

# Advanced Topics in Mid-East Culture (ARBC 3040)

## Music, Politics, and Community

### Spring 2026

Class time                    T, Th                    2:00 - 3:20 pm    LANG 104  
Instructor                  Caroline Najour  
E-mail                        [Caroline.Najour@unt.edu](mailto:Caroline.Najour@unt.edu)  
Office                         LANG 401 L; Zoom Room link is [here](#)  
Office Hours                Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:30 - 2:00 pm and & by appointment

#### Communication Expectations

Communication is key, and the best way to reach me is via email. Please refrain from using Canvas to email me; instead, send your emails to [Caroline.Najour@unt.edu](mailto:Caroline.Najour@unt.edu). 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 will be shared through email. Let's keep the lines of communication open for a smooth and productive learning experience.

#### Welcome to UNT!

As members of the UNT community, we have all committed to be part of an institution that respects and values the identities of the students and employees with whom we interact. UNT does not tolerate identity-based discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. UNT's full Non-Discrimination Policy can be found in the UNT Policies section of the syllabus.

#### Course Description and Objectives

This course explores the role of music both as a reflection of and a driving force for social and political change. Students will examine how musicians and bands have voiced resistance, inspired change, and fostered community solidarity.

**Hands-On Experience!** For two weeks during the semester, students will learn how to play the darbouke, a handheld percussion instrument.

The goal areas of this course are communication, cultures, connections, and comparisons as outlined in the ACTFL World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages

## GOALS

## STANDARDS

### Communication

#### Interpersonal

Learners interact and negotiate meaning in spoken, signed, or written conversation to share information reactions feelings, and opinions

#### Interpretive

Learners understand, interpret, and analyze what is heard, read, or viewed on a variety of topics.

#### Presentational

Learners present information, concepts, and ideas to inform, explain, persuade, and narrate on a variety of topics using appropriate media and adapting to various audiences of listeners, readers, or viewers

### Cultures

#### Relating cultural practices to perspectives

Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the practices and perspectives of cultures studied.

#### Relating cultural products to perspectives

Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the products and perspectives of the culture studied

### Connections

#### Making connections

Learners build, reinforce, and expand their knowledge of other disciplines while using the language to develop critical thinking and to solve problems creatively.

#### Acquiring information and diverse perspectives

Learners access and evaluate information and diverse perspectives that are available through the language and its cultures

### Comparisons

#### Language comparisons

Learners use the language to investigate explain and reflect on the nature of language through comparison of the language studied and their own

Cultural comparisons learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the concept of culture through comparisons of the culture studied and their own.

## 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 firmly believe in fostering learner agency and creating a learning environment that cultivates student autonomy. In this course, I encourage and expect students to take responsibility for their learning. Rather

than seeing the instructor as the sole source of knowledge, think of me as a coach here to assist you on your learning journey.

Another crucial element for success is learner-learner interaction. Hence, this class is designed as a collaborative learning environment where students collaborate to achieve tasks, leveraging each other's strengths and resources. Your active participation and engagement with your peers will contribute significantly to our collective learning experience.

Your success in this class is a top priority for me. If there are any challenges or aspects of the course hindering your learning, please reach out as soon as possible. I am dedicated to working with you and developing strategies that will 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 in the weekly schedule in modules on Canvas, 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.

See these [Engagement Guidelines](https://clear.unt.edu/online-communication-tips) (https://clear.unt.edu/online-communication-tips) for more information.

## Course Requirements and Grade Distribution

### المشاركة في الصف (20%) Attendance and participation

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.
- Throughout the semester, students will have short 2-minute presentations about music-related topics.
- 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, and late homework assignments will not be accepted unless students have received approval from the instructor prior to the assignment's due date.
- 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.
- 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 (40%) 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 a music genre 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%

Tests: 50 %

Leading class: 10 %

### **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**

#### **Language**

Please use only Arabic from the moment you enter class. English may be used on occasion to explain some grammatical concepts, during translation exercises, or for a quick translation of a word. In all other instances, only Arabic should be used in class including when chatting with classmates before class begins.

If you think you need to use English, ask for permission first. English may be used, however, during office hours and via email correspondence. Class participation points will be deducted for speaking English in class. This is a chance to practice, so take full advantage.

