Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

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Program of Study

The BA degree programs in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations (NELC) are as varied as the wide subject matter they embrace. Areas of specialization within NELC include:

Archaeology and Art of the Ancient Near East
Classical Hebrew Language and Civilization
Cuneiform Studies (including Assyriology, Hittitology, and Sumerology)
Egyptian Languages and Civilization
Islamic and Modern Middle Eastern Studies (including Arabic, Armenian, Modern Hebrew, Kazakh, Persian, Turkish, and Uzbek)
Near Eastern Judaica

Students who major in NELC learn one or more of the primary native languages as a means of access to the cultures of the ancient Near East and the modern Middle East. (Students who plan to do advanced work in Near Eastern studies are strongly encouraged also to develop a reading knowledge of German and French.) In consultation with the counselor for undergraduate studies, each student chooses an area of specialization and devises a program of study that provides a sound basis for graduate work in that area or for a career in museology, business, government, and other disciplines.

Students who major in other fields of study may wish to minor in NELC. The minor program is described below, after the description of the major.

Program Requirements

Thirteen courses and a BA paper are required for a NELC major.

(1) Two or three quarters of one of the following civilization sequences:

NEHC 20001-20002-20003. Ancient Near Eastern History and Society I, II, III
NEHC 20011-20012-20013. Ancient Empires I, II, III
NEHC 20401-20402-20403. Jewish History and Society I, II, III
NEHC 20404-20405-20406. Jewish Thought and Literature I, II, III
NEHC 20411-20412-20413. Medieval Jewish History I, II, III
NEHC 20416-20417-20418. Semitic Languages, Cultures, and Civilizations I, II, III
NEHC 20501-20502-20503. Islamic History and Society I, II, III
NEHC 20601-20602-20603. Islamic Thought and Literature I, II, III

Note that the course sequences on “Archaeology of the Ancient Near East” and “Medieval Jewish History” do not meet the general education requirement in civilization studies. All of the other NELC civilization sequences do meet the general education requirement.

(2) Six courses in one of the Near Eastern languages (e.g., Akkadian, Arabic, Armenian, Egyptian, Hebrew, Kazakh, Persian, Turkish, Uzbek). Credit for language courses may not be granted by examination or petition.

(3) Three or four elective courses in the student’s area of specialization. These courses must be chosen in consultation with the counselor for undergraduate studies. They may consist of additional NELC language courses, an additional NELC civilization sequence, or approved courses in areas such as archaeology, art, literature in translation, history, and religion.

(4) The BA Paper Seminar (NEHC 29800) is required of all NELC majors. It is to be taken in the Autumn Quarter of the year in which the student expects to graduate. The seminar and BA paper are described below.

Summary of Requirements

6 courses in one Near Eastern language at any level
2 or 3 courses in one approved civilization sequence*
4 or 3 approved electives relating to the Near East**
1 BA Paper Seminar (NEHC 29800)
13

* If a Near Eastern civilization sequence is used to meet the College general education requirement, a second Near Eastern civilization sequence is required for the NELC major.

** May include one BA Paper Preparation (NEHC 29999).

Grading. All courses used to meet requirements in the major must be taken for quality grades with the exception of the BA Paper Seminar (NEHC 29800), which is taken for P/F grading.

Advising. As soon as they declare their major in NELC, students must complete a form that is available in the departmental office and at nelc.uchicago.edu/undergraduates.htm. Students must consult the counselor for undergraduate studies when planning their programs of study. In autumn quarter of their fourth year, all NELC students must see the counselor for undergraduate studies with an updated degree program and transcript.

BA Paper Seminar. Candidates for the BA degree in NELC are required to write a substantial BA paper. The paper gives the student the opportunity to research a topic of interest and to improve writing and presentation skills.

It is the student’s responsibility, in his or her third year, to approach a NELC faculty member with a request to serve as the student’s faculty research adviser. The student and the faculty adviser together decide on a topic for the BA paper. The topic must be registered in the NELC department office by Monday of tenth week in Spring Quarter of the student’s third year. Forms to register the topic are available in the departmental office and at nelc.uchicago.edu.

Students are required to register for the BA Paper Seminar (NEHC 29800) in Autumn Quarter of their fourth year. A passing grade (P) for the seminar depends on full attendance and participation throughout the quarter. The BA Paper Seminar is a workshop course designed to survey the fields represented by NELC and to assist students in researching and writing their BA papers. Students continue working on their BA papers during the following quarters, meeting at intervals with their faculty research adviser. They may register for NEHC 29999 during the Winter Quarter to devote the equivalent of a one-quarter course to the preparation of the paper; the paper grade, reported in the Spring Quarter, will be the grade for the course NEHC 29999. See the course description below.

Students taking a double major may, with the permission of the NELC counselor for undergraduate studies, write a single BA paper that is designed to meet the requirements of both majors, provided that the faculty research adviser is a member of the NELC faculty. Approval from both program chairs is required. A consent form, to be signed by the chairs, is available from the College adviser. It must be completed and returned to the College adviser by the end of Autumn Quarter of the student’s year of graduation.

The completed BA paper with the BA Paper Completion Form (from the NELC website) must be submitted to the NELC office by Monday of third week in Spring Quarter. The faculty research adviser will grade the paper and then will submit it to the NELC counselor for undergraduate studies by Monday of fifth week in Spring Quarter. Students who fail to meet the deadline will not be eligible for honors and may not be able to graduate in that quarter.

The above information assumes a Spring Quarter graduation. Students who expect to graduate in other quarters must consult the NELC counselor for undergraduate studies prior to the quarter in which they expect to graduate.
Honors. Students who complete their course work and their BA papers with distinction are considered for honors. To be eligible for honors, students must have an overall GPA of 3.25 or higher, they must have a NELC GPA of 3.5 or higher, and they must have earned a grade of A on the BA paper.

Minor Program in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

The minor in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations requires a total of six courses. Students may choose one of two tracks: (1) a language track that includes three courses of one NELC language at any level, or (2) a culture track that replaces language study with courses in such topics as archaeology, history, religion, or literature in translation. Both tracks require a two- or three-quarter NELC civilization sequence.

Students who wish to take a minor in NELC must meet with the counselor for undergraduate studies before the end of Spring Quarter of their third year to declare their intention to complete the minor. Courses must be chosen in consultation with the counselor. Students must submit the counselor's approval for the minor program to their College adviser by the deadline above on a form obtained from the adviser.

Courses in the minor may not be double counted with a student's major(s) or with other minors, and they may not be counted toward general education requirements. Courses in the minor must be taken for quality grades. More than half of the requirements for the minor must be met by registering for courses bearing University of Chicago course numbers.

Listed below are sample sets of courses that meet the requirements of the NELC minor.

