NEAR EASTERN LANGUAGES AND CIVILIZATIONS

Arnold Hall, 304 Elm Street, 203.432.2944
http://nelc.yale.edu
M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.

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Senior Lecturer Kathryn Slanski
Lecturers Karen Foster, Christina Geisen, Agnete Lassen, Klaus Wagensonner

Senior Lectors I Sarab al-Ani, Muhammad Aziz, Jonas Elbousty, Dina Roginsky, Farkhondeh Shayesteh

Lectors Elham Alkasimi, Ozgen Felek, Selim Tiryakiol, Orit Yeret

FIELDS OF STUDY
Fields include Arabic Humanities, Assyriology, the Classical Near East, and Egyptology.

SPECIAL ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS
Applicants should state their specific field of study and intended specialization. Evidence of reading knowledge of both French and German is required of all Ph.D. students. Proficiency in one of these languages is normally a prerequisite for admission and is demonstrated by passing a departmental examination upon registration at Yale. Proficiency in the second language must be achieved before admission to the second year of study. Ph.D. students admitted with only one of the two required languages or who fail the departmental examination are expected to enroll in an appropriate full-year course given by the French or German department at Yale (or the equivalent elsewhere, with the approval of the director of graduate studies [DGS]). Completion of such a course with a grade of A or B will be accepted as fulfilling the proficiency requirement in either language; exceptions, for instance, for native speakers of French or German, may be made by the department upon recommendation of the DGS. For students in the M.A. program, evidence of reading knowledge of either French or German is sufficient.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PH.D. DEGREE

Course Work
The department normally requires three full years of course work: four yearlong courses or eight term courses per year are considered a full load. Normal progress in course work is considered to be consistent achievement of grades of High Pass or better, and at least four term courses or two yearlong courses with Honors per year.

Of the twenty-four required courses for graduate study, at least eighteen should be taken within the department, usually within the student's primary field of study. Courses taken outside of the department should be clearly related to the student's primary field or constitute a coherent second field. For students who take no courses outside of the department, minimum competence in a second field within NELC is required, defined as follows: at least two terms of a Near Eastern language, to be evaluated either by examination or a course grade of High Pass or better, or at least two terms of nonlanguage courses outside the area of specialization.

Advanced standing In exceptional cases, upon presenting evidence of successful completion of graduate courses at other universities or at Yale prior to their matriculation in the Ph.D. program, students with significant prior knowledge in their primary fields of study may apply for a waiver of up to eight courses toward the twenty-four required for candidacy. The faculty adviser and the DGS will normally present such applications to the faculty of the department, with a recommendation, no later than the end of the second year.

Committees
While doing course work, students are mentored by a faculty adviser from their field and by the DGS. Students writing dissertations may, if they so wish, be mentored by a committee headed by a primary adviser from NELC (not necessarily the faculty adviser from the course work years) and staffed with one, two, or more additional members, from either inside or outside the department, depending on the student's specific needs. Committees are to be approved by the DGS. Interested students are encouraged to seek out suitable and willing faculty to serve on their advisory committees.
Special Language and Course Requirements

Course work should be planned to meet two departmental general standards: core languages for the primary fields of study, and minimum competence in a secondary field. The core languages in each of the major fields of study are as follows: Arabic Humanities: Arabic and one other Near Eastern language, typically Hebrew, Persian, or Turkish. Assyriology: Sumerian and Akkadian. Classical Near East: Arabic and at least two of the following: Armenian, Aramaic (Babylonian or Syriac), Coptic, Greek, Hebrew, Middle Persian, New Persian, or Sanskrit. Egyptology: Egyptian and at least four terms of Demotic or Coptic.

Minimum competence in a secondary field of study is defined as follows: at least two terms of a Near Eastern language to be evaluated either by examination or with a course grade of High Pass or better, or at least two terms of nonlanguage courses outside the area of specialization. A minimum grade of High Pass in these courses will be considered successful fulfillment of this requirement.

