

Middle East Studies (MEST)

Shirin Saeidi
Director, King Fahd Center for Middle East Studies
202 Old Main
479-575-2175
mest@uark.edu

Middle East Studies Website (<https://fulbright.uark.edu/area-studies/middle-east-studies/>)

Students interested in the Middle East and North Africa and wishing to maximize their potential for academic, business, professional, or government careers related to the area, may earn a dependent major in Middle East Studies with a required primary major in an approved area in Fulbright College such as anthropology, economics, world languages, geography, history, journalism, and political science. New students entering the program are required to notify both the major adviser and the MEST director of their intention to participate. Freshmen and sophomores considering this program are advised to begin their study of a Middle East language as early as possible. Students may also earn a minor in Middle East studies.

Requirements for a Dependent Major in Middle East Studies:

MEST 20103	Introduction to Middle East Studies	3
MEST 40003/400H3	Middle East Studies Colloquium	3
ARAB 10106 or equivalent		6
Twelve credit hours in additional Middle East Studies (MEST) or related courses from the list below. No more than 6 hours may come from the same discipline, with at least three hours taken at the 30000 level or higher:		12
ANTH 39003	Topics in Anthropology (Topic must be related to Middle East Studies and approved by the program director.)	
ANTH 392H3	Honors Colloquium (Topic must be related to Middle East Studies and approved by the program director.)	
ANTH 45303	Middle East Cultures	
ANTH 49103	Topics of the Middle East	
ARAB 40203	Advanced Arabic I	
ARAB 40303	Advanced Arabic II	
ARAB 40503	Arabic Readings	
ARAB 41103	Modern Arabic Literature	
ARAB 42103	Arab Culture and Civilization.	
ARAB 4700V	Special Topics	
ENGL 35203	The Quran as Literature	
ENGL 35803	Topics in Arab American Literature and Culture	
ENGL 37103	Literature of Spain	
ENGL 39803	Special Studies (Topic must be related to Middle East Studies and approved by the program director.)	
ENGL 45803	Studies in Arab American Literature and Culture	
GEOS 40403	Geography of the Middle East	

GEOS 4100V	Special Problems in Geosciences (Topic must be related to Middle East Studies and approved by the program director.)
HIST 30303	Islamic Civilization
HIST 30403	History of the Modern Middle East
HIST 34703	Palestine and Israel in Modern Times
HIST 392H3	Honors Colloquium (Topic must be related to Middle East Studies and approved by the program director.)
HIST 3980V	Special Topics (Topic must be related to Middle East Studies and approved by the program director.)
HIST 43303	Modern Islam
HIST 43603	The Middle East since 1914
HIST 43903	Early Modern Islamic Empires, 1300-1750
HIST 44103	New Women in the Middle East
HIST 44303	Social and Cultural History of the Modern Middle East
HIST 48903	History Seminar (Topic must be related to Middle East Studies and approved by the program director.)
MEST 20003/200H3	Introduction to Islam
MEST 30003/300H3	Islam: Beliefs and Practices
MEST 3400V/340HV	MEST Independent Study
MEST 399HV	MEST: Honors Thesis
MEST 41003	Special Topics in Middle East Studies
PLSC 35203	Politics of the Middle East
PLSC 3900V	Special Topics (Topic must be related to Middle East Studies and approved by the program director.)
PLSC 4000V	Special Topics (Topic must be related to Middle East Studies and approved by the program director.)
PLSC 45203	Introduction to Gender and Politics in the Middle East
PLSC 45903	Islam and Politics
PLSC 46303	Citizenship in the Middle East
PLSC 48403	The Middle East in World Affairs
Any additional course with a Course prefix of MEST that is not in this list may also count towards major/minor requirements	

Total Hours 24

Requirements for a Minor in Middle East Studies:

Students must complete 18 hours:

Required Courses

MEST 20103	Introduction to Middle East Studies	3
MEST 40003	Middle East Studies Colloquium	3
ARAB 10106	Immersive Arabic I (or its equivalent)	6
Middle East Studies Core Courses		6

Students must complete an additional 6 hours of MEST core courses supervised by faculty participating in the program. Students choosing to take individualized reading or directed research courses as a part of the minor must obtain the approval of the Middle East Studies director and their major adviser.

Total Hours**18**

Requirements for Honors in MEST:

The Honors Program in Middle East Studies gives junior and senior students of high ability the opportunity to enroll in enriched courses and conduct independent research culminating in an honors thesis. In addition to satisfying the general Fulbright College requirements for graduation and the basic eligibility requirements for honors as established by the Honors Council, candidates for honors in Middle East Studies must complete 12 hours of honors credit in partial satisfaction of requirements for the co-major. One to 6 of these hours may be thesis hours (MEST 399HV).

The preferred method for satisfying the remaining hours is to enroll in the colloquium at least once for honors credit (MEST 400H3) and to take relevant honors colloquia or graduate courses (with permission) in one of the departments contributing to this interdisciplinary area study. The thesis committee shall include a representative from the major discipline (in the case of multiple majors, from the discipline contributing most significantly to the topic). Successful completion of these requirements will be recognized by the award of the distinction "Middle East Studies Scholar *Cum Laude*" at graduation. Higher degree distinctions are recommended only in exceptional cases and are based upon the whole of the candidate's program of honors studies.

