Arabic

The Department of Jewish, Islamic, and Middle Eastern Studies offers a major and a minor in Arabic. As majors in Arabic, students can expect to gain proficiency in the language, study the area’s literary and cultural landmarks, and gain familiarity with Middle Eastern history and civilizations.

Language Placement: Placement tests are required for all students entering our language programs. Students may be eligible for up to 6 units of back credit based on advanced placement and successful completion of the recommended course. Native speakers are not eligible for back credit; evidence of secondary or postsecondary study of the language is required. Any units received from back credit cannot be counted toward the major or minor.

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Faculty

Chair

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Professors

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Director of Undergraduate Studies
Professor of Hebrew Bible and Biblical Hebrew
PhD, Harvard University

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Professor of Hebrew Language and Literature
PhD, University of Pennsylvania

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PhD and Habilitation, Free University of Berlin

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Senior Lecturer

Housni Bennis
Senior Lecturer in Arabic Language
MA, Washington University in St. Louis

Lecturers

Meera Jain
Lecturer of Hindi Languages and Cultures
MArch, University of Texas at Austin

Sara Jay
Lecturer in Jewish, Islamic, and Middle Eastern Studies
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Toqeer Shah
Lecturer of Urdu
MSc, University of Peshawar

Eyal Tamir
Lecturer of Hebrew
PhD, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Madhavi Verma
Lecturer in Hindi Languages and Cultures
MA, Patna University
Prerequisites:
- 100- and 200-level Arabic, by course work or by placement exam. (A student who skips the first four semesters of Arabic courses by placement exam must successfully complete Arab 3075 Third-Level Arabic I. Students who complete the third-level language course with a grade of B- or better will receive 6 units of back credit.)
- JIMES 210C Introduction to Islamic Civilization and JIMES 208F Introduction to Jewish Civilization: History and Identity. (Students with substantial prior course work may substitute an additional upper-level course with permission of their advisor and the director of undergraduate studies.)

Requirements:
- 12 credits in 300- and 400-level language courses
- 6 credits in other 300- and 400-level JIMES courses, distributed as the student wishes
- At least 3 credits in 300- and 400-level courses in a JIMES culture other than that of the selected language tradition
- 3 credits in a departmental capstone course to be taken during the senior year. (Students may take this course during their junior year with permission of their advisor and the director of undergraduate studies.)

Additional Information

Students enrolled in preapproved Washington University study abroad programs during the regular academic semester can earn a maximum of 9 credits subject to review by their advisor and the director of undergraduate studies. Summer programs and transfer courses can be granted as many as 6 credits subject to review by the student’s advisor and the director of undergraduate studies. A limit of 9 credits in total can be applied to the major, whether the credits are earned in study abroad or summer programs or via transfer credit. For more information about preapproved study abroad programs, please visit the Jewish, Islamic, and Middle Eastern Studies Study Abroad Programs website (https://jimes.wustl.edu/studyabroad/).

Students must maintain an average of B in all courses for the major. A grade of B- or higher must be earned in each language course in order to advance to the next level.

No course taken pass/fail can count toward the prerequisites or the major.

A student may request credit for courses taken outside of the department (other than those that are cross-listed) by seeking the permission of the director of undergraduate studies and the department chair.

To be eligible to write a senior thesis, a student must maintain a grade-point average of 3.65 through the sixth semester. Senior thesis writers should sign up for an appropriate 3-credit course during both the fall and spring semesters. (The 6 credits from these courses can be applied to the primary area of study.)

**Majors**

**The Major in Arabic**

Total units required: 24 advanced, in addition to prerequisites
Minors

The Minor in Arabic

The minor in Arabic requires a minimum of 9 units at the 300 level or above and a minimum of 18 total units. The goal of the minor is language proficiency at the 200 level or above. Students placing into Arab 208D Intermediate Arabic II or above must complete two consecutive semesters of language instruction at Washington University to fulfill the language requirement.

