

# Middle Eastern Studies

## AN INTERDEPARTMENTAL MAJOR AND MINOR

Director: *Marlow (Religion)*

Assistant Professor: *Aadnani*

Visiting Lecturer: *Abdul-Aziz*

Advisory Committee: *Euben (Political Science), Geller (Religion), Kapteijns<sup>A1</sup> (History), Malino<sup>A2</sup> (History and Jewish Studies), Marlow (Religion), Tohme (Art)<sup>A</sup>*

The major in Middle Eastern studies is designed to acquaint students with the many facets of Middle Eastern civilizations through an interdisciplinary study of the languages, literatures, histories, religions, arts, social and political institutions, and cultural patterns of the region known as the Middle East. Study of Middle Eastern communities living in diaspora may also be counted towards the major.

The major in Middle Eastern studies requires nine units. Students must demonstrate proficiency in Arabic (equivalent to at least two semesters at the second-year level). In certain cases, another Middle Eastern language (for example, Persian, Turkish, Hebrew) may be substituted for Arabic; a student whose area of concentration may render such a substitution appropriate should consult her advisor. No credit towards the major is given for the first year of language study. For students who are exempt from the language requirement, nine units are still necessary for the completion of the major. Students are required to concentrate in some area or aspect of Middle Eastern studies (for example, Arabic language and literature; religion; the pre-modern Middle East; the modern Middle East; religion and politics in the Middle East) by taking four courses above the 100 level, including at least two at the 300 level, one of which must be a seminar. At least two courses should be taken in each of the Departments of History and Religion.

Majors devise their own programs of study in consultation with an appropriate faculty member from the student's area of concentration. Courses with an asterisk (\*) also require the permission of the instructor if the course is to be counted for Middle Eastern studies.

In addition to Wellesley courses, students are encouraged to take relevant courses at Brandeis University, Olin College, and at MIT. These courses must be approved toward the major, in advance, by the corresponding department at Wellesley.

**A minor in Middle Eastern studies** consists of five units, of which at least one should be at the 300 level (excluding 350). Units must be taken in at least two departments; only one course at the 100 level can be counted towards the minor. Second-year Arabic may be counted towards the minor.

### **Honors**

The only route to honors in the major is writing a thesis and passing an oral examination. To be admitted to the thesis program, a student must have a grade point average of at least 3.5 in all work in the major field above the 100-level; the Advisory Committee may petition on her behalf if her GPA in the major is between 3.0 and 3.5. See Academic Distinctions.

The following courses are available in Middle Eastern studies:

**ARAB 101-102 Elementary Arabic**

*Aadnani, Abdul-Aaziz*

An introduction to the Arabic language. The course takes a comprehensive approach to language learning and emphasizes the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students are introduced to the principles of grammar, taught how to read and write in the Arabic alphabet, and trained in the basics of everyday conversation. Through the use of a variety of written, video and audio materials, as well as other resources made available through the World-Wide Web, the course emphasizes authentic materials and stresses the active participation of students in the learning process. *Each semester earns 1.0 unit of credit; however, both semesters must be completed satisfactorily to receive credit for either course.*

Prerequisite: None

Distribution: None

Semester: Fall, Spring Unit: 1.0

**ARAB 201-202 Intermediate Arabic**

*Aadnani, Abdul-Aziz*

A continuation of ARAB 101-102. The course takes students to a deeper and more complex level in the study of the Arabic language. While continuing to emphasize the organizing principles of the language, the course also introduces students to a variety of challenging texts, including extracts from newspaper articles, as well as literary and religious materials. Students will be trained to work with longer texts and to gain the necessary communicative skills to prepare them for advanced-level Arabic. *Each semester earns 1.0 unit of credit; however, both semesters must be completed satisfactorily to receive credit for either course.*

Prerequisite: 101-102 or equivalent

Distribution: Language and Literature

Semester: Fall, Spring Unit: 1.0

**ARAB 210 Arabic Literature in Translation (in English)**

*Aadnani*

**NOT OFFERED IN 2008-09.** Exploration of some highly influential works of literature translated from Arabic. Students will have a chance to delve into literary works composed by authors from a large geographical area, extending from Morocco to the Middle East, from the turn of the nineteenth century to the present day. Our study of modern and contemporary Arabic literature will focus on a number of recurring themes, such as cultural and national identity, colonialism, religion, gender relations, and class conflict. Authors to be discussed include Naguib Mahfouz, Abdelrahman Munif, Ahlam Mosteghanemi, Leila Abouzeid, Tahir Wattar, Mohammed Zafzaf, and Yusuf Idris.

