MODERN MIDDLE EAST STUDIES

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FACULTY ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROGRAM OF MODERN MIDDLE EAST STUDIES

Professors Abbas Amanat (History), Gerhard Böwering (Religious Studies), John Darnell (Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations), Stephen Davis (Religious Studies), Steven Fraade (Religious Studies), Eckart Frahm (Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations), Frank Griffel (Religious Studies), Dimitri Gutas (Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations), Christine Hayes (Religious Studies), Hannan Hever (Comparative Literature), Marcia Inhorn (Anthropology), Anthony Kronman (Law School), Bentley Layton (Religious Studies), Joseph Manning (Classics, History), Ivan Marcus (History), Alan Mikhail (History), A. Mushfiq Mobarak (School of Management), Robert Nelson (History of Art), W. Michael Reisman (Law School), Maurice Samuels (French), Lamin Sanneh (Divinity School), Harvey Weiss (Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations)

Associate Professors Zareena Grewal (American Studies), Kaveh Khoshnood (Public Health), Mark Lazenby (School of Nursing), Andrew March (Political Science), Kishwar Rizvi (History of Art), Eliyahu Stern (Religious Studies), Jonathan Wyrtzen (Sociology)

Assistant Professors Rosie Bsheer (History), Thomas Connolly (French), Robyn Creswell (Comparative Literature), Narges Erami (Anthropology), Adria Lawrence (Political Science), Julia Stephens (History)

Senior Lecturers Geetanjali Singh Chanda (Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies), Tolga Köker (Economics), Kathryn Slanski (Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations)

Lecturers Adel Allouche (History), Karla Britton (Architecture), Karen Foster (History of Art)

Senior Lectors II Shiri Goren

Senior Lectors Sarab Al Ani, Muhammad Aziz, Jonas Elbousty, Dina Roginsky, Farkhondeh Shayesteh

The Modern Middle East Studies major focuses on the culture, history, religion, politics, and society of the modern Middle East in its full geographical breadth, using any of its four major languages, Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, and Turkish. Courses are selected from the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations and from other departments in the humanities and social sciences, including Anthropology, History, History of Art, Judaic Studies, Political Science, Religious Studies, and Sociology. The Modern Middle East Studies major gives students the language skills necessary to understand complex issues of the Middle East and serves as excellent preparation for graduate study or for business and professional careers in which an understanding of that region is essential.

Prerequisites There are no prerequisites, but prospective majors should keep the language requirement in mind while planning their course schedules (see below).

Requirements of the major Twelve term courses are required for the major, including three foundational courses, one each in modern thought, classical thought, and the modern Middle East. Six electives on the modern Middle East examine culture and thought, history, religion, politics, and society. Elective courses must be spread geographically and substantively; they must focus on at least two different subregions and originate in at least two different departments. The proposed course of study requires the approval of the director of undergraduate studies.

Language requirement All students are required to complete two courses at the L5 level in a Middle Eastern language. The two courses may be applied toward the twelve-course major requirement. Typical courses include ARBC 150, 151, and PERS 150.

Senior requirement Students in the major undertake a one- or two-term senior essay that involves use of materials in one or more modern Middle Eastern languages. The student selects a faculty adviser with competence in an appropriate language. A prospectus and outline signed by the adviser must be submitted to the director of undergraduate studies by the end of the fourth week of classes in either term of the senior year. Senior essays are graded by the adviser and a second reader. See the course descriptions of the senior essay courses (MMES 491, 492, 493) for additional information. Alternatively, majors may take an additional seminar and write an essay in that course to fulfill the senior requirement.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

Prerequisites None

Number of courses 12 term courses

Distribution of courses 3 foundational courses, 1 each in modern thought, classical thought, and the modern Middle East; 6 electives spread geographically and substantively, focusing on at least 2 subregions and from at least 2 depts

Language requirement 2 courses at L5 level in a Middle Eastern language

Senior requirement Senior essay (MMES 491 or MMES 492, 493) or essay written in an addtl sem
Foundational Courses

