NEAR EASTERN LANGUAGES AND CIVILIZATIONS

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The major in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations is a liberal arts major that gives students a sound competence in a Near Eastern language and a broad knowledge of the literatures, civilizations, history, and archaeology of the Near East. The major also provides essential preparation for graduate or professional work in which a knowledge of Near Eastern languages, history, and archaeology is required.

Depending on the student’s interests, the major is built around study of one or more Near Eastern languages, leading to a concentration in the ancient Near East (Mesopotamia, Egypt, or Syria-Palestine), in Hebrew language and literature, or in Arabic and Islamic studies.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

Twelve term courses in the department, or their equivalent, are required for the major, including the senior essay course. No more than six course credits from other departments may be applied toward this requirement. The course work includes at least two years of study of a Near Eastern language and no fewer than three courses in the history and civilizations of the Near East, at least one of which must be in the ancient and one in the Islamic Near East.

Areas of concentration

Students should develop coherent programs of study in one of three areas of concentration:

1. Ancient Near Eastern languages and civilizations, with emphasis on Mesopotamia, Egypt, or Syria-Palestine. Students interested in Mesopotamia take at least two years of Akkadian, as well as courses in the history and civilizations of the ancient Near East. Students interested in Egypt take at least two years of Egyptian, as well as courses in the history and civilizations of ancient Egypt. Students interested in Syria-Palestine take at least two years of biblical Hebrew, as well as courses in the history and civilizations of the ancient Near East.

2. Hebrew language and literature. Students take two years or more of Hebrew (ancient or modern, but in any case at least two years of one period of the language), and courses in Hebrew literature, the history and civilizations of the ancient Near East, and Near Eastern Judaism.

3. Arabic and Islamic studies. ARBC 120 is prerequisite for this area and counts as one term course toward the twelve required. Students take at least two years of Arabic beyond the prerequisite, and courses selected from Arabic literature, Arab civilization, Islamic religion, Near Eastern history, and Persian or Turkish language. Majors in this area of concentration are strongly advised to begin their language training as early as possible, and certainly not later than the sophomore year.

SENIOR REQUIREMENT

To derive full benefit from the major, students should acquire practical experience in using Near Eastern languages for research purposes. Therefore, all students in the major undertake a senior essay that involves substantial use of materials in one or more Near Eastern languages. The senior essay is a research paper of at least thirty pages prepared under the supervision of a departmental faculty member. It may be written under the rubric of NELC 492 and/or 493, or as an extended seminar paper in a departmental seminar course, in which case the instructor serves as the essay adviser. The topic and a prospectus signed by an adviser are to be submitted to the director of undergraduate studies by the end of the fourth week of classes in either term of the senior year. The particular subject matter and theoretical approach of the essay are decided by the student after consultation with the faculty adviser.

In cases in which students demonstrably need more time for an extensive essay, the senior essay may be approved as a yearlong course after consultation with the adviser and the director of undergraduate studies. Only those students who have advanced language skills and whose project is considered to be of exceptional promise are eligible. The requirements for the two-term essay are the same as for the one-term essay, except that the essay should be at least sixty pages.

ADVISING

All course schedules must be approved by the DUS.

Languages currently offered by the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations include Akkadian, Arabic, Egyptian, Hebrew, Persian, and Turkish. Students who take a foreign language during a term, year, or summer abroad must complete a departmental placement examination after they return to Yale; there are no exceptions to this requirement.

Well-qualified students who have acquired the requisite background in undergraduate courses may, with the permission of the instructor, the DUS, and the director of graduate studies, be admitted to graduate courses where no suitable undergraduate courses exist. In addition, courses from other departments and programs, as well as college seminars, will routinely be accepted for credit toward the major if they deal with Near Eastern topics, at the discretion of the faculty adviser and DUS.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

Prerequisites

Arabic and Islamic studies — ARBC 120; All other areas of concentration — none

Number of courses 12 term courses (incl prereq and senior essay)
Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

Distribution of courses  2 years of a Near Eastern lang; 3 courses in Near Eastern hist and civ, incl 1 in ancient and 1 in Islamic Near East; area of concentration as specified

