Jewish, Islamic and Near Eastern Languages and Cultures

Jewish, Islamic and Near Eastern Languages and Cultures (JINELC) is an academic department, unique in North America, in which Jewish Studies and Islamic Studies are integrated. It is an interdisciplinary department whose purpose is to explore the historical experience; literary, religious, and cultural expression; and political and material life of the Jewish, Islamic and Near Eastern civilizations. Whether students favor the study of language, literature, religion, history or politics, they will find in our courses a way to deepen their appreciation of these complex and diverse societies and cultures. Students will also be encouraged to explore the interaction of Jews and Muslims with neighboring societies and cultures in the Middle East, Europe, North Africa, and other parts of the world.

The department offers both a Master of Arts in Jewish Studies and a Master of Arts in Islamic and Near Eastern Studies.

The department does not currently offer a home-based PhD program. Students who would like to pursue a PhD in one of the fields of Jewish Studies or Islamic and Near Eastern Studies may do so under the auspices of a PhD-granting department or program (such as History, Anthropology, or Comparative Literature) in cooperation with participating faculty from Jewish, Islamic and Near Eastern Languages and Cultures. In such instances, the prospective student should apply directly to the appropriate disciplinary department or program at Washington University.

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Faculty

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Degree Requirements

Master’s Degrees

The Department of Jewish, Islamic and Near Eastern Languages and Cultures (JINELC) at Washington University in St. Louis offers two terminal master’s degrees: a Master of Arts in Jewish Studies (p. 2), and a Master of Arts in Islamic and Near Eastern Studies. While both programs have their own curricula, the department’s integrated nature provides students a unique opportunity to explore the shared experiences and interactions of Jews and Muslims in their various cultural and historical contexts. Both AM programs are two-year full-time programs that foster breadth and depth of study and include a graduation requirement of advanced language proficiency. Close mentoring relations allow for tailoring a program of study to a student’s specific interests and goals. Thanks to the excellence of our AM programs, many of our graduates have been subsequently accepted into highly prestigious PhD programs.

Master of Arts in Jewish Studies

The AM program 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 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 proficiency in Hebrew language equivalent to at least one year of college-level study. At the end of two years of courses, students will be expected to have completed third-year Hebrew successfully before receiving the AM degree.

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 30 credits.)
• Successful completion of third-year Hebrew
• Ability to use Hebrew source material and scholarly articles, to be demonstrated in at least one major seminar paper
• A second major research paper to be written either in a second seminar or in an independent study to be supervised by one of the faculty associated with the program
• 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. 3) below).
• At the end of their program of study, degree candidates are required to complete successfully 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. 3) below.

Master of Arts in Islamic and Near Eastern Studies

The AM program 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 Near Eastern history; Islam in world history; Islamic religion and law; anthropology of Islam; premodern Muslim political theory and practice; Near Eastern urban studies; and both classical and modern Arabic literatures. Admission to the AM program normally requires proficiency in the Arabic language equivalent to one year of college-level study. After a typical two years of courses, students will be expected to have completed third-year Arabic successfully before receiving the AM degree.

**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 30 credits.)
- Successful completion of third-year Arabic
- Ability to use Arabic source material and scholarly articles, to be demonstrated in at least one major seminar paper
- A second major research paper to be written either in a second seminar or in an independent study to be supervised by one of the faculty associated with the program
- 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. 3) below).
- At the end of their program of study, degree candidates are required to complete successfully 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. 3) below.

**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 advisers. Students may elect to graduate with or without writing a master's thesis. The master's thesis (usually about 80-100 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 (http://graduateschool.wustl.edu/policies-and-guides) issued by the Graduate School). 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 thesis:**

**Second Year**

First week of fall semester: Meet with adviser to discuss graduation plans.

First week of spring semester: Meet with adviser 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 thesis:**

**First Year**

End of spring semester: Approach a primary thesis adviser (who may but does not have to be identical with student's academic adviser).

**Second Year**

Fall and spring semesters: Enroll in L75 JINE 591 Directed Writing: Thesis.

First week of spring semester: Confirm a thesis committee of three readers, in conversation with student's adviser, and schedule the oral defense.

Friday before spring break: Final draft of the thesis is due to the thesis adviser.

End of March to early April: Oral defense.