MODERN THOUGHT

* MMES 165a / FREN 215a, Introduction to Maghrebi Literature and Culture  Jill Jarvis
Introduction to the literature and cultures of the Maghreb (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia) from independence through the Arab Spring.
Close analysis of fiction, poetry, and film. Focus on anticolonialism, decolonization, violence, multilingualism, Islam, feminism, migration, and social justice.  HU

* MMES 292b / RLST 292b, Salafiyya Movement in Islam  Frank Griffel
Close study of the development of the Salafiyya movement, a widely spread modernist reform movement of Muslim intellectuals active since the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Further development of the movement during the twentieth century; what "Salafism" means today.  HU

* MMES 403a / RLST 412a, Orientalism, Magic, and Religion  Travis Zadeh
Examination of the relationship between religion and magic as expressed in various historical and geographical contexts, with particular attention to the significance of these categories in the development of Orientalist literature, art, film, and scholarship.  HU

CLASSICAL THOUGHT

MMES 138b / RLST 165b, Introduction to the Quran  Staff
Introduction to the study of the Quran. Topics include: the literary, historical, and theological reception of the Quran; its collection and redaction; the scriptural milieu of late antiquity; education and religious authority; ritual performance and calligraphic expression; the diversity of Muslim exegesis.  HU

MMES 192a / RLST 170a, The Religion of Islam  Gerhard Böwering
The rise of Islam in Arabia; Muhammad and the Qur’an; Muslim tradition and religious law; crucial issues of Islamic philosophy and theology; basic beliefs and practices of the Muslim community; Sufism and Shi’ism; religious institutions and modern trends; fundamentalism and violence; freedom and democracy.  HU

* MMES 342a / HIST 232Ja / HUMS 443a / JDST 270a / RLST 201a, Medieval Jews, Christians, and Muslims In Conversation  Ivan Marcus
How members of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim communities thought of and interacted with members of the other two cultures during the Middle Ages. Cultural grids and expectations each imposed on the other; the rhetoric of otherness—humans or devils, purity or impurity, and animal imagery; and models of religious community and power in dealing with the other when confronted with cultural differences. Counts toward either European or Middle Eastern distributional credit within the History major, upon application to the director of undergraduate studies.  WR, HU, RP

MMES 391a / RLST 287a, Islamic Theology and Philosophy  Frank Griffel
Historical survey of major themes in Muslim theology and philosophy, from teachings of the Qur’an to contemporary Muslim thought. The systematic character of Muslim thought and of the arguments given by thinkers; reason vs. revelation; the emergence of Sunnism and Shi’ism; the reaction of Muslim theology (from 1800) to the challenges of the West.  HU

* MMES 490a / NELC 490a, Introduction to Arabic and Islamic Studies  Dimitri Gutas
Comprehensive survey of subjects treated in Arabic and Islamic studies, with representative readings from each. Methods and techniques of scholarship in the field; emphasis on acquiring familiarity with bibliographical and other research tools. Enrollment limited to senior majors in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, except by permission of instructor.

THE MODERN MIDDLE EAST

* MMES 326a / WGSS 358a, Middle East Uprisings  Zakia Salime
Understanding Middle East politics in light of the 2011 uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East, particularly the genealogy of political protests, occupations, and wars in the region. How the 2011 uprisings are classed, sexed, and gendered while considering the encounters of state and non-state actors during these uprisings.  SO

* MMES 348b / ER&M 371b / PLSC 380b, Development and Change in Iraq and Afghanistan  Naysan Adlparvar
The recent history of foreign intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq and the impact of post-conflict development upon Afghan and Iraqi social and political life. Analysis of changes brought about through military and civil interventions aimed at promoting democratization, human rights, gender and women’s economic empowerment, social stability, community development, and the well-being of minorities and refugees.  WR, SO

