

We Remember: Arab American History

IHP Teaching Fund Proposal, submitted Jan. 2024

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Project Abstract

“We Remember: Arab American History” is an undergraduate course that will introduce students to the history of Arabs in the United States from 1880 to 2000 and will also give students the opportunity to engage in original historical research. The final third of the course will focus on “Arab Americans in/at Michigan.” Students will visit the Arab American National Museum and the Bentley Historical Library and create an online exhibit, focused on Arab Americans at the University of Michigan. Students will learn how the Arab American relationship to the University of Michigan has historically been dynamic, fluctuating, and ambivalent.

Description of Course or Project

I am applying for a course development grant to design a new class called “We Remember: Arab American History.” This undergraduate course will introduce students to the history of Arabs in the United States from 1880 to 2000 and will also give students the opportunity to engage in original historical research. We will cover major touchpoints in this history (including the features of and differences between three major periods of migration before 1924, after 1965, and more recent migration) as well as thematic topics (political activism and racialization, gender and sexuality, labor organizing, religious life). Thematic topics will be woven throughout the course. The final third of the course will focus on “Arab Americans in/at Michigan.” Students will visit the Arab American National Museum and the Bentley Historical Library and learn how to do archival research. They will then use archival materials, primarily from the Bentley, to create an online exhibit, the focus of which will be decided on by the class. (This will be based on a list of options that I create, so that I ensure the project has a focus on Arab Americans at the University of Michigan, specifically.)

Project Rationale

This course directly contributes to the study and documentation of a comprehensive history of the University of Michigan by guiding students through the research materials about Arab

Americans at the university and by giving them the historical context for these populations' presence and contributions on our campuses and beyond. The specific portions of the course related to Arab Americans at the University of Michigan will allow students to understand how Arab students have created their own spaces for belonging at the university as a result of forms of racist exclusion (i.e., anti-Arab and anti-Muslim racism). These spaces have emerged at times in spite of university leadership and at other times with university support. Students will understand the Arab American relationship to the University of Michigan as a highly dynamic, fluctuating, and ambivalent one.

Learning Goals

As a result of this course, students will be able to:

- Articulate the major points and characteristics of Arab migration to the United States since 1880.
- Identify significant Arab American individuals and organizations and their historical impact.
- Articulate how race, gender, sexuality, class, and religion impacted the experiences of Arabs in the United States.
- Identify and access primary historical sources pertaining to Arab life in the United States and at the University of Michigan.
- Analyze and think critically about primary sources.
- Put primary sources in historical and scholarly context using secondary sources.
- Produce complex, analytical evidence-based arguments that address the fields of history and ethnic studies.
- Write for a broad, public history audience.

Summary of Deliverables

The two deliverables for this class will be a syllabus and an online public-history exhibit. The syllabus will be developed for the first course offering, as an Upper-Level Writing Requirement course through the department of American Culture. This will ensure enrollment and a smaller class for the first time that I teach it. I will then transition the course into a regular offering with a course number. I hope to offer the course every 1-2 years. The course will have a “meets together” with the History department and will also count for one requirement (either Race and Ethnicity or Humanities). The second deliverable of the course will be an online exhibit that focuses on one aspect of Arab American history in Michigan or at the University of Michigan specifically. The online exhibit will be planned in consultation with and hosted by [the UM library](#). The second time I teach the course, the online exhibit will also be paired with a social media account to spread word about the project and disseminate the research.

Timeline

I will offer this class for the first time in Winter 2025, and I will teach the class again during the 2025-2026 academic year. Initial consultations with the Bentley and the Arab American National Museum will happen in Summer 2024. The bulk of preparing and organizing the course will be completed during summer and fall 2024. Research assistants will be hired over summer 2024 and during fall 2024 to prepare for the first offering of the course.

Inclusive History Project Teaching Fund Budget Template

Expense Category	Amount	Brief Explanation or justification of expense
Stipend for lead instructor	\$2,000	Stipend for instructor Charlotte Karem Albrecht
Student research assistants	\$1,000	I will hire a graduate research assistant to help me identify specific materials at the Bently and the Arab American National Museum (AANM) to focus on for our course. This will be done in consultation with archivists at both locations. Additionally, either the graduate research assistant or an undergraduate research assistant will work with library staff to begin the online exhibit structure, set up social media accounts, and create storage for class research documents.
Equipment	\$600	Purchase of document camera, for class to use during archival visits (will be used for future classes as well)
Trip to Arab American National Museum in Dearborn	\$525	UM charter bus fee (5 hours @ \$105/hr)
Trip to Arab American National Museum in Dearborn	\$875	Local meal and discussion after AANM visit in Dearborn for 20 people (18 students, 1 research assistant, 1 instructor)
<i>Please specify additional expense categories below:</i>		
Total Amount Requested	\$5,000	<i>Not to exceed \$3000 for Course Redesign Grants or \$5000 for Course Development Grants</i>