

# Requirements: Asian and Middle East Studies

## Interdisciplinary

Asian and Middle East studies at Kenyon is an interdisciplinary program that offers two concentrations and a joint major. In the major, students combine their study of Asia and the Middle East with major requirements in one of several departments: anthropology, art history, history, modern languages and literatures (Chinese) or religious studies. Students may also opt for concentration in Asian studies and/or Islamic civilizations and cultures. In addition, students can find courses in Asian and Middle East studies in anthropology, music, philosophy, political science and sociology.

The Asian and Middle East studies curriculum encourages students to acquire the analytical and critical ability to explore the linguistic, literary, historical and cultural traditions of Asia and what is commonly referred to as the Middle East to develop the cultural sensitivity and humanistic knowledge needed in our increasingly globalized world. Students come to understand the interconnected worlds of Asia and North Africa as a culturally diverse region with deeply intertwined histories, and to understand the peoples of Asia and the Middle East as major actors in regional and world history, rather than as objects of other peoples' enterprises and observations. An important goal of the curriculum is the development of a critical understanding of the ways in which people of the interrelated regions of Asia and the Middle East have historically defined and expressed themselves.

The program also sponsors films, invites speakers to the College and promotes other social and cultural events to stimulate campus awareness of the societies of East Asia, South and Southeast Asia and Central Asia, West and Southwest Asia and North Africa.

*The Kenyon College faculty voted to change from Kenyon units to semester hours. This change will go into effect for all students who start at the College in the fall of 2024. Both systems will be used throughout the course catalog with the Kenyon units being listed first.*

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## **The Curriculum**

Students hoping to spend all or part of their junior year in China, Japan or the Arabic-speaking world should begin to study the appropriate language in their first two years at Kenyon. New students interested in Asia, even those who have not yet declared a major or a concentration, may enroll in any 100- or 200-level course offered by an Asian studies faculty member or should consider taking ASIA 201, which provides an introduction to the entire region.

## **Requirements for the Joint Major**

The Asian and Middle East studies joint major provides a structured yet flexible curriculum to enable students to focus their work on the region while acquiring a solid methodological grounding in an academic discipline. Students must fulfill all the requirements of the departmental major in addition to the specific requirements of the Asian and Middle East Studies Program as described below. The Senior Capstone will follow the requirements of the joint department and will focus on the area of Asia and the Middle East in which the student's relevant language and study-abroad requirements were fulfilled. Unlike in a double major, in a joint major there is only one Senior Capstone. Double-counting of courses for the departmental major and for the Asian and Middle East Studies Program is permitted.

### **1. Language Study — two to five semesters**

For Asian and Middle Eastern languages taught at Kenyon — at present Chinese, Japanese and Arabic — two years of language study are required. Students electing a joint major with modern languages and literatures (Chinese) will take more than two years of language. One semester of intensive language study in a country where the language is spoken will be considered equivalent to a full year at Kenyon.

For languages not taught at Kenyon, one year of intensive study abroad (or an approved intensive summer program combined with a semester abroad) will fulfill the requirement. In the case of transfer students, credit will be accepted for a year of relevant language study pursued at another institution.

If the program committee determines that a student possesses native proficiency in an Asian language, both oral and written, it will waive this requirement, but only if the Senior Capstone focuses on populations that speak that language.

## **2. Study Abroad**

At least one semester or one summer (minimum six weeks) in an approved study-abroad program is required. The program must be in a country where the student's Asian and Middle East language is spoken. A full year of study abroad is highly recommended.

## **3. Foundation Courses — two courses from the list below**

Because we advocate a comparative approach, choose courses from two different regions (areas) and two different disciplines. Areas are defined as East Asia (China, Japan, Korea), South/Southeast Asia (India, Vietnam, Indonesia) and the Islamic world (which includes West, Southwest and Central Asia as well as North Africa). With the approval of the director of Asian and Middle East studies, other courses can be counted, particularly introductory courses in various departments, when taught by Asian and Middle East studies faculty.

