

# CET Syllabus of Record



**Program:** Intensive Arabic Language in Amman

**Course Title:** Culture, Politics, and Religion in Arab Theater

**Course Code:** AM/LANG 370

**Total Hours:** 45

**Recommended Credits:** 3

**Primary Discipline / Suggested Cross Listings:** Arabic Language / Middle East Studies, Theater, History

**Language of Instruction:** Arabic

**Prerequisites/Requirements:** ACTFL Intermediate Mid or equivalent, final placement at discretion of academic director

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## Description

This course focuses on the plays in Arab theater that discuss cultural, political, and religious realities in the Arab world, and uses plays to learn about Arabic culture, politics, and religion. This course explores multiple aspects of Arab theater and performative traditions including, but not limited to, the historical background of Arab theater, the concept of *rawwah* (narrators), common performance spaces used by theatrical artists, the first appearances of theatrical arts, the eras of theater after the Abbasid Era, the role played by women in theater, and genres of Arab theater. This course will shine a light on the development of Arab theater, as well as the challenges faced during these developments. Additionally, this course uncovers the important players in the history of Arab theater. This course explores the portrayal of Arab cultures, politics, and religions in the context of theater.

## Objectives

In this course, students:

- Learn the history and background of key Arab theater and performance traditions (storytelling, shadow theater, *maqama*, belly dancing and *dervish* traditions)
- Recognize major Arab theater playwrights by reading their works
- Gain knowledge on Arab theater institutions (national theaters, private companies and theater festivals)
- Create connections between Arab theater and social change in the Arab world
- Conduct stage readings with “talk back” sessions for each play read and discussed in the class
- Develop the research skills necessary for understanding Arab theater practice
- Become able to see the depiction and reflection of reality on stage
- Recognize the integration of Arab culture, politics, and religion in theater, and learn to view Arab theater through this lens
- Use plays to learn about Arabic culture, politics, and religion
- Realize the difference between the language used in plays, poets, articles, stories, and novels
- Study the use of Arabic dialogue in plays
- Recognize that theater is not just an art form, but that it is also a vehicle to discuss cultural, political, and religious reality

## Course Requirements

Students must complete all reading assignments before coming to class. Weekly readings are either articles or plays ranging from 30 to 70 pages per class session. Students are also expected to map out the campus of the university and Amman community, and identify any performances or public festivals happening during the semester. They report their findings to the instructor and make plans to attend the

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events. They document their experiences by taking pictures, meeting people involved in the event, writing a reflection paper that contains both personal observations and connections drawn to the materials read in class, and finally publishing it in an online blog. Students must interview performers and playwrights they meet, recording their interviews in their reflection papers.

While studying modern Arabic plays, students are expected to come to class with an active understanding of the content. Students will do this by giving a presentation in which they summarize the play in detail and provide a critique of the play in the context of culture, politics, and/or religion. In addition to daily participation points, students are graded on weekly homework assignments, monthly projects and presentations, and a final project. For the final project, students must read three plays from the same playwrights, but on different topics, and write summaries on these plays. Following this, students may choose between a performance of the plays or a presentation on the content of the plays.

### Methods of Evaluation

The final grade is determined as follows:

Attendance and active participation	20%
Quizzes	10%
Homework	20%
Monthly projects	20%
Final written project	20%
Performance/presentation	10%

