

## *Persian 402*

### **Introduction to Classical Persian Poetry**

Winter 2020 | Tue & Thur 1:30-3:20 | MGH 278

**Instructor:** Aria Fani

**Email:** ariafani@uw.edu

**Pronoun:** او

**Office hours:** Tuesday & Thursday 12:30-1:30, or by appointment

**Office:** 233 Denny Hall

This course follows upon Intermediate Persian; it may also be taken as a standalone course in conjunction with Intermediate Persian. It focuses on the grammatical, stylistic, rhetorical, and socio-anthropological specificities of one of Eurasia's major languages of cultural prestige. It will acquaint students with the main genres of classical Persian poetry from the aftermath of the Arab conquest until the eighteenth century CE. The course will also serve as an introduction to the morphological, syntactic, and semantic specificities of the poetic and prose language for the purpose of discerning the main differences between classical and modern Persian, and also to historically contextualize the grammatical meaning of a given text. You will prepare selected texts outside of class, which are representative of a variety of Persian literary genres, in order to discuss and analyze their literary significance and to contextualize them within their historical framework. A critical discussion of these works in English—as well as the poetics and politics of their translation—will be an important part of our pedagogical objective.

**Court Materials:** Will be provided in print or PDF format throughout the course.

**Prerequisite:** Completion of one year of Persian *or* my consent.

**Course Objectives:** By the end of the course, students will acquire the following skills:

1. Identify the major grammatical specificities of classical Persian in various literary texts.
2. Identify key cultural and historical turning points in classical Persian poetry.
3. Examine and contextualize thematic concepts in various classical Persian poetic forms through the aid of secondary readings, in-class lectures, and presentations.
4. Expand their notions of diversity and inclusivity on the basis of the diverse representations of sexual, religious, and ethnic identities that emerge from some of the key texts of the classical Persian poetic and prose canon.
5. Cultivate a key vocabulary with which to discuss the question of literary translation.

#### **Why Is this Course Good for Your Life?**

We live within economic and political systems that produce difference as a mechanism to otherize humans who don't possess a certain level of material wealth, who speak a different language, who look and dress differently, worship a different (or no) god, make love differently, and lack legal status. These social systems fundamentally lack respect for the other. To reverse their work, we must deepen our range of understanding and empathy toward other cultures. I truly believe that understanding and appreciating a literary tradition like Persian poetry in all of its cultural specificities offers us a chance at expanding our empathy. Studying cultures that are flagged as inherently different from ours can be a form of collective therapy and defiance against oppressive systems. This is what the humanities should always aspire to do.

## 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.

**Presentations**.....20%

→ You will give very short presentations on a chosen text or topic in class and highlight a particular theme. Number of presentations will vary depending on enrollment.

**Exams**.....40%

→ The exams will consist of translating one seen excerpt and short answer essay questions regarding the assigned readings for the course. There will be nothing unpredictable or surprising.

**Final**.....10%

→ The Final exam will consist of translating and analyzing an unseen passage, as well as highlighting key grammatical and thematic features of the text. Students will be provided with the final exam text before it is due. Access to dictionary allowed.

**Total**.....100%

**A** = 99% - 93% | **A-** = 92% - 90% | **B+** = 89% - 87% | **B** = 86% - 83% | **B-** = 82% - 80% | **C+** = 79% - 77%  
**C** = 76% - 73% | **C-** = 72% - 70% | **F** = 69% and below

**Disclaimer:** Since there may be different language levels in this class, I will use different rubrics to evaluate each group (i.e. native speakers, heritage speakers, advanced foreign language learners, etc).

**Participation:** In a language/literature 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. ask questions, help your peers, voice your interests. *#bethere*

- **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 judgmental 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 *chaaneb-zani* in the bazaar of grades, please. I will ignore any such emails.

**DISCLAIMER #2: THE USE OF GOOGLE “TRANSLATOR” IS DIVINELY FORBIDDEN**

**Resources:**

Dictionaries

Persian-English [dictionaries](#)

Persian-Persian [dictionary](#)

[Pronunciation](#) tool

Encyclopedias

Encyclopedia [Iranica](#)

Encyclopedia of [Islam](#) (requires UW log-in)



## Schedule

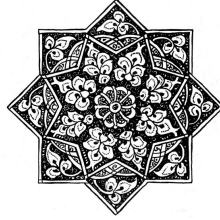
(schedule is tentative as everything else in life)