* MMES 377a / EP&E 2498 / PLSC 377a / RLST 288a, Islam and Democracy in the Modern Middle East  Andrew March
The development of regimes of government in Muslim countries since the nineteenth century. Early constitutional movements, the rise of political Islam, the management of religion in various twentieth-century states, the Iranian revolution, and the growth of Salafi ideas, culminating in the ISIS "caliphate."  SO

* MMES 398b / RLST 298b, Good and Evil in Islamic Thought  Salimch Maghsoudlou
Close study of major developments in Islamic theodicy, including the most important arguments advanced by different groups and the modality through which this set of problems affected and still affects the Islamic thinking. Exploration of Islamic philosophical tradition, focusing on why there is evil in this world, who is responsible for it, and the meaning of justice.  HU
Elective Courses

* MMES 111a / ANTH 360a, Representing Iran  Narges Erami
Major themes in Iranian history and culture used as a critical framework for understanding challenges that face Iran today. Examination of Western production of knowledge about Iran. Topics include local and oral history, revolutions, Islam and secularism, democracy and theocracy, and the role of cinema.  SO

* MMES 128a / ARCH 158a / HSAR 118a / SAST 268a, Introduction to the History of Art: Islamic Architecture  Kishwar Rizvi
Introduction to the architecture of the Islamic world from the seventh century to the present, encompassing regions of Asia, North Africa, and Europe. A variety of sources and media, from architecture to urbanism and from travelogues to paintings, are used in an attempt to understand the diversity and richness of Islamic architecture.  HU

* MMES 139a / RLST 427a, Islam, Conquest, and Conversion  Staff
Through examination of conquest and religious conversion in the formative periods of Islamic history this course interrogates the idea that Islam was spread by violent domination. Case studies are drawn from the Middle East, South and South East Asia, the Indian Ocean, Iberia, and West Africa.  HU

MMES 144a / HIST 346a, The Making of Modern Iran  Abbas Amanat
The political, socio-religious, and cultural history of modern Iran from the Shi’ite revolution and the rise of the Safavid Empire to the present. Discussion of Shi’ism and the state, relations with neighboring countries (the Ottoman Empire and India), Russia and Britain in Qajar Iran, the Babi-Baha’i religion, the constitutional revolution, the Pahlavi dynasty, oil, nationalism and relations with the United States, the causes and the consequences of the Islamic revolution, and Iran in the contemporary Middle East.  HU RP

MMES 148b / HIST 345b / JDST 265b / RLST 202b, Jews in Muslim Lands from the Seventh to the Sixteenth Centuries  Ivan Marcus
Jewish culture and society in Muslim lands from the time of the Prophet Muhammad to that of Suleiman the Magnificent. Topics include Islam and Judaism; Jerusalem as a holy site; rabbinic leadership and literature in Baghdad; Jewish courtiers, poets, and philosophers in Muslim Spain; and the Jews in the Ottoman Empire.  HU RP

MMES 149a / ER&M 219a / HIST 219a / JDST 200a / RLST 148a, Jewish History and Thought to Early Modern Times  Ivan Marcus
A broad introduction to the history of the Jews from biblical beginnings until the European Reformation and the Ottoman Empire. Focus on the formative period of classical rabbinic Judaism and on the symbiotic relationships among Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Jewish society and culture in its biblical, rabbinic, and medieval settings. Counts toward either European or non-Western distributional credit within the History major, upon application to the director of undergraduate studies.  HU RP

* MMES 150a / HEBR 150a / JDST 213a, Advanced Modern Hebrew: Daily Life in Israel  Orit Yeret
An examination of major controversies in Israeli society. Readings include newspaper editorials and academic articles as well as documentary and historical material. Advanced grammatical structures are introduced and practiced. Conducted in Hebrew. Prerequisite: HEBR 140 or equivalent.  L5 RP

