MIDDLE EAST STUDIES MINOR

Why Study the Middle East?

Rarely does the Middle East fail to make the news. Civil wars, coups, border conflicts, ethnic strife, and oil imports all remind us of the power that the Middle East has over our lives. Once the region seemed remote; now events occurring there affect America's vital interests.

Current events and problems are not the only reason to study the Middle East. There, too, arose the first civilizations. Settled agriculture and pastoral nomadism began there. So, too, did governments, law codes, cities, and alphabets. The Middle East was the birthplace of three monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Many Americans picture the Middle East as a region inhabited mainly by nomadic warriors. In reality, Middle Eastern peoples form a complex mosaic of religions, ethnic groups, occupations, and life styles. Studying Middle Eastern cultures can give Americans a better understanding of the diversity of humankind and a new insight into their own way of life.

How to Study the Middle East:

The best way to learn about any culture is to live among its people, but students who are also preparing for their own careers may feel unable to do so. The Middle East Studies Minor offers Penn State undergraduates a simpler alternative. This program makes it possible to combine the study of Middle Eastern archaeology, art, history, literature, politics, and religion, plus either Arabic or Hebrew, with any major offered at the Pennsylvania State University. Students who complete the 18 course credits required for the Minor are awarded a certificate in Middle East Studies when they finish their baccalaureate programs. Some students then enter graduate programs in the field, but the Minor is also designed to complement preparation for careers in business or public administration, education, foreign service, journalism, law military service, or religion.

Students are encouraged, when possible, to arrange their plans to include one or more semesters of study at Tel Aviv University or the American University in Cairo, whose courses can be transferred to Penn State for credit. Further information on these programs is available from the Office of Education Abroad, 222 Boucke Building, University Park, PA 16802. Some students arrange their plans to include study at another Middle Eastern university or to take courses at a summer language institute for transfer credit. However, careful scheduling of courses in consultation with the Middle East Studies Committee Chair will enable most students to complete the Minor requirements at University Park. Courses taken for the minor count toward general education or major requirements.

What Are the Minor Requirements?

The Middle East Studies Minor requires a minimum of 18 credits in courses related to the Middle East. The only required course is History 181, but students must also take at least six 400-level course credits. Currently, Penn State courses meeting the minor requirements include:

AAAS 404 (Eastern and Central African Societies)

ANTH 009 (Rise of Civilization in the Old World); 012 (Archaeology of the Bible Lands); 410 (Osteology); 420 (Archaeology of the Near East).

ARAB 001 (Elementary Modern Standard Arabic); 002 (Elementary Modern Standard Arabic II); 003 (Intermediate Modern Standard Arabic); 097; 165 (Introduction to Islamic Civilization); 197; 294; 295; 296; 297; 494; 496; 497; 498.

ART H 301 (Egyptian and Mesopotamian Art); 330 (Islamic Art); 442 (Late Antique and Early Christian Art); 452 (Byzantine Art).

CAMS 015 (Wonders of the Ancient World)

CMLIT 110 (Jewish Literature: An International Perspective)

HEBR 001 (Basic Modern Hebrew); 002 (Basic Modern Hebrew II); 003 (Intermediate Modern Hebrew); 010 (Jewish Civilization); 110 (Conversation, Reading, and Composition); 111 (Development of Hebrew Language and Literature); 097; 187; 110 (Conversation, Reading, and Composition); 111 (Development of Hebrew Language and Literature); 197; 199; 294; 295; 296; 297; 399; 401 (Advanced Hebrew – Conversation Emphasis); 402 (Advanced Hebrew – Reading Emphasis); 494; 496; 497; 498; 499.

HIST 102 (Canaan and Israel in Antiquity); 105 (Byzantine Empire); 108 (The Crusades: Holy War in the Middle Ages); 165 (Introduction to Islamic Civilization); 181 (Introduction to the Middle East); 401 (Ancient Technologies and Socio-Cultural History in the Ancient Levant); 416 (Zionist History); 471W (Clasiscal Islamic Civilization, 600-1258); 472 (The Ottoman Empire and other Muslim States); 473 (The Contemporary Middle East); 496; 497; and 499 if related to the Middle East.

J ST 010 (Jewish Civilization); 102 (Canaan and Israel in Antiquitiy); 118 (Modern Jewish History, 1492-present); 197; 297

PHIL 201 (Medieval Philosophy)

PL SC 467 (International Relations of the Middle East)

RL ST 004 (Jewish and Christian Foundations); 102 (Canaan and Israel in Antiquity); 107 (Introduction to Islam); 110 (Hebrew Bible: Old Testament); 111 (Early Judaism); 114 (Modern Judaism); 120 (New Testament); 165 (Introduction to Islamic Civilization); 170 (Death and Afterlife in the Biblical Era); 411 (Jewish Studies).

Students in the Minor may select other courses of which the major portion deals with material applicable to the Middle East, subject to the approval of the Middle East Studies Committee.

How Is the Minor Run?

The Middle East Studies Minor is administered by an interdisciplinary standing committee of the College of Liberal Arts, but is not restricted to Liberal Arts students. Any undergraduate student wishing to enter the program may obtain further information, including the enrollment form, from the Middle East Studies minor advisors:

Dr. Janina Safran
208 Weaver Building
University Park, PA 16802
814/863-0186
jxs57@psu.edu

The Committee awards the **Adma Hammam Shibley Memorial Scholarship** annually to a student enrolled in the Middle East Studies Minor who has shown a high level of academic achievement in the field of Middle East Studies.