Washington University in St.Louis

Jewish, Islamic, and Middle Eastern Studies

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Degree Requirements

The Department of Jewish, Islamic, and Middle Eastern Studies at Washington University in St. Louis offers two terminal master's degrees: a Master of Arts in Jewish Studies (p. 1) and a Master of Arts in Islamic and Near Eastern Studies (p. 1). Although both programs have their own curricula, the department's integrated nature provides students with a unique opportunity to explore the shared experiences and interactions of Jews and Muslims in their various cultural and historical contexts. Both Master of Arts (AM) programs are two-year, full-time programs that foster breadth and depth of study and that include a graduation requirement of advanced language proficiency. Close mentoring relationships allow for tailoring a program of study to a student's specific interests and goals. Due to the excellence of our AM programs, many of our graduates have subsequently been accepted into highly prestigious PhD programs.

Master of Arts in Jewish Studies

The AM in Jewish Studies offers students an opportunity for dedicated interdisciplinary study of the history, literatures and cultures of the Jewish people from biblical to modern times. It is designed for students who have some college-level preparation in the field and who wish to deepen their expertise in preparation for a PhD program. It is also well-suited for those planning on professional careers in areas such as education, law, publishing, business or social work. Our faculty offer graduate-level instruction in the Hebrew Bible; rabbinic Judaism and its sources; medieval, early modern, and modern Jewish history in both Europe and the Middle East; Jewish-Muslim encounters; premodern and modern Hebrew and Jewish literature; and Israeli culture. Applicants to the AM program must show Hebrew language proficiency equivalent to at least one year of college-level study. At the end of two years of courses and prior to receiving the AM degree, students will be expected to have successfully completed third-year Hebrew.

Degree Requirements

- A minimum of 36 credits from graduate-level courses, which may include up to 6 units transferred from another institution (**Note:** First- and second-year language classes do not count toward these 36 credits.)
- The successful completion of third-year Hebrew
- The ability to use Hebrew source material and scholarly articles as demonstrated in at least one major seminar paper

- A second major seminar/research paper to be written either in a second seminar or in an independent study supervised by one of the faculty associated with the program (**Note:** Students have the option of writing a master's thesis in place of the two major research papers; please refer to Policies and Timelines (p. 2) below.)
- At the end of the program of study, the successful completion of an oral examination, lasting no more than one hour, based on either the two research papers submitted (and revised) for this purpose or the master's thesis

Please note the departmental Policies and Timelines (p. 2) below.

Master of Arts in Islamic and Near Eastern Studies

The AM in Islamic and Near Eastern Studies offers students an opportunity for dedicated interdisciplinary study of the history, literatures and cultures of the Middle East from the Middle Ages to the present. It is designed for students who ideally have some college-level preparation in the field and who wish to deepen their expertise in preparation for a PhD program. It is also well-suited for those planning on professional careers in education, law, publishing, business, government and private agencies whose work touches upon some aspect of Islamic and Near Eastern Studies. Our faculty offer graduate-level instruction in Islamic and Middle Eastern history; Islam in world history; Islamic religion and law; the anthropology of Islam; premodern Muslim political theory and practice; Middle Eastern urban studies; and both classical and modern Arabic literatures. Admission to the AM program normally requires Arabic language proficiency equivalent to one year of college-level study. After a typical two years of courses and prior to receiving the AM degree, students will be expected to have successfully completed third-year Arabic.

Degree Requirements

- A minimum of 36 credits from graduate-level courses, which may include up to 6 units transferred from another institution (**Note:** First- or second-year language classes do not count toward these 36 credits.)
- The successful completion of third-year Arabic
- The ability to use Arabic source material and scholarly articles as demonstrated in at least one major seminar paper
- A second major seminar/research paper to be written either in a second seminar or in an independent study supervised by one of the faculty associated with the program (**Note:** Students have the option of writing a master's thesis in place of the two major research papers; please refer to Policies and Timelines (p. 2) below.)
- At the end of their program of study, the successful completion of an oral examination, lasting no more than one hour, based on either the two research papers submitted (and revised) for this purpose or the master's thesis

Please note the departmental Policies and Timelines (p. 2) below.

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Policies and Timelines Applying to Both AM Programs

To complete our AM programs — including the third-year language requirement — within the typical course of two years, students need to be highly self-motivated and should develop close working relationships with their academic advisors. Students may elect to graduate **with** or **without** writing a master's thesis. The master's thesis, which is usually about 80 to 100 pages long, represents original work of highly polished quality and is significantly more substantive than a research paper. (For guidelines, please refer to the Master's Thesis Guide (https://gradstudies.artsci.wustl.edu/node/15150/#anchor-group-13612) issued by the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences.) Instead of the thesis, students may decide to (re)submit and defend two significantly revised research papers written in the program, each of which should be at least 30 pages long.

Master's students planning to graduate without a thesis:

Second Year

- *First week of fall semester:* Meet with advisor to discuss graduation plans
- *First week of spring semester:* Meet with advisor to determine the two research papers, select the three members of the defense committee, agree on submission deadlines, and schedule the defense
- *End of March to early April:* Oral defense

Master's students planning to graduate with a thesis:

First Year

- *End of spring semester:* Approach a primary thesis advisor (who may be, but does not have to be, the academic advisor)

Second Year

- *Fall and spring semesters:* Enroll in JIMES 591 Directed Writing: Thesis
- *First week of spring semester:* Confirm, in conversation with the academic advisor, a thesis committee of three readers, and schedule the oral defense
- *Friday before spring break:* Final draft of the thesis due to the thesis advisor
- *End of March to early April:* Oral defense