### **East Asia:**

AMES 101: Introduction to Asian and Middle East Studies

AMES 201: The Silk Road

ARHS 114: Introduction to Asian Art

HIST 160: Modern East Asia

HIST 161: East Asia to 1800

HIST 163: Modern China

PHIL 212: Early Chinese Philosophy

RLST 160: Buddhist Thought and Practice

RLST 166: East Asian Religions

RLST 265: Zen Buddhism

**South/Southeast Asia:**

AMES 101: Introduction to Asian and Middle East Studies

AMES 201: The Silk Road

ARHS 114: Introduction to Asian Art

ARHS 115: Introduction to Islamic Art and Architecture

HIST 156: History of India

HIST 166: History of the Islamicate World

HIST 256: Global Crises (And The History of How We Have Addressed Them)

HIST 260: Medieval Islamic Empires

RLST 150: Hinduism in its Religious Context: An Introduction to South Asian Religions

RLST 160: Buddhist Thought and Practice

**The Islamicate World:**

AMES 101: Introduction to Asian and Middle East Studies

AMES 201: The Silk Road

ARHS 115: Introduction to Islamic Art and Architecture

HIST 166: History of the Islamicate World

HIST 260: Medieval Islamic Empires

HIST 261: The Mongol Empire

HIST 264: History of Modern Middle East

RLST 140: Islam's Diverse Paths: An Introduction to the Islamic Tradition

**4. Area Courses — three courses**

Students must complete three courses in one area in order to gain depth in their chosen field.

One additional foundation course in the area of the student's focus can count as an area course

(the other two must be from the list below). Language courses beyond the intermediate level that focus specifically on literature, film or culture may count. Equivalent courses taken abroad may also count as area courses. This list does not reflect special topics courses and sections of existing courses that in a given year may focus on Asia and the Middle East. If you have questions about a course, ask the director of Asian and Middle East studies.

**East Asia:**

ANTH 254: Asians In/Through Popular Culture

ARHS 235: Art of China

ARHS 238: Modern Chinese Art

ARHS 239: Contemporary Chinese Art

CHNS 221: The Pattern on Jade: Chinese Literary Tradition

CHHS 222: Women of the Inner Chambers

CHNS 223: Masterpieces of Modern Chinese Literature

CHNS 321, 322: Advanced Chinese Language and Culture

HIST 263: Imperial China

HIST 454: Asian Diasporas in Asia

JAPN 251: Manga, Anime and Beyond: Japanese Visual Culture

JAPN 322: Japanese Culture and Society through Literary and Media Texts

JAPN 351: From Old Tales to Popular Culture

PHIL 212: Early Chinese Philosophy

RLST 265: Zen Buddhism

RLST 272: Modern Buddhism

SOCY 222: Global Religions in Modern Society

**South/Southeast Asia:**

ANTH 254: Asians In/Through Popular Culture

ENGL 264: In Transit

ENGL 363: Writing the Global City  
HIST 260: Medieval Islamic Empires  
HIST 345: History of the Indian Ocean  
HIST 356: Vietnam  
HIST 358: Imagined India: Film and Fiction  
HIST 454: Asian Diasporas in Asia  
HIST 458: Gandhi and Civil Disobedience  
MUSC 206: Seminar in Ethnomusicology  
MUSC 485: Indonesian Music Ensemble

**The Islamicate World:**

ARBC 220: Arab World Through Literature and Film  
HIST 258: Ottoman Empire  
HIST 264: History of Modern Middle East  
HIST 365: Middle East through Film and Fiction  
HIST 370: Women and Gender in the Modern Middle East  
HIST 390: Modern Iran  
HIST 454: Asian Diasporas in Asia  
RLST 285: Voices of Contemporary Islam  
RLST 290: Seminar on Sufism  
RLST 295: Islam in North America

**5. Senior Seminar: Asia and the Middle East in Comparative Perspective**

This course is required for both the joint major and the concentration. It is offered every spring under the direction of a selected Asian and Middle East studies faculty member and meets in a seminar format. Topics vary with the instructor. Majors and concentrators must take the course in their senior year, unless special circumstances prevent them from doing so.

**Senior Capstone**

The Senior Capstone will follow the requirements of the joint department. It will focus in a significant way on the area in which the student's relevant language and study-abroad requirements were fulfilled, and will be supervised by an Asian and Middle East studies faculty member in the joint department.

