Combination Path: Hebrew and Arabic

The Middle East has long been and continues to be at the centre of world affairs. Since FAMES' Middle Eastern Studies Hebrew degree is offered in a department dedicated to the broader study of the Middle East, students are afforded a unique language-intensive opportunity to study Hebrew and Arabic concurrently, with supplementary coursework on the wider history, culture, and politics of the Near East. Both classical and modern forms of the two languages may be studied. Familiarity with both languages and sensitivity to religious, cultural, and political differences make this combination immensely helpful in understanding the complexities, historical and current, that have characterised the Middle East for centuries. This is all made all the more real during a student's third year, which is spent abroad in both an Arabic-speaking country and Israel, and during which he/she gains fluency in Arabic and Hebrew, while also conducting research for the undergraduate dissertation. The 'Hebrew and Arabic Combination' track is, of course, excellent preparation for proceeding to more advanced studies in either language as well as in subjects related more broadly to the Middle East. This track also, however, provides both knowledge and practical skills essential in many jobs and volunteer work, both those dealing with the Middle East, i.e., foreign relations, conflict resolution, diplomacy, development, translation, journalism, non-profit and non-governmental organizations, and other sorts. There are myriad transferable skills that employers in all fields value in prospective employees, including assimilating and integrating information from a wide range of intellectual disciplines, some initially unfamiliar; working with, analyzing, interpreting and presenting data; appreciating the subtleties of communication in interpersonal interaction, especially in multicultural settings; and planning, designing and executing a piece of independent research. It should also be noted that, relative to the graduates of other universities and of other departments within the University of Cambridge, FAMES graduates consistently rank high in finding suitable employment in a variety of fields and/or being accepted into advanced degree courses after graduation.

Sample Course of Study

Year 1 (IA)

Required
Elementary Arabic A and B (MES.1 and MES.2)

and either

Elementary Hebrew Language A (Classical) (MES.4)

or

Elementary Hebrew Language B (Classical and Modern Hebrew Language and Modern Hebrew Literature) (MES.5)

any two of the following provided that one of them is either MES.6 or MES.7

Introduction to the History and Culture of Middle East (MES.6)

Contemporary Middle East (MES.7)

Akkadian Language I (X.1)
Year 2 (IB)

**Required**
Intermediate Arabic Language (MES.11)

Classical (Biblical) Hebrew Language and Literature (MES.13)

*and/or*

Modern Hebrew Language (MES.13)

**Additional courses (students must choose three additional papers), for example**
Intermediate Literary Arabic (MES.14)

Intermediate Literary Hebrew (MES.16)

Topics in Hebrew Studies (MES.18): any two of:
- Pre-modern Hebrew Literature (DSS, Rabbinic, Medieval)
- Modern Hebrew Literature (literary-film-history)
- Aramaic

*or any combination of three of the above and/or the following:*

Elementary Persian (MES.3); Formation of Islam (MES.17); The Formation of the Modern Middle East (MES.19); Structures and Meanings (X.3 Linguistics); Life, Thought and Worship of Modern Judaism (X.4 Divinity); Introduction to Islam (X.5 Divinity); Sounds and Words (X.8 Linguistics); Language, brain and society (X.13 Linguistics); The Jewish presence in medieval society (X.14); Cinema East (AMES.1).

**Year 3: Year Abroad**

Minimum four months in an Arabic-speaking country and minimum three months in Israel doing language learning and dissertation research.

**Year 4 (II)**

**Required**

Advanced Arabic Language (MES.31)

Classical Hebrew Language (MES.33)

*and/or*

Modern Hebrew Language (MES.33)

**Additional courses (students must choose two additional papers), for example**

Advanced Hebrew Literature/History of Hebrew (MES.36)
- Modern Hebrew Literature
- Pre-Modern Hebrew Literature
History of Hebrew

Comparative Semitics and/or Hebrew Vocalisation Traditions (MES.41)

or any combination of three of the above and/or the following:

Intermediate Persian Language (MES.12); History of the pre-modern Middle East: Iran under the Safavids (MES.37); History of the Modern Middle East: Language, National Identity, and Conflict (MES.38); Special Subject in the Pre-modern Middle East: Image and Text in Islamic Manuscripts (MES.39); Special Subject in the Contemporary Middle East (either MES.40A - Islamist Thought in the 20th-century Arab World or MES.40B - The Invention of Israel); Elementary Sanskrit (MES.42); Elementary Hindi Language (MES.43); Judaism II (X.9 Divinity); Islam II (X.10 Divinity); Judaism and Philosophy (X.11 Divinity); The Jewish Presence in Medieval Society (X.14 Divinity)

AND

Undergraduate dissertation