* MMES 155a / HEBR 160a / JDST 360a, Hebrew in a Changing World  Dina Roginsky
Focus on how Hebrew language is used in Israel for constructing social norms, expectations, and day-to-day experiences. Topics include gendered language, political and PC language, military language, slang, humor, dialects, accents, name-giving practices, language in a sacred and in a secular context, and Americanization of the Hebrew language. Materials include advertisements, internet forums, movie clips, skits, maps, political stickers, and newspapers. Prerequisite: HEBR 140 or permission of instructor.  L5

MMES 160b / JDST 325b / NELC 155b / SOCY 155b, State and Society in Israel  Dina Roginsky
The interplay between the state and society in Israel. Current Israeli discourse on controversial issues such as civil rights in a Jewish-democratic state, Jewish-Arab relations, and right and left politics. Issues of orthodoxy, military service, globalization, and multiculturalism in Israel. Sociopolitical changes that have taken place in Israel since the establishment of the state in 1948 and that have led to the reshaping of Israeli Zionist ideology. Hebrew knowledge is not required.  HU

* MMES 161b / HEBR 162b / JDST 319b, Israel in Ideology and Practice  Dina Roginsky
An advanced Hebrew class focusing on changing ideology and politics in Israel. Topics include right and left wing political discourse, elections, State-Religion dynamics, the Jewish-Arab divide, and demographic changes. Materials include newspapers, publications, online resources, speeches of different political and religious groups, and contemporary and archival footage. Comparisons to American political and ideological discourse. Prerequisite: HEBR 140 or permission of instructor.  L5 RP

* MMES 168b / HEBR 158b / JDST 305b, Contemporary Israeli Society in Film  Shiri Goren
Examination of major themes in Israeli society through film, with emphasis on language study. Topics include migration, gender and sexuality, Jewish/Israeli identity, and private and collective memory. Readings in Hebrew and English provide a sociohistorical background and bases for class discussion. HEBR 140 or permission of instructor.  L5, HU RP
* MMES 172b / HIST 384jb / NELC 403b, The Middle East between Crusaders and Mongols  Adel Allouche
The impact of the Crusades and the Mongol conquests on the Islamic Middle East. Political, social, and economic changes in the region from the eleventh century to the middle of the fourteenth. Emphasis on the rise of new dynasties as a result of changes in the ethnic mosaic of the Middle East.  WR, HU

* MMES 172b / HIST 398jb / NELC 404b, Mamluk Egypt  Adel Allouche
A study of the Mamluks, manumitted slaves initially imported to Egypt for military service who established their own rule over Egypt and Syria (1250–1517). Focus on the structure and workings of the Mamluk state. Military, political, economic, and social factors that contributed to the grandeur and, later, the decline of the Mamluk period in Egypt and its conquest by the Ottoman Turks.  WR, HU

MMES 175a / HIST 350a / NELC 350a, Formation of the Islamic State, 610–750  Adel Allouche
The development of Islamic polity and society from the rise of Islam to the rise of the Abbasid dynasty. Religious and societal changes caused by the success of Muhammad’s mission; ramifications of the subsequent Arab expansion at the expense of the Byzantine and Sasanian empires. The origins of Islamic institutions; the historical development of the main religious sects and of Islamic legal thought; Western views of Islam.  HU

MMES 193b / HIST 351b / RLST 153b, The Golden Age of Islam  Gerhard Böwering
The development of Islamic civilization in the Middle East, North Africa, Spain, Iran, and India from Muhammad through the Mongol invasions to the rise of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires (600–1500 C.E.). Emphasis on the intellectual and religious history of Islam in the age of the caliphs and during the rule of regional dynasties.  HU

MMES 197a / HIST 216a / JDST 332a / RLST 193a, Zionism  Eliyahu Stern
Introduction to the core ideas of the Zionist movement from the mid-nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth. Focus on internal Jewish debates and criticism of the movement by European and Middle Eastern intellectuals. Social, political, cultural, and messianic ideological strands within the movement and their interpretations of various historical experiences and ideas located in the Jewish tradition.  HU

