

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 History of the Arabic Language

NELC 5611

Instructor:

Contact:

Office Hours:

Course Description and Goals:

This is a **hybrid lecture/seminar course for advanced undergraduates and graduate students** covering the history of the Arabic language. It introduces and investigates the major debates on the subject: What is Arabic? Is it one language or many? Where did Arabic come from? What is its relationship to other languages? How did it come to be as it is? What is the origin of Arabic diglossia? What factors have led it to become one of the world's most widespread languages?

The course is fundamentally philological, blending history and linguistics. We will treat both "internal" language change, descriptively, using the comparative method, and contextually- or externally-induced or "ecological" language change, situating Arabic speakers in their changing historical environments.

Prerequisites

There are no strict prerequisites, although students who know at least some Arabic will be able to make the most sense of the material. Students who do not already know the Arabic script should learn it on their own as soon as possible in order to benefit most from the course. (One way to accomplish this is to enroll in Arabic 1101 simultaneously with this course.) Students with no prior knowledge of any form of Arabic ought to have background in the study of linguistics or the history of the Middle East.

Learning Objectives

The course expects two kinds of learning from its students. On the one hand, one must learn a lot of information about Arabic and its history, the specifics that make Arabic what it is. On the other hand, one must understand and acquire some practice with methods of historical and linguistic analysis applied to the history of Arabic.

Upon completion of the course, a successful student will be able to discuss the major issues in the history of Arabic in an informed way, to conduct research on the Arabic language, and to relate history in general to the history of languages. The course contents will probably help students of Arabic in their continued acquisition of the language. Native speakers of Arabic will gain insights into their own language not otherwise available.

The course counts as an elective for OSU's Arabic major and it counts as graduate credit for the MA and PhD in NELC (and for other graduate programs as approved by the graduate student's home department). It does not count toward the Arabic minor, which has more basic requirements, although students minoring in Arabic may benefit from it.

Required Texts and Course Materials

Required readings are listed in the schedule below. Most of the readings may be found on the *Carmen* site of this course. Some of the readings are freely available on the internet or with an OSU username and password; direct links are found below.

The following readings are not provided. Students should purchase them for themselves independently. Bookfinder.com offers a comparative view of costs.

- Kees Versteegh, *The Arabic Language*, 2nd edition. Edinburgh University Press, 2014. (Make sure you get the second edition!) IN THE WEEKLY READING LISTS BELOW, THIS APPEARS SIMPLY AS "VERSTEEGH" WITH PAGE NUMBERS.
- Robert Hoyland, *In God's Path*, Oxford University Press 2014.

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 policy

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

FOR YOUR SAFETY, the OSU Student Safety/Escort Service is available after 7 p.m. by dialing 292-3322.

Attendance Policy

Your progress in this course depends upon your active engagement in class discussions and upon acquiring information imparted by the instructor in addition to the readings. Attendance, therefore, is mandatory. Please discuss absences to be excused with me as early as possible. More than two unexcused absences may be grounds for reduction of your participation grade. More than three absences will result in a grade of "EN" for the course.

Students are responsible for all information, materials, and class discussion that occurs, even in his or her absence. Absent students are expected to make arrangements with other class members to obtain notes or to be apprised of class developments when absent.

Grading

1. Each assignment receives a score:

Excellent: **3** Good: **2** Passing: **1** Poor: **0**

2. That score is multiplied by the Grade Factor of the assignment for a number of Course Points (CP). E.g., if the assignment has a Grade Factor of 5, and your work was Good (2), then $2 \times 5 = 10$ Course Points.

3. Only one assignment is mandatory: participation. *All other assignments, quizzes, homework, and tests are elective!* The assignments available are listed here with their Grade Factors.

1. participation (required): **5**
2. initiate discussion/oral summary of assigned readings (sign-up with instructor; if you do more than three, I grade the three best ones): **1 each**. (This entails beginning the class discussion on a given day, and speaking for the first five or ten minutes of class.)
3. midterm (Monday, October 14 in class): **5**
4. final exam (Wednesday, December 16, 12-1:45pm): **5**
5. Five written homework assignments (distributed the week before: due Sept 18, Sept 25, Sept 30, Oct 9): **1 each**
6. 5-minute presentation on an Arabic dialect (Oct 21): **2**
7. group research exercise on settlement patterns (weeks 11-13): **4**
8. Four quizzes (contents announced the week before: Sept 2, Sept 11, Oct 28, Nov 4): **1 each**
9. One or two detailed book reports (5-6 pages) on a scholarly book chosen in consultation with the instructor. You have two opportunities to turn in a book report: October 14 and December 16. **2 each**

4. The total of your Course Points will determine your final grade. You decide how much work you want to do to get the grade level you want. (The maximum Grade Factor for the entire course is 37, which would mean you did every single possible task for credit.)

