Middle East Studies (MEST)

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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 second 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 Combined Major in Middle East Studies: In order to add a combined major in Middle East Studies, students are required to select a primary major in one of the following approved fields: anthropology, Arabic, communication, economics (B.A.), French, geography, history, international studies, journalism, political science, sociology, or Spanish. Up to nine credit hours in the primary major may count toward the combined major in Middle East Studies with the permission of the program director.

MEST 2013 Introduction to Middle East Studies 3
MEST 4003 Middle East Studies Colloquium 3
or MEST 4003H Honors Middle East Studies Colloquium

Six credit hours of Arabic language beyond ARAB 2016 Immersive Arabic II. Other Arabic courses approved by the program director, including courses completed in a summer intensive Arabic program or study-abroad program in an Arabic-speaking country, may substitute for all or part of this requirement.

18 credit hours in additional Middle East Studies (MEST) or related courses from the list below, to be chosen from at least two disciplines, with no fewer than nine credit hours from one discipline. MEST 4003/4003H may be repeated for up to six credit hours and count toward this requirement.

ANTH 3903 Topics in Anthropology (Topic must be related to Middle East Studies and approved by the program director.)

ANTH 3923H Honors Colloquium (Topic must be related to Middle East Studies and approved by the program director.)

ANTH 4533 Middle East Cultures
ANTH 4913 Topics of the Middle East
ARAB 4016 Immersive Arabic IV
ARAB 4023 Advanced Arabic I
ARAB 4033 Advanced Arabic II
ARAB 4053 Arabic Readings

ARAB 4113 Modern Arabic Literature
ARAB 4213 Arab Culture and Civilization.
ARAB 470V Special Topics
ENGL 3583 Topics in Arab American Literature and Culture
ENGL 4583 Studies in Arab American Literature and Culture
GEOS 4033 Hydrogeology
GEOS 410V Special Problems in Geosciences (Topic must be related to Middle East Studies and approved by the program director.)

HIST 3033 Islamic Civilization
HIST 3043 History of the Modern Middle East
HIST 3473 Palestine and Israel in Modern Times
HIST 3923H Honors Colloquium (Topic must be related to Middle East Studies and approved by the program director.)

HIST 398V Special Topics (Topic must be related to Middle East Studies and approved by the program director.)

HIST 4333 Modern Islamic Thought
HIST 4363 The Middle East since 1914
HIST 4393 Early Modern Islamic Empires, 1300-1750
HIST 4413 New Women in the Middle East
HIST 4433 Social and Cultural History of the Modern Middle East

HIST 4893 History Seminar (Topic must be related to Middle East Studies and approved by the program director.)

MEST 2003 Introduction to Islam
or MEST 2003H Honors Introduction to Islam
MEST 3003 Islam: Beliefs and Practices
or MEST 3003H Honors Islam: Beliefs and Practices
MEST 340V MEST Independent Study
or MEST 340VH Honors MEST Independent Study
MEST 399V MEST: Honors Thesis
MEST 4003 Middle East Studies Colloquium
or MEST 4003H Honors Middle East Studies Colloquium
MEST 4103 Special Topics in Middle East Studies
MEST 420V Special Topics in Middle East Studies
or MEST 420VH
PLSC 3523 Politics of the Middle East
PLSC 390V Special Topics (Topic must be related to Middle East Studies and approved by the program director.)
PLSC 400V Special Topics (Topic must be related to Middle East Studies and approved by the program director.)
PLSC 4523 Introduction to Gender and Politics in the Middle East
PLSC 4593 Islam and Politics
PLSC 4633 Citizenship in the Middle East
PLSC 4843 The Middle East in World Affairs
WLIT 3523 The Quran as Literature
WLIT 3713 Literature of Spain
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 399V).

The preferred method for satisfying the remaining hours is to enroll in the colloquium at least once for honors credit (MEST 4003H) 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.
Ghadbain, 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.
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.
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 2003. 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 2003H. 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)
This course is equivalent to MEST 2003.

MEST 3003. 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: Fall)

MEST 3003H. 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)
This course is equivalent to MEST 3003.

MEST 340V. 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 340VH. 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 340V.
MEST 399V. 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 4003. 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 4003H. Honors Middle East Studies Colloquium. 3 Hours.
Honors colloquium. (Typically offered: Spring) May be repeated for up to 3 hours of degree credit. This course is equivalent to MEST 4003.

MEST 4103. 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.