* MMES 235b / JDST 235b / NELC 231b / RLST 147b, Introduction to Judaism in the Ancient World  Steven Fraade
The emergence of classical Judaism in its historical setting. Jews and Hellenization; varieties of early Judaism; apocalyptic and postapocalyptic responses to suffering and catastrophe; worship and atonement without sacrificial cult; interpretations of scriptures; law and life; the rabbi; the synagogue; faith in reason; Sabbath and festivals; history and its redemption. No prior background in Jewish history assumed.  HU

* MMES 236b / JDST 256b / NELC 232b / RLST 400b, The Dead Sea Scrolls: The Damascus Document  Steven Fraade
Study of the Damascus Document, one of the most important of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Attention to the document’s place in the history of biblical interpretation and ancient Jewish law; the nature and rhetorical function of its textual practices, both narrative and legal; and its relation to the central sectarian writings of the Qumran community. Prerequisite: reading proficiency in ancient Hebrew.  L5, HU

* MMES 253a / WGSS 243a, Gender in North Africa  Zakia Salime
Study of gender in North Africa, including, law, religion, activism, sexuality, community, labor, and migration, as well as artistic expression and cultural production, with in-depth focus on North Africa as a distinctive part of the geography and history of the Middle East. Readings are interdisciplinary, combining theoretical approaches from history, sociology, anthropology, political science, media studies, and gender and feminist studies.  SO

* MMES 261b / FREN 414b, The Algerian War of Independence and Its Literature  Jill Jarvis
Survey of literature about the Algerian war of independence written in both France and Algeria since 1954. The role of women in the insurgency; the construction of an Algerian national identity; the issue of political commitment for intellectuals; debates on terrorism and the use of torture. Some attention to film. Readings from works by Fanon, Kateb, Djebar, Dib, Feraoun, Etcherelli, Sebbar, Camus, Sartre, De Beauvoir, Stora.  L5, HU, RP

* MMES 263b / ARBC 167b, Arabic Language in Cinema  Sarah Al Ani
Critical, historical, and interpretive films and readings that develop growth in language skills (reading, listening, writing, and speaking), and better understanding of Arab social, cultural, and intellectual trends set against the backdrop that these films and readings reflect, comment upon, or reject. ARBC 150 and ARBC 151 or permission of instructor.  L5

* MMES 273a / JDST 261a / RLST 200a, Jews at the Origins of Islam  Liran Yadgar
Investigation of the role of Jews in the formative period of Islam, from the beginning of Muhammad’s call to prophethood around 610 C.E. to the early Abbasid Period (ca. 850 C.E.) in light of contemporary scholarship on the origins of Islam.  HU

* MMES 282b / AFST 373b / GLBL 362b / SOCY 330b, Imperialism, Insurgency, and State Building in the Middle East and North Africa  Jonathan Wyrtzen
The historical evolution of political order from Morocco to Central Asia in the past two centuries. Focus on relationships between imperialism, insurgency, and state building. Ottoman, European, and nationalist strategies for state building; modes of local resistance; recent transnational developments; American counterinsurgency and nation-building initiatives in the region.  SO

* MMES 291b / AFST 348b / SOCY 232b, Islamic Social Movements  Jonathan Wyrtzen
Social movement theory used to analyze the emergence and evolution of Islamic movements from the early twentieth century to the present. Organization, mobilization, political process, and framing of political, nonpolitical, militant, and nonmigrant movements;
* MMES 310b / ANTH 310b, Anthropological Theory and the Post Colonial Encounter  Narges Erami
Key texts in the theoretical development of sociocultural anthropology. Theorists include Emile Durkheim, Marcel Mauss, A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, Bronislaw Malinowski, E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Mary Douglas, Clifford Geertz, Sherry Ortner, Michele Rosaldo, Talal Asad, and Edward Said.  SO

