

ARBC 3040

Food, History, and Community

Fall 2026

Class Time: T, Th | 2:20–3:40 pm | LANG 312

Instructor: Caroline Najour

Email: Caroline.Najour@unt.edu

Phone: 469-438-9603

Office: LANG 401L | Zoom Room ID: 469-438-9603

Office Hours: Tu and TH, 12:35 - 1:55 pm & by appointment

Communication Expectations

Communication is key, and the best way to reach me is via email. I make it a priority to respond within 24 hours on weekdays, and on Mondays for any emails sent after 5 pm on Fridays.

As we navigate this course, keep in mind that Canvas will play a crucial role. I'll be regularly posting grades and assignments on the platform. Make it a habit to check both Canvas and your email daily, as important class-related information might be shared through email. Let's keep the lines of communication open for a smooth and productive learning experience.

Course Description and Objectives

This course examines food as a historical archive. It begins by problematizing the term “Arab” in expressions such as “Arab food” or “Arab cuisine,” highlighting the diversity and layered complexity embedded within those labels. From early culinary manuscripts in Abbasid Baghdad through Ottoman and regional transformations, the course traces how empires, trade routes, and migration shaped the development of Arab cuisines. The circulation of rice following the opening of the Suez Canal, Armenian culinary influence in the eastern Mediterranean, seafood traditions of the Gulf, and the migration story embedded in maté reveal how dishes carry histories of movement and exchange. Through case studies of shawarma, kibbeh, mulukhiyya, and other iconic foods, cuisine emerges as a medium that preserves memory, reflects social change, and connects communities across generations.

Tentative course schedule

Weeks 1–2 – Framing “Arab Cuisine” & Early Culinary History

Problematizing the Term “Arab”

Food and Religious Traditions (Ashura, Christian holidays)

Abbasid Baghdad and Early Culinary Manuscripts

Test 1

Weeks 3–4 – Ingredients, Agriculture, and Trade

The Arab Agricultural Revolution
The History of Eggplant
The History of Rice
Colored Rice and Culinary Adaptation

Weeks 5–6 – Coastal and River Cuisine

Seafood in Qatar and Oman
Iraqi Masgouf
Alexandria and Mediterranean Fish Culture
Feseekh and Sham El-Nessim
Test 2

Weeks 7–8 – Migration and Culinary Exchange

Armenian Culinary Influence
Maté and Migration
Urban Street Food and Shawarma

Weeks 9–10 – Regional Dishes and Collective Memory

Mulukhiyya
Kibbeh Across Regions
Test 3

Weeks 11–12 – Food, Space, and Social Life

Man'oushe and the Neighborhood Oven
Public Space and Food Economies
Moroccan Tea and Ritual Hospitality

Weeks 13–15 – Food, Place, and Contemporary Practice

Modern Interpretations of Traditional Cuisine
Test 4
Thanksgiving Break
Restaurant Concept Development
Final Project Presentations

Required Textbook and Materials

There is no required textbook for this class. The instructor will create and share all the material on Canvas and Quizlet.

Teaching Philosophy

I am a strong believer in the importance of fostering learner agency and in creating a learning environment that encourages student autonomy. For that purpose, I encourage and expect students to assume responsibility for their learning and to view the instructor not as the source of knowledge but as a coach helping them on their learning journey. Finally, another important factor in successful learning is learner-learner interaction. Therefore, I strive to create a collaborative learning environment where students work together to accomplish tasks, drawing on each others' strengths and resources.

Your success in this class is extremely important to me. If any aspects of this course prevent you from learning, please reach out as soon as possible. I will do my utmost best to work with you and to develop strategies that support your success.

Course Structure

This is a student-centered classroom. To make the most of each class session, students are expected to spend an average of 2 hours before class learning new material, watching videos, reviewing content, and completing homework. All homework details and class activities are available on Canvas under assignments, and homework must be submitted on Canvas prior to class. Since most of class time will be dedicated to pair work, thorough preparation is essential for active participation and meaningful engagement with the material.

Rules of Engagement

Rules of engagement refer to the way students are expected to interact with each other and with their instructors. Here are some general guidelines:

- Any communication that utilizes cruel and derogatory language on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law will not be tolerated.
- Treat your instructor and classmates with respect, even when their opinion differs from your own.
- Ask for and use the correct name and pronouns for your instructor and classmates.
- In Arab culture, the instructor is not addressed by first name only; make sure you use "Isteeze Caroline" both in email correspondences and when addressing the instructor.

Course Requirements and Grade Distribution

Attendance and participation (20%) المشاركة في الصف

Regular attendance is crucial to keeping up with the pace of the class and your overall success, so I look forward to you being in class on time and well-prepared. During the semester, you may be unable to prepare for class adequately for one or a couple of days. In this case, please **inform your instructor via email before class or in person right before class starts**. Do not miss class because you have been unable to prepare; show up, and you will still **learn by listening that day** and your instructor will avoid asking you questions in class.

