

MIDDLE EAST STUDIES

MES 100 Introduction to Middle East Studies (1 Credit)

This 8-week course of weekly lectures will provide students with a comprehensive overview of the Middle East by focusing on the big questions that animate the teaching and research of faculty in Middle East Studies and related fields. S/U only.

Fall, Spring, Alternate Years

MES 203 Introduction to Middle East Comparative Politics (4 Credits)

This lecture class provides an introduction to the comparative politics of the Middle East. Readings, lectures, and discussions will examine political environments in the Middle East, with a focus on states as units of analysis, and on the general processes and conditions that have shaped state formation, the formation of national markets, and state-society relations in the region. The course will equip students to understand and critically assess how political interests are organized; the development of major political, social, and economic structures and institutions; and sources of political contestation within Middle Eastern societies. {S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

MES 208/ HST 208 Introduction to the History of the Modern Middle East (4 Credits)

Offered as HST 208 and MES 208. This course examines the history of the modern Middle East from a global perspective. How have gender, economy, ecology and religion shaped Middle Eastern empires and nation-states within a broader world? The course begins with transformations in Egypt, Iran and the Ottoman Empire between 1800 and World War I. Next, it turns to experiences of colonialism, the rise of independent nation-states and the birth of new political movements. Students learn to appreciate the diversity of the region's cultures, languages and peoples and to critically assess how the Middle East has been imagined from without and within. Enrollment limited to 40. {H}

Fall, Spring, Annually

MES 213 Colloquium: Sex and Power In The Middle East (4 Credits)

This course invites students to explore how sexuality has been central to power and resistance in the Middle East. When and how have empires, colonial powers and nation states tried to regulate intimacy, sex, love and reproduction? How have sexual practices shaped social life, and how have perceptions of these practices changed over time? The course introduces theoretical tools for the history of sexuality and explores how contests over sexuality, reproduction and the body shaped empires, colonial states and nationalist projects. Finally, we examine contemporary debates about sexuality as a basis for political mobilization in the Middle East today. Enrollment limited to 18. {H}{S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

MES 217 International Relations and Regional Order in the Middle East (4 Credits)

This course focuses on the dynamics of inter-state relations in the broader Middle East (encompassing Turkey, Israel and Iran). It provides a brief introduction to relevant theoretical frameworks that have been used to explain the international and regional relations of the Middle East, and applies these theoretical frameworks through in-depth attention to a wide range of themes and cases. In addition to readings on specific cases, the course covers the origins and development of the Arab state system, alliance dynamics, the effects of oil on international relations, war and international relations, and the domestic sources of Middle East international relations. {S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

MES 219 Colloquium: Histories of Arab Feminism (4 Credits)

This course traces the history of Arab feminisms as movements forged in the context of social change in the Arab world, transnational ties, and the rise of European imperialism. How did feminist movements take shape in the modern Arab world? How have feminisms beyond the West been forged by processes of situated translation, as well as in response to local and regional conditions and struggles? And, how might feminisms from the Middle East and North Africa speak with, or speak back to, feminist politics and histories in other contexts, enriching our sense of what feminisms have, and could, accomplish? Enrollment limited to 18. {H}

Fall, Spring, Alternate Years

MES 220 The Arab Spring: Economic Roots and Aftermath (4 Credits)

Explores the social, economic and political causes and effects of the mass protest movements that came to be known as the Arab Spring or the Arab Uprisings. Through a wide range of readings, documentaries, media accounts, social media content, and other materials we dissect the most significant, and still unresolved, political transformations in the Middle East in the last 100 years. A previous course in Middle Eastern politics, history or culture recommended, but not required. {H}{S}

Fall, Spring, Alternate Years

MES 222 Islam and Democracy in the Middle East (4 Credits)

This course aims to address the following questions: Are Islam and Democracy compatible? How is religious interest defined? How are Islamic images and institutions used? What is the historical relationship between Islam and politics? When and under what conditions is Islam publicized and politicized? Is Islam compatible with modernity? Is it possible to be modern and Muslim at the same time? How do Islamic scholars deal with the questions of "difference", democracy, and science? What are the social and political origins of reformist and democratically inclined Islamist parties and movements? How do they envision the relationship between Islam and democracy?. {S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

MES 228/ ARH 228 Islamic Art and Architecture (4 Credits)

Offered as MES 228 and ARH 228. This course surveys Islamic visual art and architecture from the spread of Islam in the seventh-century until the present day, covering the Dome of the Rock and Persian miniatures to French Orientalism and Arab Spring graffiti. Attention is focused upon the relationships between Islamic visual idioms and localized religious, political and socioeconomic circumstances. In particular, lectures and readings examine the vital roles played by theology, royal patronage, gift exchange, trade and workshop practices in the formulation of visual traditions. Direct analysis of Islamic artworks at the Smith museum expand students' command of critical visual analysis. {A}{H}

Fall, Spring, Variable

MES 230 Society and Development in the Middle East (4 Credits)