**Honors**

Honors in the Asian and Middle East studies joint major will follow the requirements for honors in the joint department. The supervising faculty member in that department will present the honors proposal to the Asian and Middle East studies faculty for approval early in the fall semester. An Asian and Middle East studies faculty member in the joint department will participate in the project's evaluation.

**Requirements for the Concentration in Asian Studies**

The concentration in Asian studies enables students to integrate their studies of the histories, cultures and societies of Asia in a comparative and interdisciplinary format. It comprises three elements: at least one year of language study, three non-language courses representing at least two regions of Asia and the Middle East, and the senior seminar.

**Language Study**

For Asian languages taught at Kenyon — at present Chinese, Japanese and Arabic — one year of instruction is required. The equivalent of one year of approved relevant college-level language instruction at another accredited academic institution also meets the requirement, as does an approved intensive summer program.

For languages not taught at Kenyon, one semester of intensive language study in a country where the language is spoken, or an approved intensive summer program, will be considered equivalent to a full year at Kenyon. In the case of transfer students, credit will be accepted for a year of relevant language study with a grade of C+ or better pursued at another institution.

If the program committee determines that a student possesses native proficiency in a relevant language, both oral and written, it waives the requirement.

The program committee strongly recommends that students continue language study beyond the first year.

### **Area and Disciplinary Coursework**

Students are required to take three courses about Asia other than language courses. These courses must be from the list offered under Asian studies at Kenyon but may also include relevant courses taken in study-abroad programs. Students must take at least one course representing a region different from that of their language study. For example, students who are primarily focused on East Asia and are studying Chinese or Japanese at Kenyon (or taking Korean abroad or off-campus) must take at least one course focused on South/Southeast Asia or the Islamic world (see lists under Requirements for the Joint Major). A course that covers more than one region of Asia — e.g., "Asian Art," "The Silk Road" or "Comparative Asian Politics" — also fulfills this requirement.

Courses not specifically focused on Asia are not counted toward the concentration. Where any doubt arises, please ask a member of the Asian studies faculty. Double-counting for a student's major and the concentration is permitted.

### **Senior Seminar: Asia and the Middle East in Comparative Perspective**

This course is required for both the joint major and both concentrations. It is offered every spring under the direction of a selected Asian studies faculty member and meets in a seminar format. Topics vary with the instructor. Majors and concentrators must take the course in their senior year, unless special circumstances prevent them from doing so.

### **Off-Campus Study**

Off-campus study in Asia is not required for the concentration but is highly recommended. Students should consult with Asian studies faculty members and the director of the Center for Global Engagement to learn about the numerous opportunities to study in Asia for one semester

or a year. Summer language-study programs are also available for students who need to prepare for off-campus study or desire to learn an Asian or Middle East language not offered at Kenyon (e.g., Hindi, Urdu, Korean, Vietnamese).

### **Islamic Civilization and Cultures**

The focus of this concentration is the study of Islamic civilization as a global and multicultural phenomenon. There are more than a billion Muslims in the world. They live in dozens of countries and speak hundreds of languages and dialects. They are the majority population in a region spanning from Morocco to Indonesia.

The impact of the civilization connected with Islam on world history has been complex and profound. The founding of the religion of Islam and the first Islamic polity by the Prophet Muhammad was a major turning point in human history. The subsequent Islamic empires that arose in the immediate wake of the rise of Islam — the Umayyad and the Abbasids — not only had a tremendous effect on the political and economic nature of the global system, but also became centers of intellectual and cultural florescence. Following the fall of Baghdad to the Mongols in the 13th century, the conversion of Turko-Mongol tribes to Islam led to a remarkable new series of Islamic polities that transformed the Eurasian world not only through military conquest but also by providing links for trade and diplomacy. Islam played similarly crucial roles in the histories of Africa and Southeast Asia.

From the Taj Mahal and the libraries of Timbuktu to the Blue Mosque in Istanbul and the Alhambra palace in Spain, Islamic societies generated remarkable works of art, architecture and literature. The rise of European power and the subsequent colonization of much of the Islamic world brought new challenges. In the contemporary world, the role of Islam in global and local affairs is deeply contested. The purpose of this concentration is to allow students to study systematically and coherently the global civilization of Islam and its religious traditions, histories and cultures in all of its diversity.

### **Beginning Studies**

First-year and sophomore students may begin with any introductory course that deals with Islamic civilization or its cultures. RLST 140 (Classical Islam), HIST 166 (History of the Islamicate World) or HIST 264 (History of Modern Middle East) are especially designed as introductory courses and are open to first-year students. Students hoping to spend all or part of their junior year in the Arabic-speaking world should begin their study of Arabic in the first two years at Kenyon.

### **Area and Disciplinary Coursework**

Students are required to take at least four courses that focus on the Islamic world, outside of the Department of Modern Languages and Literature. Courses should be chosen from at least two departments. These courses may be chosen from a list approved by the program committee of the Islamic Civilization and Cultures Concentration and may include up to two relevant courses taken in study-abroad programs. These courses must have a substantial amount of work that deals specifically with an aspect or aspects of the Islamic world. One may be a comparative course that examines the Islamic world together with another cultural region. At least one must be an advanced seminar. One must be an introductory course chosen from the following: RLST 140 (Classical Islam), HIST 166 (History of the Islamicate World) or HIST 264 (History of Modern Middle East).

### **Language Study**

At least one year of instruction in a relevant Islamicate language is required. This requirement can be met by taking the two-semester sequence of Arabic at Kenyon, ARBC 101Y-102Y. The equivalent of one year of approved college-level language instruction in Arabic or another relevant language such as Farsi, Turkish, Urdu, Swahili, Uzbek or Bhasa Indonesian at another accredited academic institution also meets the requirement, as do some intensive summer programs or a semester of language study abroad when paired with language immersion. In the case of transfer students, credit will be accepted for a year of Islamicate language study with a grade of C+ or better pursued at another institution. If the program committee determines that a student possesses native proficiency in a relevant language, it waives the requirement.

Students are encouraged to continue language study beyond one year. It is strongly recommended that students continue their language study beyond the first year.

### **Off-Campus Study**

Off-campus study in the Islamicate world is not required but is highly recommended. Students should consult with Islamic Civilization and Cultures Concentration faculty and the director of international education for opportunities to study in the Islamicate world for one semester or a year. Summer language-study programs are also available for students who need to prepare for off-campus study or desire to learn an Islamicate language not offered at Kenyon (e.g., Hindi, Urdu, Farsi, Turkish, Swahili, Bhasa Indonesian). Students who wish to study in the Arabic-speaking world need to complete one year of Arabic at Kenyon before going abroad.

### **Courses That Meet the Concentration Requirement**

ARBC 101Y: Beginning Arabic

ARBC 102Y: Beginning Arabic

ARBC 201: Intermediate Arabic I

ASIA 490: Senior Seminar: Asia in Comparative Perspective (comparative, when the topic is appropriate)\*

HIST 156: History of India (comparative)

HIST 166: History of the Islamicate World\*\*

HIST 258: Ottoman Empire

HIST 261: The Mongol Empire in World History (comparative)

HIST 264: History of Modern Middle East\*\*

HIST 345: History of the Indian Ocean (comparative)

HIST 365: Middle East through Film and Fiction\*

HIST 370: Women and Gender in the Modern Middle East\*

HIST 438: The Medieval Spains: Antiquity to the New World\* (comparative)

MATH 128: History of Mathematics in the Islamic World

MUSC 485: Asian Music Ensemble (Gamelan)

RLST 140: Classical Islam\*\*

RLST 285: Voices of Contemporary Islam\*

RLST 290: Seminar on Sufism\*

RLST 295: Islam in North America\*

\* *Course fulfills the seminar requirement*

\*\* *Course fulfills the introductory course requirement*

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## Courses in Asian and Middle East Studies

The Kenyon College faculty voted to change from Kenyon units to semester hours. This change will go into effect for all students who start at the College in the fall of 2024.

