ARAB 209 Advanced Arabic as a Foreign Language III 3.0; 3 cr.
The main goal for this level is to reach a superior level of proficiency. The student who completes these two courses will be able to register for ARAB 210A or 210B. This level consists of a mixture of readings from a variety of literary and non-literary genres, writing long commentaries on select passages, discussions, presentations and questions on particular grammatical points specifically related to comprehension and composition skills. Instruction is totally in Arabic. Consent of instructor required. Prerequisites: ARAB 207/208 or placement based on a placement examination. Each semester.

ARAB 211/212 Survey of Arabic Grammar 3.0; 3 cr. (each)
A year-long course on Arabic morphology and grammar. It is comprised of readings from a classical grammatical text and training in sentence structure through i’rab. Alternate years.

ARAB 213/214 Introductory Biblical Hebrew 3.0; 3 cr. (each)
A class that teaches Biblical Hebrew allowing students who have no background in the subject to read the Bible and discover one of the founding books of our society and a major source of inspiration to many authors throughout history. ARAB 213 or permission of Instructor is prerequisite for ARAB 214. Annually
ARAB 215 Introductory Syriac 3.0; 3 cr.  
The course provides students with a working knowledge of Syriac language and grammar. 
With the help of a lexicon, students will be expected to read and translate simple Syriac texts. 
Annually.

ARAB 216 Intermediate Syriac 3.0; 3 cr.  
This course complements ARAB 215/MEST 330 'Introduction to Syriac Language', focusing on 
the reading, translation, and analysis of Syriac texts from various authors, genres, and time 
periods. In addition, the course provides a review of Syriac grammar. It is intended for those 
students who had taken the introductory course ARAB 215/MEST 330 or who already have 
a basic knowledge of Syriac and wish to continue studying the Syriac language for a second 
semester. Prerequisite: ARAB 215 or permission of instructor. Annually.

ARAB 217 Introduction to Syriac Literature 3.0; 3 cr.  
The aim of this introductory course is to provide the student with an overview of Syriac literature 
from its origins to the present day. Alternate years. Students who receive credits for ARAB 217 
cannot receive credit for MEST 331.

ARAB 220/221 Introductory Persian 3.0; 3 cr. (each)  
A year-long course introducing students to the Persian language. After surveying the grammar, 
students are given intensive training in reading Persian texts. Alternate years.

ARAB 222 Introduction to Semitic Studies 3.0; 3 cr.  
This class places the Semitic languages of the Levant (Arabic, Hebrew, Phoenician, and Syriac) 
in their historical perspective by introducing the discipline of Semitic studies, especially in 
its comparative orientation. Special emphasis is placed on Arabic dialectology, an often-
overlooked aspect to Semitic studies. Every semester.

ARAB 223 Arabic for the Media 3.0; 3 cr.  
This writing-intensive course seeks to familiarize students with Arabic journalism writing styles 
over a comprehensive range of story styles and regional news outlet house styles. Special 
attention is paid to the specialized vocabulary of news reporting. Every semester.

ARAB 224 Arabic Stylistics and Metrics 3.0; 3 cr.  
A detailed study of stylistics balagha and metrics ‘arud. This course surveys the contribution of 
the Arabs to stylistic studies and introduces their theory of versification. Annually.

ARAB 225/226 Translation 3.0; 3 cr. (each)  
A year-long course divided into a brief introduction and an extended segment in applied 
translation. In the introduction, theoretical problems and issues of translation are discussed; 
them course is transformed into an extended workshop where students will be preoccupied 
with their own translation exercises from and into both Arabic and English. Annually.

ARAB 227/228 Arabic Linguistics 3.0; 3 cr. (each)  
These two courses deal with various topics of Arabic linguistic sciences, mainly phonetics, 
semantics, and lexicology. Annually.

ARAB 229 Background to the Study of Classical Arabic Literature 3.0; 3 cr.  
A course dealing with the impact of Greek culture on classical Arabic literature and thought, and 
the rise and development of Arab intellectualism. Alternate years.

ARAB 230 Themes and Genres of Arabic Literature 3.0; 3 cr.  
A broad overview of Arabic literature throughout the ages. This course primarily emphasizes 
the literary production embodied in the works that give Arabic literature its unique character 
in different periods, while concentrating on the major themes and genres around which this 
literature revolves. Alternate years.

ARAB 231 Arabic Poetry: The Heroic Age 3.0; 3 cr.  
A course highlighting characteristic elements of Arabian life in its heroic age prior to Islam, while 
considering its individual, tribal, and mythical codes. Main problems, sources, and strains of 
the poetry of this age are surveyed. The substantial component of the course is comprised of 
critical analysis of representative poems. Alternate years.

ARAB 232 Arabic Poetry: The Age of Conquest, Love, and Nostalgia 3.0; 3 cr.  
A survey of new genres of poetry that blossomed when desert Arabs were deployed outside their 
peninsula following the conquests. This is examined through a compact probe of the economic, 
social, and political factors that affected Arabian life, from the advent of Islam to the end of 
the Arabian (Umayyad) era. The substantial component of the course is comprised of critical 
analysis of representative poems. Alternate years.

