

Attention!

This is a representative syllabus. The syllabus for the course you are enrolled in will likely be different.

Please refer to your instructor's syllabus for more information on specific requirements for a given semester.

The Arabian Nights
Arabic 2705, Class Number 23966
Meeting Times/Location

Professor:

Email:

Office:

Office Hours:

Course Description: *The Arabian Nights* (also known as *The Thousand and One Nights*) is a collection of stories that circulated in the medieval Islamic world and would later become part of modern world literature through processes of additions, translations, and creative retellings. In this course, we will read the 14th century collection of tales that constitute the earliest existing version of *The Thousand and One Nights* and analyze it both in relation to the medieval genres and concerns that shaped it and through contemporary theoretical frameworks.

The Thousand and One Nights is a fluid and changing collection. We will discuss

its origins, later additions such as the stories of Aladdin and Sindbad, and the role that its reception and translation in Europe played in making it a key world literature text. We will also study some of its many adaptations in film, poetry, and narrative.

By analyzing key components of the text such as the frame story, gender relations, and fantasy and by considering the aesthetics and politics of re-writing *The Arabian Nights* in modern contexts we will come to appreciate the stories' many travels across time and genres and develop our own ideas on the what *The Thousand and One Nights* can teach us about the enduring power of storytelling.

This course is taught in English

GE Category: Literature

Literature:

Goals: Students evaluate significant texts in order to develop capacities for aesthetic and historical response and judgment; interpretation and evaluation; and critical listening, reading, seeing, thinking, and writing.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

- 1) Students analyze, interpret, and critique significant literary works.
- 2) Through reading, discussing, and writing about literature, students appraise and evaluate the personal and social values of their own and other cultures.

In this course, we will meet these goals by:

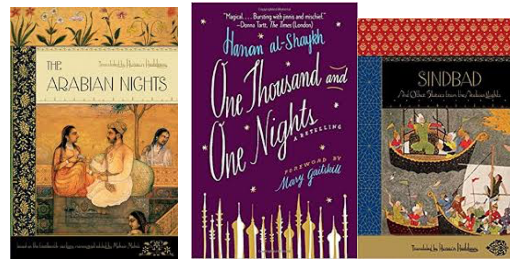
- becoming very familiar with stories and themes that constitute the core collection of The 1,001 Nights

- appreciating the complex history of translation, transmission, and adaptations in shaping The 1,001 Nights
- discussing and applying theoretical frameworks; including folklore, narrative theory, psychoanalysis, Orientalism, feminist theory; to the stories of the 1,001 Nights
- reflecting on the different meanings and roles that storytelling plays in the stories of the Nights and their adaptations
- practice the art of storytelling and deep listening in the classroom

*As an exercise in metacognitive reflection we will re-visit these learning outcomes and goals during the semester to consider *what* and *how* we are learning and if we need to make any adjustments.

Readings: We will read the following three books as well as readings that are posted to Canvas. You can purchase the books at the OSU campus bookstore, order them online, or check them out from a library. If ordering online, use the ISBN number to make sure you are purchasing the correct edition:

- 1) ***The Arabian Nights*** (New Deluxe Edition) by Muhsin Mahdi (editor) and Husain Haddawy (translator) ISBN-13: 978-0393331660
- 2) ***Sindbad: And Other Stories from The Arabian Nights*** (New Deluxe Edition) by Muhsin Mahdi (editor) and Husain Haddawy (translator) ISBN-13: 978-0393332469
- 3) ***One Thousand and One Nights: A Retelling*** by Hanan al-Shaykh (Anchor 2014) ISBN-13: 9780307948991



All other texts and materials listed in the course schedule will be made available through Canvas. I (and you, if you like) will periodically bring in additional materials for us to read / view in class. These will be posted to our Canvas page under the course summary for that day.

*Although reading Arabic is not a requirement for this course, when available, you can find the Arabic versions of our readings on Canvas.