### Primary Texts

- Mamdouh Adwan. *Al-Lumba*.  
ممدوح عدوان، اللمبة.
- Mamdouh Adwan. *Lo Kunt Filistinian*.  
ممدوح عدوان، لو كنت فلسطينياً.
- Mamdouh Adwan. *Al-Zir Salam*.  
ممدوح عدوان، الزير سالم.
- Mohammad al-Maghut. *Dia'a Tishreen*. 1973.  
محمد الماغوط، ضيعة تشرين. ١٩٧٣.
- Mohammad al-Maghut. *Kasak Ya Watan*. 1979.  
محمد الماغوط، كاسك يا وطن. ١٩٧٩.
- Mohammad al-Maghut. *Shaqaik al-Na'aman*. 1987.  
محمد الماغوط، شقائق النعمان. ١٩٨٧.
- Sa'adallah Wannus. *Al-Fil ya Malik al-Zaman*. Beirut: Dar al-Adab, 1969.  
سعد الله ونوس، الفيل يا ملك الزمان. بيروت: دار الادب، ١٩٦٩.
- Sa'adallah Wannus. *Al-Malik Huwa al-Malik*. Beirut: Dar al-Adab, 1977.  
سعد الله ونوس، الملك هو الملك. بيروت: دار الادب، ١٩٧٧.
- Sa'adallah Wannus. *Ahlam Shaqiyya*. Al-Ahali, 1980.  
سعد الله ونوس، أحلام شقية. الاهلي، ١٩٨٠.
- Sa'adallah Wannus. *Hefla Samr Min Ajl 5 Haziran*. Beirut: Dar al-Adab, 1996.  
سعد الله ونوس، حفلة سمر من أجل ٥ حزيران. بيروت: دار الادب، ١٩٩٦.
- Sa'adallah Wannus. *Munaminat Tarikhia*. Beirut: Dar al-Adab, 1994.  
سعد الله ونوس، منمنمات تاريخية. بيروت: دار الادب، ١٩٩٤.

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- سعد الله ونوس، يوم من زماننا. بيروت: دار الادب، ١٩٩٥.  
Sa'adallah Wannus. *Youm Min Zamanina*. Beirut: Dar al-Adab, 1995.
- توفيق الحكيم، يا طالع الشجرة. مكتب الادب، ١٩٥٣.  
Tawfik Al-Hakim. *Ya tali' al-shajarah*. Maktabat al-Adab, 1953.
- توفيق الحكيم، أغنية الموت. مكتب الادب، ١٩٥٢.  
Tawfik Al-Hakim. *Ughniyyat al-Mawt*. Maktabat al-Adab. 1952.
- واليد اخلاصي، الصراط. ١٩٧٦.  
Walid Ikhlassi. *Al-Sirat*. 1976.
- واليد اخلاصي، هذا النهر المجنون. ١٩٨٠.  
Walid Ikhlassi. *Hatha Nahar al-Majnun*. 1980.
- واليد اخلاصي، سهرة ديمقراطية على خشبة. ١٩٧٩.  
Walid Ikhlassi. *Sahra al-Democratia 'ala al-Hashaba*. 1979.

### Supplementary Texts

- د. عبدالله أبو هيف. المسرح العربي المعاصر: قضايا ورؤى و تجارب. دمشق: منشورات اتحاد الكتاب العرب، ٢٠٠٢.
- Abdullah Abu Heef. *Al-Masrah al-Arabi al-Mu'aasir: Qadayya wa Rou'a wa Tajarib*. Damascus: Manshura Ithad al-Kitaab al-Arab, 2002.
- Admer Gouryh. "The Sociopolitical and Cultural Ambience of Walid Ikhlas'i's Drama." *World Literature Today*, vol. 62, no. 1, 1988. Pages 50-55.
- المسرح الفلسطيني من النكبة حتى عودة السلطة الفلسطينية. دولة فلسطين، وزارة الثقافة. ٢٠١٦.  
"Al-Masrah al-Filistini min al-Nakba hatta 'Auodit al-Sulta al-Filistinia." Ministry of Culture of Palestine. 2016.
- علا عليوات. المسرح الأردني في خطر. حبر. ٢٠١٢/٣/١٤.  
'Ala 'Aliouat. "Al-Masrah al-Ordoni fi Khatir." Hiber. 14 March, 2012.
- بطاقة تعريف الكاتب: أبو خليل القباني. قصة سورية. ٢٠٠٨/١١/٢٢.  
"Bitaqa Ta'arif al-Katib: Abu Khalil Qabbani." Syrian Story. 22 November, 2008.
- Donald L. Cleary, Jr. "What's It All About? The Critical Method of Analysis as Applied to Drama." *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, vol. 25, no. 2, 1991. Pages 89-96.
- غنام غنام. موجر تاريخ المسرح الأردني. الرأي. ٢٠٠٨/٥/١٢.  
Ghinam Ghinam. "Mojer Tarikh al-Masrah al-Ordoni." Al-Rai. 5 December, 2008.
- مسرح الأردني. المملكة الأردنية الهاشمية، وزارة الثقافة.  
"Masrah al-Ordoni." Ministry of Culture in Jordan.
- نبيل صوالحة. لهذه الاسباب تفوق المسرح السياسي على الثقافة في الاردن. الدستور. ٢٠٠٩/٥/١٧.  
Nabil Sawalha. "Li-hathahi al-Asbaab Tafawaqa al-Masrah al-Siyyasi 'ala al-Thaqafa fi al-Ordon." Ad-Dustour. 17 May, 2009.
- محمد خضير. هموم المسرح بعد ثورات الربيع العربي. مصرس. ٢٠١٤/٥/٤.  
Mohammah Khadir. "Humuum al-Masrah Ba'ad Thourat al-Rabiyy'a al-'Arabi." Masress. 4 May, 2014.
- نهاد صليحة. حرية و المسرح. الإسكندرية: المكتب الثقافية. ١٩٩١.  
Nihad Saliha. *Huriyya wa al-Musrah*. Alexandria: Al-Maktab al-Thaqafiyya. 1991.
- رياض كامل. نشأ المسرح العربي الحديث. ديوان العرب. ٢٠١٥/٢/١٤.  
Riyadh Kamal. "Nishaa al-Masrah al-'Arabi al-Hadith." Diwan al-Arab. 14 February, 2015.
- صورة المرأة في المسرح العربي. الجمهورية العربية السورية، وزارة الثقافة. ٢٠٠٨.  
"Sourit al-Mar'aa fi al-Masrah al-'Arabi." Ministry of Culture in the Syrian Arabic Republic. 2008.

