Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Media Studies

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Director of Media Studies: Melki, Jad
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Assistant Professors: Farah, May; Melki, Jad; Perdigon, Sylvain; Wick, Livia
Lecturers: Fathallah, Zeina; Nasser, Khaled; Saber, Dima; Tarabey, Lubna;
Instructors: Agha, Dina; Boustany, Nora; Bibi, Karma M.; Daou, Mark; Khouri, Rami; Osman, Zeina; Mallat, Sarah; Sabban, Sarah; Yeghiayan, Heghnar

MA in Anthropology

The anthropology MA program offers students general training in socio-cultural anthropology with scholars recognized for their innovative approaches to a field that is regaining prominence in the Arab world. AUB’s program is distinguished by offering students the opportunity to develop a strong foundation in classical anthropological paradigms and to relate them to emerging concerns of modern Arab societies, especially with regard to its faculty’s expertise in creative expression and arts production, mental health and well-being, cultural ethics, refugees, medical, legal and historical anthropology. Students will have the opportunity to study the development of the discipline, especially as it pertains to Arab cultures, while exploring theories and contributing to the literature by conducting original fieldwork or doing research on secondary sources. The program is designed to sensitize students to their responsibilities as anthropologists, give them a taste of fieldwork, help them acquire an understanding of anthropological theory and history, and inspire experimentation with the medium and form of ethnographic writing.

MA in Sociology

The sociology MA program offers students the opportunity to study sociology with nationally and internationally recognized faculty in the department’s areas of research expertise, including contemporary sociological theory, comparative sociology, economic and political sociology, and research methodology. Other substantive issues include citizenship and civil society, cities and urbanism, education, ethnicity, religion, transnationalism, migration, refugees, sexuality, gender, and deviance. The program provides students with the opportunity to develop their knowledge and understanding of key theoretical approaches in sociology. Students will develop
their intellectual skills in the critical examination of contemporary social issues, especially as it pertains to the Arab world, and will get a strong grounding in research methodology and training in both qualitative and quantitative research inquiry. Foremost students will conduct original empirical research through a thesis project. In addition, the program encourages students to critically consider the relationship between theory, research, policy and practice, and to reflect on ethical considerations in doing social research.

**Graduate Studies in Anthropology and Sociology**

Students pursuing either an MA in Anthropology or Sociology are encouraged to work with faculty from other humanities and social sciences departments, in particular, anthropology, media studies, political science, and the Center for Arab and Middle Eastern Studies. A Master's degree in either field has a very wide application. Graduates in Anthropology will be qualified to pursue doctoral level studies in the field. Alternatively, they will have acquired the research methods, the exposure to anthropological scholarship, and the intercultural skills they need to work effectively in multicultural settings such as non-governmental and governmental organizations, policy centers and possibly businesses. Graduates in Sociology will be qualified to pursue studies in sociology at the doctoral level. Alternatively, they will have acquired the skills for research careers in government, non-governmental and international organizations, as well as having acquired expertise applicable in such domains as business, education, law, and public policy.

**Requirements**

Applicants for MA in anthropology are required to submit an official GRE score with their application.

A candidate for the MA degree in sociology or anthropology is required to complete 21 graduate credit hours in addition to a thesis. Sociology students must complete SOAN 300 and SOAN 312, and anthropology students must complete SOAN 304 and SOAN 310. Sociology students choosing a concentration in communication are also required to complete SOAN 313. The remainder of the requirements may be selected from other offerings in the department or in the FAS and other schools and faculties on campus, with the consent of the adviser and according to the interest of the graduate student.

