

MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES

Overview and Contact Information

One of three interdisciplinary majors within the Asian Studies program, the major in Middle Eastern studies allows students to specialize in the history, languages, cultures, and politics of the Middle East. The Five College Certificate in Middle Eastern Studies allows students to complement any disciplinary major with multidisciplinary studies and linguistic attainments.

Complementing course work at Mount Holyoke are extracurricular activities and study abroad programs that broaden and deepen students' understanding of this region.

Language study is the core component of the major. Our students are expected to incorporate the humanities and the social sciences fully into their studies with classes at Mount Holyoke and the other colleges in the Five College Consortium.

On campus, our students experience regional culture at many levels, including language tables and clubs, guest lectures, performing and visual arts, film, festivals, and regional cuisine. These activities are often initiated by and benefit greatly from the diverse student population of Mount Holyoke.

Most of our students spend a semester or a summer in study abroad programs. Students may participate in one of the many Mount Holyoke College-approved Middle Eastern study abroad programs.

Middle Eastern studies majors graduate to pursue graduate studies and careers in fields as varied as education, business, NGOs, journalism, the arts, and government service.

See Also

- Arabic Minor (<http://catalog.mtholyoke.edu/areas-study/arabic/>)
- Asian Studies (<http://catalog.mtholyoke.edu/areas-study/asian-studies/>)

Contact Information

Naoko Nemoto, Chair

Denise Falk, Academic Department Coordinator

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<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/academics/find-your-program/middle-eastern-studies> (<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/academics/find-your-program/middle-eastern-studies/>)

Learning Goals

By majoring in Middle Eastern Studies, students should:

- Develop proficiency in Arabic, Hebrew, or another language widely spoken in the Middle East. By "proficiency" we mean:
 - Ability to read newspapers, magazines, and popular literature.
 - Ability to converse with a native speaker on non-technical subjects.
 - Ability to write coherent paragraphs on non-technical subjects.
- Develop knowledge of the history of the premodern and modern Middle East.

- Develop knowledge of the arts, literature, religions, and philosophies of the Middle East.
- Develop knowledge of the geography, politics, economics, and societies of the Middle East.

Faculty

This area of study is administered by the Asian Studies Committee:

Calvin Chen, Carol Hoffmann Collins '63 Professor of International Studies and Professor of Politics

Satyananda Gabriel, Professor of Economics, Teaching Spring Only

Sohail Hashmi, Professor of International Relations on the Alumnae Foundation and Professor of Politics

Kavita Khory, Ruth Lawson Professor of Politics, Teaching Fall Only

Susanne Mrozik, Professor of Religion, Teaching Fall Only

Naoko Nemoto, Professor of Asian Studies

Joshua Roth, Professor of Anthropology

Ajay Sinha, Julie '73 and Helene '49 Herzig Professor of Art History

Ying Wang, Felicia Gressitt Bock Professor of Asian Studies, Teaching Fall Only

Elif Babul, Associate Professor of Anthropology, On Leave 2024-2025

Amina Steinfels, Associate Professor of Religion

Lan Wu, Associate Professor of History

Kyae-Sung Park, Five College Senior Lecturer in Korean, Teaching Spring Only

Lisha Xu, Senior Lecturer in Asian Studies

Jinhwa Chang, Lecturer in Japanese

Shin-Yi Kao, Language Instructor in Asian Studies

Minhee Kang, Visiting Instructor in Korean; UMass Teaching Associate

Jumee Lee, Visiting Instructor in Korean; UMass Teaching Associate

Alice Kao, Instructor of Chinese

The Five College certificate in Middle Eastern Studies is administered by the Five College Committee for Middle Eastern Studies, which includes the program advisor from Mount Holyoke:

Sohail Hashmi, Professor of International Relations on the Alumnae Foundation and Professor of Politics

Requirements for the Major

A minimum of 40 credits:

Code	Title	Credits
	Four courses (16 credits), equivalent to two years of college-level study of a Middle Eastern language, such as Arabic, Hebrew, Turkish, Persian, and Armenian ¹	16
	Two introductory courses (8 credits) providing an overview of Middle Eastern history. ²	8

One course (4 credits) must be in the premodern period (pre-1500 CE). The following course(s) fulfill the premodern history requirement:		
RELIG-102	Introduction to Islam	
One course (4 credits) must be in the modern period (1500–present).		
Four elective courses (16 credits): ²		16
Two (8 credits) must be from Group One: Humanities (language, literature, the arts, history, philosophy, and religion and interdisciplinary courses in these areas) ³		
Two (8 credits) must be from Group Two: Social Science (anthropology, economics, geography, international relations, linguistics, politics, sociology, and interdisciplinary courses in these areas)		
At least three courses (12 credits) must be at the 300 level. One of the three 300-level courses must be a non-language and non-independent study course. ⁴		
Total Credits		40

¹ Classes in Arabic and Modern Hebrew are currently taught in the Five Colleges. Additional courses in Arabic and in other languages are offered through the Five College Mentored Language Program. Students may count up to 4 credits toward the major for studying a Middle Eastern language through the Five College Mentored Language Program.