*Taught in English.*

Prerequisite: None

Distribution: Language and Literature

Semester: N/O Unit: 1.0

### **ARAB 250 Research or Individual Study**

Prerequisite: Two years of Arabic or permission of the instructor.

Distribution: None

Semester: Fall, Spring Unit: 1.0

### **ARAB 250H Research or Individual Study**

Prerequisite: Two years of Arabic or permission of the instructor.

Distribution: None

Semester: Fall, Spring Unit: 0.5

### **ARAB 301 Advanced Contemporary Media Arabic**

*Hanoosh*

**NOT OFFERED IN 2008-09.** An exploration of contemporary standard Arabic as used in audiovisual, web-based and print media, including newspapers, magazines, websites, audiovisual commentaries, news reports, forums and popular television programs.

Authentic Arabic press reports, current news broadcasts and other reading or listening materials will provide a basis for discussion and debate in class. Focus on strengthening listening and speaking skills, and developing the ability to express and support various opinions on political, cultural and other issues in contemporary Arab societies.

Prerequisite: 202 or equivalent

Distribution: Language and Literature

Semester: N/O Unit: 1.0

### **ARAB 305 Arabic Translation Workshop**

*Hanoosh*

Study of the techniques and problems involved in translating from Arabic into English. Although the focus will be on text-to-text translation of short stories, poems and other types of literary texts, students will also experiment with speech-to-speech translation, text-to-speech translation, and speech-to-text translation. The aim of these varied activities is to help students acquire a deeper understanding of the Arabic language and to further their proficiency in the four linguistic skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening. Students will also discuss a range of methods and options for tackling and translating challenging linguistic formulations and transferring meaning from the original context to the English-speaking context. Students will evaluate and critique their own translations as well as those of other students.

Prerequisite: 202 or equivalent

Distribution: Language and Literature

Semester: Fall Unit: 1.0

### **ARAB 350 Research or Individual Study**

Prerequisite: Open to juniors and seniors only.

Distribution: None

Semester: Fall, Spring Unit: 1.0

### **ARAB 350H Research or Individual Study**

Prerequisite: Open to juniors and seniors only.

Distribution: None

Semester: Fall, Spring Unit: 0.5

### **MES 250 Research or Individual Study**

Prerequisite: Open to first-year students and sophomores only.

Distribution: None

Semester: Fall, Spring Unit: 1.0

### **MES 250H Research or Individual Study**

Prerequisite: Open to first-year students and sophomores only.

Distribution: None

Semester: Fall, Spring Unit: 0.5

### **MES 218/318 Literary Voices of the Pre-Modern Middle East (in English)**

*Marlow*

Exploration of selected writings from the rich literary traditions in Arabic and Persian, from the eighth to the fifteenth centuries. Readings (in English translation) include stories and historical accounts, short and long narratives, lyric and other forms of poetry, biographies and autobiographies; from the *Thousand and One Nights* and works of Jahiz, Tabari, Ibn al-Farid, Ferdowsi, Omar Khayyam, Jalal al-Din Rumi, Hafez and others. Materials will be read with attention to historical context and in conjunction with modern literary studies. Attention to the distinctiveness of the Arabic and Persian literatures and the interactions between them; structure and meaning, authorial personae, voice; relationships among authors, patrons and broader audiences; literary theory and genre, oral and written literary expression. *This course may be taken as either 218 or, with additional assignments, 318; the latter option is intended especially for students proficient in Arabic or Persian.*

Prerequisite: None. 218 open to all students; 318 by permission of the instructor.

