

## Middle Eastern Studies course descriptions 2020-21

**Current students please note:** Course Outlines are available on the AMES intranet <http://intranet.ames.cam.ac.uk/faculty/students/mes-course-outlines/>

### Part IB (second year)

#### Descriptions

##### **MES.11 Intermediate Arabic Language (Mrs El-Keiy and Dr Khalil)**

###### Supplementary Regulation

The aim of this course is to consolidate students' understanding of Arabic grammar and expand their vocabulary so that they can confidently read a range of Arabic materials such as newspaper and magazine articles, and to develop their speaking and listening skills and their speaking in one particular dialect of Arabic.

###### Course Description

The course aims to develop students' knowledge of Arabic to a high intermediate level, giving them the capacity to read and listen to a variety of authentic texts in Modern Standard Arabic, as well as the speaking skills to discuss similar kinds of topics in Egyptian-based Educated Spoken Arabic. Students will also be introduced to other colloquials in preparation for going to different countries on the Year Abroad. The main textbook is *Al-Kitaab fii Ta'allum al-'Arabiyya Part 2*, 2nd edition. The classroom language is Egyptian Colloquial Arabic as far as possible, using English only where necessary, mainly in explaining grammar.

###### Lectures and Classes

Taught in Michaelmas, Lent and Easter

Total of 80 language classes and 20 supervisions

###### Form and Conduct

This paper will contain two sections: a three-hour written examination (70 marks) and an oral examination (30 marks). The written examination will contain one passage of Arabic on which candidates will be required to answer questions (20 marks); one passage of Arabic for translation into English (20 marks); one passage of English for translation into Arabic (15 marks); and one question requiring a piece of writing in Arabic (15 marks). All questions should be attempted.

The oral examination will contain three sections. All timings are approximate and all oral examinations are recorded.

(a) Listening comprehension: Candidates answer questions on a recorded passage, which may be taken from a variety of sources (10 marks).

(b) Liaison interpreting: Candidates act as an interpreter for two examiners, one speaking Arabic and one English (10 marks).

(c) Discussion: Candidates discuss a topic chosen in advance of the examination (10 marks). (b) and (c) together: 15 minutes.

##### **MES.12 Intermediate Persian Language (Dr Ghaffari)**

###### Supplementary Regulation

This paper consists of language work, building on the four major language skills of reading, listening, writing, and speaking. In addition, the students read a variety of texts in modern Persian as language exercises, for translation, and vocabulary build-up.

### Course Description

This course consists of language work, building on the four major language skills of reading, listening, writing and speaking with a focus on presentations, aural comprehension and writing. In addition, the students read a variety of texts in modern Persian as language exercises, for reading comprehension and reproduction, as well as vocabulary building.

### Form and Conduct

This paper will contain two sections: a three-hour written examination (70 marks) and an oral examination (30 marks).

The written examination will contain one passage of Persian on which candidates will be required to answer comprehension questions in Persian (20 marks); one passage of Persian for translation into English (15 marks); one passage of English for translation into Persian (15 marks) and one question requiring a piece of writing of approximately 200 words of Persian (20 marks). All questions should be attempted.

The oral examination will consist of three sections. All timings are approximate and all oral examinations are recorded.

(a) Liaison interpreting: Candidates act as an interpreter for two examiners; one speaking Persian, and one speaking English (10 marks, 10 minutes);

(b) Listening Comprehension: Candidates listen to a short passage in Persian on which questions will be answered (10 marks, 10 minutes);

(c) Presentation: Candidates prepare several presentations on previously agreed topics, of which they are asked to present one (10 marks, 10 minutes).

### **MES.13 Intermediate Hebrew Language (Dr Kantor)**

#### Supplementary Regulation

This paper enables students to deepen their knowledge of Hebrew. There will be two sections containing questions on classical Hebrew and Modern Hebrew respectively. Candidates taking the Modern Hebrew option will have an oral as part of their paper.

#### Course Description

This course enables students to improve their grasp of Hebrew and develop competence in the critical reading of Hebrew texts. There will be two sections, on Classical Hebrew and Modern Hebrew, respectively. Students choose one or both sections. Candidates taking the Modern Hebrew option will have an oral as part of their exam.

