



MIDDLE EAST CENTER

University of Pennsylvania

MODERN MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES

Approved Course List

Modern Middle Eastern Studies

Course List

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Course List

There has rarely been a time in which an in-depth understanding of the languages, cultures, history, and politics of the contemporary Middle East has been more important. This interdisciplinary degree is designed to allow students to specialize in the Middle East as a region of the world by combining course work using both social scientific and humanistic approaches, underpinned by relevant language skills. Students will work with faculty committed to supporting interdisciplinary, applied, research-oriented advanced study. The major gives students opportunities to work on problems of politics, policy, history, ideology, literature, social thought, economic development, and international relations.

The Major:

The major consists of at least 12 course units to be distributed as follows:

- (1) Disciplinary Distribution: A selection of three courses that must include both the Social Sciences and the Humanities – three course units
- (2) Language: Four course units on one Middle Eastern Language (e.g.: Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, or Turkish) including at least two course units at the intermediate (second year) level or above.
- (3) Regional coverage: Three course units, including at least one foundational course and at least one course centered on a culture other than that associated with the language selected in (2). One or two of these may be courses about the Middle East region in general.
- (4) Two seminar courses requiring significant research papers.

The Minor:

At least six course units on the Middle East including the following:

- (1) Two courses from the Humanities
- (2) Two courses from the Social Sciences
- (3) Two elective courses (which may include two language courses in a single language)

Course List Key:

Blue: Course Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

Orange: Course Fulfills MMES Social Sciences Requirement

Green: Course Fulfills MMES Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

Purple: MMES Foundational Course

Highlighted: Prior Approval from Middle East Center Required for Course to Fulfill MMES Requirement

Foundational Courses in Modern Middle Eastern Studies

Art History

ARTH 217 – Islamic Civilization & Its Visual Culture

History

HIST 023 – Intro to Middle East

HIST 081 – History of the Middle East Since 1800

HIST 371 – Africa and the Middle East

Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations

NELC 102 – Introduction to the Middle East

Political Science

PSCI 211 – Politics in the Contemporary Middle East

PSCI 253 – International Relations of the Middle East

Religious Studies

RELS 143 – Introduction to Islam

RELS 146 – Islam in the Modern World

All Modern Middle Eastern Studies majors MUST take at least one foundational course. Note that not every foundational course is offered every year.

Modern Middle Eastern Studies 2021-2022 Course List

Africana Studies

AFRC 233 World History: Africa or the Middle East

African cities in the past contributed to dynamic and prosperous civilizations. What happened? This course examines Africans' aspirations of modernity through the lens of African urban history using fiction, film and current scholarship in several disciplines. Each class will explore two temporalities--the precolonial history of African cities, and the colonial and postcolonial histories of economic, social and political progress which goes by the name of development. Grounded in the case studies of both ancient and modern cities, this course explores the emergence and decline of trading centers, the rise of colonial cities, and the dilemmas of postcolonial economies and politics.

Taught by: Babou, Powell

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: **GSWS 232, HIST 232, NELC 282**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Notes: Topics vary: See the Africana Studies Program's website at www.sas.upenn.edu/africana for a description of the current offerings.

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement
(Prior Approval from MEC Required for MMES Credit)

AFRC 274 Faces of Jihad in African Islam

This course is designed to provide the students with a broad understanding of the history of Islam in Africa. The focus will be mostly on West Africa, but we will also look at developments in other regions of the continent. We will explore Islam not only as religious practice but also as ideology and an instrument of social change. We will examine the process of islamization in Africa and the different uses of Jihad. Topics include prophetic jihad, jihad of the pen and the different varieties of jihad of the

sword throughout the history in Islam in sub-Saharan Africa.

Taught by: Babou

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: **HIST 275**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

AFRC 332 North Africa: History, Culture, Society

This interdisciplinary seminar aims to introduce students to the countries of North Africa, with a focus on the Maghreb and Libya (1830-present). It does so while examining the region's close economic and cultural connections to sub-Saharan Africa, Europe, and the Middle East. Readings will include histories, political analysis, anthropological studies, and novels, and will cover a wide range of topics such as colonial and postcolonial experiences, developments in Islamic thought and practice, and labor migration. This class is intended for juniors, seniors, and graduate students.

Taught by: Sharkey

Course not offered every year

Prerequisites: A university-level survey course in Middle Eastern, African, or Mediterranean history.

Also Offered As: **AFRC 632, HIST 370, NELC 332, NELC 632**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

AFRC 372 Africa & the Mid-East

This seminar will explore the historical relationship between these two regions from the early modern age to the present. We will examine the history of trade, particularly the slave trade, and its cultural and political legacy. We will compare the experiences of European imperialism--how the scramble for Africa dovetailed with the last decades of the Ottoman Empire--with an eye to how this shaped nationalist movements in both regions. The

course will also explore the decades of independence with a special eye towards pan-Africanism and pan-Arabism. We will also study the ramifications of the Arab-Israeli conflict on the relationship between African and Middle-Eastern countries, from Uganda to Ethiopia, from OPEC to Darfur. This course will pay close attention to migrations through the regions, whether forced or economic or religious. Whenever possible we will explore, through film and literature, how people in Africa and the Middle East see their connections, and their differences.

Taught by: Eve Troutt Powell, Young
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: **HIST 371, NELC 334**
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

AFRC 392 Queering North African Subjectivities

This seminar will explore the ways in which literary and visual representations of sexual difference and gender roles disrupt the cultural imagination of everyday life in North Africa and its Diasporas. Special attention will be given to representations of Arab women and queer subjectivities as sites of resistance against dominant masculinity. We will analyze the ways in which representations of gender have allowed for a redeployment of power, a reconfiguration of politics of resistance, and the redrawing of longstanding images of Islam in France. Finally, we will question how creations that straddle competing cultural traditions, memories and material conditions can queer citizenship. Course taught in English.

Taught by: Gueydan-Turek
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: **COML 393, FREN 392, GSWs 392**
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

Anthropology

ANTH 053 Music in Troubled Places

In this class, we go beyond the headlines to discuss the history and cultures of peoples who have had to endure terrible suffering, particularly through ethnic conflict and civil war. We will focus on a curious phenomenon: populations typically defined as separate from one another (e.g., Israelis and Palestinians) often have a history of shared or related cultural practices, of which music is a prime example. We will survey a number of current and recent conflict zones and use music as a way to deepen our understanding of the identities and relationships between the peoples involved including through a consideration of my own fieldwork in Sri Lanka. Querying the very definitions of music, trouble, and place, the course then broadens out to consider how musicians have been affected by and/or responded to important global problems like slavery, sexual violence, climate change and other ecological disasters, like Hurricane Katrina. Regions to be considered in our lectures and/or readings include: Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria (including Kurdish musics), Israel-Palestine, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Myanmar/Burma, Uganda, Sierra Leone, North and South Korea, the Marshall Islands, Cambodia, Mexico, and the United States.

Taught by: Sykes
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: **MUSC 053, NELC 054**
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

ANTH 110 Water in the Middle East Throughout History

The role of water in the Middle East cannot be overstated. The Middle East is an arid region, but human and natural systems have interacted to determine relative water scarcity and abundance at different times and places. The location, accessibility, yield, and quality of natural and

managed water resources significantly influenced the location and longevity of ancient and modern settlements. Control of water has always affected the economic, political, social life of the communities inhabiting these settlements. This course examines the distribution of water resources throughout the Middle East and the archaeology and anthropology of water exploitation and management over the last 9000 years. It will consider water in river valleys, deserts, highland zones, steppes, and coastal areas of Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Levant, and Arabia from environmental, political, social, cultural, and technical perspectives. We will engage with a variety of media, including academic readings, popular journalism, films, satellite imagery, and digital maps. We will examine irrigation, water supply, sanitation, and water-driven power systems known from ethnographic studies and archaeological excavations. These data will allow us to engage with debates in Middle Eastern anthropology, including those concerning the relationship between water and political power, the environment in which the earliest cities arose, and present and potential future water crises and "water wars." In our final weeks, we will discuss archaeology and historical anthropology's contribution to conceptions of water "sustainability" and examine attempts to revive traditional and ancient technologies in an effort to better manage modern water resources.

Taught by: Emily Hammer

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: **NELC 111**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

ANTH 284 World Heritage in Global Conflict

Heritage is always political. Such a statement might refer to the everyday politics of local stakeholder interests on one end of the spectrum, or the volatile politics of destruction and erasure of heritage during conflict, on the other. If heritage is always political then one might expect that the workings of World

Heritage might be especially fraught given the international dimension. In particular, the intergovernmental system of UNESCO World Heritage must navigate the inherent tension between state sovereignty and nationalist interests and the wider concerns of a universal regime. The World Heritage List has almost 1200 properties has many such contentious examples, including sites in Iraq, Mali, Syria, Crimea, Palestine, Armenia and Cambodia. As an organization UNESCO was born of war with an explicit mission to end global conflict and help the world rebuild materially and morally yet has found its own history increasingly entwined with that of international politics and violence.

Taught by: Meskell

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: **ANTH 584, CLST 284, HSPV 584, NELC 292**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Social Sciences Requirement

ANTH 325 Who Owns the Past? Archaeology and Politics in the Middle East

This course explores the role of cultural heritage and archaeological discoveries in the politics of the Middle East from the nineteenth century to the recent aftermath of the Arab Spring. We will explore how modern Middle East populations relate to their pasts and how archaeology and cultural heritage have been employed to support particular political and social agendas, including colonialism, nationalism, imperialism, and the construction of ethnic-religious identities. Although it was first introduced to the Middle East as a colonial enterprise by European powers, archaeology became a pivotal tool for local populations of the Middle East to construct new histories and identities during the post-World War I period of intensive nation-building after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. To understand this process, we will first look at the nineteenth-century establishment of archaeology by institutions like the Penn Museum. Then we will move on to individual case studies in

Turkey, Iraq, Egypt, Israel/Palestine, Iran, and the republics of former Soviet Transcaucasia to look at the role of archaeology and cultural heritage in the formation of these countries as modern nation-states with a shared identity among citizens. We will conclude with an examination of the recent impact of the Islamic State on material heritage in Syria and Iraq, the changing attitudes of Middle Eastern countries toward foreign museums, and the role of UNESCO in defining Middle Eastern sites of world heritage. The course will also include field trips to the Penn Museum.

For BA Students: History and Tradition Sector

Taught by: Hammer

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: **NELC 325**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

ANTH 351 Women Making History: The Penn Museum and the Centennial 2020

The year 2020 marks the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which declared that the right of citizens to vote "shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex". To mark this centennial - to both celebrate it and critically assess its impact on American society - we will investigate the history of women at the Penn Museum as archaeologists, ethnographers, epigraphers, philanthropists, and more. At the same time, we will examine material in the Penn Museum that women collected, donated, or studied. Our goal will be to produce original research that may contribute to future exhibits and publications as well as to broader public forums. Sponsored by the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, our seminar will focus heavily on western Asia, southeastern Europe, and North Africa - all zones that scholars have variously associated with the Near East or Middle East, and where the Penn Museum has been active since its foundation in 1887. To situate the Penn Museum and its collections within a global and comparative

frame, we will also study select women who made major scholarly contributions to other parts of the world such as the Americas and Oceania. Among the figures we will study are Sarah Yorke Stevenson (Egypt), Katharine Woolley (Mesopotamia/Iraq), Harriet Boyd Hawes (Ottoman Crete and Greece), Florence Shotridge (Alaska), Zelia Nuttall (Mexico and Russia), and Tatiana Proskouriakoff (Guatemala). We will venture into many different kinds of history. In regional terms, our scope will be transnational and international: we will cover the United States and the Middle East in the wider world. In thematic and methodological terms, we will approach our subject through biography, oral history, and microhistory; material history and museum studies; cultural and intellectual history; women's and gender studies; and the history of academic disciplines, especially archaeology and anthropology. Some background in Middle Eastern history; or Anthropology; or Women's History; or Museum Studies recommended.

Taught by: Sharkey

Course offered spring; even-numbered years

Also Offered As: **ANTH 531, GSWS 331, GSWS 533, NELC 331, NELC 531**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

ANTH 615 Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan: Islamism, Terrorism and Globalization

Why are Islam and the Middle East continually in the news in the Western world, and why are Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan the countries that are most frequently named? Fifty years ago, before the terms "Islamism" and "terrorism" were coined, and before we began talking about globalization, things were very different. All three countries had close relations with Europe and America. In this course we will track the various currents of social change that produced the current situation, using the methods and theoretical concepts of anthropology. We will follow the news in the course of the semester and track the way things are continuing to change, so

that at the end of the semester we can understand the region and its problems in the context of world history and globalization. Instead of an exam at the end of the semester, you will be asked to write a short essay (1000 words) on a question at the end of January relating to issues we have discussed in class, and again at the end of February and March, and to formulate a research question on a problem that interests you in the history of the area and try to answer it a a final paper by the end of the examination period.

Taught by: Spooner

Course not offered every year

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Social Sciences Requirement

Arabic

ARAB 031 Elementary Arabic I

This is the beginners course in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). It will introduce you to the speaking, listening, reading and writing skills in the standard means of communication in the Arab World. The course is proficiency-based, implying that all activities within the course are aimed at placing you, the learner, in the context of the native-speaking environment from the very beginning. Evaluation is done by the more traditional testing methods (vocabulary tests, dictations, grammar and translation exercises). We anticipate that by the end of this course (ARAB 031) students will range in proficiency from Novice High to Intermediate Low on the ACTFL scale; in other words (using the terminology of the government's Foreign Service Institute), from 'incipient survival' to 'full' survival' in the native-speaking environment.

For BA Students: Language Course

Course usually offered in fall term

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

ARAB 032 Elementary Arabic II

This course is a continuation of ARAB 031/631.

For BA Students: Language Course

Course usually offered in spring term

Prerequisite: **ARAB 031**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

ARAB 033 Intermediate Arabic III

This is the continuation of the Elementary course in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). This course is also proficiency-based, implying that all activities within the course are aimed at placing you, the learner, in the context of the native-speaking environment from the very beginning. This is the continuation of ARAB031 and ARAB 032, the elementary course in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). This course is also proficiency-based, implying that all activities within the course are aimed at placing you, the learner, in the context of the native-speaking environment from the very beginning. As in ARAB 031-032, evaluation is done by the more traditional testing methods (vocabulary tests, grammar and translation exercises). We anticipate that students range from Intermediate Low to Intermediate High according to the ACTFL scale.

For BA Students: Language Course

Course usually offered in fall term

Prerequisites: **ARAB 032 or equivalent**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

ARAB 034 Intermediate Arabic IV

This course is a continuation of ARAB 033/633.

For BA Students: Last Language Course

Course usually offered in spring term

Prerequisite: **ARAB 033**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

ARAB 035 Advanced Intermediate Arabic I

This is a proficiency-based course which continues from the first intermediate course, ARAB 033/034. Emphasis continues to be on all four language skills: Speaking, Listening, Reading, & Writing. The readings for the class are chosen from actual texts from both medieval and modern Arabic in a variety of fields and subjects. Students will be expected to give classroom presentations and to write short essays in Arabic. Evaluation will be both Achievement- and proficiency- based.

For BA Students: Advanced Language Course
Course usually offered in fall term
Prerequisite: **ARAB 034**
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

ARAB 036 Advanced Intermediate Arabic II

This course is a continuation of ARAB 035/635.

For BA Students: Advanced Language Course
Course usually offered in spring term
Prerequisite: **ARAB 035**
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

ARAB 037 Advanced Arabic and Syntax I

Advanced syntax through the reading of Arab grammarians. Development of reading in bulk. Emphasis on classical Arabic read in works by medieval and modern writers. This course is designed to give the student experience in reading whole works in Arabic and giving reports on them.

For BA Students: Advanced Language Course
Course usually offered in fall term
Prerequisites: **ARAB 036/636 or permission of the instructor**
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

ARAB 039 Colloquial Arabic

A one-semester, introductory course to the spoken Arabic of one of the regions of the Arab world, chosen according to the dialect of instructor.

One-term course offered either term
Prerequisite: **ARAB 032**
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

ARAB 041 Beginning Arabic I

This is a beginner course in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). It will introduce you to the speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills in the standard means of communication in the Arab world. The course is proficiency-based, implying that all activities are aimed at placing you, the learner, in the context of the native-speaking environment from the very beginning. Evaluation is done by the more traditional testing methods (vocabulary tests, dictations, grammar and translation exercises). We anticipate that by the end of this course (ARAB 041) students will range in proficiency from Novice High to Intermediate Low on the ACTFL scale; in other words (using the terminology of the government's Foreign Service Institute), from 'incipient survival' to 'full' survival' in the native-speaking environment.

Course usually offered in fall term
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: This course does not fulfill the College/Wharton language requirement.

ARAB 042 Beginning Arabic II

For BA Students: Language Course
Course usually offered in spring term
Prerequisites: ARAB 041 or permission of the instructor. See the LPS Course Guide. **This course does not fulfill the College language requirement.
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

ARAB 043 Continuing Arabic III

This is the continuation of ARAB041 and ARAB 042, the elementary course in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). This course is also proficiency-based, implying that all activities within the course are aimed at placing you, the learner, in the context of the native-speaking environment from the very beginning. As in ARAB 041-042, evaluation is done by the more traditional testing methods (vocabulary tests, grammar and translation exercises). Completion of this course fulfills the College of Liberal and Professional Studies language requirement in Arabic but not for the School of Arts and Sciences. However, it should be emphasized that you will need a longer period of study to achieve proficiency in Arabic. We anticipate that students range from Intermediate Low to Intermediate High according to the ACTFL scale.

Course usually offered in fall term

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Notes: See the CLPS Course Guide. **This course does not fulfill the College language requirement.

ARAB 044 Continuing Arabic IV

Course usually offered in spring term

Prerequisites: ARAB 043 or permission of the instructor See the LPS Course Guide. **This course does not fulfill the College language requirement.

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Notes: See the LPS Course Guide. **This course does not fulfill the College language requirement.

ARAB 131 Intensive Elementary Arabic I&II

This is a six-week intensive beginners' course in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). It will introduce the student to speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills in the standard means of communication in the Arabic world. The course is proficiency-based, implying that all activities are aimed at placing the student in the context of the native-speaking

environment from the very beginning. Evaluation is done by the more traditional testing methods (vocabulary tests, dictations, grammar and translation exercises). We anticipate that by the end of this course (ARAB 041) students will range in proficiency from Novice High to Intermediate Low on the ACTFL scale; in ot the terminology of the government's Foreign Service Institute) survival' to 'full survival' in the native-speaking environment.

For BA Students: Language Course

Course usually offered summer term only

Activity: Lecture

2.0 Course Units

Notes: Offered through the College of Liberal and Professional Studies Summer Session I.

ARAB 133 Intensive Intermediate Arabic I&II

This is a six-week intensive course offered in the summer through LPS; see the Penn Summer Course Guide. This is the continuation of ARAB031-32 or ARAB 131, the elementary course in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). This course is also proficiency-based, implying that all activities within the course are aimed at placing the student in the context of the native-speaking environment from the very beginning. As in ARAB 031-032 or ARAB 131, evaluation is done by the more traditional testing methods (vocabulary tests, grammar and translation exercises). Completion of this course fulfills the College of Arts and Sciences language requirement in Arabic. However, it should be emphasized that the student will need a longer period of study to achieve proficiency in Arabic. We anticipate that students range from Intermediate Low to Intermediate High according to the ACTFL scale.

For BA Students: Last Language Course

Course usually offered summer term only

Activity: Lecture

2.0 Course Units

Notes: Offered through the College of Liberal and Professional Studies Summer Session I.

ARAB 135 Intensive Advanced Intermediate Arabic I&II

This is a six-week intensive course offered in the summer through LPS; see Penn Summer Course Guide. It continues from the first intermediate course, ARAB 033/034 or ARAB 133. Emphasis continues to be on all four language skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Students will be expected to give classroom presentations and to write short essays in Arabic. Evaluation will be both achievement-based and proficiency-based. There is no Oral Proficiency Interview at the end of this session, but we anticipate that by the end of this, third year students will range in proficiency from Intermediate High to Advanced Mid on the ACTFL scale.

For BA Students: Advanced Language Course

Course usually offered summer term only

Activity: Lecture

2.0 Course Units

Notes: Offered through the College of Liberal and Professional Studies Summer Session I.

ARAB 180 Arabic in Residence

The Arabic House is dedicated to practicing Modern Standard Arabic outside of the classroom setting. The group meets two evenings per week for an hour of conversation practice, snacks, and mint tea. Conversations are both casual and group-led. Members are encouraged to bring any questions about their homework from class or about the Arabic language in general. Additional cultural activities may take place in Gregory, elsewhere at Penn or throughout Philadelphia. All students and Arabic enthusiasts, whether graduate or undergraduate, first-semester beginners or native speakers, are welcome to attend. Dedicated undergraduate students may choose to enroll for credit (Arabic 180).

Course usually offered in Spring term

Activity: Seminar

0.5 Course Units

ARAB 235 The Adab Tradition

Taught by: Fakhreddine, H.

Course not offered every year

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

ARAB 331 Advanced Spoken Standard Arabic

The course will concentrate on the reading and speaking skills at the advanced level. Students will be assigned reading and audio-visual materials on which to prepare oral classroom presentations. Final examination in the course will be based on performance in the oral proficiency interview.

