

# Advanced Topics in Mid-East Culture: Levantine Cultures ARBC 3040 Spring 2019

|              |                         |                                   |
|--------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Class        | Monday and Wednesday    | 2:00 - 3.20 pm in LANG 210        |
| Instructor   | Caroline Najour         |                                   |
| E-mail       | Caroline.Najour@unt.edu |                                   |
| Office       | LANG 401 L              |                                   |
| Office Hours | Mondays and Wednesdays  | 1.00 - 1.50 pm                    |
|              | Fridays                 | 1.00 - 4.00 pm and by appointment |

## Resources

Arabic lecture series: a compilation of presentations delivered mostly by native speakers of Arabic about a range of cultural topics. The lectures are available on youtube.

Beirut I Love You: a TV series available on youtube.

Whatsapp: a free to download messaging app.

## Course Description

In this course, students will explore Levantine dialects and cultures. Students are expected to acquire extensive vocabulary, work on grammar and pronunciation in dialect, and familiarize themselves with cultural aspects and societal practices of the Levant. Students will also learn specific cultural expressions used in different situations and how to respond to them appropriately. This course aims primarily at developing student's fluency and accuracy in dialect as well as their listening and comprehension skills by using authentic listening material in the Shaami dialect. Throughout the semester, students will give several short presentations in dialect about cultural aspects they are interested in such as holidays, celebrations, and art for example. By the end of the semester, students will carry out a creative script writing project short in Shaami.

## Course Policies and Requirements

### Academic Honesty:

- Do your own work. It is against the policy of this course (and will result in a grade of zero on the assignment) to use an answer key, any online translation program, to enlist the help of a fluent Arabic speaker or to have your work checked by anyone other than your instructors before submitting it.
- Working on the homework with other classmates is allowed, but each student must submit to the instructor his or her own answers.

### Homework:

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

### Class conduct:

- It is expected in Arab culture to greet others upon entering a room, so remember to greet the instructors and your classmates when you enter class.
- Eating or chewing gum is not allowed, but feel free to bring coffee, water or soft drinks to class.
- Please keep your cell phones in silent mode and in your backpacks.

### Canvas and Email:

This class relies heavily on Canvas where grades and assignments will be regularly posted. Be sure to check Canvas and your email daily as the instructor will share important information pertaining to class over the email.

## Grade Distribution

### Attendance, Participation and Preparation (15%) المشاركة في الصف

- Class time is your best opportunity to develop your Arabic oral fluency. Speaking in Arabic and avoiding the urge to use English is important to create a full immersion environment that is important to your proficiency development. **Active** participation is essential to make good progress. Don't use short answers when you can elaborate; rather try to express your thoughts in long sentences and to think at a paragraph level.
- You are expected to attend all classes and to show up to class well prepared. Your daily attendance and participation grade will be on a scale from 1 to 5. It will be posted on Canvas after each class, so make sure to check Canvas daily to see how well you are doing.
- Most of class time will be devoted to doing group or pair work. To participate actively, you need to prepare well before class. **If for any reason, you have been**

unable to prepare for class adequately, make sure to inform your instructor beforehand and s/he can arrange for you to learn by listening that day.

- In case of absence, please inform your instructor **before not after the class you will be missing**. The grade for that day's participation will be "0." The lowest 2 grades for attendance and participation will not be counted when calculating the final grade at the end of the semester.
- Students are responsible for any class work, homework and for any announcement made during their absence.
- To receive a grade of 5 on participation, students must:
  - come on time, having fully prepared the material to be covered in class.
  - actively engage in all class activities and avoids the use of short sentences when elaboration is possible
  - abstain from using English from the moment they enter the classroom even before class begins.
- Attendance and participation grades will be deducted for tardiness as follows:
  - arrival during first 5 mins. of class = 1 Pt.
  - during first 10 mins. = 2 Pts.
  - during first 15 mins. = 3 Pts.
  - during first 20 mins. = 4 PtsIf you arrive more than 20 mins. late for class you will receive a "0" for that day's class participation

#### **In-Class audio or writing submissions (15%) تسجيلات وكتابات صفية قصيرة**

- Fluency in speech is one the primary goals of this course, and speaking and writing are very effective ways to help in retention of new vocabulary and building oral fluency.
- Throughout the semester, you will be working in class on audio recordings or short dialogue writing once or twice a week. The prompts for those assignments will be given in class. The audio recordings will rely on Whatsapp where students will respond to the instructor's prompt with a one minute recording. The instructor will provide feedback also through a voice recording on Whatsapp.
- The lowest 2 grades for "in-class audio or writing submissions" will not be counted when calculating the final grade at the end of the semester.