Language Track Sample Minor
AKKD 10101-10102-10103. Elementary Akkadian*
NEHC 20001-20002-20003. Ancient Near Eastern History and Society

Language Track Sample Minor
ARAB 20101-20102-20103. Intermediate Arabic*
NEHC 20601-20602-20603. Islamic Thought and Literature

Culture Track Sample Minor
NEHC 20011-20012-20013. Ancient Empires
NEHC 20401-20402-20403. Jewish History and Society

* Consult the counselor for undergraduate studies about the level of the language (introductory, intermediate, or advanced) required to meet the language track requirement. Students may not petition for credit to meet the language requirement for the minor program.

Courses: Akkadian (akkd)

10101-10102-10103. Elementary Akkadian I, II, III. PQ: Second-year standing. The first two quarters of this sequence cover the elements of Babylonian grammar and the cuneiform writing system, with reading exercises in Old Babylonian texts (ca. 1900 to 1600 BC), such as the Laws of Hammurabi. The third quarter introduces Standard Babylonian, the literary language of ca. 1200 to 600 BC, with readings in royal inscriptions and literary texts. W. Farber, Staff. Autumn, Winter, Spring.

Courses: Ancient Anatolian Languages (aanl)

10101-10102-10103. Elementary Hittite I, II, III. PQ: Second-year standing. This three-quarter sequence covers the basic grammar and cuneiform writing system of the Hittite language. It also familiarizes students with the field's tools (i.e., dictionaries, lexica, sign list). Readings come from all periods of Hittite history (1650 to 1180 BC). This course is offered in alternate years. T. van den Hout. Autumn, Winter, Spring.

Courses: Arabic (arab)

10101-10102-10103. Elementary Arabic I, II, III. This sequence concentrates on the acquisition of speaking, reading, and aural skills in modern formal Arabic. The class meets for six hours a week. Autumn, Winter, Spring.

10251. Colloquial Egyptian Arabic. PQ: ARAB 10102 or equivalent. A. Mohamed. Spring.


30381. Introduction to Arabic Poetry. PQ: Second year Arabic or equivalent. The course is an introduction to the texts, contexts, functions, and rhythms of
Arabic poetry. Students read, translate, and analyze the most eloquent verse of the Arabic poetic canon, with a view to understanding its themes, metaphors, and forms. In addition, they study the prosody and rhetoric that underpins these texts in order to acquire a feel for its music and aesthetics. The class is part lecture, part readings. Its focus is on the classical material, but modern poetry (MSA and colloquial) is also introduced. T. Qutbuddin. Spring.


Courses: Aramaic (ARAM)

10101. Biblical Aramaic. (=JWSC 11000) PQ: Second-year standing and knowledge of Classical Hebrew. This course is offered in alternate years. S. Creason. Autumn.

10102. Old Aramaic Inscriptions. (=JWSC 11100) PQ: Second-year standing and ARAM 10101. This course is offered in alternate years. S. Creason. Spring.

10103. Imperial Aramaic. (=JWSC 11200) PQ: Second-year standing and ARAM 10101. This course is offered in alternate years. S. Creason. Winter.

10401-10402-10403. Elementary Syriac I, II, III. PQ: Second-year standing. The goal of this three-quarter sequence is to enable students to read Syriac literature with a high degree of comprehension. This sequence is divided into two segments: the first two quarters are devoted to acquiring the essentials of Syriac grammar and vocabulary; the third quarter is spent reading a variety of Syriac prose and poetic texts and reviewing grammar. S. Creason. Not offered 2010–11; will be offered 2011–12.

Courses: Armenian (ARME)

10101-10102-10103. Elementary Modern Armenian I, II, III. (=EEUR 21100-21200-21300/31100-31200-31300) This three-quarter sequence utilizes the most advanced computer technology and audio-visual aids to enable students to master a core vocabulary, the alphabet, and basic grammatical structures, as well as to achieve a reasonable level of proficiency in modern formal and spoken Armenian (one of the oldest Indo-European languages). Considerable amounts of historical/political and social/cultural issues about Armenia are built into this sequence to prepare students who intend to conduct research in Armenian studies, Indo-European studies, or general linguistics. H. Haroutunian. Winter.

20101-20102-20103. Intermediate Modern Armenian I, II, III. PQ: ARME 10103. The goal of this three-quarter sequence is to enable students to reach an advanced level of proficiency in the Armenian language. This sequence covers a rich vocabulary and complex grammatical structures in modern formal and colloquial Armenian. Reading assignments include a selection of original Armenian literature and excerpts from mass media. H. Haroutunian. Autumn, Winter, Spring.

 Courses: Egyptian (EGPT)

10101-10102. Introduction to Middle Egyptian Hieroglyphs I, II. (=ANCM 30500-30501) PQ: Second-year standing. This course examines hieroglyphic writing and the grammar of the language of classical Egyptian literature. Autumn, Winter.

10103. Middle Egyptian Texts I. (=ANCM 30502) PQ: EGPT 10101-10102. This course features readings in a variety of genres, including historical, literary, and scientific texts. Spring.

10201. Introduction to Coptic. PQ: Second-year standing required; knowledge of earlier Egyptian language phases or Classical Greek or Koine Greek helpful but not required. This course introduces the last native language of Egypt, which was in common use during the Roman, Byzantine, and medieval Islamic periods (fourth to tenth centuries CE). Grammar and vocabulary of the standard Sahidic dialect are presented in preparation for reading biblical, monastic, and Gnostic literature, as well as a variety of historical and social documents. Autumn.

10202. Coptic Texts. PQ: EGPT 10201. This course builds on the basics of grammar learned in EGPT 10201 and provides readings in a variety of Coptic texts (e.g., monastic texts, biblical excerpts, talles, Gnostic literature). Winter.

20101. Middle Egyptian Texts II. PQ: EGPT 10101-10102-10103. This course features readings in a variety of genres, including historical, literary, and scientific texts. Autumn.

20102. Introduction to Hieratic. PQ: EGPT 10101-10102-10103 required; EGPT 20101 recommended. This course introduces the cursive literary and administrative script of Middle Egyptian (corresponding to the Middle Kingdom period in Egypt) and is intended to provide familiarity with a variety of texts written in Hieratic (e.g., literary tales, religious compositions, wisdom literature, letters, accounts, graffiti). Winter.
20110. Introduction to Old Egyptian. PQ: EGPT 10101-10102-10103 required; EGPT 20101 recommended. This course examines the hieroglyphic writing and grammar of the Old Kingdom (Egypt’s “Pyramid Age”), focusing on monumental readings from private tombs, royal and private stelae, administrative decrees, economic documents, and Pyramid texts. Some attention is given to Old Egyptian texts written in cursive Hieratic. Spring.

20210. Introduction to Late Egyptian. PQ: EGPT 10101-10102-10103 required; EGPT 20101 recommended. This course is a comprehensive examination of the grammar, vocabulary, and orthographic styles of the nonliterary vernacular of New Kingdom Egypt (Dynasties XVII to XXIV), as exhibited by administrative and business documents, private letters, and official monuments. We also study the hybrid “literary Late Egyptian” used for tales and other compositions. Texts from the various genres are read and analyzed in EGPT 20211. Spring.

