

ARAB 3305 – Section 20576
Introduction to Arabic Language, Culture
and Islam

Instructor: Tawhida ElAskary
Office Hours: By appointment
E-mail: telaskary@uh.edu
Arabic Web Site: <http://www.class.uh.edu/mcl/arab>

Course Description

Arabic Language, Culture and Islam is a readings course that provides a comprehensive overview of Islam along with the language and culture that inform and are informed by it in the Arabic-speaking Middle East. Beginning with a discussion of the Arabic language from a linguistic and historical point of view, the course presents an Eastern understanding of the importance of the Arabic language for Islam; the course continues with a sociological and historical overview of Arab culture before and after the coming of Islam, with a particular emphasis on today's world. After setting a cultural and linguistic framework for understanding, the course goes on to detail the fundamentals of the Muslim faith, and delves into topics of special contemporary relevance and interest to Western students. Specifically, the course presents and discusses the position of Islamic texts and Muslim scholars in relation to the status of women, the notion of the Islamic nation and the individual state, and Islam's view of international relations. Finally, the course examines modern-day conflicts between the East and West, ultimately calling for mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence.

This course has been written by Arab scholars and translated into English to provide English-speaking students with a rare insider's view of the dominant language, culture, and religion of the Middle East.

Cr. 3. (3-0). Prerequisite: ARAB 3302 or equivalent. Students may not receive credit for both ARAB 3305 and ARAB 3306. Taught in Arabic. Arabic culture through studies of topics such as the origins of the language, relations with the West, social and political issues, the role of women, and the role of Islam.

Organization of the Course

Arabic Language, Culture and Islam online is divided into six units. Each unit comprises a chapter of reading, a set of objective questions about the reading, a test, and an essay. Additionally, students are required to demonstrate reflection on the topic by participating in class discussion on the course's discussion board at least twice in each unit. Through

the combination of exercises, exams, essays, and messages, students will demonstrate mastery of each unit's objectives.

Course Outline

Chapter 1: Development of the Arabic Language and Its Importance

Human Language, Culture and Religion

Origin of the Arabic Language

- I. The Development of the Most Important Branches of the Semitic Languages
- II. Other Branches of the Afro-Asiatic Family
- III. The Arabic Language

The Family of Arabic Scripts

- I. Development of Arabic Scripts
- II. Forms of *Musnad* Script
- III. Time of the Arabic Scripts Appearance

Development of the Arabic Language

- I. Early Development and Spreading of the Arabic Language
- II. Arabic Language at the Time of Islam and Afterwards
- III. Relationship between Arabic Language and Colloquial Dialects

Characteristics of the Arabic Language

- I. Characteristics the Arabic Language Shares with Other Languages
- II. Features of the Arabic Language

Heritage of the Arabic Language

- I. Pre-Islamic Poetry
- II. The Holy Quran
- III. The Prophetic Sayings (Hadith)

Chapter 2: Characteristics of Arabic and Islamic Culture

General Characteristics of Arabic and Islamic Culture

- I. Early Arabic Culture (Before Islam)
- II. Arabic Culture after Islam

Features of Arab Thought

- I. Arab Thought
- II. Distinctive Features of Arabic Islamic Culture

Fundamentals of Islamic Creed and Arabic Culture

- I. Doctrine
- II. Religious Practices
- III. Procedures

Chapter 3: Woman in Islam

The Position of the Woman in Islam

- I. The View of the Woman before Islam
- II. The View of the Woman in Islam
- III. Suspicions Toward Islam Due to Misunderstanding

Marital Rights of the Woman

- I. Woman's Rights in Marriage
- II. Islam's View of the Treatment of the Married Couple

Inheritance of the Woman

- I. Woman's Inheritance as Half the Man's
- II. Justice in Woman's Inheritance

Polygamy

- I. Islam's View of Polygamy
- II. Polygamy as a Right or a Solution
- III. The Wisdom Behind Polygamy
- IV. Objections Toward Polygamy

Divorce

- I. Wisdom Behind Divorce
- II. Mercy in Divorce
- III. Divorce Procedures

"Al-Khul": Divorce at the Instigation of the Wife

- I. Meaning and Legality of Khul'
- II. Khul' as a Right of the Woman
- III. Implementation of Khul'

Testimony

- I. Woman's Testimony as Half the Man's Testimony
- II. Scholars' Opinions on Woman's Testimony
- III. Testimony as One Method of Proof

Woman, the Judiciary and Public Governance

- I. Historical Examples of Woman's Governance
- II. Jurists' Opinions on Woman's Governance
- III. Balancing Opinions

Chapter 4: The Political Aspects of Islam

Determining the Concepts of Nation and State in Islam

- I. The Concept of the Nation and Its Ideological Basis
- II. Reasons Behind Disagreements in the Islamic Nation

The State in Islam

- I. What Is Meant by the State
- II. The Holy Quran and Noble Sunnah on the Islamic State
- III. Reasoning Between Religious and Secular Matters

Centrality of the Nation for Authority in Islam

- I. The Nucleus of Authority in Islam
- II. Features of Ruling Authority
- III. What Is Meant by Authority in Islam
- IV. Limits of the Ruler's Authority in Islam
- V. Ruling Authority in the Eyes of the West
- VI. Difference Between Islamic and Western Viewpoints Regarding Ruling Authority
- VII. The Right of Monitoring and Isolating a Ruler

Independence of the Judiciary in Islam

- I. Independence of Executive and Legislative Authorities
- II. Legality of Judiciary Independence
- III. Judiciary Independence after the Time of the Messenger (p.b.u.h.)