#### **Homework Assignments (20%) الواجبات**

- Expect to spend a minimum of 3 hours of learning new material, reviewing and writing homework at home prior to every class session.
- Homework assignments must be turned in at the beginning of every class, and **late homework assignments will not be accepted** unless you have received an approval from the instructor prior to the assignment's due date. The lowest 2 grades for homework are not be counted toward the final grade.
- Homework must be double spaced, and **sheets of papers must be stapled**. Make sure you write your name and the homework number. Points will be deducted when submitted work does not follow any of those guidelines. Alternatively, feel free to use blue or green booklets.

- Homework assignments will be graded on a scale from 1 to 5. You will be graded on the overall quality of your work and on the effort you put into the homework. Students are encouraged to consult with their instructor for clarification about homework grades before the next class.
- Make sure you write your homework assignment in full sentences for fill-in-the blank exercises. You will not receive credit for the exercise when you submit just a list of words rather than full sentences.

#### **Quizzes (20%) الإمتحانات القصيرة**

- Quizzes may include writing and listening components in addition to grammar and vocabulary. Dates for the quizzes will be announced at least one week in advance.

#### **Short Oral presentations and interviews (10%) التقديمات الشفوية**

- Twice during the semester, you will be delivering a short 5 minute presentation in dialect about a topic pertaining to Levantine culture such as holidays, traditions, crafts, music and musicians, fashion, and arts. You are highly encouraged to include visual aids in your presentation.
- During the last 3 weeks of the semester, you will be in charge of conducting 7 to 10 minute interviews in Shaami with students from 1020 and 2050 classes. To help you get started, a list of suggested interview questions will be provided for you. The questions are just starting points to help you get started; the goal is not to ask the questions, but to engage in a conversation about topics they have covered this semester. To adapt to their level, you are expected to review the vocabulary they have learned in class. The interview must be recorded and each student will be conducting 7 interviews.

#### **Reading text preparation and leading class discussion (5%) تحضير القراءة و إدارة الصف**

- For one session this semester, you and a classmate will lead the classroom discussion and analysis of a reading text about an Arab folktale or a famous children's story of your choice.
- Your group will decide on a level appropriate text. Two weeks prior to the class discussion of your reading, you need to meet with your instructor and submit a list of 8 to 10 vocabulary words that are important for the understanding of the reading, along with a list of questions your classmates could work on as homework. The reading as well as the lists of vocabulary and questions must be shared with your classmates under discussions (on Canvas) after the instructor's approval.
- During class, your group will lead the discussion. Feel free to prepare a powerpoint or a game to activate the studied vocabulary, prepare additional questions to be explored in class, plan for a grammar activity that zooms in on one of the passages etc. The choices of activities are open. You will be the instructor for that day!

- For the vocabulary lists:
  - For nouns, please provide the singular and the plural forms.
  - For verbs, please list the past and present forms.

### **Final creative Written project (15 %) المشروع النهائي**

- The final written project is a minimum of 750 words long and consists of writing a script in dialect. This is a creative project where you are expected to write a script for a play or an episode for a TV series.
- The goal of the project is for you to use language in a fun and creative way and to showcase your cultural competence, as well as to activate the vocabulary and grammatical structures you have learnt this semester. Because the purpose is to activate the vocabulary and grammatical structures you already know, you are not allowed to use many new words. Feel free to look up to 5 new words. Write a list of your new vocabulary at the end of the script (for nouns, provide the singular and the plural forms, and for verbs, list the past and the present forms.
- The final project must be typed in large font and double spaced. Write your name on top of the page and **include a word count at the end of the script.**
- A hard copy must be delivered to instructor office and a soft copy must be uploaded on Canvas by May 6th.

### **Grade distribution:**

Attendance, Participation and Preparation: 15 %

Homework: 20%

Quizzes: 20 %

In-class audio and writing submissions: 15 %

Final writing project: 15 %

Short oral presentations: 10 %

Leading class discussion: 5%

### **Grading Scale**

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

**Here is a list of important links:**

**Office of the Registrar— Spring 2019 Registration Guide**

<http://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 2019 Exam Schedule**

<http://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>

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

**Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT)**

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 short SPOT survey provides you with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. Toward the end of the semester, you will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Simply click on the link and complete your survey. Once you complete the survey you will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the spot website at [www.spot.unt.edu](http://www.spot.unt.edu) or email [spot@unt.edu](mailto:spot@unt.edu).

**Disability Accommodation**

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (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 see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

### **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. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at [www.deanofstudents.unt.edu](http://www.deanofstudents.unt.edu)

### **Sexual Discrimination, Harassment, & Assault**

UNT is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these acts of aggression, please know that you are not alone. The federal Title IX law makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses. UNT has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

UNT's Dean of Students' website offers a range of on-campus and off-campus resources to help support survivors, depending on their unique needs: [http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources\\_0](http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources_0). Renee LeClaire McNamara is UNT's Student Advocate and she can be reached through email at [SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu](mailto:SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu) or by calling the Dean of Students' office at 940-565-2648. You are not alone. We are here to help.

[1] This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.