



MIDDLE EAST STUDIES

Scholarship grounded in the breadth and diversity of languages, cultures, and history of the region

The Department of Middle East Studies at the University of Michigan is a major center for the production and dissemination of knowledge concerning the languages, cultures, and history of one of the most contested regions of today's world. Professors in the department study ancient Western Asia from the origins of civilization to the advent of Islam, as well as the entire Islamic world up to the present day. We include specialists in cuneiform studies, Egyptology, the Hebrew Bible, Rabbinics, Early Christianity, ancient and medieval Iran, Arabic language and literature, Ottoman, early Islamic, and Central Asian history, Islamic religion, Armenian studies, and modern Hebrew and Judaic studies. We collaborate with faculty from across the university in fields as diverse as law, anthropology, linguistics, and economics through our partnership with the Center for Middle Eastern and North African Studies (CMENAS). Few other programs in the world can offer the undergraduate or graduate student such a wide range of courses.

In conjunction with colleagues from across the university and beyond, our faculty members are continually extending the frontiers of knowledge in their specializations and have been duly recognized by their peers with awards, grants, and editorships. Our undergraduate majors have the opportunity to study with these premier teachers and scholars to hone their linguistic, analytical, research, and writing skills through a concentration in Ancient Civilizations and Biblical Studies (ACABS), Arabic, Armenian, Persian, and Turkish Studies (AAPTIS), or Hebrew and Jewish Cultural Studies (HJCS). Graduate students pursue research in areas as diverse as methods for teaching Arabic as a second language, mortuary practice in early Egypt, Mesopotamian love magic, Sufi spirituality, and Israeli cinema. Study-abroad programs, language circles, lectures by visiting scholars, and conferences organized by departmental colleagues offer a variety of ways to engage in an interdisciplinary educational program rivaled by few others. When they leave the university, our students are well prepared for successful careers in business, law, diplomacy, and medicine, as well as in teaching and scholarship.

UNDERGRADUATE STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCE FUND

The very best way a student can gain a thorough knowledge of a language and a culture is to spend time studying abroad to experience full linguistic and cultural immersion. Middle East Studies faculty members lead academic programs for students in countries in the Middle East such as Israel, Morocco, and others. Gifts of \$10,000 to \$50,000 annually will enable students who have studied the region on the Ann Arbor campus to continue their learning through travel to the area in order to engage in a deep exploration of regional history, society, and culture through first-hand on-site experiences.

UNDERGRADUATE ARABIC LANGUAGE SUPPORT

The department has major initiatives for Arabic language teaching underway, which enable undergraduates to study abroad during the academic year and summer semesters. We need to strengthen these initiatives and make them permanent, and an endowed investment of \$1M would accomplish this.

GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP SUPPORT

Original scholarship in any of the fields covered by the department requires mastery of several languages, instruction in many of which is not available at most colleges. As part of their programs in the department, therefore, our graduate students must usually allot a great deal of time and effort to language acquisition, and they typically require six or seven years of intense work before completion of their dissertations. Fellowship support is essential if the department is to continue its record of attracting the most promising applicants. An endowed gift of \$1 million will provide one graduate fellowship.



“I started in Middle East Studies as a freshman knowing only that I wanted to study Arabic language, but after my first semester I felt compelled to study the cultural context of the language as well...I thoroughly enjoyed [a variety of classes] as well as four semesters of Arabic language in both Egyptian and Levantine dialects [and] I was able to study abroad the summer after my sophomore year in Amman, Jordan where I achieved advanced level proficiency in Arabic and gained critical cultural knowledge about the country and the Middle East as a region.”

—Emily Feuka, BS '17



GRADUATE STUDENT FELLOWSHIP

Graduate fellowships provide much needed support for students working on Iran-related topics. Students in MES graduate programs face substantial financial burdens in completing their coursework and gaining research experience in the region. This endowment of \$1M will ensure our ability to recruit exceptional graduate students who plan to study and carry out research in the region. Fellowships provide funding for tuition, stipends, and research-related expenses.

ANNUAL LECTURE IN IRANIAN STUDIES

Lectures presented by scholars from outside U-M introduce students to leading figures in the field and provide an opportunity to discuss new work and research. Endowed resources of \$200,000 or \$10,000 annually are needed for the department to host an annual lecture by a prominent guest speaker on a topic related to Iran or Iranian Studies. This is an opportunity to promote the culture, history, language, politics, and society of Iranians.

LECTURESHIP IN TURKISH LANGUAGE

The University of Michigan is among the very few institutions in the country that provide instruction in Turkish at the elementary, intermediate, and advanced level on a regular basis. Due to Congress' deep cuts to international education funding, including support for the less commonly taught languages such as Turkish, outside support is crucial to securing Michigan's role as a preeminent institution for the study of Turkey. An endowed lectureship of \$1M will ensure continuity for instruction in Turkish language in perpetuity.

LECTURESHIP IN PERSIAN LANGUAGE

Michigan is among the very few institutions in the country that regularly provides instruction in Persian at the elementary, intermediate, and advanced levels. Language provides our students unparalleled opportunities to explore the culture broadly and deeply. Gifts are critical to ensure that these levels of language course offerings will continue. Due to Congress' deep cuts to international education funding, including support for the less commonly taught languages, private support is crucial to securing Michigan's role as a preeminent institution for Iranian Studies, which includes the study of Persian language. An endowed named lectureship of \$1M will ensure that Persian language will be taught in perpetuity.

IRANIAN STUDIES INITIATIVE

In the last 25 years, two generations of distinguished Iranists were trained in the department in the fields of history, literature, linguistics, and religion. