

MIDDLE EASTERN AND ISLAMIC STUDIES

Department Website:

<https://www.haverford.edu/meis>

The Concentration in Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies gives students basic knowledge of the Middle East and broader Muslim world, and allows students to employ discipline-specific tools for advanced work in this area.

The faculty at Haverford College who research and study the Middle East and Islam are committed to educating students about the politics, histories, and socio-cultural formations of the Middle East and broader Muslim world. We believe that our students must have basic knowledge about the Middle East and Islam if they are to participate thoughtfully and constructively in the many contentious debates that frame public discourse about Muslims and the Middle East today.

Learning Goals

Students in Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies will:

- learn the politics, histories, and socio-cultural formations of the Middle East and broader Muslim world.
- gain knowledge of key political, economic, and social issues in the contemporary Middle East.
- demonstrate basic knowledge of a language pertinent to the students' areas of research.

Haverford's Institutional Learning Goals are available on the President's website, at <http://hav.to/learninggoals>.

Curriculum

An "Area of Concentration" at Haverford is designed to facilitate the pursuit of an area of study distinct from a major, but which a student can use the disciplinary tools of the major to pursue. To that end, at least two courses, and no more than three, may fulfill both the student's major requirements and the concentration requirements. In practical terms, this means that students who want to concentrate in Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies usually major in anthropology, comparative literature, history, political science, or religion.

In some cases, students may find that they can combine other majors with a concentration in MEIS (for example, History of Art and Growth and Structure of Cities at Bryn Mawr are two departments that sometimes have two or three course offerings that could count for Middle Eastern and Islamic

Studies). Students who can demonstrate that at least two courses in their major are about Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies can petition the concentration coordinator and faculty to approve their major as one that can be linked to the MEIS concentration.

We strongly encourage students with interests in the Middle East and Islam to meet with the concentration coordinator early in their college program (during their first and second years). We also invite students to take advantage of Haverford's study abroad programs in Jordan, Morocco, Israel, and other appropriate locations to advance their work in the concentration.

Concentration Requirements

The MEIS concentration is normally available to students majoring in anthropology, history, political science, religion, or comparative literature. Courses from their major must represent at least two but no more than three of the requirements detailed below. Proposals to concentrate on the basis of other majors must be approved in advance by concentration coordinator.

Language Competence

Students must demonstrate competence above the basic level in a language pertinent to their area of research:

- In cases where a student has selected Arabic as their relevant language, this means completion of ARAB H002/ARAB S002.
- If a student is doing research for which another language is more appropriate, they may need to study at the University of Pennsylvania (Pashtu, Persian, Turkish and Swahili) or Bryn Mawr (Hebrew), or take other Haverford language classes (e.g., Chinese, French).

Some study abroad programs are also suitable for gaining language competence. Students should consult with the concentration coordinator about the course of language study to fill this requirement.

Core Courses

Students must take two of the core courses listed below, in which they learn about the Middle East and Islam. Students must choose from two of the four departments listed (e.g., history and political science, anthropology and religion, political science and religion). Students should consult the concentration coordinator to ensure they fill this requirement.

By completing this core requirement, students gain broad exposure to the history and politics of the Middle East, and to Islam as a major world religion

and social and political force that began in, and continues to be affected by, the Middle East.

The core course options are:

Code	Title	Credits
Anthropology		
ANTH H253	Anthropology of the Middle East and North Africa	1.0
ANTH H259	Ethnography of Islam	1.0
History		
HIST H117	Modern Mediterranean History	1.0
Political Science		
POLS H256		1.0
POLS H357	International Relations Theory: Conflict and the Middle East	1.0
Religion		
RELG H106	The Sense and Senses of Islam	1.00
RELG H107		1.00
RELG H259		1.00

Elective Courses

Students should pursue areas of inquiry related to the Middle East and/or Islam and specific to their interests by taking four electives, at least one of which is at the 300 level. Examples might include anthropological approaches to the study of Islam or Middle East, Middle Eastern Nationalism, Islam in African politics, Israeli politics, evolution of the Jihadi movement, modern Arabic literature, etc.

