

# MASTER OF ARTS IN THE FIELD OF MIDDLE EAST STUDIES

The Middle East is one of the world’s most important and challenging regions, where conflict seems chronic but peace elusive, resources are abundant but sustainable development difficult, and where the roots of major religions and global terrorism can be found. There are few issues in international affairs that do not involve the Middle East. The master of arts curriculum includes a range of courses covering the history, politics, economics, international relations, and cultures of the societies and nations of the Middle East.

In consultation with the program director, each student develops a program of study that combines a broad overview of the region through a set of core courses, in-depth study through elective courses, and a specialized professional field based on the student’s specific academic and career interests. In addition, completion of the MA in Middle East studies requires demonstrated oral and reading proficiency in a language of the Middle East region. All students complete a Middle East studies cornerstone and a year-long capstone project.

The master's program in Middle East studies is supported by the Elliott School’s Institute for Middle East Studies. The Institute’s programming is enhanced by an endowment gift from the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science and by a partnership with the Middle East Policy Forum, run by former Ambassador Edward “Skip” Gnehm.

Visit the program website (<https://elliott.gwu.edu/middle-east-studies/>) for additional information.

## ADMISSIONS

- Admission deadline:

Fall: January 7th - Fellowship & Application Deadline
- Spring: October 1st - Fellowship & Application Deadline
- Applications for admission will continue to be accepted on a rolling basis after the fellowship deadlines have passed, but students will not be considered for fellowships.
- Standardized test scores:

GRE and GMAT scores are not accepted and will not be considered in the review process. Please do not submit scores.
- Recommendations required:

Two (2) letters are required. Applicants should submit one (1) academic letter from a professor and one (1) professional reference.

- Prior academic records:

Transcripts are required from all colleges and universities attended, whether or not credit was earned, the program was completed, or the credit appears as transfer credit on another transcript. Unofficial transcripts from all colleges and universities attended should be uploaded to your online application. Official transcripts are required only of applicants who are offered admission and choose to enroll.
- If academic records are in a language other than English, English language translations must be provided. The English translations alone should be uploaded into the online application. Official transcripts and certified English translations will be required of applicants who are offered admission and choose to enroll.
- Statement of purpose:

All applicants are required to submit an essay of approximately 500 words that answers one of the two questions below:  
  
State your purpose in undertaking graduate study at the Elliott School. As part of your statement of purpose, describe your academic and research interests, career objectives, how a degree from the Elliott School will enable you to achieve your goals, and what unique skills, talents and/or perspectives you will bring to your program. Please be specific.
- OR -
- Please discuss an issue of international importance you wish to address in your professional career. Please include how the Elliott School and the academic program to which you have applied will prepare you to address this global issue.
- Additional requirements:

A resumé or curriculum vitae is required. Resumés/CVs must include dates of employment (if applicable) and date of degree conferral or expected degree conferral.
- Prerequisites:

Academic coursework in an approved Middle Eastern language, which will prepare students to complete the program’s language requirement\*, is required at the time of application. This can be demonstrated by:
- Study that is equal to four semesters of university-level coursework or equivalent.
- Completion of formal language training as part of employment (ex. Peace Corps, JET, etc.).
- Growing up in a household where the language is spoken.
- Approved languages for the M.A. in Middle East Studies are: Arabic (Modern Standard Arabic), Persian, Hebrew, Kurdish, and Turkish.
- \*Students need to have a strong foundation in a foreign language before enrolling to be successful in completing the language requirement during the program.

International applicants only: International Applicants may be required to submit official English Language tests scores with their application. Please see the Elliott School's English Language Requirements for guidance on whether you need to take the TOEFL/IELTS/PTE. Please send official TOEFL scores to institution code 5246.

The minimum English Language Test Requirements can be found below:

Eligible for Admission & requires EAP Courses:

IELTS- 7.0 overall score, no band score below 6.0

TOEFL- 100 (internet test) 600 (paper test)

PTE- 68

Eligible for Admission & Exempt from EAP Courses\*\*:

IELTS- 7.0 overall score, no band score below 6.5

TOEFL- 105 (internet test) 650 (paper test)

PTE- 72

\*\*Spring applicants must receive at least these scores to be considered for admission.

Please review International Applicant Information carefully for details on required documents, earlier deadlines for applicants requiring an I-20 or DS-2019 from GW, and English language requirements.

### Supporting documents not submitted online should be mailed to:

Office of Graduate Admissions  
The Elliott School of International Affairs  
The George Washington University  
1957 E Street, NW, Suite 301  
Washington, DC 20052

### Contact for questions:

esiagrad@gwu.edu ~ 202-994-7050 (phone) ~ 202.994.9537 (fax)  
9:00 am – 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday

## REQUIREMENTS

The following requirements must be fulfilled: 40 credits, including a 3-credit cornerstone course, 9 credits in core field courses, 3 credits in skills courses, a 4-credit capstone sequence, 12 credits in one professional specialization, and 9 credits in elective courses. In addition, students must fulfill a foreign language proficiency requirement (see below).

