

MIDDLE EASTERN AND ISLAMIC STUDIES

haverford.edu/meis

The Concentration in Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies gives students basic knowledge of the Middle East and broader Muslim world, and allows students to employ discipline-specific tools for advanced work in this area.

The faculty at Haverford College who research and study the Middle East and Islam are committed to educating students about the politics, histories, and socio-cultural formations of the Middle East and broader Muslim world. We believe that our students must have basic knowledge about the Middle East and Islam if they are to participate thoughtfully and constructively in the many contentious debates that frame public discourse about Muslims and the Middle East today.

LEARNING GOALS

Students in Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies will:

- learn the politics, histories, and socio-cultural formations of the Middle East and broader Muslim world.
- gain knowledge of key political, economic, and social issues in the contemporary Middle East.
- demonstrate basic knowledge of a language pertinent to the students' areas of research.

CURRICULUM

An "Area of Concentration" at Haverford is designed to facilitate the pursuit of an area of study distinct from a major, but which a student can use the disciplinary tools of the major to pursue. To that end, at least two courses, and no more than three, may fulfill both the student's major requirements and the concentration requirements. In practical terms, this means that students who want to concentrate in Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies usually major in anthropology, comparative literature, history, political science, or religion.

In some cases, students may find that they can combine other majors with a concentration in MEIS (for example, History of Art and Growth and Structure of Cities at Bryn Mawr are two

departments that sometimes have two or three course offerings that could count for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies). Students who can demonstrate that at least two courses in their major are about Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies can petition the concentration coordinator and faculty to approve their major as one that can be linked to the MEIS concentration.

We strongly encourage students with interests in the Middle East and Islam to meet with the concentration coordinator early in their college program (during their first and second years). We also invite students to take advantage of Haverford's study abroad programs in Jordan, Morocco, Israel, and other appropriate locations to advance their work in the concentration.

CONCENTRATION REQUIREMENTS

The MEIS concentration is normally available to students majoring in anthropology, history, political science, religion, or comparative literature. Courses from their major must represent at least two but no more than three of the requirements detailed below. Proposals to concentrate on the basis of other majors must be approved in advance by concentration coordinator.

Language Competence

Students must demonstrate competence above the basic level in a language pertinent to their area of research:

- In cases where a student has selected Arabic as their relevant language, this means completion of ARAB 002.
- If a student is doing research for which another language is more appropriate, they may need to study at the University of Pennsylvania (Pashtu, Persian, Turkish and Swahili) or Bryn Mawr (Hebrew), or take other Haverford language classes (e.g., Chinese, French).

Some study abroad programs are also suitable for gaining language competence. Students should consult with the concentration coordinator about

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the course of language study to fill this requirement.

Core Courses

Students must take two of the core courses listed below, in which they learn about the Middle East and Islam. Students must choose from two of the four departments listed (e.g., history and political science, anthropology and religion, political science and religion). Students should consult the concentration coordinator to ensure they fill this requirement.

By completing this core requirement, students gain broad exposure to the history and politics of the Middle East, and to Islam as a major world religion and social and political force that began in, and continues to be affected by, the Middle East.

The core course options are:

- Anthropology:
 - ANTH 253 (Anthropology of the Middle East and North Africa)
 - ANTH 259 (Ethnographies of Islam)
- History:
 - HIST 117 (Modern Mediterranean History)
 - HIST 266 (Sex and Gender in the Early Modern Islamic World)
 - HIST 270 (From Empire to Nation: The Ottoman World Transformed)
 - ICPR 274 (History of the Modern Middle East)
- Political Science:
 - POLS 256 (The Evolution of the Jihadi Movement)
 - POLS 357 (Conflict in the Middle East)
- Religion:
 - RELG 108 (Vocabularies of Islam)
 - RELG 218 (The Divine Guide: An Introduction to Shi'ism)
 - RELG 248 (The Qur'an)

Elective Courses

Students should pursue areas of inquiry related to the Middle East and/or Islam and specific to their interests by taking four electives, at least one of which is at the 300 level. Examples might include anthropological approaches to the study of Islam or Middle East, Middle Eastern Nationalism, Islam in African politics, Israeli politics, evolution of the Jihadi movement, modern Arabic literature, etc.

