The minor in Islamic Studies is open to all undergraduates regardless of major. It provides the intellectual and linguistic training to approach Islam — and the world — in a historically and culturally informed way, challenging stereotypes and misconceptions while exploring the diversity and complexity of the world’s second-largest religion.

**Minor Requirements**

All courses must be taken for letter grades and receive a grade of C- or higher.

**Language requirement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AS.375.115</td>
<td>First Year Arabic</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp; AS.375.116</td>
<td>First Year Arabic II (or other approved language)</td>
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**Electives (totaling at least 18 credits)**

- Two Islamic studies elective courses at the 300-400 level
- Other approved languages include: Bahasa Indonesia, Bahasa Malaysia, Bengali, Hausa, Persian, Punjabi, Turkish, and Urdu.

Additional languages may be approved by the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

**Faculty**

**Director**

Lawrence M. Principe  
(History of Science and Technology)

For current course information and registration go to [https://sis.jhu.edu/classes/](https://sis.jhu.edu/classes/)

**Courses**

**AS.194.401. Themes in Medieval Islamic Thought. 3.0 Credits.**

This seminar examines medieval Muslim thinkers who addressed themes at the intersection of theology, philosophy, science, and ethics: the definition of the nature of God’s attributes, His uniqueness, transcendence and omnipotence; human freewill and the limits of human knowledge; the nature of the world; and the relationship among reason, religion, and science. The course will look at how these and other crucial themes were addressed by major medieval philosophers and philosophical schools not only in Islam, but also in Judaism and Christianity, and highlight similarities and differences among the three major monotheistic faiths.

Instructor(s): G. Ferrario.

**AS.194.401. Themes in Medieval Islamic Thought. 3.0 Credits.**

This seminar examines medieval Muslim thinkers who addressed themes at the intersection of theology, philosophy, science, and ethics: the definition of the nature of God’s attributes, His uniqueness, transcendence and omnipotence; human freewill and the limits of human knowledge; the nature of the world; and the relationship among reason, religion, and science. The course will look at how these and other crucial themes were addressed by major medieval philosophers and philosophical schools not only in Islam, but also in Judaism and Christianity, and highlight similarities and differences among the three major monotheistic faiths.

Instructor(s): G. Ferrario.

**Cross Listed Courses**

**History of Art**

**AS.010.110. Art of the Islamic World. 3.0 Credits.**

This course is an introduction to the art of the Islamic world, covering a geography that stretches from Spain to India and a chronology that extends from the seventh century into our own time. Within this rich and varied continuum, we will look at a range of art forms—including architecture, painting, sculpture, ceramics, and calligraphy—in relation to such themes as patronage, production, function, and audience. A number of the artworks will be viewed firsthand in local collections. We will also explore the intersection of Islamic art with today’s political realities.

Instructor(s): U. Rustem  
Area: Humanities.

**AS.010.329. Building an Empire: Architecture of the Ottoman Capitals, c. 1300–1600. 3.0 Credits.**

Centered on modern-day Turkey and encompassing vast territories in Asia, Africa, and Europe, the Ottoman Empire (1299 – 1923) was the longest lived and among the most powerful Islamic states in history, with an artistic tradition to match. This course explores the functional and symbolic role that architecture played during the empire’s formative centuries, when three successive capitals — Bursa, Edirne, and Istanbul — served to visualize the sultans’ growing claims to universal authority. With reference to mosques, palaces, tombs, and other categories of architecture, the course will examine the buildings in their artistic, social, and political contexts. Themes to be addressed include patronage and audience, architectural practice and the building trade, ceremonial and ritual, topography and urban planning, and the relationship of Ottoman architecture to other traditions.

Instructor(s): U. Rustem  
Area: Humanities.

**AS.194.101. Introduction to Islam. 3.0 Credits.**

Study of Islam, its beliefs and practices in their historical development, from the preaching of Muhammad to the end of the Middle Ages, providing a historically-grounded understanding of Islam  
Instructor(s): G. Ferrario  
Area: Humanities.

