



**AMERICAN
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OF BEIRUT**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Award-Winning Novelist Hoda Barakat Concludes Creative Writing Workshop for Seniors at AUB

The University for Seniors program at the American University of Beirut (AUB), in collaboration with the university's Sheikh Zayed Chair for Arabic and Islamic Studies, has successfully concluded a special 12-session creative writing workshop led by acclaimed Lebanese novelist Hoda Barakat. Held from October 7 to November 13, the series—titled “*Tales and Words Lab*”—offered participants a unique opportunity to develop their literary voices under the guidance of one of the Arab world's most celebrated authors. The workshop reflects AUB's ongoing commitment to enriching cultural and educational programming for lifelong learners.

Hoda Barakat, the author of acclaimed novels such as *The Stone of Laughter*, *The Tiller of Waters*, and *The Night Mail*, has seen her works translated into nearly twenty languages and studied in universities worldwide. Her distinguished career has been recognized with several prestigious literary honors, including the Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature, the International Prize for Arabic Fiction (the “Arabic Booker”), and the Sheikh Zayed Book Award. In addition to her literary accomplishments, she has held academic appointments such as writer-in-residence at Dartmouth College in the United States. Her writing—rooted in themes of exile, war, memory, and identity—deeply informed her teaching throughout the workshop.

Over twelve interactive sessions, participants explored the craft of storytelling, learning to build narratives, construct compelling plots, and create vivid characters. Many reflected on the transformative nature of the experience; as one participant noted, “The creative writing class with Hoda Barakat freed me from my fear of expressing myself in writing.”

“This has been a truly exceptional experience,” said Dr. Bilal Orfali, Sheikh Zayed Chair for Arabic and Islamic Studies at AUB. “Dr. Barakat's workshop inspired participants to discover their own voices and rekindled a shared passion for literature and creativity.”

Encouraged by the workshop's great success and enthusiastic participation, AUB's University for Seniors and the Sheikh Zayed Chair for Arabic and Islamic Studies plan to offer future editions of this creative writing program as part of their shared mission to promote lifelong learning and celebrate Arab literary heritage.

ENDS

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Note to Editors

About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 790 full-time faculty members and a student body of over 9000 students. AUB currently offers more than 140 programs leading to bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full-service 365-bed hospital.

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