



# **GRADUATE HANDBOOK**

## **2025-2026**

**Middle Eastern Languages  
and Cultures, MA & PhD  
Middle Eastern Studies, MA**



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**MIDDLE EASTERN  
STUDIES  
AT UT AUSTIN**

# I. Middle Eastern Studies at UT Austin

## 1. About

The graduate programs in Middle Eastern Studies (MES) encompass a wide variety of critical methodologies and approaches to the study of the Middle East. Guiding students to conceptualize the Middle East regionally instead of limiting them to a narrow scope of nation- and language-based inquiry, the graduate programs encourage comparative study of the cultures, histories, and languages of the Middle East. In keeping with its open and flexible conception of Middle Eastern Studies, our programs emphasize the study of more than one Middle Eastern language and familiarity with multiple Middle Eastern cultures.

Our programs are committed to preparing graduate students in a very practical way for their anticipated careers. By the time they have earned degrees from Middle Eastern Studies, they will have acquired a firm grounding in the current theory and practice of their specific discipline and often in one or more national tradition. They will have conducted research in a specific area of Middle Eastern Studies, such as history, film studies, comparative literature, Ancient Near East, Islamic Studies, etc. Furthermore, they will have acquired a thorough knowledge of at least one language that they might teach at the university level or use professionally after graduation. Finally, all MES doctoral students and the majority of MES MA students will have substantial experience teaching, usually in a language course. When they finish their degrees, MA students will be well-positioned to continue to a PhD program and qualified to pursue careers with globally-oriented organizations. PhD graduates will be qualified to seek positions in departments of Middle Eastern Studies or area studies, as specialists in one or possibly more languages and cultures, or, in many cases, in other disciplinary homes, such as History, Media Studies, or Comparative Literature. They will also be well prepared for careers in related fields that require advanced expertise in international humanistic studies.

## 2. Introduction

This handbook describes the requirements of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES) for the Master of Arts in Middle Eastern Studies (MES) and the requirements of the Department of Middle Eastern Studies (DMES) for the doctoral program in Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures (MELC). The Graduate School is the central source of information for graduate students. Doctoral and master's degree evaluators provide information about procedures for submission of reports, theses, and dissertations. Important deadlines for graduation and other forms can be found through the Graduate School website.

The objective of graduate study is to develop the intellectual breadth and to provide the specialized training necessary to a career in teaching, research, the arts, or other non-academic professions. Emphasis is placed on the knowledge, methods, and skills needed for scholarly teaching, original research problem solving, intellectual leadership, and other modes of achievement in the student's discipline.

The policies and procedures in this handbook should be understood as governing the course of graduate study in the Middle Eastern Studies and Middle Eastern Language and Cultures graduate programs at The University of Texas at Austin, in conjunction with the policies and procedures described in the University's Graduate Catalog. MES/MELC policies and procedures may be amended by action of the Chair or the Director as well as the Graduate Studies Committee.

Each student is expected to read and keep a hard copy of the handbook, which contains the rules and guidelines that apply to that student and their particular cohort. Enrollment in the academic program acts as an agreement to adhere to the rules and standards contained within this handbook. Students may opt to use

any catalog and the corresponding handbook within six years after their admittance to the program. Please note that the catalog and the handbook must correspond to the same academic year.

For questions about topics not addressed in this handbook, please contact the Graduate Coordinator.

### **3. College of Liberal Arts Graduate Studies**

The Office of Research & Graduate Studies collaborates with Liberal Arts departments, centers, institutes, and the Graduate School to support initiatives that increase graduate student success and improve students' work environment. In addition to steering College policies, this office participates in the university-wide conversations about graduate student parental accommodations, funding, professional development, placement targets, and more. The Office of Research and Graduate Studies investigates college, university, and national data on graduate education; designs and offers professional development opportunities for graduate students; and works on best practices for student recruitment and support with fellowships and employment in academic job titles.

### **4. Graduate Studies Committee (GSC)**

A Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) is required for any academic area in which an approved graduate degree program is offered. The GSC consists of all assistant, associate, and full professors who are active participants in the program. With special permission from the Dean of Graduate Studies, non-tenure track positions, including lecturers and emeriti faculty may be added to the GSC. These special appointments come with limited duties, including the stipulation that the member may not serve as the sole supervisor on master's theses/reports and dissertation committees.

Although members of a graduate studies committee are usually drawn from a single administrative unit (college or school), the MES/MELC GSC is composed of members from several administrative units. The Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures' GSC is known by the acronym MELC, while the Middle Eastern Studies' GSC is distinguished as the MES. The GSC elects its own chair. The term of the GSC chair is normally three years but may be renewed. Students are able to view either program's GSC through the MES/MELC website, the Office of Graduate Studies' website, or the Graduate Catalog.

### **5. GSC and Student Evaluations**

The GSC is responsible for evaluating students in their degree program(s) to ensure that they are making satisfactory progress toward a degree. All students will receive written notification of the GSC's evaluation during fall and spring semesters. If—after entering the stages of review—the GSC finds that a student is continuing to not make satisfactory progress, it may recommend to the graduate dean that the student be terminated from the program.

### **6. Requirements for Continuation in the Program**

To continue in the Graduate School beyond the first semester—and each semester thereafter—the student must make satisfactory progress in absolving any admission conditions that were imposed, meet any requirements made in writing by the GSC and receive the approval of the Graduate Adviser and GSC. Additionally, the student must meet the program's expectations for good academic standing.

### **7. Good Academic Standing**

In addition to the information provided by the Graduate School regarding Standard of Work and Student Responsibility, MES/MELC requires students to meet the following in order to be considered in good academic standing in their program. This includes:

- Compliance with all applicable university and program policies;
- Maintenance of a cumulative GPA of 3.50;
- Taking all courses with a letter-grade and completing all coursework;
- Avoiding all of the following grades: I, NC, C+, C, C-, D, F (any one of these grades will cause a student to be in not good academic standing);
- Satisfactory and timely progress towards degree requirements and milestones;
- Maintaining regular and consistent contact with instructors, supervisors and committees;
- Exhibiting respect toward other students and during classroom discussions;
- Performing at the professional level expected by the program and faculty supervisor;
- Registration in no fewer than nine credit hours of coursework each long semester;
- Participating in program events, especially those put on by your area and to recruit, welcome or orient new students.

### 8. University GPA Requirement (*minimum*)

The graduate grade point average is calculated by the registrar and appears on the student's official record maintained by the registrar. To graduate, the **Graduate School requires all graduate students to have a graduate grade point average of at least 3.00**. Individual Graduate Studies Committees may set grade point average requirements of 3.00 or higher for all or a portion of their students' coursework and indeed **Middle Eastern Studies requires students' GPA to be 3.50 or higher**.

Middle Eastern Studies monitors students' performance to ensure that students stay in good standing in their program (i.e. with a GPA of 3.5 or higher). However, if a student's cumulative graduate grade point average falls below 3.00 at the end of any semester or summer session will be warned by the **Office of Graduate Studies** that their continuance in the Graduate School is in jeopardy. The student must attain a cumulative graduate grade point average of at least 3.00 during the next semester or summer session they are enrolled, or they will be subject to dismissal. During this period, the student may not drop a course or withdraw from the University (with the expectation of returning) without the approval of the Graduate Adviser and the Graduate Dean.

A graduate student who has been dismissed may be readmitted for further graduate study only by petition of the GSC in the student's major area or by the GSC of another program that will accept the student. The petition must be approved by the graduate dean. Academic dismissal is reflected on the student's permanent record.

### 9. Program GPA Requirement (*requisite*)

MES/MELC requires all graduate students to maintain an average semesterly *and* cumulative GPA of *at least* 3.50. Additionally, master's degree candidates must have a grade point average of *at least* 3.50 in courses included on their Program of Work. Students will not be permitted to graduate with a GPA that is less than 3.50.

### 10. Review Process

MES/MELC is committed to providing feedback, guidance, and corrective action as is necessary for students. Therefore, all students undergo a review process. MES students are reviewed semesterly, while MELC students are reviewed annually. Students will receive written notification after their review. Reviews may result in a student being placed on academic probation or recommended for dismissal from the program. The following circumstances are examples that will trigger probation, corrective action, and/or dismissal.

- Failure to meet or maintain academic requirements as stated in the University Graduate Catalog and/or the Graduate Handbook.
- Scholastic dishonesty, including cheating, lying, plagiarism, failure to cite sources, collusion, falsifying academic records, or any act designed to give unfair academic advantage to the student. For complete University policy and procedures, see General Information Bulletin, Appendix C, Section 11. These matters may also be referred to Student Judicial Services.
- Behavior judged to be in violation of the Student Honor Code or University Code of Conduct.
- Consistent pattern of unprofessional behavior (e.g. absenteeism, not communicating with faculty, disrespectful communication with faculty and staff, failing to fulfill graduate program requirements, not performing duties associated with Teaching Assistantships, etc.)

### **11. Warning Status, Academic Dismissal, and Termination**

To continue in the Graduate School beyond the first semester or summer session, the student must make satisfactory progress in fulfilling any admission conditions that were imposed, meet any requirements made in writing by the Graduate Studies Committee, maintain a graduate grade point average of at least 3.50 (CDMES requirement), and receive the approval of the Graduate Studies Committee.

Program requirements are provided by the Graduate Studies Committee in this handbook. Requirements may be changed from one student handbook to the next. The student is normally bound by the requirements of the handbook in force at the time of their first registration in the program; the student may choose, however, to fulfill the requirements of a subsequent handbook. If the student does not fulfill handbook requirements within six years of their first enrollment in the program, they are then bound by the requirements of a subsequent handbook. The student may choose the handbook in effect in any year in which they are enrolled in the program, within the six-year limit.

Graduate Studies Committees are responsible for evaluating the students in their programs to ensure that they are making satisfactory progress toward a degree. CDMES has four levels for the review of academic performance, featured in the subsequent section.

CDMES holds its students to the standard of a 3.50 GPA or higher for each semester that they are enrolled in the program. The subsequent section explains the steps that will be taken by CDMES should a student fall below that threshold.

A graduate student who has been dismissed may be readmitted for further graduate study only by petition of the MES/MELC Graduate Studies Committee or by the Graduate Studies Committee of another program that will accept the student. The petition must be approved by the Graduate Dean. Warning status and academic dismissal are reflected on the student's academic record.

### **12. Policies and Procedures for Review of Academic Performance**

There are four levels of review, outlined below, that may be invoked if a student is facing academic difficulties. Non-academic infractions, such as behavioral issues, may go to Student Judicial Services.

Faculty and program coordinators will share pertinent information with each other for the professional purpose of identifying student issues and enhancing problem solving about the concerns. They will follow University procedures related to student performance issues.

#### *Level 1: Communication of Issue*

A Level 1 review may involve a student, faculty member, MES/MELC Graduate Adviser, and Graduate Coordinator. If a faculty member has concerns about a student enrolled in the program meeting any of the academic criteria, whether related to professional behavior or scholastic performance, the concerned faculty member may:

- Discuss those concerns directly with the student and seek to work with the student to resolve the difficulties (either in person or via email).
- Notify the MES/MELC Graduate Adviser and Coordinator of the concerns in order to identify potential patterns and issues related to the student.

It is advisable that the faculty or staff member initiating the concern document dates and content of meetings and communication with students. This documentation may include an annual/semesterly review, memoranda, or email correspondence to the student detailing the nature of the concern and actions necessary to correct the situation. The documentation may include a follow-up date with measurable goals for improving the situation.