See note regarding special topics and skills courses, the capstone sequence, and LAW courses\*.

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Required</b>		
Cornerstone (3 credits)		
IAFF 6361	Middle East Studies Cornerstone	
Core field courses (9 credits)		

Three courses in any combination selected from the following:

ANTH 6707	Issues in Middle East Anthropology
GEOG 6262	Geographical Perspectives on the Middle East

HIST 6801	Topics in Middle Eastern History (History of the Modern Middle East)
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HIST 6801	Topics in Middle Eastern History (Middle East in the World)
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PSC 6377	Comparative Politics of the Middle East
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PSC 6478	International Relations of the Middle East
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Professional skills courses (3 credits)

Three 1-credit professional skills courses in any combination selected from the following:

IAFF 6502	Professional Skills I
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IAFF 6503	Professional Skills II
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IAFF 6504	Intermediate Conversation
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Capstone sequence (4 credits)

Students must complete a two-semester capstone sequence that involves collaboration on a project of mutual interest and research related to the Middle East. The capstone sequence includes a 1-credit course that must be taken in the fall of the student's final year and a 3-credit course that must be taken in the spring of the student's final year. Both courses in the capstone sequence must be taken consecutively.

IAFF 6377	Middle East Studies Program Capstone Workshop
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IAFF 6379	Middle East Studies Capstone
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Code	Title	Credits
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Professional specialization (12 credits)

12 credits in one of the professional specializations listed below. At least one 3-credit course must cover content on the Middle East. Students can construct an individualized professional specialization in consultation with the program director.

### Thematic specializations

- Conflict and Conflict Resolution (<https://bulletin.gwu.edu/archives/2023-2024/international-affairs/graduate-programs/specializations/conflict-and-conflict-resolution/>)
- Global Energy and Environmental Policy (<https://bulletin.gwu.edu/archives/2023-2024/international-affairs/graduate-programs/specializations/global-energy-and-environmental-policy/>)

- Global Gender Policy (<https://bulletin.gwu.edu/archives/2023-2024/international-affairs/graduate-programs/specializations/global-gender-policy/>)
- Global Health (<https://bulletin.gwu.edu/archives/2023-2024/international-affairs/graduate-programs/specializations/global-health/>)
- International Affairs and Development (<https://bulletin.gwu.edu/archives/2023-2024/international-affairs/graduate-programs/specializations/international-affairs-and-development/>)
- International Economic Affairs (<https://bulletin.gwu.edu/archives/2023-2024/international-affairs/graduate-programs/specializations/international-economic-affairs/>)
- International Law and Organizations (<https://bulletin.gwu.edu/archives/2023-2024/international-affairs/graduate-programs/specializations/international-law-and-organizations/>)
- International Security Studies (<https://bulletin.gwu.edu/archives/2023-2024/international-affairs/graduate-programs/specializations/international-security-studies/>)
- Nuclear Policy (<https://bulletin.gwu.edu/archives/2023-2024/international-affairs/graduate-programs/specializations/nuclear-policy/>)
- Technology and International Affairs (<https://bulletin.gwu.edu/archives/2023-2024/international-affairs/graduate-programs/specializations/technology-and-international-affairs/>)
- U.S. Foreign Policy (<https://bulletin.gwu.edu/archives/2023-2024/international-affairs/graduate-programs/specializations/us-foreign-policy/>)

#### Regional specializations

- Africa (<https://bulletin.gwu.edu/archives/2023-2024/international-affairs/graduate-programs/specializations/africa/>)
- Asia (<https://bulletin.gwu.edu/archives/2023-2024/international-affairs/graduate-programs/specializations/asia/>)
- Europe, Eurasia, and Russia (<https://bulletin.gwu.edu/archives/2023-2024/international-affairs/graduate-programs/specializations/europe-eurasia-russia/>)
- Latin America (<https://bulletin.gwu.edu/archives/2023-2024/international-affairs/graduate-programs/specializations/latin-america/>)
- Middle East (<https://bulletin.gwu.edu/archives/2023-2024/international-affairs/graduate-programs/specializations/middle-east/>)

Code	Title	Credits
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#### Middle East electives

9 credits in three elective courses related to the Middle East, selected in consultation with the program director. Students can include up to 6 credits of content-based language study (i.e. not basic language acquisition) toward this requirement. All offerings under ANTH 6707, IAFF 6378, HIST 6801, and REL 6460 can be used for elective requirements and repeated for credit provided the topic differs.