A	= 67 course points or more
A-	= 65-66 course points
B+	= 63-64 course points
B	= 57-62 course points
B-	= 55-56 course points
C+	= 53-54 course points
C	= 47-52 course points
C-	= 45-46 course points
D+	= 43-44 course points
D	= 37-42 course points
E	= 0-36 course points

5. There will be no make-up exams or quizzes and no late assignments will be accepted for *any reason*. There are plenty of chances to earn points if you miss one opportunity. Can't attend the final? Do extra work ahead of time.

6. Note that the quality of your work will make a very large difference in the amount of points you earn. One "Excellent" piece of work is worth more than two Poor pieces of work. (The same is true in life in general.) Focus on presenting in carefully articulated, thoughtful, attentive work, and you will do well. If you rush through your projects, do not proofread, do not think your work through, you will do more poorly. Most of your "good" work will be just "Good." "Excellent" is another level.

Readings listed below are to be read in preparation for the week in which they are listed.

Schedule subject to changes upon announcement.

Week 1. Aug 26, 28. Introduction. Anatomy of Language. Technical Terminology. Phonology, Morphology, Syntax. The Comparative Method and Reconstructed Languages and Cultures. Language Contact.

- Benjamin Fortson, "Introduction: The Comparative Method and the Indo-European Family," in *Indo-European Language and Culture: An Introduction* (2004), **pp. 1-12 only**.
- Calvert Watkins, "Indo-European and Indo-Europeans," from *The American Heritage Dictionary of Indo-European Roots, Second Edition* (2000), pp. vii-xxv.
- John Huehnergard, "Proto-Semitic Language and Culture," in *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 5th edition* (2011), pp. 2066-2069.

Week 2. Sept 2, 4. Afroasiatic > Semitic > Arabic > Arabics

- Wikipedia: Afroasiatic: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afroasiatic_languages
- John Huehnergard, "Afro-Asiatic," in Roger Woodard (ed.), *The Ancient Languages of Syria-Palestine and Arabia* (2008), pp. 225-246.
- Sina Tezel, "The Comparative Method as Applied to the Semitic Cognate Sets with Phonological Correspondences," in Tal Davidovich, Ablahad Lahdo, and Torkel Lindquist (eds.), *From Tur Abdin to Hadramawt: Semitic Studies in Honour of Bo Isaksson on the Occasion of his Retirement* (2014), 199-207.
- List of Proto-Semitic Stems:
https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Appendix:List_of_Protosemitic_stems
- Versteegh 1-25.
- Robert Hetzron, "Two Principles of Genetic Reconstruction," *Lingua* 38 (1976): 89-108.
- Norbert Nebes and Peter Stein, "Ancient South Arabian," in Roger Woodard (ed.), *The Ancient Languages of Syria-Palestine and Arabia* (2008), pp. 145-178.
- M.C.A. Macdonald, "Ancient North Arabian," in Roger Woodard (ed.), *The Ancient Languages of Syria-Palestine and Arabia* (2008), pp. 179-224.

Week 3. Sept 9, 11. Ancient Arabia and Its Languages.

- Versteegh 26-41.
- M.C.A. Macdonald, "Reflections on the Linguistic Map of Pre-Islamic Arabia," *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 11 (2000): 28-79.
- Hoyland, *In God's Path*, pp. 1-30.
- M.C.A. Macdonald *et alii*, "Arabs and Empires before the Sixth Century," in Greg Fisher (ed.), *Arabs and Empires in Late Antiquity* (2015), pp. 11-89 ([read up to page 74](#)).
- Christian Julien Robin, "Before Ḥimyar," in Greg Fisher (ed.), *Arabs and Empires in Late Antiquity* (2015), pp. 90-126.
- Jan Retsö, "Arabs (historical)," *Encyclopaedia of Islam Three*.
http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.ohio-state.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/arabs-historical-COM_22957
- Modern South Arabian speech samples
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=74-mhTRhnCU>
From the *Semitisches Tonarchiv*: http://www.semarch.uni-hd.de/tondokumente.php43?LD_ID=5&RG_ID=3&ORT_ID=224&lang=en

Week 4. Sept 16, 18. Reading Ancient Arabian Inscriptions. Old Arabic.

