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), 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), Andrew March (Political Science), A. Mushfiq Mobarak (School of Management), Kishwar Rizvi (History of Art), Eliyahu Stern (Religious Studies)

Assistant Professors Rosie Bsheer (History), Thomas Connolly (French), Robyn Creswell (Comparative Literature), Narges Erami (Anthropology), Adria Lawrence (Political Science), Mark Lazenby (School of Nursing), Julia Stephens (History), Jonathan Wyrzten (Sociology)

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

Lecturers Adel Allouche (History), Karla Britton (Architecture), Karen Foster (History of Art), Saghar Sadeghian (Council on Middle East Studies), Eric van Lit (Council on Middle East Studies)

Senior Lector II Ayala Dvoretsky

Senior Lectors Sarab Al Ani, Muhammad Aziz, Jonas Elbousty, Shiri Goren, Dina Roginsky, Farkhondeh Shayeesteh

Lector Etem Erol

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, and Religious Studies. 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 lang

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

MODERN THOUGHT
* MMES 216a / HEBR 156a / JDST 405a, Dynamics of Israeli Culture  Shiri Goren
  Controversies in Israeli society as revealed in novels, films, poetry, newspaper articles, Web sites, art, advertisements, and television shows. Themes include migration and the construction of the Sabra character; ethnicity and race; the emergence of the Mizrahi voice; women in Israeli society; private and collective memory; the minority discourse of the Druze and Russian Jews; and Israeli masculinity and queer culture. Conducted in Hebrew. Papers may be written in English or Hebrew. Prerequisite: HEBR 140 or permission of instructor. L5, HU RP

* MMES 262a / ARBC 162a, Modern Arabic Political Thought  Sarah Al Ani
  Works by influential Arab thinkers, leaders, and politicians who represent liberal nationalism, Arab nationalism, Islamism, and critiques of contemporary Arab society. Ways in which the authors use language both to portray their beliefs and to shape new social concepts in the Arab world. Prerequisite: ARBC 151 or equivalent, or with permission of the instructor.

MMES 346b / HIST 344b, Making of the Modern Middle East  Rosie Bsheer
  Introduction to narratives and debates in the history of the Middle East from the mid-eighteenth century to the present. Local, regional, and global events and processes; political, social, cultural, and intellectual realities. Readings from the fields of history, anthropology, politics, and literature.

* MMES 377b / EP&E 249b / PLSC 377b / RLST 288b, 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

CLASSICAL THOUGHT
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 193b / RLST 155b, 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 235b / JDST 235b / 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 267a / JDST 267a, Jews of the Medieval Islamic World  Liran Yadgar
  A survey of the religious, social, and cultural encounters between Judaism and Islam in the Middle Ages. Topics include the legal position of Jews under Islam; the social structure and relations in everyday life between the two communities; the representation of Jews in the Qur'an and later Islamic sources; and readings in Jewish poetry and fiction written under the influence of Muslim culture. HU

THE MODERN MIDDLE EAST
MMES 102a / NELC 102a, Introduction to the Middle East  Benjamin Foster
  Introduction to the history and cultures of the Middle East from the rise of Islam to the present, including the Arab world, Iran, Turkey, and Israel. Emphasis on factors important for understanding the Middle East today. HU

* MMES 181b / AFST 389b / GLBL 186b / PLSC 389b, Middle East Exceptionalism  Adria Lawrence
  The Middle East and North Africa in comparative perspective. Evaluation of claims that the region’s states are exceptionally violent, authoritarian, or religious. Themes include gender, Islam, nation and state formation, oil wealth, terrorism, and war. SO

* MMES 231a / RLST 231a, Reason and Revelation in Islam  Lambertus van Lit
  Exploration of the many dimensions of Islamic discussions on reason and revelation, mostly through primary sources. How modern science and Enlightenment have been received in the Muslim world. The fundamental building blocks of classical Islam concerning reason and revelation. How some of the greatest minds of Islam (c. 800–1300 C.E.) have used these building blocks. WR, HU
MMES 28b / AFST 37b / GLBL 36b / SOCY 33b, Imperialism, Insurgency, and State Building in the Middle East and North Africa  Jonathan Wyrtenz
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 29b / AFST 48b / SOCY 32b, Islamic Social Movements  Jonathan Wyrtenz
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 nonmilitant movements; transnational dimensions of Islamic activism. Case studies include the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas, Hizbollah, Al-Qaeda, Gulem, Al-Adl wa-Ihsann, Islamic State, and others.  SO

* MMES 31a / HIST 31a / SAST 225a, Political Islam, Past and Present  Julia Stephens
A historical introduction to Islamic law and debates in Islamic political thought from the Prophet to the Arab Spring. Different interpretations of Islamic law, the formation of Muslim empires, European colonialism, nationalist movements, jihad, and the role of religion in contemporary politics in the Middle East, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Europe, and the United States.  HU