**Course Descriptions**

**SOAN 300 Graduate Research Methods**

An advanced course in the formulation of research problems, research designs, and techniques of data collection including quantitative and qualitative methods and micro versus macro approaches to social reality. Students participate in actual research projects and apply various techniques of data collection and analysis to interpret research findings. *Annually.*

**SOAN 301 The Ethnographer’s Craft**

Anthropology or any socio-cultural research is not simply the gathering of data. The course will expose students to the classic and cutting-edge texts in anthropology today. Readings include the works of Mauss, Evans-Pritchard, Malinowski and the texts that have had the most impact in the field in the last decade. Close attention to the crafting of ethnographies will teach an analytical method of reading that will help students understand the choices of theory, methodology, and style that have been made to create classic anthropological knowledge. Thus, this course will enable students to conceive, devise, and write-up their own ethnographic research.
SOAN 302  Culture and Mental Health  3.0; 3 cr.
This graduate seminar explores anthropological approaches to the study of mental health and illness. It will introduce students to theoretical traditions in medical and psychological anthropology. Addressing ethnographies from different settings, the course treats works on subjective experiences, becoming cultural beings as well as mental health as scientific practice and as object of knowledge and intervention. Occasionally.

SOAN 303  Art, Aesthetics, and Social Change  3.0; 3 cr.
This course combines cultural anthropology, art studies, urban studies, and history to look at the role of sensuality and aesthetics in social movements that involve envisioning a different future. Focusing on case studies from the Arab world, the US, and the former Soviet Union, the course will expose students to the most recent literature in affect theory, critical art theory, and Middle East studies, as well as the classic texts on power, social hierarchy, and structuralism.

SOAN 304  Anthropological Research Methods  3.0; 3 cr.
This course is about the various methods of enquiry and interpretation used in anthropological research. Though ethnographic methods are shaped by each research situation and its particular historical and cultural circumstances, they are also guided by broad theoretical questions. This course takes the perspective that research is comprised of three inter-related domains: creative theoretical speculation, methodological ‘operationalization’ of theoretical questions, and concrete research practices. The trick (or ‘magic’) of ethnographic research is to relate empirical and observational data in many forms to the theories that motivate their collection. We explore the politics and ethics of research, kinds of observation, effective interviewing strategies, note-taking, conducting surveys, examining archives, ways of ‘coding’ or indexing information, data analysis, and approaches to writing. Annually.

SOAN 310  Seminar in Anthropological Theory  3.0; 3 cr.
An in-depth survey of the major theoretical developments in socio-cultural anthropology. The seminar focuses on both chronological treatment of issues and theories as well as the contributions of leading theorists. Prerequisite: graduate standing or consent of instructor. Annually.

SOAN 312  Seminar in Sociological Theory  3.0; 3 cr.
The seminar explores some of the enduring controversies and major developments in sociological theory critically. An effort is first made to elucidate the origins, strategies, and ideological antecedents and components of sociological theory. A special focus is placed on the reformulations of the classic tradition and recent post-modern and other promising directions. Alternate years.

SOAN 313/ MCOM 301  Seminar in Communication Theory and Research  3.0; 3 cr.
The seminar introduces the student to trends in mass communication research and theoretical approaches to the communication process and communication context (small group communication, media processing and effects, media and society, culture and communication). Focus is placed on contemporary communication theories that have emerged in the discipline since the 1950s. Annually.

SOAN 315  Seminar in Middle Eastern Culture and Society  3.0; 3 cr.
A seminar on special aspects of research with emphasis on the cultural mechanisms and processes of change in pastoral, rural, or urban communities. This course includes presentation and analysis of field data on the Middle East. Occasionally.
SOAN 317/ MCOM 302  
Seminar in Arab Media and Society  
3.0; 3 cr.
A seminar on the political, social, and economic effects of the new communication technologies on modern Arab society. Special attention is given to the effects of cultural deviance in the media on children and the effects of the communication media on social and cultural change. *Alternate years.*

SOAN 318  
Human Migration  
3.0; 3 cr.
A comparative study of the causes and effects of human migration worldwide. This course covers issues concerned with voluntary and forced migration as well as temporary labor migration and voluntary migration and resettlement, with an emphasis on the Lebanese experience. *Alternate years.*

SOAN 320  
Graduate Tutorial in Anthropology  
3.0; 3 cr.
This, like other graduate tutorials in sociology and communication, is open to graduate students preferably during the second semester of the first year in their program of study. Tutorials provide opportunities for students to pursue directed readings and preliminary grounded research of relevance to their envisaged fields of concentration. *May not be repeated for credit. Occasionally.*