Senior requirement  Senior essay using materials in 1 or more Near Eastern langs (in NELC 492 and/or 493 or in dept sem)

FAUCULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF NEAR EASTERN LANGUAGES AND CIVILIZATIONS

Professors  John Darnell, Benjamin Foster, Eckart Frahm, Dimitri Gutas, Bentley Layton (Emeritus), William Kelly Simpson (Emeritus), Shawkat Toorawa, Harvey Weiss

Lecturers  Karen Foster, Christina Geisen, Agnete Lassen, Miriam Muller, Kathryn Slanski

Senior Lector II  Shiri Goren

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

Lectors  Ozgen Felek, Orit Yeret

Near Eastern History and Civilizations

INTRODUCTORY AND SURVEY COURSES

NELC 102a / MMES 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

ANCDENT, CLASSICAL, AND MEDIEVAL

NELC 156a / HUMS 233a / LITR 178a / MMES 201a, Classics of the Arabic-Islamic World  Shawkat Toorawa
Survey of the literary tradition of the Arabic-Islamic world (West Asia, North Africa, and Muslim Spain), a textual conversation among diverse authors from late antiquity to the Mamluk period. Prose and poetry from the Qur'an to the Arabian Nights; attention to the interdependence of the works and their cultural setting, the agendas authors pursued, and the characters they portrayed.  HU

NELC 167a / WGSS 168a, Women in the Ancient World  Karen Foster
Introduction to the roles of women in ancient Egyptian, Mesopotamian, and Aegean society, as reflected in painting, sculpture, decorative arts, and literature, as well as in the earliest women’s writings known.  HU

NELC 191b / ARCG 218b, Ancient Ships and Maritime Archaeology  Karen Foster
Introduction to the world of the ancient mariners, with special attention to new discoveries and interpretations.  HU

* NELC 223a / EGYP 225a, Death and Burial in Ancient Egypt  Salima Ikram
Study of the funerary practices and beliefs of ancient Egypt from the Old Kingdom to the Graeco-Roman period, with a strong section devoted to animals. Topics include the process of mummification and the spells used during the operation; development of coffins, sarcophagi, amulets, canopic jars, canopic chests, shabtis, and other tomb furnishings; the evolution and decoration of the tomb, both royal and private; and religious rituals associated with funerals, the afterlife, and the mortuary cult.

* NELC 230a / CLCV 113a / HUMS 434a, Mesopotamia's Literary Legacy  Kathryn Slanski
Major works of ancient Near Eastern literature; relationships with literary traditions in the Hebrew Bible and ancient Greece. Readings include myths, epics, wisdom literature, love poetry, and humorous stories.  HU

* NELC 231b / JDST 235b / MMES 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
* NELC 234a / EGYP 226a, Food and Drink in Ancient Egypt  Salima Ikram
Investigation of how food helped shape the culture, economy, and history of ancient Egypt and the role of different foods in various social and religious settings. Consideration of the types of food eaten by various levels of society; the raw materials that could have been used as food; the domestication of plants and animals, farming techniques, irrigation, land use, and tools; and methods of cooking and preserving foods.

* NELC 250a, Assyria: The First Near Eastern Empire  Eckart Frahm
Survey of the history and culture of ancient Assyria, with a focus on its imperial phase in the first millennium B.C.E. Assyria’s aggressive foreign policy; the role of the military; Assyrian royal ideology, religion, literature, art, and court life; Assyria’s impact on the Bible; Assyria’s image in classical sources. Readings from primary sources in translation.  HU

MODERN

NELC 268a / ARCG 226a / EVST 226a, Global Environmental History  Harvey Weiss
The dynamic relationship between environmental and social forces from the Pleistocene glaciations to the Anthropocene present. Pleistocene extinctions; transition from hunting and gathering to agriculture; origins of cities, states, and civilization; adaptations and collapses of Old and New World civilizations in the face of climate disasters; the destruction and reconstruction of the New World by the Old. Focus on issues of adaptation, resilience, and sustainability, including forces that caused long-term societal change.  SO

