

# MIDDLE EASTERN LANGUAGES & CULTURES: MIDDLE EASTERN LITERATURES & SOCIETIES, PHD

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Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures (MELC). MELC's PhD program in Middle Eastern Literatures and Societies offers advanced study of the languages, literatures and societies of Islamic civilizations, and also Islamic history and thought in their Middle Eastern context, in modern and pre-modern settings.

Students in the Middle Eastern Literatures and Societies program are expected to command Arabic or Persian as a primary research language and another (usually Arabic, Persian, Turkish, or Hebrew) as a secondary research language, as well as the general history and culture of the region. The specific distribution of courses varies by a student's interests and specialization. Students are expected to work out the broad outlines of their programs in consultation with their faculty advisor when they begin their studies.

View the department's PhD general procedures ([https://www.sas.upenn.edu/nelc/grad\\_programs/phdProcedures.html](https://www.sas.upenn.edu/nelc/grad_programs/phdProcedures.html)).

**For more information:** <https://nelc.sas.upenn.edu/middle-eastern-literatures-societies> (<https://nelc.sas.upenn.edu/middle-eastern-literatures-societies/>)

## Curriculum

A total of 20 course units is required for graduation.

### Coursework

- Four courses in Arabic or Persian language beyond the Advanced Intermediate level
- Two course units in the secondary research language
- Four courses in Islamics (history & religion)
- Two courses in Arabic or Persian literature
- Three courses in Arabic or Persian literature and Islamics (history or thought) at the 6000 level or above
- Two course units at the second-year/Intermediate level in the minor language
- Three elective courses to be chosen in conjunction with the major advisor

### Other Program Milestones

In addition to the above-described required coursework, PhD students are responsible for two (2) European language reading exams, candidacy exams, and qualifying exams before preparing a dissertation proposal.

## Secondary Field in Middle Eastern Literatures and Societies

PhD students from other programs who wish to take a secondary field in Middle Eastern Literatures and Societies must demonstrate a thorough

knowledge of modern standard Arabic or modern Persian equivalent to proficiency at the Advanced Intermediate level.

During Candidacy Exams, students taking a secondary field will be examined in two subjects:

1. Arabic or Persian language and literature (history and criticism, based on sources in European languages)
2. Islamics: the history of the Middle East in the Islamic era, and the institutions of Islam

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The degree and major requirements displayed are intended as a guide for students entering in the Fall of 2024 and later. Students should consult with their academic program regarding final certifications and requirements for graduation.

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