20211. Late Egyptian Texts. PQ: EGPT 20210. Building on the basics of grammar, vocabulary, and orthographic styles learned in EGPT 20210, this course focuses on the reading and analysis of Late Egyptian texts from the various genres. Autumn.

30120. Introduction to Demotic. PQ: EGPT 10201 and/or EGPT 20210. Winter.


Courses: Ge’ez (GEEZ)

10101-10102. Introduction to Classical Ethiopic I, II. This course introduces the fundamentals of Ge’ez (Classical Ethiopic) with an overview of grammar and the writing system, as well as exercises in reading early monumental and simple narrative texts. R. Hasselbach. Not offered 2010–11; will be offered 2011–12.


Courses: Hebrew (HEBR)

10101-10102-10103. Elementary Classical Hebrew I, II, III. (=JWSC 22000-22100-22200) The purpose of this three-quarter sequence is to enable students to read biblical Hebrew prose with a high degree of comprehension. This sequence is divided into two segments: (1) the first two quarters are devoted to acquiring the essentials of descriptive and historical grammar (e.g., translation to and from Hebrew, oral exercises, grammatical analysis); and (2) the third quarter is spent examining prose passages from the Hebrew Bible and includes a review of grammar. The class meets five times a week. Autumn, Winter, Spring.

10501-10502-10503. Introductory Modern Hebrew I, II, III. (=JWSC 25000-25100-25200, LGLN 20100-20200-20300/30100-30200-30300) This course introduces students to reading, writing, and speaking modern Hebrew. All four language skills are emphasized: comprehension of written and oral materials; reading of nondiacritical text; writing of directed sentences, paragraphs, and compositions; and speaking. Students learn the Hebrew root pattern system and the seven basic verb conjugations in both the past and present tenses, as well as simple future. At the end of the year, students can conduct short conversations in Hebrew, read materials at their level, and write short essays. A. Finkelstein. Autumn, Winter, Spring.

20001. Hebrew Letters and Inscriptions. PQ: One year of Classical Hebrew. This course involves reading and analysis of the inscriptive material from Palestine written during the first millennium BC (including texts from Transjordan). This course is offered in alternate years. D. Pardee. Not offered 2010–11; will be offered 2011–12.

20002. Phoenician Inscriptions. PQ: HEBR 20001. This course involves reading and analysis of the inscriptions, primarily on stone and primarily from the Phoenician homeland, that belong to the early and middle first millennium BC. This course is offered in alternate years. D. Pardee. Not offered 2010–11; will be offered 2011–12.

20003. Punic Inscriptions. PQ: HEBR 20002. This course is a continuation of HEBR 20002. Texts resulting from the Phoenician expansion into the Western Mediterranean (primarily North Africa) are studied. This course is offered in alternate years. D. Pardee. Not offered 2010–11; will be offered 2011–12.


20301-20302. Tannaitic Hebrew Texts I, II. (=JWSC 22201-22202) PQ: Some basic knowledge of biblical and/or modern Hebrew, and consent of instructor. This course consists of readings in the Mishnah and Tosefta, the main corpus of legal and juridical texts assembled by the Palestinian academic masters during the second and early third centuries. Goals are to introduce: (1) views and opinions of early rabbinic scholars who flourished in the period immediately following that of the writers of the Dead Sea Scrolls; (2) aspects of the material culture of the Palestinian Jews during that same period; and (3) grammar and vocabulary of what is generally called “early rabbinic Hebrew,” thereby facilitating the ability to read and understand unvocalized Hebrew texts. N. Golb. Autumn, Winter.

HEBR 10503 or equivalent. The main objective of this course is to provide students with the skills necessary to approach modern Hebrew prose, both fiction and nonfiction. In order to achieve this task, students are provided with a systematic examination of the complete verb structure. Many syntactic structures are introduced (e.g., simple clauses, coordinate and compound sentences). At this level, students not only write and speak extensively but are also required to analyze grammatically and contextually all of material assigned. A. Finkelstein. Autumn, Winter, Spring.

30601-30602-30603. Advanced Readings in Modern Hebrew I, II, III. (=JWSC 25601-25701-25801, LGLN 23001-23101-23201/33001-33101-33201) PQ: HEBR 20503 or equivalent. Although this course assumes that students have full mastery of the grammatical and lexical content at the intermediate level, there is a shift from a reliance on the cognitive approach to an emphasis on the expansion of various grammatical and vocabulary-related subjects. After being introduced to sophisticated and more complex syntactic constructions, students learn how to transform simple sentences into more complicated ones. The exercises address the creative efforts of students, and the reading segments are longer and more challenging in both style and content. The language of the texts reflects the literary written medium rather than the more informal spoken style, which often dominates the introductory and intermediate texts. Autumn, Winter, Spring.

Courses: Kazakh (KAZK)

10101-10102-10103. Elementary Kazakh I, II, III. (=LGLN 18700-18800-18900) This sequence introduces Kazakh, a Turkic language spoken in Kazakhstan and neighboring countries. This sequence teaches the fundamentals of grammar to enable students to read, write, and speak Kazakh. Students are exposed to the history and culture of Kazakhstan through modern and nineteenth-century literature, as well as to current events through mass media. Autumn, Winter, Spring.

Courses: Persian (PERS)

10101-10102-10103. Elementary Persian I, II, III. This sequence concentrates on modern written Persian as well as modern colloquial usage. Toward the end of this sequence, students are able to read, write, and speak Persian at an elementary level. Introducing the Iranian culture is also a goal. The class meets for three hours a week with the instructor and for two hours a week with a native speaker who conducts grammatical drills and Persian conversation. S. Ghahremani. Autumn, Winter, Spring.

20101-20102-20103. Intermediate Persian I, II, III. PQ: PERS 10103 or consent of instructor. This sequence deepens and expands students’ knowledge of modern Persian at all levels of reading, writing, and speaking. Grammar is taught at a higher level, and a wider vocabulary enables students to read stories, articles, and poetry. Examples of classical literature and the Iranian culture are introduced. The class meets for three hours a week with the instructor; with enough interested students, the class meets for an additional two hours a week with a native speaker who conducts grammatical drills and Persian conversation. S. Ghahremani. Autumn, Winter, Spring.

30220. Poetics/Politics of Modern Iran. PQ: Knowledge of Persian or consent of instructor. This course surveys the major events of modern history from the Constitutional Revolution of 1906 to the present as seen through the lens of poetry. Poems in both traditional and modern forms—focusing in particular on political satire, prison poems, human rights, and women’s rights—are read and analyzed against the sociopolitical circumstances to which they respond. Primary texts are read and recited in Persian; secondary readings, discussions, and papers are in English. S. Ghahremani. Spring.

30350. Persian Poetry: Minor Genres, History of the Rubaiyat. PQ: Knowledge of Persian or consent of instructor. This course is a survey of the development of this native Persian genre from the emergence of the dialectal fahlaviyat in the early Islamic period to the quatrain writers of contemporary Iran. We emphasize the formal features of meter, structural development, and thematic genres (e.g., panegyric, chronogram, satire). A wide range of poets is covered, but particular attention is given to the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam. We also compare the original Persian to English translations of the Rubaiyat by Fitzgerald and others. Quatrain texts read and recited in Persian; discussions and papers in English. S. Ghahremani. Winter.

