

Middle Eastern Studies

College of Letters and Science (<http://ls.berkeley.edu>)

Group Major Office: International and Area Studies, 101 Stephens Hall, (510) 642-4466

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Program Website: Middle Eastern Studies (<http://iastp.berkeley.edu/mes>)

Overview

Since 1981, the interdisciplinary major in Middle Eastern Studies (MES) has provided UC Berkeley students with the opportunity to study a region of great historical and cultural importance whose political, economic, and social development is closely linked to that of our own society. The MES major covers the Arab world, Turkey, Iran, and Israel, intertwining history and culture, geography and ecology, politics and economics, with an emphasis on the modern and contemporary Middle East. Its broad and balanced program of study draws on a wide variety of Middle East-related courses offered by faculty from more than 20 different departments and schools in the University. Students in the MES major also learn at least one of the major Middle Eastern languages of today: Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, or Turkish. MES graduates have gone on to work in industry and government, both in the United States and abroad. About half pursue graduate studies; many then go on to academic or professional careers.

The MES major falls under the academic supervision of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES). The CMES organizes public lectures, publishes a newsletter, maintains a small library, and promotes scholarship on the Middle East at all levels. Students are encouraged to utilize the Center's many resources. The MES major is administered through the International and Area Studies (IAS) Office. The IAS office provides information on all administrative aspects of the major, including advice on when and how to declare, fulfilling requirements, and timely program completion. Academic advising, including planning a course of study to suit individual needs and interests, identifying a thesis topic and adviser, and career counseling, is offered by the MES Chair and Co-Chair.

The MES major should not be confused with the major in Near Eastern Studies (NES), which emphasizes language and literature and includes the study of the ancient Near East. Students interested in those fields should contact the Department of Near Eastern Studies in 250 Barrows Hall, (510) 642-3757.

The Group Major

Declaring a major in MES follows guidelines established by the College of Letters and Science. Students wishing to declare Middle Eastern studies:

- must have completed or be currently enrolled in one course that meets the MES lower division requirement (NES 10, History 12, MES 10) at UC Berkeley or have completed an equivalent course

at another institution. Other courses (listed as having 50% or more Middle East-related content) may be substituted with Chair or Co-Chair approval for the purposes of declaring the major only. The lower division requirement must still be met to declare the major, however, and should be taken no later than the following semester.

- must have completed or be currently enrolled in a modern Middle Eastern language course (Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, or Turkish);
- must have a major and cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher;
- must have attended a major declaration workshop;
- must not be in their final semester of undergraduate work.

Students are reminded that no coursework for the major may be taken on a passed/not passed basis, and no course may be used to satisfy more than one major requirement.

Applications are available in the IAS office at 101 Stephens Hall. They must be signed by the MES coordinating faculty adviser and returned to the IAS office.

Double Majors

Double majors must be approved by the dean of the College of Letters and Science. No more than two upper division courses may be used to satisfy requirements in both majors.

Courses Outside Letters and Science

No more than three courses outside the College of Letters and Science may be used to fulfill group major requirements.

Study Abroad

The use of coursework taken at institutions outside the United States to fulfill major requirements is restricted to the equivalent of three semester-length upper division courses. Courses taken to fulfill the foreign language requirement for the group major are not included in this restriction. Prior to their departure, students should meet with the MES Chair or Co-Chair to review prospective courses of study.

Transfer Courses

A maximum of three courses taken at other institutions (including those of the Education Abroad Program of the University of California) may be transferred into the major. Relevant courses taken at community colleges can be counted toward the lower division requirement only. Courses from other institutions may be counted toward upper division requirements (regardless of unit value) and must be validated by the Office of Undergraduate Admission and Relations with Schools and approved by the MES Chair or Co-Chair. Courses used to fulfill the foreign language requirement are not included in this restriction.

