Changes in the MENA Region 8353A
Spring 2015
أهلا وسهلا ومرحبا بكم من جديد الى اللغة العربية

Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey
Arabic Studies Program
ARLA 8353A: *Changes in the MENA Region*

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Office Hours: 12 noon to 1 pm, Wednesdays and Thursdays
Class Schedule: 2:00 pm-3:50 pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays at Morse A202

Important Dates:
- Spring Break: March 14-22, 2015
- Final project due on Thursday, May 14th

Required Materials:
- Wehr, Hans (1993), Arabic-English Dictionary*:* The Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic, Spoken Language Services Inc; 4th edition or other approved Arabic-English dictionary

Additional Class Resources:
- Authentic materials from Arab satellite TV stations (i.e. al-Jazeera, al-Arabiyya, BBC Arabic, Egyptian TV, Dubai TV, LBC, etc.) - sources provided by the instructor; Arabic films
- Additional suggested resources provided by the Professor for each unit

Class Overview and Structure:

Ahlan wa sahlan! Welcome to *ARLA 8353, Changes in the MENA Region*.

Over the past 75 years, the Arab world has experienced widespread changes propelled by interrelated political, economic, social and environmental events and processes. ARLA 8353 will provide theoretical tools with which students can question, unpack and analyze the complex developments of this time period.   Specifically, we will examine the major geopolitical upheavals as well as less dramatic transitions resulting from colonialism, independence, civil war, oil economies, globalization, and other key factors.

Our studies will focus on the following five areas:

North Africa	Gulf States
Egypt/Sudan	Iraq
The Levant	

We will use four overarching frameworks: *Political Change*, *Economic Change*, *Social Change* and *Environmental Change* as perspectives for research, analysis and reflection. Within each of these frameworks, a series of interrelated subtopics will further guide our investigation and provide a consistent structure for inquiry. Guest speakers, video clips, Arabic media and other relevant primary and secondary sources will offer authentic viewpoints on the issues of study.

Ongoing class activities and assignments include lectures, preparation of unit-based questions, guest speaker events, discussions, media analysis and commentary, and additional short exercises. Projects include unit-based Reflection Papers (to be posted on an Arabic blog), written responses to student blogs, classroom forum discussions, news updates on current events in the Arab world, and a final proposal project (see all project descriptions below).
The class will be conducted entirely in Arabic, and student projects will be completed in Modern Standard Arabic.

Learning Outcomes:
After successfully completing this course, you will be able to:
- identify and discuss the major changes of the past 75 years in the Arab world
- analyze and write about the interrelated political, economic, social and environmental factors at work in the MENA region
- reflect upon and discuss some of the challenges, opportunities and possible outcomes posed by specific changes in the Arab world
- apply course information/ concepts to a project proposal that addresses real life needs in the Arab world
- improve target language skills: speaking, reading, writing, listening comprehension
- expand knowledge/correct application of both Arabic vocabulary and grammatical concepts

Sequence of Units:
ARLA 8353 covers 5 units: (1) North Africa, (2) Egypt/Sudan, (3) the Levant, (4) the Gulf States, and (5) Iraq. Each unit is 3 weeks in length, except the last unit on Iraq, which will be in a 2-week structure.

Unit Activities and Projects:
- Instructor-led **overview** of specific regions/focus countries in the Arab world. Utilizing sources such as demographic maps, timelines, images and lecture, we will identify and investigate changes in the chosen areas. Each unit overview will apply ARLA 8353's Course Framework, and will prepare you for more in-depth research.
- **Vocabulary and conversation exercises** related to the unit topic. The instructor will provide essential vocabulary. It is suggested that you regularly record unit vocabulary, grammar and personally useful words (**Personal Dictionary**) in a designated 3-ring binder, laptop or other device.
- **Develop eight (8) questions** that address the complexities of the current unit of study. Questions should dig in to the topic and promote critical thinking and meaningful discussion. The questions will be directed to guest speakers for each unit. Questions can also serve as prompts for your own research.
- **News Updates:** Read 1 short newspaper or online article, or watch a news clip (sources in English are permitted) about issues studied in the current unit. Take notes in Arabic, and prepare a 5-minute news update for oral presentation in class.
- **Unit-based Reflection Papers** (see Guidelines below).

