

Modern Language Center (MLC)

(AM/LANG 233, 333, 433) Living Language: Modern Standard Arabic in Practice

Total Hours: 45

Recommended Credits: 3

Primary Discipline / Suggested Cross-Listings: Arabic Language

Language of Instruction: Arabic (MSA)

Prerequisites / Requirements: For reading and speaking concentrations, ACTFL Intermediate level is required. Final placement determined by Academic Director.

Course Description

This course serves as an advanced complement to the Modern Language Center's Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) program. It places the language within its authentic cultural, academic, and professional contexts, enabling students to engage with MSA not as an artificial textbook language, but as a living, functional register used by native speakers in media, literature, debates, lectures, public communication, and formal writing.

The curriculum is designed to meet the needs of students who wish to strengthen their command of formal Arabic for academic research, diplomatic communication, journalistic writing, cultural studies, and regional affairs. Through thematically structured units, students interact with contemporary issues, classical and modern literature, news media, political analysis, cultural debates, and public speeches.

Students select one of four concentrations—Listening, Reading, Writing Techniques, or Speaking & Rhetoric—allowing them to focus on a skill that aligns with their long-term goals. Each concentration provides scaffolded exposure to authentic materials, intensive practice, and structured tasks that encourage mastery of discourse-level MSA.

The course is offered as a small class (3–5 students) or as a tutorial (1–2 students), with adjusted contact hours as needed. Novice students may join the course halfway through the program after establishing foundational grammatical and lexical skills in MSA.

Throughout the term, students critically analyze complex texts, speeches, stories, and debates; interpret implicit meanings; identify argument structures; and produce extended oral and written output that reflects both linguistic accuracy and rhetorical sophistication.

Listening

Students engage with a broad range of high-register audio materials—news broadcasts, political panels, scholarly lectures, cultural programs, and religious discourse. The focus is on identifying key connectors, understanding argument structure, tracking shifts in tone and formality, and distinguishing between MSA and dialectal interference. Students present summaries, analyses, and critiques, gradually moving toward independent interpretation of complex listening selections.

Writing Techniques

This concentration develops the student's ability to produce structured, coherent, and stylistically appropriate texts in MSA. Learners practice sentence cohesion, transitions, rhetorical linking devices, and advanced vocabulary. Writing tasks include opinion pieces, summaries, formal emails, academic paragraphs, and multi-page essays. At advanced levels, students produce extended research papers adhering to Arabic academic conventions.

Speaking & Rhetoric

Students develop their oral proficiency in formal spoken MSA for presentations, debates, speeches, and structured dialogues. They practice building arguments, expressing hypotheses, developing counterarguments, and handling sensitive topics with clarity and cultural awareness. Weekly discussion circles based on current events enable students to strengthen spontaneous production and rhetorical confidence.

Reading

Students read authentic MSA texts at varying levels—short stories, selected readings, news articles, essays, and novels. The concentration emphasizes reading strategies such as inference, predicting meaning, understanding tone, identifying the author's stance, and recognizing literary techniques. Students discuss texts with Jordanian peers and present thematic analyses in class.

Objectives

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate increased proficiency in MSA while engaging with authentic, thematic content.
- Build a targeted linguistic skill set aligned with academic or professional goals.
- Produce clear, coherent, and structured spoken and written output in MSA.
- Analyze linguistic choices in texts, speeches, or debates and relate them to cultural or political contexts.
- Expand and internalize vocabulary across domains such as politics, society, religion, culture, media, and literature.
- Interpret implicit meaning, author bias, argumentative structure, and rhetorical devices in authentic materials.

Reading concentration learners will:

- Develop strategies for tackling complex texts without full reliance on dictionaries.
- Identify key phrases revealing opinion, tone, and perspective.
- Engage in literary analysis and discourse-level discussions using MSA.

Listening concentration learners will:

- Apply context, background knowledge, and structural cues to enhance comprehension.
- Understand speakers from a variety of regional, generational, and professional backgrounds.
- Build research skills related to collecting, categorizing, and analyzing audio samples.

Writing concentration learners will:

- Produce multi-page compositions according to level (Novice 3 pages; Intermediate 7 pages; Advanced 10–15 pages).
- Write formal emails, resumes, academic essays, and social media posts using accurate MSA.
- Follow Arab academic writing standards when structuring research papers.

Speaking & Rhetoric learners will:

- Lead debates, discussions, and presentations in formal Arabic.
- Build confidence in public speaking and persuasive communication.
- Present structured arguments for 15–20 minutes with clarity and fluency

Course Requirements

The course moves at an intensive pace and relies heavily on consistent preparation. Students must complete all assigned work and actively participate in discussions. Assignments include:

- Listening to news broadcasts, analytical programs, lectures, and podcasts.
- Reading and interpreting short stories, articles, essays, and academic excerpts.
- Writing paragraphs, opinion pieces, summaries, and research-based texts.
- Conducting interviews and gathering authentic perspectives from local speakers.
- Presenting individual and group projects, structured debates, and thematic reports.
- Memorizing essential patterns, advanced connectors, and rhetorical structures.

Attendance is essential, especially for field-based components such as guest lectures, student debates with local peers, meetings with authors or speakers, and academic site visits.

Mid-term and final projects differ by concentration and require students to synthesize skills by producing an extended response grounded in authentic material.

Grading

The final grade is determined as follows:

- **Participation:** 20% • **Homework:** 20% • **Quizzes:** 20% • **Presentations:** 10% • **Mid-term Project:** 15% •

Final Project: 15%

Readings

Readings include student-selected thematic content and the following works:

- Abd Al Hamid Shams Al Deen – *The Most Beautiful Short Stories*.
- Taha Hussein – *The Plover's Prayer*.
- Ibn Al Maqfa'a – *Kalila and Dimna* (Selected Stories).
- Hana Mena – *The End of a Brave Man*.

Additional Resources

Additional materials may include selected works by:

• Osama Fawzy • Nahid Hatr • Sami Kleib • Mohammed Al Maghout • Dawood Sheikhani (*Once Upon a Time*) • Zakaria Tamer • Rehan Yunan (*Metro*) • Programming from Al Mamlaka Television • Documentaries and infographics related to regional politics, history, and society

Analyzing the Arab Spring, water crisis, governance systems, and geopolitical shifts.

Topic 5: Prominent Jordanian Figures

Case studies on Wasfi Al Tal, King Hussein, and Mohammad Nooh Al Qada.

Topic 6: Jordanian Society after the Refugee Crisis

Impact on food culture, marriage patterns, economic challenges, and social dynamics.

Topic 7: The Middle East vs. The Arab World

Historical continuity, demographic changes, conflict narratives, and media portrayals.

Topic 8: Letter-Writing in Arabic

Practical training in formal and informal correspondence, messaging etiquette, and research paper formatting.

Topic 9: Literary Arts

Exploring metaphor, rhetorical devices, allegory, and novel-reading techniques

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