

MIDDLE EAST STUDIES, B.A.

Begin Campus: Any Penn State Campus

End Campus: University Park

Spring 2024 Curricular Update: The program description, entrance requirements, and program requirements detailed on this page are effective beginning Spring 2024. To learn more about what approved curricular changes take effect in Spring 2024, please visit the Changes to the UG Bulletin page (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/using-this-bulletin/#changestotheugbulletintext>). To view the requirements in effect for Fall 2023, please visit the 2023-24 Undergraduate Bulletin PDF (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/pdf/undergraduate.pdf>).

Program Description

The Middle East Studies major fosters the study of the Middle East from a variety of perspectives and disciplines. The core of the major is a foundation in the history of the region and the politics, societies, and cultures of the past and the present, in a global context. The major promotes the development of analytical skills, articulate expression of ideas, awareness of current events, and engagement in meaningful discussion.

What is Middle East Studies?

Middle Eastern Studies intends to instill an understanding of the history and culture of the multiple countries that make up the Middle East, from ancient through modern times. It is an interdisciplinary area of study that encompasses various aspects of the Middle East such as history, politics, religion, language, literature, art history, and more. Middle Eastern Studies offers a way to investigate a region of the world from multiple perspectives engaging a variety of methods of study.

You Might Like This Program If...

- You are interested in gaining further insight into the politics, societies, and cultures of the Middle East.
- You are interested in adding the Middle East Studies major to your major in a related field such as History, Global and International Studies, Political Science, and Arabic.
- You have a desire to do in depth research on the Middle East, and hope to spend time in the Middle East.
- You are interested in a career in international trade, diplomacy, aid, education, and more.
- You are interested in graduate studies in fields such as history, middle east studies, Islamic studies, Jewish studies, archaeology, philosophy, comparative literature, religious studies, political science, sociology, economics, and more.

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Entrance to Major

In order to be eligible for entrance to this major, a student must:

- attain at least a C (2.00) cumulative grade-point average for all courses taken at the University; and
- have at least third-semester classification (<https://www.registrar.psu.edu/enrollment/semester-classification.cfm>).

READ SENATE POLICY 37-30: ENTRANCE TO AND CHANGES IN MAJOR PROGRAMS OF STUDY (<https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/37-00-entrance-to-a-college-or-major/>)

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Degree Requirements

For the Bachelor of Arts degree in Middle East Studies, a minimum of 120 credits is required:

Requirement	Credits
General Education	45
Electives	18
Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements	24
Requirements for the Major	33

Per Senate Policy 83-80.5, the college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of course work in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned. For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

Requirements for the Major

A grade of C or better is required for all courses in the major. To graduate, a student enrolled in the major must earn at least a C grade in each course designated by the major as a C-required course, as specified by Senate Policy 82-44 (<https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/#82-44>).

Code	Title	Credits
Prescribed Courses		
<i>Prescribed Courses: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
HIST/JST 181	Introduction to the Middle East	3
HIST/JST 305Y	Middle East Studies Research Workshop	3
Additional Courses		
<i>Additional Courses: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
Select 3 credits from the following:		3
CMLIT 7	Introduction to Middle Eastern Literatures	
HIST/ARAB/RLST 165	Islamic States, Societies and Cultures c. 600-1500	
HIST/JST 190	The Middle East Today	
PLSC 267N	Government and Politics of the Middle East	
RLST 107	Introduction to Islam	

Students should choose 24 credits from the list below with the following criteria: 9 credits at the 400-level; no more than 12 credits of languages. ¹

ANTH/JST/ PLSC/SOC 60N	Society and Cultures in Modern Israel
ARAB 1	Elementary Modern Standard Arabic I
ARAB 2	Elementary Modern Standard Arabic II
ARAB 3	Intermediate Modern Standard Arabic
ARAB 110	Arab Language, Cultures, and Current Topics
ARAB/RLST 164	Introduction to the Qur'an
ARAB/HIST/ RLST 165	Islamic States, Societies and Cultures c. 600-1500
ARAB 401	Advanced Language & Cultures I
ARAB 402	Advanced Language & Cultures II
ARTH 125	Islamic Architecture and Art
ASIA/HIST/ JST 186	The Silk Roads
ASIA 401	Technology & Society in Modern Asia
CAMS 10	Mesopotamian Civilization
CAMS 10U	MESOPOTAMIAN CIVILIZATION
CAMS 20	Egyptian Civilization
CAMS/RLST 44	Myth in Egypt and the Near East
CAMS/JST/ RLST 90	Jerusalem: Past, Present, and Future
CAMS/HIST/ JST/RLST 102	Ancient Israel
CAMS/HIST 104	Ancient Egypt
CAMS 115	Literature of the Ancient Near East
CAMS 405	Law & Economy in the Ancient Near East
CAMS 470	Languages and Cultures of the Ancient Near East
CMLIT 7	Introduction to Middle Eastern Literatures
CMLIT 449	Literary Cultures of Islam
HEBR 1	Basic Modern Hebrew I
HEBR 2	Basic Modern Hebrew II
HEBR 3	Intermediate Modern Hebrew
HEBR 401	Advanced Hebrew—Conversation Emphasis
HEBR 402	Advanced Hebrew—Reading Emphasis
HIST 105	The Byzantine Empire
HIST 106	Early Modern Empires of Islam: The Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals
HIST 108	Crusades: Holy War in the Middle Ages
HIST/JST 140	The History of the Israel-Palestine Conflict (1917-Present)
HIST 169	The Indian Ocean World
HIST/JST 193	Modern Iran
HIST 238N	Society and Culture in Palestine/Israel
HIST 245	Middle Eastern Cities
HIST 252	Revolutions in the Middle East
HIST/JST 260	The Middle East in Film
HIST/JST 416	Zionism
HIST/RLST 423	Orthodox Christianity: History and Interpretations
HIST/JST 443	Jewish Histories of the Middle East

HIST/RLST 471Y	Classical Islamic Civilization, 600-1258
HIST 472	The Ottoman Empire
HIST/JST 473	The Contemporary Middle East
PLSC 267N	Government and Politics of the Middle East
PLSC 467	International Relations of the Middle East
RLST 107	Introduction to Islam

¹ Honors version of courses may count toward the major. Additional courses may count toward the major in consultation with the director of Middle East Studies.

