AIMS
The course is conceived in answer to the recent theoretical debates over the agency of the non-European and will seek to problematize the historically dominant modality in literary and critical analysis and theoretical thought whereby European thought offers the modes of theoretical knowledge production and non-European literatures offer the objects of analysis. The course is designed to complement the training and approaches to modern Arabic literary genres in the course on the Evolution of Modern Literary Genres in Arabic Literatures. It will also constitute further practical critical and theoretical training for the core course on Theory of Comparative Literature (Arabic-Western).

The course will take the form of a guided inquiry into modern Arabic literary practices through close examination of a range of representative works and a range of critical methods inspired by major theories and the specificities of modern Arabic creative and textual practices. The agency of Arabic creative expression and textual practices will be hermeneutically articulated in the attempt to offer such practices as critical and theoretical postulates, which will then be engaged in dialogue with European critical and theoretical traditions. The examination of the conceptual languages of critical theory and comparative critical methods will be linked through hermeneutical analysis to historical and cultural dynamics in the production and reception of literary theory. Literary works will be approached as text (formalist), creative act (hermeneutical) and literary practice (historical, cultural), with a focus on the case of modern Arabic literature. The intellectual projects of key Arab thinkers and critics will also serve as mediating theoretical grounds between Western theory and Arab intellectual and aesthetic traditions. The course is therefore also envisaged as an answer to the debates over the hegemony of world literary systems.

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOME
This is a core course for the Comparative Literature program. The learning outcomes of this course are directly linked to those of the program since it is designed to complement the training and approaches to modern Arabic literary genres in the course on the Evolution of Modern Literary Genres in Arabic Literatures. It will also constitute further practical critical and theoretical training for the core course on Theory of Comparative Literature (Arabic-Western), both core courses of the comparative literature program. Together, these courses will “train
students in the application of various theoretical approaches to evaluate afresh phenomena of literary and cultural production of past and present” and will provide them with the most sophisticated, interdisciplinary, critical tools to study the literary and cultural products of the Arab world, the west and the rest of the world”, which is a key learning outcome of the program.

1) Subject-specific skills: The ability to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of some of the major themes, techniques and genres to be found in Arabic literature and the principal critical works on the subject;
- Engage analytically with major contemporary critical and theoretical approaches, and to explore these approaches as modes of critical and theoretical analysis in relation to modern Arabic creative and literary practices.
- Recognize, define and engage with some of the current theoretical debates in the humanities and the ethical positioning of critical humanism;
- Demonstrate knowledge of the cultural provenances of theoretical thought and conceptual languages of knowledge production;
- Demonstrate knowledge of the peculiarities of literary consciousness and the closely allied complexities of self-insight and self-presentation;
- Demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical and historical tension in Arab nahda projects between the conception and practices of modernity and tradition;
- Demonstrate knowledge of critical issues of literary influence, theoretical contexts of production and reception and of their own positionality as readers in the world.

2) Core academic skills: The ability to:

- Offer sophisticated interpretation of the challenges of crossing linguistic and cultural boundaries and of working across critical and theoretical traditions;
- Offer sophisticated analysis of conceptions of the literary from within European and Arabic traditions;
- Demonstrate deeper understanding of transitions from reading as an experience to interpretation as a critical act and to interpreting difference as a hermeneutical process;
- Define key theoretical concepts and to negotiate a range of critical theories in their interpretation of different texts;
- Examine analytically the processes of change and search for personal and cultural identity on the literary level and to relate these to the projects of change in the political and social spheres.

3) Personal and key skills: The ability to:

- Engage critically with concepts, definitions, and a wide range of sources;
- Formulate topics of inquiry, raise questions, and conduct independent research;
- Construct persuasive and well-documented arguments in accordance with scholarly standards;
- Present on a topic clearly and systematically;
- Contribute to group discussions.

LEARNING/TEACHING METHODS

Lecture, 1 hour
This course consists of lectures and seminars. The first hour is devoted to formal lecturing on the more general aspects of the subject, critical and historical backgrounds, key figures and works, and examples of close reading and textual analysis.
Seminar and Student Presentations, 2 hours
All students are expected to have read the Core Readings and Reading Assignments before coming to class each week, and full participation during the seminar session is strongly encouraged. Close reading of relevant passages from the Core Reading and other theoretical works and an analysis of critical methods and theoretical concepts will constitute a key activity in approaching the readings.

Students will give a 10-15 minute presentation on a specific Reading Assignment, followed by small group and general discussions on the lecture and the week’s readings.

