ISLAMIC STUDIES

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.

The minor in Islamic Studies was introduced in Spring 2016.

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

Language requirement

| AS.375.119 | Beginning Arabic I |
| & AS.375.120 | and Beginning Arabic II (or other approved language) |

Electives (totaling at least 18 credits)

- Four Islamic studies elective courses at any level
- 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/

Courses

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

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.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.010.636. 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.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.

Anthropology
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 Rubaiyyat 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.

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
Writing Intensive.

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.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.070.333. 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
Writing Intensive.
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 Eastern 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. Harower
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.

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.230.367. 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.
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: Prereq: AS.375.115 or equivalent.
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): I. Hassan; S. Jafire
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: Prereq: AS.375.215 or equivalent.
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.

AS.375.402. Fourth Year Arabic II. 3.0 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. Continuation of AS.375.401. Recommended Course Background: AS.375.302 or equivalent.
Prerequisites: Prereq: AS.375.401 or equivalent.
Instructor(s): S. Jafire
Area: Humanities.