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### First-year Seminar: Introduction to Asian and Middle East Studies

AMES 101 CREDITS: 0.5/4

This course is designed to introduce students to the study of Asia and the Middle East within the context of the global humanities. It serves as a sampler, which exposes students to the rich diversity of Asian and Islamicate humanities. The seminar explores a wide range of primary sources from different places and historical periods. These may include such diverse materials as the memoirs of the medieval Muslim traveler Ibn Battuta, "The Analects of Confucius," readings from the "Vedas" and "Upanishads," Farid ud din Attar's "The Conference of the Birds," Kurosawa's "Rashomon," Rabindranath Tagore's "The Home and The World," short fiction from the modern Palestinian author Ghassan Kanafani and examples of contemporary Chinese science

fiction. This interdisciplinary course does not count toward the completion of any diversification requirement. Only open to first-year students.

## The Silk Road

AMES 201 CREDITS: 0.5/4

"The Silk Road" is a rather misleading term coined in 1877 by Ferdinand von Richthofen. It refers to a vast network of trade routes that connected East, South, and Southeast Asia with the Mediterranean region, North Africa, and Europe. While travel and migration along these routes date back to prehistoric times and continue today, communication via the land routes across the Eurasian continent primarily flourished from the second century B.C.E. through the 15th century C.E., most notably linking China with western Asia and the Mediterranean region. And while silk was one of the major products transported from China to the West as far back as the Roman Empire, the trade, especially in such other luxury goods such as spices (from India) and gemstones (from western Asia), was active in both directions. Along with the trade in material goods, the Silk Road was the medium for cultural exchange. One of the prime examples of this was the spread of Buddhism from India into Afghanistan, China, Korea, Japan and Southeast Asia. As an extensive and many-layered system of economic and cultural exchange, the Silk Road can therefore be considered a pre-modern example of what today we call globalization. This course will survey the history of economic and cultural exchange along the Silk Road from prehistoric times to the present day. We specifically will examine geographic factors, the various ethnicities and empires that contributed to Silk Road history, the exchange of goods and technologies, the religions of the Silk Road, and the spread of artistic traditions across Asia. The general aim will be to enable students to think critically about Asia (or Eurasia) in a more holistic way, to understand the interconnections of our various academic disciplines and to appreciate some of the rich cultural heritages and exchanges that have contributed to our world. This counts toward the social science diversification requirement when paired with a course in HIST. No prerequisite.

## Sufis and Yogis, Pandits and ‘Alims: Muslim/“Hindu”

### Encounters in South Asia

AMES 340 CREDITS: 0.5/4

Muslims have been an integral part of South Asian and Indian history for more than a millennium. While Islam may have first come to the region as the religion of immigrants and converts, the Muslims of contemporary South Asia are now overwhelmingly their native-born descendants. Islam has so successfully settled into South Asia that the Muslims of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh collectively account for approximately one-third of the world’s Muslims. South Asia’s Muslims and “Hindus” have seldom lived in isolation from each other. There has been continuous cultural interaction between them. This seminar examines interactions between “Hindus” and Muslims by reading a series of recent scholarly monographs on the topic. Questions to be addressed include: How did Muslim rulers and the scholars in their courts deal with the question of “Hinduism?” How did Sufis and Yogis understand each other’s religious beliefs and practices? How did Muslim historians write the history of Hindustan? Conversely, how did “Hindu” historians write the history of the Muslim presence in South Asia? Is the culture of pilgrimage to Sufi shrines truly Islamic? Is contemporary “Hindu” nationalism “othering” the culture of South Asian Islam? There is no specific prerequisite for this class, but we recommend students should have some background in the study of Islam, or Islamicate or South Asian history. This interdisciplinary course does not count toward the completion of any diversification requirement. This course is an intensive seminar and counts toward the upper-level seminar requirement for the Islamic civilization and cultures concentration.

### Senior Seminar: Asia in Comparative Perspective

AMES 490 CREDITS: 0.5/4

This capstone seminar is taught by Asian Studies Program faculty in rotation and is organized around a common theme that integrates the various disciplines and regions

of Asia. Through readings, films, guest lectures and other activities, the course leads students to synthesize their academic and personal (e.g., off-campus) experiences in a broader comparative perspective. Students produce work that examines one or more topics of their own interest within the comparative Asian framework. Required for Asian studies concentrators and joint majors. This interdisciplinary course does not count toward the completion of any diversification requirement. No prerequisite. Permission of instructor required. Senior standing. Offered every spring.