In Arabic Humanities, the minimum competence can be extended to an interdisciplinary course of study in a minor field. Minors may include six to eight term courses in such departments and programs as Comparative Literature, French, History, History of Science and Medicine, Italian, Judaic Studies, Linguistics, Medieval Studies, Philosophy, Religious Studies, Spanish and Portuguese, or others as applicable.

Students in all four fields of the department will be expected to declare their choice of a secondary language or area, or a minor field, by their third term of study.

Training in Teaching

NELC students normally acquire four terms of teaching experience, between their second and fourth years in residence. Teaching Fellow assignments will be made by the DGS in consultation with the relevant faculty and will, whenever possible, take student preferences into account.

Examinations and the Dissertation

The qualifying examination is normally taken at the end of the third year of study or no later than the beginning of the fourth year of study. For students who enter with advanced standing, the qualifying examination could be taken at the end of the second year. Qualifying examinations normally include three written and one oral examination, including language, literature, history, and other topics to be determined by the DGS in consultation with the student and the relevant faculty. Qualifying examinations may be based in part on reading lists of primary core texts and secondary literature compiled in advance by the student and the relevant faculty. Primary texts and secondary literature from course work may also be topics of the examination. For language examinations, unseen texts may also be included. In the case of the program in Arabic Humanities, for students electing to do a minor, the written portion will consist of two language examinations and one subject in the minor field, and the oral will consist of two subjects in Arabic studies and one in the minor field. Written examinations are set by the individual faculty members responsible for particular areas of study, but the oral portion may be conducted by the full staff of the department. The dissertation proposal is normally submitted one month after completing the qualifying examination.

In their final term of course work, students may, with the permission of the DGS and the relevant faculty, enroll in a Directed Readings course related to the general field of the prospective dissertation topic. Course work should include preparation of a comprehensive, annotated bibliography for the prospective topic and exploration of selected aspects of the topic in a research paper. Students availing themselves of this option may present some of their work at the NELC Roundtable.

The dissertation prospectus may comprise up to thirty pages, excluding the bibliography. A two-page summary of the prospectus will normally be circulated among and voted upon by the faculty, though the full prospectus will be available for consideration.

Successful completion of the comprehensive examination and submission of an acceptable prospectus will qualify the student for admission to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree. After completion of the dissertation, the candidate may receive a final examination concerned primarily with the defense of the thesis.

ARCHAIA GRADUATE QUALIFICATION

Students can participate in the Yale Program for the Study of Ancient and Premodern Cultures and Societies (Archaia) and receive a graduate qualification by fulfilling the necessary requirements. For further information, see Archaia, under Non-Degree-Granting Programs, Councils, and Research Institutes.

MASTER’S DEGREES

M.Phil. See Degree Requirements under Policies and Regulations.

Terminal Master’s Degree Program Applicants who do not enroll in the Ph.D. program may pursue a Master of Arts degree. Students enrolled in the M.A. program should complete a minimum of twelve term courses with at least two term grades of Honors and an average of High Pass in the remaining courses, and will be required to submit a master’s thesis no later than April 1 of the fourth term of study. No financial aid is available. Students enrolled in the Ph.D. program are also eligible for this degree by meeting the same requirements. Automatic petition for the M.A. degree is not available to students in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations.
COURSES

AKKD 500a, Elementary Akkadian I  Eckart Frahm
Introduction to the language of ancient Babylonia and its cuneiform writing system, with exercises in reading, translation, and composition.

AKKD 501b, Elementary Akkadian II  Eckart Frahm
Introduction to the language of ancient Babylonia and its cuneiform writing system, with exercises in reading, translation, and composition.

AKKD 510a, Akkadian Dialects  Benjamin Foster

ARBC 500a, Elementary Modern Standard Arabic I  Elham Alkasimi
A two-term course for students who have no previous background in Arabic. Students learn the Arabic alphabet, basic vocabulary and expression, and basic grammatical structures and concepts, and concentrate on developing listening and speaking skills. The course aims at developing the following skills: reading to extract the gist of written Modern Standard Arabic texts; speaking with increased ease, good pronunciation, sound grammatical forms, and correct usage; writing to respond to simple daily life issues; forming and recognizing grammatically correct Modern Standard Arabic.