General Education

Connecting career and curiosity, the General Education curriculum provides the opportunity for students to acquire transferable skills necessary to be successful in the future and to thrive while living in interconnected contexts. General Education aids students in developing intellectual curiosity, a strengthened ability to think, and a deeper sense of aesthetic appreciation. These are requirements for all baccalaureate students and are often partially incorporated into the requirements of a program. For additional information, see the General Education Requirements (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/baccalaureate-degree-general-education-program/>) section of the Bulletin and consult your academic adviser.

The keystone symbol appears next to the title of any course that is designated as a General Education course. Program requirements may also satisfy General Education requirements and vary for each program.

Foundations (grade of C or better is required and Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Quantification (GQ):** 6 credits
- **Writing and Speaking (GWS):** 9 credits

Breadth in the Knowledge Domains (Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Arts (GA):** 3 credits
- **Health and Wellness (GHW):** 3 credits
- **Humanities (GH):** 3 credits
- **Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS):** 3 credits
- **Natural Sciences (GN):** 3 credits

Integrative Studies

- **Inter-Domain Courses (Inter-Domain):** 6 credits

Exploration

- **GN**, may be completed with Inter-Domain courses: 3 credits
- **GA, GH, GN, GS, Inter-Domain courses.** This may include 3 credits of World Language course work beyond the 12th credit level or the requirements for the student's degree program, whichever is higher: 6 credits

University Degree Requirements

First Year Engagement

All students enrolled in a college or the Division of Undergraduate Studies at University Park, and the World Campus are required to take 1 to 3 credits of the First-Year Seminar, as specified by their college First-Year Engagement Plan.

Other Penn State colleges and campuses may require the First-Year Seminar; colleges and campuses that do not require a First-Year Seminar provide students with a first-year engagement experience.

First-year baccalaureate students entering Penn State should consult their academic adviser for these requirements.

Cultures Requirement

6 credits are required and may satisfy other requirements

- United States Cultures: 3 credits
- International Cultures: 3 credits

Writing Across the Curriculum

3 credits required from the college of graduation and likely prescribed as part of major requirements.

Total Minimum Credits

A minimum of 120 degree credits must be earned for a baccalaureate degree. The requirements for some programs may exceed 120 credits. Students should consult with their college or department adviser for information on specific credit requirements.

Quality of Work

Candidates must complete the degree requirements for their major and earn at least a 2.00 grade-point average for all courses completed within their degree program.

Limitations on Source and Time for Credit Acquisition

The college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of course work in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned. Credit used toward degree programs may need to be earned from a particular source or within time constraints (see Senate Policy 83-80 (<https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/#83-80>)). For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

B.A. Degree Requirements

Foreign Language (0-12 credits): Student must attain 12th credit level of proficiency in one foreign language. See the Placement Policy for Penn State Foreign Language Courses (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/advising-planning-degree-program/course-placements/placement-policy-world-language-courses/>).

B.A. Fields (9 credits): Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Arts, Foreign Languages, Natural Sciences, Quantification (may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major; foreign language credits in this category must be in a second foreign language or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the first language)

Other Cultures (0-3 credits): Select 3 credits from approved list. Students may count courses in this category in order to meet other major, minor, elective, or General Education requirements, except for the General Education US/IL requirement.

Program Learning Objectives

- **Art and Literature:** Analyze, evaluate, and interpret forms of art, architecture, literature, music, or popular culture produced in or about the Middle East
- **Historical Trends:** Analyze historical trends and events in the Middle East

- **Physical and Social Geography:** Demonstrate an understanding of the physical geography and ecology of the Middle East and the diversity of the regions peoples, religions, and cultures
- **Political Systems:** Apply a critical lens to the current and historical political systems of the Middle East
- **Source Analysis:** Evaluate and interpret primary and secondary source materials, judging credibility, reconstructing context, and making inferences about genre, audience, perspective, and purpose

Academic Advising

The objectives of the university's academic advising program are to help advisees identify and achieve their academic goals, to promote their intellectual discovery, and to encourage students to take advantage of both in-and out-of class educational opportunities in order that they become self-directed learners and decision makers.

Both advisers and advisees share responsibility for making the advising relationship succeed. By encouraging their advisees to become engaged in their education, to meet their educational goals, and to develop the habit of learning, advisers assume a significant educational role. The advisee's unit of enrollment will provide each advisee with a primary academic adviser, the information needed to plan the chosen program of study, and referrals to other specialized resources.

READ SENATE POLICY 32-00: ADVISING POLICY (<https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/32-00-advising-policy/>)

University Park

Liberal Arts Academic Advising

814-865-2545

Use the Liberal Arts Meet the Academic Advisers web page (<https://la.psu.edu/student-services/academic-advising/meet-the-academic-advisers/>) to see the contact information for the specific adviser(s) of this program

Contact

University Park

MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES

108 Weaver Building

University Park, PA 16802

814-865-1367

bdw150@psu.edu

<https://mes.la.psu.edu/>