UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Institutions of Arab Culture

2324-1-E2001R038

Course title

Foundations of Arab culture

Topics and course structure

The course aims to provide some essential elements for understanding Arab culture, i.e. the cultural aspects that unite the countries where the Arabic language and its dialects are fluently spoken. The course consists of three parts:

1- In the first part, the principles of Islam will be explored. Islam is the religion professed by most Arabic-speaking populations. It has a decisive influence in many aspects of life, not just spiritual.

2- The second part will take into consideration the contemporary history of one of the three geographical areas that make up the “Arab world” (North Africa, the Middle East, the countries of the Persian Gulf or the Arabian Peninsula): North Africa. This is the region closest to us and from which, moreover, most of the Arabic speakers present in our territory come. An overview will also be given of the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which involves all Arab countries due to its political and cultural implications.

3- In the third part some topical themes and cultural trends in the Arab world concerning politics, literature and cinema will be addressed, through seminars and working groups.

Objectives

Have basic understanding of Arab culture. Learn to analyse the multifaceted Arab world in a critical and in-depth

way in the aspects concerning: religion, historical-contemporary dynamics, the complexity and dynamism of political and social current affairs.

Methodologies

Frontal lessons;
Seminars and speeches by external speakers who are experts in specific topics, or professionals who work with/in the Arab world;
Group work.

Online and offline teaching materials

Classes will be held in presence. The slides of the course will be uploaded in the e-learning space, together with indications on the availability of films, videos and readings proposed in class.

Programme and references

*Required study material:

1- Massimo Campanini, *Islam*, Morcelliana, Brescia 2023 [140 pp.]
2- Caterina Roggero, *Storia del Nord Africa indipendente. Tra imperialismi, nazionalismi e autoritarismi,* Bompiani, Milano 2019 [440 pp.]
3- Materials (slides, documentary, maps) uploaded on the e-learning space about Israeli-Palestinian conflict + (*recommended*) Marcella Emiliani, *La terra di chi? Geografia del conflitto arabo-israeliano-palestinese*, Il Ponte, Bologna 2008

*A text chosen from the following:

Marco Allegra, *I palestinesi. Storia e identità di un popolo*, Carocci, Roma 2010 [136 pp.]
Massimo Campanini, *Il Corano e la sua interpretazione*, Laterza, Roma-Bari 2013 [130 pp.]
Massimo Campanini, *Quale Islam? Jihadismo, radicalismo, riformismo*, Editrice La Scuola, Brescia 2015 [127 pp.]
Chiara Comito e Silvia Moresi (a cura di), *Arabpop. Arte e letteratura in rivolta dai paesi arabi*, Mimesis Edizioni, Milano-Udine 2020 [200 pp.]
Massimiliano Cricco, Federico Cresti, *Gheddafi. I volti del potere*, Carocci, Roma 2011 [pp. 149]
Leila El Houssi, *Il risveglio della democrazia. La Tunisia dall'indipendenza alla transizione*, Carocci, Roma 2019, [112 pp.]
Alain Gresh, *Israele, Palestina. Le verità su un conflitto*, Einaudi, Torino 2015 [pp. 152]
Michela Mercuri, *Incognita Libia. Cronache di un paese sospeso*, FrancoAngeli, Milano 2019 [190 pp.]
Renata Pepicelli, *Femminismo islamico. Corano, diritti, riforme*, Carocci, Roma 2018 (20101) [pp. 140]
Renata Pepicelli, *Il velo nell'islam. Storia, politica, estetica*, Carocci, Roma 2018 [150 pp.]
Benjamin Stora, *La guerra d'Algeria*, Il Mulino, Bologna 2009 [pp. 168]

N.B. The attending students, divided into working groups, will prepare research that will be exhibited in the classroom during the course, based on one of the texts indicated above. The text chosen and studied in the working group will be the one that each student, individually, will study for the exam.

*A country of your choice from which to choose two novels among those proposed:

Marocco:
Tahar ben Jelloun, *Il libro del buio* (any editions)
Fouad Laroui, *Le tribolazioni dell'ultimo Sijilmassi*, Del Vecchio Editore, Roma 2019
Mohamed Choukri, *Il pane asciutto*, Bompiani, Milano 2023
Fatema Mernissi, *La terrazza proibita. Vita nell'harem*, Giunti, Firenze 2007*

Algeria:
Alice Zeniter, *L'arte di perdere*, Einaudi, Torino 2018
Yasmina Khadra, *Quel che il giorno deve alla notte*, Mondadori, Milano 2009
Aziz Chouaki, *La stella di Algeri*, Edizioni e/o, 2003

Tunisia:
Ali Becheur, *I domani di ieri*, Francesco Brioschi Editore, Milano 2019
Shukri al-Mabkhout, *L'Italiano,* Edizioni e/o, Roma 2017
Amira Ghenim, *La casa dei notabili*, Edizioni e/o, Roma 2022

Libia:
Hisman Matar, *Il ritorno*, Einaudi, Torino 2016
Ibrahim Al-Khoni, *La patria delle visioni celesti e altri racconti dal deserto*, e/o edizioni 2007
Laura Passavanti (a cura di), *Narratori della Libia contemporanea. Racconti scelti*, Nuova Ipsa 2011

Egitto:
'Ala al-Aswani, *Sono corso verso il Nilo*, Feltrinelli, Milano 2018
Naguib Mahfouz, *Il vicolo del mortaio*, Feltrinelli, Milano (qualsiasi edizione)
Magdy El Shafee, *Metro*, Il Sirente, Fagnano Alto 2010 insieme a Khaled Al Khamissi, *Taxi. Le strade del Cairo si raccontano*, Il Sirente, Fagnano Alto 2009

Palestina:
Susan Abulhawa, *Ogni mattina a Jenin*, Feltrinelli, Milano (any editions)
Ghassan Kanafani, *Ritorno a Haifa*, Edizioni Lavoro, Roma 2014 insieme a Ghassan Kanafani, *Uomini sotto il sole*, Edizioni del Lavoro, Roma 2016
Sayed Kashua, *Arabi danzanti*, Guanda, Parma 2003
Sélim Nassib, *L'amante palestinese*, Edizioni e/o, Roma 2006

Assessment methods

Final oral exam, held in presence.

Office hours

Students who wish to speak with the teacher are invited to fix an appointment by e-mail to: caterina.roggero@unimib.it

Programme validity

Two academic years.

Course tutors and assistants

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION