The AUB Gate on Bliss Street, known nowadays as the Main Gate, was erected in 1901 and has served ever since in a Janus-like role. The ancient Romans conceived of Janus—the god of beginnings and transitions, and thus also of gates, doors, doorways, passages and endings—as a two-faced creature, with one face turned toward the future and the other turned in the opposite direction toward the past. The Main Gate also has two opposing faces: one facade looks outward onto Bliss Street, and the other is turned inward, toward the lush campus and the community found in its midst. And the Main Gate is likewise a symbol of transitions and passages, of beginnings and endings, an embodiment and glorification of transformations, contradictions and possibilities.

In this section, we present responses from members of the AUB community to a request for reflections from a personal point of view on the history, significance, symbolism, and meaning of the Main Gate as well as its impact on and integration into the life of AUB.

We wish to extend our deepest thanks to all those who submitted an essay, and in particular to Dr. Malekeh Khoury and her English 102 class, and to Ms. Sarraf and her grandfather.
Abed al Motaleb Moukalled
Biology

The Main Gate

Ever since day 1, Main Gate at AUB hasn’t been an ordinary gate for me. It always withheld somehow a symbolic feature. It wasn’t just an entrance but it was a portal to dreamland. This might seem a bit cliché but it truly is. Ever since I was a child I had dreams and visions about passing through this gate and the experience met my dreams. To me, Main gate reminds me of all the great minds that passed through the same place and passing through it means that you were among the intellectual elite. Main gate has risen above materialism and became a concept by itself. It has been a key component of the AUB experience, for we all know the feeling once you go through it, meet the security guards, go down or sit on those famous stairs. Personally, I see the main gate as a token of good luck and fortune among my few days here at AUB. It cheered my day up every time I passed through this marvelous structure. This gate celebrates (along with AUB), it’s 150th birthday and that should alone render you speechless. This is a structure, symbol, concept that has passed the test of time and went into new heights.

Amal Ghamloush
Freshman

The Main Gate

The feeling of depression intensifies with each step I take towards the main gate. As I walk in I am greeted with many unfamiliar faces, each wearing different expressions of hope, ambition, anxiety, dread and so on. I turn around and look up at the gate, how can something so old and withered feel so new and full of promise? This gate not only symbolizes the start of the next chapter everybody speaks of, but also the end of another, knowing this makes me extremely anxious. Fourteen years of creating friendships and unbreakable bonds all gone, WASTED, as if all the effort I put in never mattered.

As I look around I begin to focus my attention on those struggling as much as I am, finding comfort in their pain. Reluctant as I was, I proceed to head down the stairs in hope of finding some joy within these walls. The main gate, is a symbol of hope for some and uncertainty for others. What makes me so hesitant and unsure about starting this new segment of my life is this uncontrollable fear of the unknown, but even so, I'll overcome this battle of doubt and make my time here worthwhile.
"Archly"

Deep-rooted and jagged, stands the arch of which we and five preceding generations have passed through. "Attraversiamo": let us cross over in Italian; this is the gate of which we, the selected, cross over through from a circumstance in which we were just another ordinary addition to the four-million-population, into a state of honor and distinction. It is not only limited to the yellowish tiles and stones, but further beyond. It is about what this gate grants you access to, it is about the richness the faculties this gate shields hold within them, it is about the warmth and the acceptance, the openness and the co-existence, it is a lot more than just information, this gate is about widening your horizons and thinking archly outside the box. The venerable gate of the American University of Lebanon has not only graduated, but made: lawyers, doctors, politicians, economists and engineers, all of who were from the leading pioneers. It has made beautiful spirits, elegant humans. And lastly, "The garden of the world has no limits, except in your mind." the Rumi says and AUB turns hands and gets with it.

Omar Labban
Freshman

The Main Gate

Prior to my enrolment in AUB, the main gate signified some kind of mystery; taking a glance each time I passed by, trying to observe its interior. I did not know what I wanted to see, however I needed to satisfy my curiosity. This summer my brother proposed to give me a tour around the university, I was thrilled by the idea and agreed immediately. The main gate of AUB famous for its beautiful Arabic design made out of stone and metal, showing the blend of the Eastern and Western cultures. As I went in I was surprised by its immensity and beautiful landscape, I loved how the buildings and the greenery were so cohesive. When I was leaving, and as I was going out I repeatedly read the quote that’s engraved into the stone that's on the left: “That they may have life and have it more abundantly.” Made me realize that this gate was more than a mean of access, it splits two different worlds. This gate was for 150 years and still is a filter; to make sure students have the greatest working space away from any corruption, so they can be the best version of themselves.
Majd Al Aawar
Freshman

The Main Gate

Upon first entering AUB's campus through the main gate, the feeling of both anxiety and exhilaration overwhelms you. The main gate has been renovated a few times over the years in order to maintain its beauty which reflects upon the campus and its students. It is like the students in the way that it is friendly and welcoming; it does not intimidate you as you walk in, but rather inspires you and lifts your spirits up. Walking in through the main gate always gives the feeling of security knowing that there are guards stationed there and everywhere always ready to act in case of an emergency. The AUB main gate stands out from the rest of AUB's gates; it is not just like any other entrance to the university, entering it is more like the first steps we take on the path to the rest of our lives. Having withstood the agony of time, the main gate now serves as a symbol of endurance; a symbol, students should look to when they are discouraged for motivation. The AUB main gate has managed to get through troubled times and still maintain its beauty and serenity, If it can manage it then so can we.

Christiano Karam Faluh
Freshman

AUB Main Gate

Built in 1866, when the American University of Beirut was founded, the main gate still stands high and proud, even after all these years. Recently renovated, for the university's one hundred and fiftieth anniversary, this amazing piece of architecture and work of art gives everyone living or studying within its walls a sense of hope, belonging, and security. Looking at this fascinating building, you can feel the power and energy that is gives off, as it is the main gateway between two worlds. As you enter through this magnificent structure you find yourself staring at one of the most beautiful sites in Lebanon, the AUB campus. In addition to being decorated with numerous designs, engraved on the main gate's walls is the university's motto, "That they may have life, and have it more abundantly." Guarded by two security guards day and night, the main gate ensures that everyone and everything inside it is safe, undisturbed, and unaffected by anything that may be happening outside the university. This significant landmark is more than just a main gate; it is a monument, because when I hear about or see the main gate, I see what I am proud to call home.
Bassel El Mrawed  
Freshman

**The Main Gate**

Crowds pushing through, police officers ushering people, the cool shade protecting pedestrians, all that and more comes to mind whenever I think of my first encounter with AUB's famous main gate. It was during AUB outdoors a couple of years ago, the first time I set foot in AUB, when I first came face to face with the main gate. I stared at it in awe for it looked so majestic to me. Time passed and as I learned more about AUB and it's history, that gate which has witnessed this nation's remarkable historic moments, gained more symbolic meaning to me. It started representing the birth of this country, the endurance of its struggles, and its revival from the ashes. AUB's main gate became one of Lebanon's landmarks to me; however, my perspective changed when I enrolled at AUB. It started to symbolize the future, whether it is in gaining more skills, expanding social circles, or getting a degree. That gate became more than just "some pretty thing" to me; it was a feeling of a warm home, a better more prosperous future. All in all, my relationship with AUB's main gate can be summarized with just one word: hope.

Joziane Skaf  
Freshman

**Behind The Main Gate**

It was only ever so often that a little girl would pass by to Bliss street with her family for a casual Sunday afternoon out. After ordering a takeout, we'd sit in our old convertible, and eat our meal in privacy whilst observing the hustle and bustle of busy salesmen and young college kids.

It was too soon for any kid to assume their future and destiny, but I was always one too many steps ahead from the rest of the kids. I’d ask my mum and dad, looking over at my right from where we'd parked where a university gate stood tall in pride, and not just in size, : “What’s lies behind the big gate?” My parent’s would simply laugh at my too-soon of a question, and say: “Success dear. Behind a University’s door is success. That’s why you should work hard in school.”

I would never understand what they had meant with that response; I was only seven and could hardly even tolerate grade school. But I was determined to find out if it was true.

Here I am, 11 years fast forward to the present, standing behind the AUB main gate. They were right.
As a sophomore student, it is quite early for me to talk about my experience in AUB because it’s been only a week that I have been in this university. Like many new students I suppose, my first days were pretty harsh, university was a big change for me and it took me some time to get used to the system. Somehow, first thing I noticed and that was a landmark in my head was the famous AUB main gate, which always gave me access to the beautiful campus. So far, the main gate symbolizes a new chapter in my life, a path leading me to ambition and hope. It’s amusing how this entry acts out all the different moods I can have in a day: When scared of being late in the morning, the main gate appears to be the secure area I have reached. Just as it is also the perfect getaway towards a needed weekend. Sometimes, I also feel like this historical gate of Bliss Street is an offered chance for me to meet new people; who may eventually become great college partners and warm friends, as it is one common meeting spot for all of us students. For the time being, let’s hope my relationship with the AUB main gate strengthens and that it brings me nothing but stunning surprises.

"The American University of Beirut—So, What About the Main Gate, huh?"

It’s grandiose.
It’s legendary.
It’s a showstopper.
Bewildering architecture.
Wicked architecture, really.
The main gate is the entrance, the very guarded stairway to Heaven — that is the university that keeps us all safe. Safe from this very capitalist world that brainwashes its inhabitants mercilessly— if we get personal, it protects us from the injustices in Lebanon: the politics, the sexism, the xenophobic and all other kinds of injustices, and finally the freedom that no one seeks for they don’t see it. They’re all unnoticed, and who can blame them. Lebanon is after all the “most liberal country in the Middle East“, the “renowned Beirut nightlife“, but only us here know what really happens and like all true Lebanese people, never will we ever dare to divulge our internal problems, for they must remain behind closed doors.

The news around town, or nation altogether should I say, for quite a lengthy period of time is that AUB is THE university, the one you dream to attend, the highest standard of education — greatness reachable. Therefore, when you walk on Bliss Street, to enter this castle, yes, you get to have for little meaningless seconds, a moment of arrogance.

Have a great day—
The Main Gate

It is astonishing how an object as simple as a gate can denote almost every adjective accompanied by its inverse. If you were to view Main Gate from the outside, you would feel a sense of restriction, routine, control, and reassurance. While if you were to look at it from the inside, you would feel freedom, excitement, disorder, and hazard. It possesses this power of reversing everything that crosses it merely because it detaches an organized institution from its external environment – the hectic reality we live in.

For my part, as a resident student of the university’s dorms, main gate mostly defines protection (along with its converse exposure) and lust (along with its converse apathy). When I step into the gate, I finally feel secure and sheltered. However, I yearn for what awaits me afar the blocks of stone – my friends, family, and unanticipated future, whereas stepping outside the gate always symbolizes vulnerability, risk, and chaos.

Lastly and most importantly, is diversity. Diversity is the sole adjective with a nonexistent inverse inside, outside or even underneath the arch of the gate itself, where hundreds of different students, scholars, faculty, and staff alternate between a safe haven and a frenzied world.

Ahmad Bouaram (..), Dayana Farhat (Chemistry), Rahaf Kadoura (Business Administration)

AUB Main Gate

AUB is like its Bunyan tree of 90 years of age. It is deeply rooted in history and heritage, yet like its old trees, it’s evergreen and blooming. Its historical Main Gate, still looking young, draws students to its embrace to build knowledge and experience.

AUB main gate is where people meet and create memories. The moment we step in, we have the chance to share our lunch with the cats by giving them some of our chicken sandwiches because they are cute and friendly. Sometimes we meet with our friends there to take a selfie before going to class.

Upon entering the main gate, a Bible verse catches your eyes:” That They May Have Life and Have It More Abundantly “, so this gate paves the way for students to a well flourished future. When crossing this gate, students know that they will be having their education under great conditions of rigorous curriculum where they learn how to think critically and freely, and how to communicate

The Main Gate is the entrance to a student’s best years of life. Its old iron doors swing open to high quality teaching and learning and let out creative and imaginative individuals.
The Main Gate

I know what I am expected to say. That “living in Hamra, Main Gate was this benevolently imposing structure that presented a portal to a world of knowledge and education that I always hoped I would one day join.” But truth be told, the first thing I thought of when I looked at its wrought iron doors was how long they could hold out against an unarmed horde – modern artillery would, of course, make short work of such a structure – and what it would be like to stand behind them, hearing the hammering of hundreds of hands and bodies pressed against them trying to get in. I doubt very much that the same concerns were at the forethought of the original designers, the highly indefensible walls that do little more than set AUB slightly apart from the rest of Bliss Street prove that. A far cry perhaps from the iconic stature Main Gate supposedly holds, and which has widely been promoted by the administration in celebration of AUB’s 150th anniversary, but a more genuine student experience than lavish sycophantic praise.

As a matter of fact, the more I think about Main Gate as an icon truly representative of AUB, the more puzzled I am by the notion. Surely Main Gate is less iconic than what stands immediately behind it. I am marked much more by walking down the stairs staring out at College Hall and Jafet behind it, than I am by crossing the threshold. And while Main Gate is certainly traversed by all students, it is no more iconic to students than West Hall, Nicely, Fisk, or any of the other places students spend the majority of their classes. Even Assembly Hall, unfrequented as it may be by the majority of the student body, feels a little more representative of AUB than the barrier between it and the outside world. I suppose the threshold is being granted this position of high honour because, regardless of faculty or major, the stones that make up its floor have been worn by every single student, teacher, faculty/administrative member, and honoured guest since AUB’s founding, but that creates a problem all of its own.

Unless it is structurally unsound – I couldn’t see any indication of the fact either before or after the cleaning and repainting, but what do I know – then surely it would be more of a celebration to keep it the way it is, reflect on how well it has stood the test of time and hope that the University as a whole mirrors this. To clean and renovate utterly it is to do away with the years and years it has stood and the minuscule, but significant, imprints of all those who have walked through it. Anything else would feel at least moderately routine – I highly doubt that it has not been cleared of grime since it was first erected. I could very well be in the minority on this thought, but even setting aside the above concerns, it seems that the main reason for Main Gate’s renovation is as a grand sweeping gesture to maintain AUB’s status as the best university in the region. A grand sweeping gesture that paints AUB’s concerns as incredibly administrative and ignores what really lies at the heart of any great university.

In his autobiography, Stephen Fry reflects on how Cambridge has changed since his time there and says something to the effect of: the buildings and roads and colleges are all the same, but it is not the same Cambridge, because each generation of students has made it their own. Romanticised guff perhaps, but romanticised guff that points to a very important fact: the students make the university – or at the very least, should be the ones allowed to make it. In light of the recent events regarding the students at AUB, events which I understand have gone on for far longer than I have been a student, this celebration of Main Gate as an iconic symbol of AUB is primarily for the high-end administrative staff and successful alums who look back at their Alma Mater with fondness, rather
than the young minds who have found their way here in search, at least in part, of some form of self-improvement, and the teachers that hone them. As if any student is sincerely going to remember Main Gate’s significance over what they experienced past its wrought iron doors.

As I pointed out earlier, the buildings inside AUB are infinitely more iconic to the students than Main Gate. West Hall’s mansion-like bearing Nicely’s nightmarish maze, the Physics building that echoes with the screams of imaginary asylum inmates, the creaking, terrifying elevators in Kerr... All of these have a far greater bearing on student life, if only because that is where most of the students’ time is spent, and most of them are in much greater need of improvement than a gate which has stood for a hundred and fifty years. To ignore the places where students spend the majority of their time in favor of touching up a structure which, let’s face it, didn’t really need that much improvement to remain aesthetically pleasing, is to place a greater emphasis on AUB’s lauded position, rather than what allowed it to acquire that position in the first place.

For all the pomp and circumstance, Main Gate remains just that, a gateway to the university proper, and the university proper is made up of students. By placing so much significance on its renovation AUB has indicated that it is more concerned with honoring its own establishment and the laurels its students have earned it, rather than the students themselves, and it does so at its peril. Main Gate may claim that AUB wants us to “have life and have it more abundantly,” but all this renovation shows is that the quotation applies to those who have left it and are pleased enough with their successes that they no longer care so much for the trials and tribulations undergone during their time as students – “that they may leave and leave more quickly” would be a more accurate statement. If the treatment and moderate happiness of older alums remains of primary importance, I assure anyone who may be reading this that it will swiftly decline. The future alumni will leave with more and more bitterness, until there comes a point where the vast majority will no longer wish to acknowledge their Alma Mater.

The beautiful thing about an establishment supposedly devoted to the betterment of mankind being made up of people, though, is that poor states of affairs need not remain so. If the pomp and circumstance surrounding AUB’s 150th anniversary is all about looking back and honoring its position, let the coming century-and-a-half be about ensuring that it maintains said position. Not through administrative posturing, and resting on increasingly tattered laurels, but through ensuring that the students that enter through those questionably defensible wrought-iron doors leave them with a better temperament than which they entered.

I do not expect many in power to make it this far. It cannot be fun to read criticism from someone who enjoys their narrative voice far too much. My defense is that the leaflet called for authentic student experiences, and authentic student experiences are not comprised of sycophantic boot-licking in the hopes of winning whatever prize or prestige is offered. I do not expect to win, nor do I expect any form of acknowledgement. As I said at the start of the essay, I know what I am expected to say, and have decided that I would much rather be truthful and held in contempt, than vindicated for being disingenuously laudatory.
Sarah BouDiab
Alumnus and staff member

Main Gate in their Own Words

Life is meant to be abundant…if one asks and one believes, one surely receives…

Yet in our daily struggles and in the pressures that the world throws upon us, we tend to forget.

We tend to forget how peaceful and beautiful life is. We tend to forget how simple it is to enjoy the precious moments. We tend to forget how warm it would feel to celebrate our humanity and our hearts.

Main Gate was always, for me, the constant reminder of abundance. Main Gate is the cherished hope that humans will follow their hearts and the clear possibility that they will reach their full potential.

Main Gate is the main path to a better place; the place where life is simply how it was meant to be…

Lévon Jermakian
Doctorat DEA en Sciences Politiques
Former Bliss Street resident

The Main Gate

During the 1950s, I used to live in a house situated on a barber shop and a snack house on Bliss street. The AUB Main Gate and the Clock Tower were clearly visible through my bedroom. Tramways crossed the Main Gate in both directions. There was a railway stop up on the corner of Jeanne D’Arc Street and another stop right at the AUB Main Gate. I used to see via my room AUB students riding the Tramway and I recall the sound of the ringing of the Tramway Bell. Near the AUB Main Gate was another entrance destined for goods’ delivery to the Cafeteria. I recall a small truck depositing a milkman driving a small lorry and a peasant sited on a mule selling carob molasses held in a bag made with goat skin. Frequently I used to run down to buy milk and carob molasses, baskets of fruits, and

Through my window the Main Gate was speaking to me about science and civilization motivating me to conquer the world. The Clock of the Tower was dialoguing with me, each day with a different topic : ”time is money”, “be on time”, ”the time of your life”, “the future is in your hands”, “time takes you to eternity”. Today my son is an AUB Mechanical Engineer graduate and my granddaughter is an AUB 2nd year student.
Hazem Noureddine  
Freshman  

The Main Gate  
The American University of Beirut has a main gate built in the year 1866. As I enter the university through its tremendously large doors, I always get this feeling of security, ambition and pride. The AUB’s main gate is always well protected by armed professional security guards, this is essential since it prevents any foreigner from entering the university and causing harm, this always gives me and all the students a great feeling of security once I'm behind it’s gates.

When I move past the gate and go into the university, I always remember how my father was in debt to get into this university and successfully managed to break the cycle of poverty that struck his family every generation and make me and my siblings walk into it’s gates without ever having to worry about debt. It was also my hard work and dedication to studying that got me here. Many students get rejected by the American University of Beirut every year, so I even feel proud to be able to walk through its welcoming doors at any time of the year, I also feel the urge to achieve more and prosper every time I am in the University.

Sandra Baff  
Medical Audiology Sciences  

The Main Gate  
Main Gate holds the lock to the light, and the key is to believe in its extraordinary power of life. It has been the door to the other side for centuries... People come and go not paying attention to the beauty of its “zakhrafa”, or the history carved in its wrinkles. This Gate might not be huge but it is larger than life. It holds within its surface the footsteps of every single person who has dreamt, fought, suffered, worshipped, lived, died and loved AUB. Out of every brick comes a thousand stories, love and prosperity, pain and hurt, but no matter what this Gate protects us, keeps us grounded and gives us hope. It stood still along all these years watching generations come and go, it is our big old Father that will never retire. It speaks the sacred words written on its wall “That they may have life and have it abundantly”, telling us that he is the door, whom ever enters it, will be saved, and will go in and out finding pasture, and live a truthful honest magical life. Main Gate is the portal that enters your heart after you step on its grounds, and may it live forever and ever.
Hanah Habash  
Freshman

The Main Gate

The AUB main gate and I have a love hate relationship, even though this relationship is one-sided but it’s okay. The love or hate aspect of the relationship depends on what time of the day I see the gate. In the morning I walk in with a sense of dread as everyone is pushing their way in and out trying to get to class or trying to go get a quick snack from Bliss Street in between classes. You literally get shoved in the shoulders so hard that it hurts for a while afterwards. Whereas in the afternoon when I’m leaving the gate I feel a sense of delight as I leave because I can finally go back home, put my feet up on a table, relax, and take in all the things that happened during the day. However in between the time that I go in the gate and the time that I go out, the main gate becomes my best friend; the steps that lead up to the gate are actually my favorite place to hang out, the breezy winds and the whizzing of all the conversations around me put me in my happy place.

Ali Esmaeel  (Mechanical Engineering )  
& Hussein Alawieh (Electrical & Computer Engineering)  
English 102

AUB Main Gate

"That they may have life, and have it more abundantly…” read the walls on the main gate exalting biblical words that have spoken to many generations of scholars seeking a high standards education at the American University of Beirut. The colossal gate has stood high and proud, since 1890’s, welcoming students to a haven where knowledge is sacred. The splendid architecture of the main gate does not only serve in fortifying the university, but it is also a depiction of the glorious American University of Beirut and its commitment to excellence. The main gate resembles an entrance to troves of knowledge and wisdom behind its walls. It is a beacon that lights up the way to a bright future leading to a successful life. AUB, as of 1920, has been one of the first universities in the region and even on the scale of the US. AUB is the place where leaders are made as the university seeks to halo creativity and to nurture critical thinking, thus breeding visionaries and innovators. Ray Irani (Chairman & CEO of Occidental Petroleum), Emily Nasrallah (writer), Riad Salameh (Governor of the Central Bank of Lebanon) and many other leading AUB alumni are evident examples. Another point that can’t be cast aside when talking about AUB is the cultural richness and the wide margin of liberation and freedom given to students as it was envisioned by its founder Daniel Bliss who said - when laying the corner-stone of College Hall in 1871- “This College is for all conditions and classes of men without regard to colour, nationality, race or religion…”. The campus today is an assembly of a rich cultural mélange made up of a multitude of ethnicities (Arabs, Armenians, English, and African etc.)

