MODERN MIDDLE EAST STUDIES (MMES)

MMES 102b / HIST 381b / NELC 102b / SOCY 102b, Introduction to the Middle East  Jonathan Wytzten
Introduction to the history, politics, societies, and cultures of the Middle East. Topics and themes include geopolitics, environment, state formation, roles of Judaism/Christianity/Islam, empire&colonialism, nationalism, regional & global wars, Palestine-Israel conflict, US and other Great Power intervention.  HU, SO

MMES 121a / PLSC 121a, International Relations of the Middle East  Nicholas Lotito
This course explores the multiple causes of insecurity in the Middle East and North Africa, a region of paramount geostrategic interest, whose populations have suffered from armed conflicts both within and across national borders. The first half of the course interrogates traditional security concepts like war, terrorism, and revolution, as well as the political, economic, and social contexts which give rise to these phenomena. The course then turns to foreign policy analysis in case studies of the region’s major states. Previous coursework in international relations and/or Middle East politics or history recommended but not required.  SO

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 161a / HEBR 162a / JDST 319a, 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 162b / HEBR 169b / JDST 405b / LING 165b, Languages in Dialogue: Hebrew and Arabic  Dina Roginsky
Hebrew and Arabic are closely related as sister Semitic languages. They have a great degree of grammatical, morphological, and lexical similarity. Historically, Hebrew and Arabic have been in cultural contact, especially in medieval Spain, the Middle East, and North Africa – as evidenced by the Judeo-Arabic languages. In modern Israel, Arabic is the native tongue of about 20% of its population, yet lack of communication exists today between Hebrew speakers and Arabic speakers for mainly political reasons. This L5 advanced Hebrew class explores cultural and linguistic contacts between the two languages and relationships between the communities, including both Jewish and non-Jewish Arabic speakers and Hebrew speakers. Additionally, students benefit from regular meetings with a parallel L5 Arabic class which discusses similar topics. The shared meetings enable Hebrew learners and Arabic learners to participate together in one class, to promote social interaction based on mutual respect and to focus on cultural and linguistic aspects of the material. Prerequisites: L4 Hebrew or equivalent (placement test).  L5, HU, TR, RP

* MMES 167b / HEBR 164b / JDST 477b, Biblical to Modern Hebrew for Reading Knowledge  Dina Roginsky
Instruction in the linguistic needs of students who have reading knowledge of Biblical Hebrew but cannot read or converse in Modern Hebrew. Concentration on reading comprehension of Modern Hebrew for research purposes, particularly scholarly texts tailored to students’ areas of interest. Two years of Biblical or Modern Hebrew studies, or permission of the instructor.  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 171b / NELC 402b, The Islamic Near East from Muhammad to the Mongol Invasion  Kevin van Bladel
The shaping of society and polity from the rise of Islam to the Mongol conquest of Baghdad in 1258. The origins of Islamic society; conquests and social and political assimilation under the Umayyads and Abbasids; the changing nature of political legitimacy and sovereignty under the caliphate; provincial decentralization and new sources of social and religious power.  HU

* MMES 172a / ARBC 178a, Yemeni Literature & Culture  Muhammad Aziz
This seminar introduces students to a variety of Yemeni novels, short stories, poetry, history, movies, songs, and culture. We delve deeply into the major Arabic literary styles, in their forms of poetry, prose, movies, and series. A general sense of the transitional period between past and present in the modern era. Students are expected to read the material at home and prepare for class discussions. Students grasp some sense of Yemeni history as well as literature in general. Prerequisite: ARBC 151.  L5
* MMES 177b / ARBC 171b / ARBC 527b / LITR 267b / NELC 237b / NELC 598b, Hunger in Eden: Mohamed Choukri's Narratives
  Jonas Elbousty
  A survey of the work of Mohamed Choukri, one of the most prominent Moroccan, if not Arab, writers to have shaped the modern Arabic literary canon. His influence has been instrumental in forming a generation of writers and enthusiastic readers, who fervently cherish his narratives. Students dive deeply into Choukri's narratives, analyzing them with an eye toward their cultural and political importance. The class looks to Choukri's amazing life story to reveal the roots of his passion for writing and explores the culture of the time and places about which he writes. Through his narratives, students better understand the political environment within which they were composed and the importance of Choukri's work to today's reader regarding current debates over Arab identity. This class surveys the entirety of his work, contextualizing within the sphere of Arabic novelistic tradition. Prerequisite: ARBC 151, L4 or equivalent, or permission from the of instructor. 1.5

* MMES 179a / NELC 169a / PERS 180a, Reading Persian Texts
  Farkhondeh Shayesteh
  Students are presented with opportunities to enhance their knowledge of Persian, with primary focus on reading skills. The course involves reading, analyzing, and in-class discussion of assigned materials in the target language. Authentic reading excerpts from history, art, philosophy, and literature, as well as art history materials from medieval to modern times are used. This course is taught in Persian. Prerequisite: L4 and instructor permission. 1.5