COURSE VALUES:

Support: Your success and learning are important to me. We all learn differently and may need different kinds of accommodation. Please talk to me as soon as possible if there are aspects of the course that are not conducive to your learning or exclude you. We can develop strategies and adjustments to meet your needs. If you need official accommodations we will work with [Disability Services](#) to make sure that you have these met. There are many resources on campus that may be useful, including the [Writing Center](#),

[Academic Advising](#), and [Academic Coaching](#).

Inclusivity: In this course, we will strive to create an inclusive learning environment. This means that different perspectives and interpretations of texts and ideas can both coexist and be questioned. This also means that we recognize that learning often initiates shifts in perspectives, approaches, and conclusions.

Preparation: Please come to class as well prepared as possible. This includes doing the assigned readings and noting aspects of the text that are particularly

interesting to you (please mark and be ready to refer to specific passages in the texts!)

Email: I am keen to support your learning and success in this course. When you have questions relating to

content and assignments in the course please consider asking them before class, during class, or in office hours rather than via email. Although I am happy to answer your emails, in person conversations are typically more productive and efficient.

Grades and Assignments:

Participation: I hope that you participate actively in this course because this is often one of the best ways to learn and process course materials. Participation can include a variety of practices, such as contributing to group and class discussion, listening to and responding to your peers, and reflecting on ideas through in-class writing assignments. In some classes, you will be asked to turn in written reflections on texts or discussions.

There are innumerable adaptations and references to *The Nights* circulating in the world. If you come across one that you want to share and discuss in the class, please email me ahead of time and let me know!

During Socratic Seminars and other discussion formats, you will take greater responsibility for guiding the learning process in the class. You will be assessed on your participation in a variety of discussion formats.

Asking questions is an important component of participation. In this class, you will receive training on how to

formulate and revise questions that can take a discussion to a deeper level. We will think about ways to probe underlying assumptions within questions and how to revise questions in order to catalyze new insights or ways of looking at an issue. **Five times during the semester**, you will share one of your questions on the Canvas discussion page before class. These and other questions will help guide class discussions and will be used as preparatory materials for Socratic Seminars.

In-class Storytelling: Throughout the term, we will reflect on the art of telling stories that can both entertain and teach us something new. In addition to discussing different modes and purposes of telling stories in *The Nights* we will practice creating, telling, and listening to stories to each other. We will engage in several shorter sessions using prompts to get us started and dedicate a full class session to storytelling following our reading of *Sindbad the Sailor*.

Midterm: The midterm exam will consist of passages from *The Nights*. You will identify the stories and write an

analysis based on the contexts and questions that are covered in readings, discussions, and lectures.

Attendance: Regular attendance is essential for success in this course. **You will be allowed three unexcused absences. After that your final grade will be lowered by 3% for every unexcused absence.**

However, if you are sick, please stay home and rest! If you are missing class due to illness or other reasons, please contact me to let me know. Other excused absences include religious holidays, OSU competitions, deaths in the family, etc.

Final Project: For your final project, you can 1) Write an analysis of an adaptation of *The Nights* (could be a novel, film, music, etc.) or 2) Do a

creative project. In a previous iteration of this class, students painted paintings, created posters, wrote a children's book, wrote short stories, and more. For each creative project, make sure to include an approximately 2-page discussion of your ideas and approach.

We will dedicate some time to peer review of your final projects in class. You will also prepare a short (2-3 minute) of your final project for the last two class meetings.

Grade Distribution:

Participation: 30%

Questions: 10%

In-class storytelling 10 %

Midterm: 20%

Final paper or project: 30 %

(presentation 10 % + written paper 20%)

Course Schedule (subject to change):

*Each class meeting has its own page on Canvas. There you will find a summary of what we did in class and any resources, links, or handouts used.

