The Center for Arab and Middle Eastern Studies (CAMES) offers interdisciplinary MA degrees in Middle Eastern Studies and in Islamic Studies. CAMES’ goal is to enhance the understanding of the Middle East and Islamic civilization and to encourage informed scholarship in all related academic disciplines. The MA programs aim to assist students in acquiring a sound grounding in one or more aspects of the study of the Middle East and Islamic civilization, and in the Arabic language. The Center offers seminars in Middle Eastern and Islamic studies as well as a full range of Arabic language courses for non-native speakers. CAMES is an interdepartmental, interdisciplinary unit and the MA programs draw on other departments to provide coursework and thesis advising for its students. To complement students’ course work and to promote scholarship about Middle Eastern and Islamic studies at AUB, the Center also sponsors visiting lectures and conferences and holds occasional events such as film screenings and readings.

CAMES focuses on current methodologies and approaches in the fields of Middle Eastern and Islamic studies. Students structure their own course work in Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, and in fields such as history, Arabic language and literature, contemporary politics, international relations, archaeology, anthropology, sociology, media studies, and philosophy. The courses and the thesis and project requirements encourage students’ critical and independent thinking and the undertaking of analytical in-depth research.

CAMES is committed to the study of the Arabic language and offers courses at all levels in coordination with the Department of Arabic and Near Eastern Languages, as well as a seven-week intensive Arabic language course in the summer.

The CAMES MA programs offer a thesis option and a project option.

Requirements

All MA applicants must submit an official GRE score with the application (along with an Arabic writing sample for the MA in Islamic Studies track).
MA in Middle Eastern Studies

Thesis Option
Students following the thesis option are required to complete a minimum of 21 credit hours in courses numbered 300 and above, in addition to a nine-credit thesis. They are also required to take the core course, MEST 301 Introduction to Middle Eastern Studies. Non-native speakers of Arabic are required to complete a minimum of six credits of Arabic language study, and may take up to nine credits of Arabic. Students may take their remaining courses at CAMES or in topics related to Middle Eastern Studies at departments other than CAMES.

Project Option
Students following the project option are required to complete a minimum of 27 credit hours in courses numbered 300 and above, in addition to a three-credit project. They are also required to take the core course, MEST 301 Introduction to Middle Eastern Studies. Non-native speakers of Arabic are required to complete a minimum of six credits of Arabic language study, and may take up to 12 credits of Arabic.

Courses

MEST 301  Introduction to Middle Eastern Studies  3.0; 3 cr.
A general course in modern Middle Eastern studies designed to introduce students to the interdisciplinary study of the Middle East. Faculty from the various departments associated with CAMES such as History and Archaeology, Philosophy, Arabic, Economics, Political Studies, Sociology, Anthropology, and Media Studies asked to present a seminar that illustrates the approaches and methodologies used in their respective fields to study the region. Consent of instructor required. Annually.

MEST 303  Graduate Tutorial  3 cr.

MEST 305  Graduate Tutorial  3 cr.

MEST 310  Seminar in Early Islamic History  3.0; 3 cr.
A seminar course that provides a social and intellectual introduction to approximately the first five hundred years of Arabic Islamic history, using a thematic rather than a chronological approach. Consent of instructor required. Annually.

MEST 311  Special Topics in Medieval Islamic Cultural History  3.0; 3 cr.
Consent of instructor required. Biennially.

MEST 315  Special Topics in Modern Middle Eastern Social and Political History  3.0; 3 cr.
Consent of instructor required. Biennially.

MEST 316  Special Topics in Modern Arabic Cultural and Intellectual History  3.0; 3 cr.
Consent of instructor required. Biennially.

MEST 317  Special Topics in Contemporary Middle Eastern Politics  3.0; 3 cr.
Consent of instructor required. Biennially.
MEST 318  Special Topics in Contemporary Middle Eastern Society  3.0; 3 cr.
Consent of instructor required. Biennially.

MEST 302  Graduate Tutorial  3.0; 3 cr.

MEST 321/322  Arabic as a Foreign Language I and II  5.0; 3 cr. (each)
A thorough course in basic literary Arabic, with emphasis on the vocabulary of modern literature, the press, and current affairs. This course teaches grammar and structure enabling students to read, understand, and translate from and into Arabic within a tightly controlled syntactical milieu. Consent of instructor required. Each semester.

MEST 323/324  Arabic as a Foreign Language III and IV  5.0; 3 cr. (each)
A continuation of the carefully graded approach begun in MEST 321 and MEST 322, and culminating with the exposition of the derivation system. This course empowers students to use lexica and to read, understand and translate, unhampered by any loopholes in their knowledge of basic Arabic syntax and morphology. Consent of instructor required. Each semester. Prerequisites: MEST 321 and MEST 322 or placement based on a placement examination.