In many instances, meetings between faculty and students resolve the concerns and do not necessarily lead to further reviews, pursuant to this section. Typically, a Level 1 review will consist of corrective feedback to the student and may include a letter of instruction from the Graduate Adviser.

#### *Level 2: Meeting for Review with Student*

A Level 2 Meeting for Review typically involves the student, Graduate Adviser, and Graduate Coordinator. The member(s) will meet with the student when the student is not meeting or following program or university standards, policies, and procedures; or when concerns have not been resolved at Level 1.

The review committee will work with the faculty to determine the nature of the concern. They will develop a plan to address that concern if one is needed. This process is designed to assist students in dealing with identified concerns that have an impact on their performance. The review committee will provide documentation with dates and measures for improvement and consequences for lack of improvement.

The MES/MELC Graduate Adviser may assess the nature of these concerns with appropriate staff/faculty, consult with the MES/MELC GSC, maintain documentation, and decide if it is necessary to conduct a more comprehensive Level 3 review.

#### *Level 3: Implementation of Conditions*

At Level 3, the review committee heretofore consisting of the Graduate Adviser and Graduate Coordinator will likely now bring the issue to the attention of the Department Chair/Center Director. At this point, the student is likely to face some sort of probationary period. Level 3 indicates serious concern with the student's ability to

continue in their program, resulting in a holistic review of their performance and guidance towards rehabilitation. The committee may then:

- Establish formal conditions for the student's continuance in the program. In these situations, specific conditions must be met in order for the student to remain in the program.
- Consult the University's Office of the Dean of Students, depending on the nature of the problem. If a referral is made to that Office after consultation, the student will be notified in writing about the nature of the concern and the fact that the referral is taking place.
- Institute registration bars or academic probation, particularly in the case of scholastic performance issues. When a student is placed on academic probation, they will receive written feedback about the reasons for being placed on probation, the length of the probation, and the criteria for lifting probation.

Should the student's issues not resolve with these warnings and conditions in place, the review committee will then move to consult with the GSC in Level 4.

#### *Level 4: Final Attempts at Resolution*

Generally, this level of review is called for when significant and/or persistent problematic patterns are identified with students. These issues often require formal consultation with faculty, other appropriate parties (faculty supervisors, University administrators, etc.), and the student.

A Level 4 review is usually conducted when concerns have not been resolved in prior reviews; when issues relate to a student not meeting the criteria for academic performance (often involving professional or ethical behaviors); when the student has not met the conditions of academic probation; or when the student is being considered for termination or discontinuance in the program.

When a Level 4 review is called, the MES/MELC Graduate Adviser will convene a meeting with the appropriate faculty including members of the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC), the GSC Chair and/or Chair/Director, the Graduate Coordinator, and the student to gather information, determine the nature of the problem (if one is confirmed to exist), and identify alternatives for its remediation. Appropriate faculty to be involved in a review will include but are not limited to those who have direct knowledge of and experience with the student. The student will be notified in writing of the concerns and meeting date, with sufficient time to prepare for and attend the meeting.

After the review meeting has occurred, the Graduate Adviser and members of the GSC will meet to discuss the problem situation and make recommendations regarding the student. In any Level 4 review, there must be clear, concise documentation of the problem areas as well as verification that these concerns have been discussed with the student and attempts to ameliorate those concerns, where appropriate, have been implemented.

Based on this review and conference, and an objective assessment of the information provided, the MES/MELC Graduate Adviser will inform the student of the decisions, which can include one or more of the following actions:

- Continue the student in the program with no conditions. In these situations, the concern has been addressed and no further action by the student or program is required.

- Counsel the student to change majors/degree programs and/or discontinue the student in the program. In some situations, it will be recommended that the student voluntarily withdraw from the program. If that does not occur, the student may be terminated from the program.

Students must be notified of the decision in writing of the review. It is the responsibility of the Graduate Adviser to communicate the decision to the student.

### **13. Student Responsibility**

While University faculty and staff give students academic advice and assistance, students are expected to take responsibility for their education and personal development. Successful completion of the degree is the responsibility of the student. The student must know and abide by the academic and disciplinary policies given in this handbook and from the Graduate School, including rules governing quantity of work, the standard of work required to continue in the University, warning status and scholastic dismissal, and enforced withdrawal.

Students must also know and meet the requirements of their degree program; must enroll in courses appropriate to the program; meet programmatic, course, project, and/or university deadlines; must meet prerequisites and take courses in the proper sequence to ensure orderly and timely progress; and must seek advice about degree requirements and other University policies.

The student must meet with the Graduate Adviser or their individual Supervisor (for MELC students) for advising prior to registration, complete the required forms, register by the deadlines given in the Course Schedule, and verify their schedule of classes each semester and keep documentation of all schedule changes and other transactions.

The student must give correct local and permanent postal addresses, telephone numbers, and email address to the Office of the Registrar and must keep contact information current via UT Direct. Official correspondence is sent to the postal or email address last given to the registrar; if the student has failed to correct this address, they will not be relieved of responsibility on the grounds that the correspondence was not delivered. The University considers email to be an official means of communication. Most correspondence from faculty, the Graduate Adviser, and Graduate Coordinator will be sent via email.

### **14. Student Conduct and Academic Integrity**

It is imperative that all students adhere to UT's honor code. Each year, the University reviews and updates the Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities.

"'Academic dishonesty' or 'scholastic dishonesty' includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, misrepresenting facts, and any act designed to give unfair academic advantage to the student (such as, but not limited to, submission of essentially the same written assignment for two classes without the prior permission of the instructor), or the attempt to commit such an act."

The examples of academic dishonesty listed above are defined at length in chapter 11 of the *Institutional Rules*. Students are expected to review this section of the document carefully, as ignorance will not be accepted as a defense against accusations. Please note that, in language courses, having a native speaker revise work done in the target language without the instructor's permission, and before submission of the assignment, is considered an act of collusion.

## 15. Title IX

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in education. It reads no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

The University is committed to providing an educational and working environment for its students, faculty, and staff that is free from sex and gender discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual misconduct, interpersonal violence (including domestic violence and dating violence), and stalking. The University encourages individuals to promptly report incidents to the University Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Title IX Coordinators. The University considers graduate students hired to work as Teaching Assistants and Assistant Instructors to be mandatory reporters. It is imperative that graduate students serving in these roles familiarize themselves with Title IX.

Title IX related incidents include many types of behaviors that are defined and governed by University policies. The full list of detailed definitions can be found in the General Information Catalog, Appendix D: Policy on Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Sexual Misconduct, Interpersonal Violence, and Stalking or the Handbook of Operating Procedures and 3-3031 Policy on Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Sexual Misconduct, Interpersonal Violence, and Stalking.



# PROGRAM INFORMATION

## II. Program Information

### 1. Faculty

The Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES, MES) and the Department of Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures (DMES, MELC) has more than 20 core faculty who may offer courses in Middle Eastern Studies and/or languages.

Additionally, there are many more associated faculty who have a scholarly or personal interest in the area. Faculty affiliates may teach any MES/MEL course. Because our graduate programs are interdisciplinary, we are able to have access to these diverse and valuable perspectives. The faculty directory, searchable by rank and affiliation, can be found on the website.

### 2. Program Staff Lists

#### **Dr. Bruce Wells**

Chair, Department of Middle Eastern Studies  
Associate Professor, Department of Middle Eastern Studies

#### **Dr. Samy Ayoub**

Graduate Adviser, Department of Middle Eastern Studies  
Associate Professor, Department of Middle Eastern Studies

#### **Dr. Levi Thompson**

Director, Center for Middle Eastern Studies  
Associate Professor, Department of Middle Eastern Studies

#### **Dr. Hina Azam**

Graduate Adviser, Center for Middle Eastern Studies Associate Professor,  
Department of Middle Eastern Studies

#### **Taylor Peterson**

Graduate Program Coordinator

#### **Dr. Dale Correa**

Middle Eastern Studies Librarian and History Coordinator UT Libraries

#### **Uri Kolodney**

Hebrew, Jewish, and Israel Studies Librarian  
UT Libraries

### 3. Graduate Adviser

The Graduate Adviser is a faculty member designated to advise students and represent the Graduate School in matters pertaining to graduate study.

The Graduate Adviser's responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Providing information about degree programs, including admission and degree requirements

- Administering graduate fellowships
- Assigning teaching and graduate assistantships
- Consulting with newly admitted students
- Monitoring the progress of all graduate students
- Advising on the student's course selections each semester (or designating this responsibility to the student's supervisor)
- Approving all formal documents during the student's program of study

Both Middle Eastern Studies (MES, MA) and Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures (MELC, MA/PhD) have their own Graduate Adviser.

#### **4. Graduate Coordinator**

The Graduate Coordinator is a staff member who assists the Graduate Adviser and other faculty members in the administration of the program, and also provides services to students. The Graduate Coordinator can help with many routine questions about courses, degrees, or the UT environment. The Graduate Coordinator is familiar with the University and program policies concerning application, admission, registration and graduation. The Graduate Coordinator informs and assists students in dealing with these policies.

Additionally, the Graduate Coordinator distributes information about the program, handles petitions and special requests, assists with registration, maintains student files, and compiles statistics.

#### **5. Graduate Studies Committee (GSC)**

A Graduate Studies Committee is required for any academic area in which an approved graduate degree program is offered. The MES and MELC GSCs are comprised of faculty members from several administrative units. When forming committees and selecting a supervisor, students must ensure that the correct number of faculty members on their committee are also currently on the appropriate GSC.

The criterion for membership on the MELC GSC is that approximately 30% of a faculty member's teaching and research must be within the areas covered by the doctoral program (HB/ANE, Middle Eastern Literature & Culture, Islamic Studies, Middle Eastern Linguistics, and Middle Eastern History). Exceptions may be made to this policy on a case-by-case basis and require a vote of the GSC.

#### **6. GSC Evaluation**

All graduate students are evaluated by the GSC on a yearly basis or anytime in which the situation calls for intervention, such as a low GPA at the end of the semester, disrespectful or disruptive behavior, and/or making inadequate progress in coursework/research. During the meeting, the student's mentor or supervisor reports on progress and responds to questions from members of the GSC. Progress toward the degree is defined in terms of the relevance of courses taken to the student's course of study, the length of time a student spends in the program, the GPA maintained, courses taken on a credit/no-credit basis, and the number of incompletes. Students will receive written evaluations on their standing and progress from the Graduate Coordinator.



# PROGRAM AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES

## III. Program and University Policies

### 1. Information Sources

Students should be familiar with the following sources of information:

*General Information Catalog* gives important information about academic policies and procedures that apply to all students. It includes the official academic calendar, admission procedures, residence requirements, information about tuition and fees, and policies on quantity of work, grades, and the grade point average, adding and dropping courses, and withdrawal from the University.

*Graduate Catalog* contains degree requirements for all graduate programs, rules that affect graduate students, descriptions of graduate courses, and a list of Graduate Studies Committee(s) members. Students are expected to be familiar with the protective and academic policies contained within and to use it as a resource throughout their time at UT.

*Course Schedule* is published by the Office of the Registrar and is available online before registration for each semester and summer session. The Course Schedule includes information about registration procedures; times, locations, instructors, prerequisites, and special fees of classes offered.

*University Directory* gives physical and email addresses and telephone numbers of University offices and of students, faculty and staff. Please note, it is possible to restrict one's personal information from appearing in the directory.

