

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICAN STUDIES (CONCENTRATION)

Program Guidelines & Mission

This concentration integrates coursework from the social sciences and humanities, allowing students to gain a broad and wide knowledge of the MENA region and MENA communities living outside the region. Building on Denison's commitment to internationalizing the curriculum, this concentration engages students with a deeper understanding of the region and its communities theoretically and experientially. It draws on the interdisciplinary strength of Denison's community by including courses from Anthropology, Economics, History, International Studies, Political Science, Religion and Modern Languages. This concentration also addresses the rising demand of students for study in Arabic. Accordingly, this concentration gives students the opportunity to integrate and contextualize their knowledge of Arabic along with a deeper understanding of the Middle East and North Africa and their diasporas.

Faculty

Director: Jason Busic (Modern Languages /Spanish)

MENA Committee Members

Hanada Al-Masri (Modern Languages /Arabic), Jason Busic (Modern Languages /Spanish), Ehab Farag (Global Health), Fadhel Kaboub (Economics), Isis Nusair (Women's Studies and International Studies), Hosna Sheikholeslami (Anthropology), Hoda Yousef (History)

Academic Administrative Assistant

Liz Barringer-Smith

[View faculty profiles and contact information](#)

Requirements for the Concentration

MENA students are required to take a total of six courses, as follows:

a. Four courses from the MENA course list (see table below)

- No more than 2 of the 4 courses may come from a single department;
- Two of the courses need to be above the 199 level;
- No more than 2 courses can be transferred from off-campus;
- No more than 2 courses can be counted towards the student's major;
- Any exceptions must be approved by the MENA committee.

b. Arabic language requirement (two courses beyond ARAB 112 - Beginning Arabic II).

c. MENA experience is required from MENA students. This could be fulfilled in one of the following forms:

- A Study Abroad program that focuses on the Middle East or North Africa in or outside the region;
- Internship at a non-governmental or governmental organization that focuses on the Middle East or North Africa;
- Research project, or internship related to or conducted within the MENA region;

- Community work in areas with predominantly Middle Eastern populations outside of the MENA region;
- All forms of fulfilling this requirement are subject to the approval of the MENA committee.

Summary of Course Distribution

I. Language Requirement (2 courses)

Code	Title
ARAB 211	Intermediate Arabic I (Prerequisite ARAB 112)
ARAB 212	Intermediate Arabic II (Prerequisite ARAB 211)

II. Elective Requirements (4 courses may include:)

Code	Title
ARAB 315	Culture of the Arab World
ANSO 345	Special Topics (when taught as "Anthropology of Islam")
ECON 361	Directed Study (on a MENA-related topic)
ECON 415	Political Economy of the Middle East (Prerequisite ECON 301 or instructor's consent.)
HIST 121	Islamic History before 1800
HIST 122	The Modern Middle East
HIST 221/MENA 225	Mapping Piracy and Captivity in the Ottoman Mediterranean
HIST 321	Women in the History of the Modern Middle East
INTL 250	Global and Local Flows and Frictions (when taught as "Gender and Revolution in the Middle East and North Africa")
REL 218	Islam
SPAN/MENA 324	Al-Andalus and Its Diasporas: From the Middle Ages to the Present (no prerequisite when taught in English)

III. MENA Experience Requirement

- An Off-campus experience is required from MENA students. This could be fulfilled in one of the following forms:
- A Study Abroad program that focuses on the Middle East or North Africa in or outside the region;
- Internship at a non-governmental or governmental organization that focuses on the Middle East or North Africa;
- Research project, or internship related to or conducted within the MENA region;
- Community work in areas with predominantly Middle Eastern populations outside the MENA region;
- All forms of fulfilling this requirement are subject to the approval of the MENA committee.

IV. A Note on Prerequisites

Of the twelve MENA elective courses, only four courses have a prerequisite requirement, as follows:

Code	Title
ECON 415	Political Economy of the Middle East (Prerequisite is ECON 301, which in turn entails taking another 2 courses (ECON 101, ECON 102). Thus, this course will be most suitable for those students who are Economics majors, or have previous knowledge that is approved by the instructor's consent.)
ARAB 211	Intermediate Arabic I (This course entails covering two semesters of Beginning Arabic, ARAB 111 and ARAB 112, or consent of instructor.)

The fewest courses a student would need to take to complete the concentration would be 4, assuming that they were proficient in Arabic when they arrived at Denison. If students had had no Arabic language training at all before coming to Denison, the fewest courses a student would need to take to complete the concentration would be 8 (in which case they would need ARAB 111 and ARAB 112 in addition to the other MENA requirements).

The most courses a student would need to take would be 8, while noting that Economics and Spanish majors would have had to fill the prerequisites for Econ 463 or Span 420 as part of their majors anyway.

Courses

MENA 121 - Islamic World to 1800 (4 Credit Hours)

A survey of the history of the Islamic World from the rise of Islam to the 1800's. Beginning with the revelation of Islam and the emergence of the first Islamic Empire in the seventh century A.D., the course will examine the formation and development of Islamic Societies through a study of religion, political theory and practice, social structure, art, literature and the sciences.

Crosslisting: HIST 121.

MENA 122 - The Making of the Modern Middle East (4 Credit Hours)

This course will cover the major political, cultural, and social features of the modern Middle East, from the eighteenth century to the end of the twentieth century. Among the transformations this course will examine are the rise of colonialism/imperialism and nationalism, as well as other major political and religious ideologies. Covering a geographic area that stretches from North Africa to Iran, this course will highlight case-studies with an emphasis on the diversity of political, social, and economic life across the region.

