Program Approval Form

For approval of new programs and deletions or modifications to an existing program.

More information is located on page 2.

Action Requested:
- [X] Create New (SCHEV form required except for minors and certificates)
- Delete Existing
- Modify Existing (check all that apply)
- Title (requires SCHEV approval except for minors, certificates)
- Concentration (Add/Modify)
- Degree Requirements
- Other Changes:

Program Type: (check one)
- [ ] B.A.
- [ ] B.S.
- [ ] Minor
- [ ] Undergraduate Certificate
- [X] M.A.
- [ ] M.S.
- [ ] Ph.D.
- [ ] Graduate Certificate
- [ ] Other:

College/School: College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Department: Islamic Studies Program and Middle East Studies Program
Submitted by: Bassam Haddad
Email: bhaddad@gmu.edu
Cemil Aydin
Email: caydin@gmu.edu
Ext:
Effective Term: Fall 2011

Please note: For students to start a new degree, minor, certificate or concentration, the program must be fully approved, entered into Banner, and published in the University Catalog.

Attached

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Title:</th>
<th>Existing</th>
<th>New/Modified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Masters of Arts in Middle East and Islamic Studies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concentration Title(s):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Admissions Standards / Application Requirements: (Required only if different from those listed in the University Catalog)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>See attached.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree Requirements: (Consult University Catalog for models, attach separate document if necessary using track changes for modifications)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>See attached.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOTAL CREDITS REQUIRED:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30 credits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Approval Signatures

Department | Date | College/School | Date |
---|---|---|---|
If this program may impact another unit or is in collaboration with another unit at Mason, the originating department must circulate this proposal for review by those units and obtain the necessary signatures prior to submission. Failure to do so will delay action on this proposal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit Name</th>
<th>Unit Approval Name</th>
<th>Unit Approver's Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

For Graduate Programs Only

Graduate Council Member | Provost Office | Graduate Council Approval Date
Overview

The Middle East Studies Program and the Islamic Studies Program in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences propose a new master of arts degree in Middle East and Islamic studies. This is an interdisciplinary graduate degree that will prepare students for a variety of post-graduate opportunities in academia, government, and an expanding job market for people with this expertise. The MA in Middle East and Islamic studies should be attractive to a broad range of prospective students given its comparative advantages in terms of curriculum, faculty expertise, and regional resources.

The degree will introduce students to the study of classical and contemporary topics from both regional and global perspectives. It will not simply replicate existing programs, however. In addition to offering a solid foundation in core areas that relate to the study of the Middle East and Islam, the curriculum will go beyond traditional approaches by emphasizing the interdisciplinary nature of these fields and by situating the study of the Middle East and Islam within a globalized world. While the MA program introduces students to the major methodological and theoretical issues and debates in the study of the Islamic tradition and Middle Eastern societies, it will also cover topics that have only recently acquired scholarly significance including the new media, 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 on-campus courses will be enhanced through internships and study abroad experiences, giving graduates both analytical and practical skills. Graduates of this degree program will be well prepared for doctoral programs or careers in the diverse and growing fields of Middle East and Islamic studies.

Curriculum

Students in this program will complete 30 credits -- 15 in core courses and 15 in electives. Electives include study abroad courses, internships, and a master’s thesis.

Students need to demonstrate language proficiency in a Middle Eastern or Islamicate language (Arabic, Persian, Hebrew, Turkish). The standards of proficiency will be determined by the MA Curriculum Committee of the degree program in consultation with the Department of Modern and Classical Languages.

See attachment.
Justification and Jobs

Nationally and internationally, interest in Islam and Muslims and in the Middle East as a region have grown immensely since 2001. There are no signs that this trend is subsiding. Rather, there is a continuous and growing demand from governmental and non-governmental organizations for people with expertise in these fields. The employment rate of graduates from similar programs is accordingly very strong. In the past 6 years, the number of advertised new teaching positions which specify expertise in these specialties has also increased significantly. These are strong signs that graduates with this training are in high demand.

Student Demand

There is evidence of a strong student demand for this area. There are two related MA programs in the Washington D.C., area -- Arab studies and Arabic at Georgetown University and Middle East studies at George Washington University. These programs receive annually on average 400 to 500 applications, but have room for only a small percentage of those applicants each year. This leaves many qualified students without a degree program. Because many applicants have professional attachments to the greater Washington metropolitan area, moving to another location is not an option. Because of the growing interest in and importance of the Middle East and Islamic studies, there will be demand for a graduate level education in this region for the foreseeable future.

George Mason University could easily absorb this demand from local applicants and simultaneously attract some top applicants nationally and internationally. The strength of the Mason faculty and resources, combined with its competitive tuition, make this proposed program an extremely attractive option for students interested in either Middle East regional studies or Islamic studies.

