Special Paper in Modern Arabic Literature  
*The Arabic Novel: a Narratological Survey*

**Dr. Marlé Hammond**

In this lecture course students will engage in socio-cultural readings and literary analyses of celebrated works of Arabic fictional narrative (primarily novels) from the latter half of the twentieth century. Political and historical themes such as colonialism, nationalism, feminism, patriarchy, exile, revolution, liberation will be presented and discussed in the light of literary form and expression. Textual analyses will emphasize the impact of narrative modes and devices (such as the interplay between voices, shifts in story-planes, and the sequencing of events) on content, meaning, and message. Two or three works may be accompanied by screenings of film adaptations.

**Week 1**  
**Naguib Mahfouz [Najib Mahfuz], *Bayn al-Qasrayn* (1956)**


**Secondary literature:**  
(Note: titles with an asterisk are required reading)


Hasan M. El-Shamy, “The Traditional Structure of Sentiments in Mahfouz’s *Trilogy*: a Behavioristic Text Analysis,” in Trevor Le Gassick, ed., *Critical*


Essay: Discuss the spatial and temporal dynamics of the relationship between two characters in the novel (suggested pairings: al-Sayyid Ahmad and Amina, al-Sayyid Ahmad and Yasin, or Amina and Kamal)’

Week 2


Secondary Literature


**Essay:** Discuss the allegorical content of the novel in the light of its shifts in perspective.

**Week 3**

Tayeb Saleh [al-Tayyib Salih], *Mawsim al-hijra ila al-shamal* (1967)


Secondary Literature


**Essay: Build a profile of the character of the narrator.**

**Week 4**


**Secondary literature**


**Essay: “Humour and History in Emile Habiby’s The Pessoptimist”**

**Week 5**


**Secondary Literature**


**Essay: “Walid Masoud: conflicting accounts”**

**Week 6**


**Secondary literature**


**Essay: “Narrations of Madness in *Story of Zahra*”**

**Week 7**
Mohamed Berrada [Muhammad Barada], *Lu’bat al-nisyan* (1987)


**Secondary literature**


(Other assignments TBA)

**Essay: “Extracting meaning from form in the *Game of Forgetting*”**

**Week 8**


**Secondary Literature**


**Essay: “Hamlat Taftish as a collective memoir”**

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Further Reading:

*On the Arabic Novel*


*On Narratological Theory and Method*


For more information contact Dr. Hammond at (martha.hammond@orinst.ox.ac.uk).