

Literatures of the Islamic World (A006632)

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

Credits 5.0

Study time 150 h

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2026-2027

A (semester 1)	Dutch	Gent	lecture	0.0h
			seminar	0.0h
			independent work	0.0h

Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

Janssen, Caroline LW21 lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027

	crdts	offering
Bachelor of Arts in Oriental Languages and Cultures(main subject Arabic and Islamic Studies)	5	A
Exchange Programme Oriental Languages and Cultures	5	A

Teaching languages

Dutch

Keywords

Literary traditions of the Islamic world, classical Arabic, Persian and Turkish literature, contemporary literature of the islamic world, literature and migration

Position of the course

In this introductory course the student is familiarized with the origins and development of literature in the Islamic world, from the roots to the present age. We consider what literature is, in this context, and what its societal relevance is. An overview is given of the literatures of the Islamic world. Particular consideration is given to the role of the three main literary languages and their traditions, Arabic, Persian and Turkish, and their interwovenness, despite the difference in language and culture.

Contents

Literatures of the Islamic world have taken shape with the development and spread of Islam, but they have their roots in even more ancient traditions, which immediately shows how multifaceted Islamic culture is.

The first written literatures of the Near East, tribal Arabian poetry, the Quran, translations from Greek, Persian, Indian, ... texts, they all contributed to the development of Arabic and Persian literature.

Turkish literature too had a long history before it became part of the world of Islam. These constituted three major literary traditions, which were intimately connected despite the difference in language and cultural background.

In this course we will see how world class literature emerges from this fertile soil. We explore some highlights, under the Umayyads, Abbasids, in diverse regions (the Near East, Central Asia, North-Africa, Andalusia, ...). Through text fragments students will be familiarized with some of the greatest authors and the environment in which they flourished.

Modern times brought change: these literatures, like other world literatures today, are deeply influenced by other mostly Western literatures. We see how new genres and forms emerged.

Students will be asked to choose a contemporary literary book from the Islamic world in the broadest sense of the world (precise instructions will be given in class) for their assignment and presentation. During the presentations we will hear voices

from the contemporary world.

Initial competences

Good reading and writing skills in Dutch.

Final competences

- 1 Have knowledge of the names and works of great authors who have made major contributions in Islamic societies and world literature
- 2 The student can contextualize these great texts and place them in their socio-cultural and geographical framework.
- 3 The student has an insight in the development of literatures in the Islamic realm.
- 4 By studying literary phenomena the student appreciates that cultures are dynamic and that there is a continuous cross-fertilization between cultures.
- 5 The student knows the most important languages in which classical literatures of the Islamic world were written and has an insight in their linguistic and historical background.
- 6 To have an insight in the value of literature for finetuning social debates, and developing tolerance, perspectives and empathy.

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, Lecture, Independent work

Extra information on the teaching methods

Lectures:

Various topics related to the origins and development of Islamic literature will be covered. Texts are the focal point of a cultural historical and literary exploration.

Independent work

The student writes a short paper about a literary work of choice (criteria will be set but the book will be chosen by the student). This work is presented in class.

No recorded classes

There are no recorded classes, but there are a detailed syllabus and powerpoints instead. Studying these materials independently is possible. Students who cannot be present, structurally or over a longer time span, are asked to contact the instructor before the period of their absence start.

Study material

Type: Syllabus

Name: Syllabus

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Available on Ufora : Yes

Additional information: Printing costs syllabus: 15 €

Type: Handouts

Name: Handouts

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Type: Other

Name: Books

Indicative price: € 35

Optional: no

Additional information: The books cost c. 35 euro (Dutch) of 25 euro (English) when purchased.

References

Abedinifard, Mostafa, et al. (eds) 2021: Persian literature as World Literature, New York.

Alcan, Burcu, et al. (eds) 2021: Turkish literature as World Literature, New York.

Dabashi, Hamid, 2019: The Shahnameh as World Literature, New York.
The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature Series
Vrolijk, A. 2002, De taal der engelen. 1250 jaar Klassiek Arabisch proza,
Amsterdam.

Course content-related study coaching

By preparing texts the student enables himself to ask feedback in class. Questions can be asked through e-mail. 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 with multiple-choice questions, Written assessment with open-ended questions

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

Written assessment with multiple-choice questions, Written assessment with open-ended questions

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Professional practice, Presentation, Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible

Extra information on the examination methods

Written exam: multiple choice and open questions about the syllabus/powerpoints.
Assignment, presentation and professional practice: the student submits a written assignment, in accordance with the guidelines, presents the results in class in the final weeks of the classes and adds a disclaimer concerning the use of AI.

Calculation of the examination mark

Written exam: 70%; presentation: 15%; paper: 15%.

The score must be at least 9/20 for both the end-of-term and the continuous assessment and the average of both scores must be at least 10/20. If this is not the case, the final mark can be lowered to the highest non-pass score.

If a part of the exam is not taken (written exam, presentation or paper) the student cannot pass, irrespective of the average. In this case the exam is incomplete.

Facilities for Working Students

1. Possible exemption from educational activities requiring student attendance
2. The examination can 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