HEB 380C – Bible in Hebrew – Isaiah-Book of the Twelve
Dr. Heath Dewrell
Contact faculty for description.

MEL 380C – Akkadian I
Dr. Bruce Wells
This course trains students in the basic grammar and script of Akkadian, the language used in ancient Babylonia and Assyria, with a special focus on the Old Babylonian dialect. Students will learn to read documents such as contracts, letters, omens, and selections from the Code of Hammurabi.

MEL 383C – Comparative Semitic Linguistics
Dr. Na’ama Pat-El
Contact faculty for description.

MES 384 – Law and Religion in the Modern Middle East
Dr. Samy Ayoub
Law and Religion in the Modern Middle East is a seminar that examines the nature of law before and after secularism. It explores the laws that govern religion and religious expression in Middle Eastern national constitutions, with a special focus on both the free exercise and establishment clause of Islam as the religion of the state. We shall analyze emerging legal understandings of authority and rights and explore the interconnections of “religion” and “law”—as traditions of thought as well as sets of practices, modes of relation as well as constellations of values. In this seminar, we will consider what counts as religion for constitutional and legal purposes. In addition, we also investigate the ways in which modern nation-states secularize religion. Participants will be expected to read academic legal commentary on the formulations of religion in the modern world. The seminar will provide extensive case-law from lower and higher courts. To better situate the classroom discussions, students will read historical, anthropological, and sociological studies on the topics of family law, international religious freedom law, and leading religions’ doctrines and teachings concerning religious freedom.

MES 385 – Middle East Police and Criminals
Dr. Kamran Aghaie
Description: This course will consist of two equal components, a research/writing workshop, and a reading seminar. Throughout the semester, approximately half of each course session will be spent on each of these two aspects of the course. By “workshopping” their research projects, students will learn how to carry out the different stages of a research project. 1) the evidentiary stage-collecting, processing and analyzing primary evidence, 2) conceptually formulating the project-culminating in a detailed prospectus, 3) presenting their research in a conference-style presentation, 4) writing the actual research paper, and 5) discussing, commenting on, and editing each other’s work in the stages listed above. The second component of the course will consist of reading and discussing scholarship on crime and criminals, as well as police and law enforcement across the Middle East. Students will learn how crime and law enforcement have evolved over the past two centuries in the Modern Middle East.
Requirements: Weekly reading assignments, substantial classroom discussions and presentations, academic-style book review, a graduate level research paper, a prospectus for this research paper, and comments on each other’s work.

Texts:
Michell Foucault, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison
Rudolph Peters, Crime and Punishment in Islamic Law: Theory and Practice from the Sixteenth to the Twenty-First Century
Fariba Zarinebaf, Crime and Punishment in Istanbul: 1700-1800
Stephannie Cronin, Crime, Poverty, and Survival in the Middle East and North Africa: The 'Dangerous Classes' since 1800
Harold Tollefson, Policing Islam: The British Occupation of Egypt and the Anglo-Egyptian Struggle over Control of the Police, 1882-1914
Eldad Harouvi, The Criminal Investigation Department of the Palestine Police Force, 1920-1948
Khaled Fahmy, In Quest of Justice: Islamic Law and Forensic Medicine in Modern Egypt
Laleh Khalili & Jillian Schwedler, Policing and Prisons in the Middle East
Zahra Tizro, Domestic Violence in Iran: Women, Marriage, and Islam
Jonathan Smolin, Moroccan Noir: Police, Crime, and Politics in Public Culture

MES 386 – The New Middle East: Critical Approach
Dr. Nahid Siamdoust
The Middle East has undergone fundamental changes since 9/11, and Middle East scholars have produced groundbreaking new approaches to critically examine the social and political dynamics at play across this diverse region today. This graduate seminar is an interdisciplinary course in which we read works that span several fields, including anthropology, political science, international relations, history, sociology, performance and media studies. Each week, we will focus on a different topic, covering throughout the semester many of the countries conventionally grouped together as “the Middle East.” Some of the topics that we will study are as follows: social uprisings, regional rivalries, new media, Islamist extremism, neoliberal politics, infrastructure, foreign power occupation, hijab controversies, and cultural production. Given that we are situated in the US, we will – whenever warranted – keep an eye also on America’s involvement in the region on the particular weekly topic. Although we will often read a combination of book chapters and articles, some weeks we will read a majority of a book. This is a reading-intensive graduate seminar predicated on students’ preparation of the week’s reading, and subsequent discussion when we gather. Through our readings and intellectual engagements we will develop an in-depth understanding of some of the most pertinent social and political processes in the Middle East region today.

MES 386 – Reading Arabic Literature
Dr. Avigail Noy
This graduate seminar introduces students to the canons of Arabic literature through readings in translation. Texts range from pre-Islamic poetry in the 6th century to novels in the 20th century, and include the Qur’an, Maqamat, Islamic court literature known as adab, literary criticism, philosophical literature, early modern love poetry, European genres in the modern era, and more. We will discuss to what degree the term “canon” applies to these texts and will consider how the
work of early modern orientalists and Islamic revivalists influenced our perception of the
canon(s). We will also explore the persistence of certain literary forms, especially classical
Arabic poetry, up until the 21st century, with reality shows coming out of the Arab world like
“Prince of Poets.” The question of translation will be considered throughout. No prior knowledge
of Arabic or Islam needed.

Weekly readings, attendance & participation: 40%

Presentation(s): 10%

Research paper: 50%
Cross-listed courses
MES 384 – Arab Monarchies  
Dr. Zoltan Barany  
In this seminar we will answer the fundamental questions of how and why has the monarchical form of government survived to the modern age. In the context of the Middle East, why have monarchies weathered the challenges posed to them by the Arab Spring upheavals with relative ease in sharp contrast with the republics around them (Egypt, Libya, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen)? To what extent have the riches derived from hydrocarbons helped these monarchies (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates) to survive? And what is the secret of Jordan and Morocco, relatively poor kingdoms, that have allowed them to maintain their rule?

We will begin with a brief look at the general historical evolution of monarchies around the world from the Middle Ages to the present. We will then turn our focus to the eight contemporary Arab monarchies. We will analyze the advantages and drawbacks of this kind of government both in the context of democracy vs. authoritarianism as well as in terms of policy implementation, nation-building, state-building, state effectiveness, stability, and security. And we will discuss such issues as women’s and minority rights, the influence of tribes and religion on society and politics, the royal families, defense and security, and the sustainability of absolute monarchy in the modern world.

MES 386 – Art/Gender in Late Antiquity  
Dr. Katherine Taronas  
This seminar will mobilize the evidence of the artistic record to illuminate aspects of the gendered experience of religion in Late Antiquity with a primary area of focus on the Mediterranean world. It will balance theorizing the representations in Greco-Roman, Jewish, and Early Christian art that constructed and circumscribed gender norms with a consideration of the avenues in which we can observe gender-specific concepts of artistic agency, making practices, and perceptual experiences of religious activity. Readings will prioritize innovative scholarly approaches to themes of gender in material culture and religion. Above all, students will gain fluency in analyzing and interpreting works of art to make arguments about historical contexts and social identities.

Reading list will include selections from:


Conway, Colleen M. Behold the Man: Jesus and Greco-Roman Masculinity (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.