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توفيق عابد. مسرحية اردنية تحتاج على الامن النعام. الجزيرة. ٢٠١٣/٨/١٤.  
Tawfik 'Aabid. "Masrahiyya Ordonia Tahtaj 'ala al-Amin al-Na'am." Al-Jazeera. 14 August, 2013.  
ولاء داود. منهجية تحليل النص المسرحي. موضوع. ٢٠١٦/٤/٣٠.  
Wala' Dawud. "Minhajyya Tahlil al-Nus al-Masrahi." Mawdoo3. 30 April, 2016.

### Recommended Readings

كلمة بدارنه. قراءة نقدية في مسرحية الملك هو الملك. رابطة الواحة. ٢٠١١/٧/٣.  
Kamala Badarna. "Qira'a Naqdiyya fi Masrahiyya al-Malik huwa al-Malik." Rabitat al-Waha. 7 March, 2011.  
Patrice Pavis. *Analyzing Performance: Theater, Dance, and Film*. University of Michigan Press, 2003.  
Roger Allen. *An Introduction to Arabic Literature*. Cambridge University Press, 2000. Pages 193-215.

### Outline of Course Content

Note: Students cover approximately one topic every two weeks.

#### Topic One: Introduction

History of Arab theater  
Abbasid Period

#### Topic Two: Popular Theater and Storytelling

Khayal al-Zill, Storytelling/Hakawati; Ta'ziah; Maqama; Aragoz, etc.

#### Topic Three: Abu Khalil Qabbani

How he established Arab theater, and his models and examples  
The connection between Qabbani and the beginning of political criticism in theater

#### Topic Four: Tawfik al-Hakim

The depiction of culture, politics, and religion in al-Hakim's works  
*Ughneyyat el-Mawt; Ya tali' al-shajarah; Nahar al-Janun*

#### Topic Five: Mamdouh Adwan

Political criticism in 'Udwan's plays  
Topics of his works revolve around Palestinians, politics, and the disabled  
*That's Life; Lo Kunt Filistinian; Al-Lumba; Zir Salam*

#### Topic Six: Sa'adallah Wannus

Topics shine a light on the state of politics in the Arab world, and criticizes the willingness of Arabs to listen and accept change without questioning  
*Al-Malik Huwe al-Malik; Yeom min Zamanina; Hefla Samr Min Ajl 5 Jiziran; Al-Fil wa Malik al-Zaman; Munaminat Tarikhia; Ahlam Shaqiyya*

#### Topic Seven: Muhammed al-Maghut

Criticism and satire about the colonialism of the Arab world and of the Arab world itself, such as how it views the past and the future  
*Dia'a Tishreen; Kasak Ya Want; Gharbi, Shaqaik al-Na'aman*

#### Topic Eight: Walid Ikhlassi

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Criticism of the government and politics

*Al-Sirat; Hatha Nahar al-Majnun; Sahra al-Democratia 'ala al-Hashaba*

Topic Nine: Jordanian Theater

Plays and drama within Jordan