Attendance and participation is graded on a scale of 1 to 10 (with a few exceptions), and posted on Canvas after every class. In case of an absence, notify me beforehand. Your participation grade for that day will be a '0,' but the lowest 2 grades will be dropped, allowing you to miss a couple of classes without impacting your grade.

You're responsible for classwork, homework, and any announcements made in your absence. Points will be deducted for tardiness, and for not actively participating or being unprepared during activities.

- To get a full participation score, you need to:
 - Be in class on time
 - Attendance and participation points will be deducted for tardiness as follows:
 - Arrival during the first 5 min of class = 1 pt.
 - Arrival during the first 10 min of class = 2 pts.
 - Arrival during the first 20 min of class = 4 pts.
 - Arrival during the first 30 min of class = 6 pts.
 - Arrival during the first 40 min of class = 8 pts.
 - If you arrive more than 40 minutes late, you will receive a “0” for that day’s participation.
 - Be fully prepared for class activities, participate actively in class and group activities, and speak exclusively in Arabic. The homework due before class will help prepare you for class activities. Attendance and participation points will be deducted for participation as follows:
 - Not actively participating in every class activity = 2 pt.
 - Being unable to participate in an activity because of lack of preparation for class, such as not having watched the video being discussed in class = 4 pts.
 - Speaking in English during pair work or class (during the second part of the semester) = 2 pts.
- In some specific cases, students may consult with the instructor to have their attendance grade excused for the entirety of the semester. In this case, the rest of the grade components will carry more weight. Please note that prior approval of the instructor is required, and this option remains at the discretion of the instructor.

Homework Assignments (20%) الواجبات

- Expect to spend an average of 2 hours in preparation for every class session. Homework assignments must be submitted on Canvas **before** class. Late homework assignments will not be accepted unless prior approval is granted before the assignment's due date. The lowest two homework grades will be dropped automatically on Canvas.
- Homework will be submitted on Canvas. Click on assignments, then Click "show by type" on the top right, then "homework assignments" and scroll the right homework number. You will find the homework number on the schedule available on Canvas, under "Modules," "schedule". Please note that whenever the assignment is a file upload, only pdfs are accepted.
- Homework assignments will be graded on a scale from 1 to 10. You will be graded on the overall quality of your work, and on the effort you put into the homework and not on the number of correct answers. It is important to note that this is not a simple completion grade; rather you are required to put effort and review the necessary material to do well on the homework.
- The lowest two homework grades will be dropped.
- Check Canvas daily to see any comments your instructor or the grader might have left. A grade of 9.9 means that your homework is very well done, and there is a comment you need to check. A 0.1 deduction will not impact your grade significantly and is meant merely to draw your attention to go to Canvas to listen to feedback or read any comments.
- The use of GenAI tools is not permissible for homework. No matter the approach, any attempt to represent GenAI output as a student's own work will be considered fabrication, cheating, and/or academic dishonesty as determined on a case-by-case basis.
- It is your responsibility to check that the grade you receive is fair. Whenever you receive a grade that is less than 9.9, you must know why. The grader is encouraged to write to let you know why you have less than a perfect score. If any grade does not make sense, please write in the comments on Canvas to inquire. If the grade still does not seem fair to you, please let your instructor know.

Tests (50%) الإمتحانات

You will have several tests covering the material learned throughout the course. Dates for tests will be announced at least one week in advance.

Leading class discussions (10%)

You will work with a group of two other students to lead class activities on an episode from طعم الحكاية during the semester. Some aspects of the preparation will be done individually, while others require collaboration with your group. Each group is responsible for preparing the homework for two class sessions (including a list of vocabulary) and for leading the instruction during those two sessions.

Grade distribution:

Attendance and participation 20 %

Homework: 20%

Leading class discussions: 10%

Tests: 50 %

Grading Scale

90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
59 and below	F

Extra credit

Several opportunities for extra credit will be available throughout the semester. To earn extra credit, students must attend an event related to the Arab world and write a cultural report in English about it. The event must be pre-approved by the instructor and announced to the class, so everyone has an opportunity to attend. Guidelines are on canvas and students must answer specific questions. The deadline to submit the report and receive extra credit is a week after the event.

Course Policies

Late Work

Late homework assignments will not be accepted unless you received an approval from the instructor prior to the assignment's due date; however, The lowest two homework grades will be dropped automatically on Canvas.

