

## CET Syllabus of Record

**Program:** CET Jordan

**Course Title:** (AM/LANG 340) Jordanian Society

**Total Hours:** 45

**Recommended Credits:** 3

**Primary Discipline / Suggested Cross Listings:** Arabic Language / Middle Eastern Studies, Anthropology

**Language of Instruction:** Arabic

**Prerequisites / Requirements:** Open to all program students

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### Description

This anthropological course offers a general introduction to the peoples, cultures and traditions of the Arab world and wider Middle East with a primary focus on Jordanian ethnography. The complex cultural and socio-political life in contemporary Jordan is highlighted, offering students a cultural framework for learning the Arabic language. Throughout the course, students challenge their assumptions and stereotypes about the Middle East's history, cultures, traditions, religions and politics. Topics include the various groups that inhabit the region, their languages/dialects, religious affiliations, economies and other cultural and social variables.

This course begins meeting a few weeks into the program, after a period of intensive instruction in MSA and Jordanian dialect. Depending on the number of students enrolled, the course may be split up into smaller groups so instructors can devote personalized attention to students at varying levels of Arabic to ensure all students are able to actively participate in the larger class meetings. Class sections make up approximately one-third of the total class hours, while large group meetings and activities make up the remaining two-thirds.

### Objectives

In this course, students can:

- Gain an understanding of the variety and complexity of life in the contemporary Arab world from a cultural, ethnic, historical and socio-political perspective.
- Describe the physical and environmental features of the Arab world and the historical distribution of its population.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the various Islamic traditions and their manifestations within socio-cultural milieus.
- Unveil and critique cultural stereotypes of the Middle East.
- Develop speaking and writing skills learned in Modern Standard Arabic class through oral presentations and written analyses



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- Augment Arabic vocabulary with high-frequency vocabulary phrases and expressions used in historical documentation and analysis

### Course Requirements

Students must complete all reading assignments before coming to class. Readings are contemporary writings and range from 10 to 30 pages per class session. Active class participation is essential. Students are expected to work through texts thoroughly at home and come to class with an active understanding of the content. The class format is based on readings, text analysis and discussions. Site visits supplement course material and participation is mandatory. In addition to daily participation points, students are responsible for two short papers, presentations and a final paper/project.

### Grading

The final grade is determined as follows:

Participation	30%
Two short papers	20%
Presentations	20%
Final paper/project	30%

### Readings

ضاهر، مسعود (1994)

مشكلات بناء الدولة الحديثة في الوطن العربي. مؤسسة عيال للدراسات والنشر

Daher, Massoud. *Problems Related to Building a Modern State in the Arab Homeland* Aibal for Studies and Publishing. 1994.

بلقزيز، عبدالاله. (2012)

تحرير. الربيع العربي إلى أين؟ أفق جديدة للتغيير الديمقراطي. مركز دراسات الوحدة العربية. سلسلة كتب المستقبل العربي. وزارة الثقافة، الأردن عمان.

Belkeziz, Abdelilah. Editor. *Where Will the Arab Spring Go? New Horizons for Democratic Change*. Center for Arab Unity Studies. Arab Future Series. Ministry of Culture. Amman, Jordan. 2012.

نعمان، بولس (2011)

خمسة أعوام في شرق الأردن، أبحاث أخلاقية، أدبية، قضائية، دينية. وزارة الثقافة، الأردن عمان.

Numan, Bolos. *Five Years in East Jordan: Ethical, Literary, Judicial, and Religious Research*. Ministry of Culture. Amman, Jordan. 2012.

المحيسن، جهاد (2005)

القبيلة والدولة في شرق الأردن. منشورات البنك الاهلي الاردني، ش م م ع. الاردن عمان.

Al-Mohisen, Jihad. *Tribe and State in East Jordan*. Jordan Ahli Bank Pamphlets. Amman, Jordan. 2005



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سعید، ادوارد (1998)  
الثقافة والامبريالية. ترجمة كمال ابو ديب. دار الاداب. لبنان، بيروت.  
Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism*. Translation by Kamal Abu Deeb. Dar Al-  
Adab. Beirut, Lebanon. 1998.

الزعيبي، احمد شريف (2011)  
حكايات شعبية اردنية. عالم الكتب الحديث للنشر والتوزيع. الاردن، اربد.  
Zoabi, Ahmad Sherif. *Jordanian Folktales*. Modern World Books for Publishing  
and Distribution. Irbid, Jordan. 2011.

الطويل، فالج (2002)  
مدارات الذاكرة. المؤسسة العربية للدراسات والنشر. الاردن، عمان.  
Al-Taweel, Falih. *Orbits of Memory*. Arab Institution for Studies and Publishing.  
Amman, Jordan. 2002.

بركات، حلیم (1998)  
قضايا في المجتمع العربي المعاصر. المؤسسة العربية للدراسات والنشر. لبنان، بيروت.  
Barakat, Halim. *Issues in Contemporary Arab Society*. Arab Institution for  
Studies and Publishing. 1998.

### Outline of Course Content

#### Topic 1 – Introduction and Overview (1 week)

- Geographic setting: Middle Easterners in their environment
- The main geographic and environmental features of the Middle East and the distribution of human populations

#### Topic 2 – Cultural Variation in the Middle East: Language and Religion (2 weeks)

- Ethnic, religious and cultural diversity of the Middle East
- Customs, traditions and values
- Shaping a Jordanian identity

#### Topic 3 – Islam and Daily Practices of Muslims (2 weeks)

- The Five Pillars of Islam
- Culture versus religion
- Islamic traditions and their manifestations in Jordanian society
- Islam and political life in Jordan
- Islamism versus secularism

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### Topic 4 –Understanding Jordanian Etiquette (1 week)

- Importance of greetings and hospitality in Arab culture
- The Café: Coffee and its meanings in Jordan
- Ethics at home, school and the workplace

### Topic 5 – Appearance, Urbanization and City Life (2 weeks)

- Sociopolitical formations: tribes and states
- Housing: old houses, stone houses, modern homes
- The history of dress in the Levant
- Men’s and women’s clothing between tradition and modernity

### Topic 6 – Social Organization: Family, Marriage and Kinship (3 weeks)

- Patterns of kinship in Jordan
- Ethnic and religious variations
- Social stratification
- Tribalism vs. nationalism
- Bedouins, peasants, the urban population
- Relationships of confrontation in the countryside
- Platonic and intimate relationships
- Marriage and divorce in Jordanian society
- Role of the family
- Death rituals

### Topic 7 –Gender and Society (1 week)

- Gender segregation
- Gender roles in Jordan
- Traditional versus contemporary view of women

### Topic 8 – Prevailing Myths and Beliefs in Jordanian Society (1 week)

- The historical roots of common myths
  - The Jinn and Spirits
  - Folk Healers
  - Evil Eye