All in all, the main gate is a monument for all students that leaves a sentimental attachment in their hearts during their journey at AUB.
AUB Main Gate

The main gate is the only point through which you can look and notice a banner saying, “Welcome to AUB”. It’s like a presentation of a new world that is accessible when crossing the main gate. It symbolizes an opening to high quality learning, as well as new beginnings. Day after day, you pass through with better knowledge and new ideas, and through AUB’s providence of security, hopefulness for a better future.

Even the little things that we learn in AUB are never ending. From the first day until we graduate, we are gaining daily knowledge through experiences and relationships; not just through the courses we take, but also from involvements taking place during leisure times. For example, we can learn and develop new skills, such as communication, sports, and first aid, through the different clubs of AUB.

When walking through the main gate and seeing the guards along with the secure environment, a sense of hope and relief arises. It feels like we are going towards home instead of away. As the gate provides safety, both physically and psychologically, we take the chance to bloom and follow the right path to a successful future.

AUB’s goal is not only to improve our knowledge but also to help us stimulate our creativity, and generate a new and different way of thinking as well as to give us hope for a promising future. As Thich Nhat Hanh stated, “If we believe that tomorrow will be better, we can bear hardship today”. (Hope Quotes)

Reference:
Whenever we pass by the AUB, we cannot stop ourselves from staring at the Main Gate. It attracts us by its beauty; some call it magic and others do not find the suitable words to describe what is happening. But why is this gate magical? And, why is it called the Main Gate?

We get seduced by its dazzling looks from the outside; we feel for one instance that it's talking to us. But wait until we set foot inside the gate; the Main Gate is the first gate ever made in AUB; it reveals all of AUB and this is why it's called the main gate in my opinion. This gate is a link between our present and our future, for we enter it as complete immature teenagers and leave it as sophisticated adults. Its guardians, the AUB security, protect this gate. Even though the main gate is built only from stones, those stones tell a story of the pride, honor, and dignity they have witnessed in AUB.

The Main Gate is the oldest gate that has ever existed in AUB; it symbolizes mightiness, and it is the gate that represents beauty. This gate is the keeper of AUB.

Mariam Majed (Business Administration),
Hussein Nasserrddine (Chemstry),
Arwa Mamlouk (Business Administration)

AUB Main Gate

Every Athens, a citadel of knowledge and culture, needs a Sparta. In this period of time AUB’s Main Gate symbolizes Sparta that protects our modern Athens, AUB itself. AUB’s Main Gate provides security and shelter to its students.

Due to the existence of the Main Gate, not all have access to AUB; thus, you can eliminate the chance of any type of crime or misbehavior happening. It gives the students a sense of security and relaxation in the campus with its huge walls and the black steel gate which separate them from the outsider society. One can also consider it as a fortress: if dangers occur, the gate will close incubating its beloved students like a careful mother with her sweet tender heart. The main gate represents an enormous magical door, and every door must have its own key to unlock it, or you’re not allowed to enter through. Our ID card is our magical key to enter this city of knowledge, education and security. In addition, this magical door is guarded by a magnificent goblin to which you show your key. After all, a castle is unreachable as long as its fences and gate still exist. And definitely AUB’s main gate cannot be demolished, making AUB unreachable. Therein lies the magic.
The Sound of the Stones

As I walk through the gate that separates me from the layperson, disengaging me from the world, the gate that withstood centuries of turbulences, I could only gawk at its magnificence.

When you look at it, you will absolutely compare it to a vantage castle. Stone and iron are the first things a passenger notice and then will enjoy the harmony that echoes its wall about the history hidden between its sands. The sound of gunfire, bombs and suffering bounces through the Main Gate hall, to come out from the other side as a voice screaming for peace, unity, and tolerance. This gate stands as a living proof of how education eliminates hatred and aversion. At it, contrasts are in dialogue: past and present times, conflict and resolutions, mercilessness and forgiveness, tension and contentedness...

Otherwise, none can dismiss the beauty and the charms of the landscape that it takes you to. The greenery and nature color are more than sufficient to explicate its gorgeousness. In addition, you can easily notice the eagerness between the eyes of students to present their AUB ID that becomes their real identity to the protection officer each time they walk through this gate to get the warm smile that brings joy to their day.

In a nutshell this monument has become at the same time a symbol of splendor and greatness. It is and it will remain the subject of contrasts in dialogue.

AUB Main Gate

AUB’s main gate isn’t an ordinary pile of stone; it’s the facade of the American territory in Beirut which contains memories dating from 1866. This main gate doesn’t represent just the high security of the university; it’s the transition to another world. It will be interesting to present the characteristics of this place.

The essential role of a main gate is to represent the entrance. In fact, AUB’s main gate is the main entrance to the university. This gate opens to us a new space when you can find first ‘liberty of expression’. We all know that in the beginning, this university was a protestant college. In that time, the liberty of expression wasn’t considered as important as nowadays. We can refer to the incident in 1882, when Dr. Lewis pronounced a speech in which the naturalist and geologist Charles Darwin was mentioned, causing enough problems and forcing Dr. Lewis to resign. However, from the 18th of November 1920 all of that has changed, and the university was finally named The American University of Beirut.

AUB is most likely a place where different people from various countries and cultures can meet. In fact, AUB is an international university, and people from all over the world have access to it. In this campus, in each faculty, we can find many students that are coming from abroad to study in Lebanon. In addition, we all know that AUB is linked with few universities and especially in the United-States and that makes this university an international one.