ARBC 501b, Elementary Modern Standard Arabic II  Staff
A two-term course for students who have no previous background in Arabic. Students learn the Arabic alphabet, basic vocabulary and expression, and basic grammatical structures and concepts, and concentrate on developing listening and speaking skills. The course aims at developing the following skills: reading to extract the gist of written Modern Standard Arabic texts; speaking with increased ease, good pronunciation, sound grammatical forms, and correct usage; writing to respond to simple daily life issues; forming and recognizing grammatically correct Modern Standard Arabic.

ARBC 502a, Intermediate Modern Standard Arabic I  Sarab Al Ani
A two-term course for students with previous background in Arabic. It is designed to improve proficiency in aural and written comprehension as well as in speaking and writing skills. The course aims to develop the following skills: reading to extract the gist as well as key details of written Modern Standard Arabic texts on a variety of academic, social, cultural, economic, and political topics; speaking with greater fluency and enhanced engagement in conversations on a variety of topics; mastering writing, easily forming and recognizing grammatically correct Arabic sentences. Prerequisite: ARBC 501 or successful completion of a placement test.

ARBC 503b, Intermediate Modern Standard Arabic II  Muhammad Aziz
A two-term course for students with previous background in Arabic. It is designed to improve proficiency in aural and written comprehension as well as in speaking and writing skills. The course aims to develop the following skills: reading to extract the gist as well as key details of written Modern Standard Arabic texts on a variety of academic, social, cultural, economic, and political topics; speaking with greater fluency and enhanced engagement in conversations on a variety of topics; mastering writing, easily forming and recognizing grammatically correct Arabic sentences. Prerequisite: ARBC 501 or successful completion of a placement test.

ARBC 504a, Advanced Modern Standard Arabic I  Muhammad Aziz
Focus on improving the listening, writing, and speaking skills of students who already have a substantial background in the study of modern standard Arabic. Prerequisite: ARBC 503 or permission of the instructor.

ARBC 505b, Advanced Modern Standard Arabic II  Muhammad Aziz
Focus on improving the listening, writing, and speaking skills of students who already have a substantial background in the study of modern standard Arabic. Prerequisite: ARBC 503 or permission of the instructor.

ARBC 509a, Intermediate Classical Arabic I  Staff
Introduction to classical Arabic, with emphasis on analytical reading skills, grammar, and prose composition. Readings from the Qur’an, Islamic theology, and literature and history of the Middle East, as well as Jewish and Christian religious texts in Arabic.

ARBC 510b, Intermediate Classical Arabic II  Staff
Introduction to classical Arabic, with emphasis on analytical reading skills, grammar, and prose composition. Readings from the Qur’an, Islamic theology, and literature and history of the Middle East, as well as Jewish and Christian religious texts in Arabic.

ARBC 519a, Levantine Arabic  Sarab Al Ani

ARBC 523a, Arabic Prose Narrative  Muhammad Aziz
Close reading of some of Naguib Mahfouz's novels. Attention to idiomatic expressions, structural patterns, literary analysis, and discussions. Students write a brief report on their weekly reading and discuss the main ideas of the assigned reading. Short midterm paper relevant to Mahfouz (to be discussed with the instructor) and a final paper. Prerequisite: ARBC 503 or permission of the instructor.

ARBC 530a, Arabic Seminar: Early Arabic Poetry  Kevin Van Bladel
Study and interpretation of classical Arabic texts for advanced students. Prerequisite: ARBC 510 or permission of the instructor.

EGYP 500a, Introduction to Classical Hieroglyphic Egyptian I  Staff
A two-term introduction to the language of ancient pharaonic Egypt (Middle Egyptian) and its hieroglyphic writing system, with short historical, literary, and religious texts. Grammatical analysis with exercises in reading, translation, and composition.
EGYP 501b, Introduction to Classical Hieroglyphic Egyptian II  Staff
A two-term introduction to the language of ancient pharaonic Egypt (Middle Egyptian) and its hieroglyphic writing system, with short historical, literary, and religious texts. Grammatical analysis with exercises in reading, translation, and composition.