MENA 150 - Introductory Special topics in Middle East and North Africa Studies (4 Credit Hours)

Introductory special topics with Middle East and North African focus.

MENA 199 - Introductory Topics in Middle East and North Africa Studies (1-4 Credit Hours)

A general category used only in the evaluation of transfer credit.

MENA 225 - Mapping Piracy and Captivity in the Ottoman Mediterranean (4 Credit Hours)

This course will examine the early modern (16th to 18th century) Ottoman Mediterranean world as one historical landscape with a focus on the issues of identity, conversion, and captivity in the context of sea-based piracy, slavery, and migration. We will ask: What part did loyalty, economic incentives, religious conviction, and coercion play in the decisions that communities, captives, sailors, and commanders made in their pursuit of their interests? By taking a wider view of these historical phenomena and studying them as forms of economic, cultural, and violent exchange, we will have the opportunity to look at the Mediterranean world as a place of both interaction and conflict. This class will have a digital humanities component. As a result, one of the central focuses of this class is using visualizations of historical information as an analytical tool to gain insights about the past and communicating those insights in clear and innovative ways.

MENA 250 - Intermediate Special Topics in Middle East and North Africa Studies (4 Credit Hours)

MENA 280 - Culture of the Arab World (4 Credit Hours)

This is a special topics course crosslisted with ARAB 350.

MENA 281 - Anthropology of Islam (4 Credit Hours)

This is a special topics course crosslisted with ANTH 322.

MENA 299 - Intermediate Topics in Middle East and North Africa Studies (1-4 Credit Hours)

A general category used only in the evaluation of transfer credit.

MENA 321 - Women in the History of the Modern Middle East (4 Credit Hours)

This course will look at the role women have played in the Middle East since the nineteenth century. We will start the course by examining the interpretative methods and sources that historians use to explore this history. Then, after an introduction to the study of women and gender in the Middle East, we turn to several of the major factors that have impacted the role of women in Middle Eastern societies: the Islamic tradition, the colonial period, the rise of nation-states, and various strands of feminism. Our examples will draw from several of the principle countries and regions in and around the Middle East including Iran, Turkey, Egypt, the Levant, and North Africa. As we proceed, students will develop their own research question, bibliography, and ultimately, research paper.

Crosslisting: HIST 321.

MENA 324 - Al-Andalus and Its Diasporas: From the Middle Ages to the Present (4 Credit Hours)

Islamic Spain was a place where ancient and new communities encountered and transformed each other. Known in the Middle Ages as al-Andalus, it continues to occupy the cultural and political imaginations of Spain and the Arab World. This class explores al-Andalus through what defines it in scholarly and popular discourse: its religious communities and the cultural contact and synthesis characterizing them. By placing medieval Spain or "Iberia" into its Mediterranean context, the class traces the development of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim communities from their beginnings in the eastern Mediterranean and their settlement in Iberia up to the diasporas in the Mediterranean region today. Rather than essentializing religion, we place it in dialogue with language and culture, tradition and innovation. As a writing intensive seminar, students will engage the cultural and historical themes of the class through writing in daily discussion posts, in-class reflections, midterm essays, and a phased-research project on a theme chosen by the student. Closed to first years. When taught in Spanish, SPAN 215.

Prerequisite(s): When taught in English, none.

MENA 340 - Hispanic Transatlantic Studies: From Human Rights to Genocide. The Encounter with America and (4 Credit Hours)

Students will engage in an in-depth study of selected topics in the frame of the Atlantic World, which addresses the relations between the cultures of Peninsular Spain and Latin America from a transatlantic perspective. Students will question Western systems of thought, will interrogate structures of power and will develop new connections to the realities of the Hispanic World. Students will summarize, compare and contrast, synthesize and evaluate cultural themes, actors and events. Students will hone their research skills and will demonstrate them through oral presentations, in-depth discussions, creative work, research papers, poster sessions, webspaces, and wikis that meet the ACTFL intermediate-high/advanced-low level standards. Conducted in Spanish. Prerequisite: SPAN 215.

MENA 350 - Advanced Special Topics in MENA (4 Credit Hours)

Advanced special topics with Middle East and North African Studies focus.

MENA 361 - Directed Study (1-4 Credit Hours)**MENA 362 - Directed Study (1-4 Credit Hours)****MENA 363 - Independent Study (1-4 Credit Hours)****MENA 364 - Independent Study (1-4 Credit Hours)****MENA 399 - Advanced Topics in Middle East and North Africa Studies (1-4 Credit Hours)**

A general category used only in the evaluation of transfer credit.

MENA 415 - Political Economy of the Middle East (4 Credit Hours)

A study of the general features of the economic development experience of the Middle East and North Africa. We will study the structural transformation of these economies and the dynamics of their colonial and post-colonial structures. This course examines the different stages of economic development starting with the early post-colonial period, followed by the period of import substitution industrialization of the 1960s, export-led growth of the 1970s, the debt crisis of the 1980s, the structural adjustment programs of the 1990s, and the Arab uprisings of 2011. We will examine the political economy of the region as it relates to unemployment, poverty, inequality, migration, food insecurity, water stress, climate change, class conflict, gender dynamics, cultural norms, as well as regional and global geopolitical power struggles over the control of key markets such as oil and natural gas.

Prerequisite(s): ECON 301.

Crosslisting: ECON 415.

MENA 450 - Advanced Special Topics in MENA (4 Credit Hours)

Advanced special topics with Middle East and North African Studies focus.

MENA 451 - Senior Research (4 Credit Hours)**MENA 452 - Senior Research (4 Credit Hours)**