

CENTER FOR MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES

Director

- Alireza Doostdar

Deputy Director for Academic Programs

- Paul E. Walker

Associate Director

- Thomas E.R. Maguire

The Middle Eastern Studies faculty are listed at <http://cmes.uchicago.edu/>.

The Center for Middle Eastern Studies offers an interdisciplinary Master of Arts program designed for students who wish to use their knowledge of the Middle East in careers other than university teaching and research. The program is also suitable for students considering an academic career who have not had the appropriate academic background for direct entrance into a doctoral program. Language and area studies preparation may be supplemented by relevant course work in a professional school or department. Students with significant previous training in Middle Eastern or Islamic studies who wish to earn a doctoral degree leading to careers in research and college or university teaching should apply for admission directly to one of the graduate doctoral departments or committees of the University.

There are two tracks—modern and ancient—for the MA program in Middle Eastern Studies. The modern program covers the time period from the rise of Islam until the present. The ancient track, offered in collaboration with the faculty of the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, focuses on the cultures and languages of the ancient Near East. The application process, degree requirements, and the rules and conditions for financial aid are similar for both programs.

ADMISSION

Applicants for the Master of Arts in Middle Eastern Studies are expected to meet the graduate admission requirements of the University and of the division to which they apply. In addition, applicants to the Middle Eastern Studies program must submit an academic writing sample. Foreign students must provide evidence of English proficiency by submitting scores from either the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS).

Students must enter the program in the autumn quarter. Although the program is designed for full time students, applications from those who can attend only on a part time basis will be considered.

HOW TO APPLY

The application process for admission and financial aid for all graduate programs is administered through the divisional Office of the Dean of Students. The Application for Admission and Financial Aid, with instructions, deadlines and department specific information is available online (<http://humanities.uchicago.edu/students/admissions/apply-now/>).

Questions pertaining to admissions and aid should be directed to humanitiesadmissions@uchicago.edu.

JOINT PROGRAM IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION AND MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES

Benefiting from the combined strengths of the Center and the University of Chicago Booth School of Business (<https://www.chicagobooth.edu/>) -- one of the finest business schools in the country -- this three-year program helps students gain a firm grasp of the languages, history, and social institutions of the Middle East while acquiring the basic skills for careers in international business. To apply for the joint M.A. in Middle Eastern Studies/Masters in Business Administration, please click here (<http://www.chicagobooth.edu/programs/full-time/admissions/>).

JOINT PROGRAM IN PUBLIC POLICY AND MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES

This dual degree program addresses the needs of students wishing to acquire a solid background in modern Middle Eastern languages, history, and civilization while developing their abilities in policy analysis in preparation for professional careers in scholarly, educational, governmental, non-governmental, and business environments in the United States and abroad. This program requires approximately 5 quarters of study in the Center for Middle Eastern Studies and 4 quarters of study in the Harris School of Public Policy (<http://harris.uchicago.edu/admissions-and-aid/>). Applicants for the joint program must apply to both the Harris School (<https://harris.uchicago.edu/>) and the Division of the Social Sciences (<https://socialsciences.uchicago.edu/admissions/>) separately.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The requirements of satisfactory completion are:

- Six quarters of a Middle Eastern (ancient or modern) language;
- One quarter core colloquium: Approaches to the Study of the Middle East, or Approaches to the Study of the Ancient Near East;
- For the modern track, three quarters of an approved integrated Middle Eastern survey course; for the ancient track, three survey courses in the History, Archaeology and Cultures of the Ancient Near East (see below under “Core Courses”);
- Seven courses in relevant electives;
- A master’s thesis.

Only courses taken for a quality grade count toward fulfilling the requirements. No P or R grades will be accepted.

Elective courses may concentrate on one area or explore several of the fields of ancient or modern Middle Eastern studies such as, for example, Archaeology, Cuneiform Studies, Egyptology, Semitic linguistics, Arabic, Persian or Turkish literature, as well as related disciplines such as Art History, Anthropology, Classics, History, Linguistics, Political Science and Sociology.

LANGUAGE

Placement interviews will be given so that entering students may register for courses at the appropriate level of instruction. The languages offered include: Akkadian, Arabic, Armenian, Egyptian (Ancient), Hebrew (classical and modern), Hittite, Persian, Sumerian, Turkish, and Uzbek.

CORE COURSES

For the modern track MA, all students are required to take the core colloquium Approaches to the Study of Middle East (CMES 30001). Students must enroll in the following three quarter sequence: Islamicate Civilization I: 600-950 (NEHC 30201/HIST 35621), Islamicate Civilization II: 950-1750 (NEHC 30202/HIST 35622), and Islamicate Civilization III: 1750-Present (NEHC 30203/HIST 35623). For the ancient track MA, students are required to take the core colloquium Approaches to the Study of the Ancient Near East and must enroll in at least three survey courses in the History, Archaeology and Cultures of the Ancient Near East, covering at least three different geographic areas (Egypt and Nubia; Mesopotamia; Anatolia; the Levant; Iran; etc.). Relevant courses are listed on the website of the department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations (<https://nelc.uchicago.edu/courses/>) at the beginning of each academic year. These courses should be chosen in consultation with the Graduate Advisor for the CMES Ancient Track MA.

COURSES

Consult in the Announcements and the quarterly Time Schedules the listings of the Departments of Art History, Anthropology, English Language & Literature, History, Music, Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations, Political Science, Sociology, South Asian Languages & Civilizations, and the Committee on Geographical Studies.

MASTER’S THESIS

Students are required to submit a master’s thesis that should deal with a problem relevant to the student’s intended career and should give evidence of the specialized disciplinary aspects of his or her training. The student’s program adviser and a faculty member with special interest in the subject of the paper will guide the research and writing of the paper and judge whether it exhibits proof of competence in the field. During the writing of the paper, the student may register for a thesis preparation or reading and research course. The thesis title will be listed on the student’s transcript.

