

ANTH2660B/MUSI3108B
Ethnography of North Africa
Course outline - Winter 2026

Course Meeting Time: Wednesdays/11:35 - 2:25

Method of Delivery: In-Person, One lecture per week (3 hours)

Instructor: Dr. Carolyn Ramzy (she/her)

Email: Carolyn.Ramzy@carleton.ca or via Brightspace

Office Hours: by appointment on zoom.

Brightspace Link: <https://brightspace.carleton.ca/d2l/home/373131>

Course Description

Globalization, new communication technologies, and a shifting youth culture have made North Africa and the broader Middle East the site of tremendous change. Through music ethnographies, we investigate the religious, classical, and folk music traditions that have propelled and accompanied these transformations known as the “Arab Uprising” beginning in 2011 and the cultural shifts that have followed in the region. We will listen, watch, and analyze how many traditional practices in the region have quickly reconfigured as urban traditions in popular spheres, including an eclectic mix of Algerian rai, Maghrebi electronic hip-hop, Egyptian nationalist pop songs, as well as Palestinian and Israeli rap, among many others. We will explore issues of identity, modernity, globalization, and the ongoing impacts of colonization in the area through a sound studies, anthropology, and ethnomusicology lens. We will ask: what parallels of North African and Middle Eastern music and culture echo in our own North American soundscapes and experiences? And thanks to our connected world, how are our music cultures in conversation with one another to reflect stories that are far more entangled than we could have imagined.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this class, students should be able to:

1. Identify various musical genres in North Africa and its connections to the broader Middle East.
2. Discuss issues pertaining to North African music culture.
3. Synthesize course materials (films, readings, listening clips, and library materials) to write critical responses to listening exercises and music's relevance to the cultures to which they belong.

Course Materials

Students are not required to purchase textbooks or other learning materials for this course. Readings are largely drawn from materials that can be found at the MacOdrum Library Reserve Desk or are available online through ARES and Brightspace. The text below is a voluntary purchase as the Library's e-copy can only host 3 users at a time.

Texts:

Andrew Hammond's *Pop Culture in North Africa and the Middle East: Entertainment and Society Around the World* (ABC-CLIO, 2017) - Available as an e-book at MacOdrum Library

Link to Listening Playlist

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLVJbfQOUEbAXQnYomT80OA7iKf9zcympl>

Evaluation and Assignments

In-Class Participation: 20%

Listening Quiz 1 – January 28: 20 %

Listening Quiz 2 – February 24: 20 %

Listening Quiz 3 - March 18: 20 %

Final Exam - Exam Period: 20%

1. **In-Class Participation (20%):** It is expected that student will complete all readings prior to class meetings and will come to class prepared to raise questions, contribute to classroom discussion, and participate in class activities.
2. **Listening Quizzes (20% x 3):** You will have 3 listening quizzes are pulled directly from the course, our shared playlist, and the music documentaries we will watch and discuss together in class. You will need to identify what kind of music/genre you hear, by who, and why it may be culturally, spiritually, or politically relevant. Finally, using key terms we discuss in class, you will outline some key musical aesthetics that make this example unique. Listening quizzes help prepare you for your midterm and final exam. ***There will be no make-up days for missed Listening Quizzes.*** Rather, you may drop your lowest grade, including a missed quiz at 0%, and the remaining two quizzes will average your third missed quiz.
3. **Final (20% x 1):** You will have a cumulative in-class scheduled final that will assess your knowledge of course key terms, critical issues, listening examples, and course readings via short answers and essay questions.