**Total units required:** 18, in addition to prerequisites

**Language prerequisites:**
- Arab 107D Beginning Arabic I and Arab 108D Beginning Arabic II, by course work or by placement exam

**Language requirements:**
- Arab 207D Intermediate Arabic I and Arab 208D Intermediate Arabic II, by course work or
- If placed into Arab 208D Intermediate Arabic II or above, two consecutive semesters of language instruction at Washington University

**Required foundational course:**
Choose one of the following courses:
- JIMES 210C Introduction to Islamic Civilization
- JIMES 208F Introduction to Jewish Civilization: History and Identity

**Electives:**
- 9 credits of 300- or 400-level L49 Arabic or L75 JIMES courses, distributed as the student wishes

**Additional Information**

- **Pass/Fail:** No course taken Pass/Fail can count toward the minor.
- **Grades:** Grades of B- or higher must be earned in each language course in order to advance to the next level.
- **Study Abroad:** Students enrolled in preapproved Washington University study abroad programs during the regular academic semester, in summer programs, and in transfer courses can earn a maximum of 3 units subject to review by their advisor and the director of undergraduate study.
- **Back Credit:** Any earned back credit does not count toward the total number of units for the Language Requirement. All students are required to take at least one year of language instruction at Washington University.

Courses


L49 Arab 107D Beginning Arabic I
This introduction to modern Arabic concentrates on rapidly developing basic skills in reading, writing, speaking, and understanding. Students with previous Arabic language background must take a placement examination.
Credit 5 units. A&S IQ: LCD, LS BU: HUM EN: H

L49 Arab 108D Beginning Arabic II
Continuation of Beginning Arabic I. There is an emphasis on enhancing skills in the reading, writing, speaking, and aural comprehension of modern Arabic. Prerequisite: Grade of B- or better in L49 107D or placement by examination.
Credit 5 units. A&S IQ: LCD, LS BU: HUM EN: H

L49 Arab 207D Intermediate Arabic I
This course involves the study of the grammar of literary Arabic; the reading of annotated classical and modern prose texts; elementary composition; and practice in speaking and comprehending modern Arabic. Prerequisite: Grade of B- or better in L49 108D or placement by examination.
Credit 4 units. A&S IQ: LCD, LS BU: HUM EN: H

L49 Arab 208D Intermediate Arabic II
Continuation of Intermediate Arabic I. The course involves the study of the grammar of literary Arabic and the reading of annotated classical and modern prose texts; elementary composition; and practice in speaking and comprehending modern Arabic. Prerequisite: Grade of B- or better in L49 207D or placement by examination.
Credit 5 units. A&S IQ: LCD, LS BU: HUM EN: H

L49 Arab 208F Introduction to Jewish Civilization: History and Identity
The anthropologist Clifford Geertz once famously invoked Max Weber in writing that "man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun. I take culture to be those webs." The main goal of this course-designed as an introduction to Jewish history, culture, and society-will be to investigate the "webs of significance" produced by Jewish societies and individuals, in a select number of historical periods, both as responses to historical circumstances and as expressions of Jewish identity. Over the course of the semester we will focus on the following historical settings: 7th century BCE Judah and the Babylonian exile; pre-Islamic Palestine and Babylonia (the period of the Mishnah and the Talmud); Europe in the period of the Crusades; Islamic and Christian Spain; Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries; North America in the 20th century; and the modern State of Israel. For each period we will investigate the social and political conditions of Jewish life; identify the major texts that Jews possessed, studied, and produced; determine the non-Jewish influences on their attitudes and aspirations; and the explore the efforts that Jews made to define what it meant to be part of a Jewish collective.
Same as L75 JIMES 208F
Credit 5 units. A&S IQ: LCD, LS BU: HUM EN: H

L49 Arab 210D Intermediate Arabic II
Continuation of Intermediate Arabic I. The course involves the study of the grammar of literary Arabic and the reading of annotated classical and modern prose texts; elementary composition; and practice in speaking and comprehending modern Arabic. Prerequisite: Grade of B- or better in L49 207D or placement by examination.
Credit 5 units. A&S IQ: LCD, LS BU: HUM EN: H