Distribution: Language and Literature

Semester: Fall Unit: 1.0

### **MES 310 Resistance and Dissent in North Africa and the Middle East (in English)**

*Aadnani*

An exploration of themes of resistance and dissent in the literatures and cultures of North Africa and the Middle East since the early 1980s. Topics include the rise of democratic movements, such as political parties, associations and NGOs; the role and importance of Islam to the identity of contemporary nation states in the region; the status of women and minorities in the ideologies of the movements under study; and the status and implications of dissent. Materials studied include works of fiction and nonfiction, films, speeches, song lyrics, and online publications. *Taught in English.*

Prerequisite: Open to students who have taken at least one course in Middle Eastern studies, and to juniors and seniors by permission of the instructor.

Distribution: Social and Behavioral Analysis or Language and Literature  
Semester: Spring Unit: 1.0

**MES 350 Research or Individual Study**

Prerequisite: Open to juniors and seniors only.  
Distribution: None  
Semester: Fall, Spring Unit: 1.0

**MES 350H Research or Individual Study**

Prerequisite: Open to juniors and seniors only.  
Distribution: None  
Semester: Fall, Spring Unit: 0.5

**MES 360 Senior Thesis Research**

Prerequisite: By permission of department. See Academic Distinctions.  
Distribution: None  
Semester: Fall, Spring Unit: 1.0

**MES 370 Senior Thesis**

Prerequisite: 360 and permission of department.  
Distribution: None  
Semester: Fall, Spring Unit: 1.0

**Related Courses**

*For Credit Toward the Major*

**ANTH 344** The Middle East: Anthropological Perspectives

**ARTH 227** Islamic Architecture in the Age of the Caliphates

**ARTH 241** Egyptian Art

**ARTH 247** Islamic Art and Architecture

**ARTH 267** Cross-Cultural Encounters in the Early Medieval Mediterranean

**ARTH 268\*** Art, Architecture and Pilgrimage in the Medieval World

**ARTH 332** Topics in Medieval Art

**HEBR 201-202** Intermediate Hebrew

**HIST 219** The Jews of Spain and the Lands of Islam

**HIST 266** The Struggle over North Africa, 1800 to the Present

**HIST 284** The Middle East in Modern History

**HIST 286** History of the Middle East, c. 600–1918

**HIST 287** History of Everyday Life in the Modern Middle East and North Africa

**HIST 290** Morocco: History and Culture (Wintersession in Morocco)

**HIST 336** The Middle East in World War I, 1914–1923

**HIST 343** Seminar. History of Israel

**HIST 364** Seminar. Women in Islamic Society: Historical Perspectives

**HIST 367\*** Seminar. Jewish Identity in the Modern World

**JWST 230** Contemporary Israeli Culture through Literature, Music, and Film

**POL4 346** Comparative Political Thought: Modern Western and Islamic Theories of Politics

**REL 104** Study of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament

**REL 105** Study of the New Testament

**REL 109\*** Religions of the Silk Road

**REL 207** Goddesses, Queens, and Witches: Survey of the Ancient Near East

**REL 240** Romans, Jews, and Christians in the Roman Empire

**REL 241** Emerging Religions: Judaism and Christianity, 150 B.C.E. – 500 C.E.

**REL 242** Introduction to Rabbinic Literature

**REL 243** Women in the Biblical World

**REL 244** Jerusalem: The Holy City

**REL 260** Islamic/ate Civilization

**REL 261** Cities of the Islamic World

**REL 262** The Formation of the Islamic Tradition

**REL 263** Islam in the Modern World

**REL 269** Religion and Culture in Iran

**REL 342** Seminar. Archaeology of the Biblical World

**REL 361** Seminar. Studying Islam and the Middle East

**REL 364** Seminar. Sufism: Islamic Mysticism

**REL 367** Seminar. Muslim Travellers

**SPAN 252\*** Christians, Jews, and Moslems: The Spirit of Spain in Its Literature

Courses with an asterisk (\*) also require the permission of the instructor if the course is to be counted for Middle Eastern studies.