Fundamentals of Ruling in Islam

- I. What Is Meant by the Ruling System in Islam
- II. The Enormity of the Ruler's Responsibility
- III. Fundamentals of Ruling in Islam

Chapter 5: Islam and International Relations

Islam, an Invitation to Peaceful Coexistence

The Truth About Jihad in Islam

- I. The Linguistic Meaning of Jihad
- II. What Is Meant by Jihad and Peace
- III. Legality of War

Mercy in Jihad, Its Implications and Features

- I. What Is Meant by Mercy
- II. Features of Mercy in Jihad

The Treatment of Non-Muslims in Islam

- I. Treatment of Pagans
- II. Treatment of the People of the Book

International Treaties in Islam

- I. What Is Meant by Treaties
- II. Conditions of Treaties with Islamic Countries

Islam's Stance on Terrorism

- I. What Is Meant by Terrorism
- II. Islam's Stance on War
- III. Islam Forbidding Terrorism
- IV. How Forbidding Terrorism Reconciles with Current Events

Spreading of Islam through Love Rather Than War

Chapter 6: Islam and Western Civilization

The Need for Westerners to Understand the Truth About Islam

Consensus Between Islam and the West

- I. Islam's Unification of Different Nations
- II. Consensus Between Arab and Western Culture

Islam and the Future

- I. The Need for a Complete Picture of Islam
- II. The Need for Intellectual Work and Improvement
- III. Peaceful Coexistence as the International Solution
- IV. The Need for Forgiveness
- V. The Need for Democracy, Citizenship and Knowledge
- VI. Common Values in Islam and the West

Course Objectives

In shaa' Allah, by the end of this course, you will be able to:

- I. Summarize the origins and history of the Arabic language and script, and explain its claim to special eloquence
- II. Describe Arab culture generally, before and after the development of Islam, and at the present time
- III. Explain the basic tenets and practices of Islam and its relationship to Judaism and Christianity
- IV. Discuss Islam's stance on women, justice, governance, jihad, and world peace
- V. Have the tools and resources to discover or predict Islam's stance on new issues that might arise, even if they are not specifically addressed in this course
- VI. Answer common Western misconceptions about Islam.

Objectives and Competencies by Unit

Roman numerals refer to the course objectives listed above. Letters indicate unit objectives.

Unit One

Chapter 1: Development of the Arabic Language and Its Importance

- I. Summarize the origins and history of the Arabic language and script, and explain its claim to special eloquence
 - A. Explain why language shapes culture and religion
 - B. Describe the historical development of the Arabic language with reference to its mother and sister languages
 - C. Give an overview of the development of Arabic writing with reference to historical evidence
 - D. Be able to name important distinctive features of Arabic phonology, morphology, syntax, and script
 - E. Compare and contrast features of eloquence in the Arabic language before and after the coming of Islam

Unit Two

Chapter 2: Characteristics of Arab Islamic Culture

- II. Describe Arab culture generally, before and after the development of Islam, and at the present time
 - A. Explain the effect of geography on Arab culture
 - B. Describe pre-Islamic daily life and socio-political organization
 - C. Describe contemporary Islamic daily life and socio-political organization
- III. Explain the basic tenets and practices of Islam and its relationship to Judaism and Christianity
 - A. Discuss the decision-making process in Islam
 - B. List the principles of Islam with regard to the governance of life, including its stance on non-Muslims
 - C. Explain the basic tenets and practices of Islam and its relationship to Judaism and Christianity
 - D. Understand the relationship between the Quran and science

Unit Three

Chapter 3: Women in Islam

- IV. Discuss Islam's stance on women, justice, governance, ...

- A. Contrast pre-Islamic attitudes toward women, Islam's view of women, and stereotypes of Islam's view of women
- B. Describe women's rights in marriage and the marital relationship.
- C. Understand the rules of inheritance in Islam, especially as they apply to women
- D. Know the role and rules of polygamy in Islam, and differentiate between polygamy as a right of the male and polygamy as an occasional solution
- E. Explain the two types of divorce in Islam and the ways they reflect Islamic values
- F. Understand the Quranic commentary of women's testimony and how to apply it in court
- G. Describe women's permissible roles in the judiciary and government