- M.C.A. Macdonald (2000): "Old Arabic (Epigraphic)" in *The Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.ohio-state.edu/entries/encyclopedia-of-arabic-language-and-linguistics/old-arabic-epigraphic-EALL_COM_vol3_0241

- M.C.A. Macdonald *et alii*, "Arabs and Empires before the Sixth Century," in Greg Fisher (ed.), *Arabs and Empires in Late Antiquity* (2015), pp. 11-89 (read 74-89).
- Christian Julien Robin, "Ḥimyar, Aksūm, and Arabia Deserta in Late Antiquity: The Epigraphic Evidence," in Greg Fisher (ed.), *Arabs and Empires in Late Antiquity* (2015), pp. 127-171.
- Robert Hoyland, "Arab Kings, Arab Tribes and the Beginning of Arab Historical memory in Late Roman Epigraphy," in Hannah Cotton, Robert Hoyland, Jonathan Price and David Wasserstein (eds.), *From Hellenism to Islam: Cultural and Linguistic Change in the Roman Near East* (2009), pp. 374-400.
- Ahmad Al-Jallad, "On the Genetic Background of the Rbbl bn Hf'm Grave Inscription at Qaryat al-Fāw," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (2014): 1-21.
- Versteegh 42-59.
- Hoyland, *In God's Path*, pp. 31-65 (esp. 56-65).

Week 5. Sept 23, 25. Arab Conquest. The Spread and Standardization of Arabic.

- Versteegh 60-84.
- Hoyland, *In God's Path*, pp. 66-102 (esp. pp. 93-102).
- Ghabban and Hoyland, "The Inscription of Zuhayr, the Oldest Islamic Inscription (24 AH/AD 644-645), the Rise of the Arabic Script and the Nature of the Early Islamic State," *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 19 (2008): 209-236.
- Learn about "the San'ā' manuscript" and its variants:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sana'a_manuscript

Week 6. Sept 30 (no meeting on Friday, Oct 2). The Structure of Standard Arabic and the Grammatical Tradition.

- Versteegh 85-125.
- Hoyland, *In God's Path*, pp. 103-137 (esp. 126-137).

Week 7. Oct 7, 9. Post-Classical Arabic.

- Versteegh 126-171.
- Hoyland, *In God's Path*, pp. 138-169 (esp. 157-169).
- Charles A. Ferguson, "The Arabic Koine," *Language* 35.4 (1959): 616-630.

Week 8. Oct 14 (no meeting on Fri Oct 16: Autumn Break). Midterm Exam and Autumn Break. (no reading)

- Midterm examination. Wednesday, October 14, in class.

Week 9. Oct 21, 23. Arabic Dialects: "New Arabic."

- Versteegh 172-220.
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Varieties_of_Arabic
- Hoyland, *In God's Path*, pp. 170-206 (esp. 195-206).

Week 10. Oct 28, 30. "Case" Studies: the Great *I'rāb* Debate.

- Hoyland, *In God's Path*, pp. 207-230.
- Jonathan Owens, "Case and Proto-Arabic," in *A Linguistic History of Arabic* (2006), pp. 79-118. Accessible here: <http://library.ohio-state.edu/record=b6577092~S7>
- Kees Versteegh, "Poetic Koine," *Encyclopaedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics* http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.ohio-state.edu/entries/encyclopedia-of-arabic-language-and-linguistics/old-arabic-epigraphic-EALL_COM_vol3_0241
- Michael Zwettler, *The Oral Tradition of Classical Arabic Poetry: Its Character and Implications* (1978), pp. 97-156.
- Gregor Schoeler, "Oral Poetry Theory and Oral Literature," in *The Oral and the Written in Early Islam* (2006), trans. from German by Uwe Vagelpohl, pp. 87-110.

Week 11. Nov 4, 6. Arabicization, Creole, Semicreole.

- An example "creole" of English: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tok_Pisin
- Kees Versteegh, *Pidginization and Creolization: The Case of Arabic* (1984), 1-79.
- John McWhorter, *Language Interrupted* (2007), "Introduction" (pp. 1-20) and "Colloquial Arabic: A Mysterious Drift" (pp. 165-197). *Access through OSU Library*.
- Bentz and Winter, "Languages with More Second Language Learners Tend to Lose Nominal Case," *Language Dynamics and Change* 3 (2013): 1-27. Skim to get the main point.
- Versteegh, "Your Place or Mine? Kinship, Residence Patterns, and Language Change," in Wim Vandenbussche, Ernst Håkon Jahr, and Peter Trudgill (eds.), *Language Ecology for the 21st Century: Linguistic Conflicts and Social Environments* (2013), pp. 65-93.

Week 12. (No class Wed Nov 11: Veteran's Day). Settlement Patterns: A Reality Check and Group Research Exercise. Nov 13.