### 2. Student Responsibility

Successful completion of the degree is the responsibility of the student. The Graduate Adviser and Graduate Coordinator are valuable resources for information on academic issues, administrative procedures, and University and program policy; students are, however, responsible for ensuring that they act within the rules and regulations of the department, college, and university; meet all deadlines; and fulfill the requirements of the degree program.

### 3. Communication

#### *Email Expectations*

UT considers email an official means of correspondence; hence, if an administrator sends you an e-mail message, you are responsible for reading it and acting in a timely manner. Pay attention to email messages from the Graduate Coordinator, administrators from the program, the Graduate School, and the University; they will be full of information about deadlines, fellowship opportunities, events, and job possibilities. Make sure that the University and the Graduate Coordinator have your current email address. Students are expected to check email on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current with University-related communications, recognizing that certain communications may be time-critical. It is recommended that students check their email daily.

#### *Student Expectations*

It is the student's responsibility to communicate regularly with instructors, supervisors, committee members, the Graduate Adviser, and Graduate Coordinator about academic matters. The Center or Department will not intervene if there is a breakdown in communication between the student and any of the above individuals.

#### **4. UT Email Address**

University policy requires that all employees, including Teaching Assistants and Assistant Instructors, use official university email accounts (Microsoft 365 emails) for all university business. As university employees are prohibited from sending an official UT email to a personal email account, students must also communicate with professors and staff through an official UT email address. As email accounts are provided with a higher-level of protection and security any individuals with access to UT information or federally protected student data must abide by this policy.

#### **5. FERPA and Privacy**

FERPA, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, is a federal law that pertains to the release of and access to educational records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. Essentially your student data and any data you may have access to as a TA/AI is federally protected.

#### **6. Meeting Deadlines**

Deadlines, whether they are course-specific or of the thesis/report/dissertation variety, are critical. There is very little flexibility built into the system. The Graduate Coordinator and University often send reminders by email, but the responsibility is ultimately on the student. Students who routinely miss programmatic, academic, and/or University deadlines will trigger a review process (see section I of Handbook).

#### **7. Academic Employment Requirements**

To be employed as a Teaching Assistant, Assistant Instructor, Graduate Research Assistant, Academic Assistant or Assistant, graduate students at The University of Texas at Austin must:

- Be making satisfactory progress toward a graduate degree without existing conditional admission requirements;
- Remain registered for at least nine semester hours of coursework in long semesters. Enrollment in three semester hours of coursework is required for students holding summer appointments;
- Maintain at least a 3.5 grade-point average; and
- Must not have more than two grades of X, I, NC, D, or F in any combination.

When a graduate student is employed in an academic job title by a unit outside their academic program the student must provide to the employing unit certification showing they are in good academic standing and making satisfactory progress towards their degree; the Graduate Adviser for the program makes this determination, and approval.

#### **8. Employment Restrictions**

##### *20/30 Rule*

Assignments in a student job title at the university, including academic as well as non-academic positions, may not exceed 20 hours per week during the first two long semesters (fall/spring) of graduate study at UT Austin, and no more than 30 hours per week during the subsequent semesters, including summer.

##### *International Students*

International students may work as many as 20 hours per week during the fall and spring semesters. Full-time employment (21-40 hours per week) is allowed only during the following times for enrolled and continuing students:

- Spring Break (5 weekdays, plus the Saturday and Sunday before and after);
- Summer (day after May graduation through day before August classes start);
- Winter Break (day after December graduation through day before January classes start).

International students who will be employed as teaching assistants or assistant instructors must obtain the International Teaching Assistant English Certification (unless exempt).

## 9. Funding

All applicants and current students are automatically considered for University fellowships, internal scholarships, in-state tuition waivers, and academic employment. Students are encouraged to apply for FLAS Fellowships offered by the various Title VI Centers on campus to increase their odds of receiving funding. Funding will vary year-by-year and is dependent upon annual instructional budgets and fellowship allocations.

### *Doctoral-specific funding packages*

Over the course of six years, our PhD students are supported through a combination of fellowships and teaching appointments, as well as competitive external fellowships or other academic appointments for various centers and departments across the college and campus. With the exception of the targeted and centrally administered fellowships competitively offered by the Graduate School, each cohort of students receives similar funding packages.

### *Masters-specific funding packages*

We encourage our students to apply for fellowships and scholarships that contribute to areas of national need, such as the Critical Language Scholarship, Boren, Fulbright, and FLAS fellowships. Many Master's students have received such fellowships in the past. The funding tied to these scholarships will drastically reduce yearly tuition rates by almost half and students are supported with monthly stipends during the award period.

### *Funding Committee*

The Department Chair and Center Director annually appoint the members of the funding selection committee, which is composed of faculty members representing each of the areas of study. Applicants and current students are evaluated for admission and funding through the merits of their application, their overall academic performance, language acquisition, and genuine potential for future academic achievement.

## 10. Funding Conditions

In order to be eligible for funding you must meet and abide by the following expectations. To be eligible for appointment and subsequent re-appointment to teaching positions, you must be in good academic standing in the graduate program and the University of Texas at Austin. Good Academic Standing includes:

- Following all applicable university and program policies;
- Maintaining cumulative and semester GPAs of 3.50;
- Making satisfactory progress towards the degree as outlined by the Graduate Handbook and The Office of Graduate Studies;
- Performing at the professional level expected of the program, Graduate Adviser, and faculty supervisor;

- Registering in no fewer than nine credit hours of coursework each long semester of employment (three hours in the summer);
- Taking all courses for a letter grade; *excluding Thesis/Report/Comprehensive Exams/Dissertation courses*;
- Replacing temporary incomplete grade(s) **before** the start of the following semester;
- Gaining permission to leave campus for academic or personal reasons and/or to attend conferences during the employment window,
- including the final exam period which is typically mid-December and early May.

## 11. Employment Positions

### *Teaching Assistants*

Teaching assistants are graduate students who help faculty with the conduct and delivery of courses. Services provided by teaching assistants include, but are not limited to, grading, monitoring, leading lab and/or discussion sessions, offering office hour assistance to students, and performing clerical tasks associated with course instruction. Teaching assistants are supervised by the course instructor of record and are subject to established departmental policies on student academic employment.

To be eligible for appointment as a teaching assistant a nominee must:

- Be a degree-seeking graduate student without existing admissions conditions imposed by the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies;
- Be in good academic standing and making satisfactory progress toward a graduate degree;
- Remain registered in courses that count toward the graduate degree for at least nine semester hours during each semester of the long session; and
- If holding an appointment for any summer term (first six weeks, second six weeks, nine weeks or twelve weeks), must remain registered in courses that count toward the graduate degree for at least three summer hours during any term of the summer session.

### *Duties of Teaching Assistants*

1. Teaching assistants may only be assigned duties which are adjunct to regular classroom instruction.
2. All duties performed by teaching assistants shall be under the supervision and direction of a designated member of the faculty.
3. Such duties may include student practice sessions, discussion sessions, assistance in laboratories, recitation sessions, review sessions and similar activities.
4. In addition, teaching assistants may be assigned to hold office hours, hold student conferences, evaluate student work, and to perform similar common academic duties.
5. Teaching assistants may not be assigned regular classroom instruction duties nor may they serve as an instructor of record for any instructional activity.
6. The dean of the college, in consultation with the chairs of departments in which teaching assistants are employed, shall set the basic workload policy for teaching assistants within the college.

### *Assistant Instructors*

A non-faculty, academic position held by an eligible graduate student with the primary duties of teaching undergraduate classes and providing instruction under the supervision of a University faculty member. Assistant Instructors are employed to meet instructional needs at the undergraduate level, primarily in lower-division areas. Approval for an assistant instructor to teach an upper-division course may be requested by

petition to the Associate Dean of the Graduate School and must be approved before the student is assigned to the upper-division course.

To be eligible for appointment as an assistant instructor a nominee must:

1. Be a degree-seeking graduate student without existing admissions conditions imposed by the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies.
2. Hold a Master's degree or have completed a minimum 30 hours of graduate coursework (including 18 hours of credit in the subject to be taught).
3. Have satisfactorily completed one semester of a course in teaching methods (398T).
4. Have completed at least one semester of service as a teaching assistant or completed at least one year of teaching experience in an accredited college or school.
5. Be in good academic standing and making satisfactory progress toward a graduate degree.
6. Remain registered in courses that count toward the graduate degree for at least nine semester hours during each long session semester of employment.

If holding an appointment for one summer term (first six weeks, second six weeks, nine weeks or twelve weeks) must remain registered in courses that count toward the graduate degree for at least three semester hours during any term of the summer session.

#### *Duties of Assistant Instructors*

1. Assistant instructors may serve as the instructor of record for assigned instructional duties including lecture classes (primarily at the lower- division level), laboratory instruction, instruction of recitation and discussion sections of classes, and other similar instructional activities. Approval for an assistant instructor to teach an upper-division course must be obtained from the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies.
2. In addition to instructional duties, assistant instructors may be assigned to hold office hours to evaluate student work, and to perform other common academic duties.
3. Instructional service of an assistant instructor shall be carried out in accordance with a syllabus and other guidelines that have been prepared by and approved by the department. All other duties of assistant instructors shall be carried out in accordance with established practices and policies of the department and college/school in which they are appointed. The duties assigned to an assistant instructor and the syllabus and guidelines relating to an assistant instructor's instructional duties may be changed at any time deemed appropriate by the department.
4. All assistant instructors shall be under assigned supervision of a regular member of the faculty. The supervising faculty member shall at the close of each semester file with the department chair a written evaluation of the performance of the assistant instructor. This evaluation shall become a permanent part of the assistant instructor's personnel file.

## **12. Grades**

Grading standards in each class will vary based on the course content and the instructor's grading policies. However, from a programmatic perspective, we consider an A or A- as strong or satisfactory performance, and B as below average performance. Grades of C, D, F, or I (permanent incomplete) indicate an unsatisfactory progress in the program. Incomplete courses may be questioned by the GSC.

Only courses in which a student earns a grade of C or better may be included in the program of work for a graduate degree at The University of Texas at Austin. This coursework must have been taken within a six-year time limit. While an average GPA of 3.0 is the minimum University requirement, students are expected to maintain a GPA higher than 3.5 in order to be considered as making satisfactory progress toward the degree.

### **13.Credit/No-Credit**

All organized courses are to be taken for a letter grade. Students who decide to change the grading option of a coursework to Credit/No Credit (CR/NC) must seek approval of their supervisor, the Graduate Adviser, and the Graduate Coordinator. These courses will not count toward degree requirements. All students who hold teaching appointments or fellowships are required to take their coursework for a letter grade. While CR/NC grades are not factored into the GPA, an NC is equivalent to failing the course and is indicative of unsatisfactory progress in the program. Students who earn a NC will be reviewed by the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC).

#### *Credit / No-Credit in Thesis / Report / Comprehensive Exams / Dissertation*

Thesis/Report/Comprehensive Exams/Dissertation courses are evaluated and graded each semester by the student's supervisor and assigned a grade of "CR" or "NC." A "CR" is appropriate when the student made satisfactory progress during the semester, and an "NC" is appropriate when the student did not make satisfactory progress during the semester. An NC is equivalent to failing the course and is indicative of unsatisfactory progress in the program. Students who earn an NC will be reviewed by the Graduate Studies Committee, which may result in being placed on probation or a recommendation of dismissal from the program.

### **14.Incomplete Grades**

If a student does not complete all course assignments before the end of the semester, the instructor may report an incomplete (X) to the Office of the Registrar in place of a grade. The student must then complete the course requirements by the last class day in their *next* fall or spring term of enrollment. The instructor must report a final grade by the end of the grade-reporting period in that term. If these deadlines are not met, the X is converted to an I (permanent incomplete). Permanent incompletes remain on the student's record and cannot be converted to a grade.

