

Middle East Studies

The concentration in Middle East Studies (MES) seeks to build a strong, interdisciplinary understanding of historical and contemporary issues within the Middle East, broadly defined. Requirements are intentionally flexible to accommodate the focused interests of students in understanding the diverse dynamics, histories, and societies of this region. A variety of courses from departments across the University, addressing subjects from antiquity to the present day, expose students to methods and materials of different disciplines and help them build a framework for understanding the Middle East in historical and contemporary context. Concentration requirements are structured around four major cornerstones: language, foundational knowledge and methods, multidisciplinary area studies, and research.

A semester-by-semester roster of courses eligible for MES elective credit can be found on the Center for Middle East Studies (<http://middleeastbrown.org/>) website.

Foundational Course: All MES concentrators are expected to take the following foundational course. The foundational course requirement cannot be fulfilled via independent study, study abroad, or transfer credits.

HIST 1968A Approaches to the Middle East 1

Electives: Students must take at least five elective courses chosen in consultation with the Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) from among the courses listed by MES as approved electives on its website (<https://watson.brown.edu/cmec/academics/undergraduate-concentration/course-listing/all-courses>). Students may apply up to two Middle Eastern language credits (beyond those that fulfill the language requirement: see below) to the MES electives requirement. To allow for exposure of different disciplinary approaches to the Middle East, students must take at least one course in the humanities (offered within the departments of Archaeology and the Ancient World, Classics, Comparative Literature, History of Art and Architecture, Modern Culture and Media, Philosophy, or Religious Studies) and at least one course in the social sciences (offered within the departments of Anthropology, History, International Relations, Political Science, Sociology, or Urban Studies). Some examples of recent courses that would fulfill these requirements include:

Humanities	
ARCH 0150	Introduction to Egyptian Archaeology and Art
ARCH 0230	Myriad Mediterraneans: Archaeology, Representation and Decolonization
ARCH 1630	Fighting Pharaohs: Ancient Egyptian Warfare
ASYR 0300	Babylon: Myth and Reality
ASYR 0310	Thunder-gods and Dragon-slayers: Mythology + Cultural Contact - Ancient Mediterranean and Near East
ASYR 0320	The Origin(s) of Science
ASYR 0800	The Cradle of Civilization? An Introduction to the Ancient Near East
ASYR 1100	Imagining the Gods: Myths and Myth-making in Ancient Mesopotamia
ASYR 1300	The Age of Empires: The Ancient Near East in the First Millennium BC
ASYR 1600	Astronomy Before the Telescope
BHBR 0100	Introduction to Biblical Hebrew
BHBR 0200	Readings in Biblical Hebrew
CLAS 0660	The World of Byzantium
CLAS 1230	The Persian Empire and Achaemenid Culture
COLT 0510K	The 1001 Nights

COLT 0610Q	Before Wikipedia
COLT 0711L	The Quran and its Readers
COLT 1310E	A Classical Islamic Education: Readings in Arabic Literature
EGYT 1030	Collapse! Ancient Egypt after the Pyramid Age
EGYT 1310	Introduction to Classical Hieroglyphic Egyptian Writing and Language (Middle Egyptian I)
EGYT 1320	Introduction to Classical Hieroglyphic Egyptian Writing and Language (Middle Egyptian II)
EGYT 1430	History of Egypt I
FREN 1070L	Islam, Immigration et Identité nationale dans le roman français contemporain
FREN 1410R	Images d'une guerre sans nom: The Algerian War in Literature and Film
FREN 1710J	Geopolitics and Identity Divides in the Middle East
FREN 1710K	Frantz Fanon: Critical Theory and Decolonizing Practices between the Caribbean and (North) Africa
HIAA 0042	Islamic Art and Architecture
JUDS 0050H	Israel's Wars
JUDS 0050P	Sacred Spaces: Synagogues, Churches, Mosques
JUDS 0608	The Parting of the Ways?: Questioning Jewish/Christian Difference
JUDS 1630	The Talmud
JUDS 1711	History of the State of Israel: 1948 to the Present
MCM 1504R	Iranian Cinema
MCM 1505Z	Kiarostami: Questions of Cinema + Reality
PRSN 1200	Iranian Cinema: Before and After the Islamic Revolution
PRSN 0720	Modern Iran: Literature, Media & Pop Culture
RELS 0014	Jesus
RELS 0021	Inequality in the Ancient World
RELS 0088	Judaism, Christianity, and Islam
RELS 0090M	Islam, Violence and Media
RELS 0095A	Islam from the Ground Up
RELS 0096	The Imaginary Lives of Muslims
RELS 0290D	Islamic Sexualities
RELS 0290H	Defense Against the Dark Arts in the Ancient World
RELS 0320	Israelite Religion
RELS 0410	Ancient Christianity: Jesus to Muhammad
RELS 1315	Religious Authority in an Age of Empire
RELS 1500	From Moses to Muhammad: Prophets of the Ancient World
RELS 1530B	Heresy and Orthodoxy in Islamic Thought
RELS 1530H	Problems in Islamic Studies: Shaking up the Study of the Islamic World
TKSH 0720A	Understanding Modern Turkey Through Film and Literature
TKSH 0720B	Istanbul, Global Metropolis
Social Sciences:	
ANTH 1150	Middle East in Anthropological Perspective
HIST 0244	Understanding the Middle East: A Modern History