Elective Courses

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 150b / 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; Mizrahí 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 159a / HEBR 159a / JDST 409a, Conversational Hebrew: Israeli Media  Shiri Goren
An advanced Hebrew course for students interested in practicing and enhancing conversational skills. Focus on listening comprehension and on various forms of discussion, including practical situations, online interactions, and content analysis. Prerequisite: HEBR 140 or permission of instructor.  L5 RP

MMES 160a / JDST 353a / NELC 155a, 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.  HU

* MMES 165b / HEBR 164b / JDST 417b, 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.  L5 RP

* MMES 172b / HIST 384b / 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 173b / HIST 398b / 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 / RLST 155b, 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 caliphates and during the rule of regional dynasties. HU

MMES 197a / HIST 216a / JDST 322a / RLST 193a, Zionism  Shaun Halper
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 282b / AFST 373b / GLBL 362b / SOCY 339b, 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 nonmilitant movements; transnational dimensions of Islamic activism. Case studies include the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas, Hizbollah, Al-Qaeda, Gulen, Al-Adl wa-Ihsann, Islamic State, and others. SO

* MMES 310b / ANTH 311b, 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 311b / ER&M 327b / WGSS 327b, Constructing the Self: From Autobiography to Facebook  Geetanjali Chanda
Autobiography in its evolving form as literary genre, historical archive, and individual and community narrative in a changing geographical context. Women’s life stories from Afghanistan, China, Cambodia, Indonesia, India, Iran, Egypt, Jordan, and Vietnam illustrate the dialectic relationship between the global and the local. What the reading and writing of autobiographies reveal about oneself and one’s place in society; autobiography as a horizontal community formation. WR, HU

* MMES 312b / JDST 312b / LITR 196b, Hebrew Poetry in Muslim Spain  Peter Cole
Introduction to the Golden Age of Hebrew poetry in Muslim Andalusia from the tenth century through the twelfth. Major figures of the period and the cultural and philosophical questions they confronted. The Judeo-Arabic social context in which the poetry emerged; critical issues pertaining to the study and transmission of this literature. Readings from the works of several poets. Readings in translation. Additional readings in Hebrew available.

* MMES 320b / ANTH 320b / ARCG 320b / EVST 321b / NELC 320b, From Babylon to Bush  Harvey Weiss
Analysis of Mesopotamian transformations from the earliest agriculture villages to the earliest cities, states, and civilization, to the earliest empires, as well as the region-wide collapses that punctuated these developments. Forces that drove these uniquely early Mesopotamian developments. Essential archaeological questions, including why each transformation happened, developed, and evolved. The end of the Ottoman empire and the British (1917) and American (1991, 2003) invasions. HU, SO

* MMES 338b / HIST 338b / WGSS 338b, A Historical Approach to Gender Trouble in the Middle East  Saghari Sadeghian
Concepts of gender and sexuality in the Middle East, with emphasis on Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Consideration of women in harems, in society, and in politics to reevaluate facts and fictions on perceptions of beauty, sexuality, and power. Additional focus on more contemporary topics of homosexuality, transsexuality, and feminism. WR, HU

* MMES 339a / ER&M 332a / HIST 339Ja, Race, Religion, and Ethnicity in the Modern Middle East  Saghari Sadeghian
Concepts of citizenship and national identity in the Middle East with emphasis on Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan in the nineteen and twentieth centuries. Focus on racial, ethnic, and religious minorities; social and legal reforms; and human rights violations. WR, HU

MMES 341a / HIST 341a / SAST 235a, Political Islam, Past and Present  Julia Stephens
A historical introduction to Islamic law and debates in Islamic political thought from the Prophet to the Arab Spring. Different interpretations of Islamic law, the formation of Muslim empires, European colonialism, nationalist movements, jihad, and the role of religion in contemporary politics in the Middle East, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Europe, and the United States. HU

* MMES 383a, Gender, Religion, and Politics in Morocco  Meriem El Haitami
Survey of major socio-political events that have shaped Morocco’s modern era in relation to female religious activism, the emergence of contemporary female leadership, and the novel constructs of Islamist feminist expression. Nuanced perspective on women’s activism and challenges to the monolithic view of women’s experiences in the MENA region. WR, SO

* MMES 384b / WGSS 382b, Gender and Religious Authority in Moroccan Islam  Meriem El Haitami
Review of recent Moroccan history and the state’s domestic religious policies in the process of building national identity. Social, historical, and cultural approaches to understanding politicized modes of Islamic education and political formulations of religious authority. WR, HU, SO
* MMES 418a / JDST 339a / LITR 418a / RLST 203a, Sovereignty, Diaspora, and Nationality in 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 461a / HSAR 461a, Collecting  Kishwar Rizvi
Cultural, political, and art historical implications of collecting, a practice undertaken by individuals and institutions. The role of collecting in European and Middle Eastern contexts from the early modern period to the present, from imperial collections to national museums. Theoretical and historical analysis is coupled with visits to collections and museums on Yale’s campus.  WR, HU

Directed Study and Senior Essay Courses

* MMES 471a and MMES 472b, Independent Directed Study  Narges Erami
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  Narges Erami
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  Narges Erami
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.