Students’ participation is vital as they are expected to prepare texts in advance of lectures and to be able to provide initial impressions and insights and to discuss and substantiate them in class. Required readings and other relevant primary sources will be handed out in advance of the relevant unit or lecture. Other primary, secondary and background sources will be available in the DI Library.

One-to-one tutorial
Each student will have 3-4 hours per semester as personal tutorials.

ASSIGNMENTS

Students are expected to write two essays of about 3000 words. These essays should reflect students’ ability to sustain a close reading, to present a well-formed critical view (based on their class discussion and participation) and to demonstrate reasonable familiarity with relevant critical and theoretical literature, as well as with social and historical contexts. Students will have the freedom to choose their own themes and approaches for the two essays, but the choice must be approved by the convenor. The essays must follow accepted guidelines for academic research essays (title and title page, complete footnotes, full bibliography, etc.). The essays are due in Weeks Seven and Fourteen (exact date to be determined). This coursework represents 80% of the final mark. The final three hour written exam will count for 20% of the total mark.

The mid-term literary critical essay (3000 words) will offer a close reading of one literary work, review the range of critical scholarship on the work and argue for a specific critical approach (20%). The final theoretical essay (3000 words) will tackle in more detail one of the theoretical issues in relation to modern Arabic literary and critical practices (25%).

In preparation for the long essay submissions, students will also be expected to produce two short analytical essays of about 1500 words each on specific texts and theorists (exact dates to be determined). This coursework represents 25% of the final mark. Students will also be expected to produce two brief histories on a classical Arabic aesthetic concept or literary practice and on a modern Arab theorist (exact date to be determined). This coursework represents 10% of the final mark.

ASSESSMENT

The proposed assessment for this Core Course consists of the following:

1. First Analytical Essay (1500 words, 10%): DUE WEEK FOUR, 25 MARCH 2016
2. Brief History of a Western Concept/ aesthetic practice (1000 words, 5%): DUE WEEK FIVE, 01 APRIL 2016
3. Literary Critical Essay (3000 words, 20%): DUE WEEK SEVEN, 15 APRIL 2016
4. Second Analytical Essay (1500 words, 15%): DUE WEEK NINE, 06 MAY 2016
5. Brief History of an Arabic Concept/ aesthetic practice (1000 words, 5%): DUE WEEK ELEVEN, 20 MAY 2016
7. Written Examination (3 hours, 20%): Date to be confirmed
SYLLABUS PLAN

WEEK ONE: 29 February 2016
Introduction
• Arabic Literary History and Arab Literary Modernity
• Early Experiments in Form, Language and Technique
• Intellectual and Literary Movements: Arab Modernity and Subjectivity
• The Intellectual, Social Realities and the Institutions of Modernity
• Arab Intellectual History: Critical Methods and Theoretical Postulates
• The Arab Spring: The People’s Rhythm and the Aesthetic Revolution
• Questions of Theory and/in Modern Arabic Criticism
• Modern Arabic Literature Between World Literature and Literary Theory
• Details of Course Syllabus, Course Assignments and Tasks

WEEK TWO: 07 March 2016
Framing Encounters: Linguistic and Cultural Imaginaries
• Napoleon’s Proclamation and Jabarti’s linguistic critical response
• Arab theorists of the encounter and the nahda epistemes: S. Idris, H. Sharabi, W. Ghali, L. Awad
• Son’allah Ibrahim’s novelistic responses: Al-‘imāma wa al-qubba’a and Al-qānūn al-firansī.

WEEK THREE: 14 March 2016
Philology as Critical Method: Tradition and the Authority of the Textual
• Historical Philological Method as Critical Method
• H. R. Jauss, H. Gadamer, P. Ricoeur,
• The 1920s: The Cases of T. Hussain and A. Abdel-Raziq

WEEK FOUR: 21 March 2016
Intellectual History, Alterity and the Construction of Traditions
• W. Benjamin, M. Blanchot, M. de Certeau,
• R. Gasché and D. Chakrabarty: Europe, the Infinite Task and Europe the Provincial
• A. Laroui and his critics: Typologies of the Arab intellectual imaginary
• Tropological Imaginaries: Gharnata and the Hara
• K. Ziadeh and the City Imaginary

