Tufts University

Middle Eastern Studies Major

Spring 2014
Course Listing
Middle Eastern Studies
Interdisciplinary Major
Spring 2014

Program Director: Hugh Roberts, Edward Keller Professor of North African and Middle Eastern History

Middle Eastern Studies is an interdisciplinary program that encourages breadth in coursework and significant immersion in one or more Middle Eastern cultures. The program gives students an opportunity to study the history and culture of the Middle East, as well as areas of the world whose territories were part of Middle Eastern empires or were under the influence of Middle Eastern civilizations in pre-modern and modern times. Study abroad is highly recommended.

The Middle Eastern Studies Major has recently been modified in respect of the course requirements, with particular reference to the language requirement, which has been relaxed. Students who matriculate in fall 2014 will have to conform to the new revised requirements. Students who matriculated in fall 2013 or earlier may choose to conform to the old requirement or the new ones as they prefer.

Revised Requirements of the Major

(mandatory for students matriculating in fall 2014; optional for those matriculating in Fall 2013 or earlier):

The Middle Eastern Studies major comprises twelve courses:

i. Four courses of a Middle Eastern language, (level 3-4, or equivalent). Students who have demonstrated language competence through level 3-4 by a placement test must take two advanced language courses and either two semesters of a second Middle Eastern language or two other courses listed in section b.

ii. Six courses in Middle Eastern studies—chosen in consultation with an advisor—from an approved list updated by the Middle Eastern Studies program annually. Three courses must be chosen from each of the following two groups:
   A. art history, religion, literature, Judaic studies, music, and
   B. anthropology, history, political science.
   These courses must include at least one course in pre-modern and one course in modern Middle Eastern studies. They must also include one course in each of two Middle Eastern cultures. Two of these courses may be more advanced language courses (21-22 and beyond).

iii. One course that relates the Middle East to other regions of the world.

iv. One advanced research course, such as thesis honors, a seminar, or advanced directed study.

Previous Requirements of the Major
(these apply only to students who matriculated in Fall 2013 or earlier, but they may choose to conform instead to the new requirement)

The Middle Eastern Studies major comprises ten courses:
Two courses in a Middle Eastern language (level 121-122, or equivalent). Students who have demonstrated language competence through level 121-122 by a placement test must take two advanced language courses, two semesters of a second Middle Eastern language, or two other courses listed in section b. for a total of ten courses.

Six courses in Middle Eastern Studies chosen in consultation with an advisor, from an approved list updated by the Middle Eastern Studies program annually. These courses must include three from each of the following two groups.

A. Art history, religion, literature, Judaic studies and music

B. Anthropology, history, political science

These courses must include at least one course in pre-modern and one course in modern Middle Eastern Studies. They must also include at least one course in each of two Middle Eastern cultures.

One course that relates Middle East to other regions of the world.

One advanced research course, such as thesis honors, a seminar or advanced directed study.

For Further Information Contact:
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Or visit the Middle Eastern Studies website at: http://farescenter.tufts.edu/students/MESmajor.asp
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In this season of extraordinary change, what can we learn about society and politics in the Middle East – especially the Arab world – by examining popular culture? What do representations produced by people in the Middle East about themselves tell us about power, social difference, and culture? In this course, we will study film, television, and music that have played a role in consolidating, contesting, and complicating national identities and state power, and media such as Arab hip-hop that are the products of global circuits. We will study the role that popular culture has played in the Arab Spring and its aftermath. We will also consider the multiple meanings of the “popular” (al-sha’bi, in Arabic) in Middle Eastern popular culture, and whether and when news can be regarded as popular culture. In addition to providing an angle of study on some of the most vital elements of contemporary Middle Eastern societies, this course also introduces students to anthropological approaches to media and globalization over the course of the last century. This course counts toward the Social Sciences distribution requirement, the World Civilization requirement, the Middle Eastern Culture option, and the Anthropology area course requirement.

Continuation of ARB 1: Elementary Modern Standard Arabic. Communicative approach through the development of the four language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. Students will have weekly oral presentations, short papers and a final video project. Pre-requisite: Arabic 01 or equivalent.

