

Arab Cultures in Film & Music

WLLC 3100

Spring 2025

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| Class | Tuesdays 3:30 -6:20 pm |
| Instructor | Caroline Najour |
| E-mail | Caroline.Najour@unt.edu |
| Office | LANG 401 L; Zoom Room ID: 469 4389603 |
| Office Hours | Wednesdays and Fridays 12:00 - 2:00 pm and & by appointment |

Course Description

This course will explore Arab modern histories and cultures through the lens of film and music. Students will examine the roots of some of the most prominent social, cultural, political, and gendered norms often attributed to the Arab World. They will also explore the relationship between music and politics, and the role singers and bands play in advocating for social justice; in addition, students will analyze what regulations imposed on music such as banning the Mahrajanat music genre or the Mashrou3 Layla band demonstrate.

Materials from across the region will help students overcome any misconceptions of uniformity in the Arab world. From Yemen, Lebanon, to Egypt and beyond, students will enhance their global competencies and reflect upon the varied life experiences of people around the Arab World.

This course incorporates Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), a form of international learning where students virtually engage with university students from another country. During the semester, students will collaborate with students at the Mohammed V University (M V) in Rabat, Morocco in planning for leading classroom discussions of films and in creating a film analysis podcast with students. Interactions among students from both universities will be mostly synchronous (via Zoom) but also asynchronous. The class discussions' synchronous component will take place over 4 weeks (February 11, February 18, February 24, and March 4) during the first hour of the scheduled time for the UNT class from 3:30 - 4:30 pm. However, preparation for leading classroom discussions and the final project podcast might take place anytime during the semester.

Prerequisite

There are no prerequisites for this course, nor is any prior knowledge of Arabic or music required.

Course Materials

There are no required texts for this course. When applicable, links to movies and websites will be provided on Canvas. We will watch the following films:

Documentary: *Reel Bad Arabs*

Documentary: *Umm Kulthum: A Voice Like Egypt*

Feature film: *Yacoubian's Building*

Feature film: *Horses of God*

Documentary: *Five Broken Cameras*

Feature film: *The Insult*

Feature film: *Papicha*

Feature film: *Ten Days Before the Wedding*

Feature film: *Our River, Our Sky*

Feature film: *Where Do We Go Now*

Feature film: *Cairo 678*

Feature film: *Wadja*

Learning Objectives:

This course fulfills the CLASS requirement for Diversity and Global Issues.

At the end of this course, students should be able to do at least three of the following:

1. Identify the origins, influences, and limits of one's own cultural heritage.
2. Demonstrate the ability to learn from and empathize with perspectives and experiences different from one's own.
3. Show an understanding of the interrelationships of the self, local society, and global environments.
4. Describe the impacts of complex, worldwide systems.
5. Explain the reasoning for one's ethical responsibilities within worldwide systems.

COIL Learning Objectives

1. Perspectives-taking:
 - a. Synchronous classroom discussions
 - i. During online synchronous classroom discussions about assigned films, students from both UNT and MV will engage in cross-cultural dialogues, sharing their different perspectives on the films and specific scenes within

each film. Discussions will foster cross-cultural communication and perspective-taking as students express ideas, share experiences, and gain insights from diverse perspectives in a small group environment of 8 to 10 students.

ii. Learning outcomes:

1. Improving the ability to engage in meaningful discussions across cultures.
2. Developing an understanding of how cultural context shapes the interpretation, and appreciation of films and results in multiple viewpoints.

2. Cultural self-awareness

a. Presenting a movie and leading class discussion:

- i. The assignment involves collaborative work in pairs, with one student from Mohammed V University and one from the University of North Texas. Students will meet outside of class time to learn together as they prepare for the class presentation and to facilitate class discussions.

ii. Learning outcomes:

1. Through the process of collaborating with a student from a different cultural background in order to analyze the film and prepare questions for class discussions, students will become aware of both how their cultural backgrounds inform their interpretations of the films as well as some of their cultural biases when viewing and interpreting a different culture.

b. COIL end of the semester reflections:

- i. Students will reflect on the growth of their cultural self-awareness and their experiences, challenges, and learning during the COIL collaboration.

ii. Learning outcomes:

1. Encourage self-reflection, and cultural self-awareness, and foster an appreciation of the impact of cross-cultural collaboration both personally and academically

3. Intercultural Communication:

a. Podcast project:

- i. Each student will collaborate with a student from our COIL partner university to create a podcast where they analyze an Arab film from a list of films provided by the instructors.

ii. Learning outcomes:

1. Demonstrate effective teamwork, intercultural communication, and project management skills.

b. Class discussions:

- i. Students will discuss sensitive topics reflected in the assigned films, building cultural sensitivity and respect for diverse perspectives.
- ii. Learning Outcome:
 1. Enhance intercultural communication and promote respectful and inclusive dialogue.

Grade Distribution

Attendance, Participation, and Preparation (20%)

- You are expected to attend all classes and 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 be sure to check Canvas daily to see how well you are doing.
- In case of an absence, please inform your instructor before and not after the class you will be missing. The grade for that day's participation will be a "0." You can waive up to three absences by writing a one-and-a-half to two-page critical observation of the film we discussed on the day of your absence. Your essay must be uploaded on canvas under participation **by the next class meeting**.
- For the 1.5 to 2-page critical observation, you will need to watch the film from the perspective of a cultural observer. DO NOT summarize the film; rather pay attention to cultural aspects. Feel free to briefly explore the context of the film before you move to your cultural analysis, which could focus on customs and traditions, family dynamics, religious practices, or gendered norms, to list some examples.
- Students are responsible for any class work, homework, and any announcements made during their absence.
- To receive a grade of a 5 on participation, students must:
 - Be punctual and come prepared, having read or prepared assigned materials
 - Remain on task and actively engaged in all class activities and discussions
- Attendance and participation grades will be deducted for tardiness as follows:
 - Arrival during the first 20 mins. of class = 1 Pt.
 - During the first 40 mins. = 2 Pts.
 - During the first 60 mins. = 3 Pts.
 - If you arrive more than an hour late for class you will receive a "0" for that day's class participation.