AUB’s Main Gate doesn't just represent the entrance of the university; it is a transition to another world where individuals of different nationalities and cultures can meet and share multiple ideas while respecting the liberty of expression.
AUB’s Main Gate: a Contrastive Objective

Back in 1866, only few buildings were part of the Syrian Protestant College now known as the American University of Beirut, among which was the Main Gate. Centered at Bliss Street on the upper campus, it is the entrance to a university considered top ranked in its area. Many believe it to be a passage that connects its surrounding eastern culture with the western one; nevertheless, we should not oversee the fact that it is initially a protective structure.

Founded by missionaries, AUB outgrew its initial orientation to embrace diversity and mixture of cultures and liberal thinking, thus living truly by the motto engraved on its main gate “that they may have life and have it more abundantly”. In fact, an integral part of an AUB education is giving students the experience of dealing with different cultures, of meeting people with different ethnic, religious, and ideological backgrounds, and of giving them the ability to accommodate to communities outside their community. Actually, 58% of AUB students leave Lebanon after finishing their studies, of which 62% head to either Europe or the US, most of whom state that they were able to accommodate quite easily outside of Lebanon.

This gate is both a passageway and a barrier; looking around on campus, you find that most students, judging by their appearances, belong to the wealthy class. Doctor Nabil Torbey, ex-president of the arts and sciences branch, states, “We are facing a major crisis. Instead of being a place for excellent students, AUB is becoming a place for fortunate students”. This beacon of knowledge, although claims that it is for “all conditions and classes of men without regard to colour, nationality, race or religion”, only shines for ‘the haves’, leaving ‘the have nots’ in darkness.

Main gate, symbolizing AUB, is both a passage to diversity and a secluding barricade for those without a golden spoon in their mouth.
The Main Gate

“That they may have life, and have it more abundantly.” The university’s motto, engraved on the main gate’s walls, implies what beyond these walls has to offer. This gate, beside its dazzling architecture, represents a historical background, a symbolic reference, and an imagination stimulator.

Built in 1866, the main gate still stands high and proud. Recently renovated for the university’s 150th anniversary, this amazing piece of art gives everyone living or studying within its walls a sense of hope, belonging and security.

I wonder if I alone have likened the gate to a keyhole I used to ponder about. I'd look through that giant keyhole, such as a child would peek into one, yearning for the forbidden city inside. Indeed it's a giant keyhole, and a student’s ID is the key.

Now armed with my key as a new AUB student, I finally get to discover its hidden paradise.

As I come across this humongous gate daily, I feel energized, empowered, as if this mythical portal allows transcendence a whole new world, a heavenly place, where I can collect the missing pieces of my puzzle, such as AUB’s distinguished graduates, in order to pursue my dreams and achieve my goals.

Cindy Warrak
Freshman

The Main Gate

A one of a kind, unique metal that has attracted many, still stands still as one of the greatest features of The American University of Beirut. Over the 150 incredible years, which seemed to have passed by with a blink of an eye, this artistic creation has always brought out the best qualities of the university.

With all the hardships, struggles, and suffering Beirut has undergone, this remarkable entrance never fails to show a little hope and courage to the upcoming generation. Thousands pass through these gates every day. This pathway, now, represents the roots of the institution. You enter a new, wider world.

Other than being one of the greatest symbols of AUB's seeds, Main Gate acts as weapon for security. The university seeks high safety and care for all members. Thereby, creating a barrier between dangers and the home of AUB. Entering there, know you have arrived at a place of hope and optimism. The feeling of excitements, ambition, motivation, and achievement rises each time I pass through it.

Being a member of AUB or not, one must know Main Gate due to its value to its community. It's been an important source for many years and will be for many more. Within this opening, there is peace and unity for everyone joins for a single purpose. I have just begun my journey and I have already started loving it.
AUB Main Gate

Created in 1866, having survived 150 years facing all these difficulties like wars, fights and crises; the AUB Main Gate is more than just a gate to a university. More like a historical monument that AUB students are proud to see, to hear about, and more importantly to exit through as wise adults ready to face life with the most powerful weapon available, education. AUB’s main gate symbolizes mostly the link between our present and our future, the birth of a new community.

I’ve always dreamed to enter the AUB, passing by the gate and wondering what it looks like. Now after being here, entering and leaving every day; the main gate is no longer a gate that I couldn’t cross, but it’s now the link to my future: First entering a new world as immature teenagers and accessing to studies and all kinds of information, building new friendships, being involved in activities, living that one time life experience with a whole new community; then exiting this same gate at the end of the day as wise grown-ups ready for another kind of experience. After finishing with the world of learning and graduating, the same old gate that hosted you as a new student is now here to bid you farewell, as you enter the big world.

Secondly, this main gate unites people from all over the world to share together cultures, traditions and experiences. The fact that the gate brings together all these different societies, fills them with education and activities, giving them the chance to exchange knowledge and ideas, shows how this gate as a symbol of AUB has its own way of building a special community of its own.

AUB’s main gate could be just a simple gate for outsiders, but for AUB students, it’s certainly their way to life, their bond with others, and most particularly, the beginning of a special community that’s ready to make itself heard.
AUB Main Gate

Solids mainly aren’t considered as symbolic material, or at least that’s what I used to think until my English teacher asked a strange question; “what does the AUB Main Gate mean to you?” It really made me shake my head. Isn’t it just a door? But after thinking about it, it turned out to be more. AUB Main Gate is a door that allows the passage from outside to inside – from the busy street, messy life, not special outside, to the wonderful, relaxing, great educational, future building inside.