For BA Students: Advanced Language Course

One-term course offered either term

Prerequisite: ARAB 036/636

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

ARAB 333 Readings in the Qur'an and Tafsir

This course has two goals: to introduce undergraduate students to reading the Qur'an in Arabic, and to enhance the speaking, listening, and writing skills in MSA. Through the reading and study of selected major Qur'anic narratives and commentary (tafsir), students will become familiar with Qur'anic vocabulary, style, recitation practices, and other intricacies of the Qur'anic text. All students will also memorize a short sura of their choice and practice reciting it in an aesthetically appropriate manner (typically suras 1, 112, 113, or 114). Taught in MSA with writing assignments in MSA.

Taught by: Lowry

Course offered spring; even-numbered years

Prerequisites: **ARAB 035 or permission of the instructor**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

ARAB 432 Arabic Readings in Belles-Lettres

This course aims to improve reading skills and vocabulary by introducing students to extensive passages taken from a variety of Arabic literary genres from all periods. Taught in MSA with writing assignments in MSA.

For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector

Course usually offered in fall term

Prerequisite: **Proficiency in ARAB 036/636**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

ARAB 433 Arabic Readings in the Social Sciences and the Media

This course trains students to be proficient with written materials and media in MSA. This class will explore the Middle East through timely analysis of Arabic media as well as original analysis of the ideological, intellectual, social, cultural, and religious background to current events, including the Arab Spring and its aftermath. It is intended that, upon completion of this course, students will be able to work independently with a variety of media texts at different levels. Taught in MSA with writing assignments in MSA.

Course offered spring; odd-numbered years

Prerequisites: **Completion of ARAB 036/636 or permission of the instructor**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

ARAB 434 Readings in Arabic Literature

Course not offered every year

Prerequisite: **Reading knowledge of Arabic**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

ARAB 436 Introduction to Pre-Modern Arabic Texts

This course aims to provide incoming graduate students and advanced undergraduate students with an introduction to issues in Arabic grammar and syntax that commonly arise in pre-modern Arabic texts. Students will also be introduced to, and expected to consult, the standard reference works used as aids in reading such texts. Students will be expected to prepare a text or set of texts assigned by the instructor for each session. It is intended that, upon completion of this course, students will be able to work independently with a wide variety of pre-modern Arabic texts. Although the texts in this course are pre-modern, the course reinforces MSA reading skills.

Taught by: Lowry

Course offered fall; even-numbered years

Prerequisites: **Completion of ARAB 036/636 Advanced Intermediate Arabic; or permission of the instructor**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Notes: May be taken twice for credit with instructors permission.

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

ARAB 437 History & Fiction in Arabic

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

ARAB 533 Readings in Islamic Law

Taught by: Lowry

Course not offered every year

Prerequisites: **Completion of ARAB036/636 or permission of the instructor**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

ARAB 534 Arabic: Reading Historical Manuscripts

Arabic language is used by many societies not only in communication but also in correspondence and in documenting the affairs of their daily lives. Arabic script is adopted by many groups whose native languages are not Arabic, in writing their language before some moved to the Roman alphabet. In many historical documents specific style of writing and handwriting are dominant. This specificity is influenced by the dialectical variations, the historical development of each region and the level of Arabic literacy and use.

Taught by: Dinar

Course not offered every year

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

ARAB 731 Topics in Islamic Studies

Topics vary from year to year in accordance with the interests and needs of students. Although this course typically focuses on premodern Arabic texts, the readings reinforce MSA reading skills.

Taught by: Lowry

One-term course offered either term

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Notes: ARAB 436 or equivalent

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

ARAB 733 Arabic Texts in Islamic History

This is a graduate seminar course in which different genres of premodern Arabic texts are covered at the advanced graduate level. Students in this course are expected to be able to read and prepare (vowel, parse, and translate) passages from Arabic texts on a weekly basis and to be able to discuss them critically during the class itself. Topics are chosen to reflect student interest. Recent and potential topics include: Geographers and travel accounts; biographical dictionaries; chronicles; heresiography; poetry;

memoir and sira. Although this course typically focuses on premodern Arabic texts, the readings reinforce MSA reading skills.

Taught by: Cobb

Course not offered every year

Prerequisites: **ARAB 036 or permission of the instructor**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

ARAB 734 Selected Topics in Arabic Literature

This is a survey of Arabic poetry from the Pre-Islamic era until today. Readings will be selected to trace major thematic and formal developments in Arabic poetry. Readings also include excerpts from modern critical scholarship on the topic in Arabic. The class aims to introduce students to the basics of academic research and writing in Arabic. The class is taught in MSA with oral presentations and writing assignments in MSA.

Taught by: Fakhreddine

Course not offered every year

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

Art & Archaeology of the Mediterranean World

AAMW 435 Medieval Islamic Art & Architecture

An introduction to the major architectural monuments and trends, as well as to the best-known objects of the medieval (seventh-to fourteenth-century) Islamic world. Attention is paid to such themes as the continuity of late antique themes, architecture as symbol of community and power, the importance of textiles and primacy of writing. Suitable for students of literature, history, anthropology as well as art history.

Taught by: Holod
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

AAMW 531 Later Islamic Art and Architecture

Istanbul, Samarkand, Isfahan, Cairo and Delhi as major centers of art production in the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries. Attention is given to urban and architectural achievement as well as to the key monuments of painting and metalwork. The visual environment of the "gunpowder empires" is discussed.

Taught by: Holod
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

AAMW 606 Pastoral Nomadism in the Past and Present

Pastoral nomadism is a "third way" of human subsistence separate from farming and foraging. It is a sustainable human adaptation to grassland and arid environments practiced through particular technologies and domesticated animals. This course begins by examining the human ecology and social organization that emerge from mobile ways of life, drawing on modern, ethnographic, and archaeological examples of pastoral nomadic groups in the Middle East and Central Asia. Academic readings and ethnographic films will form the basis of discussions about several larger themes, including: the origins of pastoral nomadism and horse riding; the development of dairy-based foods and human adaptations allowing the digestion of lactose; the historical relationship between mobile groups of pastoralists and territorial states; popular perceptions of nomads in various forms of historical and modern media; and the influence of ideas about nomads on modern senses of heritage and nationalism in the Middle East and Central Asia.

Taught by: Hammer
Also Offered As: **ANTH 108, NELC 106, NELC 606**
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Social Sciences Requirement

AAMW 635 Introduction to Visual Culture of the Islamic World

A one-semester survey of Islamic art and architecture which examines visual culture as it functions within the larger sphere of Islamic culture in general. Particular attention will be given to relationships between visual culture and literature, using specific case studies, sites or objects which may be related to various branches of Islamic literature, including historical, didactic, philosophical writings, poetry and religious texts. All primary sources are available in English translation.

Taught by: Holod
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

AAMW 737 Islamic Architecture

This seminar will address the problems of studying architecture in the Islamic world. Considered will be issues of architectural design, regional and trans-regional constructional traditions, structural know-how and innovation, patronage and use. The examples discussed will be mainly religious and social service complexes. Attention will be paid to the manner of transmission of architectural design knowledge and constructional skill.

Taught by: Holod
Also Offered As: **ARTH 737**
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

AAMW 738 Topics in Islamic Archaeology

Topic varies. Spring 2017: This seminar will trace the development of the field from one that was centered largely on the recovery of major monuments to one in which issues of daily life, demography, chronology and the study of settlement patterns have come to play a major role. The seminar will review work in the major zones of the Islamic world: Central Asia, Iran, Iraq, Anatolia, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, North Africa I (Libya-Tunisia), North Africa II (Algeria- Morocco), Spain. Of special interest this semester will be the study of landscape archaeology and settlement patterns. The seminar will discuss changes in patterns of settlement, trade and material culture 650 - 1300 CE in different areas of the Islamic world, concentrating on sites in Iran, Syria and North Africa.

Taught by: Holod

Course not offered every year

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

Art History

ARTH 233 Eastern Medieval Architecture

This lecture course examines major architectural developments in the eastern Mediterranean between the 4th and 14th centuries CE. The focus is on the Byzantine Empire, with its capital at Constantinople. Lectures also devoted to related developments in the Caucasus (Armenia and Georgia), early Russia, the Balkans (Bulgaria and Serbia), Sicily and under the Normans, the Crusader states. Parallel developments in early Islamic architecture are used for comparative purposes. The course examines evidence for religious and secular buildings, as well as urbanism and settlement patterns.

Taught by: Ousterhout

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: **AAMW 633, ARTH 633**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Social Sciences Requirement

ARTH 235 Introduction to Visual Culture of the Islamic World

A one-semester survey of Islamic art and architecture which examines visual culture as it functions within the larger sphere of Islamic culture in general. Particular attention will be given to relationships between visual culture and literature, using specific case studies, sites or objects which may be related to various branches of Islamic literature, including historical, didactic, philosophical writings, poetry and religious texts. All primary sources are available in English translation.

For BA Students: Humanities and Social Sciences
Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: **AAMW 635, ARTH 635, NELC 285, NELC 685, VLST 235**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

ARTH 435 Medieval Islamic Art & Architecture

An introduction to the major architectural monuments and trends, as well as to the best-known objects of the medieval (seventh-to fourteenth-century) Islamic world. Attention is paid to such themes as the continuity of late antique themes, architecture as symbol of community and power, the importance of textiles and primacy of writing. Suitable for students of literature, history, anthropology as well as art history.

Taught by: Holod

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: **AAMW 435, NELC 489**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

ARTH 536 Manuscript Arts in the Islamic World

This hands-on seminar will explore the long tradition of manuscript-making and manuscript-makers in the Islamic world, using the extensive collections of Arab, Persian, Turkish and Indian volumes at the University of Pennsylvania and the Free Library of Philadelphia. These include copies of the Qur'an (Islam's holy text) and other religious, scientific, historical and literary texts. Emphasis will be placed on traditional materials and artistic techniques, specifically calligraphy, binding, illumination and illustration, as well as on production methods and the historical, social, and economic contexts in which manuscripts were made, used and collected from early Islamic times to the early modern period. Also at issue will be the ways that Islamic manuscripts were transformed over the centuries as they journeyed from their diverse places of origin (Egypt, Morocco, Syria, Iran, India, etc.) to Philadelphia. The goal is the art historical skills involved in the study of Islamic codices, through close examination, discussion and presentation, and to recognize that every manuscript has a story. Most of the class sessions will be held either at the Kislak Center in Van Pelt Library or at the Free Library on the Parkway.

Taught by: Simpson

Also Offered As: **NELC 538**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

ARTH 737 Islamic Architecture

This seminar will address the problems of studying architecture in the Islamic world. Considered will be issues of architectural design, regional and trans-regional constructional traditions, structural know-how and innovation, patronage and use. The examples discussed will be mainly religious and social service complexes. Attention will be paid to the manner of transmission of architectural design knowledge and constructional skill.

Taught by: Holod

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: **AAMW 737**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

ARTH 738 Topics in Islamic Archaeology

Topic varies. Fall 2019's seminar will address the problems of studying architecture in the Islamic world. Considered will be issues of architectural design, regional and trans-regional constructional traditions, structural know-how and innovation, patronage and use. The examples discussed will be mainly religious and social service complexes. Attention will be paid to the manner of transmission of architectural design knowledge and constructional skill.

Taught by: Holod

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: **AAMW 738, NELC 731**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

Cinema and Media Studies

CIMS 036 The Middle East through Many Lenses

This freshman seminar introduces the contemporary Middle East by drawing upon cutting-edge studies written from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. These include history, political science, and anthropology, as well as studies of mass media, sexuality, religion, urban life, and the environment. We will spend the first few weeks of the semester surveying major trends in modern Middle Eastern history. We will spend subsequent weeks intensively discussing assigned readings along with documentary films that we will watch in class. The semester will leave students with both a foundation in Middle Eastern studies and a sense of current directions in the field.

Taught by: Sharkey H

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: **NELC 036**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

CIMS 118 Iranian Cinema: Gender, Politics, Religion

This seminar explores Iranian culture, art, history and politics through film in the contemporary era. We will examine a variety of works that represent the social, political, economic and cultural circumstances of post-revolutionary Iran. Along the way, we will discuss issues pertaining to gender, religion, nationalism, ethnicity, and the function of cinema in present day Iranian society. Films to be discussed will be by internationally acclaimed filmmakers, such as Abbas Kiarostami, Mohsen Makhmalbaf, Rakhshan Bani-Etemad, Tahmineh Milani, Jafar Panahi, Bahman Ghobadi, among others.

Taught by: Entezari

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: **COML 120, GSWs 118, NELC 118, NELC 618**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

CIMS 149 Filming the Middle East

This course will take us through the history of the modern Middle East as told by the region's many film-makers. We will explore how cinema developed and grew throughout countries like Egypt, Iran, Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Israel and Palestine. Unusually for a typical course on the Middle East, we will also pay close attention to North Africa's film industry, with a deep exploration of the cinema of Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. Sudanese films will be an important part of our study as well. Many of these countries' film industries grew under European occupation and colonialism. With independence, were more markets available to Middle Eastern films? Where did

directors and screenwriters train? Who were the intended audiences for these films? We will watch canonical films from the region, many of which focus on or reflect the political turmoil and aftermath of wars. But we will also examine the lightness of comedies, which were usually much more popular with Middle Eastern audiences, and which reveal every bit as much about the region's histories. And we will watch and discuss a phenomenon not found in Western cinema - the Ramadan soap operas and historical reenactments that are unique to the Middle East.

Taught by: Troutt-Powell

Also Offered As: **HIST 149, NELC 149**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

CIMS 159 Modern Hebrew Literature and Film in Translation: Autobiography

Like James Joyce's Dublin, Carl Sandburg's Chicago, or even Woody Allen's Paris, cities have long been the object of yearning and the subject of art. In the time of a pandemic, the idea of the city is associated with new challenges and emotions. This course examines how cities are forged in cinema, literature and scholarship as well as the role of their architecture. While we focus on Israeli cities like Jerusalem, Tiberias, or Tel Aviv, we'll compare their artistic portrayals to those of American, German, and Iraqi cities, among others. The psychological and physical bond between writers or directors and their respective places is metabolized in their poetry, prose, and films, and so artistic representations of cities often reflect the inner world, personal relations, or social and national conflicts.

For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector

Taught by: Gold

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: **COML 282, JWST 154, NELC 159**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

CIMS 166 Arab/Israeli Conflict Through Literature and Film

This course will explore the origins, the history and, most importantly, the literary and cinematic art of the struggle that has endured for a century over the region that some call the Holy Land, some call Eretz Israel and others call Palestine. We will also consider religious motivations and interpretations that have inspired many involved in this conflict as well as the political consequences of world wars that contributed so greatly to the reconfiguration of the Middle East after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, and after the revelations of the Holocaust in Western Europe. While we will rely on a textbook for historical grounding. The most significant material we will use to learn this history will be films, novels, and short stories.

Taught by: Troutt-Powell

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: **HIST 166**, **NELC 137**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

CIMS 218 Media and Culture in Contemporary Iran

This course offers a comprehensive introduction to the culture and media of modern Iran, with a critical perspective on issues such as identity formation, ethnicity, race, and nation-building. It focuses on how these issues relate to various aspects of modern Iranian culture -- such as religion, gender, sexuality, war, and migration -- through the lens of media, cinema, and literature.

Taught by: Esmaili

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: **GSWS 218**, **NELC 218**, **NELC 518**, **RELS 219**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

Communications

COMM 402 Arab Uprisings: Local and Global Representations

This course explores the Arab uprisings as a battleground where multiple narratives battle for visibility across a variety of media platforms. We will examine local and global representations of the popular movements that have swept Arab countries since December 2010, analyzing different media, styles and modalities of representations. We will focus among other things on social media, political humor, graffiti, and the human body as instruments of communication, and focus on various related debates and polemics about the political impact of technology, the effectiveness of political satire, and the role of gender and sexuality in revolutionary politics. The overall approach of the course is critical/theoretical.

Taught by: Kraidy

Course not offered every year

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

COMM 419 Communication, Culture & Revolution

This seminar explores revolutionary communication and cultural expression. Looking at the ongoing Arab uprisings in comparative perspective, we will examine modalities of communication through which revolutionaries express themselves, describe and attack incumbent dictators and other opponents, call for new social solidarities, and construct revolutionary political identities. Revolutionary contexts are considered as battlegrounds where multiple narratives contend for visibility. We will explore relevant debates and polemics, historical and contemporary, concerning the political impact of technology and the role of gender and sexuality in revolutionary politics. We will focus on social media, political humor, graffiti, and the human body as instruments of communication. The overall approach of the seminar

is theoretical, critical and transnational.

Taught by: Kraidy

Course not offered every year

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

Comparative Literature

COML 120 Iranian Cinema: Gender, Politics and Religion

This seminar explores Iranian culture, society, history and politics through the medium of film. We will examine a variety of cinematic works that represent the social, political, economic and cultural circumstances of contemporary Iran, as well as the diaspora. Along the way, we will discuss issues pertaining to gender, religion, nationalism, ethnicity, and the role of cinema in Iranian society and beyond. Discussions topics will also include the place of the Iranian diaspora in cinema, as well as the transnational production, distribution, and consumption of Iranian cinema. Films will include those by internationally acclaimed filmmakers, such as Rakhshan Bani-Etemad, Asghar Farhadi, Bahman Ghobadi, Abbas Kiarostami, Mohsen Makhmalbaf, Dariush Mehrjui, Tahmineh Milani, Jafar Panahi, Marjane Satrapi and others. All films will be subtitled in English. No prior knowledge is required.

Taught by: Entezari

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: **CIMS 118, GSWS 118, NELC 118, NELC 618**

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

COML 212 Modern Middle Eastern Literature in Translation

The Middle East boasts a rich tapestry of cultures that have developed a vibrant body of modern literature that is often overlooked in media coverage

of the region. While each of the modern literary traditions that will be surveyed in this introductory course-Arabic, Hebrew, Persian and Turkish-will be analyzed with an appreciation of the cultural context unique to each body of literature, this course will also attempt to bridge these diverse traditions by analyzing common themes-such as modernity, social values, the individual and national identity-as reflected in the genres of poetry, the novel and the short story. This course is in seminar format to encourage lively discussion and is team-taught by four professors whose expertise in modern Middle Eastern literature serves to create a deeper understanding and aesthetic appreciation of each literary tradition. In addition to honing students' literary analysis skills, the course will enable students to become more adept at discussing the social and political forces that are reflected in Middle Eastern literature. All readings in English.

For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector

Taught by: Gold

Course usually offered in spring term

Also Offered As: **NELC 201**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

COML 215 Introduction to Persian Poetic Tradition

This course introduces some of the major genres and themes of the millennium-old Persian poetic tradition from ancient to modern Iran. Epic and romance, love and mysticism, wine and drunkenness, wisdom and madness, body and mind, sin and temptation are some of the key themes that will be explored through a close reading of poems in this course. The course suits undergraduate students of all disciplines, as it requires no prior knowledge of or familiarity with the Persian language or the canon of Persian literature. All teaching materials are available in English translation. Students are expected to attend seminars and take part in discussions

For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector

Taught by: Shams

Course usually offered in spring term

Also Offered As: **GSWS 214**, **HIST 226**, **NELC 216**, **NELC 516**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

COML 257 Medieval Jewish Writings in Translation

Through close readings of primary sources, students will explore products of Jewish culture written in both Christian and Muslim lands between the 10th and 16th centuries, within their historical and cross-cultural contexts. Works will include selections from poetry, philosophy, Bible exegesis, polemic, ethical wills, historiography, pietism, mysticism and legal writings. Students with appropriate language skills will read Hebrew sources in the original. Graduate students will have additional assignments and meetings.

Taught by: Fishman

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: **JWST 153**, **NELC 158**, **NELC 458**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

COML 266 Introduction to Modern Hebrew Literature: Short Story Reinvented

The objective of this course is to develop an artistic appreciation for literature through in-depth class discussions and text analysis. Readings are comprised of Israeli poetry and short stories. Students examine how literary language expresses psychological and cultural realms. The course covers topics such as: the short story reinvented, literature and identity, and others. Because the content of this course changes from year to year, students may take it for credit more than once. This course is conducted in Hebrew and all readings are in Hebrew. Grading is based primarily on participation and students' literary understanding.

For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector

Taught by: Gold

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: **JWST 259**, **NELC 259**, **NELC 559**

Prerequisite: **HEBR 054**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

COML 275 Faces of Love: Gender, Sexuality and the Erotic in Persian Literature

Beloved, Lover and Love are three concepts that dominate the semantic field of eroticism in Persian literature and mysticism. The interrelation among these concepts makes it almost impossible to treat any one of the concepts separately. Moreover, there exists various faces and shades of love in the works of classical and modern Persian literature that challenges the conventional heteronormative assumptions about the sexual and romantic relationships between the lover and the beloved. A sharp contrast exists between the treatment of homosexuality and 'queerness' in Islamic law, on the one hand and its reflection in Persian literature, particularly poetry (the chief vehicle of Persian literary expression), on the other. This course introduces and explores different faces of love, eroticism and homoeroticism in the Persian literary tradition from the dawn of the Persian poetry in the ninth century all through to the twenty-first century. It offers a comprehensive study of representations and productions of heteronormativity, sexual orientation and gender roles with particular reference to the notion of love, lover and beloved in Persian literature.

Taught by: Shams

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: **COML 574**, **GSWS 275**, **GSWS 575**, **NELC 290**, **NELC 574**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

Notes: No prior knowledge of Persian is required as all literary works will be available in English translation.

COML 282 Modern Hebrew Literature and Film in Translation: Autobiography

This course examines how cities are forged in cinema, literature and scholarship as well as the role of their architecture. While we focus on Israeli cities like Jerusalem, Tiberias, or Tel Aviv, we'll compare their artistic portrayals to those of American, German, and Iraqi cities, among others. The psychological and physical bond between writers or directors and their respective places is metabolized in their poetry, prose, and films, and so artistic representations of cities often reflect the inner world, personal relations, or social and national conflicts.

For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector

Taught by: Gold

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: **CIMS 159, JWST 154, NELC 159**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

COML 353 Arabic Literature and Literary Theory

This course will explore different critical approaches to the interpretation and analysis of Arabic literature from pre-Islamic poetry to the modern novel and prose-poem. The course draws on western and Arabic literary criticism to explore the role of critical theory not only in understanding and contextualizing literature but also in forming literary genres and attitudes. Among these approaches are: Meta-poetry and inter-Arts theory, Genre theory, Myth and Archetype, Poetics and Rhetoric, and Performance theory. Course is taught in translation.

Taught by: Fakhreddine

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: **COML 505, NELC 434**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

COML 359 Seminar in Modern Hebrew Literature

This course introduces students to selections from the best literary works written in Hebrew over the last hundred years in a relaxed seminar environment. The goal of the course is to develop skills in critical reading of literature in general, and to examine how Hebrew authors grapple with crucial questions of human existence and national identity. Topics include: Hebrew classics and their modern "descendants," autobiography in poetry and fiction, the conflict between literary generations, and others. Students may take it for credit more than once. This course is conducted in Hebrew; all readings are in Hebrew. Grading is based primarily on participation and students' literary understanding.

For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector

Taught by: Gold

Course usually offered in spring term

Also Offered As: **JWST 359, JWST 659, NELC 359**

Prerequisite: **HEBR 059**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

COML 393 Queering North African Subjectivities

This seminar will explore the ways in which literary and visual representations of sexual difference and gender roles disrupt the cultural imagination of everyday life in North Africa and its Diasporas. Special attention will be given to representations of Arab women and queer subjectivities as sites of resistance against dominant masculinity. We will analyze the ways in which representations of gender have allowed for a redeployment of power, a reconfiguration of politics of resistance, and the redrawing of longstanding images of Islam in France. Finally, we will question how creations that straddle competing cultural traditions, memories and material conditions can queer citizenship. Course taught in English.

Taught by: Gueydan-Turek

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: **AFRC 392, FREN 392, GSWS 392**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

COML 432 Arabic Readings in Belles-Lettres

This course aims to improve reading skills and vocabulary by introducing students to extensive passages taken from a variety of Arabic literary genres from all periods. Taught in MSA with writing assignments in MSA.

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: ARAB 432

Prerequisite: **ARAB 036 OR ARAB 636**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

COML 505 Arabic Literature and Literary Theory

This course will explore different critical approaches to the interpretation and analysis of Arabic literature from pre-Islamic poetry to the modern novel and prose-poem. The course will draw on western and Arabic literary criticism to explore the role of critical theory not only in understanding and contextualizing literature but also in forming literary genres and attitudes. Among these approaches are: Meta-poetry and inter-Arts theory, Genre theory, Myth and Archetype, Poetics and Rhetoric, and Performance theory. This course is taught in translation.

Taught by: Fakhreddine

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: **COML 353, NELC 434**

Activity: Lecture

1 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

French

FREN 392 Queering North African Subjectivities

This seminar will explore the ways in which literary and visual representations of sexual difference and gender roles disrupt the cultural imagination of everyday life in North Africa and its Diasporas. Special attention will be given to representations of Arab women and queer subjectivities as sites of resistance against dominant masculinity. We will analyze the ways in which representations of gender have allowed for a redeployment of power, a reconfiguration of politics of resistance, and the redrawing of longstanding images of Islam in France. Finally, we will question how creations that straddle competing cultural traditions, memories and material conditions can queer citizenship. Course taught in English.

Taught by: Gueydan-Turek

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: **AFRC 392, COML 393, GSWS 392**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies

GSWS 118 Iranian Cinema: Gender, Politics and Religion

This seminar explores Iranian culture, society, history and politics through the medium of film. We will examine a variety of cinematic works that represent the social, political, economic and cultural circumstances of contemporary Iran, as well as the diaspora. Along the way, we will discuss issues pertaining to gender, religion, nationalism, ethnicity, and the role of cinema in Iranian society and beyond. Discussions topics will also include the place of the Iranian diaspora in cinema, as well as the transnational production, distribution, and consumption of Iranian cinema. Films will include those by internationally acclaimed filmmakers, such

as Rakhshan Bani-Etemad, Asghar Farhadi, Bahman Ghobadi, Abbas Kiarostami, Mohsen Makhmalbaf, Dariush Mehrjui, Tahmineh Milani, Jafar Panahi, Marjane Satrapi and others. All films will be subtitled in English. No prior knowledge is required.

Taught by: Entezari

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: **CIMS 118, COML 120, NELC 118, NELC 618**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

GSWS 214 Introduction to Persian Poetic Tradition

This course introduces some of the major genres and themes of the millennium-old Persian poetic tradition from ancient to modern Iran. Epic and romance, love and mysticism, wine and drunkenness, wisdom and madness, body and mind, sin and temptation are some of the key themes that will be explored through a close reading of poems in this course. The course suits undergraduate students of all disciplines, as it requires no prior knowledge of or familiarity with the Persian language or the canon of Persian literature. All teaching materials are available in English translation. Students are expected to attend seminars and take part in discussions

For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector

Taught by: Shams

Course usually offered in spring term

Also Offered As: **COML 215, HIST 226, NELC 216, NELC 516**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

GSWS 218 Media and Culture in Contemporary Iran

This course offers a comprehensive introduction to the culture and media of modern Iran, with a critical perspective on issues such as identity formation, ethnicity, race, and nation-building. It focuses on

how these issues relate to various aspects of modern Iranian culture -- such as religion, gender, sexuality, war, and migration -- through the lens of media, cinema, and literature.

Taught by: Esmaeili

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: **NELC 218, NELC 518, RELS 219, RELS 219**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

GSWS 232 World History: Africa or the Middle East

Topics vary.

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: **AFRC 233, HIST 232, NELC 282**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement
(Prior Approval from MEC Required for MMES Credit)

GSWS 275 Faces of Love: Gender, Sexuality and the Erotic in Persian Literature

Beloved, Lover and Love are three concepts that dominate the semantic field of eroticism in Persian literature and mysticism. The interrelation among these concepts makes it almost impossible to treat any one of the concepts separately. Moreover, there exists various faces and shades of love in the works of classical and modern Persian literature that challenges the conventional heteronormative assumptions about the sexual and romantic relationships between the lover and the beloved. A sharp contrast exists between the treatment of homosexuality and 'queerness' in Islamic law, on the one hand and its reflection in Persian literature, particularly poetry (the chief vehicle of Persian literary expression), on the other. This course introduces and explores different faces of love, eroticism and homoeroticism in the Persian literary tradition from the dawn of the Persian poetry in the ninth century all through to the twenty-first century.

It offers a comprehensive study of representations and productions of heteronormativity, sexual orientation and gender roles with particular reference to the notion of love, lover and beloved in Persian literature.

Taught by: Shams

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: [COML 275](#), [COML 574](#), [GSWS 575](#), [NELC 290](#), [NELC 574](#)

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Notes: No prior knowledge of Persian is required as all literary works will be available in English translation. Students are expected to attend seminars and take part in discussions. Please note that this syllabus is subject to change.

[Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement](#)

GSWS 392 Queering North African Subjectivities

This seminar will explore the ways in which literary and visual representations of sexual difference and gender roles disrupt the cultural imagination of everyday life in North Africa and its Diasporas. Special attention will be given to representations of Arab women and queer subjectivities as sites of resistance against dominant masculinity. We will analyze the ways in which representations of gender have allowed for a redeployment of power, a reconfiguration of politics of resistance, and the redrawing of longstanding images of Islam in France. Finally, we will question how creations that straddle competing cultural traditions, memories and material conditions can queer citizenship. Course taught in English.

Taught by: Gueydan-Turek

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: [AFRC 392](#), [COML 393](#), [FREN 392](#)

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

[Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement](#)

Hebrew

HEBR 051 Elementary Modern Hebrew I

An introduction to the skills of reading, writing, and conversing in modern Hebrew. This course assumes no previous knowledge of Hebrew. A grade of B- or higher is needed to proceed to HEBR 052, Elementary Modern Hebrew II.

For BA Students: Language Course

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: [HEBR 651](#), [JWST 051](#)

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

HEBR 052 Elementary Modern Hebrew II

A continuation of HEBR 051, First Year Modern Hebrew, which assumes basic skills of reading and speaking and the use of the present tense. Open to all students who have completed one semester of Hebrew at Penn with a grade of B- or above and new students with equivalent competency.

For BA Students: Language Course

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: [HEBR 652](#), [JWST 052](#)

Prerequisite: [HEBR 051](#) or permission of instructor

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

HEBR 053 Intermediate Modern Hebrew III

Development of the skills of reading, writing, and conversing in modern Hebrew on an intermediate level. Open to all students who have completed two semesters of Hebrew at Penn with a grade of B- or above and new students with equivalent competency.

For BA Students: Language Course

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: [HEBR 653](#), [JWST 053](#)

Prerequisites: [HEBR 052](#) or permission of the

instructor

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

HEBR 054 Intermediate Modern Hebrew IV

This course constitutes the final semester of Intermediate Modern Hebrew. Hence, one of the main goals of the course is to prepare the students for the proficiency exam in Hebrew. Emphasis will be placed on grammar skills and ability to read literary texts. Open to all students who have completed three semesters of Hebrew at Penn with a grade of B- or above and new students with equivalent competency.

For BA Students: Last Language Course

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: [HEBR 654](#), [JWST 054](#)

Prerequisite: [HEBR 053](#) or permission of instructor

Activity: Lecture

1 Course Unit

HEBR 059 Advanced Modern Hebrew: Conversation & Writing

After four semesters of language study, it's time to enter the vibrant world of contemporary Israeli culture. In this course students read some of the best plays, poems, short stories, and journalism published in Israel today. They also watch and analyze some of Israel's most popular films, TV programs, and videos. Themes include Jewish-Arab relations, the founding of the State, family ties and intergenerational conflict, war and society, and the recent dynamic changes in Israel society. [HEBR 054](#) or permission of instructor. Students may take it more than once (but only once for credit).

For BA Students: Advanced Language Course

Taught by: Engel

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: [HEBR 552](#), [JWST 059](#)

Prerequisite: [HEBR 054](#) or permission of instructor

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

HEBR 486 Rabbinic Writers on Rabbinic Culture

This course traces reflections on rabbinic culture produced within Jewish legal literature of the classic rabbinic period - - Midrash, Mishna, and Talmud - - and in later juridical genres - - Talmudic commentary, codes and responses. Attention will be paid to the mechanics of different genres, the role of the underlying proof text, the inclusion or exclusion of variant opinions, the presence of non-legal information, the balance between precedent and innovation. Reading knowledge of Hebrew is required.

Taught by: Fishman

Course not offered every year

Prerequisite: Reading knowledge of Hebrew

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

HEBR 557 Studies in Rabbinic Literature: Law and Judaism

Two terms. Student may enter either term.

Prerequisites: Knowledge of Hebrew.

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

History

HIST 023 Intro to Middle East

For BA Students: History and Tradition Sector

Also Offered As: [NELC 102](#)

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement
MMES Foundational Course

HIST 081 History of the Middle East Since 1800

A survey of the modern Middle East with special emphasis on the experiences of ordinary men and women as articulated in biographies, novels, and regional case studies. Issues covered include the

collapse of empires and the rise of a new state system following WWI, and the roots and consequences of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the Iranian revolution and the U.S.-Iraq War. Themes include: the colonial encounter with Europe and the emergence of nationalist movements, the relationship between state and society, economic development and international relations, and religion and cultural identity.

For BA Students: History and Tradition Sector

Taught by: Kashani-Sabet/Troutt-Powell

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: **NELC 031**

Activity: Recitation

1 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

MMES Foundational Course

HIST 084 Topics in 20th C. Middle East

If "the clash of civilizations" is the first image that jumps to mind when thinking about the modern Middle East, then this is the course for you. From the familiar narratives about the creation of modern nation-states to the oft-neglected accounts of cultural life, this course surveys the multi-faceted societies of the twentieth-century Middle East. Although inclusive of the military battles and conflicts that have affected the region, this course will move beyond the clichés of war and conflict in the Middle East to show the range of issues and ideas with which intellectuals and governments grappled throughout the century. The cultural politics and economic value of oil as well as the formation of a vibrant literary life will be among the topics covered in the course. By considering illustrative cultural moments that shed light on the political history of the period, this course will adopt a nuanced framework to approach the Arab/Israeli conflict, the history of the Gulf States, the Iran-Iraq War, and U.S. involvement in the region.

Taught by: Kashani-Sabet

One-term course offered either term

Activity: Lecture

1 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

HIST 088 From Oil Fields to Soccer Fields: The Middle East in the 20th Century

How did the Middle East become modern? This seemingly simple question requires a complex appraisal of civic society. Life changed in spectacular ways for the denizens of the Middle East in the span of a century. Oil -- once considered a scarce natural commodity -- was discovered and exported in substantial quantities that altered the economic landscape of the region and the world. Movie theaters, sewage systems, and public housing projects changed the urban backdrop of Middle Eastern cities and towns. Soccer, swimming, and volleyball became some of the new-fangled sports embraced by Middle Eastern communities. This course will traverse these fascinating and fraught cultural transformations of the Middle East in the twentieth century. Although inclusive of the military battles and conflicts that have affected the region, this class will move beyond the clichés of war to show the range of issues and ideas with which intellectuals and communities grappled. The cultural politics and economic value of oil as well as the formation of a vibrant literary life will be among the topics covered. By considering illustrative cultural moments that shed light on the political history of the period, this course will develop a nuanced framework to approach the history of the U.S. involvement in the region, the Iran-Iraq war, the Arab/Israeli conflict, and the current crises in the Persian Gulf.

Taught by: Kashani-Sabet

Also Offered As: **NELC 088**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

HIST 106 Of Horses, Bows, & Fermented Milk: The Turkish Empire in 15 Objects

Taught by: Aguirre Mandujano

Activity: (Freshman) Seminar

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

HIST 142 1947-49: British Empire and the Partitions of South Asia and Palestine

The partitions of South Asia and Palestine marked the end of the British Empire in those regions. British colonial rule in India ended in 1947 with the emergence of not one, but two nation states, India and Pakistan. Decolonization was marked by mass migration and ethnic cleansing along their borders. An estimated million people died in the violence in less than a year, and 12.5 million people migrated from their homes. The British Empire also gave up its claims to Palestine in 1947, exhausted by the two nationalisms of Zionists and Palestinians. This partition set up the declaration of the state of Israel, and the War for Palestine. By 1949, almost a million Palestinians found themselves displaced over many borders, some also within the borders of Israel. This comparative course is organized around three themes - the prehistories of these cataclysmic events, the role of Empire in catalyzing them, and the afterlives of these events that continue to haunt us into the present, seventy-five years later. It examines the political, social and cultural events that led to decades of war and exile, and shaped the lives of generations of Palestinians, Israelis and the wider Middle East. Primary sources will help to explore the perspectives of ordinary people whose lives were turned upside down in both places.

Taught by: Sreenivasan

Also Offered As: **NELC 142, SAST 117**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

HIST 148 Warriors, Concubines & Converts: The Ottoman Empire in the Middle East & Europe

For almost six hundred years, the Ottomans ruled most of the Balkans and the Middle East. From their bases in Anatolia, Ottoman armies advanced into the Balkans, Syria, Egypt, and Iraq, constantly challenging the borders of neighboring European and Islamic empires. By the end of the seventeenth century, Constantinople, Jerusalem, Cairo, Baghdad, Sarajevo, Budapest, and nearly Vienna came under Ottoman rule. As the empire expanded into Europe and the Middle East, the balance of imperial power shifted from warriors to converts, concubines, and intellectuals. This course examines the expansion of the Ottoman sultanate from a local principality into a sprawling empire with a sophisticated bureaucracy; it also investigates the social, cultural, and intellectual developments that accompanied the long arc of the empire's rise and fall. By the end of the course, students will be able to identify and discuss major currents of change in the Ottoman Empire and the Middle East. The student will have a better understanding of the roles of power, ideology, diplomacy, and gender in the construction of empire and a refined appreciation for diverse techniques of historical analysis.

For BA Students: History and Tradition Sector

Taught by: Aguirre-Mandujano

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: **NELC 148**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

HIST 149 Filming the Middle East

This course will take us through the history of the modern Middle East as told by the region's many film-makers. We will explore how cinema developed and grew throughout countries like Egypt, Iran, Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Israel and Palestine. Unusually for a typical course on the Middle East, we will also pay close attention to North Africa's film industry, with a deep exploration of the cinema of Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. Sudanese films will be an important part of our study as well. What does it mean to have a national cinema? Many of these countries' film

industries grew under European occupation and colonialism. With independence, were more markets available to Middle Eastern films? We will watch canonical films from the region, many of which focus on or reflect the political turmoil and aftermath of wars. But we will also examine the lightness of comedies, which were usually much more popular with Middle Eastern audiences, and which reveal every bit as much about the region's histories. And we will watch and discuss a phenomenon not found in Western cinema - the Ramadan soap operas and historical reenactments that are unique to the Middle East.

Taught by: Troutt-Powell

Also Offered As: **CIMS 149, NELC 149**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

HIST 166 Arab/Israeli Conflict in Literature and Film

This course will explore the origins, the history and, most importantly, the literary and cinematic art of the struggle that has endured for a century over the region that some call the Holy Land, some call Eretz Israel and others call Palestine. We will also consider religious motivations and interpretations that have inspired many involved in this conflict as well as the political consequences of world wars that contributed so greatly to the reconfiguration of the Middle East after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, and after the revelations of the Holocaust in Western Europe. While we will rely on a textbook for historical grounding. The most significant material we will use to learn this history will be films, novels, and short stories.

Taught by: Troutt-Powell

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: **CIMS 166, NELC 137**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Units

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

HIST 188 Civilizations at odds? The United States and the Middle East

Foe or friend, Satan or saint - America has often been depicted in the Middle East either as a benevolent superpower or an ill-meaning enemy. In America, too, stereotypes of the Middle East abound as the home of terrorists, falafels, and fanatics. This undergraduate lecture course will explore the relationship between the United States and the Middle East by moving beyond such facile stereotypes. Our goal is to understand why a century of interaction has done little to foster greater understanding between these two societies. By reading novels, memoirs, and historical accounts, we will examine the origins of this cultural and diplomatic encounter in the twentieth century. The readings shed light on America's political and economic involvement in the Middle East after the Second World War.

Taught by: Kashani-Sabet

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: **NELC 188**

Activity: Lecture

1 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

HIST 189 Modern Egypt

This course will seek to explore how Egyptian culture has dealt with its many pasts by investigating early modern and modern Egyptian history. With an emphasis on the 18th century to the present we will explore the culture of Egypt under the Ottoman Empire, slavery in Egypt, the unsuccessful French attempt to colonize Egypt and the successful British occupation of the country.

Taught by: Troutt-Powell

One-term course offered either term

Activity: Lecture

1 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

HIST 232 World History: Africa or the Middle East

Topics vary

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: **AFRC 233, GSWS 232, NELC 282**

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

(Prior Approval from MEC Required for MMES Credit)

HIST 275 Faces of Jihad in African Islam

This course is designed to provide the students with a broad understanding of the history of Islam in Africa. The focus will be mostly on West Africa, but we will also look at developments in other regions of the continent. We will explore Islam not only as religious practice but also as ideology and an instrument of social change. We will examine the process of islamization in Africa and the different uses of Jihad. Topics include prophetic jihad, jihad of the pen and the different varieties of jihad of the sword throughout the history in Islam in sub-Saharan Africa.

Taught by: Babou

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: **AFRC 274**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

HIST 306 Gunpowder, Art and Diplomacy: Islamic Empires in the Early Modern World

In the sixteenth century, the political landscape of the Middle East, Central Asia, and India changed with the expansion and consolidation of new Islamic empires. Gunpowder had transformed the modes of warfare. Diplomacy followed new rules and forms of legitimation. The widespread use of Persian, Arabic and Turkish languages across the region allowed for an interconnected world of scholars, merchants, and diplomats. And each imperial court, those of the Ottomans, the Safavids, and the Mughals, found

innovative and original forms of expression in art and literature. The expansion of these Islamic empires, each of them military giants and behemoths of bureaucracy, marked a new phase in world history. The course is divided in four sections. The first section introduces the student to major debates about the so-called gunpowder empires of the Islamic world as well as to comparative approaches to study them. The second section focuses on the transformations of modes of warfare and military organization. The third section considers the cultural history and artistic production of the imperial courts of the Ottomans, the Mughals, and the Safavids. The fourth section investigates the social histories of these empires, their subjects, and the configuration of a world both connected and divided by commerce, expansion, and diplomacy.