### **15.GPA Requirement**

All students must maintain a minimum 3.50 GPA in order to remain in good standing. If a student happens to fall between a 3.00-3.50 in a given semester, they will enter probation and have one semester to bring their grades back above a 3.50. Failure to do so could result in dismissal from the program. Students must possess at least a 3.50 in order to graduate from the program.

### **16.Transfer Credit**

The Graduate School does not allow transfer of credit for more than six hours, be it from a study abroad program or from another US institution. Only graduate courses in which your grade was an A or a B can transfer, and only if they have not been counted toward another degree. A student seeking to use coursework completed at another institution must provide the Graduate Studies Committee with an official transcript, the official explanation of the institution's course numbering system and grading system, and the course description from the catalog of the institution. Along with these documents, the Petition to Transfer a Graduate Course from Another Institution form should be submitted by the Graduate Adviser for approval by

the Graduate Dean. This form must be submitted *before* 12 hours of graduate coursework are completed at UT Austin.

For PhD students, each track will determine transfer credit eligibility on a case-by-case basis. Transfer credits may only be utilized to fulfill track-specific requirements (and may not be used to fulfill general MELC degree requirements).

### **17. Full-Time Status and Course Load**

The Graduate School recognizes nine semester hours during a long semester (spring or fall) and three hours during a summer session as a minimum full-time course load. In order to make adequate progress towards the degree, students pursuing dual Master's degrees will be expected to enroll in 12 hours during long semesters. The three-semester credit hour minimum course load for the summer session may be satisfied in one six-week term, or in the nine-week or twelve-week terms.

Under various circumstances, graduate students must be registered for and must remain registered for a full-time load, including: holders of Graduate School administered fellowships and scholarships; Assistant Instructors, Teaching Assistants, Academic Assistants, and Graduate Research Assistants, students living in university housing, students receiving certain student loans, and international students.

### **18. Time to Degree (MA)**

The College of Liberal Arts strives to matriculate outstanding master's students and provide them with the training, experience and support necessary for successful completion of their respective degrees. Within this framework, the College views time to degree as a strong indicator of program quality and student success.

#### **a. Single-Degree Students**

For these students, the MA degree must be completed within two academic years (typically 21 months). An exception to this is the Dual-Language Track or students seeking a Graduate Portfolio, where an additional year is permitted. The majority of courses do not need to be taken in any particular order, but the thesis or report must be completed during the semester in which the student graduates.

#### **b. Dual Degree Students**

Students simultaneously earning an MA in Middle Eastern studies and a second degree from one of UT's professional schools are expected to finish their degrees in three academic years—with the exception of Law, which is a four-year program.

### **19. Coursework Expiration & Time Limits (MA)**

All requirements for a master's degree must be completed within one six-year period. Coursework over six years old may be reinstated only with the permission of the graduate dean, upon recommendation of the GSC. The GSC will review the program of every student at least yearly; the results of this review will be provided to the student in writing. Middle Eastern Studies (MES, MA) requires that all students complete their master's degree coursework in 2 academic years, with dual degree students completing their two degrees in three academic years and students pursuing an MES/JD will be given four academic years to complete. Students who do not take a leave of absence are required to finish within the established timelines. Petitions for extensions beyond the two/three-year norm will be reviewed by the GSC on a case-by-case basis.

## **20. Time to Degree (PhD)**

Time to degree plays a significant role in planning for graduate student financial support. The College of Liberal Arts expects departments to have doctoral students enter candidacy no later than their fourth year in the program. In general, the College expects students to complete their PhDs no later than three years after having entered candidacy. With that expectation in mind, and allowing for exceptions in rare cases, the College will not support candidacy extensions for seventh-year doctoral students beyond the third year of candidacy status, or for students who have reached the end of their eighth year in the program.

## **21. Coursework Expiration and Time Limits (PhD)**

All completed work that is included in a doctoral student's degree program at the time of admission to candidacy must have been taken within the previous six years (exclusive of a maximum of three years of United States military service). Coursework over six years old may be reinstated upon recommendation of the GSC. The GSC will review the program of every student at least yearly; the results of this review will be provided to the student in writing. At those times the committee may recommend additional coursework, further examinations, or termination of candidacy. In addition, the program is subject to review by the graduate dean.

## **22. Parental Accommodation**

The College offers four types of accommodations for graduate students with growing families. These accommodations, all of them for a long semester or summer, are available to full-time students (enrolled for at least nine credit hours each long semester and three hours in summer). After an accommodation period, students are expected to resume their regular activities and to progress towards their degree as all students in their graduate program. After an accommodation period, faculty are encouraged to remain flexible in their expectations so that students can meet the demands of graduate study while adjusting to new demands in their parental roles.

It is the responsibility of a graduate student anticipating a birth or adoption to inform their Graduate Adviser, Graduate Coordinator, and thesis/dissertation or research project supervisor of any anticipated accommodation needs as early as possible, and to submit the required documentation in support of the accommodation request.

## **23. Leave of Absence**

Graduate students may apply for a leave of absence of no more than two semesters. If the student has not yet been admitted to candidacy for the doctoral degree, this request must be approved in advance by the Graduate Adviser.

Granting leaves of absence for students not in candidacy is left to the discretion of the Graduate Adviser and Graduate Studies Committee. A form must be submitted to the Graduate School in advance of the semester for which a leave is granted. A student on an approved leave may reenter the graduate program by filing an Application for Readmission. Students who do not return from their leave will be expected to complete the application process again, including meeting standard deadlines. Depending on the length the student has been away, they might have to retake test scores and/or complete additional coursework.

## **24. Non-degree Seekers**

The non-degree-seeker status was created at UT for special circumstances in which applicants wish to take UT courses at the graduate level without seeking a graduate degree (e.g., a high school teacher wishing to take a graduate course as part of their professional development).

MES/MELC rarely admits non-degree seekers. Applications by non-degree seekers are considered only if a very strong case for admission is presented, and it is clear that the applicant, while in a position to function at the graduate level and, is indeed, not pursuing an advanced degree. We will not consider, for example, fall applicants who wish to take courses in the previous spring as non-degree seekers with the hope of applying these courses to their degree. Admitted non-degree seekers are expected to stay in the program no longer than one academic year.

## **25. Auditing Language Courses**

Due to the intensive and interactive character of our modern language classrooms, auditing is not permitted in Arabic, modern Hebrew, Persian, and Turkish. For learners with previous experience in these languages who wish to register, we require a placement test to help us determine the appropriate level. Information and registration for the placement test are available on our website.

## **26. Final Exam Policy**

### *Scheduling*

The Office of the Registrar schedules all official University final exams each semester. “No-class” days and final exam days are listed in the official University academic calendar. No mandatory class meetings can be held on these days. No member of the University (faculty, staff, or student) has the right to alter examination dates or hold events on “no-class” days without the consent of the Faculty Council and the Board of Regents.

### *TA and AI Responsibilities*

Teaching Assistants and Assistant Instructors are not permitted to leave campus at the end of each semester until released by their supervisor / instructor of the course. They are expected to fulfill job duties before, during, and after the final exam period, including, but not limited to, proctoring and grading final exams.

Failure to remain in-residence and fulfill all related TA/AI duties may result in the loss of employee-level insurance and repaying the University for tuition waivers and any other tuition-related benefits afforded to student employees.

### *Complaints*

Complaints related to final exam procedures should be made to the department chair, college dean, or the Office of the Ombudsperson.

## **27. Restricted Regions Travel Policy**

The Travel Policy to Restricted Regions applies to UT-Austin graduate students, traveling internationally as individuals or in groups, with or without University funding, for any UT-sponsored, UT-administered, or UT-related activity or program. In these instances, and when the travel is academic-related (typically for research purposes or language programs), prior travel authorization is required, even in cases where it's the student's home country, and especially in cases where funding is involved (otherwise the funding will not be released).

The only instances where it is not necessary is when the student visits a country purely for personal purposes.

Examples of when students should seek approval to travel to Restricted Regions includes, but is not limited to:

- official study abroad programs
- attending or presenting at a conference
- conducting research
- internships
- field studies
- service learning
- volunteer, experiential, or work programs sponsored, endorsed, promoted, or administered by the University

#### *Travel request process*

There are time-sensitive deadlines related to when you will be traveling (usually mid to late April for Summer travel). Travel will usually be approved when there is a compelling justification and no suitable alternative opportunities exist. All requests must be strongly linked to academic goals and must adequately address major health, safety or security concerns. Forms require Chair/Director signature and must be submitted to the International Office prior to the stated deadline.

### **28.IRB Approval Process**

The Office of Research Support and Compliance partners with students to maintain the integrity of research at the University of Texas at Austin. The RSC helps to protect the rights and welfare of human research participants as well as assist researchers in managing foreign relationships and activities and conduct responsible research by providing research ethics education. Students' whose research requires the use of human subjects and/or foreign involvement are required to submit IRB paperwork *prior to the start* of their research. The student's supervisor and/or committee should assist them with this process. The student will need a faculty member to sponsor their research and the IRB approval process. More information can be found on the Office of Research Support and Compliance website.



# MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES (MA)

## IV. Middle Eastern Studies (MA)

### 1. MA Degree in Middle Eastern Studies (CMES)

Offered by the Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES), the MA in Middle Eastern Studies (MES) is an interdisciplinary academic degree designed to broaden and deepen the student's knowledge of the languages and cultures of the Middle East. The MA in MES program develops a strong knowledge base, preparing students for leadership positions as professionals in areas such as government, NGOs, business, consulting, foreign policy, international law, journalism, and translation; or for doctoral programs in relevant fields.

### 2. Requirements

Students pursuing a master's degree in Middle Eastern Studies (MES) may write either a thesis or a report at the end of their coursework. At full time enrollment, students will typically take 36 credit hours (thesis) and 33 (report) credit hours of coursework, of which the remaining hours are seen as in excess of the degree.

The *thesis option* requires 30 semester hours of coursework, of which *six (6)* hours are earned in the thesis course. The *report option* requires 33 semester hours of coursework, of which *three (3)* hours are earned in the report course. The thesis option is strongly recommended for those who plan to pursue a doctorate. Students pursuing a singular MA degree are expected to complete degree requirements by the spring of their second year. In addition, each student must demonstrate competence in the research skills appropriate to the student's overall academic and career objectives and to the final thesis or report.

Dual-degree students are expected to complete both degrees by the spring of their third year, with the exception of the joint MA/JD which is a four-year program. Dual-degree students typically enroll in four courses per semester.

Students are required to complete *at least two* intermediate (upper-division) language courses. Additional study may be required if a student enters the program without beginner knowledge. Students are expected to utilize primary sources in their language of study for their thesis or report projects.

All courses must be taken for a letter-grade. Credit/No Credit (CR/NC) courses may not be applied to MA course requirements (with the exception of the Proseminar, Report, and Thesis courses).

