



# FACULTY HIGHLIGHT:

## DR. RAYMOND FARRIN

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### 1) What made you decide to join the AUK community?

When I was finishing my Ph.D. in California, I was hoping to find a job in an Arab country, as it had been seven years since I left Egypt (where I had studied Arabic) and I missed this part of the world. I was lucky that a position at AUK came open at the right time.

### 2) How does your department fit into the long-term plan?

Though of course AUK focuses on improving the English skills of its students, our department ensures that the students are proficient in Arabic as well and exposed to the rich Arab culture.

As of this year, we are proud to offer an Arabic minor for those who want to delve more deeply into their heritage and literature. We also offer courses in French, Spanish, and translation. In the future, we hope to develop the translation program at AUK and perhaps offer a minor in it.

### 3) What do you like most about your job? What do you like least?

I like most teaching motivated students. It is extremely satisfying to see students progress and improve over the course of semesters and years.

As for what I like least, it is probably teaching unmotivated students.

### 4) Who were your childhood heroes?

Most of them were sports stars, like John McEnroe in tennis and some American football players. I had hoped to be an athlete when I grew up.

### 5) If you could be or do anything else - what?

While I do not play an instrument myself, I think I would enjoy playing one in an orchestra, especially in an orchestra that travels around the world.

### 6) If you could live in any other time, when might that be and why?

I think I would like to live in Al-Andalus during the fifth century AH/eleventh century CE. It was a high point for literature and culture. Also, I would like to live in Baghdad ("The City of Peace") around the time of Harun Al-Rashid, when it was the greatest city in the world.

### 7) If you could have dinner with five famous people from history, who would they be?

I would have dinner with some luminaries from Arabic literature: Ibn Zaydun and Wallada bint Al-Mustakfi (when they were still together), Al-Mu'tamid ibn 'Abbad, Badi' Al-Zaman Al-Hamadhani, and Al-Mutanabbi. We would discuss their works and Arabic literature in general. That would be an amazing dinner!

### 8) What are you most proud of?

Completing my first book (*Abundance from the Desert: Classical Arabic Poetry*). The project took years.

### 9) What are you currently working on?

The translation of my book into Arabic. Also, I am working on a study of how the Qur'anic suras are structured and how their structure serves as a guide to meaning. There is a Qur'anic science that deals with this issue: 'ilm al-munasaba. I hope to add a contribution to it.

### 10) What are some of the difficulties you face as an educator living in Kuwait?

For someone specializing in Arabic literature, this is a great place to be. The majority of our students are already strong in Arabic, so we do advanced work in many of our courses similar to that done at graduate programs in the U.S.

The difficulties I face are those that we all face living in modern Kuwait, such as the traffic and congestion.

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