Courses: Sumerian (SUMR)

10101-10102-10103. Elementary Sumerian I, II, III. PQ: AKKD 10101. Sequence typically begins in Winter Quarter and concludes Autumn Quarter of the next academic year. This sequence covers the elements of Sumerian grammar, with reading exercises in Ur III, pre-Sargonic, and elementary literary texts. This sequence is offered in alternate years. C. Woods. Winter, Spring, Autumn.

Courses: Turkish (TURK)

10101-10102-10103. Elementary Turkish I, II, III. This sequence features proficiency-based instruction emphasizing grammar in modern Turkish. This sequence consists of reading and listening comprehension, as well as grammar exercises and basic writing in Turkish. Modern stories and contemporary articles are read at the end of the courses. The class meets for five hours a week. K. Arik. Autumn, Winter, Spring.

10105. Introduction to Old Turkic. An introductory course in the written language of the Orkhon Inscriptions, dating back to the fifth-to-eighth-century K›k Türk State of Central Eurasia, and of related inscriptions from the Yenisei River area, Mongolia, Central Asia, and Eastern Europe. The language of the
inscriptions is considered to be the ancestor of the majority of Turkic languages spoken today and uses a distinctive alphabet sometimes known as the Old Turkic Runiform Alphabet. The course covers a brief historic overview, basic grammar, reading selections from the inscriptions in the original and in translation, and familiarization with the alphabet itself. K. Arik. Autumn.

20101-20102-20103. Intermediate Turkish I, II, III. PQ: TURK 10103 or equivalent. This sequence features proficiency-based instruction emphasizing grammar in modern Turkish. This sequence consists of reading, speaking, and listening comprehension, as well as grammar exercises and basic writing in Turkish. Modern stories and contemporary articles are read toward the end of this sequence. K. Arik. Autumn, Winter, Spring.

30501-30502-30503. Ottoman Turkish I, II, III. PQ: TURK 20103 or consent of instructor. This sequence introduces, in order of difficulty, selections of Turkish texts in Arabic script that are both printed and handwritten and that range from the fourteenth to the nineteenth century. Texts are drawn from chronicles, official documents, memoirs, poetry, and other genres. H. Karateke. Autumn, Winter, Spring. Not offered 2010–11; will be offered 2011–12.

Courses: Ugāritic (UGAR)

20101-20102-20103. Ugāritic I, II, III. PQ: Second-year standing and one year of Classical Hebrew. This is the introductory sequence to Ugāritic, a language of the Northwest-Semitic group that is attested on tablets dating to the Late Bronze Age. This sequence is offered in alternate years. D. Pardee. Autumn, Winter, Spring.

Courses: Uzbek (UZBK)

10101-10102-10103. Elementary Modern Literary Uzbek I, II, III. This sequence enables students to reach an intermediate level of proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing modern literary Uzbek, the most widely spoken Turkic language after Turkish. Students learn both the recently implemented Latin script and the older Cyrillic script versions of the written language and view audio-video materials in Uzbek on a weekly basis. The class meets five days a week. Autumn, Winter, Spring.

20101-20102-20103. Intermediate Modern Literary Uzbek I, II, III. PQ: UZBK 10103 or proficiency examination. This sequence enables students to reach an advanced level of proficiency in modern literary Uzbek. The curriculum includes a selection of Uzbek literature and excerpts from the written media, as well as audio-visual materials from Uzbekistan. Second- and third-year classes meet together. Autumn, Winter, Spring.

30101-30102-30103. Advanced Modern Literary Uzbek I, II, III. PQ: UZBK 20103 or proficiency examination. This sequence further develops the reading, writing, and speaking proficiency skills of intermediate to advanced students of Uzbek. The curriculum draws on modern Uzbek literature, as well as on written and audio-visual media from Uzbekistan. Second- and third-year classes meet together. Autumn, Winter, Spring.

Courses: Near Eastern Art and Archaeology (NEAA)

10630. Islamic Art and Architecture, 1100 to 1500. (=ARTH 16709) This course surveys the art and architecture of the Islamic world from 1100 to 1500. In that period, political fragmentation into multiple principalities challenged a deeply rooted ideology of unity of the Islamic world. The course of the various principalities competed not only in politics but also in the patronage of architectural projects and of arts (e.g., textiles, ceramics, woodwork, arts of the book). While focusing on the central Islamic lands, we consider regional traditions from Spain to India and the importance for the arts of contacts with China and the West. P. Berlekamp. Autumn.

20001-20002-20003-20004-20005-20006/30001-30002-30003-30004-30005-30006. Archaeology of the Ancient Near East I, II, III, IV, V, VI. This sequence does not meet the general education requirement in civilization studies. This sequence surveys the archaeology and art of the Near East from prehistoric times to the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Each course in this sequence focuses on a particular cultural region. 20001-20002-20003/30001-30002-30003 is offered in even years; 20004-20005-20006/30004-30005-30006 is offered in odd years.

20001/30001. Archaeology of the Ancient Near East I: Mesopotamia. This course is offered in alternate years. M. Gibson. Autumn.

20002/30002. Archaeology of the Ancient Near East II: Anatolia. This course is offered in alternate years. A. Yener. Winter.

20003/30003. Archaeology of the Ancient Near East III: Levant. This course is offered in alternate years. D. Schloen. Spring.


20030/30030. The Rise of the State in the Near East. (=ANTH 26715/36715) This course introduces the background and development of the first urbanized civilizations in the Near East in the period from 9000 to 2200 BC. In the first half of this course, we examine the archaeological evidence for the first domestication of plants and animals and the earliest village communities in the “fertile crescent”
20035/30035. Zooarchaeology. (=ANTH 28410/38810) PQ: Introductory course in archaeology. This course introduces the use of animal bones in archaeological research. Students gain hands-on experience analyzing faunal remains from an archaeological site in the Near East. Topics include: (1) identifying, aging, and sexing animal bones; (2) zooarchaeological sampling, measurement, quantification, and problems of taphonomy; (3) computer analysis of animal bone data; and (4) reconstructing prehistoric hunting and pastoral economies (e.g., animal domestication, hunting strategies, herding systems, seasonality, pastoral production in complex societies). G. Stein. Spring. Not offered 2010–11; will be offered 2011–12.

20051/30051. Method and Theory in Near Eastern Archaeology. This course introduces the main issues in archaeological method and theory with emphasis on the principles and practice of Near Eastern archaeology. Topics include: (1) the history of archaeology, (2) trends in social theory and corresponding modes of archaeological interpretation, (3) the nature of archaeological evidence and issues of research design, (4) survey and excavation methods and associated recording techniques, (5) the analysis and interpretation of various kinds of excavated materials, and (6) the presentation and publication of archaeological results. This course is offered in alternate years. D. Schloen. Winter.