Taught by: Mandujano

Course usually offered in spring term

Also Offered As: **NELC 306**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

HIST 370 North Africa: History, Culture, Society

This interdisciplinary seminar aims to introduce students to the countries of North Africa, with a focus on the Maghreb and Libya. It does so while examining the region's close economic and cultural connections to sub-Saharan Africa, Europe, and the Middle East. Readings will include histories, political analyses, anthropological studies, and novels, and will cover a wide range of topics such as colonial and postcolonial experiences, developments in Islamic thought and practice, and labor migration. This class is for juniors, seniors, and graduate students.

Taught by: Sharkey

Course usually offered in spring term

Also Offered As: **AFRC 332, AFRC 632, NELC 332**

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

HIST 371 Africa and the Mid-East

This seminar will explore the historical relationship between these two regions from the early modern age to the present. We will examine the history of trade, particularly the slave trade, and its cultural and political legacy. We will compare the experiences of European imperialism--how the scramble for Africa dovetailed with the last decades of the Ottoman Empire--with an eye to how this shaped nationalist movements in both regions. The course will also explore the decades of independence with a special eye towards pan-Africanism and pan-Arabism. We will also study the ramifications of the Arab-Israeli conflict on the relationship between African and Middle-Eastern countries, from Uganda to Ethiopia, from OPEC to Darfur. The course will pay close attention to migrations through the regions, whether forced or economic or religious.

Taught by: Troutt-Powell

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: **AFRC 372, NELC 334**

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

**Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement
MMES Foundational Course**

HIST 640 Topics in Middle Eastern History

Reading and discussion course on selected topics in Middle Eastern history.

One-term course offered either term

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

HIST 740 Research Seminar in Middle Eastern History

Research seminar on selected topics in Middle Eastern history.

One-term course offered either term

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Social Sciences Requirement

Jewish Studies Program

JWST 041 Israel in Middle East

Also Offered As: NELC 034

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

JWST 051 Elementary Modern Hebrew I

An introduction to the skills of reading, writing, and conversing in modern Hebrew. This course assumes no previous knowledge of Hebrew.

For BA Students: Language Course

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: **HEBR 051, HEBR 651**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

JWST 052 Elementary Modern Hebrew II

A continuation of HEBR 051, First Year Modern Hebrew, which assumes basic skills of reading and speaking and the use of the present tense. Open to all students who have completed one semester of Hebrew at Penn with a grade of B- or above and new students with equivalent competency.

For BA Students: Language Course

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: **HEBR 052, HEBR 652**

Prerequisite: **HEBR 051 or permission of instructor**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

JWST 053 Intermediate Modern Hebrew III

Development of the skills of reading, writing, and conversing in modern Hebrew on an intermediate level. Open to all students who have completed two semesters of Hebrew at Penn with a grade of B- or above and new students with equivalent competency.

For BA Students: Language Course

One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: [HEBR 053](#), [HEBR 653](#)
Prerequisites: [HEBR 052](#) or permission of the instructor
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

JWST 054 Intermediate Modern Hebrew IV

This course constitutes the final semester of Intermediate Modern Hebrew. Hence, one of the main goals of the course is to prepare the students for the proficiency exam in Hebrew. Emphasis will be placed on grammar skills and ability to read literary texts. Open to all students who have completed three semesters of Hebrew at Penn with a grade of B- or above and new students with equivalent competency.

For BA Students: Last Language Course
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: [HEBR 054](#), [HEBR 654](#)
Prerequisites: [HEBR 053](#) or permission of instructor
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

JWST 059 Advanced Modern Hebrew: Conversation & Writing

After four semesters of language study, it's time to enter the vibrant world of contemporary Israeli culture. In this course students read some of the best plays, poems, short stories, and journalism published in Israel today. They also watch and analyze some of Israel's most popular films, TV programs, and videos. Themes include Jewish-Arab relations, the founding of the State, family ties and intergenerational conflict, war and society, and the recent dynamic changes in Israel society. [HEBR 054](#) or permission of instructor. Students may take it more than once (but only once for credit).

For BA Students: Advanced Language Course
Taught by: Engel
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: [HEBR 059](#), [HEBR 552](#)

Prerequisite: [HEBR 054](#) or permission of instructor
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

JWST 127 Gender and Religion in Israel

Contemporary Israel is a site not just of religious conflict but of clashing gender norms, bringing together a variety of groups - the secular and the religious, the Orthodox and the non-Orthodox - that are distinguished from each other in part by their understanding of gender and their treatment of women and LGBTQ people. As a way into understanding the interaction of religion and gender more broadly, this course surveys various intersections of religion, gender and politics in Israel today, investigating how religion shapes gender relations, and is shaped in turn by gender.

Taught by: Ben Lulu
Also Offered As: [RELS 127](#)
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
Fulfills MMES Social Sciences Requirement

JWST 128 Spirituality in Contemporary Israel

This course maps out spiritual and religious life in Israel today, ranging from state-supported orthodox communities to groups that practice alternative forms of spirituality. What role do tradition, custom and ritual practice play in the construction of contemporary Israeli identity? How does the State shape religious and spiritual life? The course will explore these and other questions through the examination of various media including newspapers, movies, and online conversations with Israeli religious leaders and important figures in popular culture.

Taught by: Ben Lulu
Course offered fall; even-numbered years
Also Offered As: [RELS 128](#)
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

JWST 154 Modern Hebrew Literature and Film in Translation: Autobiography

Like James Joyce's Dublin, Carl Sandburg's Chicago, or even Woody Allen's Paris, cities have long been the object of yearning and the subject of art. In the time of a pandemic, the idea of the city is associated with new challenges and emotions. This course examines how cities are forged in cinema, literature and scholarship as well as the role of their architecture. While we focus on Israeli cities like Jerusalem, Tiberias, or Tel Aviv, we'll compare their artistic portrayals to those of American, German, and Iraqi cities, among others. The psychological and physical bond between writers or directors and their respective places is metabolized in their poetry, prose, and films, and so artistic representations of cities often reflect the inner world, personal relations, or social and national conflicts.

For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Gold

One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: **CIMS 159, COML 282, NELC 159**
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

JWST 248 Arab Israeli Relations

One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: **PSCI 251**
Activity: Recitation
1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

JWST 259 Introduction to Modern Hebrew Literature: Short Story Reinvented

The objective of this course is to develop an artistic appreciation for literature through in-depth class discussions and text analysis. Readings are comprised of Israeli poetry and short stories. Students examine how literary language expresses psychological and cultural realms. The course covers topics such as: the short story reinvented, literature

and identity, and others. Because the content of this course changes from year to year, students may take it for credit more than once. This course is conducted in Hebrew and all readings are in Hebrew. Grading is based primarily on participation and students' literary understanding.

For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector

Taught by: Gold

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: **COML 266, NELC 259, NELC 559**

Prerequisite: **HEBR 054**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

Notes: Because the content of this course changes from year to year, students may take it more than once.

JWST 270 Middle Eastern Jews in Israel

This undergraduate seminar offers an in-depth look at the history of Middle Eastern and North African Jews, focusing in particular on their place in Israeli society and culture. It will begin with a historical background on the Jewish communities in Ottoman Palestine, and in the larger Ottoman Empire, Iran, and Morocco. We will then proceed to consider the engagement of these Jewish communities with Zionism, and with other conflicting forces, such as European colonialism, Arab nationalism, and Cosmopolitanism. We will learn about Jewish immigration from the region to Palestine/Israel in the period between 1880 to 1948, and about their exodus/expulsion post-1948. We will then explore in depth their settlement in Israel: governmental policies towards Jewish immigrants from the Islamic World, especially between the 1950s and the 1970s; their integration in Israeli society; identity politics in Israel (or: the "invention" of "Mizrahim"); Mizrahi political action; Mizrahi music, film, literature, and food culture; and Mizrahi attitudes towards Arabs, both within and outside Israel. Students will leave the class with a firm grasp of the social and cultural history of Middle Eastern Jews in Israel, and the issues facing third-generation Mizrahim in Israel

today. Students will also be introduced to basic methods of inquiry in history, sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies. Students will engage with a mix of scholarly research, readings in original documents, film, literature, music, and some material and visual artifacts.

Taught by: Alon Tam

Also Offered As: **NELC 260**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

JWST 359 Seminar in Modern Hebrew Literature

This course introduces students to selections from the best literary works written in Hebrew over the last hundred years in a relaxed seminar environment. The goal of the course is to develop skills in critical reading of literature in general, and to examine how Hebrew authors grapple with crucial questions of human existence and national identity. Topics include: Hebrew classics and their modern "descendants," autobiography in poetry and fiction, the conflict between literary generations, and others. Because the content of this course changes from year to year, students may take it for credit more than once. This course is conducted in Hebrew and all readings are in Hebrew. Grading is based primarily on participation and students' literary understanding.

For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector

Taught by: Gold

Course usually offered in spring term

Also Offered As: **COML 359, JWST 659, NELC 359, NELC 659**

Prerequisites: **Hebrew 059 or the equivalent, per instructor's evaluation**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Notes: Because the content of the course changes from year to year, students may take the course more than once for credit.

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

JWST 413 Creating a Constitution in Israel

Why does the State of Israel not have a constitution? If it ever establishes a constitution, what will it consist of? How would it impact contemporary Israeli politics if it voted to accept one? The aim of this course, offered in conjunction with Penn's law school, is to explore the attempt to write a constitution for Israel in light of readings and the instructor's personal experience as a member of Israel's parliament (the Knesset) and chair of its Constitution, Law and Justice Committee at the time that it drafted a full Israeli constitution. We will explore legal and political issues and controversies involved in the effort to create a constitution, including issues bearing on the relationship of religion and the state in Israel, and will seek to understand the process in light of larger social, historical and philosophical contexts.

Taught by: Ben Sasson

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: **RELS 414**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Social Sciences Requirement

JWST 659 Seminar in Modern Hebrew Literature

This course introduces students to selections from the best literary works written in Hebrew over the last hundred years in a relaxed seminar environment. The goal of the course is to develop skills in critical reading of literature in general, and to examine how Hebrew authors grapple with crucial questions of human existence and national identity. Topics include: Hebrew classics and their modern "descendants," autobiography in poetry and fiction, the conflict between literary generations, and others. Because the content of this course changes from year to year, students may take it for credit more than once. This course is conducted in Hebrew and all readings are in Hebrew. Grading is based primarily on participation and students' literary understanding.

Taught by: Gold

Course usually offered in spring term

Also Offered As: [COML 359](#), [JWST 359](#), [NELC 359](#),
[NELC 659](#)

Prerequisite: [HEBR 059](#)

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

Music

MUSC 053 Music in Troubled Places

In this class, we go beyond the headlines to discuss the history and cultures of peoples who have had to endure terrible suffering, particularly through ethnic conflict and civil war. We will focus on a curious phenomenon: populations typically defined as separate from one another (e.g., Israelis and Palestinians) often have a history of shared or related cultural practices, of which music is a prime example. We will survey a number of current and recent conflict zones and use music as a way to deepen our understanding of the identities and relationships between the peoples involved including through a consideration of my own fieldwork in Sri Lanka. Querying the very definitions of music, trouble, and place, the course then broadens out to consider how musicians have been affected by and/or responded to important global problems like slavery, sexual violence, climate change and other ecological disasters, like Hurricane Katrina. Regions to be considered in our lectures and/or readings include: Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria (including Kurdish musics), Israel-Palestine, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Myanmar/Burma, Uganda, Sierra Leone, North and South Korea, the Marshall Islands, Cambodia, Mexico, and the United States.

Taught by: Sykes

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: [ANTH 053](#), [NELC 054](#)

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Near Eastern Languages and Civilization

NELC 008 Critical Speaking Seminar

American political discourse, especially since September 11th, has often depicted Islam as an oppressive force from which both Muslims and non-Muslims, particularly women and gender/sexual minorities, must be saved. In this CWiC critical speaking seminar, we will investigate how oral and written narratives-such as political rhetoric, apologetics and historical sources - claim to establish unassailable "facts" about Islam, Muslims and the Middle East. We will also investigate how the notion of empire-both in its traditionally understood form in Islamic and European history, as well as in its iterations as US Military and soft power-privileges certain voices over others, and how we can reclaim the voices of the marginalized in both contemporary discourse as well as historical oral traditions.

Taught by: Rafii

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: [COML 014](#), [GSWS 008](#)

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

(Prior Approval from MEC Required for MMES Credit)

NELC 009 Critical Writing Seminar in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

This is a critical writing seminar. As a discipline-based writing seminar, the course introduces students to a topic within its discipline but throughout emphasizes the development of critical thinking, analytical, and writing skills. For current listings, go to www.writing.upenn.edu/critical.

For BA Students: Writing Requirement Course

One-term course offered either term

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

(Prior Approval from MEC Required for MMES Credit)

NELC 031 History of the Middle East Since 1800

A survey of the modern Middle East with special emphasis on the experiences of ordinary men and women as articulated in biographies, novels, and regional case studies. Issues covered include the collapse of empires and the rise of a new state system following WWI, and the roots and consequences of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the Iranian revolution and the U.S.-Iraq War. Themes include: the colonial encounter with Europe and the emergence of nationalist movements, the relationship between state and society, economic development and international relations, and religion and cultural identity.

For BA Students: History and Tradition Sector

Taught by: Kashani-Sabet/Troutt-Powell

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: [HIST 081](#)

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Units

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

NELC 032 Topics in 20th C. Middle East

If "the clash of civilizations" is the first image that jumps to mind when thinking about the modern Middle East, then this is the course for you. From the familiar narratives about the creation of modern nation-states to the oft-neglected accounts of cultural life, this course surveys the multi-faceted societies of the twentieth-century Middle East. Although inclusive of the military battles and conflicts that have affected the region, this course will move beyond the clichés of war and conflict in the Middle East to show the range of issues and ideas with which intellectuals and governments grappled throughout the century. The cultural politics and economic value of oil as well as the formation of a vibrant literary life will be among the topics covered in the course.

Taught by: Kashani-Sabet

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: [HIST 084](#)

Activity: Lecture

1 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

NELC 034 Israel in the Middle East

This introductory level course will offer an in-depth look at Israeli history and society, and how it relates to the Middle East through varying lenses. We will consider such topics as the rise of Jewish, Palestinian, and Arab nationalisms in the context of changing imperial control over Palestine/Israel (from Ottoman to British), and the emergence of the Middle East in its current borders; Conflict and conflict-resolution in Israel, Palestine, and the Middle East; Israel's Palestinian minority, Jewish immigrants to Israel from the Middle East, food and music culture in Israel, and their connection to the Middle East; or the place of the Middle East in Israeli literature and film. We will use cutting edge research from several disciplines, as well as literature, film, audio, and photographic evidence. Students will leave the class with a firm grasp of Israeli history and society, and will be widely familiar with the different narratives, viewpoints, and complexities concerning Israel and its position in the Middle East. Prior knowledge of Israeli or Middle Eastern history is not required.

Taught by: Tam

Also Offered As: [JWST 041](#)

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

NELC 036 The Middle East through Many Lenses

This freshman seminar introduces the contemporary Middle East by drawing upon cutting-edge studies written from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. These include history, political science, and anthropology, as well as studies of mass media, sexuality, religion, urban life, and the environment. We will spend the first few weeks of the semester surveying major trends in modern Middle Eastern history. We will spend subsequent weeks intensively

discussing assigned readings along with documentary films that we will watch in class.

Taught by: Sharkey H

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: **CIMS 036**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

NELC 054 Music in Troubled Places

In this class, we go beyond the headlines to discuss the history and cultures of peoples who have had to endure terrible suffering, particularly through ethnic conflict and civil war. We will focus on a curious phenomenon: populations typically defined as separate from one another (e.g., Israelis and Palestinians) often have a history of shared or related cultural practices, of which music is a prime example. We will survey a number of current and recent conflict zones and use music as a way to deepen our understanding of the identities and relationships between the peoples involved including through a consideration of my own fieldwork in Sri Lanka. Querying the very definitions of music, trouble, and place, the course then broadens out to consider how musicians have been affected by and/or responded to important global problems like slavery, sexual violence, climate change and other ecological disasters, like Hurricane Katrina. Regions to be considered in our lectures and/or readings include: Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria (including Kurdish musics), Israel-Palestine, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Myanmar/Burma, Uganda, Sierra Leone, North and South Korea, the Marshall Islands, Cambodia, Mexico, and the United States.

Taught by: Sykes

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: **ANTH 053, MUSC 053**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

NELC 088 From Oil Fields to Soccer Fields: The Middle East in the 20th Century

How did the Middle East become modern? This seemingly simple question requires a complex appraisal of civic society. Life changed in spectacular ways for the denizens of the Middle East in the span of a century. Oil -- once considered a scarce natural commodity -- was discovered and exported in substantial quantities that altered the economic landscape of the region and the world. Movie theaters, sewage systems, and public housing projects changed the urban backdrop of Middle Eastern cities and towns. Soccer, swimming, and volleyball became some of the new-fangled sports embraced by Middle Eastern communities. This course will traverse these fascinating and fraught cultural transformations of the Middle East in the twentieth century. Although inclusive of the military battles and conflicts that have affected the region, this class will move beyond the cliches of war to show the range of issues and ideas with which intellectuals and communities grappled. The cultural politics and economic value of oil as well as the formation of a vibrant literary life will be among the topics covered. By considering illustrative cultural moments that shed light on the political history of the period, this course will develop a nuanced framework to approach the history of the U.S. involvement in the region, the Iran-Iraq war, the Arab/Israeli conflict, and the current crises in the Persian Gulf.

Taught by: Kashani-Sabet

Also Offered As: **HIST 088**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

NELC 102 Intro to Middle East

This is the second half of the Near East sequence. This course surveys Islamic civilization from circa 600 (the rise of Islam) to the start of the modern era and concentrates on political, social, and cultural trends. Although the emphasis will be on Middle Eastern

societies, we will occasionally consider developments in other parts of the world, such as sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia, and Spain, where Islamic civilization was or has been influential. Our goal is to understand the shared features that have distinguished Islamic civilization as well as the varieties of experience that have endowed it with so much diversity.

For BA Students: History and Tradition Sector

Taught by: Cobb, Sharkey

Course usually offered in spring term

Also Offered As: **HIST 023**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Notes: Fulfills Cross-Cultural Analysis

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement
MMES Foundational Course

NELC 104 Jerusalem through Ages

A study of Jerusalem, the sacred city for three different world religions, is fundamental to a rich understanding of the history and religions of the Middle East. Beginning in antiquity and continuing through the medieval and modern periods, this course will chronicle the rise, fall and reconstruction of Jerusalem many times over. Particular emphasis will be placed on the archaeology and architecture of the city, the phenomenology of sacred space, the meanings of Jerusalem in art, and the religious history of the city. We will investigate the meanings Jerusalem has had in the past and will also consider current questions about its future.

Course not offered every year

Activity: Lecture

1 Course Unit

Notes: Offered through the College of Liberal and Professional Studies.

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

NELC 106 Pastoral Nomadism in the Past and Present

Pastoral nomadism is a "third way" of human subsistence separate from farming and foraging. It is a sustainable human adaptation to grassland and arid environments practiced through particular technologies and domesticated animals. This course begins by examining the human ecology and social organization that emerge from mobile ways of life, drawing on modern, ethnographic, and archaeological examples of pastoral nomadic groups in the Middle East and Central Asia. Academic readings and ethnographic films will form the basis of discussions about several larger themes, including: the origins of pastoral nomadism and horse riding; the development of dairy-based foods and human adaptations allowing the digestion of lactose; the historical relationship between mobile groups of pastoralists and territorial states; popular perceptions of nomads in various forms of historical and modern media; and the influence of ideas about nomads on modern senses of heritage and nationalism in the Middle East and Central Asia.

Taught by: Hammer

Also Offered As: **AAMW 606, ANTH 108, NELC 606**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Social Sciences Requirement

NELC 111 Water in the Middle East Throughout History

Water scarcity is one of the most important problems facing much of the Middle East and North Africa today. These are arid regions, but human and natural systems have interacted to determine relative water scarcity and abundance at different times and places. This course examines the distribution of water resources throughout the Middle East and the archaeology and anthropology of water exploitation and management over the last 9000 years, looking at continuities and changes through time. Students will learn to make basic digital maps representing Middle Eastern hydro-geography and arguments about modern and

historic water resources in the region. The class will cooperatively play an "irrigation management game" designed to familiarize personnel involved in the operation of irrigation schemes with the logistical and social issues involved in water management. We will engage with a variety of media, including academic readings, popular journalism, films, satellite imagery, and digital maps, in our quest to explore whether or not the past can inform present efforts to better manage modern water resources. The course is structured in units focused on each of the major hydro-environmental zones of the Middle East: the river valleys of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Levant, the internal basins of western Central Asia and the Levant, the deserts of Arabia and North Africa, highland zones in Yemen and Iran, and coastal marsh areas along the Persian Gulf. We will examine irrigation systems, water supply systems, and ways of life surrounding water sources known from ethnographic studies, history, and archaeological excavations. These data will allow us to engage with debates in Middle Eastern anthropology, including those concerning the relationship between water and political power, the environment in which the world's earliest cities arose, and the relevance of "lessons of the past" for present and potential future water crises and "water wars." In our final weeks, we will discuss archaeology and historical anthropology's contribution to conceptions of water "sustainability" and examine attempts to revive traditional/ancient technologies and attitudes about water.

