

¡Language learning saves lives!

Persian 455

The Persian Ghazal: A Survey

Winter 2021 | Mon. & Wed. 11:30-1 PM | Virtual

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The Hafez Mausoleum in Shiraz | Artwork by Tida Bradshaw

The Ghazal is the leading medium for lyrical expression not only in Persian, but also in Arabic, Turkish, Urdu, and many other poetic traditions. We will read, discuss, and enjoy Persian Ghazals by Rumi (d. 1273), Sa'di (d. 1291), and Hafiz (d. 1390), towering figures whose verse has inspired global audiences well beyond the Persian language and the time periods and cultural geography to which they belonged. Together, we will unpack their poems linguistically and rhetorically, translate them into English, and discuss their approaches to beauty, love, and spirituality. Persian 455 is taught as a content-based language course, meaning we study Persian in order to better understand a specific topic— in this case Ghazal poetry.

Court Materials: PDFs will be provided out of the goodness of my heart.

Prerequisite: Completion of two years of Persian *or* god's consent.

Disclaimer: Humor may have been utilized in preparing parts of this syllabus.

Objectives:

1. **Arrive** at a fuller understanding of what less commonly-taught languages have to offer. They're far more than just a "window" into other(ized) societies.
2. **Develop** the reading techniques and vocabulary to properly read, understand, and discuss Ghazals in Persian
3. **Build** the skills to translate into English Ghazal poems
4. **Cultivate** the ability to memorize short poems
5. **Identify** some of the major conventions of the classical Persian ghazal
6. **Examine** thematic concepts in a selection of classical Persian ghazals through the aid of secondary readings, in-class discussions, and guest speakers.
7. **Expand** your notions of diversity and inclusivity on the basis of the diverse representations of sexual, religious, and ethnic identities that emerge from the selection of Ghazals read in class.
8. **Gain** a deeper understanding of the place of poetry in Persian literary culture.

Why Is this Course Good for Your Life?

Toni Morrison (d. 2019), the celebrated American novelist, was once dismissed by a white critic for *only* writing about Black people. The said critic held that Morrison's imaginative prose would be better appreciated if it were concerned with less provincial and more universal (read white) issues. Throughout her consequential career, Morrison strove to mute the internalized white gaze in her creative process in order to recenter her literary imagination around her people's humanity.

What does it mean then to read classical Persian poetry in twenty-first century America? To counter the dehumanization of any people, we must unlearn how we assign social and cultural value and how we universalize our objects of value. We must learn new ways of valuing what is important and beautiful in the world. Over the past millennium, millions of people from Iberia to India have composed and celebrated Ghazals as a lyrical expression of what they hold as subversive and beautiful. The aesthetic world of the Persian Ghazal will be a point of entry into a different value system, one that we will learn how to appreciate *and* critique together. Gaining entry into this world requires a patient practice, a step toward the recuperation of our humanity from racist systems.

Grading breakdown:

Participation.....30%

» Students are expected to prepare the week's readings prior to the first class in order to participate in discussions and in-class translation exercises.

Reading Response.....10%

» Every two weeks, you are expected to write one paragraph in Persian in response to a secondary reading in English. This reading can be an article on Ghazal poetry or an English translation of a Ghazal that we've read in class. You will turn in a total of 5 reading responses.

Homework.....40%

» Homework consists of producing word-by-word translations of ghazals prior to reading them and producing a prose translation after reading them.

Final.....20%

» Rubric will be provided.

Total.....100%

A = 4.0-3.9 | A- = 3.8-3.5 | B+ = 3.4-3.2 | B = 3.1-2.9 | B- = 2.8-2.5 | C+ = 2.4-2.2
C = 2.1-1.9 | C- = 1.8-1.5 | D+ = 1.4-1.2 | D = 1.1-0.9 | D- = 0.8-0.7 | E = 0.0



Inclusion: We are a colorful tapestry, like an Afghan kilim. All are welcome in class. By all, I mean whoever may be reading this (or to whomever this sentence may be read or translated).

Participation: In a language/literature course, it is vital that you be there and participate: ask questions, help your peers, voice your interests *#bethere*. Office hours may not be used to compensate for absences. If you need accommodation for any personal reason, please talk to me.

Punctuality: Being on time to class shows respect & commitment. If you need any specific accommodation, please talk to me. Regular tardiness may result in being marked absent: side effects include but are not limited to low participation grade, cranky instructor, and judgy classmates.

Etiquette: we will adhere to *adab* or polite behavior at all times by being respectful in class, supportive of our peers' inquiries and output, and intellectually vulnerable when discussing culturally and personally sensitive issues.

To-catch-a-predator: I assume any work that bears your name is yours truly *#integrity*. Seeking help from a tutor or a family member is OK only if they're helping you to polish your grammar and restructure your thoughts. Briefly put, the composition is your own work.

Religious Accommodation: "Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW's policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at Religious Accommodations Policy (click [here](#) for more info). Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the Religious Accommodations Request form."

Final grade is indeed *final*. No چانه زنی in the bazaar of grades, please. I will ignore any such emails.

Resources:

- Dictionary

- Persian-English [dictionaries](#) (Steingass recommended)
- Persian-Persian dictionaries: [Dehkhoda](#), [Vazhehyab](#) & [Vazheh](#)
- [Dictionary of Persian expressions](#)

* THE USE OF GOOGLE "TRANSLATOR" IS DIVINELY FORBIDDEN

- Blogs

- Tips for reading classical poetry: [one](#), [two](#), [three](#)

- Textbook

- Wheeler M. Thackston, *A Millennium of Classical Persian Poetry: A Guide to the Reading and Understanding of Persian Poetry from the Tenth to the Twentieth Century First* (Ibex Publishers, 1994)

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Schedule

(Certainty is worth squat these days; therefore this schedule -like life- is tentative)

#	Date	Readings & Agenda
1	1/4 Monday 1/6 Wednesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meet & Greet - What is Ghazal poetry? And Why Is It So Global? - Reading a Ghazal by Sa'di of Shiraz
2	1/11 Monday 1/13 Wednesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading a Ghazal by Sa'di of Shiraz
3	1/18 Monday 1/20 Wednesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading a Ghazal by Sa'di of Shiraz
4	1/25 Monday 1/27 Wednesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading a Ghazal by Hafez of Shiraz
5	2/1 Monday 2/3 Wednesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading a Ghazal by Hafez of Shiraz

6	2/8 Monday 2/10 Wednesday	- Reading a Ghazal by Hafez of Shiraz
7	2/15 Monday 2/17 Wednesday	- Reading a Ghazal by Rumi of Balkh
8	2/22 Monday 2/24 Wednesday	- Reading a Ghazal by Rumi of Balkh
9	3/1 Monday 3/3 Wednesday	- Reading a Ghazal by Rumi of Balkh
10	3/8 Monday 3/10 Wednesday	- Reading a modern Ghazal! - ¡Your translations!

Bibliography

Divan-e Hafez. Edited by Parviz Natel Khanlari, Chap-e 1 ed., Tehran: Nil, 1981.

Gozideh-ye Ghazaliyat-e Shams: Qarn-e Haftom Hejri. Edited by Mohammad Reza Shafi'i Kadkani. Chap-e 7 ed., Tehran: Sherkat-e sahmi-e ketabha-ye jibi, 1988.

Koliyyat-e Sa'adī. *Az ru-ye noskheh-ye tashih shodeh.* Edited by Mohammad 'Ali Forughi, Chap-e 8 ed., Tehran: Javidan, 1992