#### Master's with Thesis Requirements

<b>Core Degree</b>	12 credits	MES graduate courses
<b>Concentration</b>	9 credits	Concentration courses to be approved by Graduate Adviser; subject matter pertaining to thesis/report project
<b>Language</b>	6 credits	Upper-division language courses: Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, or Turkish. In most cases, graduate students enroll in 381.
<b>Thesis Work</b>	6 credits	MES 698A & 698B are taken sequentially on a CR/NC grade basis
<b>Proseminar</b>	0 credits	Taken in first semester

#### Master's with Report Requirements

<b>Core Degree</b>	15 credits	MES graduate courses
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<b>Concentration</b>	9 credits	Concentration courses to be approved by Graduate Adviser; subject matter pertaining to thesis/report project
<b>Language</b>	6 credits	Upper-division language courses: Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, or Turkish. In most cases, graduate students enroll in 381.
<b>Report Work</b>	3 credits	MES 398R taken on a CR/NC grade basis in final semester.
<b>Proseminar</b>	0 credits	Taken in first semester

### 3. MES Proseminar

This weekly, zero-credit, one-hour seminar (MES 097) is required of all MA students during their first semester of study. The Proseminar gives students the opportunity to familiarize themselves with Center faculty, to develop knowledge of the different subfields and disciplines related to Middle Eastern Studies in consideration of their research interests, and to build a sense of cohort.

### 4. Core Courses

The MA degree in Middle Eastern Studies (MES) is comprised of three areas: Core Courses, Concentration Courses, and Language courses. Core courses are graduate seminars that have an official MES course number (MES 384, 385, 386). They are taught by either core or affiliated faculty and have been verified by the curriculum committee for having at least 30% of course content related to the Middle East.

### 5. Concentration Courses

Concentration courses must pertain to the student's thesis/report. This form of support can be in terms of *discipline* (history, literary theory, religious studies, gender studies) or in terms of *topic/area* (Islam, Arab Spring, dispute resolution, Hebrew Bible). Though courses may include topics on the Middle East, they are not required to do so. Ideally, concentration courses will be *both* related to each other (same topic, area, discipline) *and* supportive of the thesis/report; if a two-fold relationship is not possible then these courses must support the thesis/report.

### 6. Course Categories

A graduate student may receive credit for up to six hours (2 courses) of *either* upper-division undergraduate coursework *and/or* conference courses as part of their core degree requirements.

*Conference course (MES 389)*: is a specialized course covering topics that are not regularly addressed in the curriculum, or designed to expand the student's opportunities for individual consultation. They are often taught on a one-on-one basis. While they make sense in terms of the topics they cover and the opportunities they offer, conference courses lack the important interaction with a peer group. Special approval from the Graduate Adviser is required for students who wish to take MES 389 *Conference Course* for MA coursework. The Graduate School limits the number of conference courses that can count toward a student's degree.

*Upper-division courses* are designated by the last two digits of the course number, x20-x79. A graduate student may receive credit for up to six hours (2 courses) of upper-division undergraduate coursework as part of their core degree requirements. Such courses are typically a specialized course in one's area of interest that is not offered at the graduate level.

*Summer graduate courses* are rarely offered at UT during the summer. Most faculty are away during the summer.

## 7. Course Limitations

Students may not apply **more than a total of two** of the following courses to the MA degree in Middle Eastern Studies:

- MES 389: Conference Course
- Upper-division: upper-division undergraduate course
- The Office of Graduate Studies allows for a maximum of two courses from the above to count toward core degree requirements in either MES core or concentration courses.

## 8. Cross Listings

A course that is cross-listed with MES may appear on the program of work regardless of the department under which a student registers for the course. For example, HIS 388K may apply to the degree without any special approval, *if* it is cross-listed with MES 385.

## 9. Non-MES Courses

A non-language course that is not cross-listed with MES cannot be applied to the MES degree (MES Core) without advance approval. To request this approval, a student must submit a non-MES course credit petition to the Graduate Adviser and Coordinator demonstrating that the non-MES course contains at least 30% Middle Eastern studies content. Petitions stating that the student will pursue final projects or individual assignments through the lens of the Middle East will not be approved. Middle East content should be represented in all aspects of the class, including lectures, readings, and assignments. This approval must be sought and granted before the 1st class day of the semester in which the non-MES course is taken. Retroactive approvals will not be granted. Courses taken outside of MES that apply neither to the degree nor a dual degree program may be taken with the approval of the Graduate Adviser. With Graduate Adviser approval students may apply non-MES courses toward their concentration courses.

## 10. Language Courses

Lower-division language courses may not be used to satisfy degree requirements. Degree requirements are met when a student completes, in-residence, two upper-division language courses (e.g. 381K-N, 320K, 320L, 329, 360). Students who place into an intermediate or advanced level course their first year in the program may continue their language study into their second year or pursue the Dual Language Track.

Native or heritage speakers of a Middle Eastern language may not use their native tongue to meet the Master's in Middle Eastern Studies' language requirement. They must complete the language requirement by pursuing a non-native Middle Eastern language, potentially from the beginner level if the applicant does not already possess a strong background in this second language.

## 11. Language Sequences

All undergraduate language courses have three-credit graduate cross-listings that graduate students register for. The intent of these corresponding three-credit versions is meant to keep tuition down. However, students are actually still taking a five- or six-credit course at the undergraduate level. "Content Courses" come after

completion of the intermediate or advanced level. These courses are neither graduate-level courses nor seminars and cannot be applied to core degree requirements.

*Meets-with undergraduate course numbers:*

<b>Arabic Lower Division</b> (preparatory courses that may not count towards the degree)		
<i>Semester</i>	<i>Grad Course</i>	<i>UG Course</i>
Fall	ARA 381H Intensive Grad Language Instruction I	ARA 601C Intensive Arabic I
Spring	ARA 381J Intensive Grad Language Instruction II	ARA 611C Intensive Arabic II
<b>Arabic Upper Division</b>		
<i>Semester</i>	<i>Grad Course</i>	<i>UG Course</i>
Fall	ARA 381K Intensive Grad Language Instruction III	ARA 621K Intensive Arabic III
Spring	ARA 381L Intensive Grad Language Instruction IV	ARA 621L Intensive Arabic IV
Fall	ARA 381M Intensive Grad Language Instruction V	ARA 531K Intensive Arabic V
Spring	ARA 381N Intensive Grad Language Instruction VI	ARA 531L Intensive Arabic VI
Fall/Spring	ARA 360L Arabic Content Courses	

<b>Hebrew Lower Division</b> (preparatory courses that may not count towards the degree)		
<i>Semester</i>	<i>Grad Course</i>	<i>UG Course</i>
Fall	HEB 381H Intensive Grad Language Instruction I	HEB 601C Intensive Hebrew I
Spring	HEB 381J Intensive Grad Language Instruction II	HEB 611C Intensive Hebrew II
<b>Hebrew Upper Division</b>		
<i>Semester</i>	<i>Grad Course</i>	<i>UG Course</i>
Fall	HEB 320L Hebrew Through the Media	
Spring	HEB 346C Innovation/Tech in Israel	

<b>Persian Lower Division</b> (preparatory courses that may not count towards the degree)		
<i>Semester</i>	<i>Grad Course</i>	<i>UG Course</i>
Fall	PRS 381H Intensive Grad Language Instruction I	PRS 601C Intensive Persian I
Spring	PRS 381J Intensive Grad Language Instruction II	PRS 611C Intensive Persian II
<b>Persian Upper Division</b>		
<i>Semester</i>	<i>Grad Course</i>	<i>UG Course</i>
Fall	PRS 322K Intermediate Persian	
Fall/Spring	PRS 329 Content Courses	

<b>Turkish Lower Division</b> (preparatory courses that may not count towards the degree)		
<i>Semester</i>	<i>Grad Course</i>	<i>UG Course</i>
Fall	TUR 381H Intensive Grad Language Instruction I	TUR 601C Intensive Turkish I
Spring	TUR 381J Intensive Grad Language Instruction II	TUR 611C Intensive Turkish II
<b>Turkish Upper Division</b>		

<i>Semester</i>	<i>Grad Course</i>	<i>UG Course</i>
Fall	TUR 320K Intermediate Turkish	
Spring	TUR 329 Content Courses	

## 12. Language Content Courses

Content courses (ARA 360, HEB 346C, PRS 329, TUR 329) foster language skills through the use of targeted vocabulary, readings, and activities that focus on the theme of the course (e.g. art and literature or media and film). These courses are still *language* courses in the sequence and are not to be confused with *regular* graduate or undergraduate courses. As a result, language content courses may be used to fulfill language coursework requirements, but they cannot be applied to the core and concentration areas of the MA degree.

## 13. Events

The Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES) sponsors or co-sponsors over 40 events each semester. These events bring various dimensions of the Middle East to our campus, allowing you to expand your knowledge of the region beyond the classroom. Graduate students pursuing the MA in Middle Eastern Studies are **required** to attend two academic events per semester.

Please note that these events must be academic – not administrative – in nature.

Though most of your time as graduate students revolves around the classroom, events are an integral part of the university experience. CMES takes this requirement seriously and considers it part of graduate training. It is one of the factors considered when assessing academic performance and funding. Students will report their event attendance on their advising & registration form each semester.

## 14. Degree Audits

Copies of degree audits for the thesis or report option can be found on the website. In addition to these schedule planners, a graduate degree planner is available through UT Direct.

## 15. Advising

Each student is required to consult the Graduate Adviser and Graduate Coordinator prior to registration so that advising bars may be cleared. Students who do not attend an advising session and submit the required forms will not be cleared to register. Changes made to a student’s registration record after their advising session must be cleared by the Graduate Adviser and Graduate Coordinator. Since registration is a busy time, students should feel free to contact the Graduate Adviser throughout the semester to discuss more in-depth academic planning.

*Academic advising and registration periods:*

<b>Continuing Students</b>	
For Spring Semesters	Late October – Early November
For Fall Semesters	Late April – Early May
<b>Incoming Students</b>	
For Fall Semester	Late August during Orientation

## 16. Advising and Registration Forms

Students must complete and email all relevant registration forms to the Graduate Coordinator and Graduate Adviser prior to their advising appointment. Forms are meant to track student progress; therefore, they must be updated and resubmitted when changes are made. Forms can be found on the Middle Eastern Studies website. Forms must be typed and digitally signed. Scans and paper copies will not be accepted.

### 17. Progress towards Degree

The Master’s degree in Middle Eastern Studies is expected to be completed within two academic years (21 months). Dual degree students follow the same trajectory but complete both degrees in three years and enroll in four courses per semester.

Note that students are required to complete *at least* two intermediate (upper-division) language courses. Additional study may be required if students enter the program with beginner knowledge.

Year One	
<i>Fall</i>	<i>Spring</i>
Graduate Course	Graduate Course
Graduate Course	Graduate Course
Language Course	Language Course
Year Two	
<i>Fall</i>	<i>Spring</i>
Graduate Course	Graduate Course
Graduate Course	Graduate Course
Thesis A <i>(students who pursue the report option will substitute this course for an additional graduate course)</i>	Thesis B/Report

### 18. Dual Language

CMES encourages students pursuing the MA in Middle Eastern Studies to study at least two semesters of a second Middle Eastern language in addition to the core degree language requirement. This Dual Language option typically includes summer language study and/or extending time-to-degree. When funding is available, these students are prioritized for funds that would support their language study, such as tuition waivers to attend the Arabic Summer Institute.

### 19. MA Thesis/Report

The Thesis or Report is required by the Master’s Program in Middle Eastern Studies and the Graduate School. It represents the final paper or research project that the student creates to culminate their coursework in Middle Eastern Studies. A student must be enrolled in the final thesis or report course (Thesis - MES 698B or Report - MES 398R) during the semester they intend to graduate. Before registering for the Thesis or Report course, the student must submit a thesis/report proposal that includes a timeline and the supervisor’s expectations to the CMES Graduate Adviser and Graduate Coordinator. The forms are located on our website. Students are expected to utilize primary sources in their language of study for their thesis or report projects.