SOAN 321  
Graduate Tutorial in Sociology  
3.0; 3 cr.
*May not be repeated for credit. Occasionally.*

SOAN 323  
Special Topics in Anthropology  
3.0; 3 cr.
This, like other special topics in sociology and communication, is devoted normally to SOAN faculty or visiting professors and recognized scholars to explore topics of current interest. May be repeated for credit. *Occasionally.*

SOAN 324  
Special Topics in Sociology  
3.0; 3 cr.
*May be repeated for credit. Occasionally.*

SOAN 395A/B  
Comprehensive Exam  
0 cr.  
*Prerequisite: Consent of adviser.*

SOAN 399  
Thesis  
9 cr.

**MA in Media Studies**  
**Mission Statement**

The AUB MA in Media Studies offers students a broad-based multidisciplinary liberal arts curriculum grounded in the social sciences that teaches students media theory, research and practice, and focuses on critical thinking and on the role of media in society. The program offers a regional and global scope and stresses a liberal arts approach that emphasizes theory, research, teaching, and critical skills, but also includes some basic practical media skills. In addition to exploring media theories, students learn scientific research methods and systematic and critical inquiry into the nature, processes and consequences of traditional and new media. Students also develop solid digital media skills that prepare them for “an information technology driven age”—a goal prominently iterated in the mission of the Faculty of Arts and Science. The program brings forth issues and principles of freedom of the press, multicultural communication, and media ethics and social responsibility. It stresses the university’s commitment “to creative and critical thinking and civic responsibility” by emphasizing media literacy principles that aim
to produce graduates who can effectively and critically access, analyze, utilize, evaluate and create media messages, in addition to developing media policies and strategies.

**Admission**

Requirements for admission into the MA program are consistent with those of the Faculty of Arts of Sciences. Applicants are required to submit the following: two letters of recommendation, a statement of goals/research interests and experiences, and official GRE scores. Each student will also be interviewed upon application to determine his/her professional background and qualification. Prospective graduate students with no background in media studies will be required to take at least the following prerequisite undergraduate courses: MCOM 202, MCOM 203, and MCOM 220, and a course in research methods. Some or all of these prerequisite courses may be waived on a case-by-case basis for equivalent courses or for relevant, extensive, and verifiable professional experience. The supplementary courses must be completed within four consecutive semesters.

**Requirements**

The MA in Media Studies follows a liberal curriculum grounded in the social sciences. Its curriculum is intended for returning professionals, and AUB and non-AUB graduates who aim to build fundamental knowledge in the theories, research methods, and critical and practical skills of the field.

The MA program offers two tracks. Students may choose either a thesis option or a project option. Both options require 30 credits. Students must decide which track they want to pursue by the time they successfully complete the comprehensive exam, which is normally at the end of the second semester for full-time students. Based on their comprehensive exam performance, students will be advised to pursue one track or the other.

- The thesis option requires seven courses (21 credits), the comprehensive exam (0 credits), and a 9-credit thesis (MCOM 399).
- The project option requires nine courses (27 credits), the comprehensive exam (0 credits), and a 3-credit project (MCOM 398).

All candidates for the MA in Media Studies must complete MCOM 300, 301, 302, and 395 (comprehensive exam) and at least two courses from the list of department electives. The remainder of the courses may be selected from the department electives, the approved general electives, or other unlisted graduate courses, after the advisor's consent.

**Core Courses:** MCOM 300, MCOM 301, and MCOM 302.

**Department Electives:** MCOM 310, MCOM 311, MCOM 312, MCOM 313, MCOM 380, MCOM 381, MCOM 390, MCOM 391, SOAN 310, SOAN 312, SOAN 315.

