

Arabic Beginner I.

(2021-22 Fall Term, Mondays and Fridays 9:00-10:45, Language course, 4 credits)

Instructor: **Rashed Daher, Ph.D., Lecturer**

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Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description

Arabic (classical – pre 20th century – and modern) is one of the most important languages required to understand Middle East culture and Medieval history. Arabic is an official language of the United Nations, and it is widely used in many parts of the world. Learning Arabic is essential to all those who have an interest in getting an overall vision of Islamic history and understand the thorough link between Islamic and Christian cultures, political and economic developments, as well as linguistic features throughout the middle ages up till recent days. Students with the intention to work at international organizations or businesses are also welcome.

Reading Arabic texts in source language opens a vast and new horizon for the student in learning Medieval history and following the developments of Arabic language throughout 15 centuries of continuous usage. The course provides practical linguistic and cultural backgrounds for research purposes. Participants can learn to read essential Arabic written sources on the intermediate level. Achieving the ability to read and later analyze historical Arabic texts provides the student not only a unique capability of understanding most of the intercultural and political events between Medieval Europe and the Middle East but also have the chance of creating their own standpoint concerning those events. This course offers more than a language course; students can acquire essential details on the culture and traditions of the Arab world.

Students can expect an interactive course in a small group, which provides an opportunity for individual studying schemes. Learning Arabic needs constant commitment and ambition to overcome the challenges of learning the language (difficult in the beginning, easier later).

Arabic is important for various reasons:

- It is the fifth most spoken language in the world, an official language of the United Nations and many countries
- It provides access to a vast number of written sources beyond Islamic texts
- There is a high demand for non-native Arabic speakers in the world, but supply is low
- Arabic is the largest Semitic language and provides a perfect introduction to other Semitic languages such as Hebrew or Amharic

- Many languages are based on the Arabic alphabet, such as Persian, Dari, Urdu, Kurdish, etc.
- It is a sound basis for learning other Arabic-related languages such as Ottoman Turkish and Persian
- Arabic includes interesting language phenomena such as diglossia, many dialects, root system, etc.
- Learning Arabic facilitates the understanding of different art forms (calligraphy, music, literature)
- Knowing Arabic fosters understanding between Middle Eastern and Western societies

Goals and Learning outcomes

After two terms of learning Arabic, students will be able to obtain a “general use” of the language; they will achieve the following:

- Write and read Arabic almost perfectly, even without using vowel signs.
- Understand much of standard Arabic language by listening, as well as, depending on student skills, a basic level of speaking (standard language, not dialect).
- Read, understand, analyze and translate moderate Arabic texts and a wide scale of primary historical resources.
- Get essential bases for further learning of the language in the future.

Besides gaining a massive basic knowledge of the language, students will also get insight into some features of Islamic, especially Arab culture. This will lead to an understanding of the environment in which the source material written in Arabic was born.

Participants’ abilities in Arabic will be assessed through a short quiz (15-20 minutes) every two weeks and a final examination at the end of the semester.

Format

Each class will begin with a brief repetition of the material we have learned in the previous lessons. Then we will check the assigned homework, continue learning grammar and practicing grammatical rules, read different texts, and finally (depending on time left) train the oral use of the language. Regular homework will be set; students should count that successful participation in this class will require at least triple the amount of time outside the classroom than inside the classroom.

Students will be able to listen to Arabic voice recordings as well, allowing them to distinguish different Arabic pronunciations. Speaking practices are helpful for gaining insight into the dialects of Arabic.

Requirements

Regular attendance (at least ten sessions out of twelve) is mandatory. Student performance will be assessed through 4 short quizzes and a final written exam composed of text translation, grammatical and listening exercises. Terminal grade: 40% quizzes, 60% final exam.

