In this seminar-style course open to undergraduate and graduate students, participants will read, listen to, and view illustrations inspired by three of the most important "romances" of the Islamicate world, in translation from Arabic, Persian and Urdu. The 1001 Nights, Shahnamah and Adventures of Amir Hamza delighted a vast audience, but were received by some as preposterous collections of lies, with their heroes reared by oversized birds and desired by fairies. Orientalists reveled in their images of a decadent and lustful East, and deprecated the childishness of the Oriental worldview that these stories supposedly represented. Into the 20th century, reworkings of these stories, whether through Walt Disney, Bollywood, or World War II propagandists, continued to reveal the preoccupations of their interpreters. In our class discussions we will consider questions of Orientalism, nationalism, gender and sexuality, oral performance and storytelling, history, the rational and the marvellous, violence, etc. through secondary readings and analyses of the texts along with sumptuous illustrations, oral performances, and films. Visits to Rare Books and Special Collections and the Islamic Studies Library will give students a chance to meditate upon rare manuscripts and lithographs. Graduate students and language students, please see below for information regarding your cases.

**Required Texts:**
These texts are available at The Word Bookstore (469 Milton Street between Aylmer and Durocher).


All other readings (listed in the class schedule) will be made available to you via myCourses. If you do NOT have access to the myCourses page for this class, please notify me A.S.A.P.!
Note as well that the list of readings is tentative, and texts may be added or subtracted according to the needs of the course as it develops. Please pay attention to announcements in class and to class emails.

**Original Texts:**
Language learners can use versions of the original texts. The ones that I recommend in each case are listed below (though others can also be used). They are available at the ISL under Reserves (ask at the front desk).


**Graduate Students** taking the class under the course number ISLA 681 should note that the requirements for the final paper differ slightly in their case, and that they will be expected to do the readings more comprehensively.

**Language Students** may take this course to fulfill the Institute of Islamic Studies' advanced language requirements in **Urdu, Persian, or Arabic**, by working with the original source texts (listed above), and closely focusing on Arabic, Persian, or Urdu sources for their final papers. For example, a final research paper on references to the 1001 Nights in modern Arabic novels; representations of Sekandar in a variety of Persian poems, romances and histories; or the connection between popular romances and modern Urdu pulp fiction, would fulfill the language requirements in each case. Students who wish to take the course for this purpose should let the professor know beforehand.

**On Technology in Class:** Students are discouraged from using mobile phones in class. Fixating on your phone, surreptitious texting and so on will result in a lowered participation mark. Laptops and tablets (iPads, etc.) are allowed in class, but solely for the purpose of referring to the readings for the day. I encourage the use of paper and pen if you need to take notes. The use of laptops and tablets should not interfere with your participation in the class discussion; this will obviously cause your participation mark to take a nosedive. Make eye contact and stay away from email, social media, and so on—stick to the readings.

**Students with Disabilities:** If you have a disability, whether physical or mental (anxiety, depression, etc.) please do not hesitate to let me know in person or via email as soon as you can, and we will plan out a course of action. I strongly recommend getting in touch with the Office of Students with Disabilities.

**Grading Scheme:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>31%</td>
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Attendance and participation in class discussions makes up a significant portion of your grade. Please come to class (on time) and engage in the discussion!
Because each class is 3 hours in duration, presence in class is very important. It is imperative to have a doctor's note to avoid losing marks due to absence.

Marks will also be given for attending the last class, where you will have the chance to complete the course evaluation. You will need to bring your laptop to class for this, or you may send me a screen shot of the top of the review page. You are welcome to opt out by indicating this decision to me via email.

Class attendance: 8%
Participation: 20%
Film Attendance: 2%
Course Evaluation/Opt-out: 1%

Online Forum 15%
Students should post their brief thoughts on the readings for each class on the myCourses forum. They should be posted by **11:59 PM the Friday night before each class**. (However, late posts will be marked as well!) These will form some of the basis of the class discussion. Full marks would be given to an exceptionally well-articulated and insightful comment showing critical meditation on at least two of the days' readings (if there is more than one reading for the day).