A continuation of ARB 3: Intermediate Modern Standard Arabic. Communicative approach with particular emphasis on active control of Arabic grammar and vocabulary; conversation; reading, translation and discussion of selected texts. The course includes oral presentations, typed papers in Arabic and a final creative project. Weekly meetings include 2 regular classes and one conversation class. Prerequisites: Arabic 3 or equivalent.

Introduction to the spoken Arabic used in Egypt, the most widely understood Arabic dialect. The course will focus on day-to-day conversations by starting with daily basic expressions and commonly used verb structures, and leading to more complex conversations and sentence forming, through engaging with a variety of social and cultural topics of current relevance. Pre-requisite: Arabic 3.

Emphasis on active control of vocabulary and grammar. Intensive practice in communication, reading, writing, and translation. The course includes oral presentations, short papers and a creative project. Weekly meetings include 2 regular classes and one conversation class. Prerequisite: Arabic 21 or equivalent.

This course will offer readings and discussions in Modern Standard Arabic. Articles dealing with a variety of topics will be explored, including Islam and politics, Arabic folklore, Arabs and the West, Modern Arabic poetry, development in Arab developing countries, and Arabic feminist writers. Grammatical structures will be discussed in the context of articles addressing these issues. The course will also use audio-visual materials. In Arabic.

This language course offers advanced Arabic students an opportunity to continue to refine their skills through exposure to current and past debates relevant to the Arab world, through different themes. Students will lead class discussions, write essays related to the texts and their content, and will occasionally engage in literary creative writing activities. Through exposure to original texts of different styles and genres, students will learn new vocabulary and grammatical structures and sharpen their reading skills while learning about a wide variety of socio-cultural phenomena.

This course will provide students with insights into the fascinating but often misunderstood realms of gender and sexuality in the Middle East. It will explore the diverse cultural and political realities of women and men, boys and girls in a region made and re-made over the last 200 years by revolution, social movements, war, and colonial power and anti-colonial resistance. How do these broader realities, traumas, conflicts, and expressions of solidarity impact the lives of men and women in the Middle East? Participants in the class will be introduced to foundational theoretical literature on gender and sexuality and will use those insights to better analyze and detail the shifting and changing experiences of Middle Easterners and the multiple communities of which they are a part. These explorations will be pursued largely through a range of fascinating literary and visual sources. Students will read three or four different works of fiction as well as poetry and creative non-fiction.
This course will provide students with an overview of contemporary Palestinian cinema and literature. It will explore the history and culture of Palestine and the region in which it is embedded through a range of path breaking writers, filmmakers, and thinkers. These include novels by Anton Shammas and Emile Habiby, the creative non-fiction of Edward Said, Suad Amiry, and Raja Shehadeh, as well as the poetry of Mahmoud Darwish and spoken word artist Suhair Hammad. We will examine these writers in relation to the burgeoning work of Palestinian filmmakers such as Elia Suleiman, Mai Masri, and Michel Khleifi and others. By doing so students will address crucial questions relating to Palestine, including themes such as nationalism and national identity, gender and sexuality, cultural hybridity, and colonialism. Students will be introduced to a range with regard to the rise of cinema in Palestine and in the diaspora as well as vital issues pertaining to film theory and the politics of aesthetics. Participants will also engage with a set of compelling questions about the ways in which cinema and literature intersect with broader cultural and political issues in Palestine and across the Middle East more generally.

This course explores how Middle Eastern literatures and cinemas have contributed to the cultural memory and/or memorialization of socially traumatic experiences such as war. To do this, the course focuses on several historical and social contexts: the Algerian war of independence, the Lebanese civil war, the Iran-Iraq war, the invasion and occupation of Iraq, and the Israeli-Palestinian experience. Alongside primary text readings and film viewings, we will also read secondary texts pertaining to social trauma, cultural memory and the limits of representing these issues in literary and cinematic forums. We will read culturally theoretical readings drawn from Holocaust studies, psychoanalysis and critical theory, as well as reading novels, short stories and poetry alongside viewings of fictional and documentary films. The goal of the course will be to develop a thematic framework of knowledge relating to the formation of cultural memory and social trauma, as well as enhancing our knowledge of modern literatures and cinemas of the region, in addition to according a deeper understanding of the historical contexts with which the course is concerned. In English. Film Screenings Wednesdays 7:30-9:30pm. Cross-listed as ILVS 92-07.

