

Understand Arab Culture

Last Updated: Mon, 12/29/2025

Course prefix: ARBC

Course number: 1501

Section: OL1

CRN (you may add up to five):

34692

Instructor First Name: natalie

Instructor Last Name: khazaal

Semester: Spring

Academic year: 2026

Course description:

This course focuses on understanding elements of the Arab culture. The course will focus on topics like Arab values, women and men, religion, language, and many other topics. You are encouraged to give examples from your own experience interacting with Arabs or your own culture. You are highly encouraged not to try to understand Arab values and traditions through your own cultural lens, but instead in the context of the target culture. This helps you make sense of certain values and traditions that might seem strange or foreign to you. We might discuss some controversial topics, and you might not agree with each other on specific points. However, we need to be able to listen to each other and respect our different opinions. You should approach this course as a learning journey where we all learn from each other.

Course learning outcomes:

1. Understanding the cultural significance of the countries of the Arab world.
2. Gaining informational literacy about the principal ethnicities, minority groups, and religions of the Arab world.
3. Analyzing films and visual arts, literature, traditional music, important writers and singers, and contemporary pop music of the Arab world.
4. Developing intercultural competence about the history of Islam, and the importance of classical Arabic and the Qur'an to Muslims of the world.
5. Understanding the ethical implications of and developing ethical reasoning skills regarding modern Arab history, particularly the 2011 uprisings known as the Arab Spring, followed by the tragic civil war in Syria.

6. Analyzing current issues and challenges facing Arab culture and society, such as economic development, political instability, and human rights.
7. Enhancing cross-cultural communication and understanding skills, including the ability to appreciate and respect the perspectives and values of other cultures.

Required course materials:

An Introduction to Arab Culture by Bassam Frangieh (Cognella Inc, San Diego, CA). When you order the book from Cognella, you will immediately receive access to a PDF of the first 30% of the book. I may also post occasional videos and other readings on Canvas.

Five documentaries – on Canvas

Grading policy:

Discussion Posts	40%
Quizzes	40%
Final Project	20%

Grading Scale:

Your final grade will be assigned as a letter grade according to the following scale:

A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	0-59%

Attendance policy:

Students who are absent because of participation in approved Institute activities (such as field trips, professional conferences, and athletic events) will be permitted to make up the work missed during their absences. Approval of such activities will be granted by the Student Academic and Financial Affairs Committee of the Academic Senate, and statements of the approved absence may be obtained from the Office of the Registrar. For more information, check out <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/4/>

Academic honesty/integrity statement:

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All work submitted must be original and properly cited. Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic dishonesty will result in immediate consequences as outlined in the university's academic integrity policy.

Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Humanities area. Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help students master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals. This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I interpret the human experience through creative, linguistic, and philosophical works?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:

- Students will effectively analyze and interpret the meaning, cultural significance, and ethical implications of literary/philosophical texts or of works in the visual/performing arts.

Course content, activities, and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Ethical Reasoning
- Information Literacy
- Intercultural Competence