

THE FIELD

Middle Eastern studies is an interdisciplinary program that gives students a broad background in the Middle East and North Africa using courses in various departments. The program also includes various levels of Arabic and Hebrew courses offered through the Department of Judaic and Near Eastern Studies. In addition to courses at UMass Amherst, students may draw on Middle Eastern studies courses offered at the other four colleges in the Five College Consortium.

Minors in Middle Eastern studies and in Arabic language are available.

THE MAJOR

Middle Eastern studies majors must complete HISTORY 130 and HISTORY 131 (students may substitute MIDEAST 190B for HISTORY 130, and MIDEAST 190A or PUBPOL 190A for HISTORY 131), and the intermediate-level requirement (two years) in a Middle Eastern language, which is typically fulfilled through Arabic. Majors must also complete 24 upper-level credits (approved 200-level courses, 300-level courses, and above) in Middle Eastern subjects in a variety of disciplines, including art history, comparative literature, economics, history, political science, religious studies, and sociology. With advisor approval, some of these courses may be taken at the other four colleges in the Five College system. Finally, majors complete the Junior Year Writing (usually taken in the history department with HISTORY 450 or with MIDEAST 389) and Integrative Experience requirements (also usually taken in the history department with HISTORY 394AI or HISTORY 394TI). Secondary Middle Eastern studies majors may fulfill the Junior Year Writing and Integrative Experience requirements in their primary major department.

HONORS

Students may pursue honors opportunities within the major. Contact the honors coordinator, Susan Shapiro (413-545-4464, shapiro@judnea.umass.edu), for more information.

STUDY ABROAD

Students in the major frequently supplement their language training and regional background with a semester or year abroad. Students typically participate in programs in Jordan, Morocco, Oman, Abu Dhabi, and Lebanon. Credits earned may be transferred to UMass Amherst as part of a Middle Eastern studies concentration, subject to approval of the program advisor. For detailed information on study abroad opportunities, contact the Middle Eastern Studies Program or the International Programs Office (413-545-2710, umass.edu/ipo).

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

A Middle Eastern studies major allows students to explore various academic and professional prospects after graduation. Recent graduates have found positions in teaching, journalism, government, international relations, business, and nonprofit organizations. Majors have also pursued successfully competitive fellowships and postgraduate education, including the Fulbright, Boren, and other prestigious awards.

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND FINE ARTS

The humanities focus on human creativity, endeavor, and culture. The imaginative and creative arts—literary and performing—derive from life and teach about human behavior and constructs of social reality. The history of social, political, and economic systems illuminates and shapes the present and future. Students in the College of Humanities and Fine Arts are expected to broaden their perspectives on individual and cultural expression within their own and other societies, to understand the development and evolution of the discipline of study in relation to the culture from which it emanates, and to learn the methods by which knowledge in the discipline is gained.

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