

Instructor: Melanie Magidow
Office: Swan Hall 160
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 4:00 - 5:00 pm and by appointment
Email: melaniemagidow@gmail.com

Course Objectives:

By the end of this session, you will *in-shaa'a-llaah*: إن شاء الله

- have mastered the Arabic alphabet and sound system, be able to distinguish and pronounce all Arabic sounds, and write accurately from dictation;
- initiate social interactions, ask for basic information, and be aware of basic cultural aspects of social interaction in the Arab world;
- be able to talk about yourself, your education, and your family with native speakers of Arabic;
- comprehend simple written texts on familiar topics;
- comprehend simple audio/video texts on familiar topics;
- be able to compose simple paragraphs about yourself; and
- be familiar with some of the differences between formal and spoken Arabic.

Course Materials:

1. *Alif Baa: Introduction to Arabic Letters and Sounds* (3rd ed.) by Brustad, Al-Batal, and Al-Tonsi (Georgetown University Press) with DVDs + companion website
2. *Al-Kitaab fii Ta'allum al-'Arabiyya Part I: A Textbook for Beginning Arabic Part One* (3rd ed.) by Brustad, Al-Batal, and Al-Tonsi (Georgetown UP) with DVDs

Course Requirements and Grade:

1. Attendance and Participation (30%)

You must attend classes and come prepared to participate fully in class activities. This means listening to the DVDs and learning new vocabulary and structures so that you can actively use them in class. More than three unexcused absences will result in **one percentage point deduction from the students' final grade for every unexcused absence**. An excused absence means a written note from the appropriate office (doctor, coach, dean) justifying the absence. Please inform the instructor of an absence as soon as possible before—not after—the class you will miss.

Participation is graded daily according to the following scale:

- 4 = Excellent (well prepared for class, excellent participation in quantity and quality)
- 3 = Good (prepared for class, good participation)
- 2 = Average (prepared for class, yet participates only when called)
- 1 = Poor (shows evidence of little preparation / little or no participation / late)
- 0 = Absent

2. Homework Assignments (25%)

There will be daily written assignments due at the beginning of class on the day designated in the syllabus. Normally, you should aim for two to three hours of preparation for every class session. Late homework assignments may be checked but will not be given any credit. Please hand in homework written out on a separate sheet of paper; pages xeroxed out of the book will not be accepted. It is important to follow up on any comments on your homework, and it is your responsibility to come to office hours or make an appointment if you have questions.

3. Periodic Quizzes (20%)

There will be periodic quizzes. You will be informed of the dates in advance. The first quiz is scheduled for the week of Tuesday 17 September (*Alif Baa* Units 1-2).

4. Skits/Oral Presentations (15%)

You will be asked to create two skits in groups to present to the class, and will be notified of the dates in advance.

5. Final Examination (5%)

The final examination will be comprehensive and will test all the skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

6. Final Oral Interview (5%)

As part of the final assessment for the course, you will have a 10-15 minute oral interview in Arabic in which you will be asked to talk about aspects of your academic and social life using the vocabulary and structures you've learned throughout the semester.

There is no prerequisite. This course is designed for students with NO prior background in the Arabic language, whether spoken or written. If you have experience with Arabic, you MUST speak to the instructor to determine whether or not this class is appropriate for you.

Remember that the URI policy on academic ethics is in effect in this class. Submitting work that is not your own, or that you did not participate fully in doing (including consulting answer keys), is a violation of that code. Likewise, purposefully enrolling in an inappropriate class level is also a form of cheating. If you have any questions, please ask or consult the University Manual, from section 8.27.10, at <http://www.uri.edu/facsen/8.20-8.27.html>

How to Do Well in this Class:

Prepare for active participation in class. You should soon be able to predict what kinds of questions will be asked and what kinds of activities will be performed. Be ready for them by guessing what they will be and practicing beforehand.

Once is not enough. When you are pronouncing new vocabulary along with the DVD or practicing a new grammatical pattern, you should repeat the activity **several times**. It is best to pronounce new vocabulary words at least ten times, so that you can say them easily. Remember: if you cannot pronounce a new word easily, you haven't really learned it yet.

Study out loud. The only way to train your brain and your mouth to speak this language is by doing. Thinking about it is not enough!

Personalize vocabulary. Make words relevant by thinking of what you can say about yourself with them. Write extra sentences that are meaningful to you so that the vocabulary becomes yours.

Study in pairs/groups. This is a great way to prepare for class and review--as long as you do the work in Arabic as much as possible, of course! Ask each other questions, brainstorm about assignments, go over materials covered together. You are encouraged to collaborate on assignments, as long as each student hands in his/her own paper. The URI policy on academic ethics applies of course.

Learn to guess. The approach we use here at URI encourages you, the learner, to use what you know to derive what you do not. Just as you acquired your native language through guessing the meaning of

new words from context, and then imitating patterns, so you can learn this language by observation, imitation, and using what you know. Do not leave blanks on the homework, but do not allow yourself to become frustrated; give it your best shot, and move on.

Learn from mistakes. Correcting mistakes is an essential part of the learning process. In this class, you will never be penalized for a mistake that you make when trying something new. Be an active listener, paying attention to the language you hear. Being attentive to both *what* and *how* people speak will improve your own speaking skills.

The first month of class requires an extra time investment on your part

while we are doing the alphabet drills. Expect to spend an extra hour per day during this month. This investment will pay off later: by learning to write what you hear and vice-versa, you will not have spelling problems, you will memorize vocabulary more easily, and you will be better able to speak with and understand native speakers of the language.

Practice Arabic as much as possible. Take advantage of opportunities to practice Arabic outside of class (conversation, internet, radio, newspapers, TV, films, concerts) to increase your knowledge and enrich your learning experience.

Principles for Group Activities:

There can be no language without community. In our community, respect for each other at all times will ensure a positive and fruitful learning experience. Help and encourage your colleagues: each of you can learn with and from everyone else. Work with different people on a regular basis, because everyone has her/his own particular strengths.

Due to the importance of getting ample opportunity to participate and practice, and with a large class size, we will spend at least 75% of class time in small group or pair activities. During these activities, the instructor plays the role of personal trainer. Learning a language is a lot like going to the gym. Rather than arm muscle, however, we need to build mental and throat muscles and train that brain-mouth coordination :)

Come prepared. Don't be someone who slows down a colleague by not being ready. If an emergency or that biochemistry midterm have prevented you from preparing, let me know before class begins. I will then be able to arrange the groups so that you can learn by listening.

Speak Arabic at all times. If you feel frustrated, raise your hand rather than breaking into English. Stay focused on the task at hand without rushing to finish. Most activities are designed to elicit creative play with vocabulary and structures on which we are working. I will often call time before everyone is finished. If your group does not finish, you may want to take a few minutes to study the rest of the exercise after class as part of your regular study and review. When your group finishes the task, raise your hand to let me know.

Ahlan wa Sahlan (WELCOME) TO ARABIC ! أهلا وسهلا