

MODERN MIDDLE EAST STUDIES

Director of undergraduate studies: Travis Zadeh, Rm. 308, 451 College St., 432-6532, travis.zadeh@yale.edu
(travis.zadeh@yale.edu); www.yale.edu/macmillan/cmcs

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, while developing expertise in any of the major languages associated with the region, namely Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, and Turkish. Courses are drawn from departments in the humanities and social sciences, including Anthropology, History, History of Art, Judaic Studies, Political Science, Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Religious Studies, and Sociology. The Modern Middle East Studies major gives students the analytical and linguistic skills necessary to master the complex issues of the Middle East and serves as excellent preparation for graduate study or for professional careers in which an understanding of that region is essential.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

The major allows students to develop highly individualized courses of study, tailored to their own academic, intellectual, and linguistic interests. There are no prerequisites. Twelve term courses are required for the major, including one course at the L5 level in a Middle Eastern language and two survey courses on the modern period, taken at the introductory level. Beyond those requirements, students take eight distribution courses focusing on any aspect of the culture, thought, history, religion, politics, and society of the region. These eight distribution courses must be spread geographically and temporally and include two courses from two different regions or countries within the Middle East, two courses from different departments or programs, and two that focus substantially on the period before 1750. These courses must draw from distinct methodological or disciplinary approaches, and they must include at least two advanced seminars. The proposed course of study requires the approval of the director of undergraduate studies.

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. Each student selects a faculty adviser with competence in the appropriate language. A prospectus and outline signed by the adviser must be submitted to the DUS 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 further information. Alternatively, under supervision of the instructor, 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

Survey requirement 2 intro survey courses on the Middle East, focusing on the modern period

Distribution requirement 2 courses on Middle Eastern regions or countries; 2 courses from two different departments or programs; 2 courses with focus on pre-1750; and 2 adv seminars

Language requirement 1 course at L5 level or above in a Middle East language

Substitution permitted With DUS approval, up to 2 language courses below L5 in Modern Middle East language may count toward distrib requirement

Senior requirement One term senior essay (MMES 491), two term senior essay (MMES 492, 493), or essay written in additional seminar

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*), Christine Hayes (*Religious Studies*), Hannan Hever (*Comparative Literature*), Marcia Inhorn (*Anthropology*), Anthony Kronman (*Law School*), Joseph Manning (*Classics, History*), Ivan Marcus (*History*), Alan Mikhail (*History*), A. Mushfiq Mobarak (*School of Management*), Robert Nelson (*History of Art*), Kishwar Rizvi (*History of Art*), Maurice Samuels (*French*), Lamin Sanneh (*Divinity School*), Shawkat Toorawa (*Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations*), Harvey Weiss (*Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations*)

Associate Professors Zareena Grewal (*American Studies*), Kaveh Khoshnood (*Public Health*), Mark Lazenby (*School of Nursing*), Eliyahu Stern (*Religious Studies*), Jonathan Wrytzen (*Sociology*), Travis Zadeh (*Religious Studies*)

Assistant Professors Rosie Bsheer (*History*), Thomas Connolly (*French*), Robyn Creswell (*Comparative Literature*), Narges Erami (*Anthropology*), Jill Jarvis (*French*)

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

Lecturers Karla Britton (*Architecture*), Karen Foster (*History of Art*), Emma Sky (*Global Affairs*)

Senior Lecturer II Shiri Goren

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

Lector Orit Yeret

Foundational Courses

MODERN THOUGHT

* **MMES 105a / AFST 372a / HIST 375Ja / SOCY 372a, Comparative Nationalism in North Africa and the Middle East** Jonathan Wyrzten

The rise of nationalism in the Maghreb (or Arab West) and Mashriq (or Arab East). Introduction to major debates about nationalism; the influence of transnational (pan-Islamic and pan-Arab) ideologies, ethnicity, gender, and religion. Case studies include Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf monarchies, Morocco, Western Sahara, Algeria, and Berber and Kurdish movements. SO

* **MMES 176b / PERS 161b, Cinema of Iran, Past and Present** Farkhondeh Shayesteh

A thematic survey of Iranian cinema, past and present. Prominent Iranian directors such as Kiarostami, Beyzai, Panahi, Banietemad, and Farhadi are explored through discussion and in-class viewing of clips from assigned films. Students enhance their awareness of Persian culture through Iranian films while advancing their language skills. L4 and instructor permission. L5

MMES 191b / RLST 100b, Intro to World Religions Gerhard Böwering

HU

CLASSICAL THOUGHT

MMES 138b / NELC 127b / RLST 165b, Introduction to the Quran Travis Zadeh

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 139a / HIST 378Ja / RLST 427a, Islam, Conquest, and Conversion** Travis Zadeh

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 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

THE MODERN MIDDLE EAST

* **MMES 256a / JDST 296a / LITR 443a, State and Religion in Israel** Hannan Hever and Yair Asulin

