

ARABIC 375
THE ARABIAN NIGHTS

Instructor:	Dr. Bruce Fudge	Class Schedule:
Office:	320 Hagerty Hall	Location:
Office Hours:	TBA or by appointment	Call number:
Telephone:	247-6995	Credit: U 5
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Course Description:

Readings from *The Arabian Nights*; the history of the text, translations and literary and cinematic adaptations.

This course is intended to satisfy the GEC requirement for Category 2. Breadth: Section C. Arts and Humanities (1) Literature

Goals:

Students evaluate significant writing and works of art. Such studies develop capacities for aesthetic and historical response and judgment; interpretation and evaluation; critical listening, reading, seeing, thinking, and writing; and experiencing the arts and reflecting on that experience.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

1. Students develop abilities to be informed observers of, or active participants in, the visual, spatial, performing, spoken, or literary arts.
2. Students describe and interpret creative work, and/or movements in the arts and literature.
3. Students explain how works of art and writings explore the human condition.

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(1) Literature Expected Learning Outcomes:

1. Students learn to analyze, appreciate, and interpret significant literary works.
2. Through reading, discussing, and writing about literature, students learn to understand and evaluate the personal and social values of their own and other cultures

Expected Learning Outcomes for Arabic 375:

Students who successfully complete the course will be well acquainted with the core stories of the *Arabian Nights*, and some of the critical approaches that can help to

understand and appreciate them. In the course of these studies, students will learn to describe, analyze, appreciate, and interpret significant literary works, developing abilities to be informed observers of creative work. As students acquire a thorough understanding of the history of the collection, in both its European and Middle Eastern contexts, and an awareness of the issues involved in both linguistic and cultural translations, they will learn to understand and evaluate the personal and social values of their own and other cultures.

Rationale:

The course treats three related areas: i) the stories of the *Nights* themselves; ii) the textual history of the collection and its various editions and translations; and iii) some of the transformations and transmogrifications of the *Nights*, both literary and cinematic. The overall aim of the course is to demonstrate the range of the literary and cultural importance of the *Arabian Nights*. The origins of the collection lie in the Islamic Middle East, but the versions we know today are a direct result of a fascinating cross-cultural encounter, beginning with Antoine Galland's translations of anonymous Arabic manuscripts in late seventeenth-century Paris. The subsequent vogue for "oriental tales" spread throughout Europe and back to the Islamic world, where subsequently there appeared a number of greatly expanded Arabic editions of the collection, apparently at least partly in response to European manuscript hunters. Within the Arabic world, such frivolous narratives were not regarded as serious literature, a prejudice that has not entirely disappeared today.

The *Nights* are a remarkable example of a shared literary heritage, and at the same time have played a major part, for better or worse, in shaping Western perceptions of the Arabic-Islamic world. In this course students will be exposed to the original stories, which remain delightful to this day, as well as to the process by which manuscripts were bought, sold, copied, forged and translated. Then we will consider the remarkable diffusion of the tales and their characters, especially in cinema and modern literature.

Required texts for purchase (available at SBX):

The Arabian Nights, trans. Husain Haddawy (1990)
 Robert Irwin, *The Arabian Nights: A Companion* (1994)
 A.S. Byatt, *The Djinn in the Nightingale's Eye* (1994)

Student evaluation:

- 40 % Two Midterms (20% each; multiple-essay format)
- 30 % Attendance, class participation
- 30 % Final paper (topic to be selected in consultation with the instructor)

Course Schedule and Readings

Week 1

Introduction: the medieval Islamic world

Nights on Film: Disney's Aladdin (1992)
Irwin, Ch. 1. pp. 9-41.

Week 2

Frame story and Porter cycle

Haddawy, trans, *Arabian Nights* pp. 1-149;

Nights on Film: Excerpt from Douglas Fairbanks' The Thief of Bagdad (1925)

Week 3

Hunchback cycle

"The Hunchback's Tale," pp. 206-95.

Irwin, *Companion*, Ch. 4, pp. 103-119.

Week 4

The Manuscripts and the History of the Text

Readings: Irwin, Ch 2.

Nights on Film: Fritz Lang's Der müde Tod (1921).

FIRST MID-TERM

Week 5

Romance in the *Nights*

Readings:

"The Story of the Three Apples" and "The Story of the Two Viziers," in Haddawy, trans., pp. 150-206.

Aladdin (I)

"The Story of 'Ala al-din (Aladdin) and the Magic Lamp," in *The Arabian Nights II: Sindbad and other popular stories*, trans. Husain Haddawy (1995), pp. 81-163.

Nights on Film: The Thief of Bagdad (1940)

Week 6

Aladdin (II)

Nights on Film: The Thief of Bagdad [continued]

Readings:

Michael Cooperson, "The Monstrous Births of 'Aladdin'" *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 1 (1994), pp. 67-86.

Week 7

Character and Narrative: The Adventures of Sindbad

Nights on Film: excerpt from Harryhausen's Sindbad trilogy.

Readings:

“The Story of Sindbad the Sailor,” in *The Arabian Nights II*, pp. 3-51.

Todorov, “Narrative-Men” in *The Poetics of Prose*, trans. Richard Howard (1971), pp. 66-79.

SECOND MIDTERM

Week 8

I. Scheherezade, Feminist

Nights on Film: Aladin, or The Wonderful Lamp (1906)

Readings:

Fedwa Malti-Douglas, *Woman’s Body, Woman’s Word: Gender and Discourse in Arabo-Islamic Writing* (1991), Ch 1, “Narration and Desire,” pp. 11-28.

II. Orientalism

Rana Kabbani, “The Arabian Nights and Orientalism,” in *The Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*, ed. Ulrich Marzolph and Richard van Leeuwen (ABC-Clio: Santa Barbara, 2004).

Week 9

Back to the *Nights*

Irwin, Ch. 10, pp. 237-92.

Ulrich Marzolph, “Crescentia’s Oriental Relatives,” in *Marvels & Tales*, forthcoming.

“The Pious Man and his Chaste Wife,” trans. Burton. *The Thousand Nights and a Night*, vol. V. pp. 256-59.

Nights on Film: excerpts from Pasolini’s *Fiore delle Mille e Una Notte* (1974)

Week 10

Children of the Nights

Edgar Allan Poe, “The Thousand-and-second Tale of Scherazade,” in *The Complete Stories and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe* (1975), 104-17.

Nights on Film: excerpts from Pasolini’s *Fiore delle Mille e Una Notte* (1974)
(continued)

FINAL PAPER DUE

Disability Services

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Studies is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760

Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901;
<http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>

Academic Misconduct Policy

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info_for_students/csc.asp).