For BA Students: Humanities and Social Science S

Taught by: Hammer

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: [ANTH 110](#)

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Social Sciences Requirement

NELC 118 Iranian Cinema: Gender, Politics and Religion

This seminar explores Iranian culture, society, history and politics through the medium of film. We will

examine a variety of cinematic works that represent the social, political, economic and cultural circumstances of contemporary Iran, as well as the diaspora. Along the way, we will discuss issues pertaining to gender, religion, nationalism, ethnicity, and the role of cinema in Iranian society and beyond. Discussions topics will also include the place of the Iranian diaspora in cinema, as well as the transnational production, distribution, and consumption of Iranian cinema. Films will include those by internationally acclaimed filmmakers, such as Rakhshan Bani-Etemad, Asghar Farhadi, Bahman Ghobadi, Abbas Kiarostami, Mohsen Makhmalbaf, Dariush Mehrjui, Tahmineh Milani, Jafar Panahi, Marjane Satrapi and others. All films will be subtitled in English. No prior knowledge is required.

Taught by: Entezari

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: [CIMS 118](#), [COML 120](#), [GSWS 118](#), [NELC 618](#)

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

NELC 119 Middle Eastern Cinema

In the past two decades, films from the Middle East have gained exceptional international reception. This course is designed to explore the reasons behind this reception through a study of the prevalent social, political, and historical themes and issues in Middle Eastern cinema. Questions such as women's laws, literature and its function, familial issues and gender roles, historical legacies and political tensions, and religion, will be discussed. This course assumes no previous knowledge of film studies or languages of the region. Films from Israel, the Arab World, Turkey, and Iran will be shown in subtitled versions.

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: [CIMS 119](#), [COML 129](#)

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

NELC 130 Introduction to the Qur'an

The goal of this course is to provide students with a general introduction to the holy scripture of the religion of Islam, the Qur'an. In particular, students will become familiar with various aspects of Qur'anic content and style, the significance of the Qur'an in Islamic tradition and religious practice, scholarly debates about the history of its text, and contemporary interpretations of it. Through close readings of a wide range of passages and short research assignments, students will gain first-hand knowledge of the Qur'an's treatment of prophecy, law, the Biblical tradition, and many other topics. No previous background in Islamic studies or Arabic language is required for this course.

For BA Students: Humanities and Social Sciences

Taught by: Lowry

Course offered fall; odd-numbered years

Also Offered As: [RELS 140](#)

Activity: Lecture

1 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

NELC 133 Penn/Philadelphia/and the Middle East

This seminar explores the historic engagement of the University of Pennsylvania and its faculty, students, and graduates in the Near and Middle East. It does so while drawing on archives, rare books and manuscripts, and artifacts that are now preserved in the University Archives, the Penn Museum, and the Penn Libraries. Together we will consider how, beginning in the late nineteenth century, Penn scholars engaged in archaeological expeditions to celebrated sites like Ur (in what is now Iraq) and Memphis (in Egypt) and how some of these efforts influenced the late Ottoman Empire's policies towards antiquities and museums. We will examine how Penn's curriculum changed over time to accommodate Semitics, including the study of languages and biblical traditions, in light of or in spite of historic tensions at the university between secular and religious learning. We will assess how Penn responded to changing American popular

attitudes and U.S. foreign policy concerns relative to the Middle East, including during the Cold War and post-2001 (post-9/11) eras. Finally, we will trace the stories or biographies of some individual objects in Penn collections in order to appreciate the university's roles in collecting, preserving, analyzing, and disseminating knowledge about the region's deep cultural heritage. Ultimately, by investigating and writing.

Taught by: Sharkey, H

One-term course offered either term

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Social Sciences Requirement

NELC 136 Introduction to Islam

This course is an introduction to Islam as a religion as it exists in societies of the past as well as the present. It explores the many ways in which Muslims have interpreted and put into practice the prophetic message of Muhammad through historical and social analyses of varying theological, philosophical, legal, political, mystical and literary writings, as well as through visual art and music. The aim of the course is to develop a framework for explaining the sources and symbols through which specific experiences and understandings have been signified as Islamic, both by Muslims and by other peoples with whom they have come into contact, with particular emphasis given to issues of gender, religious violence and changes in beliefs and behaviors which have special relevance for contemporary society.

Taught by: Elias

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: [RELS 143](#), [SAST 139](#)

Activity: Lecture

1 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

NELC 137 Arab/Israeli Conflict in Literature and Film

This course will explore the origins, the history and, most importantly, the literary and cinematic art of the struggle that has endured for a century over the region that some call the Holy Land, some call Eretz Israel and others call Palestine. We will also consider religious motivations and interpretations that have inspired many involved in this conflict as well as the political consequences of world wars that contributed so greatly to the reconfiguration of the Middle East after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, and after the revelations of the Holocaust in Western Europe. While we will rely on a textbook for historical grounding, the most significant material we will use to learn this history will be films, novels, and short stories. Can the arts lead us to a different understanding of the lives lived through what seems like unending crisis?

Taught by: Troutt-Powell

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: **CIMS 166**, **HIST 166**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Units

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

NELC 142 1947-49: British Empire and the Partitions of South Asia and Palestine

The partitions of South Asia and Palestine marked the end of the British Empire in those regions. British colonial rule in India ended in 1947 with the emergence of not one, but two nation states, India and Pakistan. Decolonization was marked by mass migration and ethnic cleansing along their borders. An estimated million people died in the violence in less than a year, and 12.5 million people migrated from their homes. The British Empire also gave up its claims to Palestine in 1947, exhausted by the two nationalisms of Zionists and Palestinians. This partition set up the declaration of the state of Israel, and the War for Palestine. By 1949, almost a million Palestinians found themselves displaced over many borders, some also within the borders of Israel. This comparative course is organized around three

themes - the prehistories of these cataclysmic events, the role of Empire in catalyzing them, and the afterlives of these events that continue to haunt us into the present, seventy-five years later. It explores the political history - and the collapse of politics - that led to violence on a scale that was without precedent in the history of the Indian subcontinent.

Taught by: Sreenivasan

Also Offered As: **HIST 142**, **SAST 117**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

NELC 145 Near Eastern Topics

Course topics will vary

Course not offered every year

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

Notes: Sometimes offered as a Benjamin Franklin Seminar.

NELC 148 Warriors, Concubines, and Converts: the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East & Europe

For almost six hundred years, the Ottomans ruled most of the Balkans and the Middle East. From their bases in Anatolia, Ottoman armies advanced into the Balkans, Syria, Egypt, and Iraq, constantly challenging the borders of neighboring European and Islamic empires. By the end of the seventeenth century, Constantinople, Jerusalem, Cairo, Baghdad, Sarajevo, Budapest, and nearly Vienna came under Ottoman rule. As the empire expanded into Europe and the Middle East, the balance of imperial power shifted from warriors to converts, concubines, and intellectuals. This course examines the expansion of the Ottoman sultanate from a local principality into a sprawling empire with a sophisticated bureaucracy; it also investigates the social, cultural, and intellectual developments that accompanied the long arc of the empire's rise and fall. By the end of the course, students will be able to

identify and discuss major currents of change in the Ottoman Empire and the Middle East. The student will have a better understanding of the roles of power, ideology, diplomacy, and gender in the construction of empire and a refined appreciation for diverse techniques of historical analysis.

For BA Students: History and Tradition Sector

Taught by: Aguirre-Mandujano

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: **HIST 148**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

NELC 149 Filming the Middle East

This course will take us through the history of the modern Middle East as told by the region's many film-makers. We will explore how cinema developed and grew throughout countries like Egypt, Iran, Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Israel and Palestine. Unusually for a typical course on the Middle East, we will also pay close attention to North Africa's film industry, with a deep exploration of the cinema of Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. Sudanese films will be an important part of our study as well. With independence, were more markets available to Middle Eastern films? Where did directors and screenwriters train? Who were the intended audiences for these films? We will watch canonical films from the region, many of which focus on or reflect the political turmoil and aftermath of wars. But we will also examine the lightness of comedies, which were usually much more popular with Middle Eastern audiences, and which reveal every bit as much about the region's histories. And we will watch and discuss a phenomenon not found in Western cinema - the Ramadan soap operas and historical reenactments that are unique to the Middle East.

Taught by: Troutt-Powell

Also Offered As: **CIMS 149, HIST 149**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

NELC 159 Modern Hebrew Literature and Film in Translation: Autobiography

Like James Joyce's Dublin, Carl Sandburg's Chicago, or even Woody Allen's Paris, cities have long been the object of yearning and the subject of art. In the time of a pandemic, the idea of the city is associated with new challenges and emotions. This course examines how cities are forged in cinema, literature and scholarship as well as the role of their architecture. While we focus on Israeli cities like Jerusalem, Tiberias, or Tel Aviv, we'll compare their artistic portrayals to those of American, German, and Iraqi cities, among others. The psychological and physical bond between writers or directors and their respective places is metabolized in their poetry, prose, and films, and so artistic representations of cities often reflect the inner world, personal relations, or social and national conflicts.

For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector

Taught by: Gold

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: **CIMS 159, COML 282, JWST 154**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

Notes: There will be five film screenings; the films will also be placed on reserve at the library for those students unable to attend. The content of this course changes from year to year, and therefore, students may take it for credit more than once.

NELC 201 Modern Middle Eastern Literature in Translation

The Middle East boasts a rich tapestry of cultures that have developed a vibrant body of modern literature that is often overlooked in media coverage of the region. While each of the modern literary traditions that will be surveyed in this introductory course-Arabic, Hebrew, Persian and Turkish-will be analyzed with an appreciation of the cultural context unique to each body of literature, this course will also attempt to bridge these diverse traditions by

analyzing common themes-such as modernity, social values, the individual and national identity-as reflected in the genres of poetry, the novel and the short story. This course is in seminar format to encourage lively discussion and is team-taught by four professors whose expertise in modern Middle Eastern literature serves to create a deeper understanding and aesthetic appreciation of each literary tradition. In addition to honing students' literary analysis skills, the course will enable students to become more adept at discussing the social and political forces that are reflected in Middle Eastern literature, explore important themes and actively engage in reading new Middle Eastern works on their own in translation. All readings are in English.

For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector

Taught by: Allen/Gold

Course usually offered in spring term

Also Offered As: [COML 212](#)

Activity: Lecture

1 Course Unit

Notes: Fulfills Cross-Cultural Analysis

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

NELC 216 Introduction to Persian Poetic Tradition

This course introduces some of the major genres and themes of the millennium-old Persian poetic tradition from ancient to modern Iran. Epic and romance, love and mysticism, wine and drunkenness, wisdom and madness, body and mind, sin and temptation are some of the key themes that will be explored through a close reading of poems in this course. The course suits undergraduate students of all disciplines, as it requires no prior knowledge of or familiarity with the Persian language or the canon of Persian literature. All teaching materials are available in English translation. Students are expected to attend seminars and take part in discussions

For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector

Taught by: Shams

Course usually offered in spring term

Also Offered As: [COML 215](#), [GSWS 214](#), [HIST 226](#), [NELC 516](#)

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

NELC 217 Literature of Modern Iran

NELC 218 Media and Culture in Contemporary Iran

This course offers a comprehensive introduction to the culture and media of modern Iran, with a critical perspective on issues such as identity formation, ethnicity, race, and nation-building. It focuses on how these issues relate to various aspects of modern Iranian culture -- such as religion, gender, sexuality, war, and migration -- through the lens of media, cinema, and literature.

Taught by: Esmaeili

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: [CIMS 218](#), [GSWS 218](#), [NELC 518](#), [RELS 219](#)

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

NELC 231 Modern Arabic Literature

This course is a study of modern Arabic literary forms in the context of the major political and social changes which shaped Arab history in the first half of the twentieth century. The aim of the course is to introduce students to key samples of modern Arabic literature which trace major social and political developments in Arab society. Each time the class will be offered with a focus on one of the literary genres which emerged or flourished in the twentieth century: the free verse poem, the prose-poem, drama, the novel, and the short story. We will study each of these emergent genres against the socio-political backdrop which informed it. All readings will be in English translations. The class will also draw attention to the politics of translation as a reading and representational lens.

For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector

Taught by: Fakhreddine

Course usually offered in spring term

Also Offered As: [COML 246](#), [NELC 631](#)

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

[Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement](#)

NELC 233 Arabic Literary Heritage

This course provides a survey of the genres and major figures in Arabic literary history from the 6th century up to the present day. Selections will be read in translation after a general introduction to the cultural background and a session devoted to the Qur'an and its influence, a sequence of sessions will be devoted to poetry, narratives, drama, and criticism. Each set of texts is accompanied by a collection of background readings which place the authors and works into a literary, political and societal context. This course thus attempts to place the phenomenon of "literature" into the larger context of Islamic studies by illustrating the links between Arab litterateurs and other contributors to the development of an Islamic/Arab culture on the one hand and by establishing connections between the Arabic literary tradition and that of other (and particularly Western) traditions.

Taught by: Fakhreddine

Course usually offered in fall term

Activity: Lecture

1 Course Unit

[Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement](#)

NELC 235 Food in the Islamic Middle East: History, Memory, Identity

In the tenth century, a scholar named Ibn Sayyar al-Warraaq produced an Arabic manuscript called Kitab al-Tabikh (The Book of Cooking). This volume, which compiled and discussed the recipes of eighth- and ninth-century Islamic rulers (caliphs) and their courts in Iraq, represents the oldest known surviving cookbook of the Arab-Islamic world. Many more such cookbooks followed; in their day they

represented an important literary genre among cultured elites. As one food historian recently noted, there are more cookbooks in Arabic from before 1400 than in the rest of the worlds languages put together. Ibn Sayyars cookbook can help us to think about the historical and cultural dynamics of food. In this class, we will focus on the Middle East across the sweep of the Islamic era, into the modern period, and until the present day, although many of the readings will consider the study of food in other places (including the contemporary United States) for comparative insights. The class will use the historical study of food and foodways as a lens for examining subjects that relate to a wide array of fields and interests. These subjects include economics, agricultural and environmental studies, anthropology, literature, religion, and public health. With regard to the modern era, the course will pay close attention to the consequences of food for shaping memories and identities including religious, ethnic, national, and gender-based identities particularly among people who have dispersed or otherwise migrated. It will also focus considerably on the politics of food, that is, on the place of food in power relations. Among the questions we will debate are these: How does food reflect, shape, or inform history? By approaching the study of Middle Eastern cultures through food, what new or different things can we see? What is the field of food studies, and what can it offer to scholars? What is food writing as a literary form, and what methodological and conceptual challenges face those who undertake it?

Taught by: Sharkey

Course not offered every year

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

[Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement](#)

NELC 238 Introduction to Islamic Law

This course will introduce students to classical Islamic law, the all-embracing sacred law of Islam. Among the world's various legal systems, Islamic law may be the most widely misunderstood and even

misrepresented; certainly, misconceptions about it abound. Islamic law is, however, the amazing product of a rich, fascinating and diverse cultural and intellectual tradition. Most of the readings in this course will be taken from primary sources in translation. Areas covered will include criminal law, family law, law in the Quran, gender and sexuality, the modern application of Islamic law, Islamic government and other selected topics.

Taught by: Lowry

Course offered fall; even-numbered years

Also Offered As: [RELS 248](#)

Activity: Lecture

1 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

NELC 239 Migration and the Middle East

This reading-and discussion-intensive seminar examines the phenomenon of migration into, out of, within, and across the Middle East and North Africa. We will focus on the period from the late nineteenth century to the present and will emphasize the cultural (rather than economic) consequences of migration. Along the way we will trace connections between the Middle East and other regions-- notably the Americas, sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, the Caucasus, and Western Europe. Readings are interdisciplinary and include works of history, anthropology, sociology, medical research, literature, political science, geography, and human rights advocacy. As students develop final projects on topics of their choice, we will spend time throughout the semester discussing tactics for research and writing.

Taught by: Sharkey

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: [ASAM 239](#), [NELC 539](#), [SAST 269](#)

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

NELC 259 Introduction to Modern Hebrew Literature: Short Story Reinvented

The objective of this course is to develop an artistic appreciation for literature through in-depth class discussions and text analysis. Readings are comprised of Israeli poetry and short stories. Students examine how literary language expresses psychological and cultural realms. The course covers topics such as: the short story reinvented, literature and identity, and others. Because the content of this course changes from year to year, students may take it for credit more than once. This course is conducted in Hebrew and all readings are in Hebrew. Grading is based primarily on participation and students' literary understanding.

For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector

Taught by: Gold

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: [COML 266](#), [JWST 259](#), [NELC 559](#)

Prerequisite: HEBR 054

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

NELC 260 Middle Eastern Jews in Israel

This undergraduate seminar offers an in-depth look at the history of Middle Eastern and North African Jews, focusing in particular on their place in Israeli society and culture. It will begin with a historical background on the Jewish communities in Ottoman Palestine, and in the larger Ottoman Empire, Iran, and Morocco. We will then proceed to consider the engagement of these Jewish communities with Zionism, and with other conflicting forces, such as European colonialism, Arab nationalism, and Cosmopolitanism. We will learn about Jewish immigration from the region to Palestine/Israel in the period between 1880 to 1948, and about their exodus/expulsion post-1948. We will then explore in depth their settlement in Israel: governmental policies towards Jewish immigrants from the Islamic World, especially between the 1950s and the 1970s; their integration in Israeli society; identity politics in

Israel (or: the "invention" of "Mizrahim"); Mizrahi political action; Mizrahi music, film, literature, and food culture; and Mizrahi attitudes towards Arabs, both within and outside Israel. Students will leave the class with a firm grasp of the social and cultural history of Middle Eastern Jews in Israel, and the issues facing third-generation Mizrahim in Israel today. Students will also be introduced to basic methods of inquiry in history, sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies. Students will engage with a mix of scholarly research, readings in original documents, film, literature, music, and some material and visual artifacts.

Taught by: Alon Tam

Also Offered As: **JWST 270**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

NELC 270 Science in the Middle East

This course provides a long-term overview of science, learning and naturalistic practices in the Middle East, broadly defined, from the eighth century to the present. The students may expect to read state-of-the-field analyses of some of the turning points and major debates, including the Graeco-Arabic translation movement, occultism, decline, colonization and modernity. The course is built on a mixture of primary and secondary sources. The students are expected to contribute to class discussion and to write a final research paper. Some knowledge of the history of the region is desirable, but not required.

Taught by: Kucuk

Course offered fall; odd-numbered years

Also Offered As: **STSC 266**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

NELC 281 Topics In Anthropology and the Modern World

This course relates anthropological models and methods to current problems in the Modern World. The overall objective is to show how the research findings and analytical concepts of anthropology may be used to illuminate and explain events as they have unfolded in the recent news and in the course of the semester. Each edition of the course will focus on a particular country or region that has been in the news.

Taught by: Spooner

Course usually offered in spring term

Also Offered As: **ANTH 100, ANTH 654, NELC 681, SAST 161**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Social Sciences Requirement

(Prior Approval from MEC Required for MMES Credit)

NELC 282 Iraq and Syria from World War I to ISIS

NELC 285 Introduction to Visual Culture of the Islamic World

A one-semester survey of Islamic art and architecture which examines visual culture as it functions within the larger sphere of Islamic culture in general. Particular attention will be given to relationships between visual culture and literature, using specific case studies, sites or objects which may be related to various branches of Islamic literature, including historical, didactic, philosophical writings, poetry and religious texts. All primary sources are available in English translation.

For BA Students: Humanities and Social Science S
Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: **AAMW 635, ARTH 235, ARTH 635, NELC 685, VLST 235**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

NELC 290 Faces of Love: Gender, Sexuality and the Erotic in Persian Literature

Beloved, Lover and Love are three concepts that dominate the semantic field of eroticism in Persian literature and mysticism. The interrelation among these concepts makes it almost impossible to treat any one of the concepts separately. Moreover, there exists various faces and shades of love in the works of classical and modern Persian literature that challenges the conventional heteronormative assumptions about the sexual and romantic relationships between the lover and the beloved. A sharp contrast exists between the treatment of homosexuality and 'queerness' in Islamic law, on the one hand and its reflection in Persian literature, particularly poetry (the chief vehicle of Persian literary expression), on the other. This course introduces and explores different faces of love, eroticism and homoeroticism in the Persian literary tradition from the dawn of dawn of the Persian poetry in the ninth century all through to the twenty-first century. It offers a comprehensive study of representations and productions of heteronormativity, sexual orientation and gender roles with particular reference to the notion of love, lover and beloved in Persian literature. Prerequisite: No prior knowledge of Persian is required as all literary works will be available in English translation. Students are expected to attend seminars and take part in discussions. Please note that this syllabus is subject to change.