Uniqueness

There is no comparable program in the Commonwealth of Virginia. In the Washington metropolitan area there are two related programs-- the Arab studies and Arabic language and literature program at Georgetown and the Middle East program at George Washington University. The focus of these degrees is different from the focus in this proposed program, which covers both the regional issues of Middle East (as George Washington) and the global study of Islam (which neither institution addresses in the same in depth way). As private institutions, they also have high tuition rates that make them inaccessible to many qualified potential applicants. Johns Hopkins University has a related MA program on the books, but it is inactive. None of the area universities offers an MA with a focus in Islamic studies.

The proposed MA program in Middle East and Islamic studies will not only set George Mason apart from other programs in the Commonwealth, it will also put Mason on a competitive footing with a number of major national universities. The requirements for successful completion of this program will make graduates competitive in the private,
public, and non-profit job markets. The creation of the program would require a relatively low investment from the institution and can entirely be accomplished with the existing faculty. Most of the courses currently exist or have been offered as special topics courses.

Supporting Middle East and Islamic Studies Faculty by Discipline

Amal Amireh  English
Cemil Aydin  History
Shaul Bakhash  History
Rebecca Bryant  Anthropology
Lawrence Butler  Art History
Marc Gopin  Conflict Resolution
Bassam Haddad  Political Science
Sumaiya Hamdani  History
Juliane Hammer  Religious Studies
Mark Katz  Political Science
Yehuda Lukacs  Political Science
Peter Mandaville  Political Science
Maria Massi-Dakake  Religious Studies
Eric McGlinchey  Political Science
Agnieszka Paczinska  Conflict Resolution
John Paden  Political Science
Omar Salawdeh  Arabic Language and Literature
Burl Self  Geography
MASTER OF ARTS IN MIDDLE EAST AND ISLAMIC STUDIES
CURRICULUM

Catalog Copy

The interdisciplinary 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 Middle Eastern societies. Students study classical and contemporary topics from both regional and global perspectives. The expressed goal of this program is to situate the study of the Middle East and Islam within a globalized world. Accordingly, the curriculum covers topics of recent scholarly significance including the new media, 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.

This interdisciplinary graduate degree prepares students for a variety of post-graduate opportunities in academia, government, and an expanding job market for people with this expertise.

Application Requirements

Applicants must meet admission standards and application requirements as specified in the Admission chapter of the catalog. Applicants to the master’s degree in Middle East and Islamic studies should submit satisfactory scores on the GRE, two letters of recommendation from professors with whom the applicant has studied or others directly familiar with the applicant’s professional competence and interests, and statement of interests and career goals including description of how they plan to meet the language proficiency requirement. The GRE requirement is waived for applicants who received their undergraduate degrees 10 or more years ago or hold another graduate degree.

Degree Requirements

Students pursuing this degree complete 30 graduate credits.

1. Five core courses (15 credits):

   - HIST 575 – Critical Issues and debates in Islamic and Middle East Studies
   - GOVT 739 – Political Islam
   - GOVT 739 – The Politics and Societies of the Middle East
   - RELI 591 – Approaches to the Study of Islam
   - HIST 751 – Research Seminar in Comparative World History: Islamic and Middle East Studies
2. Five elective courses (15 credits):

Students choose from courses below, special topics courses when relevant, directed readings and research, study abroad courses, and internships. Students who choose to write a thesis apply those credits to the elective requirement.

ANTH 635 – Regional Ethnography – Peoples and Cultures of the Middle East
CONF 749 - World Religions, Violence, and Conflict Resolution
ENGL 665 – Texts in Global Context: Representing Islam
ENGL 665 - Texts in Global Context: Arabic Women Writers
GOVT 530 – Comparative Politics
GOVT 731 – Advanced Seminar in Comparative Politics
GOVT 739 – Issues in Comparative and International Politics: Political Economy of the Middle East
HIST 535 – Problems in Comparative World History: Politics of Historical Memory
HIST 510 – Approaches to Modern World History: Comparative World Region Methodology
HIST 585 - Problems in Middle Eastern History: Revolution and State in Islam
HIST 585 - Problems in Middle Eastern History: Tourism and Travel in East and West
RELI 591 - Special Topics in Religious Studies: Muslims in the United States
RELI 591 - Special Topics in Religious Studies
RELI 632 – World Religions in Conflict and Dialog
RELI 635 – World Religions in Transition and Transformation

3. Thesis (3 or 6 credits) (Optional): HIST 799; GOVT 799

Students can elect to do a 3 or 6 credit thesis. Students who choose this option complete accordingly fewer electives.

The thesis course that students register for depends on the focus of the thesis and the expertise of the thesis advisor.

4. Language proficiency: Students need to demonstrate language proficiency in a Middle Eastern or Islamicate language (Arabic, Persian, Hebrew, Turkish). The standards of proficiency will be determined by the MA Curriculum Committee of the degree program in consultation with the Department of Modern and Classical Languages.