WEEK FIVE: 28 March 2016
Marx, Marxism and Arab Marxists
• Marx and Engels, A. Gramsci, L. Althusser, P. Bourdieu
• Ideology and hegemony in cross-cultural discourses: G. Lukács and B. Brecht; R. Williams, F. Jameson and T. Eagleton
• The debates over commitment & literature as socially symbolic act
• Arab Marxists and Arabic literature: 1950-1970 & Arab political aesthetics
• Saadallah Wannus and the Arab Politicizing Theater; Idris’s Farfours and the Social Self
WEEK SIX: 04 April 2016
Postcolonial Studies and the Tain of Discursive Mirrors
- M. Foucault, F. Fanon, E. Said, A. Negri, S. Hall, G. Spivak, B. Parry
- Colonial and Postcolonial Discourses: Conrad and Achebe
- Al-Tayeb Salih, *Mawsim al-hijra* and the Craft of Fiction

WEEK SEVEN: 11 April 2016
Postcolonial Studies and the Language Imaginary
- M. Foucault, F. Fanon, E. Said, A. Negri, S. Hall, G. Spivak, B. Parry
- The North African Novel in French and Francophone Imagologies
- T. Wattar: The Algerian Novel in Arabic and the Socialist Novel from Below

WEEK EIGHT: 18 April 2016
Feminist Theory and Gender Studies
- Arab Discursive Feminisms: H. Shaarawi, D. Shafiq, Z. Fawwaz
- Gendering Discourse, Gendering Space
- Examples from Early Arab Feminist Discourses

Reading Week 24-28 April 2016

WEEK NINE: 02 May 2016
Feminist Aesthetics and Resistance Discourses
- J. Butler, M. Foucault, J. Lacan, G. Spivak
- Arab Critical and Theoretical Feminisms: A. Djebbar, F. Mernissi, N. al-Saadawi, L. Ahmed
- Gendering Algerian Revolutionary Aesthetics
- Samira Azzam and Palestinian Feminist Aesthetics of Resistance

WEEK TEN: 09 May 2016
Cultural Studies & Popular Literature Approaches
- The Frankfurt School, R. Williams and S. Hall
- Arabic Cultural Studies: Semiotics of the Oral, the Written and the Visual
- Examples from a range of contemporary artists and writers

WEEK ELEVEN: 16 May 2016
Deconstruction and Poststructuralist Approaches
- J. Derrida, P. de Man, C. Malabou
- Arabic Linguistic and Rhetorical Thought
- *Takhyīl* and Arabic Poetics of the Word
- T. Abdel Rahman and the theory of *ta’thil*.
- Examples from a range of contemporary works

WEEK TWELVE: 23 May 2016
Postmodern Geographies, Spatial Studies and Poetics of Space
- G. Bachelard, H. Lefebvre, E. Soja, M. de Certeau, G. Agamben
• Rhythmanalysis, the Everyday and Spaces of Representation

**WEEK THIRTEEN: 30 May 2016**
**Aesthetics and Politics: The Theoretical Terms of the Game**
• J. Rancière, S. Žižek, A. Badiou, J. Butler on the Arab Uprisings
• Political Aesthetics and Aesthetics of the Political
• Revolutionary Aesthetics Post 2011: Examples from a range of contemporary artists and writers

**WEEK FOURTEEN: 06 June 2016**
**Critical Humanism**
• E. Said and A. H. Abu Zayd: The Return to Philology and Comparative Hermeneutics
• W. Benjamin, E. Glissant and the Poetics of Relationality
• M. Darwish: Late Poetry and the Aesthetics of Belatedness

**EXAM WEEK 12-16 June 2016**
INDICATIVE READING LIST

This basic list includes some key indicative studies on modern Arabic literature and literary theory. It excludes original creative works and studies on individual authors or literary genres.


 زياد، خالد. حارات الأهل. جادات الله. بروت: دار البار للنشر. ١٩٩٦.

 زياد، خالد. الكاتب والسلطان: من الفقهي إلى المنطقي. القاهرة: الدار المصرية اللبنانية. ٢٠١٣.

سعد، خالد. في البدء كان النفي. بروت: دار الساقي. ٢٠٠٠.


عصفور، جابر. النص في هذا الزمان. القاهرة: الدار المصرية اللبنانية. ٢٠١٢.

العزيزي، عبد الله. الأيديولوجية العربية المعاصرة. الدار البيضاء: المركز الثقافي العربي. ١٩٩٥.

كرم، أنطون. غطاس. في الأدب العربي الحديث والمعاصر. بروت: دار البار. ٢٠٠٤.

المرنسي، فاطمة. الجنس كنيدسة اجتماعية: بين النص والواقع. ترجمة فاطمة الزهراء زريل. الدار البيضاء: نشر الفنك. ١٩٩٦.

Critical Approaches to Arabic Literature


**Critical Theory**