Preliminary Research Question 2%
By **February 2 at 11:59 PM** students must email me a preliminary question that they hope to answer in their research paper. Please do not send attachments. Please read the instructions on submission (found in the Research Paper guidelines on myCourses) and follow them closely.

Proposal 15%
1-3 pages, **due February 28 at 11:59 PM**. Guidelines with a marking rubric are available on myCourses.

Proposal Workshop 7%
By **March 6 at 11:59 PM** students should comment substantially on the proposals of 4 of their classmates (assigned by the professor) on Google Docs. If time permits we will discuss the feedback in the subsequent class. See the instructions in the Proposal guidelines on myCourses.
In order to ensure timely grading, assignments handed in late or under an extension will not receive written comments.

Class Schedule:

January 7
1001 Nights: Shahrazad
Representing Shahrazad

Readings:
Arabian Nights. 5-21

January 11
1001 Nights: The Fisherman and the Jinn
Textual History of the Nights; The Marvellous and Strange

Readings:
Arabian Nights. 36-80


January 18

1001 NIGHTS: THE PORTER AND THE THREE LADIES

Orientalism

Readings:

Arabian Nights. 80-171


January 25

1001 NIGHTS: THE HUNCHBACK
History and the Marvellous; Visual Art

Jan. 26: Screening of The Thief of Bagdad (location TBA)

Readings:
Arabian Nights. 248-320


February 1

1001 NIGHTS: ALADDIN
World Literature; Cinematic Representations

Library Session I (Rare Books & Special Collections)

Readings:
Aladdin. 1-12

February 8

SHAHNAMAH: BEGINNINGS
Storytelling and Story-writing

Readings:

Shahnamah. 1-103


February 15  SHAHNAMAH: ROSTAM & SOHRAB, SEYAVASH
Men and Women

Readings:
Shahnamah. 104-109, 131-228

February 22  SHAHNAMAH: AKVAN DIV, ROSTAM & ESFANDYAR
The Iranian Nation and Its Others

Readings:
Shahnamah. 299-305, 371-440

February 29

READING WEEK

March 7

SHAHNAMAH: SEKANDAR

History and the Marvellous

Proposal Workshop

Readings:
Shahnamah. 440-528

March 14

SHAHNAMAH: BAHRAM GUR, NUSHIN-RAVAN, KHUSSRAU & SHIRIN

Visual Art and Otherness

Library Session II (Islamic Studies Library)

Readings:
Shahnamah. 600-678, 685-716, 810-831
Marzolph, Ulrich. “Bahram Gur’s Spectacular Marksmanship and the Art of Illustration in Qajar Lithographed Books.” The
March 21  
**AMIR HAMZAH: FROM CTESIphon TO MAKKA**  
Telling and Showing Stories  

Readings:  
Amir Hamzah. 3-87  
Khan, Pasha M. “Chapter 3. The Storytelling Craft”. 1-30  

March 28  
**AMIR HAMZAH: AMIR AND NAUSHERVAN**  
Genre and Ideology  

Readings:  
Amir Hamzah. 88-182  
Khan, Pasha M. “Chapter 1. Introduction”. 1-30  

April 4  
**AMIR HAMZAH: AMAR, LANDHOOR, NARANJI-POSH**  
War and Love  

Readings:  
Amir Hamzah. 186-266
April 11

AMIR HAMZAH: AMIR IN THE LAND OF QAF

Marvels and Anxieties

Readings:

Amir Hamzah. 267-352

Khan, Pasha M. “Chapter 5. Reasoned Wonders”. 1-30


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McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).

In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded. / Conformément à la Charte des droits de l’étudiant de l’Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l’un des objets est la maîtrise d’une langue).
Instructor generated course materials (e.g., handouts, notes, summaries, exam questions, etc.) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor. Note that infringements of copyright can be subject to follow up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

If you have a disability please contact the instructor to arrange a time to discuss your situation. It would be helpful if you contact the Office for Students with Disabilities at 514-398-6009 before you do this.