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Master of Arts in Middle East and Islamic Studies

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The Middle East

and the Islamic world are currently major actors on the international stage. The complex socio-political forms in the region have not homogenized with globalization, but have in fact increased in intricacy under the influence of the West. Far from having disappeared under the influence of westernization and globalization, new types of socio-political entities such as national, religious, ethnic, and cultural networks are developing.

Understanding these new redefined socio-political groups necessitates a thorough understanding of the rapidly changing states, people and religions of the Middle East. Such knowledge is imperative in order to ensure appropriate action and policy.

The Master of Arts in Middle East and Islamic Studies (MEIS) aims to train knowledgeable and analytical intellectuals committed to the understanding of and dialogue with the Middle East and Muslim world. The program cultivates scholars capable of synthesizing and conveying a finer knowledge of the region, allowing students to rise beyond the stereotypes and amalgams.

The program is distinctive through its pluralistic approach. Rigorous core lectures are complemented by discipline-based seminars, providing multiple political and ideological views. The subject matter is taught from different political and ideological perspectives by leading experts of the region. The MEIS equips students with the tools required to comprehend the continuously changing role of the Middle East and the Islamic world, as well as synthesize and develop their own solutions and convictions.

Learning Goals

- In the study and analysis of policy positions, ideas, events and conditions, Western-centred perceptions are considered as are those reflecting the view of Muslims and Middle Easterners.
- Students develop a balanced understanding of the religious, social, political and economic past and present of the Middle East and the Islamic world.
- Graduates will master facts and ideas pertaining to the Middle East and to Islam and will have the ability to critically interpret, analyse, synthesize and contextualize them.
- Two-year degree recipients will cultivate a greater understanding of the subject matter through learning a Middle Eastern language; Arabic, Farsi, Hebrew, Turkish.



Mark VanderVeen took a sabbatical leave from his position at the U.S. Department of State in order

to pursue the MA's two-year program option. Following his MA in Security Policy Studies at The George Washington University, Mark was hired by the U.S. government to work on issues pertaining to national security, including counter-terrorism. This work fed Mark's desire to "obtain a deeper understanding of a region critical to U.S. national security, and gain a richer perspective of a religion and ideology that many in the West are trying to better comprehend in the wake of terrorist attacks..." After obtaining his degree from AUP, Mark returned to his position with the U.S. government and is considering options for pursuing a Ph.D.



Carey Klutz earned her BA in French and Anthropology from the University of Virginia.

An interest in the history, religion, and culture of the Middle East combined with a desire to improve her linguistic skills brought her to AUP, where she graduated from the 2-year MA in Middle East and Islamic Studies program in 2009. Carey recently passed the U.S. government's Foreign Service exam and was awaiting her first assignment at the time of going to print.



Prior to beginning her studies at AUP, **Rebecca Anne Proctor** obtained an M.Litt in

Modern and Contemporary Art History from Christie's in London in 2006. She then obtained both an MA in Middle East and Islamic Studies and an MA in International Affairs at AUP. She is currently managing the Barakat Gallery of antiquities at its most recent venue at the Emirates Palace Hotel in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. There she oversees 5,000 museum-quality artifacts from an array of ancient cultures.

Highlighted courses

Methodology of viewing the Middle East and the Islamic World takes students behind the variety of political and cultural lenses through which the Middle East and the Muslim world are viewed. Our perception and understanding of the Middle East and the Muslim world is assessed, analyzed and processed through a historical filter of ideas produced by scholars, pundits, politicians and the media.

The History of the Middle East: 1800 to Present uses the Ottoman Empire of the late 1700s as a starting point for the study of the region's recent past. The course then focuses on the creation of the modern Middle East, partially resulting from the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. Particular attention is given to the political and historical transformations in Turkey, Iran, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia.

Islam: Religion and Law covers the history of Islam from its pre-history or the age of ignorance, *Jahiliyyah*, to the Prophethood of Muhammad, the Prophet's migration to Medina, his return to Mecca and his death. An overview of Islam as a belief and faith is provided, focusing on its principles, duties, rites and rituals. The development of Islamic law is examined through a study of the *Shari'ah*.

One-Year Program Option*

1 st Semester	2 nd Semester
4 core courses	3 core courses + research project
16 credits	16 credits

Two-Year Program Option*

1 st Semester	2 nd Semester	3 rd Semester	4 th Semester
4 core courses	4 core courses	1 core course + 1 intensive language course + Thesis	1 core course + 1 intensive language course + Thesis
16 credits	16 credits	16 credits	16 credits

* Enrollment is possible in fall and spring semesters.