#### Lectures and Classes

Classical: 16 sessions per term for Michaelmas and Lent Terms; 8 sessions per term for Easter Term.

Modern: 16 sessions per term for Michaelmas and Lent Terms; 8 sessions per term for Easter Term.

Whether students opt for Classical, Modern or both sections, they are entitled to 8 supervisions per term during Michaelmas and Lent Terms and to 4 supervisions during Easter Term.

#### Form and Conduct

This paper will be divided into two sections, at least one of which must be answered.

Section A (Classical Hebrew) will contain four questions on Hebrew language (15 marks each) and two questions on specified texts (20 marks each).

Section B (Modern Hebrew) will contain two questions on Hebrew language (15 marks each) and two questions on specified texts (20 points each). Question 1: unseen Modern Hebrew passage for translation and linguistic analysis. Question 2: Composition in Modern Hebrew from a choice of three topics. Questions 3–4: questions on specified texts (20 marks each). The oral examination (30 marks total) will consist of (a) reading precision and comprehension test (7 marks); (b) listening comprehension test (8 marks); and (c) general oral ability test (15 marks). Candidates offering one section only must answer all questions.

Candidates studying both Classical Hebrew and Modern Hebrew must offer two language questions (15 marks each) and one specified text question (20 marks) from Section A and one language question (15 marks), one specified text question (20 marks), and the general oral ability component of the oral examination (15 marks) from Section B.

### **MES.14 Intermediate Literary Arabic (Professor Montgomery, Dr Miller, Dr Webster)**

#### Supplementary Regulation

This paper introduces students to a variety of Arabic literary texts to enhance their understanding of textual analysis and linguistic expression.

#### Course Description

This course provides an introduction to literary Arabic, both classical and modern, and including both poetry and prose. Specifically, it aims to introduce students to reading and translating literary Arabic, acquaint them with the basic grammatical structures of literary Arabic, and enhance their understanding of translation techniques. Through textual analysis, it will also provide them with an introduction to the history, study and analysis of Arabic literature, as well as with an overview of theoretical frameworks. Each week's readings will urge the student to consider what the definition of literature is in the said text and where it locates "the canon". Students will therefore be expected to read a variety of secondary materials relevant to the core texts, in order to acquire a basic grounding in both the academic study of literary Arabic and the themes specifically addressed by the readings.

Passages for commentary in the examination will be chosen from the Arabic core texts but may not necessarily have been read in full or discussed in class. Students should ensure therefore that they have read all of the core texts as prescribed.

#### Form and Conduct

The examination will consist of two sections, both of which must be attempted. Section A will contain three passages of Arabic chosen from the pre-modern texts set as reading for the course, one of which is to be chosen for commentary. Section B will contain a choice of three passages of Arabic chosen from the modern texts set as reading for the course, one of which is to be chosen for commentary. Both sections carry equal marks.

Word limit: 2,000 words per question

### **MES.15 Intermediate Literary Persian (Dr Parwana Fayyaz)**

#### Supplementary Regulation

This course provides an introduction to Persian literary texts, using a selection of readings from prose writers and poets. The objective is to introduce major classical Persian authors, to familiarize students with classical literary and poetical conventions and to see the written language in action as a vehicle for literary expression.

#### Form and Conduct

This paper is assessed in two parts – each part carries equal marks: (a) a research essay of between 4,500 and 5,000 words, including footnotes and excluding bibliography. Each

student will develop the topic of the essay in consultation with the instructor. A one-page topic and paper outline will be due during the first week of Lent Term. Two hard copies and one electronic copy (pdf) of the project shall be submitted to the Programmes Administrator in the Faculty office so as to arrive not later than the fourth Friday of Full Easter Term; (b) a viva voce examination which will contain the reading and translation of a seen passage, a commentary on given aspects of the piece, and a discussion of the research essay.

### **MES.16 Hebrew Literature/Culture (special topics) (Dr Peleg)**

#### Supplementary Regulation

This course will be divided into two sections, of which students must choose one: (a) Modern Hebrew culture, and (b) Medieval Hebrew texts. In both sections, the focus will be on linguistic, literary, or cultural analysis.

