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## GrécourtGate News

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### New Radio Show an Oasis for Arabic Speakers

 By **Lily Samuels '11**

For those in the Smith community who speak or are learning Arabic, and others who might crave the beats and news from the Arab world, a new radio show provides a weekly sanctuary.

*Oasis*, a show produced and hosted by Abdelkader Berrahmoun, a teaching fellow and Arabic language instructor at Smith, airs on Smith radio station WOZQ 91.9 FM every Wednesday, from 5 to 6 p.m.

The show features music from North Africa and the Middle East, as well as contemporary Arabic fusion music. Berrahmoun also broadcasts interviews in Arabic on the politics of North Africa, for example, Arabic art and photography, the impact of climate change on North Africa, women's issues, and sensitive topics such as the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.



Abdelkader Berrahmoun at the mic in the WOZQ studio.

"The message of *Oasis* is to build a bridge of understanding between Arabic and non-Arabic cultures and language groups," explains Berrahmoun. "It's imperative in the contemporary political climate to promote tolerance, and to counter common stereotypes about Arabs and Muslims. I hope that *Oasis* serves as a vehicle for mutual understanding."

*Oasis* first hit the airwaves in late September. The idea was spawned several years ago, when Berrahmoun, was inspired by an article on the use of radio by high school students in Italian and French languages courses.

"I decided that producing an Arabic radio show at Smith College would be a meaningful and rich learning experience for my students at the advanced Arabic level," says Berrahmoun, who is from Algeria.

Berrahmoun has incorporated his radio show into the curricula of his courses Elementary Arabic 100Y and Advanced Arabic 300, as well as two independent studies conducted in Arabic. "I require my students in the Advanced Arabic class to prepare and present a show in Arabic," he says. "The radio show project gives them the opportunity to research, write, speak and think in Arabic. For example, a group of students recently interviewed a guest on air. [It] reinforces students' understanding of Arabic through real-life applications."

Berrahmoun has a clear goal for the radio show's future. "I would like to attract students to listen to the show, awaken their interest in learning more about Arab cultures, and the Arabic language," he envisions. "I want *Oasis* to be a medium for introducing Arabic cultures and music to the public and the community. I think of the show as a forum to tackle issues about the Arab/Middle Eastern world that are rarely discussed in the mainstream media, and give voice to different social, political and cultural views."