Combination Path: Hebrew and a Modern European Language

Thanks to links between FAMES and the Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages, students pursuing a degree in Middle Eastern Studies may combine Hebrew study with continued study of a Modern European Language—French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish (no prior knowledge of Hebrew is required, but students are required to be at post A Level or equivalent in the European language). Both classical and modern forms of Hebrew may be studied. Familiarity with Hebrew and a Modern European language offers the student a unique window into the history of Judaism, of Europe, of Israel, and of other places where the Jews of Europe have settled; into the rich cultures involved; and into the ongoing and complex links between Europe, Israel, and Jews worldwide. This is all made all the more real during a student's third year, which is spent abroad in the multi-ethnic and multicultural State of Israel, during which he/she gains fluency in Hebrew, while also conducting research for the undergraduate dissertation (with special permission it may also be possible to spend time in an appropriate country in which the target European language is spoken). The 'Hebrew and Modern European Language 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 Europe, Israel, and the Middle East. This track also, however, provides both knowledge and practical skills essential in many jobs and volunteer work, both those dealing with multicultural and international work, e.g., 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

either

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

or

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

and either

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

or
Contemporary Middle East (MES.7)

and both the MML B1 and B2 papers plus oral exam in one of the following languages

French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish

and one corresponding MML IA paper

Introduction to French literature, linguistics, film and thought (FR1); Introduction to German Studies (GE 1); (Italian) Text and Contexts (IT 1); Introduction to the languages, literatures and cultures of Portuguese speaking countries (PG 1); Introduction to Russian Culture (SL 1); Introduction to the languages, literatures and cultures of Spanish speaking countries (SP 1)

Year 2 (IB)

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

and/or

Modern Hebrew Language (MES.13)

Additional courses (students must choose four additional papers, at least one of which must be from MES.14–20, AMES.1, or a Regulation 8 paper and no more than one from X.3–5, 8, and 13), for example
the relevant B3 paper on the MML 1B schedule

the relevant non-asterisked paper(s) on MML 1B schedule

Intermediate Literary Hebrew (MES.16); Formation of Islam (MES.17); Topics in Hebrew Studies (MES.18); 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

The standard requirement is to spend eight months in an appropriate Middle Eastern country. In exceptional circumstances, and if there is a reason deemed sound by the Faculty Board, you may spend some of the eight months in country relevant to your MML language, but you must in any case spend a minimum of three months in Israel or a Persian-speaking country.

Year 4 (II)

Required
Classical Hebrew Language (MES.33)

and/or

Modern Hebrew Language (MES.33)
Additional courses (students must choose three additional papers), for example
the relevant C1 or C2 paper on the MML Part II schedule
the relevant MML Part II schedule paper(s)
and/or any combination of three of the above and/or the following:

Advanced Hebrew Literature/History of Hebrew (MES.36); 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); Comparative Semitics and/or Hebrew Vocalisation Traditions (MES.41); 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 in Asian and Middle Eastern Studies or Modern and Medieval Languages