THE ARABIAN NIGHTS (RS 633)

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Hartford Seminary, January 2018 Intersession

This new course explores from several perspectives the world famous collection of Arabian tales developed within the Muslim Middle East since the ninth century and introduced into Europe in 1704 by the French Antoine Galland. The origins of the Nights corpus, the historical, cultural and interreligious contexts in which it evolved, its manuscripts and editions, the key figures of its passage to the West, its major English translations and their challenges, the literary, artistic and other socio-cultural developments it triggered, in Islam, in Europe and in the US, will be among the topics covered. Read in Arabic and/or English, a number of the core tales will be discussed. Great benefit will be drawn from the scholarship of Hartford Seminary’s former professor D. B. Macdonald (d. 1943) and from his Nights collection preserved in the Seminary’s library. While being accessible to the general public, the course should be of particular interest to students of Islamic studies (history, societies and, even, religion) as well as to professionals of pastoral care. Isn’t indeed the whole matter about healing a serial killer of women by telling him more and more amazing stories?

Class will meet during 10 days: from Tuesday January 2, 2018 to Saturday 6, and from Monday January 8 to Friday 12, 6 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. Each of these classes will have two parts: A) Lecture; B) Discussion of the required readings. The teacher can be contacted at ymichot@hartsem.edu. Office hours TBA.

Course Objectives

1) Students should be able to find their way around in the major reference works on, and versions of, the Arabian Nights.

2) In relation to selected stories read in the Arabic text and various English versions, students will be introduced to translation with its challenges: philological, socio-cultural, religious.

3) They are expected to gain an acquaintance with the ways the Arabian Nights corpus developed, the historical and cultural contexts in which it evolved, the key figures of its passage to the West, the literary, artistic and other socio-cultural phenomena it crystallized into, in Islam and in the West.
4) They should be able to benefit from the methodological approach adopted in these classes and apply it for their own studies and/or research projects.

**Seminary Learning Outcomes**

To demonstrate the ability to relate theory and practice in the social contexts in which a religion’s communities exist (MARS 5). Competence to teach this area in religious communities and academia (PhD 3).

**Course Requirements**

1) It is recommended (but not pre-required) that the student arrive at the first class already able to read Arabic. A general knowledge about the religion of Islam, as well as about the history and geography of Muslim peoples would also be useful. They should already have read some of the Arabian Nights tales, especially those included in the required readings. They should also be able to find their way around in the major reference tools for Islamic Studies (*Encyclopaedia of Islam, Index Islamicus…*).

2) Daily preparations and readings (**THE ASSIGNMENTS ARE ESSENTIAL**), class participation, final presentation and paper.

3) Attendance in class is required. If you know that you will be unable to attend a class please inform the professor in advance. Missing two classes will result in an automatic lowering of your final grade by 30%. Missing three or more classes will result in automatic failure of the course.

4) PhD students are moreover expected to read a book concerning the Nights chosen in consultation with the professor from the general references listed in this syllabus and to use it in their final paper.

**The final grade will be based upon the following:**

1) Active class participation (50%).

2) The presentations during Class X (January 12). Each student, or group of students, will be responsible for the oral presentation and discussion of a topic related to the Arabian Nights. This oral presentation (30%) will be based on an original written research paper (8 pages maximum, 20%). For PhD students, 15 pages), to be submitted to the teacher, and circulated on paper in the class, before the presentation. The topic should be chosen by the end of class V in consultation with the professor.

* All written work is to conform to the seminary writing guidelines, which can be found online at: [http://www.hartsem.edu/student/forms/researchpaperguide.pdf](http://www.hartsem.edu/student/forms/researchpaperguide.pdf). It must use the transliteration system given in class I. It must be run through a grammar and spell-check program or read by the writing tutor if necessary before submission. The Hartford Seminary Grading Guidelines will be the standard of evaluation for work in the course.

**IMPORTANT:** Plagiarism, the failure to give proper credit for the words and ideas of another person, whether published or unpublished, is strictly prohibited. All written material submitted by students must be their own original work; where the words and ideas of others are used they must be acknowledged. Credit will not be given for work containing plagiarism, and plagiarism will lead to failure of the course. Please see the *Hartford Seminary Catalogue* for the full plagiarism policy.

**General references**

*ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF ISLAM (EI2), INDEX ISLAMICUS…*


Web ressources
http://expositions.bnf.fr/1001nuits/arret/pappl.htm
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/One_Thousand_and_One_Nights

CLASS SCHEDULE

Class I. Tuesday January 2, 2018. INTRODUCTION

General references:
DOBIE, Madeleine, Translation in the Contact Zone: Antoine Galland’s Mille et une nuits: contes arabes, in Saree
Reading assignments:


Class II. Wednesday January 3, 2018. **THE ARABIC TEXTS**

General references:


Reading assignments:


Class II. Wednesday January 3, 2018. **THE ARABIC TEXTS**

General references:


al-QADI FATH MUHAMMAD & MULÁ NÚR AL-DIN B. JIVÁKHÁN, Alf layla wa layla, 4 vols (Bombay: Maṭba‘ al-Ḥaydarī, 1300[1883]).


Reading assignments:


Class III. Thursday January 4, 2018. The 19th and 20th Centuries English Translations

General references:


RICE, Edward, Captain Sir Richard Francis Burton. The Secret Agent Who Made the Pilgrimage to Mecca, Discovered the Kama Sutra, and brought the Arabian Nights to the West (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1990), xxii & 522 p., 0-684-19137-7.


Web resources
http://burtoniana.org/biography/index.html

Reading assignments:


   b1. **STADE, George (ed.), The Arabian Nights. — P. 162-177: The Story Told by the Tailor.**


   b5. **HADDAWY, Husain, The Arabian Nights. — P. 249-266: The Tailor’s Tale.**

Class IV. Friday January 5, 2018. **THE MARDRUS PHENOMENON**

General references:


**CHAUVIN, Victor, Bibliographie des ouvrages arabes ou relatifs aux Arabes..., vol. IV, p. 108-110, 159-160; vol. VII, p. 95-96; vol. IX, p. 77-85.**


**YOUNES, Mona Saleh, La traduction française des Mille et une nuits par le Dr. J.C. Mardrus d’après son dossier de presse : 1898-1904, in Merveilles & contes, vol. 4/1 (May 1990), p. 5-17.**

Reading assignments:


b. **MATHERS, Powys, The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night... Vol. I, p. 259-267: The Tale of Shakkâshik, the Barber’s Sixth Brother.**
Class V. Saturday January 6, 2018. *The Tale of the Trader and the Jinni*

**General references:**


**Reading assignments:**


Class VI. Monday January 8, 2018. *The Porter and the Three Ladies of Baghdad*

**General references:**


**Reading assignments:**


Class VII. Tuesday January 9, 2018. *The Nights for Children?*

**General references:**


**Reading assignments:**


**Class VIII. Wednesday January 10, 2018. THE NIGHTS AND ISLAM**

**General references:**


MAHFEZ, Najib, *La yâlît alf laylah* (Cairo, Maktabat Miṣr, 1979), 271 p.


**Reading assignments:**


**Class IX. Thursday January 11, 2018. THE NIGHTS, EAST & WEST**

**General references:**


Web resources

https://1001nightsatbu.wordpress.com/

Reading assignments:


Class X. Friday January 12, 2018. **STUDENTS’ PRESENTATIONS**