To fulfill their elective credit, students may select from a list of designated electives at Bryn Mawr and Swarthmore, or request approval from the concentration coordinator to take other appropriate courses at Bryn Mawr, Swarthmore, or the University of Pennsylvania's Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations Program. Students may also petition the concentration coordinator and MEIS faculty for approval of a course that is not on the electives list but which the student feels provides important content for their specific research topic.

See the end of this section of the Catalog for a sampling of courses that count toward the MEIS concentration. For more information about core and elective courses, contact the concentration coordinator.

No more than four of the six concentration credits may come from institutions outside of the Tri-Co.

Senior Thesis

Students must write a thesis in their major department (anthropology, history, political science, or religion) that addresses Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies and that the concentration coordinator (as well as the major advisor) approves. The concentration coordinator must approve

this thesis topic in advance to count for the MEIS concentration. To request approval, students should submit a brief (one page) thesis proposal to the concentration coordinator and arrange a meeting to discuss the proposal.

Study Abroad

Students may fulfill some of the required courses for the Concentration in Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies in study abroad programs. Some such programs that offer intensive language training can also count toward fulfilling the language requirement. Students are encouraged to consult with Rebecca Avery and the concentration coordinator about study abroad options.

Affiliated Faculty

Pika Ghosh

Visiting Associate Professor of Religion

Guangtian Ha

Assistant Professor of Religion

Anita Isaacs

The Benjamin Collins 1920 Professor of Social Science; Professor of Political Science

Alexander Kitroeff

Professor of History

Naomi Koltun-Fromm

Professor and Chair of Religion

Anne McGuire

The Kies Family Professor of Humanities; Associate Professor of Religion

Barak Mendelsohn

Associate Professor and Chair of Political Science

Zainab Saleh

Assistant Professor of Anthropology; Coordinator of Middle East and Islamic Studies

Bethel Saler

Associate Professor of History

Courses

Anthropology Courses

ANTH H253 ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA (1.0 Credit)

Zainab Saleh

Division: Social Science

This course surveys anthropological approaches to the Middle East and North Africa, with a focus on themes of representation. In addition, we will explore questions of gender, religion, nation-state, colonialism, tribes, subject formation, and sexuality. We will examine a range of critical methodologies

applying them to a variety of ethnographic sources that anthropologists have been using in their studies, namely archives, fieldwork, poetry, memorials, science and technology. Prerequisite(s): One 100-level course in anthropology, political science, sociology, or history
(**Typically offered:** Every Year)

History Courses

HIST H117 MODERN MEDITERRANEAN HISTORY (1.0 Credit)

Alexander Kitroeff

Division: Social Science

Domain(s): A: Meaning, Interpretation (Texts); B: Analysis of the Social World

This course studies the Mediterranean region in the twentieth century and the ways its countries and peoples experienced the transition to modernity by focusing on: the collapse of the Ottoman Empire; Italian fascism & colonial policies; the Spanish civil war; WWII German occupation & local resistance; the Cold War; the Algerian revolution; Egypt from Nasser to the Muslim Brotherhood; Southern European student and women's movements in the 1960s & 1970s.

(**Typically offered:** Every other Spring)

HIST H341 TOPICS COMPAR HIST: CALL ME ISHMAEL (1.0 Credit)

Bethel Saler

Division: Social Science

Domain(s): A: Meaning, Interpretation (Texts); B: Analysis of the Social World

Seminar meetings, reports and papers. May be repeated for credit with change of topic.

Political Science Courses

POLS H151 INTERNATIONAL POLITICS (1.0 Credit)

Barak Mendelsohn

Division: Social Science

This course offers an introduction to the study of international politics. It considers examples from history and addresses contemporary issues, while introducing and evaluating the political theories that have been used by scholars to explain those events. The principal goal of the course is to develop a general set of analytical approaches that can be used to gain insight into the nature of world politics - past, present and future.

(**Offered:** Spring 2022; **typically offered:** Every Year)

POLS H289 IMMIGRATION POLITICS AND POLICY (1.0 Credit)

Anita Isaacs

Division: Social Science

Domain(s): B: Analysis of the Social World

Examines the causes and rights of forced migrants and refugees along with the responses and responsibilities of the international community. Focus on Mexico and Central America. Prerequisite(s): One political science course or instructor consent
(**Offered:** Spring 2022; **typically offered:** Every other Year)

POLS H292 TURKISH POLITICS (1.0 Credit)

Division: Social Science

Domain(s): B: Analysis of the Social World

The proposed course focuses on the structure and evolution of Turkish politics from the end of the Ottoman Empire till the present. Special attention is given to Turkey's shift from secularism to Islamism over the last three decades.

