

MIDDLE EASTERN LANGUAGES & CULTURES: CULTURES AND SOCIETIES OF THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA, BA

Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures (MELC). MELC's Cultures and Societies of the Middle East and North Africa is an interdisciplinary major which allows students to explore broadly the cultures, societies, religions, and literary and visual traditions of the greater Middle East. The geographical scope of this major includes: Arabia, the Levant, Mesopotamia, Iran and the Persianate world, Egypt and the Nile Valley, North Africa (including the Maghreb), and Asia Minor (including present-day Turkey). This major encourages students to develop an understanding of deep continuities through time, and close connections among the cultures of the region and adjacent areas. The major also promotes the humanistic study of Middle Eastern societies across ancient, medieval and modern periods – something that no other majors currently do – while exposing students to the current methodologies and breadth of scholarship in Middle Eastern studies at Penn.

Because this concentration does not include language coursework, and does not contribute towards the University's Language Requirement, the major consists of 12 CU. Students pursuing this major must complete the department's foundational courses: MELC 0001 (Introduction to the Ancient Middle East) and MELC 0002 (Introduction to the Middle East). Additionally, students must complete a breadth requirement consisting of one introductory to intermediate course in each of the following areas: the Ancient Middle East; Hebrew and Judaic Studies; Societies and Cultures of the Islamic World; and the Modern Middle East. To gain grounding in methodology two credits must cover literary or visual cultures and methodologies used to study them (such as MELC 0102, Reading Ancient Mesopotamia, or MELC 0700, Iranian Cinema: Gender, Politics, Religion). The remaining electives (3 CU) should consist of intermediate to advanced coursework in the student's area of primary interest. To develop experience in researching and writing substantial analytical essays, during their senior year, students must complete a concentration paper within a MELC class in consultation with their Major Advisor.

Curriculum

Code	Title	Course Units
College General Education Requirements and Free Electives		
Foundational Approaches + Sectors ¹ + Free Electives		20
Major Requirements		
<i>Core Requirement</i>		
MELC 0001	Introduction to the Ancient Middle East	1
MELC 0002	Introduction to the Middle East	1
<i>Visual and Literary Cultures</i>		
Select 2 CU in Visual and Literary Cultures		
<i>Breadth</i>		
1 CU in Ancient Middle East		1
MELC 0003	Origin and Culture of Cities	

MELC 0004	Myths and Religions of the Ancient World	
MELC 0050	Ancient Civilizations of the World	
MELC 0100	Archaeology & The Bible	
MELC 0102	Reading Ancient Mesopotamia	
MELC 0200	Land of the Pharaohs	
MELC 0205	Literary Legacy of Ancient Egypt	
MELC 0210	Art and Architecture in Ancient Egypt	
MELC 0215	The Religion of Ancient Egypt	
MELC 0225	The World of Cleopatra	
MELC 0905	Water in the Middle East Throughout History	
MELC 1000	Iraq: Ancient Cities and Empires	
MELC 1010	History and Society of Early Mesopotamia	
MELC 1100	History of Ancient Egypt	
MELC 2040	Ancient Iranian Empires	
1 CU in Hebrew and Judaic Studies		1
MELC 0305	Great Books of Judaism	
MELC 0325	Jewish Mysticism	
MELC 0330	Themes Jewish Tradition	
MELC 0335	Jewish Humor	
MELC 1300	Jewish Folklore	
MELC 1310	Introduction to Modern Hebrew Literature	
MELC 1325	Jews and Christians	
MELC 1400	The Making of Scripture	
MELC 3300	Jewish Magic	
HEBR 4000	Rabbinic Writers on Rabbinic Culture	
MELC 4305	Spirit and Law	
1 CU in Societies and Cultures of the Islamic World		1
MELC 0050	Ancient Civilizations of the World	
MELC 0400	Getting Crusaded	
MELC 0500	Introduction to the Qur'an	
MELC 0510	Muhammad and Society	
MELC 1001	The Arabian Nights	
MELC 3400	Age of Caliphs, 600-1100	
MELC 3410	Age of Sultans 1100-1500	
MELC 4505	Islamic Intellectual Tradition	
1 CU in Modern Middle East		1
MELC 0600	The Middle East through Many Lenses	
MELC 0620	Food in the Islamic Middle East: History, Memory, Identity	
MELC 1600	North Africa: History, Culture, Society	
MELC 1605	Muslims, Christians, and Jews in the Middle East: Historical Perspectives	
MELC 1610	Nationalism and Communal Identity in the Middle East	
MELC 1615	Migration and the Middle East	
MELC 1620	Middle Eastern Jews in Israel	
MELC 2900	Who Owns the Past? Archaeology and Politics in the Middle East	
Methods in Literary and Visual Cultures		2
MELC 0102	Reading Ancient Mesopotamia	
MELC 0205	Literary Legacy of Ancient Egypt	
MELC 0300	Introduction to the Bible	

MELC 0305	Great Books of Judaism	
MELC 0610	Modern Middle Eastern Literature in Translation	
MELC 0615	Modern Arabic Literature	
MELC 0700	Iranian Cinema: Gender, Politics and Religion	
MELC 1200	The Bible in Translation	
MELC 1310	Introduction to Modern Hebrew Literature	
MELC 1310	Introduction to Modern Hebrew Literature	
MELC 1700	Introduction to Persian Poetic Tradition	
MELC 1700	Introduction to Persian Poetic Tradition	
MELC 2705	Media and Culture in Contemporary Iran	
HEBR 4000	Rabbinic Writers on Rabbinic Culture	
<i>Advanced Electives</i>		
Select 3 CU chosen in consultation with advisor		3
<i>Senior Concentration Paper Course</i>		
Select 1 CU in consultation with advisor		1
Total Course Units		32

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.