To fulfill their elective credit, students may select from a list of designated electives at Bryn Mawr and Swarthmore, or request approval from the concentration coordinator to take other appropriate courses at Bryn Mawr, Swarthmore, or the University of Pennsylvania's Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations Program. Students may also petition the concentration coordinator and MEIS faculty for approval of a course that is not on the electives list but which the student feels provides important content for their specific research topic.

See the end of this section of the Catalog for a sampling of courses that count toward the MEIS concentration. For more information about core and elective courses, contact the concentration coordinator.

Senior Thesis

Students must write a thesis in their major department (anthropology, history, political science, or religion) that addresses Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies and that the concentration coordinator (as well as the major advisor) approves. The concentration coordinator must approve this thesis topic in advance to count for the MEIS concentration. To request approval, students should submit a brief (one page) thesis proposal to the concentration coordinator and arrange a meeting to discuss the proposal.

STUDY ABROAD

Students may fulfill some of the required courses for the Concentration in Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies in study abroad programs. Some such programs that offer intensive language training can also count toward fulfilling the language requirement. Students are encouraged to consult with Dean Donna Mancini and the concentration coordinator about study abroad options.

FACULTY

Alexander Kitroeff (*on leave 2017-2018*)
Associate Professor of History

Samuel Helfont
Visiting Assistant Professor

Naomi Koltun-Fromm
Professor of Religion

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Barak Mendelsohn

Associate Professor of Political Science

Zainab Saleh

Concentration Coordinator and Assistant
Professor of Anthropology

Susanna Wing

Associate Professor of Political Science

COURSES

ANTH H219 NATIONAL IMAGINARIES OF THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Zainab Saleh

Social Science (SO)

The purpose of the course is to provide a historical and anthropological approach to understanding nation formation in the Middle East. Anchored in major debates on nationalism, this course critically examines both nationalistic imagination and state formations. By focusing on questions of imagined communities, the course will analyze nationalistic discourses and the exclusion of the other who is seen to undermine national purity. It will also approach the nation state as a category of practice, by focusing on laws, monuments, museums, flags, etc. In addition, we will examine transformations in national discourses and practices, historiography, and memory throughout the twentieth century. (Offered Fall 2017)

ANTH H253 ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Zainab Saleh

Social Science (SO)

This course surveys anthropological approaches to the Middle East and North Africa, with a focus on themes of representation. In addition, we will explore questions of gender, religion, nation-state, colonialism, tribes, subject formation, and sexuality. We will examine a range of critical methodologies applying them to a variety of ethnographic sources that anthropologists have been using in their studies, namely archives, fieldwork, poetry, memorials, science and technology. Prerequisite(s): One 100-level course in anthropology, political science, sociology, or history, or instructor consent. (Offered Spring 2018)

ANTH H259 ETHNOGRAPHY OF ISLAM

Zainab Saleh

Social Science (SO)

Comparative ethnographies of Muslim societies. Islam as a field of anthropological inquiry and theorizing. Ethnographic representation and the construction of ethnographic authority. Islam in the western imagination. (Offered occasionally)

HIST H117 MODERN MEDITERRANEAN HISTORY

Alexander Kitroeff

Social Science (SO)

This course studies the Mediterranean region in the twentieth century and the ways its countries and peoples experienced the transition to modernity by focusing on: the collapse of the Ottoman Empire; Italian fascism & colonial policies; the Spanish civil war; WWII German occupation & local resistance; the Cold War; the Algerian revolution; Egypt from Nasser to the Muslim Brotherhood; Southern European student and women's movements in the 1960s & 1970s. (Typically offered every other spring)

ICPR H274 HISTORY OF THE MIDDLE EAST: 18TH C TO PRESENT

Samuel Helfont

Social Science (SO)

This course surveys the evolution of the Middle Eastern political system from the 18th century to present. Beginning with the twilight of ottoman empire, the course then shifts to discuss the mandate system formed by the colonial powers in the wake of the first World War, and the road of the region's countries to self-determination and independence. The course also explores the social and political structures of Middle Eastern states, as well as their domestic and international politics. (Offered Fall 2017)

POLS H151 INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

Barak Mendelsohn

Social Science (SO)

This course offers an introduction to the study of international politics. It considers examples from history and addresses contemporary issues, while introducing and evaluating the political theories that have been used by scholars to explain those events. The principal goal of the course is to develop a general set of analytical approaches that can be used to gain insight into the nature of world politics—past, present and future. (Offered Spring 2018)

POLS H253 INTRODUCTION TO TERRORISM STUDIES

Barak Mendelsohn

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Social Science (SO)

