MIDDLE EAST AND ISLAMIC STUDIES, MA

Banner Code: LA-MA-MEIS

Academic Advising
D215 Buchanan Hall
Fairfax Campus

Email: mes@gmu.edu
Website: meis.gmu.edu/programs/la-ma-meis

The MA in Middle East and Islamic Studies introduces students to the major methodological and theoretical issues and debates in the study of the Islamic tradition and of Middle Eastern societies. The program situates the study of the Middle East and Islam within a globalized world. The curriculum covers topics of recent scholarly significance including political Islam, the political economy of business-government networks, the relationship between “resource wars” and the “war on terrorism,” new diasporas and transnational Muslim communities in the “West,” and the changed geopolitical environments of Muslim and Middle Eastern countries. The degree prepares students for a variety of post-graduate opportunities in academia, government, and an expanding job market for people with this expertise.

Admissions & Policies

Admissions
Applicants to all graduate programs at George Mason University must meet the admission standards and application requirements for graduate study as specified in Graduate Admissions. For specific information, see Application Requirements and Deadlines (https://meis.gmu.edu/programs/la-ma-meis/application) on the departmental website.

Policies
For policies governing all graduate degrees, see AP.6 Graduate Policies.

Requirements

Degree Requirements
Total credits: 30

Core Courses
Code | Title | Credits
--- | --- | ---
MEIS 500 | Critical Issues and Debates in Middle East and Islamic Studies | 3
HIST 575 | Approaches to Middle East and Islamic History | 3
RELI 644 | Islamic Texts and Contexts | 3
GOVT 632 | Politics and Societies of the Middle East | 3
Select one methods course from the following: | | 3
ANTH 650 | Methods in Anthropology | 
GLOA 605 | Interdisciplinary Research Methods | 
GOVT 500 | The Scientific Method and Research Design | 
HIST 610 | The Study and Writing of History | 

Electives
In addition to the following list, electives may include special topics courses when relevant, directed readings and research, study abroad courses, internships, and other courses with the approval of the program director. Students who choose to complete a research project or write a thesis take 3 or 6 fewer elective credits.

Code | Title | Credits
--- | --- | ---
Select five electives from the following: | | 15
ANTH 635 | Regional Ethnography (when topic is Middle East and North Africa) | 
ARTH 599 | Special Topics in Art History and the Decorative Arts (when topic is Middle Eastern or Islamic art) | 
ARTH 699 | Topics in Art History (when topic is Middle East or Islamic art) | 
CONF 653 | World Religions, Diplomacy, and Conflict Resolution | 
CONF 722 | Conflict and Religion | 
ENGH 591 | Topics in Folklore Studies | 
ENGH 665 | Seminar in Global Culture (when topic is Middle East or Muslim world) | 
FREN 553 | Topics in North African Francophone Literature and Culture | 
FRLN 550 | Special Topics (when topic is a language of the Middle East or Muslim world) | 
FRLN 551 | Special Topics (when topic is a language of the Middle East or Muslim world) | 
GGS 533 | Issues in Regional Geography (when topic is Middle East) | 
GOVT 731 | Advanced Seminar in Comparative Politics (when topic is the Middle East or a Muslim world region) | 
GOVT 733 | Islam and Politics | 
HIST 535 | Problems in Comparative World History | 
HIST 585 | Problems in Middle Eastern History | 
MEIS 794 | Graduate Internship in Middle East and Islamic Studies | 

Language Proficiency
Prior to graduating, students must demonstrate professional competency in one of five major languages of the Middle East and Muslim world: Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Hebrew, or Urdu.

A waiver for this requirement may be received either through 1) documentation verifying primary language of instruction at either the high school or university level in respective foreign language; transcripts showing coursework at the advanced level in respective foreign language or 2) an examination with an appropriate faculty/examiner designated by the director in consultation with the program’s steering committee.
### Optional Research Project or Thesis

**Research Project**

Students choosing to complete a research project take one of the following courses, and one less elective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MEIS 798</td>
<td>Directed Readings in Middle East and Islamic Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>MEIS 599</td>
<td>Issues in Middle East and Islamic Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELI 591</td>
<td>Special Topics in Religious Studies (when topic is Islam or Muslim communities)</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELI 645</td>
<td>Muslim Comparative Theologies: Sunni-Shi’i Religious Thought</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELI 646</td>
<td>Islam and Human Rights</td>
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<td>RELI 660</td>
<td>Islamic Biomedical Ethics</td>
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**Total Credits** 15

**Thesis**

Students who choose to write a thesis should be aware of the policies governing theses as stated in AP.6.9.3 Master’s Thesis. They must follow the thesis enrollment policy of the university and once enrolled in MEIS 799 Thesis Research and Writing in Middle East and Islamic Studies, maintain continuous enrollment.

Students choosing to complete a thesis take 6 fewer credits of electives.

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**Total Credits** 6

As graduate students, accelerated master’s students have an advanced standing. They must meet all master’s degree requirements except for the two courses (6 credits) they completed as undergraduates. Students must begin their master’s program the semester immediately following conferral of the undergraduate degree.

### Reserve Graduate Credit

Students may take up to 6 additional graduate credits as reserve graduate credit. These credits do not apply to the undergraduate degree. To apply these credits to the master’s degree, students should use the Bachelor’s/Accelerated Master’s Transition Form.

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<td>GOVT 731</td>
<td>Advanced Seminar in Comparative Politics (when content focus is the Middle East)</td>
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**Total Credits** 6

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**Accelerated Option Requirements**

While undergraduate students, accelerated master’s students complete two graduate courses as indicated on their Accelerated Master’s Program Application with a minimum grade of 3.00 in each course. Once admitted to the accelerated master’s pathway, students must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.25 in all course work. Upon completion and conferral of the undergraduate degree in the semester indicated in the application, they submit the Bachelor’s/Accelerated Master’s Transition Form and are admitted to graduate status.

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**Accelerated Master’s**

### Bachelor’s Degree (any)/Middle East and Islamic Studies, Accelerated MA

**Overview**

Highly-qualified undergraduates pursuing a BA may apply to the accelerated master’s degree in Middle East and Islamic studies. If accepted, and depending on their undergraduate major, students will be able to earn a bachelor’s degree in their chosen major and a master’s degree in Middle East and Islamic studies after satisfactory completion of 144 credits, sometimes within five years. See AP.6.7 Bachelor’s/Accelerated Master’s Degrees.
The ability to take courses, including ones not listed above, for reserve graduate credit is available to all high achieving undergraduates with the permission of the department. Permission is normally granted only to qualified Mason seniors within 15 hours of graduation. Permission is normally granted only to qualified Mason seniors within 15 hours of graduation. See AP1.4.4 Graduate Course Enrollment by Undergraduates.