ARAB 233/234 Abbasid Poetry 3.0; 3 cr. (each)  
A survey of Arabic poetry during the Abbasid period while considering the historical, political, 
and social background. The first part of the course deals with the major poets of the early 
Abbasid era, which ends during the reign of al-Mu'tasim; while the second part surveys the 
poetry of the latter Abbasid age up to the fall of Baghdad. Alternate years.

ARAB 235 Andalusian Literature 3.0; 3 cr.  
An introduction to Arabic literature in Islamic Spain. Students read and analyze Andalusian 
poetry and prose, with special emphasis on the new literary forms that appeared in al-Andalus. 
Alternate years.

ARAB 236 Qur'anic Studies 3.0; 3 cr.  
An introduction to major Qur'anic issues, such as the collection of the Qur'an, Qur'anic imagery, 
and the various trends in Qur'anic exegesis. Alternate years.

ARAB 237/238 Modern Arabic Poetry 3.0; 3 cr. (each)  
A year-long course studying the factors that shaped modern Arabic poetry, tracing the phases of 
its development, and analyzing in detail its various characteristics. Alternate years.

ARAB 239 Modern Arabic Novel 3.0; 3 cr.  
A course on the development of the Arabic novel, along with a survey focusing on the main 
factors that led to the rise of the novel. Students will thoroughly analyze a number of works by 
prominent Arab novelists. Alternate years.
ARAB 240  Modern Arabic Drama  3.0; 3 cr.
A survey of the rise and development of the dramatic literary genre in modern Arabic, with a focus on the main factors that led to the rise of drama. Students will thoroughly analyze a number of selected works by prominent Arab playwrights. Alternate years.

ARAB 241  Literary Theory and Criticism  3.0; 3 cr.
A course on the development of Arab literary theory and criticism from the classical period to the present. This course is structured according to the main themes that concerned Arab critics throughout the ages, as well as the major critical trends and their prominent representatives. Alternate years.

ARAB 242  Arabic Classical Folk Literature  3.0; 3 cr.
A course in which students read and analyze extracts from the works of major prose writers representing the main trends in classical Arabic prose, beginning with pre-Islamic times up to the age of al-Ma'arri. Alternate years.

ARAB 243  Classical Arabic Prose  3.0; 3 cr.
A survey of the main doctrines, terms, and modes of expression that are peculiar to the major Muslim sects (firaq) in the medieval age, and the impact they had on literature. Mu'tazila, Ash'ariyya, and Imamiyya, constitute the focal point of the course, which includes readings in selected representative texts. Alternate years.

ARAB 245/246  Background to the Study of Modern Arabic Literature  3.0; 3 cr. (each)
A two-semester course dealing with the Arab cultural renaissance of 1800–1940. Special emphasis is placed on the impact of the West on the making of the modern Arab literary culture. Annually.

ARAB 247  Arabic Classical Folk Literature  3.0; 3 cr.
A course covering the following topics: folktales, the novella in The Arabian Nights, and the hero sagas such as Sirat Bani Hilal. This course aims at studying the textual history of this special genre, its language, motives, and structures. Students are also exposed to various methodological approaches to folk literature. Alternate years.

ARAB 248  Christian-Muslim Encounters  3.0; 3 cr.
A collaborative investigation of select topics in Arab and Middle Eastern History viewed from multiple perspectives. Periodic progress reports and the incorporation of findings in an interpretive term paper are required. Senior status and permission of instructor are required. Students who receive credit for ARAB 248 cannot receive credit for ISLM 341.

ARAB 249  Sufi Literature  3.0; 3 cr.
A course aiming to acquaint the student with Sufi literature as one of the major aspects in Arabic literature. Alternate years.

ARAB 250  Medieval Arabic Drama  3.0; 3 cr.
The study of the dramatic literary genre in the medieval period, with emphasis on the impact of the West on the making of the modern Arab literary culture. This course includes readings in selected representative works.

ARAB 251/252  Special Topics in Arabic Language and Literature  3.0; 3 cr. (each)
A course that varies in content and focuses on selected topics in language and literature. May be repeated for credit. Occasionally.

ARAB 256  JudeoArabic and the Arabic Writings of Maimonides (Ibn Maymun)  3.0; 3 cr.
An introduction to Judeo-Arabic (Middle Arabic) focusing on Ibn Maymun and his writings. The class emphasizes the influence of Arabic on medieval Hebrew. Through the reading of his texts, students will discover the Andalusian physician and philosopher from his childhood in Cordova to his position as the personal doctor of Salaheddine and the head of the Jewish community in Cairo. Prerequisite: None. Annually.

ARAB 257  The Maqamat  3.0; 3 cr.
The course is devoted to the two major representatives of the maqamat genre, its inventor al-Hamadhani (d. 1008) and his more famous emulator al-Hariri (d. 1122). The course will include both close reading of selected passages and discussion of the entire texts of the maqamat. The readings are supplemented by additional texts from other genres in Arabic literature which shared sources, literary features, or common discourse with the maqamat, such as faraj ba'd al-shidda stories, anecdotes, popular tales, letters, treatises, and orante prose. Annually.

ARAB 290  Undergraduate Seminar on al-Mutanabbi  3.0; 3 cr.
A seminar on the times, life, and poetry of this major Arab poet. It combines the historical and the literary analytical-critical methodologies. Its substantial component comprises close textual analysis of poetry from the different phases of the poet's intertwined private and public life. Alternate years.

33 + 3 Credits in Arabic

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