In Bliss Street you see many people, feel unpleasant weather and annoying noise, but through the majestic gate, you leave this crowd behind and enter what’s considered a new world. Once inside, you find that not only do the buildings possess diversity in names and structures, but they also differ in the specialty each offers to students. At the instant you enter the university from this ornamented gate, you feel the love you’re about to be immersed in. Not only from the professors and staff who are willing to help you, but also the feelings that are offered among the students themselves who show their passion to learn, and experience at AUB.

When I enter AUB from the big middle gate, I don’t only gain knowledge, but I also gain a new identity. I find that I’m transformed into a critical thinker and a creative person who has a wider perspective. Though this gate, I enter my new me.

They call it Main Gate; to me it’s ‘Magical Gate’ When I pass through it, I find a new Haifa who’s reborn in this long-sought and desired city and who will live her life abundantly.
Gate in its literal meaning means: "an opening permitting passage through an enclosure". However, the AUB Main Gate is unique. The Main Gate is the key that opens for you the sunny worlds of education and tolerance.

Everyone who passes through the main gate should be proud of himself/herself because this gate is a link to a high level of education and fruitful opportunities. On your first day, you will enter the main gate to AUB as someone who only knows how to draw dreams and hope they become true somehow, someday. But in the end, you will graduate and leave through this gate as someone who is intellectual, creative, imaginative, innovative, and having a wider perspective. You will have learned then how to make dreams come true.

AUB like Lebanon, is a melting pot of religions. The Main Gate plays the role of a filter for intolerance. We all live under the name of AUB although every single one of us is different. Yet, the AUB heterogeneous society is also homogeneous: the different elements “melt” together into a harmonious whole. We're completing each other with our different ideas and beliefs. Also, the Main Gate is a door to solutions to the toughest problems from regional to international ones. We're building bridges between the east and the west at the moment we're passing through the Main Gate. In fact, AUB is teaching a new generation tolerance and acceptance.

As Denzel Washington said: "Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity". Yes, the main gate is our opportunity that opens a thousand new gates that hold a thousand new opportunities within.
Where the Future Begins…

When AUB is mentioned, most people will think of the liberal high-standard education; very few people will think of AUB’s main gate. Yes, the main gate that rarely crosses people’s minds is in fact remarkable: for its architecture, its educational and social symbolism.

The fancy royal-like architecture of the main gate grabs your attention as you are strolling along Bliss Street. The 19th century-built gate is magnificent with its carved sand-colored stones. This splendor emphasizes the essential role of the university itself since a lot of concern is given to it main gate construction.

Pondering over the symbolism of the AUB’s main gate, our minds can contemplate its deep meanings. Usually viewed as an entrance to the world of dreams, it gives a license to cross to “the kingdom of knowledge”. Now we are knights in this kingdom sitting as students in Nicely Hall where our older brothers and parents used to sit; now we can go borrow books from Jafet library, study on its 3rd floor, or just hang around its entrance chatting with friends.

Socially, the main gate is a passage to a place where Mohamad from Qatar, Jones from USA and George from Beirut gather on campus to converse about sports, politics and much more. Students from different social backgrounds, coming from the rainbow of the Lebanese sects or even from different races and countries are admitted through the Gate to live together inside the University’s walls.

Although the Main Gate is technically a door or an entrance to the university, in essence it represents a path to a bright future in every sense,” so that they may have life, and have it more abundantly”.
The Main Gate

The most remarkable aspect of AUB is its timeless constructions, foremost among which is its royal entrance, the Main Gate. The American University of Beirut is one of the oldest institutions of higher education in the Middle East that is also known for its admirable academic programs. Throughout the 150 years, this gate has developed from a symbol of a passage into a mixture of communities to a passage into a secluded place.

On one hand, the fact that an open gate represents hope and opportunities is embodied in AUB’s main gate by the quote written on its wall in both Arabic and English, saying: "that they may have life and have it more abundantly". This quote by itself represents the opportunities AUB gives its students for a better life and a brighter future. Written in different languages, the quote shows hope for living all together, despite our differences.

On the other hand, let's take a minute to observe this country nowadays. Lebanon's bad situation on all levels has driven its citizens to seek a secluded town, a shelter flowing with serenity and comfort where they can be far from the discomfort and even the ugliness of the outside world. AUB students are fortunate to be able to walk through the majestic gate, and reach this desired town, a present day Camelot.

AUB's main gate is more than a simple construction. It holds a lot of meanings and symbolism. It represents a road to a different world, a world that is sheltered from problems around it, and a world where success is assured and peace is promised.
The Gate of My Future

After finally getting accepted at the American University of Beirut, I couldn’t feel anything but the excitement of having the honor of joining this respectable university. Standing in Bliss Street, I was astonished by the huge welcoming gate. The gate showed me my destination, my future and my dreams as I can see myself reaching my ambitions and becoming an engineer, my dream as long as I can remember. It also has a significant history and a huge legacy: It is AUB’s Main Gate.

Built back in 1866, the Main Gate, as we can see, has survived many great and horrible moments in the history of Lebanon, and had heroically stood up through them all. It truly embodies the quote “never give up and stand tall”. Examining the gate, I can see visions of my future days there: coming up daily from the stairs connecting the gate to the Plaza in front of College Hall, walking to the cafeteria, to the Green Oval, to the sports center, to the classrooms... all of AUB. I can also see myself growing up, maturing and turning from who I am now to a new person: the full, smart and dedicated individual I’ve always dreamt of becoming. This gate separates between the noisy surrounding around the university and the green university. This gate symbolizes nothing but peace, beauty and friendliness. It’s like a gate to a palace, guarded by the security that have the sole purpose of protecting and keeping the darkness of the surroundings away from the paradise the gate is protecting.