EGYP 512b / RLST 658b, Egyptian Monastic Literature in Coptic  Stephen Davis
Readings in the early Egyptian classics of Christian asceticism in Sahidic Coptic, including the Desert Fathers and Shenoute. Prerequisite: EGYP 510b or equivalent.

EGYP 514a, Gnostic Texts in Coptic  Harold Attridge
The course reads selected portions of important texts from the Nag Hammadi collection, including the Apocryphon of John, the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Truth, Thunder, the Treatise on Resurrection, the Tripartite Tractate, as well as other noncanonical texts preserved in Coptic, including the Gospel of Mary and the Gospel of Judas. Prerequisite: EGYP 510 or equivalent.

EGYP 515b, The Wisdom of Ancient Egypt: Pharaonic Cultural Texts in Translation  Christina Geisen
Overview of the different text genres in ancient Egypt. Critical analysis of primary sources and their important role in the reconstruction of the history and cultural aspects of ancient Egyptian civilization.

EGYP 522a, Ancient Egyptian Hieratic Texts  Christina Geisen
An introduction to the hieratic script mainly used for everyday documents. The course also considers Old and Late Egyptian texts.

EGYP 533a, Intermediate Egyptian I: Literary Texts  John Darnell
Close reading of Middle Egyptian literary texts; introduction to the hieratic (cursive) Egyptian script. Readings include the Middle Kingdom stories of “Sinuhe” and the “Eloquent Peasant” and excerpts from wisdom literature. Prerequisite: EGYP 501.

EGYP 578b, The Egyptian Netherworld Books  John Darnell
Study of the Underworld texts from the royal tombs of the New Kingdom. Readings from the Amduat, the Book of Gates, the Book of Caverns, the Book of the Creation of the Solar Disk, the Book of the Day and the Night, the cryptographic Books of the Solar-Osirian Unity, the Book of the Heavenly Cow, and the Book of Nut. Discussions of the significance of these texts for understanding Egyptian religion, and the possible contributions of these compositions to the Hermetica and Christian Gnosticism.

HEBR 500a, Elementary Modern Hebrew I  Dina Roginsky
A two-term introduction to the language of contemporary Israel, both spoken and written. Fundamentals of grammar; extensive practice in speaking, reading, writing, and comprehension under the guidance of a native speaker. No previous knowledge required. Successful completion of the fall term required to enroll in the spring term.

HEBR 501b, Elementary Modern Hebrew II  Orit Yeret
A two-term introduction to the language of contemporary Israel, both spoken and written. Fundamentals of grammar; extensive practice in speaking, reading, writing, and comprehension under the guidance of a native speaker. No previous knowledge required. Successful completion of the fall term required to enroll in the spring term.

HEBR 502a, Intermediate Modern Hebrew I  Orit Yeret
A two-term review and continuation of grammatical study leading to a deeper comprehension of style and usage. Focus on selected readings, writing, comprehension, and speaking skills. Prerequisite: HEBR 501 or equivalent.

HEBR 503b, Intermediate Modern Hebrew II  Shiri Goren
A two-term review and continuation of grammatical study leading to a deeper comprehension of style and usage. Focus on selected readings, writing, comprehension, and speaking skills. Prerequisite: HEBR 502 or equivalent.

HEBR 504a, 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.

HEBR 509b, Reading Academic Texts in Modern Hebrew  Dina Roginsky
The course addresses the linguistic needs of English-speaking students who would like to be able to read with ease and accuracy contemporary Hebrew-language scholarship in the fields of Judaic studies, religious studies, history, political science, sociology, Near Eastern studies, and other related fields. Particularly, this course confronts reading comprehension problems through straightforward exposition of the grammar supported by examples from scholarly texts. Conducted in Hebrew. Prerequisite: two years of modern or biblical Hebrew, or permission of the instructor.

HEBR 511a, Elementary Biblical Hebrew  Staff
A two-term introduction to Biblical Hebrew. Intensive instruction in grammar and vocabulary, supplemented by readings from the Bible. No prior knowledge of Hebrew required.