The seminar focuses on the complex relations between Judaism practiced in Israel and the state's social makeup. Judaism plays a political and social role in the public sphere of the State of Israel, which contains alongside religion institutions also secularism and post-secularism. Institutional religions function as part of the structure of social conflicts in Israel as they collide with other, social institutions such as the education system or the army, as well as the literary institution. Through readings in Israeli poetry and fiction we study political theology of Jewish sovereignty as a hermeneutical code to understanding Israeli literature as it represents chasms and contacts within Israeli society. Readings for the seminar include essays that enable understanding Hebrew literature on the background of Zionist and anti-Zionist thought and politics. HU

Elective Courses

MMES 121a / PLSC 121a, International Security in 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 126a / ARCH 271a / HSAR 266a / SAST 266a, Introduction to 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. Field trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. HU

MMES 144a / HIST 346a, The Making of Modern Iran Abbas Amanat

The political, socioreligious, 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

* **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 156b / HEBR 161b / JDST 407b, 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; modern popular music and 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. Conducted in Hebrew. Prerequisite: HEBR 140 or equivalent. L5

* **MMES 157b / JDST 306b / NELC 157b, 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. Theories of war and peace, migration, nationalism, and gender. Authors include Yehoshua, Grossman, Matalon, Castel-Bloom, and Kashua. No knowledge of Hebrew required. HU TR

* **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, on-line 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 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 246a / NELC 239a / RLST 362a / WGSS 247a, Women and Gender in Islam** Sara Omar

This course traces the historical roots of contemporary Muslim discourses over issues pertaining to women and gender in the Middle East. We examine how perceptions of women and gender have been shaped and represented vis-à-vis changing and competing discourses. This course explores cross-cultural, oral, theological, exegetical, historical, and legal debates over a number of divisive issues. Topics include marriage and slavery, the history and politics of veiling, debates over female-led prayer, illicit sexual intercourse, same-sex intercourse and sexual practices, and classical perceptions of gendered hierarchies. We also examine early Islamic texts as sites of cultural production, where laws were modified and negotiated through social contexts and communal attitudes. Furthermore, throughout the course, we reflect on the following questions: How have Muslim scholars transformed some of the vague wording of the Quran into concrete technical legal terms, meaning specific acts with designated legal punishments? In what ways do early Muslims' views on gender and sexuality mirror their cultural fabric and social contexts? And, how have contemporary Muslims attempted to reinterpret their scriptural sources and reform their cherished intellectual heritage? SO

* **MMES 261a / AFST 414a / FREN 414a / LITR 269, 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*, Haneke's *Caché*, and Panijel's *Octobre à Paris*. Literary works by Djebbar, 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. L5, HU

* **MMES 310b / ANTH 311b, Anthropological Theory and the Post Colonial Encounter** Sarah LeBaron von Baeyer

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 343a / EP&E 273a / RLST 291a / SOCY 343a, Sociology of Islam** Jonathan Wyrzten

Social scientific studies of Islam; introduction to sociology of religion and its application to Islam; the utility of "Islam" and "Muslim" as analytical categories; debates about definitions of Islam and religion in anthropology and religious studies; comparative sociological studies both within Islam and contrasting Islam with other religions. SO

* **MMES 345a / HIST 342Ja, The Middle East and the West: A Cultural Encounter** Abbas Amanat

Cultural dialogues and confrontation between the modern Middle East and the West (Europe and North America) and their significance for our time. Western images of the Orient and discourse of Orientalism, Middle East as a modern construct, Muslim knowledge of Western modernity, impact of colonialism and territorial conflicts, and cultural roots of Islamic Jihadism and nonstate terrorist entities. WR, HU

* **MMES 360b / AFST 425b / FREN 425b, 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 364a / PLSC 396a, Politics of the Contemporary Middle East Elizabeth Nugent

This course is an overview of contemporary politics of the Middle East, and is organized thematically and (more or less) chronologically. We examine prominent explanations for the democratic deficit in the Middle East, and challenge the notion that the region is completely devoid of competitive and meaningful politics. We also explore the ways in which a variety of factors—including foreign intervention, persistent authoritarianism, oil, and Islam, among others—has affected domestic politics. We consider different aspects of domestic politics, including redistribution, gender politics, and public opinion. We end the course by building on what we learned to make sense of the 2010-2011 'Arab Spring' uprisings, in an effort to understand whether these developments mark change or continuity. SO

* **MMES 378a / PLSC 363a, Turkish Politics** Aysen Candas

Issues in contemporary Turkish politics, particularly continuity and change in historical institutional legacies, with specific focus on internal contradictions between these legacies (Ottomanism, Kemalism, secular versus religious nationalism, and Islamism). Major issues include Turkey's "divided society" concerning the ends of state; secularism versus Islamism; top down reformism versus majoritarianism; and minority rights. SO

* **MMES 430b / ANTH 441b / MMES 399 / WGSS 430b, 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 465a / ARBC 165a, Arabic Seminar: Early Adab** Kevin Van Bladel

Study and interpretation of classical Arabic texts for advanced students. The subtitle of this course changes depending on the materials covered. This term the course focuses on "Early Adab." Prerequisite: ARBC 146, 151, or permission of instructor. May be repeated for credit.

Directed Study and Senior Essay Courses* **MMES 471a and MMES 472b, Independent Directed Study** Travis Zadeh

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** Travis Zadeh

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 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.

MMES 492a and MMES 493b, The Yearlong Senior Essay Travis Zadeh

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 only on completion of MMES 493.