What has Baghdad to do with Damascus—or with Rabat? We see the Islamic world as a series of nations on the map of the twenty-first century, but the real map has little to do with early twentieth century boundaries and much to do with the links that structure the Islamic world that began to be forged fourteen hundred years ago. Through the study of the detailed descriptions contained in the work The Best Division for Knowledge of the Regions by al-Muqaddasī, representative of the classical school of Arab geography, students will examine the geographical, economic, political, religious and cultural factors that kept this world together and pulled it apart. By encountering the structure of the Islamic world of the past, students will gain an invaluable insight how it is organized in the present and its possibilities for the future. Digital tools will facilitate these explorations. Students will work with Geographic Information Systems (GIS), one of the most exciting (and marketable) new technologies to map the Islamic world. Digital multilingual tools will facilitate students’ encounter with the original texts, whether or not students have had prior exposure to Modern Standard Arabic. Students of Arabic will have an opportunity to work with Classical Arabic sources using state-of-the-art multilingual services to leverage their current knowledge. Students with no knowledge of Arabic will use existing English translations that can be used in combination with the original text. All students will have an opportunity to contribute to a major new project that will reinvent how we visualize and understand the Islamic World. By the end of the course we will produce an interactive map of the classical Islamic world, with its major provinces, towns, villages and routes that connected them. Valuable in and of itself, it will become a crucial tool for the study of other primary sources on Islamic history.

A survey of the visual arts in Muslim lands from Spain to Central Asia between the seventh and thirteenth centuries, emphasizing the role of visual arts in the formation and expression of cultural identity. Painting, sculpture, architecture, and the portable arts of ceramics, ivory, metalwork, and manuscript illustration will be considered. Topics will include the uses of figural and non-figural imagery; calligraphy and ornament; religious and secular art; public and private art; the art of the court and the art of the urban middle class; and the status, use, and meaning of the portable arts. Cross-list REL 23/121

Continuation of Hebrew 1 focusing on the book Hebrew from Scratch part I. The course will continue to develop knowledge of Hebrew for both reading and conversation. An additional hour of class for practice and drills to be arranged. Prerequisite: Hebrew 1 or consent of instructor.
HEB 4  Intermediate Hebrew  ARR  Harari-Spencer
Continuation of Hebrew 3. The course teaches students intermediate-level Hebrew language skills, in particular with regard to the daily use of Hebrew as well as the understanding of articles written from the press and scientific journals adapted into simplified Hebrew. The course increases students’ vocabulary, adding an additional 800 words. From the course, students will gain command of the fundamental structures of Hebrew and its basic grammatical forms. Each lesson emphasizes all four skills – reading, listening comprehension, speaking, and writing – so that the students will feel comfortable to use their skills in the same manner. By the end of Hebrew 4, students will be familiar with the basic structure of the Hebrew language. Prerequisite: Hebrew 3 or consent of instructor.

HEB 22  Composition and Conversation  ARR  Harari-Spencer
Continuation of Hebrew 21. This course will teach students to understand adapted articles and create passages in Modern Hebrew through exposure to the Hebrew currently used in Israeli newspaper, television, cinema, pop music, Internet, literature, and everyday conversation. The course will combine and broaden the grammatical structures and vocabulary studied in Hebrew 21. By the end of Hebrew 22, students will be able to read texts in regular Hebrew, write on topics discussed in class. Prerequisite: Hebrew 21 or consent of instructor.

HEB 122  Composition and Conversation  ARR  Harari-Spencer
Continuation of Hebrew 121. The course will broaden the grammatical structures and vocabulary studied in Hebrew 121. It will concentrate on the written language and will teach students to understand unadapted texts, in particular literature and the press. Students will expand their knowledge of synonyms and the subtle differences between words. Vocabularies will substantially increase. By the end of the course, students should have a good command of most verbal and syntactical structures, including exceptions to the rules. Prerequisite: Hebrew 121 or consent of instructor.