#	Date	Text	Secondary Reading <small>(articles from the <i>Brill Encyclopaedia of Islam</i> unless otherwise noted)</small>	Due
1	1/7   Tuesday  1/9   Thursday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Syllabus &amp; Introduction</li> <li>- <i>Lecture: What do we mean by “classical Persian poetry?”</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Reading</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Selection by Rudaki</li> <li>- Selection from Nezāmi ‘Aruzi’s <i>Chahār Maqale</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Persian Literature (<i>Oxford Islamic Studies</i>)</li> <li>- “On Translating the Poetry of Rudaki” by Sassan Tabatabai</li> </ul>	
2	1/14   Tuesday  1/16   Thursday	<p><i>Reading</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Persian prosody</li> <li>- Wine poem by Rudaki</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Finn Thiesesn, selection from <i>Classical Persian Prosody</i></li> <li>- “Poetic Imagery” by Riccardo Zipoli</li> </ul>	
	1/21   Tuesday	<p><i>Reading</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Shahr-āshub</i> by</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Mas‘ūd-i Sa‘d-i Salmān</a></li> </ul>	

3	1/23   Thursday	Mas‘ud Sa‘d Salmān	by Sunil Sharma	
4	1/28   Tuesday 1/30   Thursday	<i>Reading</i> - <i>Ghazal</i> by Jahan Malek Khatun	- Jahan Malek Khatun ( <i>Ency. Iranica</i> )	
5	2/4   Tuesday 2/6   Thursday	<i>Reading</i> - <i>Ghazal</i> by Amir Khosrow Dehlavi - Translation by Sunil Sharma and Paul Losensky (Penguin Global, 2013)	- <a href="#">Amīr Khusraw Dihlavī</a> by Sunil Sharma - <a href="#">Ghazal in Persian</a> by Ève Feuillebois	
6	2/11   Tuesday 2/13   Thursday	<i>Reading</i> - <i>Ghazal</i> by Hāfez - Translation by Dick Davis (Penguin, 2012) and Geoffrey Squires (Miami University Press, 2014)	- <a href="#">“Re-writing Hafez: Re-theorizing Untranslatability in Persian Poetry”</a> ( <i>Ajam Media Collective</i> )	
7	2/18   Tuesday 2/20   Thursday	<i>Reading</i> - Selection from Sa‘di’s <i>Bustan</i>	- <a href="#">Advice Literature</a> by Louise Marlow	- Presentations Due
8	2/25   Tuesday 2/27   Thursday	<i>Reading</i> - The Prelude to the <i>Shāhnameh</i>	- “The Shahnameh of Ferdowsi as World Literature” by Frank Lewis	
9	3/3   Tuesday 3/5   Thursday	<i>Reading</i> - The Prelude to Rumi’s Mathnawi-ye Ma‘nawi	- “Erasure of Islam from the Poetry of Rumi” <i>The New Yorker</i> - <a href="#">“The Benefits of Memorizing Poetry”</a> by Erin Medeiros	
	3/10   Tuesday	<i>Reading</i>	- <a href="#">Epigram, Persian</a> by	

10	3/12   Thursday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Rubā'īyyāt</i> of 'Omar Khayyām</li> <li>- Translation by Edward Fitzgerald as well as Karim Emami</li> </ul>	<p>'Ali Asghar Seyed-Gohrab</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "FitzGerald's Anglo-Persian Rubáiyát" by Reza Taher-Kermani</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Final exam on Thursday</li> </ul>
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## Persian 402



- **What:** You'll speak informally on two or more occasions for seven minutes on a topic of interest to you, one that is related to the primary and secondary readings we do in class. You may also suggest to do it on a reading you find relevant.
  - **Criteria:**
    - **Delivery**
      - Your primary goal should be to deliver an organized, well-enunciated, and linguistically accurate presentation. It would be ideally in Persian or mixed with English.
    - **Grammar**
      - Make sure to use the correct verb tenses and words that accurately express your thoughts and intended register.
  - **Recap:** Your presentations constitute 20% of your final grade. Check syllabus for presentation dates.
- Expectations vary based on your level. Native speakers: I expect you to speak at a significantly lower pace so that your peers may better understand you. This may take some training, so make sure to prepare for it.

# Presentation rubric

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**Presenter** .....

**Preparation (25%)** Does the student know hir script? Is ze able to deliver the presentation without reading notes? Does ze have the appropriate background information for the presentation?

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**Organization (25%)** Is the topic focused and relevant? Is there coordination and harmony between different parts of the presentation? Does the topic give coherence to the presentation?

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**Pronunciation (25%)** Could the presentation be understood easily? Was the class able to understand and follow along? Were key words and terms misspoken or used in the wrong context? Is the presentation delivered in a smooth, non-halting manner? Does the presenter stress the appropriate words?

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**Accuracy (25%)** Is the presentation delivered in proper, standard Persian? Are grammatical mistakes a distraction from the ideas that the student attempts to convey? If the presenter deviates from the lines ze was supposed to have prepared are the improvised lines grammatically correct?

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**Total grade (100%)**

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