

## *Persian 403*

### **Modern Persian Literature: *A Survey***

Winter 2022 | Mon. & Wed. 3:30-4:50 | DEN 213

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Modernism is a catch-all term that refers to vastly diverse experiences, ideas and forms of artistic and literary expression, created and canonized in the past hundred and fifty years in the context of Persian literature— a received wisdom subject to debate. In *Persian 403*, we will not seek to define what is a modern canon (and what is not). Instead, we will read and discuss a selection of highly-read and inspirational literary works that Persian-speakers have read as modern. Our focus this quarter will be on both prose and poetry. Where relevant, we will also engage cinematic and artistic works that complement our readings. Ultimately, *Persian 403* is a content-based language course, meaning we utilize our knowledge of Persian to read literature. But students will not be primarily evaluated on the quality of their commentary on literature. Instead, they will be assessed only by their comprehension and production of language. *Image:* Painting by Sohrab Sepehri (d. 1980)

**Course Materials:** Will be provided in print or PDF format.

**Prerequisite:** Completion of two years of Persian *or* my consent.

#### **Course Objectives:**

1. **Type of language in focus**
  - a. Narration: using language to describe, compare, and contrast ideas and emotions.
2. **Interpretive listening**
  - a. Develop the skills to watch/listen to authentic interviews about future/past political, cultural, social events and identify speakers' point of view, concerns, and feelings in general with a few supporting details.
3. **Interpretive reading & writing**
  - a. Cultivate the ability to contribute to discussions about key cultural and historical turning points embedded in modern Persian prose they read during the course.
4. **Interpersonal listening & speaking**
  - a. Gain the skills to initiate and maintain a conversation with peers and instructors about social, cultural, and political issues represented in modern literature you've read or interviews/films you've watched.

## 5. Presentation speaking

- a. Present on a topics of student' choice based on different types of prose: novels, short stories, memoirs, legal writings, and travelogues they have read during the course and discuss/state a viewpoint with supporting evidence social, cultural, and political issues represented therein.

## 6. Diversity

- a. Expand your notions of diversity and inclusivity on the basis of the diverse representations of cultural identities that emerge from some of the key texts of the modern Persian literature.

## Why is this course good for your life?

We live within a socio-political system that produces difference along racial, linguistic, and religious lines. Manufactured difference serves as a mechanism to otherize those who do not possess a certain level of material possession, lack a certain legal status, speak a marginalized language, and have a dark skin tone. The racialization of the other has been baked into our social system; therefore tweaking or reforming it will not do. To make sense of how this system operates, we must deepen our range of understanding and empathy toward cultures that have been flagged as fundamentally different from our own. Language learning has the potential to serve as a form of collective detox; it can replenish our social and emotional imagination and fill us with joy.

## Grading breakdown:

**Participation**.....50%

→ I will assess your participation based on two categories: your level of preparation in class (doing the week's readings and speaking in class) and doing post-class discussions and engaging with your peers in class.

**Vocabulary list**.....20%

→ Each week, you are expected to keep a list of 15-20 new words & expressions that you didn't know before. To see a template: Go to Canvas → Files → Rubrics & Templates. You will turn in your vocabulary lists on two occasions, each time for 4 weeks (60-80 words and idioms for four weeks, a total of 120-160 words and idioms for 8 weeks).

**Final**.....30%

→ Your final project is to collaboratively translate into English a short story of your choice in consultation with me, for rubric Go to Canvas → Files → Rubrics & Templates.

**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**

**Participation:** In a language course, it is vital that you be there and participate. 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.



**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).

**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.

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

### Resources:

- Dictionaries\*
  - Persian-English [dictionaries](#)
  - Persian-Persian dictionaries: [Dehkhoda](#),
  - [Vazhehyab](#) & [Vazheh](#)
  - [Dictionary of Persian expressions](#)

\* THE USE OF GOOGLE "TRANSLATOR" IS DIVINELY FORBIDDEN

- Pronunciation
  - [Fovo](#)
- Translation
  - [Corpus dictionary](#)

# Schedule\*



\* In the past two years, we've learned that certainty is worth squat, all dates are therefore tentative

#	Date	Agenda	Due
1	Mon., Jan. 3  Wed., Jan 5	<p>Agenda for Monday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meet &amp; Greet</li> <li>- Going over syllabus               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How to use Persian-Persian dictionaries</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Poems and paintings by Sohrab Sepehri</li> </ul> <p>Agenda for Wednesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Poem by Forugh Farrokhzad</li> <li>- Discussing the documentary <i>The House Is Black</i></li> </ul>	- Bring thy enthusiasm
2	Mon., Jan. 10  Wed., Jan. 12	<p>Agenda for Monday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Watching and discussing a <a href="#">documentary</a> on Ahmad Zahir</li> <li>- An <a href="#">article</a> on Ahmad Zahir</li> </ul> <p>Agenda for Wednesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A poem by Simin Behabehani, sung by Ahmad Zahir</li> </ul>	
3	Mon., Jan. 17  Wed., Jan. 19	<p>Agenda for Monday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Holiday:</b> Martin Luther King Jr. Day</li> </ul> <p>Agenda for Wednesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An excerpt from Sadeq Hedayat's <i>Tup-e Morvari</i> (excerpt)</li> </ul>	- Choose short story for final project
4	Mon., Jan. 24  Wed., Jan. 26	<p>Agenda for Monday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An excerpt from Samad Behrangi's <i>Mahi-ye siyah-e kuchulu</i></li> </ul> <p>Agenda for Wednesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tbd</li> </ul>	

5	Mon., Jan., 31  Wed., Feb., 2	Agenda for Monday: - An excerpt from Iraj Pezeshkzad's <i>Da'i Jan Napel'on</i>  Agenda for Wednesday: - Tbd	
6	Mon., Feb., 7  Wed., Feb., 9	Agenda for Monday: - An excerpt from Shahrnush Parsipur's <i>Zanan bedun-e Mardan</i> (excerpt)  Agenda for Wednesday: - Tbd	- Submit vocabulary entries for weeks 1-5
7	Mon., Feb., 14  Wed., Feb., 16	Agenda for Monday: - An excerpt from Atiq Rahimi's <i>Sang-e sabur</i>  Agenda for Wednesday: - Watching <a href="#"><i>The Patient Stone</i></a> , A cinematic adaptation of <i>Sang-e sabur</i>	
8	Mon., Feb., 21  Wed., Feb., 23	Agenda for Monday: - <b>Holiday:</b> Presidents' Day  Agenda for Wednesday: - An excerpt from the first Constitution of Afghanistan	
9	Mon., Feb., 28  Mon., Mar., 2	Agenda for Monday: - An excerpt from Bahram Beyza'i's <i>Marg-e yazdgerd</i>  Agenda for Wednesday: - Tbd	
10	Mon., Mar., 7  Wed., Mar., 9	Agenda for Monday: - Discussing the cinema and poetry of Abbas Kiarostami  Agenda for Wednesday: - Students present on final translation project	- Submit vocabulary entries for weeks 6-10  - Translation project due on March 11