- Group Research Exercise: to be explained in advance.

Week 13. Nov 18, 20. Modern Standard Arabic and Theorizing Diglossia.

- Ferguson, "Diglossia," *Word* 15 (1959): 325-340.
- "Ferguson's original formulation" [of diglossia]: <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~haroldfs/messeas/diglossia/node3.html>
- Versteegh 221-258.

Week 14. NO CLASSES NOV 25 AND 27 (Thanksgiving Break + Columbus Day)

- o No classes

Week 15. Dec 2, 4. Arabic Interacting with Other Languages.

- o Versteegh 259-322.

Week 16. Dec 9. Finish Discussion. Review.

FINAL EXAM: Wednesday, December 16, 12-1:45 pm, in the regular classroom

Eng.	Arabic	Hebrew	Sabaen	Lihyanite	Thamudic (Bedouin)	Safaitic
a	ا	א	ሐ	𐩧 𐩨 𐩩	𐩧 𐩨 𐩩	𐩧 𐩨 𐩩
b	ب	ב	𐩪	𐩪 𐩫	𐩪 𐩫	𐩪 𐩫
j	ج	ג	𐩬	𐩬	𐩬 𐩭	𐩬 𐩭
d	د	ד	𐩮	𐩮 𐩯 𐩰	𐩮 𐩯 𐩰	𐩮 𐩯 𐩰
dha	ذ	ז	𐩱	𐩱 𐩲 𐩳	𐩱 𐩲 𐩳	𐩱 𐩲 𐩳
ha	ه	ח	𐩴	𐩴 𐩵 𐩶	𐩴 𐩵 𐩶	𐩴 𐩵 𐩶
w	و	ו	𐩸	𐩸 𐩹	𐩸 𐩹	𐩸 𐩹
za	ز	ז	𐩺	𐩺 𐩻	𐩺 𐩻	𐩺 𐩻
h	ح	ח	𐩼	𐩼 𐩽 𐩾	𐩼 𐩽 𐩾	𐩼 𐩽 𐩾
kh	خ	כ	𐩿	𐩿 𐻀 𐻁	𐩿 𐻀 𐻁	𐩿 𐻀 𐻁
th	ث	ת	𐻃	𐻃	𐻃 𐻄 𐻅	𐻃 𐻄 𐻅
dh	ذ	ד	𐻇	𐻇 𐻈	𐻇 𐻈	𐻇 𐻈
ya	ي	י	𐻉	𐻉 𐻊	𐻉 𐻊	𐻉 𐻊
k	ك	כ	𐻋	𐻋 𐻌 𐻍	𐻋 𐻌 𐻍	𐻋 𐻌 𐻍
l	ل	ל	𐻏	𐻏 𐻐 𐻑	𐻏 𐻐 𐻑	𐻏 𐻐 𐻑
m	م	מ	𐻓	𐻓 𐻔 𐻕	𐻓 𐻔 𐻕	𐻓 𐻔 𐻕
n	ن	נ	𐻗	𐻗 𐻘 𐻙	𐻗 𐻘 𐻙	𐻗 𐻘 𐻙
s	س	ס	𐻛	𐻛 𐻜 𐻝	𐻛 𐻜 𐻝	𐻛 𐻜 𐻝
Aa	ع	ע	𐻟	𐻟 𐻠	𐻟 𐻠	𐻟 𐻠
gha	غ	ג	𐻡	𐻡 𐻢 𐻣	𐻡 𐻢 𐻣	𐻡 𐻢 𐻣
z	ز	ז	𐻥	𐻥 𐻦 𐻧	𐻥 𐻦 𐻧	𐻥 𐻦 𐻧
Sa	س	ס	𐻛	𐻛 𐻜 𐻝	𐻛 𐻜 𐻝	𐻛 𐻜 𐻝
dh	ذ	ד	𐻇	𐻇 𐻈	𐻇 𐻈	𐻇 𐻈
Q	ق	ק	𐻊	𐻊 𐻋	𐻊 𐻋	𐻊 𐻋
r	ر	ר	𐻌	𐻌 𐻍	𐻌 𐻍	𐻌 𐻍
Sh	ش	ש	𐻐	𐻐 𐻑 𐻒	𐻐 𐻑 𐻒	𐻐 𐻑 𐻒
ta	ت	ת	𐻔	𐻔 𐻕	𐻔 𐻕	𐻔 𐻕
tha	ث	ת	𐻗	𐻗 𐻘 𐻙	𐻗 𐻘 𐻙	𐻗 𐻘 𐻙

Comparative chart of Ancient Arabian Scripts.