Emphasis Path: Hebrew and Persian

While pursuing the Middle Eastern Studies degree in Hebrew at FAMES, a student may also study Persian language, literature, and culture. This not only gives the student an opportunity to appreciate the complexities of the modern Middle East and Middle Eastern history from two very important perspectives, but also affords him/her unique access into the world of Iranian Judaism, with its rich heritage that extends to the present day. Beginning in their second year of study, students enjoy great latitude in choosing classes. Their third year they spend abroad, minimum four months in a Persian-speaking country and minimum three months in Israel, gaining fluency in both languages and conducting research for their undergraduate dissertation. The 'Hebrew and Persian' emphasis track is excellent preparation for studying for more advanced degrees in Hebrew- and Persian-related subjects (such as Bible, Religious Studies, literature, history, political science, and Middle Eastern Studies), but it is also immensely useful as preparation for work in foreign relations, diplomacy, development, translation, and journalism, as well as for positions in non-profit and non-governmental organizations, experience which employers in all fields find attractive in prospective employees. 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 Persian Language (MES.3)

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)

Egyptian Language I (X.2)

Year 2 (IB)

Required
Intermediate Persian Language (MES.12)

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

or  

Modern Hebrew Language (MES.13)  

Additional courses (students must choose three additional papers), for example  
Special Topics in Hebrew Literature (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  
The Formation of the Modern Middle East (MES.19)—The Arab provinces in the Ottoman Empire, Iran, and Israel  

or any combination of four of the above and/or the following:  
Elementary Arabic Language (MES.1); Formation of Islam (MES.17); 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 4 months in Persian-speaking country and minimum 3 months in Israel doing language learning and dissertation research.  

Year 4 (II)  
Required  
Advanced Persian Language (MES.32)  

and either  

Classical Hebrew Language (MES.33)  

or  

Modern Hebrew Language (MES.33)  

Additional courses (students must choose two additional papers), for example  
History of the pre-modern Middle East: Iran under the Safavids (MES.37)  

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  

or any combination of three of the above and/or the following:
Intermediate Arabic Language (MES.11); Advanced Hebrew Literature/History of Hebrew (MES.36); 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); 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