The main difference between the master's report and master's thesis is that with the thesis, students collect original research to answer a specific research question. For reports, students review and critique a body of literature. The report may or may not focus on the practical implications of an area of research. Most students choose to do the master's thesis, especially if they plan to apply to a PhD program. A thesis will require two semesters to complete (MES 698A in the first semester, MES 698B during the second semester) versus one semester to complete the report (MES 398R). The project also may require approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The success of your project will depend on your ability to work well with your committee and meet deadlines.

### *The Committee*

At least two faculty members must serve as thesis/report readers. It is most common to have a supervisor and a second reader. Two equal co-supervisors may also be acceptable but please first check with the Graduate Coordinator. In the first example, the supervisor must be on the MES Graduate Studies Committee. In the second example, one of the co-supervisors must be on the GSC list.

When approaching a faculty member, you must have a prospectus explaining your topic and a tentative bibliography. One of the earliest things to negotiate with the committee is a timeline in which work will be submitted. Supervisors and/or readers reserve the right to disband the committee if the student is unable to meet established deadlines or formulate an adequate project.

The Graduate Adviser and Graduate Coordinator play no role in advising on GSC committees or evaluating the thesis/report project, its quality, or its completion.

## **20. Graduation Requirements**

*Candidates for the Master's Degree in Middle Eastern Studies must:*

- Be registered in the Graduate School in the semester or summer session in which they plan to graduate.
- Be enrolled in the final thesis or report course (Thesis - MES 698B or Report - MES 398R) in the semester or summer session in which they plan to graduate.
- Submit the online Master's Graduation Application and associated Program of Work via the Graduate School website by the established deadline.
  - Dual Degree Program of Work is still completed using paper forms. The Graduate Coordinator of each program will assist dual degree students in completing this Milestone.
- Submit the thesis or report to the supervising committee by the standard deadlines established by the program and the Graduate School.
  - CMES, Graduate Adviser, Supervisor, and Committee reserve the right to impose internal deadlines.
- Submit the thesis or report to the Office of Graduate Studies for final approval by the Graduate Dean no later than the published deadline, typically 3:00 pm on the last class day of the semester. The thesis or report must be submitted in electronic format and follow the format guidelines published on the Graduate School's website.
- Submit a signature page containing the (digital or traditional) signatures of the thesis or report supervising committee to the Office of Graduate Studies no later than the published deadline.
  - Proxy signatures are not permitted. Digital signatures must include certification (i.e. Adobe Digital Signature, DocuSign, etc.)

- Submit final PDF of thesis/report to Graduate Coordinator by 3:00 pm on the last class day of the semester.



**MIDDLE EASTERN  
LANGUAGES AND  
CULTURES (MA,  
PHD)**

## V. Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures (MA, PhD)

### 1. MA/PhD Degree in Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures

Offered by the Department for Middle Eastern Studies (DMES), the MA in Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures (MELC) is an interdisciplinary academic degree designed to broaden and deepen the student's knowledge of the languages and cultures of the Middle East prior to moving on to PhD/pre-Comprehensive Exam coursework in Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures (MELC). The MELC MA degree is to be taken as part of the MELC PhD program. It is not a terminal MA degree.

### 2. Master's Requirements

Both the thesis and report options require thirty semester hours of coursework, which is to be chosen in consultation with the student's supervisor or the graduate Adviser. The thesis option requires at least twenty-four semester hours of coursework, to be taken on a letter-grade basis, and six semester hours (MEL 698A and 698B) of thesis coursework culminating in an approved thesis. The report option requires twenty-seven semester hours of coursework, to be taken on a letter-grade basis, and three semester hours (MEL 398R) of report coursework culminating in an approved report. The report option will most commonly take the form of an applied pedagogy project or publishable article.

All students are expected to maintain a minimum 3.50 grade point average in order to remain in good standing. Failure to maintain this minimum average will result in a warning letter and one semester of probation, during which time the student is expected to return to a minimum 3.50 average. The program has the discretion to dismiss students who are unable to meet this requirement after one additional semester.

A student must be enrolled in the final Thesis or Report course (Thesis - MEL 698B or Report - MEL 398R) during the semester they intend to receive their MA. Before registering for the thesis or report course, the student must submit a thesis/report proposal that includes a timeline and the supervisor's expectations to the MELC Graduate Adviser and Graduate Coordinator. The forms are located on our website. A singular MA degree is expected to be completed by the spring of the second year.

#### Master's in Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures (MELC) with Thesis (30 credit hours)

<b>Core Degree</b>	12 credits	MES graduate courses
<b>Concentration</b>	9 credits	Concentration courses to be approved by Graduate Adviser; subject matter pertaining to thesis/report project
<b>Language</b>	6 credits	Upper-division language courses: Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, or Turkish. In most cases, graduate students enroll in 381.
<b>Thesis Work</b>	6 credits	MES 698A & 698B are taken sequentially on a CR/NC grade basis
<b>Proseminar</b>	0 credits	Taken in first semester

#### Masters in Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures (MELC) with Report (33 credit hours)

<b>Core Degree</b>	15 credits	MES graduate courses
<b>Concentration</b>	9 credits	Concentration courses to be approved by Graduate Adviser; subject matter pertaining to thesis/report project

<b>Language</b>	6 credits	Upper-division language courses: Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, or Turkish. In most cases, graduate students enroll in 381.
<b>Report Work</b>	3 credits	MES 398R taken on a CR/NC grade basis in final semester.
<b>Proseminar</b>	0 credits	Taken in first semester

In addition, each student must demonstrate competence in the research skills appropriate to the student's overall academic and career objectives and to the final thesis or report. Students are required to complete *at least two* intermediate (upper-division) language courses. Additional study may be required if a student enters the program without beginner knowledge. Students are expected to utilize primary sources in their language of study for their thesis or report projects. Students may take up to 6 hours of upper-division (undergraduate) credit for their MA coursework. All courses must be taken for a letter-grade. Credit/No Credit (CR/NC) courses may not be applied to MA course requirements (with the exception of the Proseminar and Report/Thesis courses). Special approval from the program and Graduate Adviser is required for students who wish to take MEL 389 *Conference Course* for MA coursework.

Students pursuing a master's degree in Middle Eastern Studies (MES) may write either a thesis or a report at the end of their coursework. At full time enrollment, students will typically take 36 credit hours (thesis) and 33 (report) credit hours of coursework, of which the remaining hours are seen as in excess of the degree.

The *thesis option* requires 30 semester hours of coursework, of which *six (6)* hours are earned in the thesis course. The *report option* requires 33 semester hours of coursework, of which *three (3)* hours are earned in the report course. The thesis option is strongly recommended for those who plan to pursue a doctorate. Students pursuing a singular MA degree are expected to complete degree requirements by the spring of their second year. In addition, each student must demonstrate competence in the research skills appropriate to the student's overall academic and career objectives and to the final thesis or report.

Dual-degree students are expected to complete both degrees by the spring of their third year, with the exception of the joint MA/JD which is a four-year program. Dual-degree students typically enroll in four courses per semester.

### 3. Course Categories

*Conference courses (MEL 389)* are specialized courses covering topics that are not regularly addressed in the curriculum, or designed to expand the student's opportunities for individual consultation. They are often taught on a one-on-one basis. While they make sense in terms of the topics they cover and the opportunities they offer, conference courses lack the important interaction with a peer group. The Graduate School limits the number of conference courses that can count toward a student's degree.

*Upper-division courses* are designated by the last two digits of the course number, x20-x79. A graduate student may receive credit for up to six hours (2 courses) of upper-division undergraduate coursework as part of their core degree requirements. Such courses are typically a specialized course in one's area of interest that is not offered at the graduate level.

*Summer graduate courses* are rarely offered at UT. Most faculty are away during the summer.

#### 4. Course Limitations

Students pursuing an MA in Middle Eastern Language and Cultures (MELC) may not apply **more than a total of two** of the following courses for the MELC MA degree:

- MEL 389: Conference Course
- Upper-division: upper-division undergraduate course

The Office of Graduate Studies allows for a maximum of two courses from the above to count toward core degree requirements.

#### 5. Master's Thesis/Report Committee (MA/PhD Track)

At least two faculty members must serve on a thesis/report committee. It is most common to have a supervisor and a second reader. Two equal co-supervisors may also be acceptable but please first check with the Graduate Coordinator. In the first example, the supervisor must be on the MELC Graduate Studies Committee. In the second example, one of the co-supervisors must be on the MELC GSC list.

When approaching a faculty member, you must have a prospectus explaining your topic and a tentative bibliography. One of the earliest things to negotiate with the committee is a timeline in which work will be submitted. Committees reserve the right to disband the committee if the student is unable to meet established deadlines.

##### *Extensions*

Students who do not complete their thesis or report project by the end of the spring semester must petition to both their committee and the MELC GSC to continue in the program for the following (and/or summer) semester. Extensions will only be granted when the committee supports the extension and the student has exhibited timely progress throughout their project.



**MIDDLE EASTERN  
LANGUAGES AND  
CULTURES (POST-  
MA, PHD)**

## VI. Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures PhD (post-MA)

### 1. Core Requirements

Students pursuing a PhD degree in Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures (MELC) will meet core degree requirements while pursuing a specific track's requirements.

Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures PhD Requirements 2019-2025	
Core Degree	A minimum of 30 hours of MELC courses
	9 hours of graduate-level language seminars, as part of the minimum of 30
	Reading knowledge of French or German (or mastery in a Middle Eastern language)
	Between 12 and 27 hours of comprehensive exam preparation coursework
	At least 6 hours of dissertation coursework

DMES expects students to complete at least 12 hours of comprehensive exam preparatory coursework. With supervisor permission, students may take up to 6 hours of upper-division (undergraduate) credit for their coursework. All courses must be taken for a letter-grade; Credit/No Credit (CR/NC) courses may not be applied to degree or area requirements. Special approval from the Graduate Adviser and Department Chair is required for students who wish to take MEL 389 *Conference Course*. All coursework must be approved by the supervisor and Graduate Adviser prior to registration. Advising forms are located on the MELC website. Students are required to complete all necessary registration forms prior to being cleared for registration.

### 2. Requirements by Track

#### *Hebrew Bible/Ancient Near East (HB/ANE)*

The Hebrew Bible/Ancient Near East (HB/ANE) track is designed to immerse students in the critical, academic study of the Hebrew Bible in its ancient Near Eastern context. Students read the entire Hebrew Bible in four semesters, and they learn another ancient Semitic language to an intermediate level. They are prepared for the field of biblical studies via two years of seminars in which they are expected to write and respond as scholars in the field.

All students in HB/ANE must develop a second field as well, with an eye toward the kinds of positions that exist for Hebrew Bible specialists in these times. Second fields that have so far been selected include religious studies, New Testament, gender studies, linguistics, and the politics/war/strategy of the Ancient Near East.

Track Specifications and Requirements (54 credit hours)	
Hebrew Bible/Ancient Near East	Courses must include 12 hours of the Bible in Hebrew
	3 hours of <i>Comparative Semitic Grammar</i>
	3 hours in <i>Theory &amp; Method in Study of Religion</i>
	12 hours in topics on the Ancient Near East
	12 hours in a Minor field
	12 hours of Near Eastern language work

### *Literature & Culture*

The Literature & Culture track provides graduate students with comprehensive and in-depth training in Middle Eastern literary and cultural production. This course of study is engaged within and across national and linguistic boundaries, disciplines, genres, and historical periods. Students are trained in comparative and theoretical approaches to literature, film, and media. By interrogating conventional nationalist, cultural, and literary paradigms, students will deepen their understanding of the cultural dynamics of the region and confront complex questions as part of a larger humanistic inquiry.