(**Typically offered:** Occasionally)

POLS H333 INTERNATIONAL SECURITY (1.0 Credit)

Barak Mendelsohn

Division: Social Science

Domain(s): B: Analysis of the Social World

This course offers an introduction to the study of international security. It considers examples from history and addresses contemporary issues, while introducing and evaluating the political theories that have been used by scholars to explain those events. The principal goal of the course is to develop a general set of analytical approaches that can be used to gain insight into the nature of world politics - past, present and future. The first section introduces key conceptual issues and review main theoretical approaches in the field. The second section addresses specific issues in international security such as war, military doctrines, alliances, crisis, deterrence, grand strategy, and proliferation.

(**Typically offered:** Every other Fall)

Religion Courses

RELG H106 THE SENSE AND SENSES OF ISLAM (1.0 Credit)

Guangtian Ha

Division: Humanities

Domain(s): A: Meaning, Interpretation (Texts); B: Analysis of the Social World

This course introduces students to the debates about the senses in Islam. What is the relationship between sound and the sacred, between the sensorium and the meanings of Islam? Course readings will include Sufi texts, works by Islamic scholars, ethnographies of Muslim musical practices, as well as philosophical works.

(**Typically offered:** Every other Fall)

RELG H110 SACRED TEXTS AND RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS (1.0 Credit)

Anne McGuire

Division: Humanities

Domain(s): A: Meaning, Interpretation (Texts); B: Analysis of the Social World

An introduction to Religion through the close reading of selected sacred texts of various religious traditions in their historical, literary, philosophical, and religious contexts.

(Offered: Fall 2021; **typically offered:** Every other Fall)

RELG H150 SOUTH ASIAN RELIGIOUS CULTURES (1.0 Credit)

Pika Ghosh

Division: Humanities

Domain(s): B: Analysis of the Social World

An introductory course covering the variegated expressions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Islam, and Sikhism in South Asia.

(Offered: Fall 2021; **typically offered:** Every other Year)

RELG H159 GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN ISLAMIC TEXTS AND PRACTICES (1.0 Credit)

Guangtian Ha

Division: First Year Writing

This course introduces students to the different views of gender and sexuality in Islamic thought, and situates these views within Muslim histories and societies. We will draw on primary sources, historiographical work, ethnographies of Muslim societies, fiction, poetry, and play. One major focus will be on homosexuality in Islam and Muslim societies. In the course of this examination we will also have a chance to question what “homosexuality” is and whether this term can be applied cross-culturally and cross-religiously. To think critically about homosexuality in Islam will thus compel us to reconsider homosexuality and Islam at once. Open only to first-year students as assigned by the Director of College Writing.

(Offered: Fall 2021; **typically offered:** Only Once)

RELG H224 INDIGENIZING ISLAM TRANSNATIONALLY: RACE, GENDER, ETHNICITY (1.0 Credit)

Guangtian Ha

Division: Humanities

Domain(s): B: Analysis of the Social World

This course introduces students to the myriad arguments and controversies surrounding the “indigenization” of Islam in different non-Muslim societies around the world. The main areas of focus will be Europe (primarily the UK and France), the US, and China.

(Typically offered: Every other Year)

Writing Program Courses

WRPR H159 GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN ISLAMIC TEXTS AND PRACTICES (1.0 Credit)

Guangtian Ha

Division: First Year Writing

This course introduces students to the different views of gender and sexuality in Islamic thought, and situates these views within Muslim histories and societies. We will draw on primary sources, historiographical work, ethnographies of Muslim societies, fiction, poetry, and play. One major focus will be on homosexuality in Islam and Muslim societies. In the course of this examination we will also have a chance to question what “homosexuality” is and whether this term can be applied cross-culturally and cross-religiously. To think critically about homosexuality in Islam will thus compel us to reconsider homosexuality and Islam at once. Open only to first-year students as assigned by the Director of College Writing.

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