Intermediate Arabic I - 2016

BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY
ARABIC 30A

M, W & Th, 1:00 p.m. – 1:50 p.m.
T & F, 12:30 p.m. – 1:50 p.m.

Lown Center for Judaic Studies, Rm. TBA

Instructor: Safaa Shaheen
Emails: sshaheen@brandeis.edu
Office: Lown 207

Four-Credit Course (with three hours of class-time per week):

Success in this 4 credit hour course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for exams, etc.).

Course Objectives:

- Fleshing out knowledge of the Arabic verbal system and noun forms and behavior
- Learning to describe potential and desired events in addition to past, present and future
- Exploring the vocabulary of leisure activities such as sports and the arts
- Revisiting schedules, everyday activities, geography, professions and family
- Exploring real media and continuing to learn about various Arab personalities
- Developing power of expression through Arabic-only interaction

Approach:

Teacher and student activities are geared toward developing functional abilities to use Modern Standard Arabic accurately and fluently in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This involves intensive classroom interaction and out-of-class assignments. Open conversation practice will be held at least once every two weeks.

The instructor has prepared lengthy manuals for practicing vocabulary and grammar alike. These will be integral to the course and will provide for an ‘inverted classroom’-type experience, i.e., class time will be mainly devoted to reinforcement and refinement as opposed to exposition of new topics.
Course Materials:
- Audio and video materials included in discs with books, external links and exercises provided by instructor
- **Grammar Manual:** You will be provided with grammar explanations compiled by the instructor along with exercises for each lesson in the book. You will use these to learn and explore at home and we will spend class time correcting and refining your discoveries.
- **Vocab Manual:** You will be provided with vocab exercises compiled by the instructor and will be asked to complete them as the lesson progresses. **Doing so will greatly increase your chances of retaining vocabulary as well as your quiz scores.**

Requirements:
1. Attending and participating in class activities. Most of the language skills to be developed cannot be acquired without effective participation and interaction with other students and with the instructor. Our collective goal is to build an Arabic-speaking community through teamwork. *Students should be aware that attendance records will be kept rigorously. Students are allowed two (2) unexcused absences over the course of the semester. Each additional unexcused absence will result in a full point being deducted from the “Attendance” component of the course grade at the end of the semester. Please note: Eight unexcused absences or more will result in an automatic failing grade.*
2. **Doing homework assignments regularly and completely.** Out-of-class practice is essential for reinforcement of classroom learning, reading, and writing. Homework that is one day late will receive half credit. Homework that is two days late will be corrected, but no credit will be given. **Homework later than two days will not be accepted without extenuating circumstances plus instructor permission.**
3. Taking classroom quizzes, tests, and the written final exam.
4. Performing a final oral presentation. Pronunciation, fluency, breadth of vocabulary, and appropriate, functional usage will be taken into account. This presentation may take the form of a group skit, video or individual presentation. The instructor will announce this early in the semester so that you have ample time to prepare for it. Group skits must involve 3 or 4 students with equally distributed lines and must show meticulous attention to grammar and vocabulary. Time will be given in class to work on them as the deadline approaches.
Getting the Most Out of This Class

This class is a group effort! We can make much more progress as a class than as individuals by creating an Arabic-speaking community of which you will be a fully participating member. The following suggestions will help you get the most out of the course:

1. **Prepare for active participation in class.** Practice new vocabulary out loud until you can produce it easily, listen to / read texts several times until you are ready to answer questions on them, practice new grammar by using them in sentences.

2. **Study out loud.** The only way to train your brain and your mouth to speak Arabic is through performance. Reading silently is not enough. Repeat whatever you hear, pronounce whatever you write, and learn to talk to yourself in Arabic.

3. **Think in Arabic.** While on your way from one class to another, think to yourself in Arabic. Name all of the objects whose name you know in Arabic. Describe their location, size, shape, color, number, etc., adding as much detail as possible.

4. **Study in pairs / groups.** Group study is a great way to prepare for class and to review—as long as you do the work in Arabic as much as possible, of course! Ask each other questions, brainstorm about assignments, go over materials covered in class together. (Note, however, that you are not authorized to collaborate on homework assignments that will be handed in. Such assignments should fully reflect each student’s own, individual work. This is necessary so that instructors can gauge the progress of each student and be able to offer the best help and advice possible for each to achieve his or her best.

5. **Personalize vocabulary.** Make words relevant by thinking of what you can say about yourself with them. Write extra sentences that are meaningful to you so that the vocabulary becomes yours. It is important at this stage to concentrate on what you can say more than what you want to say—which will come in time—and the best way to successfully attain that goal is to build a solid vocabulary base. Language learning is a process of programming yourself, because the words that you memorize are those very words that you will use to express yourself. By spending 5-10 minutes regularly reviewing your vocabulary lists, you will be able to retain words for the rest of your life. **MAKE THIS LANGUAGE YOURS!**

6. **Language is context.** The communicative approach to language learning encourages you, the learner, to use what you know to derive what you do not. Think about how you acquired your native language: you learned new words by guessing their meaning from
context, and you learned how to produce sentences by imitating and using patterns. As adult learners, we can take some shortcuts, but guessing skills remain central to language acquisition.

7- **Good language learners learn from their own mistakes and those of others.** As adults, we have been trained not to make mistakes. As language learners new to Arabic, mistakes are going to be made, but should not cause you undue stress. When your classmates are speaking, don’t just sit there passively, wasting your time. Rather, take maximum advantage of every minute in the classroom by being an active listener, paying attention both to *what* your classmates are saying and to *how* they are saying it. Think about how you would correct or otherwise restructure their sentences.

**Office Hours & Location:**

*Hours:* Safaa Shaheen: M, W, Th 12-1 PM or by appointment

*Location:* Lown Center for Judaic Studies
Brandeis University
Room #207