In consultation with a supervisor from their chosen field, students devise a program of study that includes training in literary and cultural theory and close textual reading in original languages. Students in the Literature & Culture track have the unique opportunity to draw on a wide range of Middle East experts and literary and cultural theorists across the university. They are expected to take graduate seminars conducted in the Middle Eastern language of their primary specialization, and to contextualize and complement their chosen focus by taking seminars in other Middle Eastern literature and intellectual history, comparative literature, and in other relevant fields and departments. Some work in a second Middle Eastern language is also recommended. Students who complete this track will be equipped with the necessary critical methodologies and literary training that will strategically position them for the job market in Middle Eastern Studies.

<b>Track Specifications and Requirements</b> ( <i>6 hours of required courses in addition to the core requirements</i> )	
<b>Literature &amp; Culture</b>	6 hours of literary theory and/or cultural studies
	Students are strongly encouraged to acquire a second Middle Eastern language

### *Middle Eastern History (ME HIST)*

The Middle Eastern History (ME HIST) track provides students with training in the discipline of History, with a geographic focus on the Middle East region, with the primary goal of training Ph.Ds. for academic jobs in history programs. Thus, the program of study is designed to be consistent with the training typically provided in history departments.

While students may take some non-history courses, the program is structured so that the coursework, exams, and dissertation are all overseen primarily by historians, both within the Middle Eastern Languages and Culture program and in other departments, such as History or Religious Studies. While most of these historians will be focused on the Middle East, students are also allowed to work with historians who are not focused specifically on the Middle East. Usually, this will be because of shared theoretical, thematic, and methodological interests, but it could also be because of the desire to develop a secondary area of research or teaching competence.

<b>Track Specifications and Requirements</b> ( <i>a minimum of 30 required credit hours in MELC/History coursework</i> )	
<b>Middle Eastern History</b>	Students are required to reach Advanced/Superior in the language of their research field.
	A secondary research language may be substituted for French or German

*Islamic Studies*

The doctoral program in Islamic Studies provides in-depth multidisciplinary training in the study of Islam coupled with a strong grounding in languages and theoretical approaches in religious studies.

The core faculty consists of eight tenured and tenure-track members who offer courses in a range of subjects that include Islamic law, gender and women’s studies, history, Shi’ism, Sufism, art, architecture, devotional poetry, diaspora, political theory, and sovereignty in Islam. Besides Arabic, students can take advantage of advanced teaching of Persian, Turkish, Urdu and other vernacular languages of Muslim societies. All students are also required to take a theory and methods course in the study of religion and to develop a minor field. Overall, the doctoral program strives to produce well-rounded and rigorous scholars of Islam who are experts in their own fields and capable of collaborating with colleagues in related disciplines.

<b>Track Specifications and Requirements (48 credit hours)</b>	
	<p>MELC core <b>30 hours</b> must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 courses from the category “Institutions and Traditions of Islam”</li> <li>• 3 courses from the category “Thematic Approaches to Islam”</li> <li>• 3 seminars in advanced/research-level language</li> <li>• R S 383M Theory and Method in the Study of Religion</li> </ul>
<b>Islamic Studies</b>	<p>In addition to the MELC core 30 hours, I S students must also take (<b>18 hours</b>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 courses in a supporting discipline. This can be met through an approved graduate portfolio or minor.</li> <li>• 1 additional course in intermediate or higher language course</li> <li>• MES 398T “Supervised Teaching in Middle Eastern Languages &amp; Cultures”</li> </ul>
	<p>Students must achieve reading proficient in 2 Islamicate languages, one of which must be Arabic, and in one European language appropriate to their research needs.</p>

*Linguistics*

For those interested in the study of language, MELC offers a track in linguistics within the Semitic and/or Middle Eastern contexts. Students receive an in-depth training in one or more of the following fields: comparative Semitics, historical linguistics, the autochthonous Arabic linguistic tradition, language contact, dialectology, and syntax. Students are encouraged to explore other areas as well by taking courses in the Linguistics Department in relevant subdisciplines.

What distinguishes MELC from a degree in linguistics is that MELC students are expected to attain a high degree of language proficiency as well as cultural proficiency in their area. Entering students are expected to have advanced proficiency in one Middle Eastern Language and all students are encouraged to study an

additional language or languages. Graduates of the linguistics track are competitively positioned for the job market in Middle Eastern Studies, Linguistics, and Area Studies.

Track Specifications and Requirements (30 credit hours)	
Linguistics	Students are required to choose a major field (18 credit hours) in either literature/culture or language/linguistics
	Students are required to choose two minor fields (6 credit hours each).

### 3. Advising

During their first year, incoming students choose or are assigned a faculty mentor with whom they plan to work in their major field. This mentor oversees the student's selection of courses for registration and the design of the student's course of study. Students are also encouraged to seek the advice of other faculty members in the program on their studies and their progress.

Once the student enters candidacy, the student will select a supervisor. The supervisor does not need to be the same person as the mentor; the mentor need not continue on as the supervisor.

Each student is required to consult their mentor prior to registration so that the advising hold may be cleared. Once the Graduate Coordinator receives the signed and completed paperwork from the student and their mentor, they will clear the advising hold. Once students enter candidacy, advising is no longer required.

Changes made to a student's registration record after their advising session must be cleared by their mentor and sent to the Graduate Coordinator. *The Graduate Coordinator cannot approve any registration changes without the mentor's input.* It is the student's responsibility to seek any faculty or department approvals needed to add courses outside of MELC.

*Academic advising and registration periods:*

<b>Continuing Students</b>	
For Spring Semesters	Late October – Early November
For Fall Semesters	Late April – Early May
<b>Incoming Students</b>	
For Fall Semester	Late August during Orientation

Since registration is a busy time, students should feel free to contact their supervisor throughout the semester to discuss more in-depth academic and professional planning.

### 4. Advising and Registration Forms

Students must complete and email *all* relevant registration forms to the Graduate Coordinator after their advising appointment. Forms are meant to track student progress, so they must be updated and resubmitted if changes occur. All forms must be typed and digitally signed by the student and supervisor. Scans, paper copies, and incomplete forms will not be accepted. Forms can be found on the MELC website.

## 5. Progress towards Degree (PhD)

Progress toward the degree is defined in terms of the relevance of courses taken to the student's course of study, the length of time a student spends in the program, the GPA maintained, the number of courses taken on a credit/no-credit basis, and the number of incompletes. All graduate students are evaluated by the MELC GSC on a yearly basis. During the meeting, the student's supervisor reports on progress and responds to questions from members of the GSC.

Doctoral students are required to review the degree plans, specific degree requirements, milestones, and estimated timelines to reach various benchmarks. You will be able to log in to the Graduate Degree Planner and check your progress to degree completion.

## 6. Milestones

Located on the Graduate School's website, all incoming doctoral students are expected to review their program's Milestones.

UT Austin Milestones	Expected Time of Achievement
Review Degree requirement and milestones agreement form with Adviser & Coordinator	By the first day of class of the first semester
Maintain a 3.50 GPA	Every semester
Complete all required, formal coursework	By the end of the third year
Successful completion of all exams (oral and written) needed to advance to candidacy	By the end of the fourth year
IRB (human testing) if needed	See dissertation supervisor
Dissertation completed, successfully defended, and approved by the committee	By the end of the sixth year
Student completes and files all paperwork for graduation	
Dissertation accepted by the Graduate School	

## 7. 398T: Supervised Teaching

The MELC program and the Graduate School require all students who hold Assistant Instructor positions to have completed a pedagogy course. With supervisor approval, students may take a 398T in an affiliated department, such as Religious Studies, Linguistics, Sociology, History, Government, Anthropology, etc.

## 8. Language Examinations

Students must pass the research language examination before starting the comprehensive examination. A secondary Middle Eastern language may be substituted for French or German with supervisor and Graduate Adviser approval. The examination usually consists of several pages of text that the student must translate into English. The text commonly is selected from a book chapter or journal article. The use of a dictionary is permitted.

Research Language by Area	
HB/ANE	Normally German

	Exam is taken ASAP and not later than the beginning of the third year
Middle Eastern History	French or German  A second Middle Eastern Language may be substituted with supervisor and Graduate Adviser approval
Islamic Studies	French or German
Linguistics	French or German
Literature and Culture	French

## 9. Comprehensive Exams

### *MEL 393, Comprehensive Exam: Preparation*

Comprehensive exams are taken after all language exams and coursework have been met; students normally begin their examination prep during **the third and fourth years of the doctoral program**. Before taking the written exam, the student will work on preliminary reading/study lists approved by their committee members. The purpose of the exams is to ascertain whether students possess a breadth of knowledge outside the dissertation specialization to participate in professional discussions in their area and be at the level expected of a new Assistant Professor. These exams test a student's analytical and research skills through the completion of a series of essays followed by an oral defense.

### *MEL 393, Comprehensive Exam: Written Examination*

The written examination takes place over a span of **30 days**. Students may be asked to produce any of the following during this time: analytical reviews, answers to synthesis questions, response papers, definitions of key terms, conceptualizations of particular events, or explanations of discipline knowledge. Committee members will send exam questions to the Graduate Coordinator at least 24 hours in advance of the start of the exam. The Graduate Coordinator will distribute the exam questions to the student. Students will then return their work to the Graduate Coordinator, who will distribute the exams to the committee.

### *MEL 393, Comprehensive Exam: Oral Examinations*

**Two to three weeks** after the submission of the written exam, an oral examination is held in which the student defends before the committee their research, analyses, and arguments presented in their written exam. The committee will assign a grade of pass, fail, or pass with conditions. Any conditions imposed must be met before the student advances to candidacy.

## 10. Dissertation Prospectus

This milestone takes place upon completion of the comprehensive exam process, **no later than 90 days** after the comprehensive exam was passed. The prospectus must be successfully defended before being eligible to advance to doctoral candidacy in the Graduate School. The prospectus committee is composed of faculty whose area or research methodology align with the proposed dissertation topic. The Graduate School requires three members to be from the MELC Graduate Studies Committee (GSC), and one member not to be affiliated with the department. Prospectus formats vary widely and depend on the field and project, but most committees request a 15-20-page document that conforms to the standards of scholarly writing in the field and includes footnotes, references, and bibliographies.

### *Prospectus Defense*

All dissertation committee members must attend the prospectus defense. However, with Graduate Adviser approval, any member may be excused, provided it is not a supervisor or, if applicable, co-supervisor. Members may attend electronically, including the supervisor/co-supervisor. If a regular committee member is absent, they must read and approve the prospectus prior to the prospectus defense. After the exam, the student will complete the Prospectus Committee Defense Report, which will be routed to their committee members, with a final copy sent to the Graduate Coordinator. The Graduate Coordinator will then notify the student that they may apply for candidacy with the Graduate School.

## **11. Applying for Candidacy**

Passing both the comprehensive exams and the prospectus defense allows a student to apply for candidacy and, therefore, begin official work on the dissertation. To complete the candidacy application, the student must establish a full dissertation committee, have defended a dissertation prospectus, and collected the necessary information requested by the Office of Graduate Studies. Some initial steps toward these requirements should be taken during the Comprehensive Exam process. The dissertation committee chair (or at least one co-chair) must have a full-time, tenured or tenure-track appointment in DMES. A full dissertation committee consists of at least four faculty members, at least three of whom sit on the MELC Graduate Studies Committee (GSC). Students must apply for doctoral candidacy in the Graduate School and the MELC program before being eligible to enroll in dissertation coursework.