**AS.194.201. Jews, Muslims, and Christians in the Medieval World. 3.0 Credits.**

The three most widespread monotheisms have much more in common than is generally portrayed: a common founding figure, a partly shared succession of prophets, closely comparable ethical concerns and religious practices, a history of coexistence and of cultural, religious, social and economic interaction. This course will focus on a number of key texts and historical events that have shaped the relationships between Jews, Muslims, and Christians during the Middle Ages and contributed to their reciprocal construction of the image of the “other.” The geographical center of the course will be the Mediterranean and the Near and Middle East, a true cradle of civilizations, religions, and exchange.

Instructor(s): G. Ferrario.
AS.010.330. Art of the Caliphates: Visual Culture and Competition in the Medieval Islamic World. 3.0 Credits.
Despite its modern-day association with a fringe extremist movement, the term "caliphate" was traditionally used to describe the Muslim world at large, the political and spiritual ruler of which bore the title of caliph. The original Islamic caliphate was established in the seventh century as a vast empire centered on the Middle East and extending deep into Africa, Asia, and Europe. It soon broke apart into a series of competing powers, until in the tenth century, three rival dynasties—the Baghdad-based Abbasids, the Spanish Umayyads, and the Fatimids of North Africa—each claimed to be the rightful caliphate. This course will examine how these fascinating political developments and conflicts played out in the realm of art and architecture between the seventh and thirteenth centuries. As well as palaces, mosques, and commemorative buildings, the course will look at media ranging from ceramics and metalwork to textiles and illustrated manuscripts, with many of the artifacts being viewed firsthand in local museum collections. These works will be considered in relation to such themes as patronage, audience, ceremony, and meaning. Particular attention will be paid to how the various caliphates—both in emulation of and competition with one another—used visual culture as a powerful tool to assert their legitimacy.
Instructor(s): U. Rustem
Area: Humanities.

AS.010.436. Orientalism and Occidentalism: The Discourse of the Other in the Visual Arts. 3.0 Credits.
This course explores works of art and architecture that reveal or are informed by the long, complex, and often troubled relationship between the West and the Islamic world. Though extending in scope from the early modern period into our own time, the course focuses on the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when East-West artistic interactions were arguably at their liveliest and most charged. Topics to be addressed include Ottoman Baroque architecture, Orientalist painting of the nineteenth century, Qajar portraiture and photography, Islamicate architecture at Western world’s fairs, and the recent Danish cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad. Students will be encouraged to consider the differences as well as commonalities between these various modes of cross-cultural representation and engagement, and to think critically about the political, cultural, and artistic conditions that engendered and shaped them.
Instructor(s): U. Rustem
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive.

AS.010.637. Ottoman Baroque and Beyond.
The eighteenth century saw the Ottoman capital of Istanbul transformed by the introduction of a brand-new style of architecture that scholars have dubbed the Ottoman Baroque. Informed, as its name suggests, by Western European models, this new manner of building heralded a permanent shift in late Ottoman visual culture that has been reductively discussed as decadent “Westernization.” This seminar will challenge the conventional wisdom and reconsider the Ottoman Baroque as a timely and sophisticated artistic statement by which the empire reaffirmed its global standing in terms that were both locally rooted and internationally resonant. Topics to be addressed include the semiotics of style; the roles and relationships of patrons, artists, and viewers; architecture as a locus of ceremonial and spectacle; and cross-cultural connections and networks. Although focusing on the architecture of eighteenth-century Istanbul, the seminar will extend into other regions and art forms that demonstrate the impact of the Ottoman Baroque, and it will also consider the style’s afterlife in the context of nineteenth-century Ottoman modernity.
Instructor(s): U. Rustem
Area: Humanities.

