

NEAR EASTERN LANGUAGES AND CIVILIZATIONS

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The major in Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations is an interdisciplinary liberal arts major with a long history at Yale. The Near East describes the very long civilizations of the region known today as the Middle East, including Northeast Africa. The program emphasizes analytic and reflective learning. Students acquire proficiency in languages and literatures, art and archaeology, and cultural and historical traditions as they study the Near East, whether of (ancient) Egypt and Mesopotamia; of late antiquity and Classical Islam; or of the contemporary moment, represented by modern Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, and Turkish.

The Near East is studied for its own intrinsic literary, historic, and artistic interest, as well as its cultural and historical legacies, which also open new ways of understanding the modern world. Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations majors go on to careers in government, foreign service, international finance, law, education, and even medicine and public health. The major also provides a strong foundation for graduate study and academic research.

Languages offered include: (modern) Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, and Turkish (including Ottoman Turkish); Classical Arabic and Classical Persian; and (ancient) Assyrian & Babylonian, Egyptian, Old Persian, Syriac, and Sumerian. Students with experience in any of the modern languages must take a placement test at the beginning of the fall term. See the department website for details.

All modern languages, as well as ancient Assyrian & Babylonian (Akkadian), and Egyptian, are offered in multi-year sequences and can be taken to fulfill the language requirement. The department also offers Advanced Language Certificates in Arabic, Hebrew, Turkish, as well as ancient Egyptian. Many majors undertake intensive language study abroad during the summer, and the language faculty advises students on recommended programs.

COURSE NUMBERING

Courses numbered NELC 001–099 are first-year seminars, with enrollments capped at 18. Courses in the NELC 100–199 range are introductory lecture courses, and NELC 200–299 are seminars with enrollment capped at 18. These courses have no prerequisites and are designed for students of any background or major to explore the Near East. Courses designated NELC 300–399 are more challenging courses and typically are seminars. Courses numbered NELC 400–499 are courses offered by visiting scholars or are related to the senior project.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

The major requires twelve term courses, including the senior requirement. Working with the director of undergraduate studies (DUS), students develop coherent programs of study in one of two concentrations.

Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations Concentration (depth) This concentration is for students who wish to focus *in depth* on a particular language and/or civilization, such as *ancient* Egypt or Mesopotamia; the *classical* Near East or medieval Islam; or *modern* Near Eastern culture through Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, or Turkish. Contextualized through study of literature, religion, art and archaeology, and history, this concentration provides students the opportunity to explore a Near Eastern civilization through in-depth study of one or two Near Eastern languages and written texts in their original languages.

Requirements to earn the depth concentration are 6 term courses in one or two Near Eastern languages; one NELC Foundations course; four NELC electives, chosen in consultation with the DUS (no more than two may be counted from other departments/programs); and the senior requirement (see below).

Near Eastern Languages, Civilizations, and Culture Concentration (breadth) This concentration is suitable for students who wish to study Near Eastern languages and civilizations *more broadly*. It provides flexibility to study the Near East in its historical and cultural breadth, and to explore its long-lived civilizations over time or comparatively. Students in this concentration take a range of classes and design their course of study according to their specific interests, such as Near Eastern literature, history, religion, art and archaeology (material culture), or philosophy and science; or the study of the Near East in the ancient, medieval, or modern eras.

Requirements to earn the breadth concentration are 4 term courses in NELC languages; two NELC Foundations courses; five NELC electives, including one on the ancient Near East, one on the medieval Near East, and one on the modern Middle East (no more than three may be counted from other departments/programs); and the senior essay (see below).

Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations majors are encouraged to take related courses in other departments and programs to complement their interests and round out their intellectual formation. These typically include courses in Anthropology, Archaeology, Classics, Comparative Literature, Islamic Studies, Judaic Studies, History, History of Art, History of Science, Medicine and Public Health, Philosophy, and Religious Studies. Above all, complementary courses should be chosen according to the interests of the student and in consultation with the DUS or faculty advisor. If courses outside the department include substantial Near Eastern content and are relevant to the student's overall program of study, they may be approved at the discretion of the DUS toward the electives requirement for the major.

Credit/D/Fail No more than one Near Eastern Languages and Literatures elective taken Cr/D/Fail can be counted toward the major.

SENIOR REQUIREMENT

The senior requirement is an opportunity for students to design and execute an independent research project, bringing to bear the intellectual curiosity as well as philological and analytic skills the student has honed during their time at Yale. It is also a chance to be mentored by a member of the faculty who serves as advisor to the project, which typically culminates in an essay of about 25-35 pages (one-semester project) or 45-55 pages (year-long project). Conversations about the senior project

should begin with the DUS in the fall of junior year, especially if the student plans to undertake summer research travel.

In rare occasions and *only* with advanced written agreement of the instructor and the DUS, a research paper for an upper-level seminar may be developed and expanded to satisfy the senior requirement. In such cases, the project must constitute work substantially beyond the requirements of the seminar paper.

Each year the DUS provides majors with resources, guidelines, and a timetable of deadlines for both the one- semester and year-long senior project. In addition, the DUS leads a bimonthly seminar for seniors to present work on their senior project and to exchange feedback with their peers in a supportive environment.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

Prerequisites None

Number of courses 12 term courses (including the senior req)

Distribution of courses *Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations concentration (depth)* – 6 term courses of up to 2 Near Eastern languages; 1 Foundations course; and 4 electives; *Near Eastern Languages, Civilizations, and Culture concentration (breadth)* – 4 term courses of 1 or more Near Eastern language courses; 2 Foundations courses; 5 NELC electives to include 1 ancient, 1 medieval, and 1 modern

Senior requirement NELC 492 and/or NELC 493