HST 71  Middle East and North Africa since WW1  I+ mw  Roberts
This course will provide an introduction to the politics, society and culture of the Middle East and North Africa. It will examine the transformations that occurred following both WWI and WWII, the rise of anti-colonial nationalism and Islamism, the emergence of nation-states, the creation of the state of Israel and the evolution of the Arab-Israel conflict; and, since the end of the Cold War, the impact of globalisation, the development of democratic currents, feminist and minority rights movements and Islamist movements and the dynamics and evolution of the ‘Arab Spring’.

HST 77  Egypt since 1952  H+tr  Roberts
This course examines Egyptian history since the Free Officers’ coup in 1952. It considers the social, economic, cultural and religious as well as political and diplomatic history of Egypt under Nasser, Sadat and Mubarak as well as the dynamics of the major crises – Suez, the Six-Day War in 1967, the War of October 1973, and the 2011 revolution. The course also studies the Muslim Brothers and other currents of Islamic activism, the evolution of the Coptic community since 1952, the emergence of new opposition currents since 2002, and the main developments since the fall of Mubarak.

HST 157  Empresses, Saints and Scholars: The Women of Byzantium  K+mw  Proctor
Pulcheria, Irene, Theophanous, Theodora, St. Mary of Egypt, Anna Comnena – women who helped shape empires, the Christian religion, the discipline of history. In the lives of these and other women of Byzantium are reflections and commentaries on ideas as varied as political legitimacy, education, the spread of Byzantine culture, and the evolution of Christian theology. Though the focus will be on the Byzantines, the course will also examine Byzantine influences on and interactions with the peoples of Eastern, Western and Southeastern Europe and the Middle East. Satisfies the Classics Culture Option and the Humanities or Social Sciences Distribution Requirement. Cross-listed as Classics 86

JS 65  Introduction to Yiddish Culture  H+tr  Gittleman
An examination of the roots of East European Jewish culture, beginning with a 6000-year survey of the religions of Abraham; a brief examination of the origins of Judaism, the evolution of Christianity and Islam; the historic migration of the Jewish people from Asia to Western Europe and eventually to Czarist Russia; the rise and fall of Yiddish literature; the end of the Shtetl world; and the American experience. Readings include Sholom Aleichem, Sholem Asch, I. B. Singer, Bernard Malamud, and Phillip Roth. Stress on universal cultural patterns and similarities of ethnic experience. In English. Cross-listed as ILVS 92-21 and REL 65.
Images, experiences, and accomplishments of Jewish women in life, literature, and tradition from Biblical times to the present. Focus on individual women from various times and cultures; Discussion of basic issues, present conditions, and prospects. Cross-listed as REL 78 and ILVS 62-01. In English.

Introduction to the language known as Ladino and the culture of the Sephardic Jews who have spoken it for over 500 years. When they were expelled from Spain in 1492, Jews took this language with them, and it has been enriched through contact with languages encountered in their various lands of resettlement. Emphasis on the living language: understanding, speaking, and writing [including creatively]. Texts will include proverbs, stories, and songs from the folk tradition as well as contemporary poems and songs, and basic language materials. Some background in Spanish (or Ladino!) is helpful, but not essential. Cross-listed as SPN 92.

This course will examine the role and function of music in Jewish worship. We will consider the ways that music is used strategically by men and women as they define, present and maintain their religious and cultural identity. The course will focus on the Kabbalat Shabbat (Friday evening) service and consider such topics as participation vs. performance in worship, music and historical authenticity in prayer, music and religious experience, the invention and preservation of tradition and how liturgical music is used to negotiate issues of dual culturalism in the American Jewish community. Cross-listed as REL 98 and as MUS 54. In English.