NELC 317b / HIST 319b / MMES 314b, Islam in Asia  Valerie Hansen and Michael Rapoport
Examination of the three countries with the largest Muslim populations (Indonesia, India, and Pakistan) and China. Case studies on how the history of Islam in these countries helps us to understand present-day controversies regarding violence (jihad), gender, law (Shari’a), and governance (caliphate). Exploration of similarity and diversity in beliefs and practices.  HU

* NELC 399a / ANTH 478a / ARCG 399a / EVST 399a, 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.  SO

Languages and Literatures of the Ancient Near East

AKKADIAN

Students wishing to study Akkadian should consult the director of undergraduate studies.

EGYPTIAN

EGYP 110a, Introduction to Classical Hieroglyphic Egyptian I  Christina Geisen
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. Credit only on completion of EGYP 120.  L1 RP

EGYP 117a, Elementary Biblical Coptic I  Thomas Schmidt
The native Egyptian language in the Roman and Byzantine periods. Thorough grounding in grammar and vocabulary of the Sahidic dialect as a basis for reading biblical, monastic, and Gnostic texts. Credit only on completion of EGYP 127.  L1 RP

EGYP 120b, Introduction to Classical Hieroglyphic Egyptian II  Christina Geisen
Continuation of EGYP 110. Prerequisite: EGYP 110.  L2 RP

EGYP 127b, Elementary Biblical Coptic II  Thomas Schmidt
Continued study of the native Egyptian language in the Roman and Byzantine periods. Thorough grounding in grammar and vocabulary of the Sahidic dialect as a basis for reading biblical, monastic, and Gnostic texts. Prerequisite: EGYP 117.  L2 RP

* EGYP 131a, Intermediate Egyptian: Literary Texts  Christina Geisen
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 120.  L3 RP

* EGYP 177a, Egyptian Rock Inscriptions  John Darnell
Examination of Egyptian rock inscriptions (graffiti) from desert sites (Eastern and Western Deserts of Egypt and Nubia), as well as "parasitic" inscriptions from Egyptian and Nubian temples. Texts range in date from the Protodynastic through the New Kingdom, with some later material, and include an introduction to lapidary hieratic and the available tools for deciphering this cursive script.

* EGYP 225a / NELC 223a, Death and Burial in Ancient Egypt  Salima Ikram
Study of the funerary practices and beliefs of ancient Egypt from the Old Kingdom to the Graeco-Roman period, with a strong section devoted to animals. Topics include the process of mumification and the spells used during the operation; development of coffins, sarcophagi, amulets, canopic jars, canopic chests, shabtis, and other tomb furnishings; the evolution and decoration of the tomb, both royal and private; and religious rituals associated with funerals, the afterlife, and the mortuary cult.

* EGYP 226a / NELC 234a, Food and Drink in Ancient Egypt  Salima Ikram
Investigation of how food helped shape the culture, economy, and history of ancient Egypt and the role of different foods in various social and religious settings. Consideration of the types of food eaten by various levels of society; the raw materials that could have been used as food; the domestication of plants and animals, farming techniques, irrigation, land use, and tools; and methods of cooking and preserving foods.
used as food; the domestication of plants and animals, farming techniques, irrigation, land use, and tools; and methods of cooking and preserving foods.

* EGYP 227b, Ancient Egyptian Hieratic Texts  Christina Geisen
Introduction to the Hieratic script, used primarily for everyday documents. Study of Old and Late Egyptian, the other major language phases beside the classic Middle Egyptian. Prerequisite: EGYP 120.

SYRIAC
Students wishing to study Syriac should consult the director of undergraduate studies.

Hebrew Language and Literature

HEBR 110a, Elementary Modern Hebrew I  Staff
Introduction to the language of contemporary Israel, both spoken and written. Fundamentals of grammar; extensive practice in speaking, reading, and writing under the guidance of a native speaker. Credit only on completion of HEBR 120.  L1  RP  1½ Course cr

HEBR 120b, Elementary Modern Hebrew II  Orit Yeret
Continuation of HEBR 110. Introduction to the language of contemporary Israel, both spoken and written. Fundamentals of grammar; extensive practice in speaking, reading, and writing under the guidance of a native speaker. Prerequisite: HEBR 110 or equivalent.  L2  RP  1½ Course cr

* HEBR 130a, Intermediate Modern Hebrew I  Staff
Review and continuation of grammatical study, leading to a deeper understanding of style and usage. Focus on selected readings and on writing, comprehension, and speaking skills. Prerequisite: HEBR 120 or equivalent.  L3  RP

* HEBR 137a, Intermediate Biblical Hebrew I  Matthew Glassman
Review and continuation of grammatical study leading to a deeper comprehension of biblical Hebrew style. Focus on extended reading of biblical narrative, poetry, prophecy, and Wisdom texts. Prerequisite: HEBR 127 or equivalent.  L3  RP

HEBR 140b, Intermediate Modern Hebrew II  Dina Roginsky
Continuation of HEBR 130. Review and continuation of grammatical study leading to a deeper comprehension of style and usage. Focus on selected readings and on writing, comprehension, and speaking skills. Prerequisite: HEBR 130 or equivalent.  L4  RP

* HEBR 147a or b, Intermediate Biblical Hebrew II  Staff
Continuation of HEBR 137. Prerequisite: HEBR 137 or equivalent.  L4  RP

* HEBR 156b / JDST 405b / MMES 216b, 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

* HEBR 159a / JDST 409a / MMES 159a, 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

HEBR 161a / JDST 407a / MMES 156a, 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

* HEBR 164b / JDST 417b / MMES 167b, 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

Arabic and Islamic Studies

ARABIC

ARBC 110a, Elementary Modern Standard Arabic I  Staff
Development of a basic knowledge of Modern Standard Arabic. Emphasis on grammatical analysis, vocabulary acquisition, and the growth of skills in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Credit only on completion of ARBC 120.  L1  RP  1½ Course cr

ARBC 120b, Elementary Modern Standard Arabic II  Staff
Continuation of ARBC 110. Prerequisite: ARBC 110 or requisite score on a placement test.  L2  RP  1½ Course cr
* ARBC 130a, Intermediate Modern Standard Arabic I  Muhammad Aziz
Intensive review of grammar; readings from contemporary and classical Arab authors with emphasis on serial reading of unvoweled
Arabic texts, prose composition, and formal conversation. Prerequisite: ARBC 120 or requisite score on a placement test.  L3  RP
1½ Course cr

ARBC 140b, Intermediate Modern Standard Arabic II  Muhammad Aziz
Continuation of ARBC 130. Prerequisite: ARBC 130 or requisite score on a placement test.  L4  RP 1½ Course cr

ARBC 146b, Intermediate Classical Arabic II  Staff
Continuation of ARBC 136. Prerequisite: ARBC 136 or permission of instructor. May be taken concurrently with ARBC 140 or 151.  L4  RP

* ARBC 150a, Advanced Modern Standard Arabic I  Jonas Elbousty
Further development of listening, writing, and speaking skills. For students who already have a substantial background in Modern
Standard Arabic. Prerequisite: ARBC 140 or requisite score on a placement test.  L5  RP

* ARBC 151b, Advanced Modern Standard Arabic II  Jonas Elbousty
Continuation of ARBC 150. Prerequisite: ARBC 150 or requisite score on a placement test.  L5  RP

* ARBC 165a or b / MMES 465a or b, Arabic Seminar  Staff
Study and interpretation of classical Arabic texts for advanced students. Prerequisite: ARBC 146, 151, or permission of instructor. May be
repeated for credit.  L5

* ARBC 168a / MMES 170a, Modern Arab Writers  Muhammad Aziz
Study of novels and poetry written by modern Arab writers. Such writers include Taha Hussein, Zaid Dammaj, Huda Barakat, Nizar
Qabbani, al-Maqalih, and Mostaghanimi. Prerequisite: ARBC 140 or permission of instructor.  L5

PERSIAN

PERS 110a, Elementary Persian I  Farkhondeh Shayesteh
Introduction to modern Persian, with emphasis on all four language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Credit only on
completion of PERS 120.  L1  RP 1½ Course cr

PERS 120b, Elementary Persian II  Farkhondeh Shayesteh
Continuation of PERS 110, with emphasis on all four language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Prerequisite: PERS 110 or
permission of instructor.  L2  RP 1½ Course cr

PERS 130a, Intermediate Persian I  Farkhondeh Shayesteh
Continued study of modern Turkish, with emphasis on advanced syntax, vocabulary acquisition, and the beginnings of free oral and
written expression. Prerequisite: PERS 120 or permission of instructor.  L3  RP  1½ Course cr

PERS 140b, Intermediate Persian II  Farkhondeh Shayesteh
Continuation of PERS 130, with emphasis on expanding vocabulary and understanding more complex grammatical forms and syntax.
Prerequisite: PERS 130 or permission of instructor.  L4  RP 1½ Course cr

* PERS 151b, 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.  L5

* PERS 161a / MMES 176a, 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

TURKISH

TKSH 110a, Elementary Modern Turkish I  Gül Deniz Demirel Aydemir
Integration of basic listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills through a variety of functional, meaningful, and contextual activities.
Students become active users of modern Turkish and gain a deeper understanding of Anatolian culture through lessons based on real-life
situations and authentic materials. Credit only on completion of TKSH 120.  L1  RP 1½ Course cr

TKSH 120b, Elementary Modern Turkish II  Staff
Continuation of TKSH 110. Prerequisite: TKSH 110 or permission of instructor.  L2  RP 1½ Course cr

TKSH 130a, Intermediate Turkish I  Israfil Boyaci
Continued study of modern Turkish, with emphasis on advanced syntax, vocabulary acquisition, and the beginnings of free oral and
written expression. Prerequisite: TKSH 120 or permission of instructor.  L3  RP

TKSH 140b, Intermediate Turkish II  Staff
Continuation of TKSH 130. Prerequisite: TKSH 130.  L4  RP
TKSH 151b, Advanced Turkish II  Staff  
Continuation of TKSH 150. An advanced language course focused on improving students' reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills in modern Turkish. Extensive study of vocabulary and idiomatic expressions. Readings from genres including academic articles, critical essays, literature, newspaper articles, and formal business writing. Screening of films, documentaries, and news broadcasts. Prerequisite: TKSH 150.  L5 RP

Courses for Majors

* NELC 471a and NELC 472b, Directed Reading and Research  Staff  
For students who wish to pursue a topic or body of texts not available in the department's regular curriculum. Approval of the plan of study by both the director of undergraduate studies and a member of the department who agrees to serve as instructor is required. Student and instructor meet regularly throughout the term. The course culminates in either a piece of written work or a final examination.

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

* NELC 492a and NELC 493b, The Senior Essay  Jonas Elbousty  
Preparation of a research paper of at least thirty pages (sixty pages for a two-term essay) under the supervision of a departmental faculty member, in accordance with the following schedule: (1) by the end of the second week of classes of the fall term, students meet with advisers to discuss the topic, approach, sources, and bibliography of the essay. Note: students planning to write the essay in the second term (NELC 493) should also meet with their prospective advisers by this deadline; (2) by the end of the fourth week of classes a prospectus with outline, including an annotated bibliography of materials in one or more Near 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 Near Eastern language that will be used; (3) at the end of the tenth week of classes (end of February for yearlong essays), a rough draft of the complete essay is submitted to the adviser; (4) two copies of the finished paper must be submitted to the director of undergraduate studies, Rm 314 HGS, by 4 p.m. on the last day of reading period. Failure to comply with the deadline will be penalized by a lower grade. Senior essays will be graded by departmental faculty unless, for exceptional reasons, different arrangements for an outside reader are made in advance with the director of undergraduate studies and the departmental adviser.

GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COURSES OF INTEREST TO UNDERGRADUATES

Some Graduate School courses are open to qualified undergraduates with permission of the instructor and of the director of graduate studies. For course descriptions see the Online Course Information Website. (Also see "Courses in the Yale Graduate and Professional Schools" under "Special Arrangements" in the Academic Regulations.)