Some people only see this gate as a pile of rocks. However, for AUB students, it means way more than that. It is the beginning of a new adventure full of what life has to offer.
That They May Have Life And Have It More Abundantly”. This is not just a simple quotation written on an ordinary wall. It’s a history of one hundred and fifty years, summarized in a sentence and engraved on a majestic wall, which is part of a gate that separates, and at once, links the world with the American university of Beirut. How does the main gate separate two worlds and build a bridge between them at the same time?

We could describe AUB’s main gate as a border and a separation between the university life and the outside world. The structure doesn’t only separate the university from the city, but also from the traffic and chaos of the city from the peaceful green environment, where AUB is known as one of the few green spots in Beirut.

With its ancient architecture: tall imposing structure surrounded by two small entrances, AUB’s main gate resembles a fortress providing security and assurance to everyone inside campus and prevents them from the “uneducated” and “ruthless” external world; making us, students the knights fighting the vice of society by knowledge and education. AUB is basically a bubble, and the main gate is the portal in and out of AUB.

At the same time AUB’s main gate is a link between the university and the outer region, a literal and figurative passage is then created between those two worlds. When new students set foot in AUB through the main gate for the first time, the moment represents a passage from childhood to adulthood; this university is, therefore, creating and forming the future generations based on values of respect, equality, trust, and liberal education and then releasing these new citizens from that same main gate into the world to excel everywhere. Thus, AUB is creating “The Future”.

Also AUB’s main gate leads directly to Jafet library, which is the main library of the university and one of the largest libraries nationally. Housing thousands of books, it contains a reasonably huge amount of knowledge in one simple building. Obviously, besides being the heart of AUBs community, it plays a central role in the region, by being the number one functional nation library in Lebanon that may be referred to it as Lebanon’s “Library of Congress”.

The main gate of AUB is a key to success which once you pass by, sets you free and gives you wings to fly high to another world of education, knowledge, heritage, and civic-moral responsibilities.
The Main Gate

Black and dirty pavements, little black eyes following my steps hoping for a few coins, screams and honks, a bank manager walking quickly, coffee in hand, struggling with the weight of everyday routine, failing to dream…

Then we enter the Main Gate…

Contagious ambition, young minds enjoying the lawn on the green oval, meeting people they would have never imagined they would meet, seeking knowledge, taken by the dream, entering a magical land: The American University of Beirut.

This is where the journey begins.

AUB is an amalgam of students coming from different countries, cultures, and backgrounds with a common interest. All eager to learn new things. Teachers are mentors and coaches who allow us to improve our critical thinking and civic responsibilities towards our community. They give us the tools through which we can become autonomous and curious researchers able to seek and discover knowledge on our own. AUB offers a unique educational experience where students can develop their personalities and their own active role in society, so when they graduate, they disseminate what they have learned to the others in their community.

Indeed, AUB changes you. You are not the same once you cross past the Main Gate. It turns you to the best; you look at things differently, and you put your learning into practice and feel the thirst for knowledge. Being a leader becomes possible; it is even more of a requirement than an option: a student at AUB is the change agent of the community, the hope for the future, the greater chance to improve the situation of others.

This magical gate has superpowers that make the impossible possible. It lets people in, transforms them, and sends them outside so they can extend a helping hand to their community,... bring back the sparkles of hope into those desperate eyes, and teach the bank manager how to dream!
The Main Gate

The Main Gate is much more than just a regular gate. It is a symbol of a new beginning to many others and us. While the Main Gate allows us an entrance to one of the oldest institution of higher learning in the Middle East, it allows us the opportunity to engage and to become part of a community in Lebanon much different than the community beyond the Gate.

Firstly, we would like to look at the AUB Main Gate as a border, a separation between the present and the future, in the sense that AUB holds the future of our society, the doctors, the politicians, the businessmen and women… While our outside world-- the world beyond the AUB Main Gate-- is full of corruption, ignorance and miscommunication, our world within the AUB borders is the complete opposite. For example, within the AUB borders cats are respected to the extent that if any student attempts to hurt one, the student will receive a dean’s warning! We found that pretty amazing in comparison to being able to simply kill a human and get away with it using your “wasta” just a few steps away from the AUB borders. This we believe shows a great example of order and respect for rules. Walking through the AUB main gate gives us, the students as well as the staff including professors and instructors, the opportunity to engage and become part of a community. By community we mean being part of a group of people living together on the same land, under the same rules and sharing the same day to day experiences. Walking through the AUB main gate gives the opportunity to engage with one another in many different ways and under different situations. We are not limited to speaking to one another only in our lectures; we are bound to get to know one another beyond our classroom walls. From working with one another on a certain project, to participating in the same sports, teams and clubs this all helps to engage us in the AUB community.

While the Main Gate can symbolize many things, most importantly it stands for the border that protects us, the youth, from the disasters of the present. However, after a couple of years, leaving this same gate, we could be the generation that improves the society and environment beyond the gates we left to a much similar society and environment found in AUB.
THE MAIN GATE

Through the main gate,
Students walk in and out
Since 150 years;
They walk in young and simple,
Walk out wiser and great,
Through this main gate.
Like bees in spring,
Like eagles of freedom,
Like the fresh wind of September,
They spread out and fill the globe
With genius, wit and amber.
In classes, on campus, on benches
In the shades of green trees
Their love stories are can be read:
Muslims, Christians… students
From all countries and races,
All passed through the main gate;
Some left hand-in-hand,
Some in new brotherhood,
Some stayed, some to faraway lands,
All friends for good.
The smooth and gentle
Floor stones of the main gate
Still show the marks of their
Minds and steps till today.
There at the main gate,
You can hear their chats,
Laughter, play and rest
At this bridge
Between East and West.
The soft and old stones
Of the main gate,
The ancient iron sculpture,
The well-made arch
All narrate
The story of AUB’s
Torches of glory
Since 150 years.
From the days of Bliss, to Kerr,
To Dorman, to Fadlo Khuri.