L49 Arab 210F Introduction to Islamic Civilization
A historical survey of Islamic civilization in global perspective. Chronological coverage of social, political, economic and cultural history are balanced with focused attention to special topics, which include: aspects of Islam as religion; science, medicine and technology in Islamic societies; art and architecture; philosophy and theology;
interaction between Islamdom and Christendom; Islamic history in the Middle East, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Central Asia as well as Africa; European colonialism; globalization of Islam and contemporary Islam. Same as L75 JIMES 210C
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM; LCD Arch: HUM Art: HUM BU: ETH, IS EN: H

L49 Arab 3075 Third-Level Arabic I
This course is a continuation of Intermediate Arabic II. Competence in reading, writing, speaking, listening and culture is developed through intensive exposure to classical and modern standard Arabic in its written and audiovisual forms. Prerequisite: Grade of B- or better in L49 2080 or placement by examination. Note: L75 5075 is intended for graduate students only.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: LCD, LS BU: HUM EN: H

L49 Arab 3085 Third-Level Arabic II
This course is a continuation of Third-Level Arabic I. The continued integration of language development will occur through reading, writing, speaking, and listening activities centered around advanced authentic material. This semester will prove critical for making the transition from modern Arabic to classical Arabic, including Qur'anic Arabic. There will also be focus on the continued development of colloquial Arabic. Prerequisite: Grade of B- or better in L49 3075 or placement by examination. Note: L75 5085 is intended for graduate students only.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: LCD, LS BU: HUM EN: H

L49 Arab 313C Islamic History: 600-1200
The cultural, intellectual, and political history of the Islamic Middle East, beginning with the prophetic mission of Muhammad and concluding with the Mongol conquests. Topics covered include: the life of Muhammad; the early Muslim conquests; the institution of the caliphate; the translation movement from Greek into Arabic and the emergence of Arabic as a language of learning and artistic expression; the development of new educational, legal and Pietistic institutions; changes in agriculture, crafts, commerce and the growth of urban culture; multiculturalism and inter-confessional interaction; and large-scale movements of nomadic peoples. Same as L22 History 313C
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM; LCD Arch: HUM Art: HUM BU: HUM, IS EN: H

L49 Arab 3149 The Late Ottoman Middle East
This course surveys the Middle East in the late Ottoman period (essentially the 18th and 19th centuries, up to the First World War). It examines the central Ottoman state and the Ottoman provinces as they were incorporated into the world economy, and how they responded to their peripheralization in that process. Students focus on how everyday people’s lived experiences were affected by the increased monetization of social and economic relations; changes in patterns of land tenure and agriculture; the rise of colonialism; state efforts at modernization and reform; shifts in gender relations; and debates over the relationship of religion to community and political identity. Same as L22 History 3149
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD, SD Arch: HUM Art: HUM BU: HUM, IS EN: H

L49 Arab 325 Introduction to Arabic Literature
This course is a survey of the major genres and themes in Arabic literature from the pre-Islamic era to the modern period. Texts will include pre-Islamic, classical, and Sufi poetry as well as popular tales and critical prose from the Umayyad and Abbassid empires and Andalusia. The modern sections of the course will interrogate political commitment in Arabic literature and introduce students to feminist and magical realist novels from North Africa and the Levant. All readings will be in English translation. Note: L75 525 is intended for graduate students only.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD Arch: HUM Art: HUM BU: HUM, IS EN: H

L49 Arab 329C Middle Eastern Islamic Literatures in Translation
This course studies, in English translation, several great works of Islamic literature that still influence or reflect the ways in which we perceive Islamic culture today. We critically consider great and disparate literary works, originally written in a variety of languages including Arabic, Turkish and Persian and stretched from Spain to India, that share the common backdrop of an urban and educated milieu in which they were produced, widely read and circulated. The course aims at exploring the literary cultures in their historical and social context. Possible themes include court literature, politics, Sufi literature, history, theology and literature of romance. All readings are in English.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD Arch: HUM Art: HUM EN: H