AS.010.638. Orientalism and Occidentalism: The Discourse of the Other in the Visual Arts.
This course explores works of art and architecture that reveal or are informed by the long, complex, and often troubled relationship between the West and the Islamic world. Though extending in scope from the early modern period into our own time, the course focuses on the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when East-West artistic interactions were arguably at their liveliest and most charged. Topics to be addressed include Ottoman Baroque architecture, Orientalist painting of the nineteenth century, Qajar portraiture and photography, Islamicate architecture at Western world’s fairs, and the recent Danish cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad. Students will be encouraged to consider the differences as well as commonalities between these various modes of cross-cultural representation and engagement, and to think critically about the political, cultural, and artistic conditions that engendered and shaped them.
Instructor(s): U. Rustem
Area: Humanities.

AS.070.204. An introduction to Islamic Intellectual History. 3.0 Credits.
This course will study the vibrant world of the Seljuks, an Islamic empire that flourished between 1037 and 1157 AD, from Khorasan across Baghdad to Hijaz and Anatolia. As an exploration in intellectual history, we will attempt to understand the social world of the Seljuk Turks through political, religious, and literary texts. We will first read a political treatise, Siyasatnama (The Book of Government), written by Nizam al-Mulk (1018-1092), the formidable minister of the Seljuk Empire, who oversaw the reign of three successive sultans during the second half of the eleventh century and created a strong bureaucratic state for the Seljuks. During his administration, he commissioned the development of madrasas, colleges dedicated to the teaching of Islamic law, theology, literature, and history. The most famous of these madrasas was the Baghdad Nizamiyya where Al-Ghazali (1058-1111) taught from 1190 and 1194. We will read Al-Ghazali’s Deliverance from Error in order to explore the state of religious learning at the peak of the Islamic Golden Age. Having discussed the political and religious foundations of Islamic orthodoxy in the eleventh century, next we turn to the rise of heterodox movements that challenged the authority of the Seljuk state. We will briefly examine the history of the Ismaili branch of Shia Islam, focusing on the politico-religious ideas of its most potent representative, Hassan-i Sabbah (1050s-1124). Finally, we will end our class with the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam (1048-1131), the prominent poet and polymath of the eleventh century.
Instructor(s): B. Polat
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences
Writing Intensive.
AS.070.230. From Jihad to Revolution: The Political Struggles of Women in the Middle East. 3.0 Credits.
The course explores the role of women as political prisoners, combatants and activists in the modern history of the Middle East using a multidisciplinary approach. It explores the history of women's engagement in political struggles in the Middle East over the long durée starting with anti-colonial movements in the 20th century up until the recent uprisings known as the “Arab Spring”. The course is geared towards the examination of the ways in which politics, in a broad sense, is gendered in the Middle East by examining how the social and political construction of women as political subjects influence the nature and practice of political life, as well as the ways in which sexual difference has served as a basis for social and political organization.
Instructor(s): F. Halbouni
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences.

AS.070.267. Culture, Religion and Politics in Iran. 3.0 Credits.
This is an introductory course for those interested in gaining basic knowledge about contemporary Iran. The focus will be on culture and religion and the ways in which they become interwoven into different kinds of political stakes.
Instructor(s): N. Haeri
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS.070.333. Theologies of Political Life. 3.0 Credits.
This course explores the relationship between modern political forms and theological traditions. Looking at developments both in the West and the postcolonial world, we will examine the multiple ways in which theological traditions have continued to inform how political life is conceived and pursued. In particular, we will focus on the relation between liberalism and the Christian tradition; the turn to messianism in critical theory; the transformation of the shari'a into a legal form; and its imbrication in anti-colonial politics.
Instructor(s): S. Al-Bahloly
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS.070.372. Religion and Media. 3.0 Credits.
This course examines the ways in which conventional and non-conventional media recreate or transform religious experience in modern life. Increasingly, religion is experienced not only in sacred spaces and as ritual prescriptions, but also through the information that is disseminated through radio, TV, and the Internet, as well as in consumer culture and political speeches. Beginning with this proposition that our ideas about religion are shaped not only by historical and scriptural legacies, but as well as by material practices and other sundry conditions of mediation, of which our present times supply many, we will reexamine how questions of revelation, belief, spirituality, ethereality, and ritual practice are constituted by these irreducible ways, thus complicating the neat separation of religion and secularism, or, for that matter, religion and culture.
Instructor(s): S. Bagaria
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS.070.417. Political Spirituality. 3.0 Credits.
This course explores forms of political action that have emerged at the interface of modern revolutions with religious traditions. It focuses on the Middle East during the twentieth century and the civil rights struggle in the American south. We will attempt to trace the genealogy of these forms of action in the Islamic and Christian traditions, as well as examine their influence on the political thought of our own time.
Instructor(s): S. Al-Bahloly
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences.