Unit Four

Chapter 4: Political Aspects of Islam

- IV. Discuss Islam's stance on ... justice, governance, ...
 - A. Define the concepts of nation and state in Islam
 - B. Evaluate the effects of differences of opinion between branches of Islam on the Islamic state
 - C. Understand the limits of religious and civil authority in Islam
 - D. Explain the role of the ruler in Islam and how it differs from the role of the ruler in the West
 - E. Describe the role of the public in governance
 - F. Explain the role of the judiciary in Islam

Unit Five

Chapter 5: Islam and International Relations

- IV. Discuss Islam's stance on ... jihad, and world peace
 - A. Identify and explain the centrality of peace in Islam
 - B. Explain the meaning of jihad and detail how it is to be played out and constrained
 - C. Discuss Islam's approach to the treatment of non-Muslims
 - D. Explain Islam's stance on international treaties and on terrorism
 - E. Contrast Islam's view, based on the Quran and Sunnah, of jihad and terrorism with the view spread by Eastern extremists and with the stereotypes promoted in the West

Unit Six

Chapter 6: Islam and Western Civilization

- IV. Discuss Islam's stance on ... world peace
 - A. Characterize the current state of the relationship between Islam and the West
 - B. Show the commonalities between Islam and the West
- VI. Answer common Western misconceptions about Islam
 - C. Discuss Western misconceptions about Islam

- D. Describe how Arab states fall short of Islamic ideals of governance and international relations
- E. Comment on the need for and possibility of international understanding

All Units

- V. Have the tools and resources to discover or predict Islam’s stance on new issues that might arise, even if they are not specifically addressed in this course
 - A. Identify the primary texts of Islam
 - B. Understand the emphasis Islam places on human reason
 - C. Follow the logic and be able to explain the logic of Islamic rulings on topics such as women’s testimony or inheritance

Course Requirements

1. Online Activities:

Every unit includes a number of online activities. You are expected to complete 100% of the total questions on those activities for every session. This helps you understand and learn the material and prepares you for the test.

2. Research Papers:

At the end of every session, you are expected to write a short research paper on the topic that is given to you.

4. Culture Board:

You are expected to communicate on the "Culture" board, which is a special board for this course. It allows you to interact with teachers and colleagues and reflect over the topics you are studying. During the course, every student has to post or respond to four messages.

5. Final Exam

At the end of the course, you are expected to take a final exam.

Evaluation Criteria

Your grade is based on the following:

- I. Requirements for the online course
 - 1. Online Activities 50%
 - 2. Research Paper 50%

- II. Requirements for the final exam
 - 1. Controlled Questions 50%
 - 2. Essay 50%

Logistics

The University of Houston is using the platform of Arab Academy (www.arabacademy.com) to deliver online courses. The Arab Academy is supposed to be your textbook, but it is really much more than that. It is a "place" where you will study, write and discuss what you're learning, and make friends with other students in your course. You will get support from the teachers and technicians online. You will be able to access your online report with your scores, see where your points of weaknesses are, and get back to work on them, bringing your grade up.

You need to register in order to get your passwords. University of Houston students are getting reduced rates of \$40 per credit hour or \$120 for the full course. U of H registration pages are found at:
<http://www.arabacademy.com/register/houston>

As soon as you register, you will get your passes by email. You should start working on the course immediately. There will be a schedule that you will be expected to follow. While the course is self-paced in the sense that you can study at the time that is most convenient for you, you should do your best to follow the schedule. You should not leave your work till the end of the semester, as you will not be able to catch up.

We will use the message boards of the Arab Academy to communicate. You will be submitting written essays for correction, and you will also be taking online exam.

If you have a question related to the content of the courses, post a message on the course discussion board. If you have a technical question, then post a message on the Technical Support board.

Important Dates

Here are some important dates that you should remember:

- August 24, 09: First Day of Class.
- September 8, 09: Last day to drop or withdraw without receiving a grade.
- November 4, 09: Last day to drop a course or withdraw
- December 14, 09. Last day of classes.
- December 14, 09: Final exam. You can take it at any time on Monday up to noon (Houston time). You should make sure to complete all your online course requirements before then. No extensions are allowed.
- December 18, 09: Official closing of the fall semester. Noon

Schedule

Week 1: Chapter One: Development of the Arabic Language and Its Importance

Week 2: Chapter One: Development of the Arabic Language and Its Importance

Week 3: Chapter One: Development of the Arabic Language and Its Importance

Week 4: Chapter Two: Characteristics of Arabic and Islamic Culture

Week 5: Chapter Two: Characteristics of Arabic and Islamic Culture

Week 6: Chapter Two: Characteristics of Arabic and Islamic Culture

Week 7: Chapter Three: The Woman in Islam

Week 8: Chapter Three: The Woman in Islam

Week 9: Chapter Three: The Woman in Islam

Week 10: Chapter Four: The Political Aspects of Islam

Week 11: Chapter Four: The Political Aspects of Islam

Week 12: Chapter Five: Islam and International Relations

Week 13: Chapter Five: Islam and International Relations

Week 14: Chapter Six: Islam and Western Civilization

Week 15: Chapter Six: Islam and Western Civilization

Week 16: **Revision**

Week 17: **Final Exam**