Arabic Writing in the Virtual Age: New Media
ARA 384C (#41227)
W 3-6; CAL 419
Fall 2016

In this graduate seminar we will explore the writings of a new generation of Arab bloggers and tweeps (Twitter users). The course examines digital writing genres against the backdrop of social and political developments in the Arab world from the beginning of the new millennium. What new multilingual and interactive domains shape and define this new writing? In what way do new technologies affect the way we tell stories and produce narratives, engage in political debates and contest power? What models of audience and publics are imagined when examining the notions of “online followers”? In turn, how does this writing transform and express new configurations of language, ethics, community, and politics? We will read works by Ahmad Naji, Ahmad Baydoun, Rasha Azb, Laila Shereen Sakr, Helga Tawil-Souri, Wendy Chun, Youssef Rakha, Marwan Kraidy, Wael Abbas, and Mujtahidd.

**COURSE WORK AND GRADING**
- Class Participation (15%).

- Class Presentation (15%), 10-15 Minutes. Presentations should focus on the subject matter related to the course material assigned the day of the presentation.

- Final Project 70% *(Due Nov. 30)*
Suggested Topic 1 (English or Arabic 5000 words)
Follow a blogger or a tweep, or a hashtag or trend on social media throughout the semester. The seminar paper should focus on what you observed over this period, choosing an angle of discussion that is most appropriate to you disciplinary and intellectual interests (literature, linguistics, politics, etc.).

Suggested Topic 2 (English or Arabic; Introduction 1000 words; Paper 4000 words):
Start a blog or a Twitter account dealing with a particular topic (language, culture, literature). Tweet over the course of the semester and collect and publish your work as a paper with a critical introduction identifying the topic of the tweets, the responses you got, and the interactive framework produced. You could include in the paper examples of the comments you received or responses to the hashtags you started.

Suggested Topic 3 (English or Arabic 5000 words):
Seminar paper of your choice relating to the class topic.

- Please discuss your ideas for the final project with the professor before starting.
- Two sessions (Nov. 9 and 16) are devoted to presenting your research and findings for the final project. You have the option to assign readings/links for the class to read/explore.
- Format: All papers should be typed, spell-checked, and double-spaced.

**REQUIRED READINGS AND LINKS**
- Available on Canvas in respective folders.
- Links are on the syllabus.

**SCHEDULE**

**Week 1**
Aug. 24
- Introduction.

**Week 2**
Aug. 31
- Ahmad Naji, *Al-Mudawwannat min al-bust ila al-twit* ("Blogs: From Post to Tweet").
- Brian Edwards, *After the American Century*.

**Week 3**
Sep. 7
- Ahmad Baydoun, *Al-Fasbakat* ("Facebooking").
  Link:
  http://www.madamasr.com/ar/opinion/دبل أموسيتية لتلفللم إحسام ناجي أحود قضية

**Week 4**
Sep. 14
- Wael Abbas, *Al-Wa‘i al-misri* ("Misr Digital").
- Slavoj Zizek, *Trouble in Paradise*.
- Links:
  https://twitter.com/waelabbas?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor
  http://misrdigital.blogspot.com/
  https://www.youtube.com/user/waelabbas

**Week 5**
Sep. 21
- Rasha Azb, *@RashaPress*
- Helga Tawil Souri, “Egypt’s Uprising and the Shifting Spatialities of Politics.”
- Links:
  https://twitter.com/rashapress
  https://hunasotak.com/article/8896
  https://hunasotak.com/article/11396
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mrK-dIYuXoE

Week 6
Sep. 28
- Alia al-Mahdi, Mudhakarat Tha’ira (A Rebel’s Diary).
- Marwan Kraidy, The Naked Blogger of Cairo.
- Link:
  http://arebelsdiary.blogspot.com/?zx=471c99ca21656882

Week 7
Oct. 5
- Mujtahidd, Al-Kitab al-mu’tamad fi taghridat Mujtahidd (“The Reliable Book of Mujtahidd’s Tweets”)
- Stefan Leder and Hilary Kilpatrick, “Classical Arabic Prose Literature: A Researchers' Sketch Map.”
- Link:
  https://twitter.com/mujtahidd

Week 8
Oct. 12
- Mujtahidd (cont.)
- Links:
  https://twitter.com/search?f=users&vertical=default&q=%D9%85%D8%AC%D8%AF%D8%A9&D9%8A%D8%A9&src=typd
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_UZBAlYzdE8

Week 9
Oct. 19
- Badriyya al-Beshr, Haghtag Ghazwa (“Hashtag Raid”).
- Hatoon al-Fasi, Al-Infilat al-twitr wa qazf al-nisa’ (“Twitter Chaos and the Attack on Women”)
- Wendy Chun, “Habits of Leaking: Of Sluts and Network Cards.”
- Link:
  https://twitter.com/search?q=%23%D9%84%D8%A7_%D9%84%D8%AF%D8%1%D9%8A%D8%A9&src=hash

Week 10
Oct. 26
-Laila Shereen Sakr (VJ Um Amel).
-Links:
  http://vjamamel.com/
  http://r-shief.org/

Week 11
Nov. 2
**Guest Speaker:** Dr. Allison Gibbons, Sheffield Halam University.
-“On Writing Genres.”

Week 12
Nov. 9
Final Projects

Week 13
Nov. 16
Final Projects

Week 14
Nov. 23
Thanksgiving – No Class

Week 15
Nov. 30
Conclusion