Elective offered to All

Course Materials and Recommended Literature

1. Fawzieh A. Bader: *Al-Asas for Teaching Arabic for Non-Native Speakers. Part 1 (Beginner Level)*. Noorart Inc. 2010.
2. Kristen Brustad - Abbass al-Tonsi - Mahmoud al-Batal: *Al-Kitaab fii Taallum al-Arabiyya with DVDs. Parts I-II*. Georgetown University Press. DVDs are included.
3. Schulz, Krahl, Reuschel: *Standard Arabic. An elementary-intermediate course*. Cambridge University Press, 2000 (for grammar).
4. Karin C. Ryding: *A Reference Grammar of Modern standard Arabic*. Cambridge University Press, 2005 (complementary material).
5. A. F. L. Beeston: *The Arabic Language Today*. Hutchinson & Co Ltd, 1970.
6. Adam Gacek: *Arabic Manuscripts. A Vademecum for Readers*. Brill, 2009.
7. Karin C. Ryding: *Arabic. A Linguistic Introduction*. Cambridge, 2014.
8. Rana Raddawi (ed.): *Intercultural Communication with Arabs. Studies in Educational, Professional and Societal Contexts*. Springer, 2015.
9. Carl Brockelmann: *History of the Arabic Written Tradition. Vol. I-II*. Brill, 2017.
10. J. R. Osborn: *Letters of Light. Arabic Script in Calligraphy, Print, and Digital Design*. Harvard University Press, 2017.
11. Faruk Abu-Chacra: *Arabic. An Essential Grammar. 2nd edition*. Routledge, 2018.
12. Mansur, Lutfi: *Arabic Stories for Language Learners: Traditional Middle Eastern Tales In Arabic and English*. Tuttle Publishing, 2013.
13. Other background texts and listening material which the students will receive in time.

Schedule

Dates and times are not final, as actual dates and times will be finalized according to the need of participants.

Week 1 (20/9 and 24/9/2021)	Introduction Learning the alphabet – writing skills
Week 2 (27/9 and 1/10/2021)	Learning the alphabet, writing skills + exercises
Week 3 (4/10 and 8/10/2021)	Writing skills + exercises Grammar 1-2 Reading: Schulz, Krahl, Reuschel: Standard Arabic - lesson 2 + exercises.
Week 4 (11/10 and 15/10/2021)	Grammar 3-4 + practicing exercises Reading: Schulz, Krahl, Reuschel: Standard Arabic – lesson 3 + oral communication
Week 5 (18/10 and 22/10/2021)	Short quiz Grammar 5 Reading: Standard Arabic – lesson 4 + exercises + oral communication (<i>Al-Asas</i> p.1)
Week 6 (25/10 and 29/10/2021)	Revision 1 Grammar 6-7 + exercises Reading: Standard Arabic – lesson 5 + short text translation and analysis.
Week 7 (5/11/2021)	Grammar 8-9 + exercises Standard Arabic – lesson 6 Reading: conversations (<i>Al-Asas</i>)
Week 8 (8/11 and 12/11/2021)	Grammar 10-11 + exercises Reading: Duroos al-Lugha al-Arabiyya Fatwa online – lessons 1-6

Week 9 (15/11 and 19/11/2021)	Revision 2: Standard Arabic lessons 2-6 Grammar 12-13 + exercises Reading: conversation (<i>Al-Asas</i>) + oral communication
Week 10 (22/11 and 26/11/2021)	Short quiz. Grammar 14-16 + exercises Standard Arabic – lesson 7
Week 11 (29/11 and 3/12/2021)	Grammar 17-20 Standard Arabic – lesson 8 Reading: <i>Durus al-Luga al-Arabiyya</i> + overall revision + text analysis
Week 12 (6/12 and 10/12/2021)	Final Revision-consultation Written exam

About the Instructor

Rashed Daher, Ph.D., is a lecturer of Arabic language at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, and Central European University. He has been teaching Arabic for eleven years at CEU, and all his Arabic courses received very positive feedback in the student surveys.

He works as an Arabic-English-Hungarian interpreter in Hungary. He is a professional Arabic translator and interpreter who possesses a breadth of expertise in government, corporate, academic, historical, and complex research interpretation and translation, university-level instruction, and language instruction.

His main research interest concerns security-related issues (migration, population dynamics, social and economic conflicts, environmental degradation, water security) in the Middle East, especially in Egypt, Lebanon, and Syria, from both historical and contemporary perspectives.