## **12. Continuous Registration**

All graduate students are expected to enroll and pay tuition by the twelfth-class day of the fall semester and the spring semester of each academic year until graduation. If the student has been admitted to candidacy for the doctoral degree, registration in the dissertation course or the equivalent or in international study and research (ISR) is required. The only alternative to continuous registration is a leave of absence, discussed in the Leave of Absence section.

If a student who is not on approved leave fails to register by the twelfth-class day, the student may not return to the University without applying for readmission. The student must apply for readmission both to the University and to the graduate program and must pay the general application fee. The application is reviewed by the Graduate Studies Committee, which may choose to readmit the student or to deny readmission.

In order to fulfill the continuous registration requirement, doctoral candidates who are readmitted must retroactively register and pay tuition for all semesters that have elapsed since they were last enrolled.

## **13. Dissertation**

**MEL X99W: Dissertation. At least two semesters of dissertation registration are required before being eligible to graduate.** Dissertation courses are graded only on the CR/NC basis, in which a NC indicates that adequate progress was not made. Depending on funding requirements, students will enroll in either 399W, 699W, or 999W. Students are required to maintain regular contact with their committee members and meet all deadlines set forth by the supervisor and/or committee. Students in the dissertation phase will still undergo yearly reviews by the MELC GSC.

## **14. Scheduling the Defense**

You and your supervisor, in negotiation with the dissertation committee members, should determine a time and date for the defense. You must schedule the dissertation defense with the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to the defense date by completing the Request for Final Oral Examination form, located on the Graduate School's website. All members of your committee must sign your request form indicating their intent to be present at your defense. [Only the Graduate Adviser is permitted to sign the defense form. The Graduate Coordinator is not permitted to sign in the absence of the Graduate Adviser, nor is the faculty supervisor.] The Graduate Adviser must also sign this form to indicate you have been approved to defend. It is expected that all members of the committee attend the defense, either in person or electronically. Doctoral students' defenses are open to all members of the University community and the public unless attendance is restricted by the Graduate Studies Committee.

You must provide your Dissertation committee with your completed Dissertation no later than **four weeks before** your dissertation defense. Defenses are required by the Office of Graduate Studies to take place **no later than two weeks** prior to the submission deadline.

### 15. Graduation Requirements

- Be registered in MEL X99W in the semester or summer session in which you plan to graduate.
- Submit the online Doctoral Graduation Application via the Graduate School Web site during the appropriate time period. Deadlines are posted on the Graduate School website at the start of each semester, students who do not submit the form by the deadline will not be eligible to receive their degree until the following semester.
- Submit your dissertation to your committee at least four weeks prior to your dissertation defense.
- Schedule your dissertation defense with the MELC Graduate Coordinator and the Graduate School. Form located on the Graduate School's website.
- Submit dissertation to the Office of Graduate Studies for final approval by the Graduate Dean no later than the published deadline, typically 3:00 pm on the last class day of the semester. The document must be submitted in electronic format and follow the format guidelines published on the Graduate School's website.
- Submit required paperwork *and* a signature page containing (traditional or digital) signatures of supervising committee to the Office of Graduate Studies no later than the published deadline. [Proxy signatures are not permitted. Digital signatures must include certification (i.e. Adobe Digital Signatures, DocuSign, etc.)]
- Submit final PDF of dissertation to the Graduate Coordinator by 3:00 pm on the last class day of the semester.



# PORTFOLIO IN MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES

## VI. Graduate Portfolio in Middle Eastern Studies

### 1. About

Offered by the Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES), the Graduate Portfolio Program in Middle Eastern Studies (MES) provides focused and recognized training in diverse aspects of the Middle East region to graduate students from across UT Austin. Faculty spanning 15 graduate programs offered in five schools and colleges at UT offer courses that provide in-depth scholarly approaches to modern and ancient Middle Eastern history, culture, religion, politics, and society.

The Graduate Portfolio Program in MES encourages graduate students at UT to adopt an interdisciplinary academic trajectory by taking advantage of MES scholarly resources. Students enrolled in the program are also part of the CMES intellectual community, and are invited to participate in conferences, community outreach, and visits by authors, scholars, artists, and other guests.

### 2. Application

Current degree-seeking graduate students at UT Austin, from any department, who possess a 3.5 GPA may apply for and enter the Graduate Portfolio Program in MES at any point in their graduate study. Applicants must demonstrate a current cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher and submit the application, which includes the following:

- A 1-2-page statement of the student's interest in the program;
- An explanation of the importance of the MES specialization for the student's home graduate program and career goals;
- A proposed list of relevant courses that fulfill the portfolio requirements, including those already completed by the student.

### 3. Requirements

Students pursuing a portfolio in Middle Eastern Studies take 12 hours in MES graduate coursework. Six hours must be offered by programs outside of the student's home department and cannot be cross-listed with the student's home department. Language courses (ARA, HEB, TUR, PRS) cannot be applied to portfolio course requirements. Conferences courses in MES do not count.

### 4. Submission to Graduate School

When the portfolio program requirements are complete, the student should collect the necessary signatures on the Portfolio Completion Reporting form and should submit to the MES Graduate Coordinator.



# APPENDIX

## MELC Requirements At-a-glance

### General Coursework Requirements

All students must complete, at a minimum, 30 hours of MELC coursework. This requirement is also called the “core coursework.”

- At least 9 of these must be in graduate-level language seminars, although up to two undergraduate upper-division language courses may count with the permission of the supervisor and Graduate Adviser.
- Conference courses *can* count towards this requirement with Graduate Adviser and supervisor approval.
- MES 398T (and its cross-listed equivalents) *does not* count towards this requirement.
- Comps hours *do not* count towards the 30-hour requirement.
- Language sequence courses *do not* count towards this requirement. Advanced language content courses, however, can count with Graduate Adviser and supervisor approval.
  - Graduate seminars conducted in a foreign language always count towards core coursework.
- Generally, the core coursework is comprised of MES/MEL courses (including courses in other departments cross-listed with MES or MEL) but exceptions can be made by track.

Each track may have its own requirements for the specific courses that their students must take in order to satisfy the general coursework requirement

- Tracks are empowered to waive their own requirements pending internal discussions/agreements, but any waiver of MELC core coursework is under the purview of the Graduate Adviser and GSC.
- Courses can be “double-dipped” between track requirements and MELC core coursework requirements, but likely cannot be double-dipped amongst internal track requirements.

### Language Exams

Students must pass their language exams before starting (i.e. writing) their comprehensive exams. The student’s supervisor must submit written notification to the Graduate Coordinator and Graduate Adviser once students have successfully passed their language exams. The Graduate Coordinator then updates the student’s milestones in EASI.

*Primary Middle Eastern Language:* This is administered by the faculty in the relevant track and should be taken in person. Other than that, the nature of the primary Middle Eastern language exam is determined by the student’s supervisor in consultation with the other faculty in the student’s track.

*Secondary Research Language:* This is administered by the faculty in the relevant track and should be taken in person. Current requirements are that students choose either French or German as their secondary research language. A second Middle Eastern language may be substituted for French or German with supervisor and Graduate Adviser approval.

The examination usually consists of a text that the student must translate into English. The text is commonly selected from a book chapter or journal article. The use of a hard-copy dictionary is permitted; no electronic devices are allowed. The nature of the text, the time allotted for the exam, and the type of dictionary permitted are all set by the faculty in the track.

### Comprehensive Exams and Defense

*Updated January 2025*

Students should take their comprehensive exams after all language exams and coursework have been completed, and they normally begin their examination prep during the third or fourth years of the doctoral program. In the semester that students take their comps, they must be registered for MEL 393.

A comps committee generally consists of three members, two of whom must be members of the MELC Graduate Studies Committee (GSC). Before taking the written exam, the student will work on preliminary reading/study lists approved by their committee members. Lists typically range between 100-150 items all together (200 at the most) and take the form of lists of key concepts, articles, books, etc., that are important in the field. They may include texts in the student's primary and/or secondary research languages. The purpose of the exams is to ascertain whether students possess a breadth of knowledge outside the dissertation specialization to participate in professional discussions in their area and be at the level expected of a new assistant professor. These exams test a student's analytical and research skills through the completion of a series of essays, timed or untimed, followed by an oral defense.

Normally, students will take three exams, although four may be taken with the permission of the supervisor and Graduate Adviser. Students are given 30 days to complete the written exams. Questions will be sent to the Graduate Coordinator no less than 24 hours ahead of the exam start date and the Graduate Coordinator will disseminate all questions to the student at the same time.

During the written examination process, they may be asked to prepare any of the following: analytical reviews, answers to synthesis questions, response papers, definitions of key terms, conceptualizations of particular events, or discipline knowledge. Students will submit work to the Graduate Coordinator and their committee.

Two to three weeks after the submission of the written exam, an oral examination is held in which the student defends before the committee the research, analyses, and arguments presented in their written exam. The committee will assign a grade of pass, fail, or pass with conditions. Any conditions imposed must be met before the student advances to candidacy.

### **Dissertation Prospectus**

For the semester following the successful oral defense of comps, students should continue to enroll in MEL 393 while they do research for the prospectus.

The completion and defense of the prospectus should take place no more than 90 days after the successful oral defense of the comprehensive exams. Only days in a term during which a student is enrolled count towards the 90-day deadline. The prospectus committee is composed of faculty whose area or research methodology align with the proposed dissertation topic. The Graduate School requires three members to be from the MELC GSC and one member not to be affiliated with the department.

Prospectus formats vary widely and depend on the field and project, but most committees request a document of 15-20 pages that conforms to the standards of scholarly writing in the field and includes footnotes, references, and bibliographies.

All dissertation committee members must attend the prospectus defense. However, with Graduate Adviser approval, any member may be excused, provided it is not a supervisor, or, if applicable, co-supervisor. Members may attend electronically, including the supervisor/co-supervisor. If a regular committee member is absent, they must read and approve the prospectus prior to the prospectus defense.

## **Dissertation**

The dissertation committee is usually the same as the prospectus committee, consisting of at least 4 members—three from the MELC GSC and at least one who is unaffiliated with the department. Students are required to maintain regular contact with their committee members and meet all deadlines set forth by the supervisor and/or committee. Students in the dissertation phase will still undergo yearly reviews by the MELC GSC. Students must be continuously enrolled in the appropriate dissertation course while in the candidacy phase; the exact course (MEL 399W, MEL 699W, MEL 999W) is determined in consultation with the Graduate Coordinator.

Students and supervisors, in consultation with the dissertation committee members, should determine a time and date for the defense. The dissertation defense should be scheduled with the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to the defense date by completing the Request for Final Oral Examination form, located on the Graduate School's website. All members of the committee must sign the request form indicating their intent to be present at the defense. The Graduate Adviser must also sign this form to indicate the student has been approved to defend. All members of the committee are expected to attend the defense, either in person or electronically. Doctoral students' defenses are open to all members of the University community and public unless their attendance is restricted by the Graduate Studies Committee. The student must provide their dissertation committee with the completed dissertation no later than four weeks before the dissertation defense. Defenses are required by the Office of Graduate Studies to take place no later than two weeks before the submission deadline.

*With respect to any discrepancy between this "At-a-Glance" sheet and official publications such as the CDMES Graduate Handbook and the Graduate Catalog, the policy in the official publication always takes precedence.*