AS.070.423. Anthropology of Poetry and Prayer. 3.0 Credits.
What kind of activity is prayer? Are we talking to God(s), to our ancestors, to ourselves? What are the differences between choosing our own words and repeating the words of an established prayer? The course will explore these and similar questions with particular attention to the language of prayers across a number of religious traditions.
Instructor(s): N. Haeri
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences.

History
AS.100.212. Freshman Seminar: Jews in the Medieval Mediterranean: The Politics of Conquest under Crescent and Cross. 3.0 Credits.
How can Jewish history help us understand the politics of Islamic and Christian states in Sicily, Spain, and Palestine in the age of Crusade and holy war? Freshman only
Instructor(s): B. Goldman
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS.100.234. The Making of the Muslim Middle East, 600-1100 A.D.. 3.0 Credits.
A survey of the major historical transformations of the region we now call the 'Middle East' (from late antiquity through the 11th century) in relation to the formation and development of Islam and various Muslim empires. Cross-listed with Near Eastern Studies and the Program in Islamic Studies.
Instructor(s): T. El-leithy
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences.

AS.100.362. Children and Childhood in the Middle Ages. 3.0 Credits.
Seminar on the history of childhood and ideas of childhood around the medieval Mediterranean; themes include child custody; medieval education and punishment; parent-child private letters; child mortality and the arts of bereavement/consolation. Cross-listed with the Program in Islamic Studies and Near Eastern Studies.
Instructor(s): T. El-leithy
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences.

AS.100.374. Conquest, Conversion, and Language Change in the Middle Ages. 3.0 Credits.
Examines cases of imperial conquest and attendant religious transformation (Christianization; Islamization) and language change in the medieval Mediterranean (Europe and Middle East), e.g. transition from Latin to vernacular languages in Europe; Arabization; translation movements.
Instructor(s): T. El-leithy
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences.

AS.100.387. Everyday Life in the Medieval Middle East. 3.0 Credits.
In this seminar, students will explore the daily lives of non-elites in medieval Egypt (i.e. average folk, not kings in palaces)—including their food and cooking; clothes (and government edicts regulating fashion); the houses they inhabited; their marriage patterns, divorce rates, and child custody battles; and the burden of taxes on the working poor (e.g. urban craftsmen). We will examine and discuss artifacts and documents, including surviving hats (stuffed with recycled documents), private letters, marriage contracts (and the clauses women inserted into them), petitions for charity, and court records.
Instructor(s): T. El-leithy
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences.
**AS.100.456. Getting Medieval? Public Violence in the Middle Ages. 3.0 Credits.**

Traditional studies and popular culture often consider violence as a hallmark of medieval life and hence, present it as a fundamental difference between a ‘brutal and violent’ Middle Ages and a ‘civilized and humane’ (Western) modernity. To evaluate these claims and images, we will examine different forms of violence in medieval societies—European and Middle Eastern—especially (i) martyrdom, (ii) communal violence, and (iii) public punishment. After exploring the specific cultural meanings of these practices, we will re-examine those modern polemics that invoke ‘the medieval’ (often vis-à-vis non-Western traditions and societies).