HEBR 512b, Intermediate Biblical Hebrew  Staff
A two-term review and continuation of instruction in grammar and vocabulary, supplemented by readings from the Bible. Prerequisite: HEBR 510 or equivalent.
HEBR 516b, Israeli Popular Music  Dina Roginsky
Changes in the development of popular music in Israel explored as representations of changing Israeli society and culture. The interaction of music and cultural identity; the role of modern popular music in representing, shaping, challenging, and criticizing social conventions; songs of commemoration and heroism; popular representation of the Holocaust; Mizrahi and Arab music; feminism, sexuality, and gender; class and musical consumption; criticism, protest, and globalization. Prerequisite: HEBR 502 or equivalent.

HEBR 519a, Israel in Ideology and Practice  Dina Roginsky
An advanced Hebrew class that focuses 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. Also, this course draws comparisons to American political and ideological discourse. Prerequisite: HEBR 502 or equivalent.

MESO 530a, Beginning Sumerian I  Klaus Wagensonner
A two-term introduction to the Sumerian language.

MESO 531b, Beginning Sumerian II  Klaus Wagensonner
A two-term introduction to the Sumerian language.

MESO 532a, Advanced Sumerian  Benjamin Foster

NELC 508a, Ancient Painting and Mosaics  Karen Foster
Study of the major developments in wall painting, vase painting, and mosaics as seen in ancient Egypt, the Aegean Bronze Age, and the Greek, Etruscan, and Roman world.

NELC 509a, The Age of Akhenaton  John Darnell

NELC 519b, Religion and Politics in the Ancient Near East  Kevin Van Bladel
Survey of interaction between religion and politics in ancient Mesopotamia, compared to Egypt and Israel. Topics include divine kingship and royal rituals, religious justification of war, the politics of religious icons, politics and scholarship, political dimensions of myths, religious reforms, and the invention of monotheism as a response to empire.

NELC 520a, Mesopotamian History of the Third Millennium  Benjamin Foster
Readings and discussion of issues and evidence for a selected 500-year period of Mesopotamian history.

NELC 529a, Seals and Sealing in the Ancient Near East  Agnete Lassen
The course investigates seals and seal use in mesopotamia and surrounding areas from the earliest impressions in the Neolithic to the Neo-Babylonian period. The teaching will take the form of a research seminar with active student participation and will be based on the extensive glyptic material in the Yale Babylonian Collection.

NELC 537b / ANTH 692b / ARCG 692b, Imaging Ancient Worlds  Roderick McIntosh, John Darnell, and Agnete Lassen
The interpretation of epigraphic and archaeological material within the broader context of landscape, by means of creating a virtual model to reconstruct the sensory experiences of the ancient peoples who created the sites. Use of new technologies in computer graphics, including 3-D imaging, to support current research in archaeology and anthropology.

NELC 557b, Israeli Narratives  Shiri Goren
Close reading of major Israeli novels in translation with attention to how their themes and forms relate to the Israeli condition. Focus on topics and theories of war and peace, migration, nationalism, and gender. Authors include Oz, Yehoshua, Grossman, Matalon, Castel-Bloom, Shalev, and Kashua.

NELC 588b / ANTH 773b / ARCG 773b, Abrupt Climate Change and Societal Collapse  Harvey Weiss
Collapse documented in the archaeological and early historical records of the Old and New Worlds, including Mesopotamia, Mesoamerica, the Andes, and Europe. Analysis of politicoeconomic vulnerabilities, resiliencies, and adaptations in the face of abrupt climate change, anthropogenic environmental degradation, resource depletion, “barbarian” incursions, or class conflict.
NELC 580b / ANTH 763b / ARCG 763b, Archaeologies of Empire  Harvey Weiss
Comparative study of origins, structures, efficiencies, and limitations of imperialism, ancient and modern, in the Old and New World, from Akkad to “Indochine,” and from Wari to Aztec. The contrast between ancient and modern imperialisms examined from the perspectives of nineteenth- and twentieth-century archaeology and political economy.