Lower Division Requirements

- **NES 10, Introduction to the Near East (4 units):** A survey course introducing the fundamentals of Middle Eastern civilization presented in a broad historical framework; or
- **MES 10, Social Issues in Middle Eastern Studies (4 units):** A lower division interdisciplinary course about contemporary social issues relating to the Middle East that treats regional and international questions; or
- **History 12, Introduction to the Middle East (4 units):** A survey of key historical developments from the rise of Islam to the present, including the significance of Islamic civilizations from a world historical perspective, the construction of the modern state system from the late Ottoman era through the period of British and French colonial rule,

the newly independent states of the Middle East and the postcolonial period.

Language Requirement

All MES students must be able to demonstrate proficiency equivalent to four college-level semesters in a modern Middle Eastern language: Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, or Turkish. The first semester language course must be completed or be in progress at the time of admission to the major. The remaining three courses may be completed at any time before graduation. The language cannot be started in the senior year and finished in the post-graduation summer.

There are three ways students can fulfill the four-semester language requirement, depending on their background and ability:

1. **Through coursework:** A combination of college, summer program, or college-level study abroad programs could satisfy the language requirement. At a minimum, students must complete the fourth semester of a language with a grade of C- or better. The first, second, and third level of language may be taken on a *passed/not passed* basis; the fourth semester *must* be taken for a letter grade. Language courses need not be taken at Berkeley; courses taken at a community college or any accredited school or university are acceptable. Advanced Placement Language Test scores of 5 complete the requirement. However, transcripts and score reports must be provided. See the MES coordinating faculty adviser concerning language study abroad.
2. **With a proficiency examination:** Students whose language skills are at a fourth semester or beyond and who do not wish to take language courses can opt to test out of the requirement by requesting a language exam at the time of admission by an appropriate language instructor in the Department of Near Eastern Studies (see language directions in the Department of Near Eastern Studies for certification requirements). Language Certification forms are required, and may be obtained through the IAS office. Students whose exams reveal only partial ability to read, write and converse must take additional language courses to elevate their level, as determined by the examiner. These courses may be in any of the four Middle Eastern languages. Students who are able to show advanced or native ability in one Middle Eastern language are encouraged, but not required, to begin study of a second Middle Eastern language.
3. **Being a non-native English speaker:** Non-native speakers of English may use their native language to satisfy this requirement; however, documentation of fourth-semester ability is still required. Students may take a proficiency test (see above) or, alternatively, provide documentation that they have been educated in their native language at least through high school.

Upper Division Requirements

There are nine required upper division courses, totaling no fewer than 30 units. They consist of three core courses; four thematic and disciplinary concentration courses; a methods course (MES 102); and a senior or honors thesis (MES 190/H195).

Note: With the exception of MES courses, no more than three courses may be taken from the same department.

1. **Core Courses (3 courses):** The core course requirement is intended to provide a broad introduction to the Middle East, encompassing geography and ethnography, history and cultures, and current political, economic and social developments. To satisfy

this requirement, students must choose from a list of eligible courses (those indicated as having 50% or more Middle East-related content) in three different departments. A list of currently approved core courses may be found in the MES Handbook.