20061-20062/30061-30062. Ancient Landscapes I, II. (=ANTH 26710-26711/36710-36711, GEOG 25400-25800/35400-35800) The landscape of the Near East contains a detailed and subtle record of environmental, social, and economic processes that have obtained over thousands of years. Landscape analysis is, therefore, proving to be fundamental to an understanding of the earlier history and archaeology of the region. This course provides an overview of the ancient cultural landscapes of this heartland of early civilization from the early stages of complex societies in the fifth and sixth millennia BC to the close of the Early Islamic period around the tenth century AD. S. Branting. Autumn, Winter.

20310/30310 The Prehistory of the Levant. (=ANTH 26735/36735) This course offers a survey of the prehistoric periods in the Levant. Students explore prehistoric and earliest proto-historic archaeology chronologically and examine topics such as evidence for the first hominids and humans in the region, the transition from small scale bands of hunter-gatherers to more complex hunter-gatherers, increasing sedentism and the Neolithic Revolution, and the rise in social inequality. Reference to other contiguous areas of the Eastern Mediterranean is included. Our objective is to survey human society through the Palaeolithic, Neolithic, Chalcolithic, and Early Bronze Ages. The latter section highlights particular topics for the major methodological and theoretical concerns for Levantine archaeology. Winter.

20372/30372. Anatolian Archaeology II. This survey course focuses on the archaeological heritage of Turkey (ancient Anatolia) within the context of important technological, territorial, and cultural changes taking place in the Assyrian Trading Colonies, Hittite Empire, Urartu, Phrygia, and the neo-Hittite kingdoms. We discuss site stratigraphy and material culture dating to the first half of the second millennium through the first millennium BC from Kültepe, Alalakh, and Bogazköy (Hattusha), Tüyinat, Van, Bоздjin, and Carchemish. A. Yener. Winter.

20520/30520. Islamic Archaeology of Arabia. This course is an exploration of the cultural patterns in Arabia from the pre-Islamic to the pre-modern periods. The subject matter is archaeological sites of this period within the Arabian peninsula (Jazirat al-Arab), with separate consideration of settlement patterns in the Hijaz, Southwest Arabia, and eastern Arabia (Bahrain and Oman). The focus is on the role of archaeology in understanding the beginnings of Islam and the cultural role of Arabia in Islamic history. D. Whitcomb. Winter.

20521/30521. Egypt after the Pharaohs: Coptic and Islamic Egypt. This course is an exploration of the continuities of Egyptian culture after the Ptolemaic period down to modern times, a span of over 2000 years. Our emphasis is on the archaeology of Coptic and Islamic Egypt. The focus is on the role of medieval archaeology in amplifying the history of economic and social systems. It is this connective quality of archaeology that contributes to an understanding of Pharaonic culture and fills the gap between ancient and modern Egypt. D. Whitcomb. Spring.

20522/30522. Late Levant: Archaeology of Islamic Syria-Palestine. This course is an exploration of the cultural patterns in the Levant from the late Byzantine period down to modern times, a span of some 1500 years. While the subject matter is archaeological sites of this period in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Israel, the focus is on the role of medieval archaeology in amplifying the history of economic and social systems. It is this connective quality of Islamic archaeology that contributes to an understanding of the earlier history and archaeology of this region. D. Whitcomb. Autumn. Not offered 2010–11; will be offered 2011–12.

20760/30760. Mongol and Timurid Art and Architecture in the Islamic Lands, 1258 to 1506. (=ARTH 23009/33009) This course explores art and architecture in the Islamic east from 1258 to 1506. After the sack of Baghdad in 1258, the eastern half of the Islamic world was incorporated into a Mongol world empire stretching from China to Eastern Europe. Along with a brutally imposed new world order came new visual forms, such as the phoenix; as well as shifts in patronage patterns, evidenced by the rise of women patrons. Conquerors and the conquered negotiated their positions vis-à-vis each other through the arts, and rival Turko-Mongol princes vied to attract the best artists to their courts.
The vibrancy of this period was universally acknowledged under subsequent Islamic dynasties. Later writers traced the origins of Persian manuscript painting tradition to the early fourteenth century, and later courts positioned themselves as heirs of the Timurid artistic legacy. P. Berlekamp. Winter.

29700. Reading and Research Course: Near Eastern Art and Archaeology. PQ: Consent of faculty adviser and counselor for undergraduate studies. Students are required to submit the College Reading and Research Course Form. Autumn, Winter, Spring.

Courses: Near Eastern History and Civilization (NEHC)

10101. Introduction to the Middle East. Prior knowledge of the Middle East not required. This course aims to facilitate a general understanding of some key factors that have shaped life in this region, with primary emphasis on modern conditions and their background, and to provide exposure to some of the region’s rich cultural diversity. This course can serve as a basis for the further study of the history, politics, and civilizations of the Middle East. E. Donner. Spring.

20001-20002-20003/30001-30002-30003. Ancient Near Eastern History and Society I, II, III. Taking these courses in sequence is not required. This sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies. This sequence surveys the history of the ancient Near East. Areas covered include Egypt, Mesopotamia, Anatolia, and the Levant (Syria-Palestine). Autumn, Winter, Spring. Not offered 2010–11; will be offered 2011–12.

20001/30001. Ancient Near Eastern History and Society I: Egypt. This course surveys the political, social, and economic history of ancient Egypt from pre-dynastic times (ca. 3400 BC) until the advent of Islam in the seventh century of our era. Autumn.

20002/30002. Ancient Near Eastern History and Society II: Mesopotamia. This course introduces the history of Mesopotamia. We begin with the origins of writing and cities in Sumer (ca. 3200 BC); then cover the great empires of Assyria, Babylon, and Persia; and end with the arrival of Alexander the Great in the late fourth century BC. S. Richardson. Winter.

20003/30003. Ancient Near Eastern History and Society III: Anatolia and Levant. This course surveys the political, social, and economic history of ancient Anatolia and the Levant (Syria-Palestine) from ca. 2300 BC until the conquest of the region by Alexander that inaugurated the Hellenistic period in the Near East. P. Goedegebuure. Spring.

20004-20005-20006/30004-30005-30006. Ancient Near Eastern Thought and Literature I, II, III. Taking these courses in sequence is not required. This sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies. Students in this sequence explore the thought and literature of the ancient Near East, where writing was invented more than five thousand years ago, yielding documents in diverse languages and genres that shed light on politics, religion, and society at the dawn of civilization. Each course in this sequence focuses on a particular cultural region. Texts in English. Autumn, Winter, Spring.

20004/30004. Ancient Near Eastern Thought and Literature I: Mesopotamian Literature. This course surveys a wide range of poetic and prose compositions written in Sumerian and Akkadian in the period from ca. 2500 to 500 BCE, including the famous Epic of Gilgamesh. The role these compositions played in ancient Mesopotamian society is considered, as well as questions of content and style. C. Woods. Autumn.