Academic Honesty

I expect you to submit your own work and participate in all aspects of the course with integrity and academic honesty. It is against the policy of this course to use an answer key or any translation platform or resource, to enlist the help of a fluent Arabic speaker, or to have your work checked by anyone other than your instructor before submitting it. Failure to follow this policy on any assignment will result in a grade of zero for that assignment.

The use of GenAI tools is not permissible for homework. No matter the approach, any attempt to represent GenAI output as a student's own work will be considered fabrication, cheating, and/or academic dishonesty as determined on a case-by-case basis. You may use GenAI to help you plan for leading class discussions.

Working on the homework with other classmates is encouraged, but each student must submit to the instructor his or her own answers.

Grading Concerns

I encourage you to reach out to your instructor as soon as possible if you have any questions about grades or if you feel that the grade is not accurate or fair. It is extremely important that you understand the rubric and the reasoning for your grades.

Attendance Policy

I look forward to you being in class on time and well-prepared. Regular attendance is crucial to keeping up with the pace of the class and your overall success. Daily attendance, participation, and exit tickets are graded on a scale of 1 to 10 and will be posted on Canvas after every class.

UNT Policies

Academic Integrity Policy

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences. According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

Course Evaluation

Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT) is the student evaluation system for UNT and allows students the ability to confidentially provide constructive feedback to their instructor and department to improve the quality of student experiences in the course.

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The survey will be made available during weeks 13, 14 and 15 of the long semesters to provide students with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Students should look for the email in their UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the [SPOT website](http://spot.unt.edu/) (<http://spot.unt.edu/>) or email spot@unt.edu.

ODA Statement

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodations for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the Office of Disability Access website at <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access>. You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (Policy 16.004)

The University of North Texas (UNT) prohibits discrimination and harassment because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law in its application and admission processes; educational programs and activities; employment policies, procedures, and processes; and university facilities. The University takes active measures to prevent such conduct and investigates and takes remedial action when appropriate.

Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Retention of Student Records

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Coursework completed via the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. Students have the right to view their individual record; however, information about student's records will not be divulged to other individuals without proper written consent. Students are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the University's policy. See UNT Policy 10.10, Records Management and Retention for additional information.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. Visit UNT's [Code of Student Conduct](https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct) (<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>) to learn more.

Access to Information - Eagle Connect

Students' access point for business and academic services at UNT is located at: my.unt.edu. All official communication from the University will be delivered to a student's Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward e-mail [Eagle Connect](https://it.unt.edu/eagleconnect) (<https://it.unt.edu/eagleconnect>).

Sexual Assault Prevention

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Federal laws (Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act) and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, and therefore prohibit sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking, and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available

to provide support and assistance. UNT's Survivor Advocates can assist a student who has been impacted by violence by filing protective orders, completing crime victim's compensation applications, contacting professors for absences related to an assault, working with housing to facilitate a room change where appropriate, and connecting students to other resources available both on and off campus. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565- 2648. Additionally, alleged sexual misconduct can be non-confidentially reported to the Title IX Coordinator at oeo@unt.edu or at (940) 565 2759.

Academic Support & Student Services

Here is a list of important links:

Office of the Registrar— Fall 2026 Registration Guide

<http://registrar.unt.edu/registration/fall-registration-guide>

This is a link to important dates for adding, dropping, withdrawing, and so forth.

Office of the Registrar— Fall 2026 Exam Schedule

<http://registrar.unt.edu/exams/final-exam-schedule/fall>

This is a link to the official schedule for final exams.

Undergraduate Catalog

<http://catalog.unt.edu/>

This is a link to the official catalog for all undergraduate students.

UNT Policy Manual

<http://policy.unt.edu/policy-by-number/1>

This is a link to the official policy manual for faculty and students.

Student Support Services

Mental Health

UNT provides mental health resources to students to help ensure there are numerous outlets to turn to that wholeheartedly care for and are there for students in need, regardless of the nature of an issue or its severity. Listed below are several resources on campus that can support your academic success and mental well-being:

- [Student Health and Wellness Center](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center>)
- [Counseling and Testing Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>)
- [UNT Care Team](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care>)

Additional Student Support Services

- [Financial Aid](https://financialaid.unt.edu/) (<https://financialaid.unt.edu/>)
- [Student Legal Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services>)
- [Career Center](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center>)
- [Counseling and Testing Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>)
- [UNT Food Pantry](https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry) (<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry>)

Academic Support Services

- [Academic Resource Center](https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources) (https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources)
- [Academic Success Center](https://success.unt.edu/asc) (https://success.unt.edu/asc)
- [UNT Libraries](https://library.unt.edu/) (https://library.unt.edu/)
- [Writing Lab](http://writingcenter.unt.edu/) (http://writingcenter.unt.edu/)



حظاً سعيداً وبالتوفيق!

***This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Students will be notified of all updates; then it becomes their responsibility to adhere to the changes.*