



LANGUAGE, IDENTITY, AND NATIONALISM IN CONTEMPORARY MOROCCO

APA Program: The Contemporary Maghreb - Rabat, Morocco

Language of instruction: English

US semester credits: 4.0

Contact hours: 36

Term availability: Summer (6 weeks)

Instructor: Professor Ahmed Smirkou

Course Description

The course is an investigation into questions of identity, multiculturalism and nationalism in Morocco from the point of view of language taken in its social, cultural and political dimension. How does language forge community and belonging and how does it relate to nationalism? The course starts by exploring the cultural and linguistic diversity of Morocco where a variety of Arabic and Berber dialects, French, and standardized Arabic are spoken as well as more recently English. What is the impact of multilingualism on cultural identity? How has the Moroccan state attempted to forge a national identity through language standardization and planning policies, and how have these state efforts been received? The course also examines how language use informs speech and behavior as well as social class identities. What are the attitudes of Moroccans towards various languages and how does gender shape language use or choice of a language partake in the construction of social classes? Overall, the course highlights the connection between language, culture and politics. By the end of this course, students will have covered the following axes:

- Dialectal variations in Morocco
- Standardization of MA and Tamazight in Morocco and political obstacles
- The linguistic influence of French language on Moroccan Arabic and French loanwords adaptation into Moroccan Arabic
- Language errors made by Moroccan speakers of English (EFL learners)
- Casablanca as the center of linguistic change in Morocco
- Tangier as the center of cultural and linguistic exchange between American writers and Moroccan ones in the 20th century
- Semantic gaps in Moroccan Arabic
- Attitudes to language use in Morocco
- Stereotypes in Morocco
- Conversational behaviors in the public space in Morocco
- Male vs. female language use (Genderlect) in Morocco
- Amazigh identity and the challenge of multilingualism

Assessment

- Class participation: 25%
- Oral Presentation: 25%
- Paper: 25%
- Final Examination: 25%