Week 1

8/22 First day: Introductions to the course and to each other

8/24 The Story of King Shahrayar and Shahrazad, pp. 1-21 in *The Arabian Nights*
lecture and discussion: frame stories

Week 2

8/29 Excerpt from *The Art of Storytelling* by Mia Irene Gerhardt (on Canvas), "Madness and Cure in the *1001 Nights*" by Jerome W. Clinton (on Canvas)
lecture and discussion: gender and agency in the frame story

8/31 Introduction: The Story of the Merchant and the Demon, The Story of the Fisherman and the Demon, pp. 21-80 in *The Arabian Nights*
+ “Narrative-Men” by Tzvedan Todorov (on Canvas)
lecture and discussion: The world and narrative form of the 1,001 Nights

Week 3

9/5 The Story of the Porter and the Three Ladies, pp. 80-181 in *The Arabian Nights*
9/7 Excerpt from the film *Scheherazade, Tell Me a Story* (2009)

Week 4

9/12 The Story of the Three Apples, pp. 181-241 in *The Arabian Nights*

9/14 *Lecture and practice: The art of asking questions*

Week 5

9/19 The Story of the Hunchback, pp. 248-356 in *The Arabian Nights*
Lecture and discussion: humor

9/21 *Socratic Seminar*

Week 6

9/26 “The Translators of the One Thousand and One Nights” by Jorge Luis Borges; “The Thousand and One Nights in European Culture” by Francesco Gabrieli (on Canvas)

9/28 The Story of Prince Ahmad and the Fairy Peri-Banou:
http://www.wollamshram.ca/1001/Sn_3/13tale7.htm

Week 7

10/3 The Story of Jullanar of the Sea, pp. 464-518 in *The Arabian Nights*
lecture and discussion: fantasy

10/5 Review for midterm

Week 8

10/10 Midterm

10/12 Autumn Break

Week 9

10/17 *Lecture and discussion of orality and literacy in The Arabian Nights*

10/19 Visit to Rare Books and Manuscripts: **Meet in Thompson Library 150 A/B**

Week 10

10/24 Introduction, pp i-xix + The Story of Sinbad the Sailor, pp 3-61 in *Sinbad*, "The Hole" by Hassan Blasim (on Canvas) and / or Excerpt from the novel *Memories of a Meltdown* by Mohamed Makhzangi (on Canvas)

10/26 *Storytelling through objects in the museum*

Week 11

10/31 The Story of 'Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves, pp 63-95 in *Sinbad*

11/02 "Kahramana" in *Iraq+100* (on Canvas) and "Why Kahramana?"
<https://www.englishpen.org/pen-atlas/why-kahramana/>

Week 12

11/7 The Story of 'Ala al-Din (Aladdin) and the Magic Lamp 97-197 in *Sinbad*

11/9 Disney's Aladdin (Secured Media Library), "It Doesn't Matter that an Arab Will Play Aladdin" <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2017/07/doesn-matter-arab-play-aladdin-170719091927577.html>

Lecture and discussion: Orientalism and US discourses on race

Week 13

11/14 Musical Adaptations

11/16 *One Thousand and One Nights: A Retelling* by Hanan al-Shaykh (1/3)

Week 14

11/21 *One Thousand and One Nights: A Retelling* by Hanan al-Shaykh 2/2)

11/23 Thanksgiving Break

Week 15

11/28 *One Thousand and One Nights: A Retelling* by Hanan al-Shaykh (3/3)

11/30 Presentations

Week 16

12/5 Presentations

Final Projects are due on Wednesday, December 13 at 2 pm

STUDENT RESOURCES:

Mental and Emotional Health:

If you are experiencing a personal crisis or problems that are difficult for you to manage please contact the OSU Counseling and Consultation Services (614-292-5766; <http://www.ccs.ohio-state.edu>). This service is free and confidential to students. Staff is there to provide support and guidance.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged

academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct <http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>.

DISABILITY SERVICES

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office of Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office of Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone: 292-3307, TDD: 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>