#### Form and Conduct

This paper will be divided into two sections. Section A will contain four questions on Modern Hebrew culture and Section B will contain four questions on Medieval Hebrew texts. Candidates will pick one section from which they must answer all four questions. All questions carry equal marks.

### **MES.17 The formation of Islam (Dr Marsham and Dr Miller)**

#### Supplementary Regulation

This paper examines how the development of the Islamic world was shaped by its social, political, economic, and ecological contexts, tracing the history of Islam from its origins in the religious and political turmoil of late antiquity through the rise and fall of the first Muslim empire and the emergence of the new religious and political formations of early medieval times. The paper engages both with the primary sources for these questions, and with the debates in the modern literature.

#### Course Description

Students taking this course will learn to engage with current debates about the formative era of Islam (c.500 to c.1000 CE) and will learn to analyse the relevant primary sources. Particular attention is paid to the social, political, economic and ecological context of the earliest Islamic societies.

#### Form and Conduct

This paper will consist of eight essay questions, of which candidates will be required to answer two, and a question requiring commentary on three short source extracts (from a choice of ten). All questions will carry equal marks.

### **MES.18 Topics in Hebrew studies (Professor Khan)**

#### Supplementary Regulation

This course will enable students to study the special topics of: (1) Pre-modern Jewish literature; or (2) Modern Hebrew culture. The topic 'Pre-modern Jewish literature' subsumes two options, of which the student must choose one: (a) Aramaic, or (b) Medieval Hebrew literature.

#### Form and Conduct

This paper will be divided into two sections. Section A will contain six questions on Pre-Modern Jewish Literature and Section B will contain six questions on Modern Hebrew culture. Candidates must choose one section and answer three of the six questions in that section. All questions will carry equal marks.

## **MES.19 The formation of the modern Middle East (Dr Monier, Dr Ashraf, Dr Peleg)**

### Supplementary Regulation

This paper examines key moments in the formation of the modern Middle East with an emphasis on developing an understanding of the periods of transition and conflict that have shaped and defined modern societies in the region since the nineteenth century.

### Course Description

The encounter with European modernity and subsequent European imperialism in the area provides the framework within which we shall study modernisation efforts, responses to colonialism, the rise of new ideologies such as nationalism, and the role of religion in politics and political discourse. The course will look at the late Ottoman Empire, Iran, the successor states to the Ottoman Empire in the 20th and 21st century and Israel.

### Form and Conduct

The paper will consist of eight essay questions of which candidates will be required to answer three. All questions carry equal marks.

## **MES.20 Themes in the Anthropology of Islam (Dr Anderson)**

### Supplementary Regulation

This course introduces students to themes in the anthropology of Islam.

### Course Description

The regional focus will range from the Middle East, to Europe, Africa and South-east Asia. We will consider the academic and political context for the study of Islam and Muslims, and the ways in which the anthropology of Islam has been productive for broader debates in anthropology, about the relationship between tradition and creativity, the nature of morality/ethics, the role of the body in religion, and the relationship between religion and ethics.

### Lectures and Classes

Taught in Michaelmas, Lent and Easter.

Total of 14 participatory lectures, 12 student seminars and 4 supervisions.

### Form and Conduct

The paper will consist of eight essay questions of which candidates will be required to answer three. All questions carry equal marks.

## **AMES.1 Cinema East (Dr Peleg, Dr Young et al)**

### Supplementary Regulation

This course provides students with the opportunity to explore the film traditions of East Asia and the Middle East through a number of possible themes, including modernity, identity and nation, and genre. These broad concerns encompass common themes of comparative significance, such as gender, city and countryside, love, marriage, and family and violence and are expressed in genres such as melodrama.

### Course Description

Cinema was the major globalizing cultural medium of 20th-century modernity, at once transnational and yet deeply embedded in the lived experience of particular societies. East Asian and Middle Eastern countries have developed indigenous and independent film industries since the very early days of cinema, and film has played an important role in the cultural imagination of the different modern nations. The importance of cinema has, if anything, increased in this new century of the internet and a wide area of electronic means

of conveying, storing, consuming (and stealing) moving images. All have combined to significantly broaden access to film and film culture for individuals and audiences around the world. Apart from being a subject of study in its own right, film can be an invaluable adjunct to the study of literature and history. It can offer a window on social reality and visual culture, and, like literature, can pose new questions or offer new perspectives. Finally, although this is not a language-based course, it can offer as by-product a record of living voices exercising the widest range of linguistic expression for students working with films from the area of their specialisation.