#### **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 Integrity**

You are expected to submit your own work and to participate in all aspects of the course with integrity and academic honesty. All submitted work must be your own. It is a violation of this course's policy to use AI tools, answer keys, translation platforms or resources, enlist the help of a fluent Arabic speaker, or have your work reviewed by anyone other than your instructor prior to submission. Any violation of this policy on an assignment will result in a grade of zero for that assignment.

Collaboration with classmates on homework is encouraged; however, each student must submit their own individual answers.

To learn more, check [UNT's Academic Integrity Policy](#).

### **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 you understand the rubric and the reasoning for your grades.

### **Attendance Policy**

I expect you to arrive to class on time and well prepared. Regular attendance is essential to keeping up with the pace of the course and to your overall success. If you anticipate an absence, please inform me before the class you will miss, not after. The participation grade for that day will be recorded as a zero; however, the two lowest participation grades are automatically dropped in Canvas, allowing you to miss up to two class sessions without affecting your grade.

You are responsible for any classwork, homework, and announcements made during your absence.

### **Homework**

Assigned homework will be posted on Canvas and, unless otherwise noted, must be submitted before the *beginning* of the following class session.

### **Class Conduct**

Remember to greet the instructor and your classmates when you enter class and to engage in small talk with your classmates (in Arabic, of course!) while waiting for class to begin.

Please keep your cell phones in silent mode, in your bags, and out of sight during class time.

Lastly, please be respectful of the instructor and your classmates at all times. Behavior that is disruptive or disrespectful in any manner will not be tolerated. We are all here to learn, so please do not inhibit the learning process for yourself, your classmates, or the instructor.

## **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 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 accommodation for students with disabilities. Students needing a reasonable academic accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the student will request their letter of accommodation. ODA will provide faculty with a reasonable accommodation letter via email to begin a private discussion regarding a student's specific needs in a course. Students 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 meet with faculty regarding their accommodations during 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.

### **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. Course work 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](https://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](mailto: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](mailto:oeo@unt.edu) or at (940) 565 2759.

## Academic Support & Student Services

Here is a list of important links:

### Office of the Registrar— Spring 2026 Registration Guide

<https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/spring-registration-guide>

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

### Office of the Registrar— Spring 2026 Exam Schedule

<https://registrar.unt.edu/exams/final-exam-schedule/spring>

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

### Students' Concerns and Complaints

Open communication is key to resolving concerns. Most issues or misunderstandings can be addressed effectively when those directly involved engage in honest discussion.

If you have a concern related to your course, whether about materials, instruction, assessments, or the classroom environment, please begin by speaking with your instructor. If the matter remains unresolved, or if you are uncomfortable approaching your instructor, you may contact the WLLC department.

To learn more about the complaint procedure or to file a formal complaint, you can access the document WLLC COURSE COMPLAINT PROCEDURE FOR STUDENTS on the departmental website:

<https://class.unt.edu/world-languages-literatures-cultures/resources/studentcomplaint.pdf>

When emailing the department, be sure to include:

- Your first and last name

- Your instructor's name
- Your course title and section number

Thank you for helping us to maintain a supportive learning environment.

### **Mental Health**

UNT strives to offer a high-quality education in a supportive environment where you can learn, grow, and thrive. As a faculty member, I am committed to supporting you, and I want to remind you that UNT offers a range of mental health and wellness services to help maintain balance and well-being. Utilizing these resources is a proactive way to support your academic and personal success. To explore campus resources designed to support you, check out [mental health services \(https://clear.unt.edu/student-support-services-policies\)](https://clear.unt.edu/student-support-services-policies), visit [unt.edu/success](https://unt.edu/success), and explore [unt.edu/wellness](https://unt.edu/wellness). To get all your enrollment and student financial-related questions answered, go to [scrappysays.unt.edu](https://scrappysays.unt.edu).

### **Additional Student Support Services**

Additional Resources I encourage you to take advantage of are:

- [UNT's Counseling and Testing Services](#) can provide psychological counseling and academic testing
- [UNTWell](#) provides FREE individual and group counseling as well as a vocational assessment
- [UNT Food Pantry](#) is a great resource if you or someone you know experiences food insecurity
- [Academic Success Center](#) can support you in your academics



حظاً سعيداً وبالتوفيق!

*\*\*This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Students will be notified of any updates, and it is their responsibility to adhere to the revised schedule and requirements.*