**Approved General Elective Courses**

- Political communication: PSPA 321, PSPA 380, PSPA 381, PSPA 382.
- Health communication: HPCH 310, HPCH 332, HPCH 333, HPCH 334, HMPD 300, EPHD 331, EPHD 332.
- Visual Literacy: GRDS 032, GRDS 036, GRDS 020.
Course Descriptions

MCOM 300   **Graduate Research Methods in Media Studies**  2.2; 3 cr.
This course teaches students how to critically read, design, and implement scientific research and use quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods and data analysis techniques to address research questions and hypotheses common in the field of media studies. Students participate in actual research projects and apply various techniques of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. *Annually.*

MCOM 301/ SOAN 313   **Seminar in Communication Theory and Research**  3.0; 3 cr.
The seminar introduces the student to trends in media studies research and theoretical approaches to the media and communication process. Focus is placed on contemporary media and communication theories. *Annually.*

MCOM 302/ SOAN 317   **Seminar in Arab Media and Society**  3.0; 3 cr.
A seminar on the political, social, and economic effects of the new communication technologies on modern Arab society. Special attention is given to the effects of cultural deviance in the media on children and the effects of the communication media on social and cultural change. *Annually.*

MCOM 310   **Digital Media Literacy and Education**  2.2; 3 cr.
Explores media education and digital media literacy, or the ability to effectively access, analyze, evaluate and create digital media. Examines how media messages shape politics, culture and society, and explores new media production skills, including blogs, podcasts, photo and video manipulation. *Alternative years.*

MCOM 311   **Media Law and Ethics**  3.0; 3 cr.
A survey of Lebanese, Arab and International media laws and regulations, and their application within the realms of journalism, public relations, advertising, digital media, and entertainment, with an exploration of ethical guidelines, moral values, and social responsibilities of media scholars, practitioners and educators. *Alternative years.*

MCOM 312   **Seminar in Persuasion Theory and Practice**  3.0; 3 cr.
The seminar deals with how individuals exercise influence through communication. It examines the appropriate boundaries of persuasion research, the impact of persuasive practices, and the dynamic nature of persuasion inquiry. The seminar conducts an interdisciplinary examination of research in a wide range of areas related to persuasion of interest to mass communication students, psychologists, and public health practitioners. *Occasionally.*

MCOM 313   **Seminar in Communication and Development**  3.0; 3 cr.
A seminar on the role of communication in developing societies, with a focus on the media as modernizing agent, and on questions that are relevant for the understanding of the socioeconomic developmental process in less developed cultures. *Occasionally.*

MCOM 380   **Global Media Literacy**  3.0; 3 cr.
This course explores how distinctive global media shape views of politics, culture and society within nations, across regions and internationally. It analyzes information, values and underlying messages conveyed via various forms of media. It will develop research methods, designs and instruments that examine the accuracy of various media messages. The research designs will be later implemented in the afternoon course (MCOM 381). *Note: this course is part of a study abroad program. Students need to apply to the office of International Programs to enroll. Every Summer. Corequisite: MCOM 381.*
MCOM 381  Global Change, Global Cooperation, Global News  3.0; 3 cr.
A summer abroad course built around global problems of contemporary importance. The class will be broken into cooperative teams that will apply analytic frameworks, research tools and concepts derived from the morning course (MCOM 380) to examine a global event, issue or problem as it is represented regionally. Note: this course is part of a study abroad program. Students need to apply to the office of International Programs to enroll. Every Summer. Corequisite: MCOM 380.

MCOM 390: Special Topics in Media Studies  3.0; 3 cr.
This course is devoted normally to MCOM faculty or visiting professors and recognized scholars to explore topics of current interest. May be repeated for credit. Occasionally.

MCOM 391   Graduate Tutorial in Media Studies  3.0; 3 cr.
This course is open to graduate students preferably during the second semester of the first year in their program of study. Tutorials provide opportunities for students to pursue directed readings and preliminary grounded research of relevance to their envisaged fields of concentration. May not be repeated for credit.

MCOM 395   Comprehensive Exam  0 cr.
Prerequisite: Consent of adviser.

MCOM 398   MA Project  3 cr.

MCOM 399   MA Thesis  9 cr.