Instructor(s): T. El-leithy

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences.

**AS.100.646. Marvels and Wonder in medieval Arabic Culture.**

Explores the concept of marvels in different genres of medieval Arabic culture: Qur’anic exegesis; travel literature; ‘ethnography’, cosmography and geography; marvels of the natural world (e.g. hermaphrodites); Muslim views of pre-Islamic (‘pagan’) monuments.

Instructor(s): T. El-leithy

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences.

**Near East Studies**

**AS.130.368. Nomads, Tyrants and Kings: Water in the Ancient Near East. 3.0 Credits.**

This course explores economic and social histories of water in the ancient Near East. It examines water’s diverse roles in ancient Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Levantine and South Arabian agriculture, politics, ritual and religion, including water’s interconnected significance in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Taught jointly with AS.131.615.

Instructor(s): M. Harrower

Area: Humanities.

**History of Science Technology**

**AS.140.301. History of Science: Antiquity To Renaissance. 3.0 Credits.**

The first part of a three-part survey of the history of science. This course deals with the origins, practice, ideas, and cultural role of scientific thought in Graeco-Roman, Arabic/Islamic, and Medieval Latin/Christian societies. Interactions across cultures and among science, art, technology, and theology are highlighted.

Instructor(s): G. Ferrario; L. Principe

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

**Writing Intensive.**

**Philosophy**

**AS.150.462. Islamic Political Philosophy. 3.0 Credits.**

An introduction to the history of Islamic political philosophy, primarily focused on two flashpoints of encounter between the religion of Islam and other philosophical/political systems—an early one with ancient Greek philosophy (especially in the works of Plato and Aristotle), and a period of interface with modern Western secular political thought, from the late 19th century to present. Our goal will be to try to understand some of the varying responses in each period as Muslim thinkers seek authentic engagement with external and internal trends, both religious and philosophical. The focus will be on primary texts from philosophically engaged thinkers (who may or may not consider themselves philosophers).

Instructor(s): S. Ogden

Area: Humanities.

**Political Science**

**AS.190.394. Comparative Politics of the Middle East and North Africa. 3.0 Credits.**

This course examines the domestic, regional, and transnational politics of the Middle East and North Africa. The class is organized into three units. The first examines major armed conflicts—anti-colonial, intra-state, and inter-state—from 1948 through the 1990s. It uses these historical moments as windows onto key issues in Middle Eastern and North African political issues such as external intervention/occupation, human rights, sectarianism, social movements, and memory politics. Unit Two focuses on policy relevant issues such as democratization, minority populations, religion and politics, and gender. In Unit Three, students will explore the politics of the Arab Uprisings through critical reading and discussion of new (post-2011) scholarship on MENA states, organizations, and populations. Enrollment limited to Political Science and International Studies majors.

Instructor(s): S. Parkinson

Area: Social and Behavioral Sciences.

**AS.191.335. Arab-Israeli Conflict. 3.0 Credits.**

The course will focus on the origin and development of the Arab-Israeli conflict from its beginnings when Palestine was controlled by the Ottoman Empire, through World War I, The British Mandate over Palestine, and the first Arab-Israeli war (1947-1949). It will then examine the period of the Arab-Israeli wars of 1956, 1967, 1973, and 1982, the Palestinian Intifadas (1987-1993 and 2000-2005); and the development of the Arab-Israeli peace process from its beginnings with the Egyptian-Israeli treaty of 1979, the Oslo I and Oslo II agreements of 1993 and 1995, Israel’s peace treaty with Jordan of 1994, the Road Map of 2003; and the periodic peace talks between Israel and Syria. The conflict will be analyzed against the background of great power intervention in the Middle East, the rise of political Islam and the dynamics of Intra-Arab politics, and will consider the impact of the Arab Spring.