After being marginalized in international relations scholarship for years, in the aftermath of 9/11 terrorism has moved to the forefront of scholarly interest. The purpose of this course is to survey the various theories concerning terrorism from diverse perspectives employing rationalist and psychological theories to explain terrorism-related phenomena. (Typically offered every other year)

POLS H256 THE EVOLUTION OF THE JIHADI MOVEMENT

Barak Mendelsohn

Social Science (SO)

This course explores the evolution of the jihadi movement, focusing on its ideological development throughout the twentieth century, and the structural changes it has gone through since the jihad to drive the Soviets out of Afghanistan during the 1980s. (Offered Spring 2018)

POLS H290 ISRAELI POLITICS

Barak Mendelsohn

Social Science (SO)

The course surveys the Israeli political system and its primary institutions, and explores how societal cleavages are manifested in and shape Israeli politics. (Offered Fall 2017)

POLS H313 ARMED NON-STATE ACTORS IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

Barak Mendelsohn

Social Science (SO)

The principal goal of the course is to expose students to various types of armed nonstate actors and gain insights into their motives and activities. The course also introduces analytical lens through which scholars have sought to conceptualize the interplay between states and armed nonstate actors. Prerequisite(s): One political science course or instructor consent. (Typically offered every other fall)

POLS H333 INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

Barak Mendelsohn

Social Science (SO)

This course offers an introduction to the study of international security. It considers examples from history and addresses contemporary issues, while introducing and evaluating the political theories that have been used by scholars to explain those events. The principal goal of the course is to develop a general set of analytical approaches

that can be used to gain insight into the nature of world politics - past, present and future. The first section introduces key conceptual issues and review main theoretical approaches in the field. The second section addresses specific issues in international security such as war, military doctrines, alliances, crisis, deterrence, grand strategy, and proliferation. (Offered Fall 2017)

POLS H357 INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY: CONFLICT AND THE MIDDLE EAST

Barak Mendelsohn

Social Science (SO)

Conflicts in the Middle East since World War I. Cleavages are discussed that have contributed to the emergence of violent conflicts in the region and discusses particular conflicts. (Typically offered every other spring)

RELG H107 VOCABULARIES OF ISLAM

Staff

Humanities (HU)

Provides students with an introduction to the foundational concepts of Islam, its religious institutions, and the diverse ways in which Muslims understand and practice their religion. We explore the vocabularies surrounding core issues of scripture, prophethood, law, ritual, theology, mysticism, literature, and art from the early period to the present. (Offered Fall 2017)

RELG H202 THE END OF THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT

Naomi Koltun-Fromm

Humanities (HU)

Why are people always predicting the coming endtime? This course will explore the genre of apocalypse, looking for common themes that characterize this form of literature. Our primary source readings will be drawn from the Bible and non-canonical documents from the early Jewish and Christian traditions. We will use an analytical perspective to explore the social functions of apocalyptic, and ask why this form has been so persistent and influential. (Offered Fall 2017)

RELG H212 JERUSALEM: CITY, HISTORY AND REPRESENTATION

Naomi Koltun-Fromm

Humanities (HU)

An examination of the history of Jerusalem as well as a study of Jerusalem as religious symbol and how the two interact over the centuries. Readings from ancient, medieval, modern and

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contemporary sources as well as material culture and art. (Offered Spring 2018)

RELG H248 THE QURAN

Staff

Humanities (HU)

Overview of the Qur'an, the scripture of Islam. Major themes include: orality, textuality, sanctity and material culture; revelation, translation, and inimitability; calligraphy, bookmaking and architecture; along with modes of scriptural exegesis as practiced over time by both Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Crosslisted: Religion, Comparative Literature (Not offered 2017-18)

RELG H259 GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN ISLAMIC TEXTS AND PRACTICES

Staff

Humanities (HU)

This course explores competing notions of gender and sexuality in Islamic societies from the time of Muhammad to the contemporary period. Readings include primary sources in translation as well as scholarly articles, works of fiction and nonfiction. (Not offered 2017-18)

RELG H308 MYSTICAL LITERATURES OF ISLAM

Staff

Humanities (HU)

Overview of the literary expressions of Islamic mysticism through the study of poetry, philosophy, hagiographies, and anecdotes. Topics include: unio mystica; symbol and structure; love and the erotic; body / gender; language and experience. (Offered occasionally)