L49 Arab 352 Iraqi Literature
This course introduces students to major works in Iraqi literature in the 20th and 21st centuries, with a focus on the post-World War Two period up to the present day.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM BU: IS EN: H

L49 Arab 396 Islamic Philosophy, Mysticism, and Theology
How does an individual achieve access to knowledge and access to God? To what extent is such access dependent upon scripture? To what extent is such access dependent upon reason? Are there forms of truth and experience that only reveal themselves through mysticism? Questions of this sort are central to the interrelated disciplines of Islamic philosophy, Islamic theology, and Islamic mysticism (i.e., Sufism). This course examines how these three disciplines have shaped various aspects of social life within premodern Muslim communities.
Credit 3 units.

L49 Arab 4001 Capstone Seminar
The capstone course for Jewish, Islamic, and Middle Eastern Studies majors, Arabic majors, and Hebrew majors. The course content is subject to change.
Same as L75 JIMES 4001
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM BU: ETH EN: H

L49 Arab 4041 Islam and Politics
Blending history and ethnography, this course covers politics in the Islamic world in historical and contemporary times. Topics include history of Islam, uniformity and diversity in belief and practice (global patterns, local realities), revolution and social change, women and veiling, and the international dimensions of resurgent Islam. Geographical focus extends from Morocco to Indonesia; discussion of other Muslim communities is included (Bosnia, Chechnya, sub-Saharan Africa, U.S.).
Same as L49 Anthro 4041
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: LCD, SSC Arch: SSC BU: IS

L49 Arab 4050 Diaspora in Jewish and Islamic Experience
Tensions between center and periphery, migration and rest; power and powerlessness; and exile, home, and return are easily found in the historical record of both Jews and Muslims. For Muslims, it can be said that it was the very success of Islam as a world culture and the establishment of Muslim societies in all corners of the globe that lay at the root of this unease. However, the disruptions of the post-colonial era, the emergence of minority Muslim communities in Europe
and North America, and the recent tragic flow of refugees following
the Arab Spring have created a heightened sense of displacement
and yearning for many. Of course, the very term “diaspora” -- from
the ancient Greek, meaning “dispersion” or “scattering” -- has most
often been used to describe the Jewish condition in the world.
The themes of exile and return and of catastrophe and redemption are
already woven into the Hebrew Bible, and they continued to be central
motifs in Rabbinic Judaism in late antiquity and the Middle Ages. This
occurred despite the fact that more Jews lived outside the borders of
Judea than within the country many years before the destruction of
Jewish sovereignty at the hands of the Romans. In the 20th century,
European imperialism, nationalism of various types, revolution, and
war -- including the Israeli-Palestinian conflict -- have done much
to underscore the continuing dilemmas of diaspora and home in
both Jewish and Islamic identity. The goal of this course is to offer
a comparative historical perspective on the themes of migration and
displacement, center and periphery, home and residence, and exile
and return and to give students the opportunity to examine in depth
some aspect of the experience of diaspora. Note: This course fulfills
the capstone requirement for Jewish, Islamic, and Middle Eastern Studies.
The course also counts as an Advanced Seminar for history. (Students
wishing to receive history Advanced Seminar credit should also enroll
in L22 491R section 19 for 1 unit.) The course is open to advanced
undergraduate and graduate students.

