



COLLEGE of
CHARLESTON

SUMMER II 2018
ONLINE Course
ARABIC STUDIES (ARST) 240:
The Arab World through
Music and Song



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Asian Studies Minor

Summer 2018 Course Offerings

ARST 240 Special Topics: The Arab World through Music and Song

In this course we will sample Arab popular songs and musicians from a variety of musical genres and styles, with emphasis on the modern, cosmopolitan, mass-mediated song from its early 20th century beginnings in Egypt. We will approach Arab popular culture as a site of cross-culturalism, blending local traditions and aesthetics with global musical and cultural influences. The regions covered range from North Africa, to Egypt and East Africa, all the way east to the Levant (Lebanon, Palestine, Israel, Syria, Jordan, Iraq) and the Arabian Gulf. Larger themes will be discussed in the context of the sampled songs and artists. Among the genres covered are Algerian Rai, Egyptian and Levantine pop, and Khaleeji (Gulf Arab). Some musical concepts such as instrumental timbre, melody, harmony and the quarter tone systems will be discussed as important factors in the negotiation of local practice with foreign influences in the evolution of modern Arabic music, but technical musical knowledge is not expected. Song lyrics will be provided in English translation where necessary. The course will be structured around a soundscape project that students will work on in stages, and that involves making connections between students' own musical soundscapes and soundscapes of the Arab world. The course is in English. All song lyrics will be provided in English translation where relevant. This course satisfies a General Education Humanities requirement.