* MMES 418a / JDST 339a / LITR 418a / RLST 203a, Politics of Modern Hebrew Literature  Hannan Hever
Overview of the Poetics, Culture, History and Political dynamics of Modern Hebrew Literature as a national literature over the last 300 years. The course will trace the literary development of its diasporic condition in Europe through the Hebrew Literature that is created in the Israeli Jewish sovereignty. Readings in translation. No background in Jewish literature, Hebrew literature, or Jewish culture is required.  HU

* MMES 442b / HIST 347jb, From the Great Game to the Great Satan: Iran, Afghanistan, and Central Asia in the Age of Empires  Abbas Amanat
Encounters of Iran and its neighbors with Britain, Russia, and the United States since the nineteenth century. Special attention to Western imperial interests in the region and to indigenous forms of resistance to imperial hegemony. Topics include travel, diplomacy, war and hegemony, postcolonial sovereignty, the Cold War and regional power, and the Islamic Republic's demonizing of America.  WR, HU

* MMES 465a / ARBC 165a, Arabic Seminar  Dimitri Gutas
Study and interpretation of classical Arabic texts for advanced students. Prerequisite: ARBC 146, 151, or permission of instructor. May be repeated for credit.  1.5

Directed Study and Senior Essay Courses

* MMES 471a and MMES 472b, Independent Directed Study  Staff
Independent research or directed reading under the direction of a faculty member in the program on a special topic in Modern Middle East Studies not substantially covered by an existing undergraduate or graduate course. A proposal describing the nature of the program and the readings to be covered must be signed by the adviser and submitted to the director of undergraduate studies by the end of the second week of classes. The student should meet with the adviser regularly, typically for an hour a week, and write one term essay or several short essays.

* MMES 491a or b, Senior Essay  Staff
The one-term senior essay is a research paper of at least thirty pages prepared under the supervision of a faculty member in accordance with the following schedule: (1) by the end of the second week of classes of the term, students meet with advisers to discuss the essay's topic, approach, sources, and bibliography; (2) by the end of the fourth week of classes a prospectus with outline, including an annotated bibliography of materials in one or more modern Middle Eastern languages and of secondary sources, is signed by the adviser and submitted to the director of undergraduate studies. The prospectus should indicate the formal title, scope, and focus of the essay, as well as the proposed research method, including detailed indications of the nature and extent of materials in a modern Middle Eastern language that will be used; (3) at the end of the tenth week of classes, a rough draft of the complete essay is submitted to the adviser; (4) by 4 p.m. on the last day of the reading period, two copies of the finished paper must be submitted to the MMES registrar, 115 Prospect St., room 344. A late essay will receive a lower grade. Senior essays are graded by faculty associated with the Modern Middle East Studies program unless, for exceptional reasons, different arrangements for another reader have been made in advance with the director of undergraduate studies and the faculty adviser. Credit for MMES 492 only on completion of MMES 493.

MMES 492a and MMES 493b, The Yearlong Senior Essay  Staff
The yearlong senior essay is a research paper of at least sixty pages prepared under the supervision of a faculty member in accordance with the following schedule: (1) by the end of the second week of classes of the first term, students meet with advisers to discuss the essay's topic, approach, sources, and bibliography; (2) by the end of the fourth week of classes a prospectus with outline, including an annotated bibliography of materials in one or more modern Middle Eastern languages and of secondary sources, is signed by the adviser and submitted to the director of undergraduate studies. The prospectus should indicate the formal title, scope, and focus of the essay, as well as the proposed research method, including detailed indications of the nature and extent of materials in a modern Middle Eastern language that will be used; (3) at the end of February, a rough draft of the complete essay is submitted to the adviser; (4) by 4 p.m. on the last day of reading period in the spring term, two copies of the finished paper must be submitted to the MMES registrar, 115 Prospect St., room 344. A late essay will receive a lower grade. Senior essays are graded by faculty associated with the Modern Middle East Studies program unless, for exceptional reasons, different arrangements for another reader have been made in advance with the director of undergraduate studies and the faculty adviser. Credit for MMES 492 on completion of MMES 493.