NELC 605a, Global Environmental History  Harvey Weiss

NELC 606a, Agriculture: Origins, Evolution, Crises  Harvey Weiss
Analysis of the societal and environmental drivers and effects of plant and animal domestication, the intensification of agroproduction, and the crises of agroproduction: land degradation, societal collapses, sociopolitical transformation, sustainability, and biodiversity.

NELC 611a / ARCG 611a / CLSS 811a / RLST 833a, The Ancient Egyptian Temple as Cosmos: Correlation of Architecture and Decoration Program  Christina Geisen
The course focuses on the correlation of archaeology, iconography, and philology by analyzing ancient Egyptian temples under the specific consideration of the interplay of architecture and decoration program. The different types of temples and their developments over time are discussed. The main focus is the function of each temple type, which can only be understood by analyzing the architecture of the monument, its decoration program, related texts (such as rituals, myths, and festival description, but also historical texts), and its place in the cultic landscape of the specific location. The class also provides an overview of rituals performed and festivals celebrated in the temples, as well as of the administrative sphere of the temple. Optional field trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York to see the Temple of Dendur. No previous knowledge of ancient Egyptian culture or languages is necessary; all texts are read in translation.

NELC 701a / JDST 736a / RLST 746a, Midrash Seminar: The Revelation at Sinai  Steven Fraade
The giving of the Torah to Israel as seen through rabbinic eyes. Close readings of midrashic texts. Views of revelation, tradition, interpretation, law, and commandment in their literary and historical contexts. Interpretations and interpretive strategies compared and contrasted with those of other ancient biblical exegetes (Jewish and non-Jewish). Prerequisite: reading fluency in ancient Hebrew.

NELC 702a / JDST 727a / RLST 752a, Mishnah Seminar: Tractate Ta’anit on Fasting  Steven Fraade
Close study of a section of the Mishnah, the earliest digest of Jewish law, treating procedures for public fasts in response to drought and other forms of collective adversity. Particular attention to the textual practices of rabbinic legal discourse in relation to its social function, and to the interplay of law and narrative. Prerequisite: reading fluency in ancient Hebrew.

NELC 703b / JDST 721b, Introduction to Judaism in the Ancient World: From Temple to Talmud  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.

NELC 768b, Sasanian Seminar  Kevin Van Bladel
This is an intensive introduction to the primary sources for the study of the Sasanian Persian kingdom (third–seventh century C.E.) and the state of research on the topic.

NELC 829b, History of the Arabic Language  Kevin Van Bladel
The course covers the development of the Arabic language from the earliest epigraphic evidence through the formation of the Classical ‘Arabiyya and further, to Middle Arabic and Neo-Arabic. Readings of textual specimens and survey of secondary literature.

PERS 500a, Elementary Persian I  Farkhondeh Shayesteh
A two-term introduction to modern Persian with emphasis on all four language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The objective is to allow students to develop the foundational knowledge necessary for further language study. Designed for nonnative speakers.

PERS 501b, Elementary Persian II  Farkhondeh Shayesteh
A two-term introduction to modern Persian with emphasis on all four language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The objective is to allow students to develop the foundational knowledge necessary for further language study. Designed for nonnative speakers.

PERS 502a, Intermediate Persian I  Farkhondeh Shayesteh
This two-term course is a continuation of PERS 501 with emphasis on expanding vocabulary and understanding of more complex grammatical forms and syntax. Designed for nonnative speakers. Prerequisite: PERS 501 or permission of the instructor.

PERS 503b, Intermediate Persian II  Farkhondeh Shayesteh
This two-term course is a continuation of PERS 501 with emphasis on expanding vocabulary and understanding of more complex grammatical forms and syntax. Designed for nonnative speakers. Prerequisite: PERS 501 or permission of the instructor.

PERS 561b, Persian Culture and Media  Farkhondeh Shayesteh
Advanced study of Persian grammar, vocabulary, and culture through the use of authentic Persian media. Examination of daily media reports on cultural, political, historical, and sporting events in Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and other Persian-speaking regions. Designed for nonnative speakers. Prerequisite: PERS 140 or permission of instructor.