Beginning Modern Standard Arabic  
ARAB1003-1503 (3 credits)  

Tunisia and Italy: Politics and Religious Integration in the Mediterranean

This syllabus is representative of a typical semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.

Course Description
This course is designed to develop student proficiency and communication in Modern Standard Arabic. While emphasis is placed primarily upon oral comprehension and conversational skills (i.e. listening and speaking), reading and writing are highlighted as crucial to the reinforcement of those skills. Thus, the course is designed not only to help students acquire Arabic, but also to grasp cultural practices in the Arab world. Cultural context is built into the course and introduced through audiovisual materials and experiential activities accompanying the textbook. Beginning Arabic introduces students to pronunciation and writing systems of basic grammar, basic vocabulary, and sentence structure. Emphasis is placed on the functional use of the language to enable students to participate in basic conversational exchanges, understand native speakers of Arabic accustomed to dealing with non-native Arabic speakers, complete written compositions describing daily events or personal experiences, and read basic texts on familiar topics such as weather, seasons, food, family, studies, and friends.

Tunisian Arabic
Immediately after arriving in Tunis and during the first week of orientation, students are offered a two-session introductory course on Tunisian Arabic (totaling fifteen hours) that ranges from basic vocabulary and sentence structure to easy dialogues and interactive exercises. The objective of these sessions is to provide students with an elementary background and early familiarity with Tunisian Arabic in preparation for the homestay experience.

Language Levels and Placement
Non-beginning participants are placed into appropriate language course levels based on estimated-ACTFL oral proficiency interviews and written exams (placement tests) conducted during orientation in Tunisia.

Course Objectives
Beginning Arabic has an interdisciplinary and experiential focus. The main objectives of the course are to:

- Develop emergent proficiency in spoken Arabic;
- Strengthen listening, comprehension, and communication skills;
- Use the language confidently and effectively in everyday situations;
- Acquire insight into the role of Arabic within Tunisian life and culture.

**Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the program, students will be able to complete the following linguistic tasks:

- Perform greetings and introduce self and others formally and informally
- Identify objects and items in the classroom
- Order entities sequentially and count numbers from 1-100
- Respond to requests and instructions related to teaching/learning activities
- Respond to requests and instructions appropriately and courteously
- Name days of the week, significant dates, and months
- Identify Arab countries, capital cities, and main cities
- Identify one’s nationality and that of others
- Quantify entities in response to questions how much/how many
- Ask and respond to factual questions
- Describe objects
- Ask and answer questions about weather and seasons

In addition, students will be able to ask about and indicate ownership, identify academic disciplines, express feelings, accept/decline invitations, understand street/store signs, narrate texts and conversations explained in class (units 1-9), and converse with classmates about topics discussed and practiced in class. Students will also be able to master essential linguistic structures such as: feminine/masculine, demonstratives (singular/plural, feminine/masculine), definite article, Wh- questions, possessive pronouns, plural (regular/irregular), nominal sentences, negation with «laysa» (nouns and adjectives), verbal sentences, present tense (feminine/masculine, singular/plural pronouns), prepositions and pronouns, verb patterns (Form I, Form II, Form III, Form IV), nunation (adverbs), noun-adjective phrases, verbal nouns, quantification expressions, comparative, superlative, past tense, the dual, *Idhaafa* 'of', and possessive constructions.

**Language of Instruction**

Students are encouraged to use Arabic as much as possible in classroom discussions and assignment correction. Grammatical rules, however, are mostly explained in English.

**Instructional Methods**

SIT’s teaching and learning philosophy is grounded in the experiential learning theory developed by Kolb (1984; 2015) and informed by various scholars, such as Dewey, Piaget, Lewin, among others. Experiential learning theory recognizes that learning is an active process that is not confined to the formal curriculum; “knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (Kolb, 2015, p. 49). Learning involves both content and process. Learning is holistic and happens through various life experiences upon which students draw to generate
new ways of knowing and being. Learning involves a community and is a lifelong endeavor. Learning is transformational. The suggested four step-cycle of a concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation embedded in the experiential learning model is not linear and might not always happen in that specific order, as any learning is highly context dependent. These stages of taking part in a shared experience; reflecting on that experience by describing and interpreting it; challenging their own assumptions and beliefs to generate new knowledge; and ultimately applying new knowledge, awareness, skills, and attitudes in a variety of situations and contexts are important for students to engage in to become empowered lifelong learners.

Required Texts
You are responsible for all the required readings and should be prepared to bring them to bear on discussions in class. The readings will help you place the classes in their context, challenge and engage lecturers, generate questions for class discussions, and deepen your knowledge of particular aspects discussed in class.

Required Readings

Supplementary teaching materials include:
- textbook designed by instructors for SIT students
- audiovisual materials
- magazines and newspapers

Course Schedule
This Arabic language course is designed to give equal weight to developing four skills: reading, writing, listening, and conversation. All of the skills will be covered in the Standard Arabic class, and dialect will be taught through listening and the conversation class.

*Please be aware that topics and excursions may vary to take advantage of any emerging events, to accommodate changes in our lecturers’ availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs

Week 1
This week, students will:
- Be introduced to different varieties of the Arabic language, including classical, standard, and colloquial Arabic;
- Learn basic daily dialogue to communicate.

By the end of this week, students will be able to:
- Greet and be greeted;
- Start recognizing the letters of the Arabic alphabet in different positions within words;
• Communicate on a day-to-day level (students will have approximately 25 pages of essential vocabulary with words related to daily expressions, prepositions, numbers, and verbs).

**Week 2**
This week, students will:
• Cover Alkitaab 1, Unit 1;
• Learn how to form nominal sentences, gender in nouns and adjectives, and Alnisba;
• Learn to write using the Arabic alphabet;
• Practice reading and writing;
• Learn lists of vocabulary and expressions related to health and daily life.

By the end of this week, students will be able to:
• Give directions to taxi drivers in Arabic;
• Introduce themselves and others in Arabic;

**Week 3**
This week, students will:
• Cover Alkitaab 1, Unit 2;
• Learn how to form short sentences and questions.

By the end of this week, students will be able to:
• Understand plural forms and subject pronouns;
• Use some main verb conjugations, like, to want, and to have;
• Relate verbs to cultural and health contexts;
• Talk about their families and friends.

**Week 4**
This week, students will:
• Cover Alkitaab 1, Unit 3;
• Learn alidaaafa and possessive pronoun rules;
• Take the midterm exam.

By the end of this week, students will be able to:
• Form polite requests and conjugate some essential verbs;
• Speak in more depth about food, drinks, body parts, and health-related terms.

**Week 5**
This week, students will:
• Cover Alkitaab 1, Unit 4;
• Learn how to conjugate the present tense and to negate sentences;
• Learn Arabic numbers in relation to counting, time, and shopping;
• Learn in a café, restaurant, and a grocery shop.

By the end of this week, students will be able to:
• Express likes and dislikes;
• Talk about their hobbies;
• Learn how to fix an appointment with someone (applicable to the ISP project).

*At the end of the course, students will present their Final Arabic projects and have Arabic Final Exam.

Additional Information

Homestays
As a complement to the language classes, homestays provide students with the opportunity to learn from different people and to use their language skills continually in a multilingual learning environment. Our goal is to help students develop the necessary communication tools which they can use with their host families, neighbors, and Tunisians on the street.

Field Exercises
Once a week, through field assignments, students enrich their classroom learning experience and their ability to function in real life language situations, assimilate everyday life issues, and immerse in the host culture. Field assignments are done both individually and in groups.

Field assignments may include visits to the following places:

- **Souks**: to practice bargaining skills and interact with community members
- Cafés and restaurants: to experience ordering drinks and food
- Museums and monuments: to learn about historical sites and handicrafts

Assignments and Evaluation

Assignment Descriptions and Grading Criteria

Assignments include reviews and preparation for upcoming sessions and are due at the beginning of class. It is the student’s responsibility to:

- Listen to and learn vocabulary from the textbook and/or the website and/or CD so they can practice in classroom as part of their activities.
- Undertake vocab exercises.
- Study grammatical rules and rehearse in class.
- Read about local culture and write sentences about their experiences in the country

Timely completion of all Arabic assignments is expected. Late hand-ins will be penalized. All assignments are evaluated according to organization, analytical quality, and depth of understanding, argumentation, and presentation of evidence. Tests will not be repeated for absentees. Only certifiable and verifiable absences from tests will be accepted.

Assessment

Regular Tests: 40%
Assignments: 30%
Final examination: 30%

Late Assignments
SIT Study Abroad programs integrate traditional classroom lectures and discussion with field-based experiences, site visits and debriefs. The curriculum is designed to build on itself and progress to the culmination (projects, ISP, case studies, internship, etc.). It is critical that students complete assignments in a timely manner to continue to benefit from the sequences in assignments, reflections and experiences throughout the program.
Example: Students may request a justified extension for one paper/assignment during the semester. Requests must be made in writing and at least 12 hours before the posted due date and time. If reason for request is accepted, an extension of up to one week may be granted at that time. Any further requests for extensions will not be granted. Students who fail to submit the assignment within the extension period will receive an ‘F’ for the assignment.

Grading Scale
94-100%   A
90-93%     A-
87-89%     B+
84-86%     B
80-83%     B-
77-79%     C+
74-76%     C
70-73%     C-
67-69%     D+
64-66%     D
below 64   F

Program Expectations

Class Participation
Participation in class refers to attendance, punctuality, attentive listening, and active engagement in all Arabic language lectures, discussions, educational excursions, assignments, and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior. An absent student is responsible for contacting the instructor, the tutor, and/or fellow students to be prepared for the assignments s/he missed and the ones scheduled for the next class.

Student Expectations
• **Show up prepared.** Be on time, have your readings completed and points in mind for discussion or clarification. Complying with these elements raises the level of class discussion for everyone.
• Have assignments completed on schedule, printed, and done according to the specified requirements. This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.
• Ask questions in class. Engage the lecturer. These are often very busy professionals who are doing us an honor by coming to speak.
• Comply with academic integrity policies (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).
• Respect differences of opinion (classmates, lecturers, local constituents we engage with on site visits). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.

SIT Policies and Resources

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Handbook and the Policies section of the SIT website for all academic and student affairs policies. Students are accountable for complying with all published policies. Of particular relevance to this course are the policies regarding: academic integrity, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), research and ethics in field study and internships, late assignments, academic status, academic appeals, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and misconduct, and the student code of conduct.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Handbook and SIT website for information on important resources and services provided through our central administration in Vermont, such as Library resources and research support, Disability Services, Counseling Services, Title IX information, and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion resources.