HIST 0150D	Refugees: A Twentieth-Century History
HIST 0246	The Ottoman Empire and Modern Middle East
HIST 1202	Formation of the Classical Heritage: Greeks, Romans, Jews, Christians, and Muslims
HIST 1457	Understanding the Palestinians
HIST 1960S	North African History: 1800 to Present
HIST 1964L	Slavery in the Early Modern World
HIST 1968V	America and the Middle East: Histories of Connection and Exchange
HIST 1969D	Palestine versus the Palestinians
IAPA 1804A	Iran and the Islamic Revolution
POLS 1822I	Geopolitics of Oil and Energy
Language Semesters: Middle East Studies concentrators are expected to reach a level of language proficiency consistent with completion of four semesters of Brown language coursework in at least one of the modern Middle Eastern languages, such as Arabic, Persian, Hebrew, or Turkish, or the equivalent through transfer or study abroad credits. Courses at Brown that can be used to fulfill this requirement include: ³	
ARAB 0100	First-Year Arabic
ARAB 0200	First-Year Arabic
ARAB 0300	Second-Year Arabic
ARAB 0400	Second-Year Arabic
ARAB 0500	Third-Year Arabic
ARAB 0600	Third-Year Arabic
ARAB 0700	Advanced Arabic: Tales of the City
ARAB 0800	Advanced Arabic: Language & Culture through Cinema
ARAB 0850	Advanced reading and composition in Arabic: Kalila wa-Dimna
ARAB 0950	Advanced Reading and Composition: Arabic Fiction in the West
HEBR 0100	Elementary Hebrew
HEBR 0200	Elementary Hebrew
HEBR 0300	Intermediate Hebrew
HEBR 0400	Intermediate Hebrew
HEBR 0500	Writing and Speaking Hebrew
HEBR 0600	Issues in Contemporary Israeli Society, Politics, and Culture in Hebrew
PRSN 0100	Basic Persian
PRSN 0105	Accelerated Persian
PRSN 0200	Basic Persian
PRSN 0300	Intermediate Persian Language and Culture
PRSN 0400	Intermediate Persian Language and Culture
PRSN 0500	Advanced Persian Language and Culture I
PRSN 0600	Advanced Persian Language and Culture II
PRSN 1100	Reading Persian for Research
PRSN 2980	Reading and Research
TKSH 0100	Introduction to Turkish Language and Culture I
TKSH 0110	Intensive Elementary Turkish Language and Culture
TKSH 0200	Introduction to Turkish
TKSH 0300	Intermediate Turkish
TKSH 0400	Intermediate Turkish II
TKSH 0500	Advanced Turkish I
TKSH 0600	Advanced Turkish II Online

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• Through advanced reading and writing courses in that language. Recent examples include:

COLT 1310J The Arab Renaissance

COLT 1431B Modern Arabic Poetry

JUDS 1810 Israeli Literature in Hebrew

• Through taking courses in a second Middle Eastern language.