MEST 325/326  Arabic as a Foreign Language V and VI  3.0; 3 cr. (each)
The main goal for this level is to reach a superior level of proficiency. Reading texts containing opinions, hypotheses, and intellectual discussions, in addition to selections from classical Arabic literature. Grammar consists largely of details, such as the full conjugation of irregular verb classes and fine points of complex sentence structure. Instruction is totally in Arabic. Consent of instructor required. Prerequisites: MEST 323 and MEST 324 or placement based on a placement examination. Each semester.

MEST 327/328  Arabic as a Foreign Language VII and VIII  3.0; 3 cr. (each)
The main goal for this level is to move from a superior level of proficiency towards fluency. The student who completes these two courses will be able to register for ARAB 201A or B. This level consists of a mixture of readings from a variety of literary and non-literary genres, writing long commentaries on select passages, discussions, presentations and questions on particular grammatical points specifically related to comprehension and composition skills. Instruction is totally in Arabic. Prerequisites: MEST 325/326 or placement based on a placement examination. Consent of instructor required. Each semester.

MEST 329  Special Topics in Arabic Language and Literature  3.0; 3 cr.
Occasionally.

MEST 330  Introductory Syriac  3.0; 3 cr.
The course provides students with a working knowledge of Syriac language and grammar. With the help of a lexicon, students are expected to read and translate simple Syriac texts. Occasionally.

MEST 331  Introduction to Syriac Literature  3.0; 3 cr.
The aim of this introductory course is to provide the student with an overview of Syriac literature from its origins to the present day. Prerequisite: ARAB 215/MEST 330, or consent of instructor. Occasionally.

MEST 340  Introduction to Lebanese Arabic  5.0; 3 cr.
This course is for foreign speakers of Arabic only. The course builds proficiency in Lebanese Arabic through the introduction of the grammatical features of the Lebanese dialect and the practice of interactive functional skills, including listening comprehension, conversation tasks, and vocabulary building. For undergraduate and graduate students. Consent of instructor required. Each semester.
MEST 341  Intermediate Lebanese Arabic  5.0; 3 cr.
This course is for foreign speakers of Arabic only. Intermediate Lebanese Arabic is a continuation of MEST 240/340 Introduction to Lebanese Arabic. The course emphasizes the further development of conversational skills in Lebanese Arabic, and therefore targets primarily speaking and listening skills. Knowledge of the Arabic alphabet is required to join MEST 241/341. This course concentrates on increasing vocabulary and command of syntax enabling students to reach a higher level of fluency. For undergraduate and graduate students. Consent of instructor required. Prerequisite: MEST 240/340 or placement based on a placement interview. Each semester.

MEST 342  Advanced Lebanese Arabic  3.0; 3 cr.
This course is the continuation of the sequence begun in MEST 241/341 Intermediate Lebanese Arabic and MEST 240/340 Introduction to Lebanese Arabic. Like the preceding courses, it focuses on spoken rather than written Arabic, and will therefore target primarily the oral/aural skills; speaking and listening. Knowledge of the Arabic alphabet is required to join MEST 242/342. The course is designed to meet the needs and expectations of non-native young adults and adults who are seeking to develop a comfortable level of proficiency in a variety of complicated communicative tasks and social situations. For undergraduate and graduate students. Consent of instructor required. Prerequisite: MEST 241/341 or placement based on a placement interview. Each semester.

MEST 398  MA in Middle Eastern Studies Project  3cr.
MEST 399  MA in Middle Eastern Studies Thesis  9 cr.
MEST 395A Middle Eastern Studies Comprehensive Exam  0 cr.

MA in Islamic Studies

Thesis Option

Students following the thesis option are required to complete a minimum of 24 credit hours in courses numbered 300 and above, in addition to a six-credit thesis. They are also required to take the core courses, ISLM 301 (Sources and Methods) and ISLM 302 (Islamic Civilizations). Students may take their remaining courses at CAMES or in topics related to Islamic Studies at departments other than CAMES. For the course work, the program requires at least six credits in classical Arabic, six credits in modern, and at least three credits in classes based on texts, and three credits based on social science methodology. Non-native speakers of Arabic are required to take intensive Arabic language classes, and these are not counted as part of the degree credits. The program recommends the study of a second European language other than English, and for native speakers of Arabic to also develop a reading proficiency in a second language central to literature in Islamic civilizations and cultures, or a second Semitic language, depending on the field of specialization.

Project Option

Students following the project option are required to complete a minimum of 27 credit hours in courses numbered 300 and above, in addition to a three-credit project. They are also required to take the core course, ISLM 301 (Sources and Methods) and ISLM 302 (Islamic Civilizations).
Students may take their remaining courses at CAMES or in topics related to Islamic Studies at departments other than CAMES. For the course work, the program requires at least six credits in classical Arabic, six credits in modern, and at least three credits in classes based on texts, and three credits based on social science methodology. Non-native speakers of Arabic are required to take intensive Arabic language classes, and these are not counted as part of the degree credits. The program recommends the study of a second European language other than English, and for native speakers of Arabic to also develop a reading proficiency in a second language central to literature in Islamic civilizations and cultures, or a second Semitic language, depending on the field of specialization.