20011-20012-20013. Ancient Empires I, II, III. (=CLCV 25700-25800-25900) Taking these courses in sequence is not required. This sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies. Three great empires of the ancient world are introduced in this sequence. Each course focuses on a particular empire, with attention to the similarities and differences among the empires covered in this sequence. By exploring the rich legacy of documents and monuments that these empires produced, students are introduced to ways of understanding imperialism and its cultural and societal effects—both on the imperial elites and on those they conquered. Extensive use is made of visual materials, including artifacts on display in the Oriental Institute Museum. Autumn, Winter, Spring. NOTE: NEHC 20011-20012-20013 will be offered out of sequence in 2010–11.


20012. Ancient Empires II: The Egyptian Empire of the New Kingdom. (=CLCV 25800) Not open to students who have completed NEAA 20006/30006. N. Moeller. Spring.


20163. Using Ancient Middle Eastern Pasts. For students with an interest in the Middle East as a geocultural unit of study, this course creates a dialogue between antiquity and medieval, pre-modern, and modern discourses of religious authority, imperialism, nationalism and political dissent. Antiquity has been used in the defense of both tradition and innovation by Western and Middle Eastern cultures alike; yet for whom do historians, custodians, and other users of the past speak? This course examines the interaction and coexistence of cultures with their pasts, from the rise of Islam; to the formation of medieval identities in both Europe and the Middle East; to the moments of empires and nation-states; and to their role in contemporary political questions. S. Richardson. Spring.
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20401-20402-20403/30401-30402-30403. Jewish History and Society: Between Text and Practice I, II, III. Taking these courses in sequence is not required. This sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies. This sequence surveys Jewish history and society from the era of the ancient Israelites until the present day. Students explore the ancient, medieval, and modern phases of Jewish culture(s) by means of documents and artifacts that illuminate the rhythms of daily life in changing economic, social, and political contexts. Texts in English. Autumn, Winter, Spring.

20401/30401. Jewish History and Society: Between Text and Practice I: Introduction to the Hebrew Bible. (=BIBL 30800, JWSC 20001, RLST 11004) This course explores Jewish thought and literature from ancient times until the modern era through a close reading of original sources. A wide variety of works is discussed, including the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament). This three-quarter sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies. Not offered in 2010–11; will be offered in 2011–12.

20402/30402. Jewish History and Society: Between Text and Practice II: European Judaism as Minority Diasporic Culture. (=HIST 22406, JWSC 20002) This course is both an introduction to European Jewish history from the eighteenth century to the present and a case study in the history of diasporic, minority cultures. Key topics such as Hasidism; the Jewish Enlightenment; emancipation; nineteenth-century reform of religious practice; assimilation; Jewish cultural productions particularly in the visual arts; Zionism; and post-war Jewish life are analyzed as sites of interaction between the polities and cultures within which Jews lived and Jewish practices. L. Auslander. Winter.

20403/30403. Jewish History and Society: Between Text and Practice III: Biblical Archaeology. (=JWSCC 20003) This course examines the relationship between the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) and the discoveries made by archaeological excavations in the Middle East over the past 150 years. The results of modern biblical criticism are discussed in light of the constantly growing body of nonbiblical evidence concerning ancient Israel and the wider cultural context in which the Bible was composed. Students are introduced to the methods and conclusions of scholars who synthesize biblical texts and archaeological data (including ancient inscriptions, as well as architecture and artifacts) to reconstruct the history, society, and religion of ancient Israel and early Judaism. No prior background in archaeology or biblical studies is required, although it will be helpful for students to have taken JWSC 20001 (Introduction to the Hebrew Bible) in the Autumn Quarter. D. Schloen. Spring.

20404-20405-20406/30404-30405-30406. Jewish Thought and Literature I, II, III. (=JWSC 20004-20005-20006) Taking these courses in sequence is not required. This sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies. Students in this sequence explore Jewish thought and literature from ancient times until the modern era through a close reading of original sources. A wide variety of works is discussed, including the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) and texts representative of rabbinic Judaism, medieval Jewish philosophy, and modern Jewish culture in its diverse manifestations. Texts in English. Autumn, Winter, Spring. Not open to first-year students. Taking these courses in sequence is recommended but not required. This sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies. This three-quarter sequence deals with the history of the Jews over a wide geographical and historical range. First-quarter work is concerned with the rise of early rabbinic Judaism and development of the Jewish communities in Palestine and the Eastern and Western diasporas during the first several centuries CE. Topics include the legal status of the Jews in the Roman world, the rise of rabbinic Judaism, the rabbinic literature of Palestine in that context, the spread of rabbinic Judaism, the rise and decline of competing centers of Jewish hegemony, the introduction of Hebrew language and culture beyond the confines of their original home, and the impact of the birth of Islam on the political and cultural status of the Jews. An attempt is made to evaluate the main characteristics of Jewish belief and social concepts in the formative periods of Judaism as it developed beyond its original geographical boundaries. Second-quarter work is concerned with the Jews under Islam, both in Eastern and Western Caliphates. Third-quarter work is concerned with the Jews of Western Europe from the eleventh through the fifteenth centuries. N. Golb. Autumn, Winter, Spring.

20416-20417-20418/30416-30417-30418. Semitic Languages, Cultures, and Civilizations I, II, III. PQ: Not open to first-year students. Taking these courses in sequence is recommended but not required. This sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies. This sequence deals with the Semitic languages and peoples of the ancient and modern Middle East. Semitic languages include ancient languages (e.g., Akkadian, Biblical Hebrew, Classical Arabic, Phoenician, Classical Ethiopic) and modern languages (e.g., Arabic, Hebrew, Amharic, Aramaic). Concentrating on case studies from ancient Mesopotamia (today’s Iraq), the Syro-Palestinian corridor, and modern Middle Eastern states, we study continuity and changes in ancient and modern societies, the connections between writing and history, language, history and national identity, and literature and history. Although there is an overall chronological framework, the sequence is thematically oriented to analyze the way historical actors addressed political problems and historical situations. Through an interdisciplinary approach we reflect on the creation and cohesion of states, empires, modern nation states and national identities.

20416/30416. Semitic Languages in the Ancient and Modern Middle East. This course looks at the attestations of Semitic, the development of the language family and its individual languages, the connection of language spread and political expansions with the development of empires and nation states (which can lead to the development of different language strata), the interplay of linguistic innovation and archaism in connection with innovative centers and peripheries, and the connection and development of language and writing. R. Hasselbach. Autumn.
20417/30417. Semitic Cultures and Civilizations in the Ancient Near East. This course explores various peoples of the ancient Near East from the third through the first millennium BC. The shared characteristic of those peoples is their use of Semitic languages. The focus is on major cultural traditions that later become of interest for the modern Middle East and for the Western world. This course provides a background to understand contemporary problems in a historical context. This includes a close examination and discussion of representative ancient sources, as well as readings in modern scholarship to help us think of interpretative frameworks and questions. Ancient sources include literary, historical, and legal documents. Texts in English. A. Seri. Winter.

