

## Structures of Arabic (Language and Texts): Historical Thinking (A005575)

**Course size** *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

**Credits 8.0**

**Study time 240 h**

**Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2026-2027**

A (semester 2)

Dutch, English

Gent

seminar

**Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027**

Termonia, Maya

LW21

staff member

Van Steenberghe, Jo

LW21

lecturer-in-charge

**Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027**

[Bachelor of Arts in Oriental Languages and Cultures \(main subject Arabic and Islamic Studies\)](#)

**crdts**

**offering**

8

A

[Exchange Programme Oriental Languages and Cultures](#)

8

A

[Elective Set Arabic and Islamic Studies](#)

8

A

**Teaching languages**

English, Dutch

**Keywords**

Arabic grammar, Arabic historiography, Islamic historical thought, written sources of the world of Islam

**Position of the course**

This course builds on 'Structures of Arabic (Language and Text): Literary Heritage'. It provides further depth to the modules 'Introduction to the History of Islamic West Asia (600-1800)' and 'Introduction to Islam and Being Muslim'. It offers a thorough introduction to Arabic grammar (from a decolonized Arabic perspective), to Arabic historiographical literature and to Islamic historical thought, as part of the history of Islamic intellectual thought. This course familiarises students with various Arabic historiographical genres and texts from the past and present, as well as with the historical and linguistic contexts in which these played and continue to play a role.

**Contents**

This course consists of two modules: text structures and languages structures.

- In the module 'textual structures', various historiographical texts from the pre-modern Islamic world are read and studied, in particular chronicles, biographies, and biographical dictionaries, .... This is framed in a thorough deepening of the knowledge of Arabic historiographical literature and of Islamic historical thought, from late antiquity to the modern period.
- In the module 'linguistic structures', the (study of the) structure of the Arabic language is discussed in more detail, in close interaction with the text material from the textual structures module.

**Initial competences**

Introduction to the structures of Arabic (Language and Texts)

**Final competences**

- 1 To translate different Arabic historical texts
- 2 To analyse grammatically different Arabic historical texts
- 3 To identify the characteristics of different Arabic historical texts
- 4 to contextualise historically and culturally different Arabic historical texts
- 5 To recognise major Arabic religious formula in epigraphic form

- 6 To reflect on an abstract level on the form, function and meaning of different Arabic historical texts
- 7 To participate in pertinent and tolerant ways in discussions and debates on different Arabic historical texts
- 8 To connect different Arabic historical texts and related debates to subjects and insights from other relevant courses
- 9
- 10

#### Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is unrestricted: the student takes into consideration the conditions mentioned in 'Starting Competences'

#### Conditions for exam contract

Access to this course unit via an exam contract is unrestricted

#### Teaching methods

Seminar

#### Extra information on the teaching methods

Two modules: linguistic structures & textual structures.  
 During the textual structures classes, texts prepared by the student are contextualized and discussed. This preparation includes reading comprehension, translation and reading assignments for contextual understanding.  
 The classes of linguistic structures focus on the study of Arabic grammar.  
 There are no recordings of classes.

#### Study material

Type: Syllabus

Name: ATTHD: taalstructuren  
 Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty  
 Optional: no  
 Language : Other  
 Available on Ufora : Yes  
 Online Available : No

Type: Reader

Name: Reader 'ATT: Historisch Denken'  
 Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty  
 Optional: no  
 Language : English  
 Number of Pages : 500  
 Available on Ufora : Yes  
 Online Available : No  
 Available in the Library : No  
 Available through Student Association : No  
 Additional information: Selected chapters from: Robinson, C. F., *Islamic Historiography*. Khalidi, T., *Arabic historical thought in the classical period*, Rosenthal, F., *A History of Muslim Historiography*. Di-Capua, Y., *Gatekeepers of the Arab Past. Historians and History Writing in Twentieth-Century Egypt. A Companion to Global Historical Thought*.

#### References

- Robinson, C. F., *Islamic Historiography*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Khalidi, T., *Arabic historical thought in the classical period*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Rosenthal, F., *A History of Muslim Historiography*, Leiden: Brill, 1968.
- Di-Capua, Y., *Gatekeepers of the Arab Past. Historians and History Writing in Twentieth-Century Egypt*, University of California Press, 2009.
- *A Companion to Global Historical Thought*, edited by Prasenjit Duara, Viren Murthy and Andrew Sartori. John Wiley & Sons, 2014.
- Schulz, E., *A Student Grammar of Modern Standard Arabic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008
- Wehr, H., *Arabic-English Dictionary, Fourth Edition*.
- Allen, R., *An introduction to Arabic Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Van Steenbergen, J., *Een Nieuwe Geschiedenis van de Islamwereld: een*

### **Course content-related study coaching**

Preparation of classes by the students and interactive classes allow a permanent feedback. Feedback is also possible after the exams.

### **Assessment moments**

end-of-term and continuous assessment

### **Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period**

Written assessment

### **Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period**

Written assessment

### **Examination methods in case of permanent assessment**

Participation

### **Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment**

examination during the second examination period is possible in modified form

### **Extra information on the examination methods**

Written exam: language & texts

Participation: class attendance and assignments

### **Calculation of the examination mark**

Text structures: 70 %

Language structures: 30 %

Both parts are subdivided into end-of-term evaluation and continuous assessment (active participation during classes, and tests and assignments).

Students who do not participate in (one of the parts of) the assessment, or have a mark below 10/20 for one of the assessed components, automatically fail the entire course. Final marks higher than 10/20 will, in this case, be reduced to the highest mark that does not qualify for automatic upgrade ('deliberation') (7/20).

A pass mark for one of the assessed components means that the assessment of that component does not need to be retaken in case of a resit (only!). Students are nevertheless free to decide to retake it.

### **Facilities for Working Students**

1. Student attendance is compulsory
2. The examination cannot be rescheduled
3. Feedback can be given by email, telephone or during an appointment during office hours

For more information concerning flexible learning: contact the monitoring service of the faculty of Arts and philosophy