• Or through courses in a non-Middle Eastern language to be used in a senior capstone project (for example, Spanish for the study of Andalucía or French for the study of North Africa).

Capstone/Honors Project: MES requires all concentrators to conduct a capstone project within their senior year (i.e., in their last two semesters before graduation). The purpose of the capstone is to synthesize and apply the skills and knowledge that MES concentrators have acquired through the MES curriculum—including disciplinary perspectives, methodological and theoretical approaches, background in the historical and contemporary dynamics of the region, and language competency—to particular interests developed through the concentration. Capstones offer students the opportunity to integrate and build upon their experiences within the concentration, while demonstrating intellectual creativity, research skills, and effective communication, and should serve in some sense as a culmination of or reflection on what one has gained in the concentration. All students are expected to present their capstone research in the final semester before graduation. Presentations of honors theses will be approximately twenty minutes long, and those of non-honors capstone projects will be approximately ten minutes long, both followed by a question-and-answer session. Capstone projects must fulfill the following requirements:

• Must be taken in the final two semesters before graduation (excluding summer and winter sessions)

• Must incorporate research in a Middle Eastern language.

• Must be approved or overseen by a MES or MES-affiliated faculty member.

• Must be presented in the final semester before graduation.

Capstones can take one of three forms:

a. A Middle East-focused research paper of at least 20 pages for an existing concentration-eligible (MES-coded or X-Listed) course, undertaken with the permission and supervision of the instructor.

b. An independent study or project (artistic, research, or otherwise), approved by the DUS and supervised by at least one faculty member for at least one semester under the MES 1970 - Independent Study designation.

c. A two-semester honors thesis, completed under the supervision of a primary reader (who is an MES or MES-affiliated faculty member) and a secondary reader (who can be from other Brown departments and programs), and in coordination with the DUS.⁴

Total Credits

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¹ For concentrators graduating before 2023, courses designated "Foundational Courses" under previous concentration requirements may be used to fulfill this requirement. Please meet with the MES Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) to discuss any such arrangements.

² Previously HIST 1968 or HIST 1968A: Approaches to the Middle East. Any student who has taken HIST 1968 or HIST 1968A: Approaches to the Middle East, will have fulfilled this requirement.

³ Concentrators are encouraged to discuss options for fulfilling language requirements with the DUS.

⁴ Two semesters of Independent Study (MES 1970 & MES 1971) are required for honors and will raise the number of required courses to 13. One of these Independent Study courses should take the form of a thesis writing workshop supervised by the DUS or other designated MES faculty during the first semester of thesis writing. Students must declare their intention to write an honors thesis and submit a thesis

prospectus (to include a thesis proposal, research plan, proposed thesis outline, initial literature review, and initial bibliography) by April 25th of their junior year (for May graduates) or November 20th of their junior year (for December graduates).

* **Study Abroad**

Concentrators may apply up to two courses per semester of study abroad toward their MES concentration requirements, with a maximum of four courses (for two semesters abroad). Students must meet with their advisors and have them sign off on their specific course selections prior to embarking upon their program. Study abroad transfer credits may only be applied toward fulfilling elective and language requirements. Study abroad transfer credit may not be used to fulfill foundational course requirements.

** **Dual Concentrators**

Middle East Studies concentrators may apply up to two courses that fulfill MES concentration requirements toward fulfilling the requirements of another concentration. Language courses do not count toward this two-course limit on overlapping courses.

Honors

Students may graduate with honors in MES by completing an undergraduate honors thesis in MES. To be eligible for honors, students will have earned an 'A' (or 'S' with distinction) in the majority of courses for the concentration and will have submitted a thesis prospectus and secured a faculty advisor by the end of their junior year. Honors theses are substantial research projects driven by a deep interest in engaging with a selected topic of study. They require a time commitment and coordination between students, advisors, and the DUS to ensure completion. Honors students will undertake two semesters of thesis writing in their senior year, the first in a thesis writing workshop (MES 1971) supervised by the DUS or other MES faculty, followed by a second semester of Independent Study (MES 1970) to complete the thesis under the guidance of the thesis advisor. This is typically done during senior year and will raise the total number of required courses to 12.