2. **Disciplinary Concentration Requirement:** In addition to the core courses, MES students must complete a four-course disciplinary concentration requirement in which they pursue advanced study of a selected topic in Middle Eastern studies following a particular disciplinary approach. Topics may focus on a specific region or a thematic problem and may relate to religious and cultural studies, history, contemporary development and social change, urbanization, nation building, and the impact of imperialism and colonialism on the Middle East, among other topics. The concentration must be designed in consultation with the MES Chair or Co-Chair and pre-approved by an MES staff adviser in the IAS office. In order to ensure disciplinary depth, at least two of the four courses taken to fulfill the concentration requirement must be in the same department. The remaining two must be thematically related to the selected topic. Students may choose their concentration courses from the list of core courses above and from any courses indicated as at least 50% Middle East-related content. Students may also petition to count up to two courses listed as having 33% Middle East-related content toward their concentration.
3. **Methods Requirement:** Methods and Scope of Research in MES (MES 102) is offered each fall. It provides an introduction to interdisciplinary research strategies for the collection, interpretation, and analysis of data in the field of Middle Eastern studies. The semester's reading and assignments are devoted to two parallel activities: identifying and analyzing different scholarly approaches to select topics in MES and preparing a prospectus on individual thesis topics, the writing of which will take place in MES 190 or MES H195 under the supervision of an appropriate faculty thesis adviser.
4. **Senior Thesis (one course), MES 190 (4 units):** The required senior thesis (a research paper of 30-40 pages) gives students the opportunity to integrate their concentration coursework and conduct further advanced research on a topic in Middle Eastern studies. To organize and guide their research and writing, students participate in a tutorial with a relevant faculty adviser or with an advanced scholar approved by the MES Chair or Co-Chair. The senior thesis must be completed within one semester. Students are also required to submit a bound copy of the thesis to the Center for Middle Eastern Studies. MES 190 must be taken for a letter grade.
5. **Senior Honors Program (optional), MES H195 (4 units):** Senior students with a grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.6 in courses for the major and 3.5 in all work completed at Berkeley are eligible to participate in the honors program. The program consists of a two-semester sequence: MES 102 and H195. MES 102 is a research methods course in which students determine a thesis topic, review the relevant secondary literature, identify primary source materials, and prepare a substantive prospectus. The honors thesis, a research paper of approximately 50-75 pages, is completed in MES H195 under the direct supervision of a faculty member appropriate to the student's interest. Students must register for both MES 102 and H195 for a letter grade. The original copy of the honors thesis must be submitted on the date agreed upon between the student and the thesis adviser. A bound copy must also be submitted to the Center for Middle Eastern Studies.
6. **Online Research (one course):** MES 194 (Online Research and Digital Production for Middle Eastern Studies). This workshop is intended for Middle Eastern Studies majors undertaking senior thesis projects. It should be taken in the spring semester, while

students are enrolled in MES 190/H195: "Senior Thesis in MES." Students in this workshop will explore online research tools and web-building techniques with an aim to complement their theses with multimedia websites that disseminate their findings and demonstrate their capacity for research to a wider audience.

Note: There is no guarantee that students accepted into the honors program will graduate with honors. Honors recommendations are made after graduation and are based on a number of factors including (but not limited to) major GPA, grades received for MES 102 and H195, and faculty adviser recommendations.

Selecting Courses for the MES Major

There are several rules governing course selection for MES. These rules are designed to preserve the character and coherence of the major. Exceptions are rare and can only be approved by the MES Chair or Co-Chair.

MES majors and minors may use any courses listed as having 50% or more Middle East-related content to fulfill their program requirements. No lower division courses other than NES 10 and History 12 may be counted toward the major or the minor unless by prior approval of the MES Chair or Co-Chair.

MES majors may also petition to use up to two courses listed at 33% toward their concentration. Other upper division courses that do not appear on the course list may also be included subject to petition if they have some Middle East-related content. Petitions for courses with 33% Middle East-related content, as well as petitions for courses not on the course list, must consist of: the "MES Major Concentration Course Petition and an attached course syllabus with all Middle East-related content highlighted. Petitions must be submitted to the MES Chair or Co-Chair. *Note:* Courses with 33% Middle East-related content cannot be used to fulfill core requirements of the major. MES minors must choose courses listed at 50% or more Middle East-related content to complete minor requirements.

Minor in Middle Eastern Studies

The minor in Middle Eastern studies is designed to introduce students to the study of the modern Middle East, understood as comprising the Arab world, Turkey, Iran, and Israel through social science and humanities courses. (Students interested in emphasizing language, archaeology and/or ancient civilizations should investigate minors in the Department of Near Eastern Studies.) The MES minor is open to all undergraduates with the exception of MES majors. Minor applications must be submitted no later than the last day of instruction of the semester immediately preceding the final semester.