Taught by: Shams

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: **COML 275, COML 574, GSWs 275, GSWs 575, NELC 574**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

Notes: No prior knowledge of Persian is required as all literary works will be available in English translation. Students are expected to attend seminars and take part in discussions. Please note that this syllabus is subject to change.

NELC 292 World Heritage in Global Conflict

Heritage is always political. Such a statement might refer to the everyday politics of local stakeholder interests on one end of the spectrum, or the volatile politics of destruction and erasure of heritage during conflict, on the other. If heritage is always political then one might expect that the workings of World Heritage might be especially fraught given the international dimension. In particular, the intergovernmental system of UNESCO World Heritage must navigate the inherent tension between state sovereignty and nationalist interests and the wider concerns of a universal regime. The World Heritage List has almost 1200 properties has many such contentious examples, including sites in Iraq, Mali, Syria, Crimea, Palestine, Armenia and Cambodia. As an organization UNESCO was born of war with an explicit mission to end global conflict and help the world rebuild materially and morally yet has found its own history increasingly entwined with that of international politics and violence.

Taught by: Meskeil

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: **ANTH 284, ANTH 584, CLST 284, HSPV 584**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Social Sciences Requirement

NELC 306 Gunpowder, Art and Diplomacy: Islamic Empires in the Early Modern World

In the sixteenth century, the political landscape of the Middle East, Central Asia, and India changed with the expansion and consolidation of new Islamic empires. Gunpowder had transformed the modes of warfare. Diplomacy followed new rules and forms of legitimation. The widespread use of Persian, Arabic and Turkish languages across the region allowed for an interconnected world of scholars, merchants, and diplomats. And each imperial court, those of the Ottomans, the Safavids, and the Mughals, found innovative and original forms of expression in art and literature. The expansion of these Islamic

empires, each of them military giants and behemoths of bureaucracy, marked a new phase in world history. The course is divided in four sections. The first section introduces the student to major debates about the so-called gunpowder empires of the Islamic world as well as to comparative approaches to study them. The second section focuses on the transformations of modes of warfare and military organization. The third section considers the cultural history and artistic production of the imperial courts of the Ottomans, the Mughals, and the Safavids. The fourth and final section investigates the social histories of these empires, their subjects, and the configuration of a world both connected and divided by commerce, expansion, and diplomacy.

Taught by: Mandujano

Course usually offered in spring term

Also Offered As: **HIST 306**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

NELC 325 Who Owns the Past? Archaeology and Politics in the Middle East

This course explores the role of cultural heritage and archaeological discoveries in the politics of the Middle East from the nineteenth century to the recent aftermath of the Arab Spring. We will explore how modern Middle East populations relate to their pasts and how archaeology and cultural heritage have been employed to support particular political and social agendas, including colonialism, nationalism, imperialism, and the construction of ethnic-religious identities. Although it was first introduced to the Middle East as a colonial enterprise by European powers, archaeology became a pivotal tool for local populations of the Middle East to construct new histories and identities during the post-World War I period of intensive nation-building after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. To understand this process, we will first look at the nineteenth-century establishment of archaeology by institutions like the Penn Museum.

Then we will move on to individual case studies in Turkey, Iraq, Egypt, Israel/Palestine, Iran, and the republics of former Soviet Transcaucasia to look at the role of archaeology and cultural heritage in the formation of these countries as modern nation-states with a shared identity among citizens. We will conclude with an examination of the recent impact of the Islamic State on material heritage in Syria and Iraq, the changing attitudes of Middle Eastern countries toward foreign museums, and the role of UNESCO in defining Middle Eastern sites of world heritage. The course will also include field trips to the Penn Museum.

For BA Students: History and Tradition Sector

Taught by: Hammer

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: **ANTH 325**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Social Sciences Requirement

NELC 330 The University, the Museum, and the Middle East

This seminar explores how two kinds of institutions - the research university and the museum - developed in the United States as American scholars and philanthropists and the U.S. government engaged with the wider world. We will take the involvement of the University of Pennsylvania and the Penn Museum in the Middle East as a test case for this history, while focusing on the period from the late nineteenth century to the present. We will approach questions in transnational intellectual, cultural, and political history through the lens of Penn's Middle Eastern engagements. For example, how did the university and its museum contribute to the construction of the Middle East as a zone of U.S. diplomatic intervention? How have American scholarly traditions shaped academic fields of inquiry including "Semitics" (a term used a century ago to suggest the study of biblical languages and traditions), "Oriental Studies" (a now-passe and politically loaded term suggesting connections to American traditions of Orientalist thought), "Islamic

Studies", and "Egyptology"? How did Penn's archaeological expeditions to celebrated sites like Ur in the late nineteenth century influence the late Ottoman Empire's policies towards antiquities and museums? How did Penn's broader expeditions in the twentieth century, to Egypt, Iran, and elsewhere, shape nationalist imaginations in the United States and in Middle Eastern countries, while also informing international antiquities policies? Finally, how have institutions like Penn and the Penn Museum responded to changing American popular attitudes and U.S. foreign policy concerns relative to the Middle East, during the Cold War and post-2001 ("post-9/11") eras, and most recently, amid civil strife in Syria and Iraq? This seminar offers students an opportunity to consult Penn's phenomenal collections of Middle East-related materials as they pursue end-of-semester research. These collections include artifacts (museum objects), archival records (such as documents, drawings, and photographs), and rare books and manuscripts from the Penn Museum and Penn Libraries.

Prerequisite: Middle Eastern history survey

Taught by: Sharkey

Course offered spring; odd-numbered years

Also Offered As: **NELC 530**

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

NELC 331 Women Making History: The Penn Museum and the Centennial 2020

The year 2020 marks the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which declared that the right of citizens to vote "shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex". To mark this centennial - to both celebrate it and critically assess its impact on American society - we will investigate the history of women at the Penn Museum as archaeologists, ethnographers, epigraphers, philanthropists, and more. At the same time, we will examine material in the Penn Museum that women collected, donated, or studied. Our goal will be to produce original

research that may contribute to future exhibits and publications as well as to broader public forums. Sponsored by the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, our seminar will focus heavily on western Asia, southeastern Europe, and North Africa - all zones that scholars have variously associated with the Near East or Middle East, and where the Penn Museum has been active since its foundation in 1887. To situate the Penn Museum and its collections within a global and comparative frame, we will also study select women who made major scholarly contributions to other parts of the world such as the Americas and Oceania. Among the figures we will study are Sarah Yorke Stevenson (Egypt), Katharine Woolley (Mesopotamia/Iraq), Harriet Boyd Hawes (Ottoman Crete and Greece), Florence Shotridge (Alaska), Zelia Nuttall (Mexico and Russia), and Tatiana Proskouriakoff (Guatemala). We will venture into many different kinds of history. In regional terms, our scope will be transnational and international: we will cover the United States and the Middle East in the wider world. In thematic and methodological terms, we will approach our subject through biography, oral history, and microhistory; material history and museum studies; cultural and intellectual history; women's and gender studies; and the history of academic disciplines, especially archaeology and anthropology. Some background in Middle Eastern history; or Anthropology; or Women's History; or Museum Studies recommended.

Taught by: Sharkey

Course offered spring; even-numbered years

Also Offered As: **ANTH 351, ANTH 531, GSWS 331, GSWS 533, NELC 531**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

NELC 332 North Africa: History, Culture, Society

This interdisciplinary seminar aims to introduce students to the countries of North Africa, with a focus on the Maghreb and Libya (1830-present). It does so while examining the region's close economic

and cultural connections to sub-Saharan Africa, Europe, and the Middle East. Readings will include histories, political analyses, anthropological studies, and novels, and will cover a wide range of topics such as colonial and postcolonial experiences, developments in Islamic thought and practice, and labor migration. This class is intended for juniors, seniors, and graduate students. Prerequisite: A university-level survey course in Middle Eastern, African, or Mediterranean history.

Taught by: Sharkey

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: [AFST 332](#), [AFRC 632](#), [HIST 370](#), [NELC 632](#)

Prerequisites: A university-level survey course in Middle Eastern, African, or Mediterranean history.

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

NELC 333 Urban Life in the Middle East and North Africa

With rapid urbanization, most people in the Middle East and North Africa are living now in cities and towns, rather than in rural areas. This seminar introduces the complex realities of living in the major cities of the region, in terms of globalization, social class, politics, gender and sexuality, culture, religion, communal identities, communal networks, and more. Through intensive engagement with the various readings and films, both documentaries and feature films, we will explore how those realities and processes shape the urban space, or express themselves in it. In addition, we will explore the basic premises of such disciplines as anthropology, cultural studies, history, or sociology, and learn how they can help us research and understand the realities of urban life in the modern and contemporary Middle East and North Africa. We will use Cairo, Egypt, as our main case study, while looking at a range of other cities, such as Istanbul, Turkey, and Marrakesh, Morocco, for further insights.

Taught by: Tam

Also Offered As: [URBS 333](#)

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

NELC 334 Africa and the Middle East

Taught by: Troutt Powell

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: [AFRC 372](#), [HIST 371](#)

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

NELC 335 Muslims, Christians, and Jews in the Middle East: Historical Perspectives

A reading- and discussion-intensive seminar that addresses several recurring questions with regard to the Middle East and North Africa. How have Islam, Judaism, and Christianity influenced each other in these regions historically? How have Jews, Christians, and Muslims fared as religious minorities? To what extent have communal relations been characterized by harmony and cooperation, or by strife and discord, and how have these relations changed in different contexts over time? To what extent and under what circumstances have members of these communities converted, intermarried, formed business alliances, and adopted or developed similar customs? How has the emergence of the modern nation-state system affected communal relations as well as the legal or social status of religious minorities in particular countries? How important has religion been as one variable in social identity (along with sect, ethnicity, class, gender, etc.), and to what extent has religious identity figured into regional conflicts and wars? The focus of the class will be on the modern period (c. 1800-present) although we will read about some relevant trends in the early and middle Islamic periods as well. Students will also pursue individually tailored research to produce final papers. Prior background in Islamic studies and Middle Eastern history is required. Middle Eastern history is

required. This class is intended for juniors, seniors, and graduate students.

Taught by: Sharkey

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: [HIST 479](#), [JWST 335](#), [NELC 535](#), [RELS 311](#)

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

NELC 336 Nationalism and Communal Identity in the Middle East

This seminar views the phenomenon of nationalism as it affected the modern Middle East in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Together we will consider the diverse components of nationalism, including religion, language, territorial loyalty, and ethnicity, and test the thesis that nations are "imagined communities" built on "invented traditions." At the same time, we will examine other forms of communal identity that transcend national borders or flourish on more localized scales. This class approaches nationalism and communal identity as complex products of cultural, political, and social forces, and places Middle Eastern experiences within a global context. Students must take a survey of modern Middle Eastern history or politics before enrolling in this class. This class is intended for juniors, seniors, and graduate students.

Taught by: Sharkey

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: [NELC 536](#)

Prerequisites: [NELC 102](#)

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

NELC 342 Egypt in Four Revolutions

This seminar offers an in-depth look at the political and social history of revolution and protest in modern Egypt. We will examine four such seminal events, through different lenses: The Urabi Revolution (1879-1882), The 1919 Revolution, The

1952 Revolution, and The 2011 Revolution. We will discuss their political, social, and economic causes and effects; popular participation and the use of public space; the roles of the army, women, youth, and social organizations in those events; their ideological and international aspects; their colonial and post-colonial contexts; and more. We will use cutting edge research from several disciplines, as well as literature, film, music, photography, and social media as sources. Students will leave the class with a firm grasp of the social and political history of modern Egypt, as well as of current scholarly discussions about the nature of revolution and protest.

Taught by: Tam

Also Offered As: [NELC 642](#)

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

NELC 359 Seminar in Modern Hebrew Literature

This course introduces students to selections from the best literary works written in Hebrew over the last hundred years in a relaxed seminar environment. The goal of the course is to develop skills in critical reading of literature in general, and to examine how Hebrew authors grapple with crucial questions of human existence and national identity. Topics include: Hebrew classics and their modern "descendants," autobiography in poetry and fiction, the conflict between literary generations, and others. Because the content of this course changes from year to year, students may take it for credit more than once. This course is conducted in Hebrew and all readings are in Hebrew. Grading is based primarily on participation and students' literary understanding.

For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector

Taught by: Gold

Course usually offered in spring term

Also Offered As: [COML 359](#), [JWST 359](#), [JWST 659](#), [NELC 659](#)

Prerequisite: [HEBR 059](#)

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

NELC 385 Eastern Christianities

The history of Christianity is often told from the perspective of its spread westward from Israel to Rome. Yet, in the first millennium, there were more Christians living in the East, in places as far away as Persia, Yemen, India, China, and Mongolia, than in the West. Spread across the Asian continent, these Christians were actively involved in local and imperial politics, composed theological literature, and were deeply embedded in the cultural fabric of their host societies. This course traces the spread of Christianity eastward, paying particular attention to its regional developments, its negotiations with local political powers, and its contact with other religions, including Buddhism, Manichaeism, and Islam. Readings will cover a broad range of sources, including selections from classical Syriac literature, Mesopotamian magic bowls, the so-called "Jesus Sutras," and the Quran.

Taught by: Durmaz

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: [RELS 235](#), [SAST 245](#)

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

NELC 434 Arabic Literature and Literary Theory

This course will explore different critical approaches to the interpretation and analysis of Arabic literature from pre-Islamic poetry to the modern novel and prose-poem. The course will draw on western and Arabic literary criticism to explore the role of critical theory not only in understanding and contextualizing literature but also in forming literary genres and attitudes. Among these approaches are: Meta-poetry and inter-Arts theory, Genre theory, Myth and Archetype, Poetics and Rhetoric, and Performance theory.

Taught by: Fakhreddine

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: [COML 353](#), [COML 505](#)

Activity: Lecture

1 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

NELC 437 Islamic Intellectual Tradition

This comprehensive survey of the traditions of rational thought in classical Islamic culture is distinguished by its attempt to contextualize and localize the history of what is best described as philosophy in Islam, including not only the Islamic products of the Hellenistic mode of thought but also religious and linguistic sciences whose methodology is philosophical. Reading history as a set of local contingencies, the course examines the influence of these different disciplines upon each other, and the process of the Islamic "aspecting" of the Greek intellectual legacy. The readings thus include not only the works of Hellenized philosophers (falasifa) of Islam, but also those of theologians (mutakallimun), legists (fiqh scholars), and grammarians (nahw/lugha scholars). No prerequisites. Additional advanced-level assignments can be given for graduate credit.

Taught by: Lowry

Course not offered every year

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

NELC 518 Media and Culture in Contemporary Iran

This course offers a comprehensive introduction to the culture and media of modern Iran, with a critical perspective on issues such as identity formation, ethnicity, race, and nation-building. It focuses on how these issues relate to various aspects of modern Iranian culture - such as religion, gender, sexuality, war, and migration - through the lens of media, cinema, and literature.

Taught by: Esmaeili

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: [CIMS 218](#), [GSWS 218](#), [NELC 218](#), [RELS 219](#)

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

[Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement](#)

NELC 530 The University, the Museum, and the Middle East

This seminar explores how two kinds of institutions - the research university and the museum - developed in the United States as American scholars and philanthropists and the U.S. government engaged with the wider world. We will take the involvement of the University of Pennsylvania and the Penn Museum in the Middle East as a test case for this history, while focusing on the period from the late nineteenth century to the present. We will approach questions in transnational intellectual, cultural, and political history through the lens of Penn's Middle Eastern engagements. For example, how did the university and its museum contribute to the construction of the Middle East as a zone of U.S. diplomatic intervention? How have American scholarly traditions shaped academic fields of inquiry including "Semitics" (a term used a century ago to suggest the study of biblical languages and traditions), "Oriental Studies" (a now-passe and politically loaded term suggesting connections to American traditions of Orientalist thought), "Islamic Studies", and "Egyptology"? How did Penn's archaeological expeditions to celebrated sites like Ur in the late nineteenth century influence the late Ottoman Empire's policies towards antiquities and museums? How did Penn's broader expeditions in the twentieth century, to Egypt, Iran, and elsewhere, shape nationalist imaginations in the United States and in Middle Eastern countries, while also informing international antiquities policies? Finally, how have institutions like Penn and the Penn Museum responded to changing American popular attitudes and U.S. foreign policy concerns relative to the Middle East, during the Cold War and post-2001 ("post-9/11") eras, and most recently, amid civil

strife in Syria and Iraq? This seminar offers students an opportunity to consult Penn's phenomenal collections of Middle East-related materials as they pursue end-of-semester research. These collections include artifacts (museum objects), archival records (such as documents, drawings, and photographs), and rare books and manuscripts from the Penn Museum and Penn Libraries.

Taught by: Sharkey

Course offered spring; odd-numbered years

Also Offered As: [NELC 330](#)

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

[Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement](#)

NELC 531 Iraq, Egypt, Algeria: Case Studies from the Arab World

This reading- and discussion-intensive seminar will use historical and political analyses, ethnographic studies, novels, and films to consider and compare the experiences of Iraq, Egypt, and Algeria in the modern period. Themes to be covered include the nature of local Arab and Arabic cultures; the impact and legacies of Ottoman and Western imperialism; the development of Islamist, nationalist, and feminist movements; the status of non-Arab or non-Muslim minorities (notably the Iraqi Kurds, Egyptian Copts, and Algerian Berbers); and patterns of social and economic change. The class will culminate in research projects that students individually design and pursue. This class is intended for juniors, seniors, and graduate students.

Taught by: Sharkey

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: [NELC 331](#)

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

[Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement](#)

NELC 534 Topics in Islamic Religion

Selected topics, such as Sufi texts or The Qur'an, in the study of Islamic religion.

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: [RELS 545](#), [SAST 549](#)

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

NELC 536 Nationalism and Communal Identity in the Middle East

This seminar views the phenomenon of nationalism as it affected the modern Middle East in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Together we will consider the diverse components of nationalism, including religion, language, territorial loyalty, and ethnicity, and test the thesis that nations are "imagined communities" built on "invented traditions." At the same time, we will examine other forms of communal identity that transcend national borders or flourish on more localized scales. This class approaches nationalism and communal identity as complex products of cultural, political, and social forces, and places Middle Eastern experiences within a global context.

Taught by: Sharkey

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: [NELC 336](#)

Prerequisite: [NELC 102](#)

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

NELC 538 Manuscript Arts in the Islamic World

This hands-on seminar will explore the long tradition of manuscript-making and manuscript-makers in the Islamic world, using the extensive collections of Arab, Persian, Turkish and Indian volumes at the University of Pennsylvania and the Free Library of Philadelphia. These include copies of the Qur'an (Islam's holy text) and other religious, scientific, historical and literary texts. Emphasis will be placed on traditional materials and artistic techniques, specifically calligraphy, binding, illumination and illustration, as well as on production methods and the historical, social, and economic contexts in which manuscripts were made, used and collected from

early Islamic times to the early modern period. Also at issue will be the ways that Islamic manuscripts were transformed over the centuries as they journeyed from their diverse places of origin (Egypt, Morocco, Syria, Iran, India, etc.) to Philadelphia. The goal is the art historical skills involved in the study of Islamic codices, through close examination, discussion and presentation, and to recognize that every manuscript has a story. Most of the class sessions will be held either at the Kislak Center in Van Pelt Library or at the Free Library on the Parkway.

Taught by: Simpson

Also Offered As: [ARTH 536](#)

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

NELC 559 Introduction to Modern Hebrew Literature: Short Story Reinvented

The objective of this course is to develop an artistic appreciation for literature through in-depth class discussions and text analysis. Readings are comprised of Israeli poetry and short stories. Students examine how literary language expresses psychological and cultural realms. The course covers topics such as: the short story reinvented, literature and identity, and others. Because the content of this course changes from year to year, students may take it for credit more than once. This course is conducted in Hebrew and all readings are in Hebrew. Grading is based primarily on participation and students' literary understanding.

For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector

Taught by: Gold

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: [COML 266](#), [JWST 259](#), [NELC 259](#)

Prerequisite: [HEBR 054](#)

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

NELC 614 Introduction to Persian Literature

This course, which requires no knowledge of Persian, aims to introduce students to the major trends and developments in the Persian literary tradition, which has spanned for more than a millennium. Introductory sessions will familiarize students with the history of Persian literature, especially the transition away from classical modes of representation, a tradition that was largely poetic, to modern genres and forms, including the novel, blank-verse poetry, and short stories. However, most of the course will be organized thematically rather than chronologically, and each unit will bring together literary texts from both the classical and modern traditions.

Also Offered As: [NELC 114](#)

Activity: Lecture

1 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

NELC 633 Seminar in Selected Topics in Arabic Literature

This is the graduate seminar course in which a variety of aspects of Arabic literature studies are covered at the advanced graduate level. Students in this course are expected to be able to read large amounts of literature in Arabic on a weekly basis and to be able to discuss them critically during the class itself. Topics are chosen to reflect student interest. Recent topics have included: 1001 NIGHTS; the short story; the novel; MAQAMAT; classical ADAB prose; the drama; the novella; modern Arabic poetry.