MMES 21b / ENGL 191b / HUMS 206b / LITR 318b / NELC 201b, The Arabian Nights, Then and Now
  Robyn Creswell
  Exploration of Arabian Nights, a classic of world literature. Topics include antecedents, themes and later prose, and graphic and film adaptations. HU

* MMES 261b / AFST 414b / FREN 414b / LITR 269b, Afterlives of Algeria's Revolution
  Jill Jarvis
  The Algerian War for Independence from France was the longest and most violent decolonizing war of the 20th century. This war and its aftermath transformed political, social, intellectual, and artistic life on both sides of the Mediterranean—and it became a model for other decolonizing and civil rights movements across the world. Memory of this war continues to shape current debates in Europe and North Africa about state violence, terrorism, racism, censorship, immigration, feminism, human rights, and justice. Through study of fiction, film, testimonies, graphic novels, and theater, this seminar charts the war’s surprising and enduring legacies. Films may include Pontecorvo’s The Battle of Algiers, Hanекe’s Caché, and Paniyel’s Octobre à Paris. Literary works by Djebar, Camus, Sebbar, Etcherelli, Dib, Cixous, Kateb, Fanon, De Beauvoir, Mechakra. The course is conducted in French. If you have any questions about your French ability, contact the instructor. 1.5, HU

* MMES 271a / GLBL 271a, Middle East Politics
  Emma Sky
  Exploration of the international politics of the Middle East through a framework of analysis that is partly historical and partly thematic. How the international system, as well as social structures and political economy, shape state behavior. Consideration of Arab nationalism; Islamism; the impact of oil; Cold War politics; conflicts; liberalization; the Arab-spring, and the rise of the Islamic State. SO

MMES 290a / PLSC 435a / RLST 290a, Islam Today: Jihad and Fundamentalism
  Frank Griffel
  Introduction to modern Islam, including some historical background. Case studies of important countries in the contemporary Muslim world, such as Egypt, Iran, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia. Islam as a reactive force to Western colonialism; the ideals of Shari’a and jihad; violence and self-sacrifice; and Islam as a political ideology. HU

* MMES 300a / HIST 398Ja / RSEE 329a / RUSS 329a, Introduction to Modern Central Asia
  Claire Roosien
  An overview of the history of modern Central Asia—modern-day Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China. This course shows Central Asia to be a pivotal participant in some of the major global issues of the 20th and 21st centuries, from environmental degradation and Cold War, to women's emancipation and postcolonial nation-building, to religion and the rise of mass society. It also includes an overview of the region's longer history, of the conquests by the Russian and Chinese empires, the rise of Islamic modernist reform movements, the Bolshevik victory, World War II, the perestroika, and the projects of post-Soviet nation-building. Readings in history are supplemented by such primary sources as novels and poetry, films and songs, government decrees, travelogues, courtly chronicles, and the periodical press. All readings and discussions in English. HU

* MMES 303a / HIST 311Ja, Social Movements in the Modern Middle East and North Africa
  Hamzah Baig
  How have social movements and grassroots networks shaped politics, culture, and day-to-day realities in the contemporary Middle East and North Africa (MENA)? This seminar addresses such driving questions by way of readings and discussion on a range of movements and ideological currents in the MENA region from the late nineteenth century to present, including labor, socialism, feminism, Islamism, Third Worldism, and nationalism in its various forms. Moving between local, national, regional, and global perspectives, we explore the social and political contexts in which these movements developed; the various ways in which they negotiated structures of power; and their impact on culture, sociality, and politics. WR, HU

* MMES 311a / FILM 326a / RLST 256a, Social Change in Middle East Cinemas
  Staff
  This course invites students to explore how modern aesthetic forms such as cinemas from the Middle East and North Africa critique rigid social realities and imagine modern social experiences, thereby pushing boundaries towards social change. By chronologically examining Arabic, Turkish, Hebrew, and Persian films in different historical periods, we will explore how film as art reveals the nature of social myth and the role public intellectuals play in perpetuating or challenging that myth. In addition to weekly film screenings (with English subtitles), course material includes short readings on the modern history of the region, history of film production, and analysis of film as art. By the end of this course, students will learn about the history of filmmaking in the MENA region, the different questions (religion,
class, language, gender, ethnicity, race, nationalism and colonialism) influencing the production and reception of film, the challenges facing the filmmaker as an artist and producer and more importantly how these challenges impact the imagination of social change on the screen.

* MMES 318a / GLBL 218a / PLSC 193a, Security in North Africa and the Middle East

This course explores the debates about regional security in North Africa and the Middle East, mainly from a critical security perspective. Traditional and non-traditional security challenges are discussed throughout the semester. The state is presented as much a subject of security as a subject of insecurity for individuals and groups of people. This is to say that security here is not state-centered. North Africa and the Middle East are mostly dealt with separately, with very few exceptions.

