

MIDDLE EAST STUDIES

PREPARATION FOR THE MAJOR

High School Preparation

Recommended as part of or in addition to UC's "a-g" admission requirements:

English composition,
American government or civics,
American history,
Western civilization or world history.

Transfer Preparation

You may complete the following courses in your first two years (but generally these courses are taken at UCSB after transfer):

Introduction to Middle Eastern studies,

Survey of Middle Eastern history or Introduction to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam,

One of the following language series:

Modern Hebrew,
Arabic,
Biblical Hebrew,
Targumic Aramaic,
Syriac.

Please see the UCSB *General Catalog* (www.catalog.ucsb.edu) or your school counselor for more information on course preparation. California community college students should see www.assist.org.

The Program

Middle East Studies is an interdisciplinary program in which students can explore the myriad peoples, societies, languages, and cultures of the Near East and the Islamic worlds from a variety of perspectives. The program brings under one roof studies on two overlapping but quite distinct entities: first, the Near East in the Ancient, Islamic, and modern periods; second, the religious and cultural traditions of Islam, not only within its original Near Eastern homeland, but also in other areas where these traditions have come to play a major role—South and Southeast Asia, Africa, and (more recently) Europe and North America.

In studying the Near East, it is essential to realize that the cultural, religious, and intellectual works generated there by Judaism, Christianity, and Islam have been so durable, and so closely intertwined with one another, that our understanding of any one of them is fatally flawed if we try to study it in isolation from the other two. Likewise, Islam was born in the Near East and evolved its core traditions there, but it has long since taken root throughout the world and must be studied in a world context.

One of the most exciting new areas of interest to emerge at UCSB in recent years has been the comparative study of the Middle East and South Asia. Although many universities offer courses in both Middle East and South Asian studies, very few offer programs that actively engage in the comparative study of these two regions. Despite their physical proximity and the many forms of cultural contact that have existed between the two regions from ancient times onward, the Middle East and South Asia are rarely brought together for study or teaching by American academics. Currently five faculty members at UCSB research and teach comparative Middle East and South Asian Studies. This promises to be an area of major growth in the near future at UCSB.

The Major

UCSB offers the Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Middle East Studies which is administered by the Global & International Studies Program.

Preparation for the major: Students must take Middle East Studies 45: Introduction to Middle East Studies. This lower-division "gateway" course will introduce students to the exploration of the ancient, medieval, and modern cultures of the Near and Middle East and North Africa, and the religion, music, art, language, and daily life of Muslim societies from Africa to Asia.

In addition, they must complete either History 46: Survey of Middle Eastern History or Religious Studies 5: Intro to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. They must also complete ONE of the following language series:

Hebrew 1-2-3-4-5-6 (Modern Hebrew);
Religious Studies 10A-B-C-D-E-F (Arabic);
Religious Studies 17A-B-C (Biblical Hebrew);
Religious Studies 17A-B, 122A-B (Targumic Aramaic);
Religious Studies 57A-B-C-D-E-F (Persian); or
Religious Studies 90A-B-C (Turkish).

Students who take Targumic Aramaic, Syriac, or Coptic should consult with their

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faculty advisor on how to achieve an intermediate level of language competency within the framework of the major. Students who already have the equivalent of two years' proficiency in the above languages or in another major Islamic or Near Eastern language may petition to satisfy the language requirement with a proficiency examination.

Upper-division major: Before students begin the upper-division major, they are required to meet with their faculty advisor to discuss and have approved their academic plan. With the assistance of the faculty advisor, students will develop a broad, coherent plan, which supports both the integrity of the major and their own interests.

Careers and Other Opportunities

The B.A. in Middle East Studies aims to provide an educational experience that is satisfying in and for itself, while simultaneously developing the body of knowledge and skills necessary for graduate study or an area-based career in business, government, or international development. Obviously no undergraduate major can provide a deep expertise in the whole of this vast arena. However, students should expect to achieve a well-defined sense of the whole, as well as to acquire the basic linguistic and conceptual tools needed to approach the Near East and Islam with real understanding. To this end, the program gives students considerable flexibility in designing their course of studies, but it also demands coherence and rigor.

As a key part of the curriculum, Middle East Studies strongly recommends, though does not require, that students spend time abroad in UC Education Abroad Program centers or in other suitable programs. Members of the Advisory Committee will work actively with interested students to help them identify appropriate opportunities for study abroad.

The program does not offer the M.A. or Ph.D. However, it can help graduate students to coordinate interdisciplinary study across departmental lines, and it also provides an enrichment of UCSB's own resources through the lectures, colloquia, and seminars, which it sponsors. Finally, the program also collaborates with the Von Grunebaum Center for Near Eastern Studies at UC Los Angeles in areas of common concern.

For more information on UCSB's Middle East Studies major, please call or write to the undergraduate advisor:

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