Taught by: Allen

Course usually offered in spring term

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

NELC 638 Approaches to Islamic Law

This course aims to introduce students to the study of Islamic law, the all-embracing sacred law of Islam. In this course we will attempt to consider many different facets of the historical, doctrinal, institutional and social complexity of Islamic law. In addition, the various approaches that have been taken to the study of these aspects of Islamic law will be analyzed. The focus will be mostly, though not exclusively, on classical Islamic law. Specific topics covered include the beginnings of legal thought in Islam, various areas of Islamic positive law (substantive law), public and private legal institutions, Islamic legal theory, and issues in the contemporary development and application of Islamic law.

Taught by: Lowry

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: [RELS 648, LAW 737](#)

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

NELC 672 Key Concepts in Modern Persian Poetry

This graduate seminar which is tailored for graduate students with higher intermediate and advanced command of Persian language focuses on a variety of recurrent concepts in Modern Persian poetry. The seminar will run as a workshop and students are expected to embark on a project in which they explore large amounts of literary materials in Persian. Students must feel confident to read and discuss large amounts of literature in Persian on a weekly basis. Concepts such as exile, home, belonging, body, borders, nationalism and selfhood will be explored.

Taught by: Shams

Course usually offered in spring term

Prerequisites: [PERS 015](#), [PERS 016](#)

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

NELC 686 Topics in Mid East History

Reading and discussion course on selected topics in Middle Eastern history.

Also Offered As: [HIST 640](#)

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

Persian

PERS 010 Persian for Heritage Speakers I

Persian for Heritage Speakers is conducted in Persian and designed to help you strengthen your skills by learning not only to read and write, but also to engage in more complex forms of discourse in Persian. In this course, we will begin to address a variety of topics in order to increase your proficiency in linguistic as well as cultural terms. Emphasis is placed on actively using the language for interpersonal, interpretive and presentational modes of communication. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are integrated into the course, as are culture, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Prerequisite: Students must be proficient in spoken Persian (whether Farsi or Dari), and lack reading and writing skills.

Taught by: Entezari

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: [PERS 610](#)

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

PERS 011 Elementary Persian I

This course is designed to help you start learning Persian and to give you the necessary tools to continue your study of Persian. This course introduces the Persian alphabet alongside grammar and vocabulary. Emphasis is placed on actively using the language for interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational modes of communication. The four language skills (i.e., listening, speaking, reading and writing) as well as pronunciation and culture are

integrated into the curriculum. There is no prerequisite.

For BA Students: Language Course

Taught by: Entezari

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: [PERS 611](#)

Activity: Lecture

1 Course Unit

PERS 012 Elementary Persian II

This course is designed to help you build upon what you have learned in Elementary Persian I. Emphasis is placed on using the language for interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational modes of communication. Therefore, use of English is restricted. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing- as well as culture, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation-are integrated into the course. Students must either have successfully completed PERS-011 or take the departmental exam.

For BA Students: Language Course

Taught by: Entezari

Course usually offered in spring term

Also Offered As: [PERS 612](#)

Prerequisite: [PERS 011](#) or equivalent

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

PERS 013 Intermediate Persian I

This course is conducted in Persian and designed to help you continue expanding upon what you have learned in Elementary Persian II (PERS-012). In this course, we will begin to address a broader variety of cultural topics in order to increase your proficiency in linguistic as well as cultural terms. Emphasis is placed on actively using the language for interpersonal, interpretive and presentational modes of communication. Therefore, use of English is restricted. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are integrated into the course, as are culture, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Students must either have successfully completed PERS-012

or take the departmental placement exam.

For BA Students: Language Course

Taught by: Entezari

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: [PERS 613](#)

Prerequisite: [PERS 012](#) or equivalent

Activity: Lecture

1 Course Unit

PERS 014 Intermediate Persian II

In this course, we will continue to address a broader variety of cultural topics in order to increase your proficiency in linguistic as well as cultural terms. Emphasis is placed on actively using Persian for interpersonal, interpretive and presentational modes of communication. Therefore, use of English is restricted. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are integrated into the course, as are culture, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Students must either have successfully completed PERS-013 or take the departmental placement exam.

For BA Students: Last Language Course

Taught by: Entezari

Course usually offered in spring term

Also Offered As: [PERS 614](#)

Prerequisite: [PERS 013](#) or [PERS 017](#)

Activity: Lecture

1 Course Unit

PERS 015 Advanced Persian I

For BA Students: Advanced Language Course

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: [PERS 615](#)

Prerequisite: [PERS 014](#) or [PERS 018](#)

Activity: Lecture

1 Course Unit

PERS 016 Advanced Persian II

For BA Students: Advanced Language Course

Taught by: Assefi-Shirazi

Course usually offered in spring term

Also Offered As: [PERS 616](#)

Prerequisite: [PERS015](#) or equivalent

Activity: Lecture

1 Course Unit

PERS 017 Persian for Heritage Speakers I

A course designed to teach the reading and writing of standard modern Persian to those with a competency in spoken Persian. The course will focus on the lexical and syntactic differences between written and spoken Persian, and the problems of Persian spelling.

Taught by: Assefi-Shirazi

One-term course offered either term

Prerequisites: [Fluency in spoken Persian](#).

Activity: Lecture

1 Course Unit

PERS 018 Persian for Heritage Speakers II

A course designed to develop greater skills in reading and writing standard modern Persian for those with a competency in spoken Persian. The course will focus on the lexical and syntactic differences between written and spoken Persian, and the problems of Persian spelling. Prerequisite: Offered through the Penn Language Center.

One-term course offered either term

Prerequisites: [PERS 017](#)

Activity: Lecture

1 Course Unit

PERS 019 Advanced Persian in the Media

This course is designed for advanced students of Persian interested in contemporary Persian media from Iran as well as Afghanistan and abroad, who wish to gain a deeper understanding of contemporary Persian-speaking societies and politics. Students will advance their skills in reading and listening, as well as in writing and speaking. Prerequisite: Offered through the Penn Language Center.

Taught by: Assefi-Shirazi
Course usually offered in spring term
Prerequisites: [PERS 016](#)
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
Notes: Offered through the Penn Language Center.

PERS 040 Introduction to Sorani Kurdish

Introduction to Sorani Kurdish is an introductory-level course designed to help you start learning Sorani Kurdish and to give you the necessary tools to continue your study of Kurdish language. This course introduces the Kurdish alphabet (Arabic script) alongside grammar and vocabulary. Toward the end of the semester, the course will also involve some Kurdish classical and modern poetry. Emphasis is placed on actively using the language for interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational modes of communication. The four language skills (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing) as well as pronunciation and culture are integrated into the curriculum. There is no prerequisite.

Taught by: Salih
Also Offered As: [PERS 640](#)
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

PERS 111 Beginning Pashtu I

Reading, writing, basic grammar and elemental speaking.

For BA Students: Language Course
Taught by: Santry
Course usually offered in fall term
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

PERS 112 Beginning Pashtu II

Reading, writing, basic grammar and elemental speaking.

For BA Students: Language Course

Taught by: Santry
Course usually offered in spring term
Prerequisites: **For second semester, completion of the first semester.**
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: This is a two-semester course.

PERS 113 Intermediate Pashtu

A wide variety of reading genres, writing, and oral expression.

For BA Students: Language Course
Taught by: Santry
Course usually offered in fall term
Prerequisites: Beg. Pashtu, or permission by instructor.
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

PERS 114 Intermediate Pashtu Part II

Beg. Pashto, or permission of the instructor. A wide variety of reading genres, writing, and oral expression

For BA Students: Last Language Course
Taught by: Santry
Course usually offered in spring term
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Offered through Penn Language Center. This is a two-semester course.

PERS 320 Persian Culture, Literature and Film for Advanced Learners I

This course is designed for those undergraduate students who have successfully passed the intermediate Persian course. Undergraduate students who take this course must either have successfully completed Intermediate Persian II, or take the placement exam. The main objective of this course is to further enhance the students'

knowledge about the millennium-old Persian literary tradition and culture as well as its world-renowned cinema through reading primary sources or watching Iranian films in original Persian. Students who take this course are expected to use Persian language at all times during their time in class. Using English inside the classroom is restricted in order to improve the students' proficiency in Persian language.

Taught by: Shams Esmaili

Also Offered As: [PERS 620](#)

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

[Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement](#)

PERS 321 Persian Culture, Literature and Film for Advanced Learners II

Taught by: Shams Esmaili

Activity: Lecture

1 Course Unit

[Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement](#)

PERS 415 Classical Persian Prose

This course is designed for those junior and senior students who are eager to explore the major works of classical Persian prose. Students will become familiar with the medieval Persia through an in-depth reading of major mystical, historical and literary works of classical Persian prose. Depending on the text under discussion, students will be introduced to the socio-cultural context of Medieval Persia. Although no prerequisites are required, this course is a perfect follow-up for [NELC 216](#) "Persian Poetry in Translation". Only basic knowledge of Persian language is required for this course as all texts will be read and compared against their English translation.

Taught by: Shams Esmaili

One-term course offered either term

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

[Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement](#)

PERS 511 Beginning Pashtu I

Reading, writing, basic grammar and elemental speaking.

For BA Students: Language Course

Taught by: Santry

Course usually offered in fall term

Activity: Lecture

1 Course Unit

Notes: Offered through the Penn Language Center

PERS 512 Beginning Pashtu Part II

Reading, writing, basic grammar and elemental speaking.

For BA Students: Language Course

Taught by: Santry

Two terms. student must enter first term.

Prerequisites: **For second semester, completion of the first semester.**

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

Notes: Offered through Penn Language Center. This is a two-semester course.

PERS 513 Intermediate Pashtu I

A wide variety of reading genres, writing, and oral expression.

For BA Students: Language Course

Taught by: Santry

Two terms. student must enter first term.

Prerequisites: Beg. Pashtu, or permission by instructor.

Activity: Lecture

1 Course Unit

Notes: Offered through the Penn Language Center

PERS 514 Intermediate Pashtu Part II

For BA Students: Last Language Course

Taught by: Santry

Two terms. student must enter first term.

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

Notes: Offered through Penn Language Center. This is a two-semester course.

PERS 617 Persian for Heritage Speakers I

This course is conducted in Persian and designed to help you strengthen your skills by learning not only to read and write, but also to engage in more complex forms of discourse in Persian. In this course, we will begin to address a variety of topics in order to increase your proficiency in linguistic as well as cultural terms. Emphasis is placed on actively using the language for interpersonal, interpretive and presentational modes of communication. Therefore, English is restricted. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are integrated into the course, as are culture, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Students must be proficient in spoken Persian (whether Farsi or Dari), and lack reading and writing skills.

Taught by: Entezari

One-term course offered either term

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

PERS 621 Persian Culture, Literature and Film for Advanced Learners II

Taught by: Shams Esmaili

Activity: Lecture

1 Course Unit

Political Science

PSCI 211 Politics in the Contemporary Middle East

This course is an introduction to the historical, cultural, institutional, and ideological features of Middle Eastern politics. Typical of the questions we shall address are why processes of modernization and economic change have not produced liberal democracies, why Islamic movements have gained

enormous strength in some countries and not others, why conflicts in the region--between Israel and the Arabs, Iran and Iraq, or inside of Lebanon--have been so bitter and protracted; why the era of military coups was brought to an end but transitions to democracy have been difficult to achieve; why Arab unity has been so elusive and yet so insistent a theme; and why oil wealth in the Gulf, in the Arabian Peninsula, and in North Africa, has not produced industrialized or self-sustaining economic growth.

Taught by: Vitalis or Lustick

One-term course offered either term

Activity: Recitation

1 Course Unit

**Fulfills MMES Social Sciences Requirement
MMES Foundational Course**

PSCI 251 Arab Israeli Relations

In this course the Arab-Israeli dispute from 1948 to the present will serve as a vehicle for understanding how domestic and global political processes interact to shape, contain, or aggravate Middle Eastern wars between states and non-state actors. Particular stress will be placed on understanding how wars affect international politics in states and political organizations and how ideological and structural features of states and organizations find expression in wars and complicate or enable the search for peace. In addition, the key features of the conflict will be interpreted as both a clash between the political interests of national and/or religious groups and as a reflection of global political power struggles. Attention will be given toward the end of the course to alternative ideas about possible resolution of the conflict as well as to the increasingly prominent argument that, in this case, there is no solution.

Taught by: Lustick

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: **JWST 248**

Activity: Recitation

1 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Social Sciences Requirement

PSCI 253 International Politics of the Middle East

This course will focus primarily on episodes of external intervention by Great Powers in the politics of Middle Eastern states. We shall begin by examining the emergence of the Middle Eastern state system after the disappearance of the Ottoman Empire in the early part of the 20th century. This discussion will provide opportunities to develop key concepts in the study of international politics and will serve as crucial historical background. We shall then turn our attention to the primary concern of the course - a systematic consideration of the motives, operational results, and long-term implications of a number of important examples of intervention by Great Powers in the Middle East. Among the episodes to be considered will be British policies toward the end of World War I, in Palestine in the 1930s, and, along with the French, in Suez in 1956. Soviet intervention in the first Arab-Israeli war, in 1948, will be analyzed along with Soviet policies toward Egypt in the early 1970s. American intervention in Iran in 1953 and in the Gulf War in 1991 will also be examined.

Taught by: Lustick

Course usually offered in spring term

Also Offered As: **JWST 253**

Activity: Recitation

1 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Social Sciences Requirement
MMES Foundational Course

PSCI 286 Islamist Political Theory: From al-Banna to bin Laden

This course focuses on one of the most important but least understood strands of Muslim political theory: Islamist political thought. We begin by defining such politically-laden terms as Islam, Islamism, the West, terrorism, jihadism, etc. We then systematically analyze the arguments of a range of Islamist thinkers and organizations, including al-Banna, Qutb, Mawdudi, al-Ghazali, Khomeini, al-Qaradawi, bin Laden, Hamas and ISIS. Among the questions central to the course are: what

is the relationship, if any, between Islamism and democracy? How do Islamists seek to remake the modern state? What explicit claims about women, and implicit assumptions about gender, characterize the work of many Islamist thinkers, and why does this matter? What does jihad mean, and does it necessarily legitimate violence? Relatedly, is violence ever justifiable, and under what conditions? What are the arguments for globalizing jihad? And importantly: why ask these questions rather than others; what assumptions are built into them; and what kinds of political dangers do they court? Prior coursework in political theory, philosophy or on Islam is strongly recommended. Open to first years with permission of the instructor.

Taught by: Euben

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Social Sciences Requirement

PSCI 598 Islamic Political Thought

The study of modern and contemporary political theory tends to focus on European and American thinkers. By contrast, this seminar is an advanced, reading-intensive course focused on modern and contemporary Islamic political thought. Topics and concepts covered include Muslim philosophies of history; critiques of Western imperialism; the relation between reason and revelation; the status of women; travel and knowledge; democracy and sovereignty; jihad and violence; what it means to be a Western Muslim; what the War on Terror means to American Muslims; and what it means to be a thinker or book "Islamic."

The course has three goals: 1) to introduce students to a rich tradition of political thought beyond the Euro-American canon of political theory; 2) to critically analyze some of the most important ideas, debates, and dilemmas that characterize modern and contemporary Islamic political thought; and 3) to engage with major figures from the recent history of Islamic political thought on as close to their own terms as possible, with an eye toward understanding

their continuing political significance. Advanced undergraduates are welcome to take the course with permission.

Taught by: Euben
Not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

Religious Studies

RELS 140 Introduction to the Qur'an

RELS 143 Introduction to Islam

This course is an introduction to Islam as a religion as it exists in societies of the past as well as the present. It explores the many ways in which Muslims have interpreted and put into practice the prophetic message of Muhammad through historical and social analyses of varying theological, philosophical, legal, political, mystical and literary writings, as well as through visual art and music. The aim of the course is to develop a framework for explaining the sources and symbols through which specific experiences and understandings have been signified as Islamic, both by Muslims and by other peoples with whom they have come into contact, with particular emphasis given to issues of gender, religious violence and changes in beliefs and behaviors which have special relevance for contemporary society.

Taught by: Elias
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: **NELC 136, SAST 139**
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement
MMES Foundational Course

RELS 145 Islamic History and Culture

This course introduces students to the history of Islam as both a religion and as a civilization, from pre-Islamic Arabia to the rise of the gunpowder empires in the 16th century. The course will use key moments, texts, and figures in Islamic history to examine notions of religion, culture, and civilization as they have been understood by Muslims, in a variety of contexts, as well as the problems and politics surrounding the representation of Islamic history and Islam in the contemporary world. Some major topics to be covered include the development of Islamic institutions, the participation of Jews, Christians, and others in Islamic civilization, Arabic and Persian literature, as well as Europeans' encounters with Islam.

Taught by: Elias
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

RELS 146 Islam in the Modern World

RELS 147 Modern Islam and Poetry

RELS 189 Islam and the West

How did Muslims and modern South Asia interact with the West? What Islamic idioms, orientations and movements emerged in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries? Was South Asia a prominent global center of Islam? What kinds of Islamic educational institutions developed in modern South Asia? How did Muslims appropriate technologies? What materials were printed by Muslims? Were Muslims part of the British army? What was jihad in modernity? How did Muslim 'modernists' and 'traditionalists' respond to the challenges of colonialism and modernity? What was the nature of Sufism in modern South Asia? What was the nature of political Islam in South Asia? How did some Muslims demand a Muslim State? What was the Partition? How has Muslim history been

remembered in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan? This is an introductory course, and aims to introduce students to a facet of the long history of Islam, Muslims, and the West.

Taught by: Sevea

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: **SAST 189, SAST 589**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

RELS 245 Sufism

This course is a survey of the large complex of Islamic intellectual and social perspectives subsumed under the term Sufism." Sufi philosophies, beliefs, practices, and social organizations have been a major part of the Islamic tradition in all historical periods and Sufism has also served as a primary muse behind Islamic aesthetic expression in poetry, music, and the visual arts. In this course, we will attempt to understand the nature and importance of Sufism by addressing both the world of ideas and socio-cultural practices. We will trace the development of Sufism as a form of Muslim piety linked to key notions in the Quran as well as living practices of venerating the Prophet Muhammad. We will then immerse ourselves in Sufi theoretical writings through a select list of primary sources introducing foundational Sufi concepts concerning the annihilation of oneself in God, and the various stages of the Sufi quest for spiritual union. From there, we will shift to a discussion of the interactions between Sufism and philosophy by looking at the writings of two of the most influential Sufi thinkers, Al-Ghazali and Ibn al-Arabi. We will also study the important role of Sufi poetry through a close reading of a selection of Rumi's works. In our discussion of the social and political dimensions of Sufism, we will explore the relations between Sufi movements and religious and political authority, focusing on antinomianism and patronage in the Ottoman Empire, and on Sufi responses to colonial rule. The last part of the course will look at the roles of Sufis

and Sufism in contemporary societies from South Asia to North America.

Taught by: Harris

Course usually offered in spring term

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

RELS 248 Introduction to Islamic Law

This course will introduce students to classical Islamic law, the all- embracing sacred law of Islam. Among the world's various legal systems, Islamic law may be the most widely misunderstood and even misrepresented; certainly, misconceptions about it abound. Islamic law is, however, the amazing product of a rich, fascinating and diverse cultural and intellectual tradition. Most of the readings in this course will be taken from primary sources in translation. Areas covered will include criminal law, family law, law in the Quran, gender and sexuality, the modern application of Islamic law, Islamic government and other selected topics.

Taught by: Lowry

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: **NELC 238**

Activity: Lecture

1 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

RELS 311 Muslims, Christians, and Jews in the Middle East: Historical Perspectives

A reading- and discussion-intensive seminar that addresses several recurring questions with regard to the Middle East and North Africa. How have Islam, Judaism, and Christianity influenced each other in these regions historically? How have Jews, Christians, and Muslims fared as religious minorities? To what extent have communal relations been characterized by harmony and cooperation, or by strife and discord, and how have these relations changed in different contexts over time? To what extent and under what circumstances have members of these communities converted, intermarried,

formed business alliances, and adopted or developed similar customs? How has the emergence of the modern nation-state system affected communal relations as well as the legal or social status of religious minorities in particular countries? How important has religion been as one variable in social identity (along with sect, ethnicity, class, gender, etc.), and to what extent has religious identity figured into regional conflicts and wars? The focus of the class will be on the modern period (c. 1800-present) although we will read about some relevant trends in the early and middle Islamic periods as well. Students will also pursue individually tailored research to produce final papers. Prior background in Islamic studies and Middle Eastern History is required. This class is intended for juniors, seniors, and graduate students.

Taught by: Sharkey

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: [HIST 479](#), [JWST 335](#), [NELC 335](#), [NELC 535](#)

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

RELS 440 Later Islamic Art & Architecture

Istanbul, Samarkand, Isfahan, Cairo and Delhi as major centers of art production in the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries. Attention is given to urban and architectural achievement as well as to the key monuments of painting and metalwork. The visual environment of the "gunpowder empires" is discussed.

Taught by: Holod

Activity: Lecture

1 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

RELS 445 Sufism

RELS 643 The Persian Intellectual Tradition

What makes Persian culture distinctive within broader Islamic intellectual history, and what constitutes the historical and geographical boundary of the Persianate intellectual and cultural zone? These questions lie at the center of inquiry in this seminar in which participants will read and discuss a broad range of works from the 11th to the 20th centuries. Readings will include works on philosophy and language, Sufi epic poems, religious and cultural geographies, accounts of natural and manufactured wonders, urban and political histories, as well as other kinds of texts. All readings will be in English for the regular meeting of the seminar; students with a reading knowledge of Persian and an interest in participating in an additional meeting to read the assignments in their original language should register for the higher of the two numbers listed for this course.