Homework (20%)

- In preparation for class, students will need to research some part of the history of the country where the events of the film are taking place . After the research, students are often required to record a 2 to 3-minute audio summary on Canvas, highlighting the key insights they have gained.
- Students will be informed of the homework on Canvas.

- The lowest homework grade will be dropped.

Music genre presentation (20%)

Students will deliver a class presentation with two or three classmates about the development of a music genre in the Arab world and its relationship with politics and social issues. There are three components for this assignment:

A. References document

1. Due one week before the presentation day on Canvas under “ Music List Preparation and Presentation”
2. This component is individual work; students must not consult with other students when working on this component.
3. The document must consist of:
 - i. Hyperlinks to two scholarly references about the genre or the musicians you are presenting on. If any reference is not available online, students can upload a pdf of the reference as a separate document
 - ii. A **detailed** outline summarizing the main points and listing all the major ideas of each scholarly references.
 - iii. Start with a hyperlink of the article followed by a bulleted point list of ALL the major points.

B. Music playlist, song in translation, presentation script document

1. Create a list of 4 - 5 your favorite as well as the most prominent songs in a certain musical genre.
 - a. The list must be shareable (Spotify, youtube...)
2. Write out the script of your presentation.
3. Be sure to upload this document before class time on the day you are presenting on Canvas, under assignments, “Music Playlist preparation and class presentation”

C. Class presentation

1. Please work on creating a PowerPoint with your group.
 - a. It must consist almost exclusively of pictures and a few headings
 - b. A link to one of your favorite songs of this genre; you may each share a different song.

All components of this assignment need to be submitted under the same Canvas assignments. This assignment is set up to accept multiple assignments

Presenting a movie and leading class discussion (COIL assignment) (20%)

- Students from both universities will collaborate as they prepare for the presentation and for leading class discussions.
- The assignment requires pair work, with one student from Mohammed V University and one from the University of North Texas. Each pair will sign up to facilitate a discussion on one of four movies during the 4-week COIL collaborative learning period.

- The session will commence with a 10-minute introduction. Throughout the session, both students will be responsible for leading the class discussion on the assigned movie via Zoom.
- To prepare for this task, students need to meet virtually outside of class to prepare the presentation and compile a list of questions for the class discussion.
- Class discussions will occur via Zoom during UNT class time, with groups consisting of 8-10 students. Students from both universities will actively engage in these discussions.

Movie Analysis podcast (COIL assignment) (20%)

- The assignment involves working in pairs, with one student from Mohammed V University and one from the University of North Texas. Students need to work with a new partner, different from the one they have collaborated with for leading class discussions.
- Students will collaborate to produce a 15-minute podcast, which involve the analysis and discussion of a movie different from the one they presented for class discussion.

Grade distribution:

Attendance, Participation, and Preparation: (20%)

Homework assignments (20%)

Music List preparation and class presentation (20%)

Presenting a movie and leading class discussion (COIL component: 20%)

Movie Analysis podcast (COIL component: 20%)

Grading Scale

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

Tentative schedule

Week 1: **Documentary:** [*Reel Bad Arabs*](#)

Week 2: **Documentary:** [*Umm Kulthum: A Voice like Egypt*](#)

Week 3: **Film:** *Yacoubian's Building*

Week 4: **Film:** (Continuation) *The Yacoubian Building*

Week 5: **Film:** *Horses of God* (COIL)
Week 6: **Documentary:** *Five Broken Cameras* (COIL)
Week 7: **Film:** *The Insult* (COIL)
Week 8: **Film:** *Papicha* (COIL)
Week 9: Spring Break
Week 10: **Film:** *Ten Days Before the Wedding*
Week 11: **Film:** *Our River, Our Sky*
Week 12: **Film:** *Where Do We Go Now*
Week 13: **Film:** Cairo 678
Week 14: Class does not meet; Movie analysis podcast is due by midnight (COIL)
Week 15: **Film:** *Wadjda*; Reflection and survey about COIL experience (encouraging reflection on the COIL experience and collaboration with Moroccan students).

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 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 academic accommodation 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. 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. 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— Spring 2025 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 2025 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

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>)
- [UNT Psychiatric Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry)
(<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry>)

Chosen Names

A chosen name is a name that a person goes by that may or may not match their legal name. If you have a chosen name that is different from your legal name and would like that to be used in class, please let the instructor know. Below is a list of resources for updating your chosen name at UNT.

- [UNT Records](#)
- [UNT ID Card](#)
- [Legal Name](#)

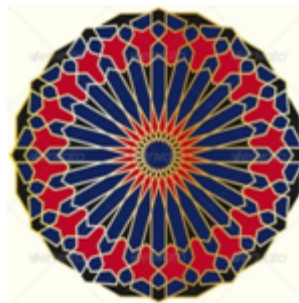
*UNT EUIDs cannot be changed at this time. The collaborating offices are working on a process to make this option accessible to UNT community members.

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/)



***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.*