MES Minor Course Requirements

One introductory lower-division course from the following: MES 10, MES 20, NES 10, History 12; and five upper-division Middle East-related courses selected from the list of core courses. Any substitutions must be pre-approved by the MES coordinating faculty adviser.

The five upper division courses must be taken from at least two different departments. The study of modern Middle Eastern languages is encouraged; however, there is no language requirement for the MES minor, nor do language courses count toward the minor. The six courses taken to satisfy the MES minor must total 22 or more units. All courses must be taken for a letter grade. MES 97, 99, 197, and 199 may not be used to fulfill minor requirements. At least three of the upper division minor courses must be completed at Berkeley. (All transfer courses must

be approved by the MES Chair or Co-Chair.) Students must achieve a minimum overall GPA of 2.0 in the courses used to satisfy minor requirements. Only one course may be double-counted with a major program. Coursework for the minor must be completed within the 130-unit maximum for graduation.

For further information, see the MES minor information sheet, pre-approved course list, and application available in 101 Stephens Hall.

M E STU 20 Perspectives on the Middle East 2 Units**Department:** Middle Eastern Studies**Course level:** Undergraduate**Term course may be offered:** Spring**Grading:** Letter grade.**Hours and format:** 2 hours of Seminar per week for 15 weeks.

A weekly seminar including guest speakers on (1) ethnic perspectives (Persians, Arabs, Turks, Israelis); (2) religious perspectives (Islam, Christianity, Judaism); and (3) disciplinary perspectives (anthropology, sociology, etc.). The seminar introduces students to the work of several major Berkeley Middle East scholars. The class has no prerequisites and admission preference is given to lower division students and prospective Middle Eastern majors.

M E STU 24 Freshman Seminar 1 Unit**Department:** Middle Eastern Studies**Course level:** Undergraduate**Terms course may be offered:** Fall, spring and summer**Grading:** The grading option will be decided by the instructor when the class is offered.**Hours and format:** 1 hour of Seminar per week for 15 weeks. 2 hours of Seminar per week for 8 weeks.

The Freshman Seminar Program has been designed to provide new students with the opportunity to explore an intellectual topic with a faculty member in a small seminar setting. Freshman seminars are offered in all campus departments, and topics vary from department to department and semester to semester. Enrollment is limited to 15 freshmen.

Course may be repeated for credit as topic varies. Course may be repeated for credit when topic changes.

M E STU 98 Directed Group Study for Lower Division Students 1 - 4 Units**Department:** Middle Eastern Studies**Course level:** Undergraduate**Terms course may be offered:** Fall, spring and summer**Grading:** Offered for pass/not pass grade only.**Hours and format:** 1 to 4 hours of directed group study per week.**Prerequisites:** Consent of instructor.

Seminars in various fields of Middle East studies designed to introduce beginning undergraduates to problems of importance to students interested in the Middle East. Topics vary from semester to semester.

Course may be repeated for credit with different instructor. Course may be repeated for credit when topic changes.

M E STU 102 Scope and Methods of Research in Middle Eastern Studies 4 Units**Department:** Middle Eastern Studies**Course level:** Undergraduate**Terms course may be offered:** Fall and spring**Grading:** Letter grade.**Hours and format:** 3 hours of Lecture per week for 15 weeks.**Prerequisites:** Upper division standing.

Required for all students majoring in Middle Eastern Studies, open to all students in International and Area Studies Teaching Program focusing on the Middle East interdisciplinary research strategies for the collection, interpretation, and analysis of data. Course integrates the study of the fundamental theories of social science, with the practical techniques of social science research methods.

Students will receive no credit for 102 after taking Political Economy of Industrial Societies 102, or International and Area Studies 102 or 118.

Instructor: Gottreich

M E STU 109 Model Arab League 3 Units**Department:** Middle Eastern Studies**Course level:** Undergraduate**Term course may be offered:** Spring**Grading:** Offered for pass/not pass grade only.