Same as L75 JIMES 405
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM Arch: HUM Arch: HUM: H

L49 Arab 4060 Convivencia or Reconquista? Muslims, Jews, and
Christians in Medieval Iberia
This seminar will explore various facets of the coexistence (convivencia)
of Muslims, Jews, and Christians in medieval Spain. Its horizon
stretches from the Muslim conquest of Iberia (al-Andalus) up to the
turn of the 16th century when Spanish Jews and Muslims were equally
faced with the choice between exile and conversion to Christianity.
Until about 1100, Muslims dominated most of the Iberian Peninsula;
from then onward, Christians ruled much and eventually all of what
would become modern Spain and Portugal. Through a process known
as reconquista (reconquest), Catholic kingdoms acquired large Muslim
enclaves. As borders moved, Jewish communities found themselves
under varying Muslim or Christian dominion. Interactions between the
three religious communities occurred throughout, some characterized
by shared creativity and mutual respect, others by rivalry and strife.
The course focuses on these cultural encounters, placing them in
various historical contexts. It will explore the ambiguities of religious
conversion, and the interplay of persecution and toleration. Last
not least, the course will address the question of how the memory of
medieval Spain’s diversity reverberates-and is utilized-in modern
popular and academic discourse. All sources will be read in English
translation; however, students are encouraged to make use of their
linguistic and cultural expertise acquired in previous classes. This
course serves as the capstone seminar for Jewish, Islamic & Near
Eastern Studies majors, Arabic majors, and Hebrew majors. Graduate
students, minors, and other interested undergrads are likewise
welcome.

Same as L75 JIMES 4060
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD Arch: HUM Arch: HUM BU: ETH, IS EN: H

L49 Arab 408 Fourth-Level Arabic: Classical Literature
This course provides an overview of pre-modern Arabic-Islamic thought
(i.e., Islamicate intellectual traditions expressed in the Arabic language).
Topics to be covered include pre-Islamic poetry, the Quran, hadith,
Islamic law, Sufism, philosophy, natural science, and social thought.
Students will be introduced to these topics through the focused reading
and discussion of classical Arabic texts by key thinkers like al-abari, Ibn
In addition to reading classical Arabic texts, students will be given
select exercises designed to strengthen their grammar, expand their
vocabulary, and build their translation. Prerequisite: Grade of B- or
better in L49 308D or L49 308S or placement by examination.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: LCD, LS Arch: HUM Arch: HUM BU: HUM EN: H

L49 Arab 465 Topics in Arabic
This course is an in-depth study of a particular segment of Arabic
literature and/or culture.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD Arch: HUM Arch: HUM EN: H

L49 Arab 4675 Beyond the Harem: Women, Gender, and
Revolution
This course examines the history and current situations of women
in Middle Eastern societies. The first half of the course is devoted to
studying historical changes in factors structuring women’s status and
their sociopolitical roles. The second half of the course will focus on
several case studies of women’s participation in broad anticolonial
social revolutions and how these revolutions affected the position of
women in those societies.
Same as L22 History 4675
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD BU: BA, HUM: H

L49 Arab 470 Topics in Classical Arabic Literature in Translation
Various themes in Arabic religious literature and Belles-Lettres (Adab),
e.g., the intertwining of religion and politics, court culture and fashions,
social critiques, gender roles, etc., are read in English.
Credit 3 units. Arch: HUM Arch: HUM BU: ETH

L49 Arab 471 Topics in Modern Arabic Literature in Translation
Modern Arabic narratives read in English translation foregrounding
themes such as the conflict between tradition and modernity, civil war,
poverty, alienation, religion and politics, and changing gender roles.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD Arch: HUM Arch: HUM BU: ETH EN: H

L49 Arab 488 Independent Work for Senior Honors
This course to be taken in the fall semester. Prerequisites: senior
standing, eligibility for honors, and permission of the department.
Credit 3 units.

L49 Arab 489 Independent Work for Senior Honors
This course to be taken in the spring semester. Prerequisite: senior
standing, eligibility for honors, and permission of the department.
Credit 3 units.

L49 Arab 497 Guided Readings in Arabic
Prerequisites: senior standing and permission of instructor and
department chair.
Credit variable, maximum 5 units.

L49 Arab 498 Guided Readings in Arabic
Prerequisites: senior standing and permission of the instructor and
the department chair.
Credit 3 units.