



Center for Middle Eastern and North African Studies

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Why should I study the Modern Middle Eastern and North Africa?

The Middle East and North Africa is certainly an area worth studying. With a tremendous diversity of cultures, religions, languages, and economic resources in a relatively small geographical space, the Middle East is not only rich with history, but is also tremendously relevant to current global issues. A hotbed of political and cultural activity and conflict, the Middle East is constantly in the international media, and due to the complex nature of these matters, it is important to have a strong understanding of the underlying issues and how they arose.

Additionally, with more and more college graduates entering the job pool each year, it is becoming increasingly important to demonstrate specialized skills in order to stand out to prospective employers. An area specialty such as the Middle East can be an important asset in standing apart from other candidates.

Which countries are considered to be part of the Middle East and North Africa?

While it has been a topic of debate, the Middle East is conventionally considered to include the countries of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey. Although each country is certainly made up of several different cultural and ethnic groups, the region shares a common history as well as common religions and languages.

How is the Middle East relevant to my broader areas of interest?

The Middle East and North Africa is extremely relevant to almost every area of interest. Here are just a few examples of how the region is an integral part of many international concerns.

- *Anthropology*: an extraordinary blend of diversity and continuity exists as a result of the several languages, cultures, religions, and forms of social organization present in the region
- *Archaeology*: among the most important archaeological sites in the world, the Middle East boasts evidence of early human settlement, the first cities, and the first large-scale civilizations
- *Architecture*: complex geometric patterns and colorful mosaics are featured in structures throughout the Middle East
- *Business*: imports/exports, as well as the global nature of today's market make the region an important area of commerce
- *Ecology/Natural Resources*: a shortage of fresh water and issues regarding oil extraction make the region of concern ecologically
- *Economics/Finance*: groups based in the Middle East such as the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) are an important factor in global economics
- *Government*: the difficulties involved with establishing and maintaining peace make the region an important area to study regarding the processes within governments as well as the interactions between them
- *History*: the Middle East's long history includes the biblical period, the emergence and expansion of Islam in the 7th and 8th centuries, the Crusades, and the emergence of Europe as a colonial power
- *Law*: issues such as human rights, women's rights, and victim's rights are at the foreground in many countries within the Middle East
- *Literature*: beyond religious texts, the region has produced several successful authors addressing such themes as exile, migration, and cultural issues
- *Medicine/ Public Health*: devastation from wars has left large numbers of people without adequate health care, creating a great need for international medical assistance
- *Philosophy/ Cultural Theory*: the region has been home to many great philosophers throughout the centuries, and there are currently several well-known Middle Eastern theorists who discuss and critique cultural issues
- *Religion*: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all have their origins in the Middle East

Career Opportunities

Graduates of the program have gone on to pursue a variety of successful careers. Our graduates now include Ambassadors, Foreign Services Officers, Lawyers, Journalists, and Professors. While many of these careers may require further education and training, an interdisciplinary area concentration such as [Modern Middle East and North African Studies](#) can provide a sturdy base from which to pursue future goals. Below are just a few ideas to consider:

Research/Education	Government/Public Administration	Business	Communication
Academics	Governmental Service	Business	Journalism
Scholar	State Department	Market Analyst	Foreign Correspondent
Professor	Military Service	International Consultant	Translator
Librarian	Central Intelligence	Lawyer	

K-12 Teacher	International Organizations
Anthropology	United Nations
Archaeology	Red Cross
Medical Services	International Public Health worker

Concentration Program Information

The Modern Middle East and North African Studies [Bachelor of Arts Concentration Program](#) is an interdisciplinary program designed to give students a broad background of the region including history, language, and culture. The faculty and courses are from several different departments within the [College of Literature, Science and the Arts](#), and it is the combination and coordination between them that provides a wide base of knowledge of past and present issues involving the region.

Advising: Prospective concentrators are encouraged to work closely with the Center's area concentration advisor. The advisor is an important guide, not only in ensuring that students complete their program requirements but also in providing additional support in planning for future opportunities.