Faculty

Antov, Nikolay Atanasov, Ph.D. (University of Chicago), M.A. (Bilkent University, Turkey), B.A. (American University in Bulgaria), Associate Professor, Department of History, 2011, 2017.

Ghadbian, Najib, Ph.D. (City University of New York), M.A. (City University of New York), M.A. (Rutgers University), B.Sc. (United Arab Emirates University), Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, 1999, 2005.

Gordon, Joel Samuel, Ph.D. (University of Michigan-Ann Arbor), B.A. (University of Illinois), Professor, Department of History, 1999, 2007.

Haydar, Adnan Fuad, Ph.D. (University of California-San Diego), M.A., B.A. (American University of Beirut), Professor, Department of World Languages, Literatures and Cultures, 1993.

Haydar, Paula Marie, Ph.D., M.F.A. (University of Arkansas), M.Ed., B.S. (University of Massachusetts), Associate Professor, Department of World Languages, Literatures and Cultures, 2006, 2023.

Kahf, Mohja, Ph.D., B.A. (Rutgers State University-New Brunswick), Professor, Department of English, 1995, 2019.

Mahmoud, Rania, Ph.D. (University of Washington), M.A. (Old Dominion University), B.A., (University of Alexandria, Egypt), Assistant Professor, Department of World Languages, Literatures and Cultures, 2017.

Odabaei, Milad, Ph.D., M.A., B.S. (University of California, Berkeley), Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, 2023.

Paradise, Thomas R., Ph.D. (Arizona State University), M.Sc. (Georgia State University), F.G.A. (Goldsmith Hall Gem-A, London), G.G. (Gemological Institute of America), B.S. (University of Nevada), University Professor, Department of Geosciences, 2000, 2016.

Saeidi, Shirin, Ph.D. (University of Cambridge, United Kingdom), M.A. (George Mason University), B.A. (University of Maryland-College Park), Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, 2018.

Courses

MEST 20003. Introduction to Islam. 3 Hours.

This course introduces Islam as a global religion and world civilization, including study of the Qur'an, prophet Muhammad, ritual and community practices, metaphysics, mysticism, art, literature, and sacred and critical history. (Typically offered: Irregular)

MEST 200H3. Honors Introduction to Islam. 3 Hours.

This course introduces Islam as a global religion and world civilization, including study of the Qur'an, prophet Muhammad, ritual and community practices, metaphysics, mysticism, art, literature, and sacred and critical history. (Typically offered: Irregular)

MEST 20103. Introduction to Middle East Studies. 3 Hours.

This course is designed to provide students with fundamental building blocks for understanding the contemporary Middle East/Islamic World. Students will be introduced to a variety of disciplinary approaches to the study of the geo-cultural region, including history, politics, arts and literature, religions and cultures, social geography, and economics. (Typically offered: Fall)

MEST 20203. Persian Language and Culture. 3 Hours.

Introduction to basic language and cultural theories surrounding Persian society in modern time. (Typically offered: Fall and Spring)

MEST 30003. Islam: Beliefs and Practices. 3 Hours.

Explores the relationship between teachings, norms, customary practices and Muslim perception of Islam. Examines theoretical concepts and practices, such as war and peace, democracy, pluralism, modernity, human rights, environment, gender, Islamic law, nation-state, and citizenship in addition to the basic tenets of Islam. (Typically offered: Spring)

MEST 300H3. Honors Islam: Beliefs and Practices. 3 Hours.

Explores the relationship between teachings, norms, customary practices and Muslim perception of Islam. Examines theoretical concepts and practices, such as war and peace, democracy, pluralism, modernity, human rights, environment, gender, Islamic law, nation-state, and citizenship in addition to the basic tenets of Islam. Prerequisite: Honors standing. (Typically offered: Spring)

MEST 3400V. MEST Independent Study. 1-3 Hour.

An exploration of varied topics related to the Middle East and North Africa studied independently with the supervision of a faculty member. Credit arranged with instructor. Prerequisite: Instructor consent and junior standing (Typically offered: Fall and Spring) May be repeated for up to 9 hours of degree credit.

MEST 340HV. Honors MEST Independent Study. 1-3 Hour.

An exploration of varied topics related to the Middle East and North Africa studied independently with the supervision of a faculty member. Credit arranged with instructor. Prerequisite: Instructor consent, junior standing and honors standing. (Typically offered: Fall and Spring) May be repeated for up to 9 hours of degree credit.

This course is equivalent to MEST 3400V.

MEST 399HV. MEST: Honors Thesis. 1-6 Hour.

Middle East Studies Honors research, readings and thesis. Prerequisite: Junior standing. (Typically offered: Irregular) May be repeated for up to 6 hours of degree credit.

MEST 40003. Middle East Studies Colloquium. 3 Hours.

An interdepartmental colloquium with an annual change in subject required of all students in the Middle East studies program. Prerequisite: Sophomore standing. (Typically offered: Spring) May be repeated for up to 6 hours of degree credit.

MEST 400H3. Honors Middle East Studies Colloquium. 3 Hours.

Honors colloquium. (Typically offered: Spring) May be repeated for up to 3 hours of degree credit.

MEST 41003. Special Topics in Middle East Studies. 3 Hours.

Courses in lecture or seminar format to be offered in a variety of disciplines relating to the history, culture, politics, geography, languages, literature, arts, and religions of the Middle East, North Africa, and/or Islamic world. (Typically offered: Irregular) May be repeated for up to 12 hours of degree credit.