Performance of both classical and folk Arabic music. The maqām micro-tonal scale system as applied to both Western and Arabic instruments. Improvisation, form, style, rhythmic cycles, as well as Arabic vocal diction. Some Arabic ouds (lutes) to be made available. One half-course credit. Cross listed MUS 92. In Arabic.

Musical traditions of the Arab world from a music theory perspective. In-depth study of the modal system (maqãm) and rhythmic cycles (îqã'ãt), as well as music of the sub-Saharan diaspora in Arab societies. Topics include modulation and improvisation, ensemble texture, formal analysis, the relationship between theory and practice, and theories of music and emotion. Prerequisites MUS 101 or permission of instructor.

Introduction to the central concepts of modern political thought that have underlined Western political practice. The views of those writers who launched the Enlightenment and challenged Christianity: Descartes and Hobbes. The conflict within modern theory on the meaning of liberty and justice as developed by Rousseau, Smith, Marx and others, setting the stage for a protracted period of conflict within the West. Efforts by thinkers like Mill and de Tocqueville to reconcile divisions within Western civilization and Nietzsche's comprehensive critique of it. Throughout the semester we will analyze the divisions that have animated modern thought – liberty and virtue, self-interest and morality, equality and oligarchy, science and religion, nature and history, reason and politics – and assess whether these divisions: a.) have been overcome; b.) are now ignored due to diminished confidence in the human mind; c.) are persisting and harbingers of conflicts in the future.

This survey course looks at the political development of the Arab states, Turkey, and Iran since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in World War I. It analyzes the various factors that shape the political institutions, actors, and ideologies of these states – factors such as history, culture, religion, economics, and foreign intervention – and tries to reach some conclusions about the prospects for future socio-economic and political change, including liberalization, in the Muslim Middle East. As such, the course seeks to provide students with an empirically rich regional case study of some of the central concerns of comparative politics theory in general.
REL 152  Islam and Modernity
REL 194-03 Islam and Modernity IR seminar level

The radical transformation in human societies, economies, institutions, and world-views over the past 200 years known as modernity has posed challenges to all religious traditions. This course will begin with a survey of the major figures and movements in modern Islamic thought from the 19th century to the present and end with a survey of the contemporary religious landscape of Egypt, covering the Muslim Brotherhood, different trends in Salafism, the “new preachers,” and the re-emergence of al-Azhar as an independent institution. This latter section of the course will also consider current events. This course counts toward the Humanities distribution requirement, the World Civilization requirement, and the Middle Eastern Culture and South & Southeast Asian Culture options. Register under REL 194-03 for IR seminar level.

REL 154  Muhammad and the Quran

Though many think of the Qur’an alone as Muslim Scripture, in fact there is a broad array of sacred writings in the Islamic religious tradition that could be considered scripture, including reports of the saying and deeds of Muhammad, known as hadith, the biography of Muhammad, known as the Sira, and collections of stories about prophets mentioned in the Qur’an who also appear in the Hebrew Bible and New Testament, known as Tales of the Prophets. This seminar will consider each of these genres individually, looking at theories of the origins of the Qur’an, Qur’anic exegesis, theories of the origins of hadith and hadith criticism. It will also consider the interaction of these genres, looking at the changes in the presentations of prophets and sacred history as it moves from the Bible to the Qur’an to Tales of the Prophets; the use of Qur’an and hadith in the articulation of Islamic law; and the role of the Sira in providing the narrative of the life of the Prophet Muhammad not found in hadith. This course counts toward the Humanities distribution requirement, the World Civilization requirement, and the Middle Eastern Culture option.

CIS 160  Middle Eastern Studies Interdisciplinary Thesis/Project

Middle Eastern Studies Thesis. Please see departmental website for specific details. The project required of students electing the interdisciplinary minor option. Either one-half or one course credit will be given at the discretion of the faculty members involved. Permission of Director.

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Beatrice Manz, History

Nimah Mazaheri, Political Science
Ina Baghdiantz McCabe, History
Malik Mufti, Political Science
Kamran Rastegar, GRALL
Hugh Roberts, History
Joel Rosenberg, Judaic Studies Program
Enrico Spolaore, Economics

December 2, 2013