Prerequisites: One of the following first year language sequences or the equivalent:

- Arabic (AAPTIS 101 and 102; AAPTIS 103 and 104)
- Armenian (AAPTIS 171 and 172; AAPTIS 181 and 182)
- Hebrew (HJCS 101 and 102)
- Persian (AAPTIS 141 and 142)
- Turkish (AAPTIS 151 and 152)

Some introductory classes are also strongly recommended, although not required:

- *Peoples of the Middle East* (AAPTIS 100)
- *Introduction to Islam* (AAPTIS 204)
- *Introduction to Near Eastern History* (History 240)

Program Requirements: A minimum of 30 credits chosen in consultation with and approved by the undergraduate concentration advisor. The courses chosen must include:

1. *Peoples and Cultures of the Near East and North Africa* (Anthropology 409)
2. *Modern Middle East History* (History 443) and one of the following: *The First Millennium of the Islamic Near East* (History 442), 538, 539, *Modern Iran and the Gulf States* (History 542) or 545.
3. One of the following Political Science courses: *The Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Poli Sci 353), *Israeli Society and Politics* (Poli Sci 452), *Government and Politics of the Middle East* (Poli Sci 453) or Poli Sci 476.

4. One year of an appropriate language of the area (Arabic, Armenian, Hebrew, Persian, Turkish) beyond the first-year level. For Arabic a student may choose one year of colloquial Arabic (such as Egyptian, Syrian) as the second year of language study.
5. Two approved electives with appropriate Middle East content from the following Departments: Anthropology, History, History of Art, Modern Middle East and & North African Studies, Near Eastern Studies, Political Science, and Sociology.

Honors Concentration

Special arrangements are made for qualified students to elect an Honors concentration. Honors candidates undertake independent research project for a senior Honors thesis. Prospective Honors concentrators should consult with the Honors concentration advisor before the end of the junior year and should enroll in one of the senior Honors thesis courses approved by the advisor.

Study Abroad Opportunities

Students are welcome and encouraged to spend some time studying abroad. The Center maintains updated information on several schools and accredited institutions, and other University resources such as the [Office of International Programs](#), the [International Center](#) and the [International Institute](#) are also well informed about study abroad opportunities. The student should meet with the concentration advisor prior to their departure in order to ensure that the credits are transferable and will meet necessary concentration requirements.

About Our Center

The Center for Middle Eastern and North African Studies was established as an interdisciplinary program to coordinate training and research between various departments within the University. [Faculty members](#) specializing in the Middle East represent the following disciplines:

Anthropology	Hebrew and Jewish Cultural Studies	Near Eastern Studies
Ancient Civilization and Biblical Studies	History	Political Science
Arabic, Armenian, Persian, Turkish, and Islamic Studies	History of Art	Religion
Comparative Literature	Judaic Studies	Sociology
		Women's Studies

The Center provides a variety of services to our students. Such services include academic and Honors advising, catalogued information on study abroad programs, and notification of University events related to the Middle East. The Center also brings in internationally renowned speakers for special lectures during the academic year.

The Center also offers a [Master of Arts program in Modern Middle Eastern and North African Studies](#) and dual degree programs with the Law School, the Business School and the School of Public Health.

The Department of Near Eastern Studies

The Center for Middle Eastern and North African Studies' interdisciplinary program is closely associated with the [Department of Near Eastern Studies](#) (NES), which provides several courses (including all relevant language instruction), faculty members, and resources to the Center and its concentration program. NES offers instruction with a more disciplinary focus in the languages, literatures, histories, and cultures of the ancient Near East and the medieval and modern Middle East. Language training serves as the foundation of NES undergraduate programs, which are designed to initiate academic study of the region, enhance the student's critical skills, and increase understanding of the historical processes behind the transmission and transformation of cultures.

Library Resources

The [Hatcher Graduate Library](#) contains more than 350,000 volumes in the field of [Middle Eastern Studies](#), including an estimated 205,000 volumes in Arabic, Armenian, Hebrew, Persian, and Turkish. In addition, other on-campus library collections have specialized materials on the Middle East and include: the [Law Library](#) (which houses an extensive collection on Islamic Law as well as civil and criminal law of the Middle East), [Kresge Business Library](#) (an excellent collection on economics and business in the Middle East), [Music](#) (printed music and recordings), [Shapiro Undergraduate Library](#) (photographs, negatives, slides and microfilms), and [Public Health](#). In addition, the University has major collections of artifacts from the Middle East in the [Kelsey Museum](#) and the [Museum of Anthropology](#).