20418/30418. Modern Antiquities: Semitic Cultures, Languages, and History in the Modern Middle East. The course studies how various groups in the Middle East imagined the ancient Semitic heritage of the region. We examine how Semitic languages (in particular, Arabic and Hebrew) came to be regarded as the national markers of the peoples of the Middle East. We likewise explore the ways in which archeologists, historians, novelists, and artists emphasized the connectivity between past and present, and the channels through which their new ideas were transmitted. The class thus highlights phenomena like nationalism, reform, and literary and print capitalism (in both Hebrew and Arabic) as experienced in the Middle East. O. Bashkin. Spring.

20501-20502-20503/30501-30502-30503. Islamic History and Society I, II, III. (=HIST 25704-25804-25904/35704-35804-35904) Taking these courses in sequence is recommended but not required. This sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies. This sequence surveys the major trends in the political history of the Islamic world, with some attention to economic, social, and intellectual history.

20501/30501. Islamic History and Society I: The Rise of Islam and the Caliphate. (=HIST 25704/35704) This course covers the period from ca. 600 to 1100, including the rise and spread of Islam, the Islamic empire under the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs, and the emergence of regional Islamic states from Afghanistan and eastern Iran to North Africa and Spain. F. Donner. Autumn.

20502/30502. Islamic History and Society II: The Middle Period. (=HIST 25804/35804) This course covers the period from ca. 1100 to 1750, including the arrival of the Steppe Peoples (Turks and Mongols), the Mongol successor states, and the Mamluks of Egypt and Syria. We also study the foundation of the great Islamic regional empires of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Moghuls. J. Woods. Winter.

20503/30503. Islamic History and Society III: The Modern Middle East. (=HIST 25904/35904) This course covers the period from ca. 1750 to the present, focusing on Western military, economic, and ideological encroachment; the impact of such ideas as nationalism and liberalism; efforts at reform in the Islamic states; the emergence of the “modern” Middle East after World War I; the struggle for liberation from Western colonial and imperial control; the Middle Eastern states in the cold war era; and local and regional conflicts. Spring.

20539/30539. The Renaissance East and West. (=HIST 23100/33100) PQ: Advanced standing. This course examines the Renaissance (ca. 1400 to 1600) as a global rather than purely Western European phenomenon. We emphasize comparison and interaction between Christendom and Islamdom. C. Fleischer. Spring. Not offered 2010–11; will be offered 2011–12.

20568/30568. Balkan Folklore. (=SOSC 26800/36800) This course gives an overview of Balkan folklore from ethnographic, anthropological, historical/political, and performative perspectives. We become acquainted with folk tales, lyric and epic songs, music, and dance. The work of Milman Parry and Albert Lord, who developed their theory of oral composition through work among epic singers in the Balkans, helps us understand folk tradition as a dynamic process. We also consider the function of different folklore genres in the imagining and maintenance of community and the socialization of the individual. The historical/political part surveys the emergence of folklore studies as a discipline as well as the ways it has served in the formation and propagation of the nation in the Balkans. A. Ilieva. Winter.

20573/30573. The Burden of History: A Nation and Its Lost Paradise. (=CMLT 23401/33401, SOSL 27300/37300) This course begins by defining the nation both historically and conceptually, with attention to Romantic nationalism and its flourishing in Southeastern Europe. We then look at the narrative of original wholeness, loss, and redemption through which Balkan countries retell their Ottoman past. With the help of Freud’s analysis of masochistic desire and Žižek’s theory of the subject as constituted by trauma, we contemplate the national fixation on the trauma of loss and the dynamic between victimhood and sublimity. The figure of the Janissary highlights the significance of the other in the definition of the self. Some possible texts are Petar Njegoš’s Mountain Wreath; Ismail Kadare’s The Castle; and Anton Donchev’s Time of Parting. A. Ilieva. Spring.

20601-20602-20603/30601-30602-30603. Islamic Thought and Literature I, II, III. (=SOSC 22000-22100-22200) Taking these courses in sequence is recommended but not required. This sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies. This sequence surveys Islamic civilization from the rise of Islam in the seventh century to modern times. Texts in English.

20601/30601. Islamic Thought and Literature I. (=SOSC 22000) This course covers the period from ca. 600 to 950, concentrating on the career of the Prophet Muhammad; Qur’an and Hadith; the Caliphate; the development of Islamic legal, theological, philosophical, and mystical discourses; sectarian movements; and Arabic literature. T. Quabuddin. Autumn.
20602/30602. Islamic Thought and Literature II. (=SOSC 22100) This course covers the period from ca. 950 to 1700. We survey such works as literature, theology, philosophy, sufism, politics, and history that were written in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. We also consider the art, architecture, and music of the Islamicate traditions. Through primary texts, secondary sources, and lectures, we trace the cultural, social, religious, political, and institutional evolution through the period of the Fatimids, the Crusades, the Mongol invasions, and the “gunpowder empires” (Ottomans, Safavids, Mughals). F. Lewis. Winter.

20603/30603. Islamic Thought and Literature III. (=SOSC 22200) This course covers the period from ca. 1700 to the present, exploring works of Arab intellectuals who interpreted various aspects of Islamic philosophy, political theory, and law in the modern age. We look at diverse interpretations concerning the role of religion in a modern society, at secularized and historicized approaches to religion, and at the critique of both religious establishments and nation-states as articulated by Arab intellectuals. Generally, we discuss secondary literature first and the primary sources later. O. Bashkin. Spring.


20634/30634. North Africa, Late Antiquity Islam. (=CLAS 30200, CLCV 20200, HIST 25701/35701) This course examines topics in continuity and change from the third through ninth centuries CE, including changes in Roman, Vandalic, Byzantine, and early Islamic Africa. Topics include the waning of paganism and the respective spread and waning of Christianity, the dynamics of the seventh-century Muslim conquest and Byzantine collapse, and transformation of late antique North Africa into a component of Islamic civilization. Topography and issues of the autochthonous populations also receive some analysis. Readings are in primary sources and the latest modern scholarship. All work in English. W. Kaegi. Autumn.

20636/30636. Survey: Classical Arabic Literature in Translation. PQ: Knowledge of Arabic and/or Islamic studies helpful but not required. Spanning seven centuries and three continents, classical Arabic literature developed in diverse artistic directions. Poetic genres (e.g., brigand poetry, love lyrics, court panegyrics, satires, mystical poetry) and prose genres (e.g., scripture, orations, epistles, fables, mirrors for princes, popular tales) all developed their own, fascinating features. Students read the texts to explore the culture and thought of the medieval Arabic-speaking world. Texts in English. T. Qutbuddin. Spring. Not offered 2010–11; will be offered 2011–12.