<u>Reflection Paper Description and Guidelines:</u>
The Reflection Paper is a record of your learning and interaction with the material from each unit. This includes introductory overviews, guest speaker presentations, news media reports, and any other material introduced. Rather than just a restatement of facts, you are asked to respond to and synthesize unit information.   You will add your thoughts and analysis to shape an original statement about your learning in each unit. Specific guidelines:

- **Incorporate at least 2 of the 4 ARLA 8353 framework categories** (political, economic, social and environmental) **in your analysis of changes in each region** studied. Clearly demonstrate intersecting and/or cause-effect relationships between these categories (e.g. the changing roles of Arab women in education and the labor force , in connection with resulting economic and social changes)
- Utilize **at least 10 words** of the current **unit vocabulary**
- Incorporate any grammatical concepts introduced in class
- Include words or phrases from your Personal Dictionary that apply to the topic
- **Reflection Papers for each unit will be posted on the Arabic blog.** Each student will also be assigned to **read and comment upon at least two blogs** written by classmates. We will discuss the blog posting and comment schedule in class.
- Paper length/word count: 600 words minimum
- Papers should be double-spaced, size 16 Arial font, .8 inch margin

Final Project: Think Tank Proposal: Envisioning Positive Change in the Arab World

The **Think Tank Proposal project** offers you an opportunity to integrate your learning from the semester through a creative and practical visioning exercise. Consider the semester's national/regional case studies about changes that have occurred in the Arab world over the past 75 years. Reflect upon both the challenges and opportunities presented by these political, economic, social and environmental changes. Then, brainstorm and develop a mock proposal for a project with real-life applications that has the potential to address current and/or future needs in the Arab world.

Guidelines:
- Students may work individually or with a partner from ARLA 8353
- Include a **description** of the proposed project and the **needs it addresses**, **population served**, **focus areas** (example: environment and economy), **project goals** and any other relevant project information (e.g. duration, number of people served). **How does your project potentially bring about positive change to the target region?**
- **Base your proposal research on ARLA 8353 resources <u>as well as a minimum of 1 interview with an expert on your topic area (may be Arab or non-Arab</u>)**. Incorporate your interview findings through quotes, a summary or other method.
- Include a minimum of 3 images (graphics, maps, charts, timeline, photographs, etc.)
- You may expand upon one of the Reflection Papers you wrote during the course of the semester
- Relate the project to your MIIS graduate study field and/or career goals
- Projects will be orally presented in class. Options for audiovisual presentation include video podcast, Prezi, Powerpoint or illustrated lecture.
- Word count: minimum 800 words

Grading rubrics will be provided by the Professor.

General Homework Guidelines:

Written assignments will be due **every class at the beginning of class.** Students are expected to turn these assignments in **on time**. **Please include your name and the due date of the assignment on all submitted work.**

Homework assignments will be graded on numerical points. The grading criteria is provided below.

Important Notes:

- All assignments must be written in Arabic and should be handed in at the beginning of class session
- You are allowed two excused absences (i.e. sickness or other emergency circumstances). Two points will be taken from the total grade points for each additional absence. Please inform your professor of absence as soon as possible before--not after--the class you will miss.
- Use of electronic devices is not permitted in class unless it is related to class activities and/or tasks (e.g. presentation). This requires the instructor's permission.
- Please switch off your cell phone during class time.

Active participation

- **Use of Arabic:** The language of instruction and interaction in class is Arabic. English is not used in class or with the teacher outside of class.
- Regular attendance is expected. Excessive absence impacts your participation grade.
- Show evidence of preparation of materials prior to the class session
- Take an active role in class discussions!
- Participate fully in all class activities and tasks (i.e. pair and group work)
- Engage in discussion with classmates and guest speakers

Grading Guidelines

Class participation (see absence policy below)	20 %
Homework assignments	15 %
Mid-term	20 %
News Update	5%
Reflection paper	20 %
Final project	20 %

Grade distribution

A = 4.0 = 96 – 100   C+ = 2.33 = 73 – 77
A- = 3.67 = 92 – 95   C = 2.0 = 69 – 72
B+ = 3.33 = 88 – 91   C- = 1.67 = 64 – 68
B = 3.0 = 83 – 87   D = 1.00 = 60 – 63
B- = 2.67 = 78 – 82

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Course Frameworks for Research, Analysis and Reflection

Aspects of Political Change:

- Impact of colonialism and neo-colonialism: adoption of Socialist ideology by most Arab states
- Development of Islamist movements
- Building of Nation-States
- Independence/post-independence
- Territorial disputes
- Impact of war and conflict on populations: displacement and refugee issues
- Migration
- Impact of 9-11 on relationships with the West
- Arab Union
- The Arab Spring movement
- Issues of terrorism

Aspects of Economic Change:

- Discovery, production and export of oil
- Post-independence nationalization of resources
- Issues of inequality and distribution of wealth; changes to class structure
- Free trade
- National debt and influence of the International Monetary Fund (IMF)
- Impact of emerging technologies on the economic sector
- Privatization of state-owned industries
- Impact of oil-based economy on all aspects of society
- Agricultural reforms

Aspects of Social Change:

- Impact of modern life and globalization on traditional Arabic societies
- Impact of population shifts from rural to urban areas
- Changing role of women in education and the labor force
- Short and long-term impact of civil war on society
- Changing affinities and divisions between ethnic groups in neighboring regions
- Social activism
- Impact of religious conflicts on Arabic societies

Aspects of Environmental Change:

- Impact of climate change on ecosystems and weather patterns (drought, desertification, etc.)
- Impact of war on the environment
- Public health issues related to the environment
- Emergence of new technologies to address environmental issues