This course focuses on the political economy of the Arab Middle East with emphasis on the social dimensions of economic development. It provides students with insight into the effects of shifting economic and social policies and economic conditions on the peoples of the Middle East and the social transformations that have accompanied post-colonial processes of state- and market-building. It explores how economic conditions shaped political activism, social movements, modes of protest and broader patterns of state-society relations. Students become familiar with theories of economic and social development and major analytic frameworks that are used to assess and make sense of society and development in the Middle East. {S}

Fall, Spring, Alternate Years

MES 235/ JUD 235 Perspectives on the Arab-Israel Conflict (4 Credits)

Same as MES 235. What is in dispute between Israelis and Palestinians? What has prevented a resolution to the conflict, and why does it continue to arouse such passions? Situating contemporary controversies in their historical contexts, explores key issues such as borders, settlements, Jerusalem, refugees, security, debates about Zionism and Palestinian nationalism, the impact of religious claims, and the role of regional and international players and activists. Includes analysis of competing models for conflict resolution. No prerequisites. Open to students at all levels. {H}{S}

Fall, Spring, Alternate Years

MES 237/ HST 237 Colloquium: Mobility and Migration in the Modern Middle East (4 Credits)

Offered as MES 237 and HST 237. The history of the modern Middle East is a story of border-crossing as well as border-making. From 19th century immigrants from the Ottoman Empire to the Americas, to today's migrant laborers in Lebanon, Iraq, and the Gulf, the region has been forged by those who move within and beyond national borders. How have forces of gender, class, and ethnicity shaped these journeys? This course examines the gendered processes of movement and migration—voluntary and involuntary—that have shaped the modern Middle East from the 19th century to the present. Enrollment limited to 18. {H}{S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

MES 240 Colloquium: Encounters with Unjust Authority: Political Fiction of the Arab World (4 Credits)

This course will expose students to contemporary political literature of the Arab world in translation. Through their critical engagement with this literature, students will gain a nuanced, tangible and deeply dimensional understanding of contemporary life in the Middle East and the many diverse and complex ways in which lives of the region's peoples are shaped by their political circumstances. Enrollment limited to 20. {L}{S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

MES 244/ HST 244 Colloquium: Thinking Revolution: Histories of Revolt in the Modern Middle East (4 Credits)

Offered as MES 244 and HST 244. How could we theorize revolution from the MENA region? How might we connect older histories and vocabularies of social change to recent events in Egypt, Syria, Libya, Yemen, and Tunisia? In the first part of this course, students engage prominent theories of revolution generated within EuroAmerican and MENA contexts. Next, we consider diverse theories of social change generated within key moments in the history of the modern Middle East, from Ottoman constitution in 1876 to postcolonial revolts in Oman, Yemen, and Algeria. Finally, we consider the 2011 Arab spring within this longer history of social change in the region. Enrollment limited to 18. {H}{S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

MES 290 Colloquium: Islam and Capitalism (4 Credits)

This course examines how interactions between Islamic law and commerce shaped Muslim societies during watershed moments in the history of capitalism, including the rise of trade networks in the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean; the birth of the joint-stock company and the corporation; colonialism and industrialization; and most recently, the ascendancy of neoliberal financial capitalism. Enrollment limited to 20. (E) {H}{S}

Fall, Variable

MES 327 Seminar: Histories of Science, Nature and the Body in the Middle East (4 Credits)

This course explores the history of science in the Middle East from the early modern period to the present. In order to introduce debates within the discipline of history of science, this course takes a broad view of that discipline's object: the many and disparate attempts to understand changes in the body of knowledge about the reality of lives and the world. Scholars have often analyzed the history of science in Middle Eastern societies either in relation to a timeless Islamic culture or through a framework that conflates Westernization with inevitable scientific "progress." This course goes beyond these paradigms to explore unexpected and multidirectional encounters, connections and mobilities of ideas, practices, people and specimens among various communities within and beyond the MENA region. Enrollment limited to 12. Juniors and seniors only. Instructor permission required. {H}

Fall, Spring, Variable

MES 380 Seminar: Authoritarianism in the Middle East (4 Credits)

This upper-level seminar focuses on the durability of authoritarian regimes in the Middle East and North Africa. The course examines the emergence of authoritarian regimes in the Arab world; their consolidation into full-fledged systems of rule; patterns and variation in authoritarian governance among Arab states; the political economy of authoritarianism; state-society relations under authoritarian rule; and authoritarian responses to democratization, economic globalization and pressures for political reform. Prior course work on the history, politics, sociology, anthropology of the modern Middle East is useful. Enrollment limited to 12. Juniors and seniors only. Instructor permission required. {S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

MES 400 Special Studies (1-4 Credits)

Admission by permission of the Program in Middle East Studies, normally for junior and senior minors in Middle East studies, and for qualified juniors and seniors from other departments. Offered both semesters each year.

Fall, Spring

MES 430D Honors Project (4 Credits)
Fall, Spring