This course provides students with the opportunity to explore the film traditions of East Asia and the Middle East through a number of possible themes, including modernity, identity and nation, and genre. These broad concerns encompass common themes of comparative significance, such as gender, city and countryside, love, marriage, and family and violence and are expressed in genres such as melodrama. Students will be given access to a range of interesting classic and less well-known films while developing the skills and vocabulary to perform good cinematic analysis. Secondary readings and lectures will help to familiarise students with the historical, social, political and cultural contexts behind each film and thus deepen their understanding and appreciation for the films discussed.

### Lectures and Classes

The course will be taught in weekly sessions for a total of 16 weeks (8 each in Michaelmas & Lent terms). Sessions will comprise participatory lectures and seminars, with some content provided in a pre-recorded form. Students may be asked on occasion to lead seminars and make presentations based on the weekly readings that should stimulate discussions about the films viewed and issues that they raise. Each student will also write a minimum of two essays each term. Feedback on these will be given in supervisions or in group discussions.

Taught in Michaelmas and Lent (final supervisions may be held at the beginning of Easter Term)

Total of 16 participatory lectures and seminars, plus 4 supervisions.

### Form and Conduct

The examination paper will consist of ten questions divided between two sections. Candidates will be required to attempt three questions in total, including at least one from each section.

## **MES.21 Elementary Hindi Language (Mr Kumar)<sup>4</sup>**

### Supplementary Regulation

This paper introduces students to contemporary Hindi language through a series of exercises testing grammar, reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

### Course Description

During the first couple of weeks, students are introduced to the Devanagari alphabet and learn basic vocabulary. They are also exposed to the Hindi sentence structure, and simple grammar through visual aids and online programmes. The class material includes a text book, reading passages and handouts that gradually enhance the students' proficiency. In addition to this, students read a variety of texts in modern Hindi as part of language exercises for translation which in turn builds vocabulary.

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<sup>4</sup> This is an optional (additional paper under Regulation 8). The Department reserves the right not to offer this paper if it is undersubscribed.

## Form and Conduct

This paper will consist of two parts: a written paper (70 marks) and an oral examination (30 marks). The written paper will consist of two sections: Section A will contain a text comprehension exercise in Hindi (20 marks) and a 'fill in the blanks' exercise to test students' grammar (20 marks). Section B will contain a translation exercise from Hindi to English (15 marks), and a translation exercise from English to Hindi (15 marks).

The oral examination will consist of three sections. All timings are approximate and the oral examinations are recorded:

- (a) Listening and comprehension test (10 marks);
- (b) Role-play (10 marks);
- (c) Discussion on a given topic (10 marks). Ten minutes in total will be given for Sections (b) and (c).

## **Courses borrowed from other Faculties**

### **X.3 Structures and meanings (Paper Li.2 of the Linguistics Tripos)<sup>5</sup>**

For details consult the Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages and Linguistics [www.mml.cam.ac.uk](http://www.mml.cam.ac.uk) and inform your DoS who will liaise with the Linguistics department to set up supervisions.

### **X.4 Modern Judaism: thought, culture and history (Paper B14 of the Theology, Religion, and Philosophy of Religion Tripos)**

For details consult the Faculty of Divinity.

### **X.5 Introduction to Islam (Paper B15 of the Theology, Religion, and Philosophy of Religion Tripos)**

For details consult the Faculty of Divinity.

### **X.6 Intermediate Babylonian (Paper M4 of Parts IIA and IIB of the Archaeology Tripos)\***

### **X.7 Middle Egyptian Texts (Paper E2 of Parts IIA and IIB of the Archaeology Tripos)\*\***

### **X.8 Sounds and Words (Paper Li.1 of the Linguistics Tripos)**

For details consult the Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages.

\* Paper X.6 can only be taken at Part IB if a candidate has taken Paper X.1 at Part IA

\*\* Paper X.7 can only be taken at Part IB if a candidate has taken Paper X.2 at Part IA

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<sup>5</sup> There are a limited number of places for AMES-only students on this course.