Taught by: Elias

Course not offered every year

Prerequisite: **prior knowledge of Persian is required**

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

RELS 648 Approaches to Islamic Law

RELS 742 Qur'anic Studies

This seminar explores the nature and uses of the Qur'an. It focuses on the practice and theory of Qur'an commentary and interpretation (tafsir and ta'wil). A major portion of the course will involve a close examination of manuscripts of the Qur'an at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Kislak Center at the University of Pennsylvania, concentrating on the relationship between the text and marginalia as well as on the peculiarities of individual manuscripts. The rest of the course will center around reading commentaries on the Qur'an in manuscript as well as print. In addition, we will read and discuss theoretical works on the history and nature of Qur'an commentary, literary criticism

and textual analysis, and spend some of the later section of the course discussing issues of translation and editorial processes involved in popularizing Qur'an commentaries on the internet. READING KNOWLEDGE OF ARABIC REQUIRED.

Taught by: Elias

Course not offered every year

Prerequisites: A reading knowledge Arabic required.

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

RELS 745 Visual Cultures in Islam

Activity: Lecture

1 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

Sudanese Arabic

SARB 548 Sudanese Arabic

Sudan is a country with a rich history and diverse cultures and people. Sudan is surrounded by nine countries. Two of Sudan's neighbors have Arabic as their official language (Egypt & Libya). While in neighboring Chad and Eritrea, Arabic is widely spoken. The only barrier that divides Sudan from Arabia is the Red Sea. Arabic is the official language of the Sudan, and Sudanese pidgin Arabic (Juba Arabic) is widely used in the southern part of the country. Sudanese colloquial Arabic has close resemblance to Egyptian Colloquial Arabic and to Classical Arabic. Sudanese colloquial Arabic is also spoken and is intelligible in Eritrea, Chad, Nigeria and many places in West Africa. This course will focus on speaking, listening, reading, & writing Sudanese Arabic through the followings: 1- Speaking: Conversing in Sudanese Arabic in various settings. 2- Reading & Writing: Reading and writing of Sudanese Arabic Texts. 3- Listening: Listening to various audio recordings of Sudanese Arabic in different forms and settings. Prerequisite: Knowledge of Arabic

equivalent to intermediate level and higher is required for this course.

For BA Students: Language Course

Taught by: Ali B Ali-Dinar

Course not offered every year

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

SARB 559 Sudanese Arabic II

Course usually offered in spring term

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Social Policy & Practice

SWRK 749 Civil Society Promoting Coexistence and Peace in Israel/Palestine

Taught partially at Penn, partially at Hebrew University's Mt. Scopus campus, and partially on excursions in Israel, this course examines multiple facets of the Israeli/Arab conflict and explores the ways in which diverse sectors of civil society are working towards peace and coexistence. Students may choose virtually any topic for their pre-departure presentation, enabling them to customize their focus within the course to an issue related to their major or degree, as it relates to peace and conflict in the region. Students from across campus, including but not limited to the following fields of study, are invited to apply: Political Science, Religious Studies, History, Non-Profit Leadership, Education, Public Health, Urban Planning, International Relations, Social Work, Organizational Dynamics, Government, Social Policy, Environmental Studies, Middle Eastern Studies, and Law.

Course not offered every year

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

South Asian Studies

SAST 117 1947-49: British Empire and the Partitions of South Asia and Palestine

The partitions of South Asia and Palestine marked the end of the British Empire in those regions. British colonial rule in India ended in 1947 with the emergence of not one, but two nation states, India and Pakistan. Decolonization was marked by mass migration and ethnic cleansing along their borders. An estimated million people died in the violence in less than a year, and 12.5 million people migrated from their homes. The British Empire also gave up its claims to Palestine in 1947, exhausted by the two nationalisms of Zionists and Palestinians. This partition set up the declaration of the state of Israel, and the War for Palestine. By 1949, almost a million Palestinians found themselves displaced over many borders, some also within the borders of Israel. This comparative course is organized around three themes - the prehistories of these cataclysmic events, the role of Empire in catalyzing them, and the afterlives of these events that continue to haunt us into the present, seventy-five years later. It explores the political history - and the collapse of politics - that led to violence on a scale that was without precedent in the history of the Indian subcontinent. It examines the political, social and cultural events that led to decades of war and exile, and shaped the lives of generations of Palestinians, Israelis and the wider Middle East. Primary sources will help to explore the perspectives of ordinary people whose lives were turned upside down in both places.

Taught by: Sreenivasan

Also Offered As: [HIST 142](#), [NELC 142](#)

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

SAST 139 Introduction to Islam

This course is an introduction to Islam as a religion as it exists in societies of the past as well as the present. It explores the many ways in which Muslims have interpreted and put into practice the prophetic message of Muhammad through historical and social analyses of varying theological, philosophical, legal, political, mystical and literary writings, as well as through visual art and music. The aim of the course is to develop a framework for explaining the sources and symbols through which specific experiences and understandings have been signified as Islamic, both by Muslims and by other peoples with whom they have come into contact, with particular emphasis given to issues of gender, religious violence and changes in beliefs and behaviors which have special relevance for contemporary society.

Taught by: Elias

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: [NELC 136](#), [RELS 143](#)

Activity: Lecture

1 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

SAST 144 Modern Islam and Poetry

This course focuses on a basic question: How and why a modern poem turns into a narrative device to debate contemporary Islamic discourses? We begin exploring this question by taking note of how a 12th-century Persian poet Rumi became - as described by Time magazine - "the best-selling poet in the US today," and then introduces students to poems and various social, cultural and religious moments that were key in the making of modern Islam. Although the course primarily emphasizes the study of poetry produced and circulated among various Muslim communities world-wide, it also covers a diverse set of secondary readings from the field of religious studies, anthropology and literature to outline more clearly the contours of contemporary Islam. Readings begin with internationally famous Rumi and then include poets emerging from Arabic, Persian, Urdu, and several vernacular literary

cultures in both Muslim and non-Muslim countries.

Course not offered every year

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

SAST 146 Islam in the Modern World

This course covers key issues facing Muslims in the modern world with an emphasis on gaining an understanding of how Muslims view themselves and the world in which they live. Beginning with a discussion of the impact of colonialism, we will examine Islamic ideas and trends from the late colonial period until the present. Readings include religious, political and literary writings by important Muslim figures and focus on pressing issues in the Islamic world and beyond: the place of religion in modern national politics; the changing status of women; constructions of sexuality (including masculinity); pressing issues in bioethics; Islam, race and immigration in America; the role of violence; and the manifestations of religion in popular culture.

For BA Students: Humanities and Social Sciences

Taught by: Elias

Course usually offered in spring term

Also Offered As: **NELC 184, RELS 146**

Activity: Lecture

1 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

SAST 189 Islam and the West

How did Muslims and modern South Asia interact with the West? What Islamic idioms, orientations and movements emerged in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries? Was South Asia a prominent global center of Islam? What kinds of Islamic educational institutions developed in modern South Asia? How did Muslims appropriate technologies? What materials were printed by Muslims? Were Muslims part of the British army? What was jihad in modernity? How did Muslim 'modernists' and 'traditionalists' respond to the challenges of

colonialism and modernity? What was the nature of Sufism in modern South Asia? What was the nature of political Islam in South Asia? How did some Muslims demand a Muslim State? What was the Partition? How has Muslim history been remembered in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan? This is an introductory course, and aims to introduce students to a facet of the long history of Islam, Muslims, and the West.

Taught by: Sevea

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: **RELS 189, SAST 589**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Social Sciences Requirement

SAST 218 Media and Culture in Contemporary Iran

This course offers a comprehensive introduction to the culture and media of modern Iran, with a critical perspective on issues such as identity formation, ethnicity, race, and nation-building. It focuses on how these issues relate to various aspects of modern Iranian culture -- such as religion, gender, sexuality, war, and migration -- through the lens of media, cinema, and literature.

Taught by: Esmaili

One-term course offered either term

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

SAST 245 Eastern Christianities

The history of Christianity is often told from the perspective of its spread westward from Israel to Rome. Yet, in the first millennium, there were more Christians living in the East, in places as far away as Persia, Yemen, India, China, and Mongolia, than in the West. Spread across the Asian continent, these Christians were actively involved in local and imperial politics, composed theological literature, and were deeply embedded in the cultural fabric of their host societies. This course traces the spread of

Christianity eastward, paying particular attention to its regional developments, its negotiations with local political powers, and its contact with other religions, including Buddhism, Manichaeism, and Islam. Readings will cover a broad range of sources, including selections from classical Syriac literature, Mesopotamian magic bowls, the so-called "Jesus Sutras," and the Quran.

Taught by: Durmaz

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: **NELC 385, RELS 235**

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

SAST 269 Migration and the Middle East

This reading and discussion-intensive seminar examines the phenomenon of migration into, out of, within, and across the Middle East and North Africa. We will focus on the period from the late nineteenth century to the present, and will emphasize the cultural (rather than economic) consequences of migration. Along the way we will trace connections between the Middle East and other regions-- notably the Americas, sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, the Caucasus, and Western Europe. Readings are interdisciplinary and include works of history, anthropology, sociology, medical research, literature, political science, geography, and human rights advocacy. As students develop final projects on topics of their choice, we will spend time throughout the semester discussing tactics for research and writing.

Taught by: Sharkey

Course not offered every year

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

Notes: This is a topics course and will vary from year to year.

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

SAST 633 THE PERSIAN INTELLECTUAL TRADITION

What makes Persian culture distinctive within broader Islamic intellectual history, and what constitutes the historical and geographical boundary of the Persianate intellectual and cultural zone? These questions lie at the center of inquiry in this seminar in which participants will read and discuss a broad range of works from the 11th to the 20th centuries. Readings will include works on philosophy and language, Sufi epic poems, religious and cultural geographies, accounts of natural and manufactured wonders, urban and political histories, as well as other kinds of texts. All readings will be in English for the regular meeting of the seminar; students with a reading knowledge of Persian and an interest in participating in an additional meeting to read the assignments in their original language should register for the higher of the two numbers listed for this course.

Taught by: Elias

One-term course offered either term

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement

Turkish

TURK 021 Elementary Turkish I

This is a course for beginners who have no previous knowledge of Turkish. Using a communicative approach, Elementary Turkish introduces basic vocabulary and grammar rules and focuses on building language competencies in listening, reading, speaking and writing. By the end of the course, students will be able to participate in simple conversations, to know daily expressions, and will understand simple dialogues in day-to-day context and will be able to count and tell time. Will be able to speak about events that happened in the past and express plans for the future. Students will also develop writing strategies that will allow them to write simple letters and fill in commonly-used forms.

For BA Students: Language Course

Taught by: Hatiboglu

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: [TURK 621](#)

Activity: Lecture

1 Course Unit

TURK 022 Elementary Turkish II

This course is a continuation of [TURK 021](#) and is designed to strengthen and extend students' listening, speaking, reading and writing competence and to deepen an understanding of Turkish people in Turkey. By the end of this course, students will be able to handle a variety of day to day needs in Turkish-speaking settings and engage in simple conversations. Students can expect to be able to order food and drinks, purchase things, and to be able to be familiar with current social topics. Students will be able to talk about all tenses, present, future, past, past continuous, make comparisons, describe people and things in detail, make travel plans, make reservations in hotels and holiday resorts, write complaint letters. By the end of the course, students will be able to talk about their studies and their plans for the future. Also, students will develop reading strategies that should allow them to understand the general meaning of articles, and short literary texts. Students will learn practical life in Turkey and will explore Turkish culture on the internet.

For BA Students: Language Course

Taught by: Hatiboglu

Course usually offered in spring term

Also Offered As: [TURK 622](#)

Prerequisites: [TURK 021](#), [Elementary Turkish I](#), or [equivalent](#).

Activity: Lecture

1 Course Unit

TURK 023 Intermediate Turkish I

A continuation of elementary Turkish, with emphasis on grammar and reading. This course is for students who have previous knowledge of Turkish or students who have completed Elementary Turkish I and II.

This course is designed to improve students' writing and speaking competence, to increase vocabulary, to deepen grammar usage and to help develop effective reading and listening strategies in Turkish. Students' Turkish language proficiency and cultural awareness and knowledge will increase by exposing to authentic materials and coursework. and in order give them cultural knowledge, students are exposed to authentic materials.

For BA Students: Language Course

Taught by: Hatiboglu

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: [TURK 623](#)

Prerequisites: [TURK 022](#) or [equivalent](#).

Activity: Lecture

1 Course Unit

TURK 024 Intermediate Turkish II

Expands students writing and speaking competence in Turkish, increases vocabulary, and helps students' practice effective reading and listening strategies. Our In-class discussions are based on role-plays and weekly readings and news reports from TV and newspapers. Discussion will take place in this course and students will communicate through threaded discussions, chat rooms and skype. The review of grammar will not be the primary focus of the course. Students' will, expand and deepen their knowledge of grammar will be extended through specific grammar exercises. Students will have the opportunity to practice and read about the cultural and historical issues and get prepared for an advanced level Turkish.

For BA Students: Last Language Course

Taught by: Hatiboglu

Course usually offered in spring term

Also Offered As: [TURK 624](#)

Activity: Lecture

1 Course Unit

TURK 025 Advanced Modern Turkish I

The study of modern Turkish at the advanced level; emphasis on grammar and reading, focusing on Business Turkish. Interviews with professionals from different business groups will take place, such as, education, medicine, business law and political science. The study of modern Turkish at the advanced level; emphasis on conversational fluency and on increased ability reading and comprehending texts, including newspaper prose and Turkish cultural materials. grammar and reading, focusing on Business Turkish. Interviews with professionals from different business groups will take place, such as, education, medicine, business law and political science.

For BA Students: Advanced Language Course

Taught by: Hatiboglu

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: **TURK 625**

Prerequisites: **TURK 024, Intermediate Turkish II**

Activity: Lecture

1 Course Unit

TURK 027 Advanced Spoken Turkish and Cinema I

In this course, we will look at differing degrees of interaction between literature and the films it inspires. Discussions of each novel will be followed by screening the related film, allowing us to explore themes such as the different forms of banditry (old school vs. organized), honor killings, the use of books in films, the problems of artistic representation. This course will give students the opportunity to improve significantly written and spoken discourse strategies and raise language competence to an academic register. Students work across Turkish Language, literary genres and media as they interpret and analyze cultural, political and historical moments in Turkish movies. Students will attempt to understand how political shifts over the past 20 years have impacted the current situation and cultural conception, religious and cultural norms and traditions. Contemporary Turkish authors' books will be analyzed and discussed in this course. We'll have

sessions in Penn Museum related to exhibitions from Turkey and the region.

For BA Students: Advanced Language Course

Taught by: Hatiboglu

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: **TURK 627**

Activity: Lecture

1 Course Unit

TURK 028 Advanced Spoken Turkish and Cinema II

This course offers students the opportunity to improve significantly written and spoken discourse strategies and raise language competence in advance level. Students work across media and movies as they interpret and analyze cultural, political and historical moments in Turkish movies. Special attention will be given to the development of an academic discourse style during in-class discussions, threaded discussions and, written compositions. Interviews and discussions will take place in this course. There will be class movie screenings and the course concludes with an in-class presentation of the collaborative creative project and the final

For BA Students: Advanced Language Course

Course usually offered in spring term

Activity: Lecture

1 Course Unit

TURK 031 Elementary Uzbek I

Designed to cover beginning college levels of language instruction, Uzbek: An Elementary Textbook provides learners and instructors with a wide selection of materials and task-oriented activities to facilitate the development of language learning. It offers a thematically organized and integrative approach to the Uzbek language and its culture, including a functional approach to grammar, an emphasis on integrated skills development, and the use of authentic materials such as videos filmed in various regions of Uzbekistan. Uzbek: An Elementary Textbook contains one CD-ROM that

includes authentic audio and video materials to accompany the text and integrated, interactive exercises and games, all in Flash format and all of which are keyed to the textbook. It includes a supplementary Cyrillic reader, an extensive glossary, and four-color illustrations and photographs throughout.

For BA Students: Language Course
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: **TURK 631**
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

TURK 032 Elementary Uzbek II

Continuation of **TURK 031**, Elementary Uzbek I. Designed to cover beginning college levels of language instruction, Uzbek: An Elementary Textbook provides learners and instructors with a wide selection of materials and task-oriented activities to facilitate the development of language learning. It offers a thematically organized and integrative approach to the Uzbek language and its culture, including a functional approach to grammar, an emphasis on integrated skills development, and the use of authentic materials such as videos filmed in various regions of Uzbekistan. Uzbek: An Elementary Textbook contains one CD-ROM that includes authentic audio and video materials to accompany the text and integrated, interactive exercises and games, all in Flash format and all of which are keyed to the textbook. It includes a supplementary Cyrillic reader, an extensive glossary, and four-color illustrations and photographs throughout.

Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: **TURK 632**
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

TURK 033 Intermediate Uzbek I

Designed to strengthen and develop further skills, in listening, speaking, reading and writing and to deepen an understanding of the cultural context of Uzbek. Emphasis on the expansion and refinement of linguistic and communicative skills learned in elementary Uzbek
Course usually offered in fall term
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

TURK 034 Intermediate Uzbek II

Continuation of Intermediate Uzbek I. Will focus on to develop language skills, in listening, speaking, reading and writing and to deepen an understanding of the cultural context of Uzbek. Emphasis on the expansion and refinement of linguistic and communicative skills learned in elementary Uzbek and Intermediate Uzbek.

Course usually offered in spring term
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

TURK 121 Advanced Turkish Culture & Media I

This course is for students who are from all different levels of Turkish knowledge. They are expected to write and talk about Turkish movies, culture, politics according to their own level and pace. They will talk to Turkish visitors and interview them. Turkish movies will be the part of the course and once a month, students will watch a Turkish movie and analyze it. Discussions will take place and students will write essays about the movie. This course is designed with a technology-rich, project-based approach. The materials will go beyond instruction in grammar and vocabulary to support the acquisition of socio-cultural pragmatics, and intercultural learning.

For BA Students: Advanced Language Course
Taught by: Hatiboglu
Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: **TURK 521**

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

TURK 122 Advanced Turkish Culture & Media II

Similar to TURK 212, Advanced Turkish Culture & Media I, in this course students also will have exposure to social Turkish clubs and to establish their own. They will arrange their Turkish tea parties and learn about Turkish cuisine. Expose Turkish daily news and media will be discussed in class. Students will have a chance to interview Turkish businessman, writer, journalists in class and/or skype or zoom people in Turkish. Team spirit or ethics with those of the United States. Students will present and prepare a drama. Students will create and decide their activities and discussions. They will continue watching Turkish movies and Turkish culture through these films.

For BA Students: Advanced Language Course

Taught by: Hatiboglu

Course usually offered in spring term

Also Offered As: **TURK 522**

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

TURK 229 Ottoman Turkish I

This course is an introduction to Ottoman Turkish with basic characteristics. Ottoman Turkish through readings in printed selections will be exercised with different techniques. Students will learn Persian and Arabic effects on Ottoman Turkish. They will be able to read simple texts at the end of this course.

General information on Ottoman Turkish will be given to students during this course. This course will be offered one semester during the school year. Not open to auditors

Taught by: Hatiboglu

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: **TURK 629**

Prerequisites: **Two semesters of Turkish and two semesters of Arabic or Persian OR four semesters of**

Turkish or equivalent

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

TURK 329 Advanced Readings Ottoman Texts

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: **TURK 729**

Activity: Seminar

1 Course Unit

Urban Studies

URBS 333 Urban Life in the Middle East and North Africa

With rapid urbanization, most people in the Middle East and North Africa are living now in cities and towns, rather than in rural areas. This seminar introduces the complex realities of living in the major cities of the region, in terms of globalization, social class, politics, gender and sexuality, culture, religion, communal identities, communal networks, and more. Through intensive engagement with the various readings and films, both documentaries and feature films, we will explore how those realities and processes shape the urban space, or express themselves in it. In addition, we will explore the basic premises of such disciplines as anthropology, cultural studies, history, or sociology, and learn how they can help us research and understand the realities of urban life in the modern and contemporary Middle East and North Africa. We will use Cairo, Egypt, as our main case study, while looking at a range of other cities, such as Istanbul, Turkey, and Marrakesh, Morocco, for further insights.

Taught by: Tam

Also Offered As: **NELC 333**

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Fulfills Humanities or Social Sciences Requirement

Visual Studies

VLST 235 Introduction to Visual Culture of the Islamic World

A one-semester survey of Islamic art and architecture which examines visual culture as it functions within the larger sphere of Islamic culture in general. Particular attention will be given to relationships between visual culture and literature, using specific case studies, sites or objects which may be related to various branches of Islamic literature, including historical, didactic, philosophical writings, poetry and religious texts. All primary sources are available in English translation.

For BA Students: Humanities and Social Science S
Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: [AAMW 635](#), [ARTH 235](#), [ARTH 635](#),
[NELC 285](#), [NELC 685](#)

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Notes: This course can count toward Sector B, (Stage 2 or 3) of the Visual Studies Major.

Fulfills MMES Humanities Requirement