Instructor(s): R. Freedman

Area: Social and Behavioral Sciences.

**Sociology**

**AS.230.147. Introduction to Islam Since 1800. 3.0 Credits.**

This course is an introduction to contemporary Islam and Muslim societies from approximately 1800 to the present. Key themes will include the colonial encounter, state formation and reform, revolution, Islamic revival, and globalization. Reflecting Islam’s status as a world religion, the course will touch on developments around the Muslim-majority world and in the West.

Instructor(s): R. Calder

Area: Social and Behavioral Sciences.

**AS.230.367. Islamic Finance. 3.0 Credits.**

Today, Islamic finance is a global industry comprising nearly $2 trillion in assets, with hubs from Kuala Lumpur to Dubai to London. But half a century ago, nothing called “Islamic finance” existed. So where did Islamic finance come from? Why is it growing so fast? And what does it mean for finance to be Islamic? We discuss the ban on riba in the Quran and hadith, finance in early and medieval Islamic societies, petrodollars and the birth of Islamic banking in the 1970s, the rise of Islamic capital markets since 2000, contemporary shariah-compliant financial structures, and the constitution of piety through financial practice.

Instructor(s): R. Calder

Area: Social and Behavioral Sciences.
Center for Language Education

AS.375.115. First Year Arabic. 4.5 Credits.
Introductory course in speaking, listening, reading, and writing Modern Standard Arabic. Presents basic grammatical structures and a basic vocabulary. Through oral-aural drill in classroom, tapes in Language Laboratory, and reading/writing exercises, students attain a basic level of competence on which they can build in subsequent years of study. No Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory
Instructor(s): S. Jafire.

AS.375.116. First Year Arabic II. 4.5 Credits.
Continuation of AS.375.115. Introductory course in speaking, listening, reading, and writing Modern Standard Arabic. Presents basic grammatical structures and a basic vocabulary. Through oral-aural drill in classroom, tapes in Language Laboratory, and reading/writing exercises, students attain a basic level of competence on which they can build in subsequent years of study. Accelerated students should register for Section 01. May not be taken Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory
Prerequisites: AS.375.115 or instructor permission
Instructor(s): F. Abdallah; I. Hassan; K. Tahrawi; S. Jafire.

AS.375.215. Second Year Arabic. 4.0 Credits.
Designed to bring students up to competency level required for third/fourth year Arabic. Students will consolidate and expand their mastery of the four basic skills acquired in AS.375.115-116. More authentic material—written, audio, and visual—will be used, and culture will be further expanded on as a fifth skill. Recommended Course Background: AS.375.115-116 or equivalent.
Prerequisites: AS.375.116 or equivalent.
Instructor(s): Staff
Area: Humanities.

AS.375.216. Second Year Arabic II. 4.0 Credits.
Continuation of AS.375.215. Designed to bring students up to competency level required for third/fourth year Arabic. Students will consolidate and expand their mastery of the four basic skills acquired in AS.375.115-116. More authentic material—written, audio, and visual—will be used, and culture will be further expanded on as a fifth skill. Accelerated students should register for Section 01. Recommended Course Background: AS.375.215 or permission required.
Prerequisites: AS.375.215 or instructor permission
Instructor(s): I. Hassan; S. Jafire
Area: Humanities.

AS.375.301. Third Year Arabic. 3.0 Credits.
Designed to enhance students' ability to read, discuss, and write about various topics covered in traditional and contemporary Arabic texts.
Recommended Course Background: AS.375.216 or equivalent.
Prerequisites: AS.375.116 or instructor permission
Instructor(s): S. Jafire
Area: Humanities.

AS.375.401. Fourth Year Arabic. 2.0 Credits.
This is an introductory course to different periods of the Arabic literature. Selections of famous Arabic poetry and short prose works are the substance of the course.
Prerequisites: AS.375.302 or equivalent.
Instructor(s): Staff
Area: Humanities.