Courses

**ISLM 301 Sources and Methods 3.0; 3 cr.**
This course familiarizes students with the sources, research tools and methods in Islamic Studies, by also looking at the history of the discipline and survey its major research areas, including history, language, literature, religious sciences, intellectual sciences, and social studies (Arabic native speakers can replace ISLM 301 with the equivalent Arabic course: ARAB 309).

**ISLM 302 Islamic Civilizations 3.0; 3 cr.**
This course examines key aspects of the Islamic civilizations, cultures, and thought. It will focus on the political, social and religious institutions that shaped the Islamic civilizations as well as on the intellectual and scholarly traditions which characterized the Muslim world from the foundation of Islam onwards, and across various geographical regions and cultures. Beginning with the geographical, cultural and historical context of the rise of Islam, the life of the Prophet, the Qur’an, it will extend through modernity and beyond, with a special emphasis on texts. The readings consist of a selection of translated primary sources from languages that are central to the literature of Islam, as well as complementary secondary source literature.

**ISLM 315 The Qur’an in History 3.0; 3 cr.**
A historical study of the Qur’an and other allied disciplines. Themes include the Islamic concept of the Qur’an; thematic and formal aspects of the Qur’an; modes of interpretation and principles of exegesis; and medieval and modern controversies regarding its history, formal structure, authorship, and authority.

**ISLM 317 Approaches to the Qur’an 3.0; 3 cr.**
This interactive graduate seminar presents an introduction to the corpus of Sunni Islamic exegesis (tafsir) from the 9th to the 20th century.

**ISLM 321 Graduate Seminar in Islamic Philosophy and Theology 3.0; 3 cr.**
This course is intended to cover the major debates, concepts, modes of reasoning, figures, and texts of Islamic philosophy (falsafa) and theology (kalam) in their intellectual historical contexts.

**ISLM 325 Graduate Seminar in Sufism 3.0; 3 cr.**
A general presentation of Sufism that, while not aiming at exhaustiveness, will seek to acquaint students with the place and function of Sufism in Islam; the main outlines of its history; doctrinal and ritual features; the relationship between Sufism and literature, especially poetry. The course will give an overview of the sources of classical Sufism. Students will read Islamic mystical texts dealing with the Sufi Path, the nature of God and the hidden meanings of the Qur’an, dreams and miraculous powers, and the different Sufi stations.
ISLM 331  Islamic Movements and Reform  3.0; 3 cr.
An in-depth course on modern Islamic political thought. This course focuses on the historical and intellectual developments that have fueled both revolutionary and conservative trends in Islamic political movements and states. Discussions over issues such as the relationships between religion and politics, political philosophy and ideology, and political action and revolution.

ISLM 333  Islamic Thought and Modernity  3.0; 3 cr.
This course starts by examining the main reform movements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the transformations in Islamic thought in the wake of the encounter with Europe. The course then explores various models of Islamic political and social activism, and major themes addressed by leading thinkers of Islamic movements in the twentieth century. The focus is on Islamic movements from Egypt and the Arab Middle East, India/Pakistan, and Iran. Topics include the intellectual networks of scholars in the eighteenth century, the contexts of various forms of reform and revival, questions of continuity and European influence, the effects of the encounter with colonialism and imperialism, the attitude toward nationalism and other modern ideologies, and Islamic discussions of modernity and liberalism. In addition to background essays, primary sources in translation will be studied; the selected texts are classics that have wide circulation within contemporary Islamic movements.

ISLM 341  Christian-Muslim Encounters  3.0; 3 cr.
A collaborative investigation of select topics in Arab and Middle Eastern History viewed from multiple perspectives. Periodic progress reports and the incorporation of findings in an interpretive term paper are required.

ISLM 361  Readings in Classical Texts  3.0; 3 cr.
Negotiating Classical Arabic Literature through the historical method, the thematic approach, or direct textual engagement, the selective focuses of this course cover a wide spectrum of Arabic literary production before 1258/657

ISLM 363  The Arab Historians, I and II  3.0; 3 cr.
A systematic analysis of a select Arab historian in the context of his time, employing primary sources and recent secondary literature on the subject

ISLM 365  History Tutorial in Islamic Studies  3.0; 3 cr.
ISLM 397  Tutorial in Islamic Studies  3.0; 3 cr.
ISLM 398  MA in Islamic Studies Project  3 cr.
ISLM 399  MA in Islamic Studies Thesis  6 cr.
ISLM 395 A/B  Islamic Studies Comprehensive Exam  0 cr.