* MMES 322b / HIST 324jb / SOCY 320b, World War I and the Making of the Modern Middle East

Jonathan Wyrtzen

WWI fundamentally transformed the Middle East, unmaking the Ottoman Empire and unleashing competition among colonial and local actors to reshape region's political order that lasted well into the 1930s. This seminar examines what can be called the “Long Great War” in the Middle East. The first part examines the road to World War I and the course of the war in the Middle Eastern theater’s principle fronts (Caucasus, Mesopotamia, Sinai/Syria, North Africa, Dardanelles). We then look at the period immediately following the October 1918 Mudros Armistice (that technically ended Allied/Ottoman hostilities). During this violent “Wilsonian Moment” in the Middle East, local aspirations for self-determination were articulated, reformulated, and argued locally and internationally while colonial actors—British, French, Italian, and Spanish—mobilized competing state-building projects. The last section of the course looks at the climax points of conflict between these competing projects in the mid to late 1920s—including the Great Syrian Revolt, the Rif War, Kurdish Revolts, Saudi wars of consolidation, and the Italo-Samsi war in Libya—and how present-day political units were finally negotiated. We conclude discussing how the Long Great War continues to echo and resonate in contemporary upheaval in the Middle East a century later.

HU, SO

* MMES 360a / AFST 455a / FREN 442a, North African French Poetry

Thomas Connolly

Introduction to North African poetry composed in French during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Works explored within the broader context of metropolitan French, Arabic, and Berber cultures; juxtaposition with other modes of expression including oral poetry, painting, dance, music, the Internet, and film. The literary, aesthetic, political, religious, and philosophical significance of poetic discourse. L5, HU

* MMES 365a / HEBR 170a / JDST 421a, Contemporary Israeli Art (1948 until today)

Orit Yeret

An advanced level Modern Hebrew course which focuses on contemporary Israeli art, from 1948 until today. The course aims to expand student's knowledge of the Hebrew language and refine their writing, reading, speaking, and listening skills through the exposure to authentic materials in the field of the visual arts. Students engage with diverse Israeli visual art productions—such as: paintings, drawings, sculpture, photography, new media etc.—and employ critical thinking to discuss and analyze a variety of art pieces. Prerequisite: Completion of L4 (Modern Hebrew) or a placement exam. L5, RU

* MMES 399a / ANTH 441a / MMES 430a / WGSS 430a, Gender and Citizenship in the Middle East

Eda Pepi

Examination of the gendered and sexual dimensions of war, conflict, and partition, and the codification of modern citizenship in the Middle East—from Syria, to the Middle East conflict, to Western Sahara, among others—this course presents ethnographic, historical, and literary scholarship that theorizes the role of kinship and citizenship in narratives of the nation and sovereignty.

SO

* MMES 402a / AFST 443a / FREN 442a / LITR 484a, Decolonizing Memory: Africa & the Politics of Testimony

Jill Jarvis

This seminar explores the politics and poetics of memory in a time of unfinished decolonization. It also provides students with a working introduction to anticolonial, postcolonial, and decolonial critique. Together we bring key works on the topics of state violence, trauma, and testimony into contact with literary works and films by artists of the former French and British empires in Africa. Reading literary and theoretical works together permits us to investigate archival silences and begin to chart a future for the critical study of colonial violence and its enduring effects. Literary readings may include works by Djebar, Rahmani, Ouologuem, Sebbar, Diop, Head, Krog. Films by Djebar, Leuvrey, Sembène, and Sissako. Theoretical readings may include works by Arendt, Azoulay, Césaire, Derrida, Fanon, Mbembe, Ngugi, Spivak, and Trouillot. WR, HU

* MMES 430a / ANTH 441a / MMES 399a / WGSS 430a, Gender and Citizenship in the Middle East

Eda Pepi

This seminar explores the gendered and ethnic-based social processes and forms of power that citizenship, statelessness, and migration crises fuel, and are fueled by, in the Middle East and North Africa. The history of gender and citizenship in the region is imbricated in ethnicsexual and orientalist colonial legacies that articulate a racialized problematic of “modernity.” Part of these legacies involve obscuring the role that women, sexual minorities, and gender, more broadly, have played in framing citizenship and statehood in the Middle East in global, regional, and local imaginations not only as border policing and legal doctrine, but as signifier—and reifier—of culture, race, and ethnicity. By examining the gendered and sexual dimensions of war, conflict, and partition, and the formation of modern citizenship in the Middle East, the seminar presents ethnographic, historical, literary and visual scholarship that theorizes the role of kinship and citizenship in gendered and racialized narratives of the nation and political sovereignty.

SO

* MMES 490a / NELC 490a / RLST 445a, Introduction to Arabic and Islamic Studies

Frank Griffel

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.