² A full list of the approved courses (p. 2) for the major appears at the end of the Middle Eastern Studies Courses section.

³ In order to count toward the major, studio art or performance courses must be supplemented with analytical written work.

⁴ A course that is taught outside of Mount Holyoke College must be approved by the chair of the Asian Studies program to count as a 300-level course.

Additional Specifications

- Any course that devotes 50 percent or more of its substance to Middle Eastern countries, peoples, or issues may be counted toward the major. One course on Middle Eastern diasporas may count toward the major.
- A maximum of 16 lower-level language credits and a total of 24 language credits can be counted toward the major.
- Students who declare a Middle Eastern studies major automatically fulfill the College’s “outside the major” requirement.

Requirements for the Certificate

Because of the wide range of courses available through the Five Colleges, students must design a program that will meet their intellectual, academic, and prospective professional needs in conjunction with a Middle Eastern Studies advisor from Mount Holyoke. Students are encouraged to declare intentions and begin work with an advisor during the sophomore year.

A minimum of seven courses:

Code	Title	Credits
Knowledge equivalent to at least two years of college-level study of a Middle Eastern language, such as Arabic, Hebrew, Turkish, Persian, and Armenian ¹		0-4

Two introductory courses providing an overview of Middle Eastern history:	2
One course must be in the pre-modern period (600-1500 CE)	
One course must be in the modern period (1500-present)	
Five courses from the following groups, including at least one course in each of the following three groups:	5
Group one: Religion and Philosophy	
Group two: Literature, Art, and Language study beyond what is required to satisfy the language requirement above	
Group three: History and Social Sciences	
Total Courses	7

¹ Classes in Arabic and Modern Hebrew are currently taught in the Five Colleges. Additional courses in Arabic and in other languages are offered through the Five College Mentored Language Program. This requirement may be fulfilled through course completion or by examination.

Additional Specifications

- Students are also encouraged to spend time in the Middle East, learning Arabic and other languages and immersing themselves in the culture of the area. Plans for study abroad should be designed in consultation with the student’s advisor.
- Courses offered at the Five Colleges in the upcoming semester that qualify for the Certificate are listed on the certificate’s website (<https://www.fivecolleges.edu/academics/middle-eastern-studies/#courses>), as is the application students must submit when all requirements have been completed. Courses not listed, whether taken at one of the Five Colleges or elsewhere, must be approved by the committee on the recommendation of the campus advisor.
- Students must receive a grade of B or better in every course counted toward the certificate.
- Contact information: Sohail Hashmi, Professor of International Relations; Amina Steinfelds, Associate Professor of Religion; <https://www.fivecolleges.edu/academics/middle-eastern-studies> (<https://www.fivecolleges.edu/academics/middle-eastern-studies/>).

Most Middle Eastern studies courses at Mount Holyoke are listed below, but students should also consult the catalogue entries or websites of other departments, including art history, history, international relations, politics, and religion.

Middle Eastern Studies majors should also plan to use the rich resources of the Five College Consortium in selecting their courses (listings are available through the Five College Class Schedule (<https://www.fivecolleges.edu/academics/courses/>) or individual college websites).

Please consult the chair of the Asian studies program for guidelines regarding Asian languages not taught in the Five Colleges.

Courses Counting toward the Major in Middle Eastern Studies

Code	Title	Credits
Anthropology		
ANTHR-316ME	Special Topics in Anthropology: ‘Political Anthropology of the Middle East’	4

ANTHR-316PR	Special Topics in Anthropology: 'Productive and Reproductive Labor in the Middle East'	4
Asian Studies		
ASIAN-130	First Year Arabic I	4
ASIAN-131	First Year Arabic II	4
ASIAN-232	Second Year Arabic I	4
ASIAN-233	Second Year Arabic II	4
ASIAN-362	Political Anthropology of the Middle East	4
Gender Studies		
GNDST-210SL	Women and Gender in Philosophy and Religion: 'Women and Gender in Islam'	4
Politics		
POLIT-216	Middle East Politics	4
POLIT-224	The United States and Iran	4
POLIT-226	The United States, Israel, and the Arabs	4
POLIT-333	Just War and Jihad: Comparative Ethics of War and Peace	4
POLIT-342	Islamic Political Thought	4
Religion		
RELIG-102	Introduction to Islam	4
RELIG-207	Women and Gender in Islam	4
RELIG-311	Love, Madness, Discipline: the Sufi Path In Islam	4
RELIG-343	The Sabbath	4

Courses Counting toward the Five College Certificate in Middle Eastern Studies

A list of currently offered courses approved towards the Five College certificate is maintained on the certificate's website (<https://www.fivecolleges.edu/academics/middle-eastern-studies/#courses>).