20710/30710. Iranian Cinema. (=CMST 24801/34801) This course is a survey of the history of the Iranian film industry and Iranian cinema as a national cinema—including major directors, genres, and trends—from the 1970s to the present. Our emphasis is on situating films in the historical, political, social, and economic context of modern Iranian society, both prior to and after the revolution of 1979. In addition to analyzing the films as artistic constructs and as the works of particular auteurs, we consider such larger questions as how the political and intellectual history of modern Iran is reflected in its films; the extent to which Iranian cinema is a national cinema, a “third-world” cinema, or part of “world cinema”; whether Iranian film has developed a “grammar” and style of its own; and revolutionary uses of cinema, censorship, gender, and so forth. F. Lewis. Autumn.

20751/30751. Rumi: Poet of Islamic Spirituality. This course is a survey in English of the biography, poetry, and thought of Mowlânâ Jalâl al-Din Rumi (1207–1273). Rumi’s Masnavi has been the most widely read poem from Bosnia to Bengal, and he has been hailed by more than one modern scholar as Islam’s or the world’s “greatest mystical poet.” His poetry—particularly, the lyrical ghazals from his Divan-e Shams of Tabriz—has been a best-seller in America. Through lecture and discussion, this course considers Rumi’s poetry from a literary perspective, Rumi’s thought through the lens of Sufism, and the phenomenon of his modern popularity. F. Lewis. Autumn. Not offered 2010–11; will be offered 2011–12.

20752/30752. The Book of Kings: Ferdowsi’s Shahnameh as World Literature. (=CMLT 21901/31901, FNDL 26102) Ferdowsi completed his verse rendition of the tragic history of the Iranian nation a millennium ago, in 1010. Through close reading, lecture, and discussion, this course analyzes the Shahnameh both as world literature and a foundational text for Persian ethnicity and Iranian national feeling. We consider the Shahnameh as epic genre, as comparative Indo-Islamic mythology, as political commentary, as reflective of ideals of masculinity and femininity, and as an illustrated text. All work in English. Optional Persian discussions sessions offered. F. Lewis. Autumn.

20761/30761. Introduction to the History and Culture of Central Asia. (=HIST 25801/35801, SLAV 20300/30300) This survey course provides an introduction to the linguistic, cultural, and historical backgrounds of the peoples of Central Eurasia. The period covered is approximately 400 BC to 1200 AD, and the methodology draws upon historical anthropology. This course features film presentations and lectures by guest scholars. This course is offered in alternate years. K. Arik. Winter.

20762/30762. Contemporary Central Asia. (=HIST 25600/35600, SLAV 20400/30400) This survey course covers the period from approximately 1700 AD to the present. We emphasize the genesis of the modern nations of Central Eurasia, including the post-Soviet republics and adjacent areas in the periphery of Central Eurasia. K. Arik. Winter. Not offered 2010–11; will be offered 2011–12.

20765/30765. Introduction to the Musical Folklore of Central Asia. (=ANTH 25905, EEUR 23400/33400, MUSI 23503/33503) This course explores the musical traditions of the peoples of Central Asia, both in terms of historical development and cultural significance. Topics include the music of the
epic tradition, the use of music for healing, instrumental genres, and Central Asian folk and classical traditions. Basic field methods for ethnomusicology are also covered. Extensive use is made of recordings of musical performances and of live performances in the area. K. Arik. Spring.

20766/30766. Shamans and Oral Poets of Central Asia. (=ANTH 25906) NEHC 20765 and 20766 may be taken in sequence or individually. This course explores the rituals, oral literature, and music associated with the nomadic cultures of Central Eurasia. K. Arik. Spring. Not offered 2010–11; will be offered 2011–12.

20800. Reading and Research Course: Near Eastern Languages. PQ: Consent of faculty adviser and counselor for undergraduate studies. Students are required to submit the College Reading and Research Course Form. Autumn, Winter, Spring.

20840/30840. Radical Islamic Pieties, 1200 to 1600. (=HIST 25901/35901, RLST 20840) Some knowledge of primary languages (i.e., Arabic, French, German, Greek, Latin, Persian, Spanish, Turkish) helpful. This course examines responses to the Mongol destruction of the Abbasid caliphate in 1258 and the background to formation of regional Muslim empires. Topics include the opening of confessional boundaries; Ibn Arabi, Ibn Taymiyya, and Ibn Khaldun; the development of alternative spiritualities, mysticism, and messianism in the fifteenth century; and transconfessionalism, antinomianism, and the articulation of sacral sovereignties in the sixteenth century. All work in English. This course is offered in alternate years. C. Fleischer. Autumn.

20885/30885. Returning the Gaze: The Balkans and Western Europe. (=SOSL 27200/37200, CMLT 23201/33201) This course investigates the complex relationship between South East European self-representations and the imagined Western “gaze” for whose benefit the nations stage their quest for identity and their aspirations for recognition. We focus on the problems of Orientalism, Balkanism, and nesting orientalisms, as well as on self-mythologization and self-exotization. We also think about differing models of masculinity and of the figure of the gypsy as a metaphor for the national self in relation to the West. The course concludes by considering the role that the imperative to belong to Western Europe played in the Yugoslavian wars of the 1990s. A. Ilieva. Autumn.

20906/30906. The Arab-Israeli Conflict in Literature and Film. (=HIST 26004/36004, JWSC 20906) How do historical processes find their expression in culture? What is the relationship between the two? What can we learn about the Arab-Israeli conflict from novels, short stories, poems and films? Covering texts written by Palestinians and Israelis, as well as works produced in Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and the United States, this course attempts to discover the ways in which intellectuals defined their relationship to the “conflict” and how the sociopolitical realities in the Middle East affected their constructions of such term as nation and colonialism. O. Bashkin. Winter.

20952/30952. Introduction to the History of Modern Iraq. This class surveys the modern history of Iraq. We consider the state’s changing relationships with the British Empire and reflect on the ways in which colonized Iraqi elites responded to and appropriated the Western civilizing mission. We also focus on disciplinary institutions that emerged during colonial and post-colonial periods, as well as attempts to investigate how they changed over time. In particular, we examine such institutions as the Iraqi educational system, the modern Iraqi army, and the Baath party. O. Bashkin. Autumn.

29700. Reading and Research Course. PQ: Consent of faculty adviser and counselor for undergraduate studies. Students are required to submit the College Reading and Research Course Form. Autumn, Winter, Spring.

29800. BA Paper Seminar. PQ: Consent of instructor and counselor for undergraduate studies. Required of fourth-year students who are majoring in NELC. This is a workshop course designed to survey the fields represented by NELC and to assist students in researching and writing the BA paper. Autumn.

29999. BA Paper Preparation. PQ: Consent of instructor and counselor for undergraduate studies. Students are required to submit the College Reading and Research Course Form. In consultation with a faculty research adviser and with consent of the counselor for undergraduate studies, students devote the equivalent of a one-quarter course to the preparation of the BA paper. Winter.

Courses: Near Eastern Languages (NELG)

20301/30301. Introduction to Comparative Semitics. (=LGLN 37900) PQ: One year of a Semitic language or introduction to historical linguistics. This course examines the lexical, phonological, and morphological traits shared by the members of the Semitic language family. We also explore the historical relationships among these languages and the possibility of reconstructing features of the parent speech community. R. Hasselbach. Autumn.