ANTH 6707	Issues in Middle East Anthropology
ECON 6295	Special Topics *
IAFF 6364	Religion and Society in the Modern Middle East
IAFF 6378	Special Topics in Middle East Studies
GEOG 6262	Geographical Perspectives on the Middle East
HIST 6801	Topics in Middle Eastern History
PSC 6377	Comparative Politics of the Middle East **
PSC 6478	International Relations of the Middle East **
REL 6401	Islamic Historiographies
REL 6402	Qur'an and Hadith
REL 6441	Islamic Law
REL 6460	Topics in the Study of Islam

\*Only specific topics that are determined by the program director to be relevant to the student's program of study can be used to fulfill this requirement. Any topic intended to be used for this requirement must be approved by the program director prior to enrollment.

\*\*If not taken as core course.

\* Specific subject matter covered in special/selected topics courses varies by semester. Consult the Schedule of Classes for each semester's offerings. Topics courses not listed here may be used to fulfill program requirements if approved by the Program Director.

Additional information regarding skills courses (<https://elliott.gwu.edu/professional-skills-courses/>) and the capstone (<https://elliott.gwu.edu/global-capstone/>) is available on the Elliott School website.

Law School courses—Students may, with permission of their advisor, include courses in the Law School (<http://www.law.gwu.edu/>) in their major field. Enrolling in a LAW course also requires permission of the Law School dean of students. Students should consult the Elliott School Office of Academic Advising and Student Services

(<http://elliott.gwu.edu/graduate-advising/>) office before enrolling in LAW courses.

#### Language proficiency requirement

Students in the Middle East studies program are required to demonstrate the currently-required level of proficiency in one of the following languages by passing a reading and speaking proficiency examination administered by the Elliott School: Modern Standard Arabic (taught at GW); Persian; Hebrew (taught at GW); or Turkish. The Elliott School administers language proficiency examinations (<https://elliott.gwu.edu/foreign-language-proficiency-requirement/>) once in the fall and once in the spring semesters. Students may take the examination at any point during their academic program. Students have three opportunities to pass the examination. Consult the Program Director, the program's Arabic coordinator, or an academic advisor for more information

## SPECIALIZATIONS

#### Thematic specializations

- Conflict and Conflict Resolution (<https://bulletin.gwu.edu/archives/2023-2024/international-affairs/graduate-programs/specializations/conflict-and-conflict-resolution/>)
- Global Energy and Environmental Policy (<https://bulletin.gwu.edu/archives/2023-2024/international-affairs/graduate-programs/specializations/global-energy-and-environmental-policy/>)
- Global Gender Policy (<https://bulletin.gwu.edu/archives/2023-2024/international-affairs/graduate-programs/specializations/global-gender-policy/>)
- Global Health (<https://bulletin.gwu.edu/archives/2023-2024/international-affairs/graduate-programs/specializations/global-health/>)
- International Affairs and Development (<https://bulletin.gwu.edu/archives/2023-2024/international-affairs/graduate-programs/specializations/international-affairs-and-development/>)
- International Economic Affairs (<https://bulletin.gwu.edu/archives/2023-2024/international-affairs/graduate-programs/specializations/international-economic-affairs/>)
- International Law and Organizations (<https://bulletin.gwu.edu/archives/2023-2024/international-affairs/graduate-programs/specializations/international-law-and-organizations/>)
- International Security Studies (<https://bulletin.gwu.edu/archives/2023-2024/international-affairs/graduate-programs/specializations/international-security-studies/>)
- Nuclear Policy (<https://bulletin.gwu.edu/archives/2023-2024/international-affairs/graduate-programs/specializations/nuclear-policy/>)
- Technology and International Affairs (<https://bulletin.gwu.edu/archives/2023-2024/international-affairs/graduate-programs/specializations/technology-and-international-affairs/>)

- U.S. Foreign Policy (<https://bulletin.gwu.edu/archives/2023-2024/international-affairs/graduate-programs/specializations/us-foreign-policy/>)

#### Regional specializations

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- Asia (<https://bulletin.gwu.edu/archives/2023-2024/international-affairs/graduate-programs/specializations/asia/>)
- Europe, Eurasia, and Russia (<https://bulletin.gwu.edu/archives/2023-2024/international-affairs/graduate-programs/specializations/europe-eurasia-russia/>)
- Latin America (<https://bulletin.gwu.edu/archives/2023-2024/international-affairs/graduate-programs/specializations/latin-america/>)
- Middle East (<https://bulletin.gwu.edu/archives/2023-2024/international-affairs/graduate-programs/specializations/middle-east/>)

## COMBINED PROGRAMS

### Combined Programs

- Joint Master of Arts in Elliott School programs and Master of Business Administration (<http://bulletin.gwu.edu/international-affairs/graduate-programs/joint-mba-ma-international-affairs/>)
- Joint Master of Arts and Juris Doctor (<https://current.bulletin.gwu.edu/international-affairs/graduate-programs/joint-ma-jd/>)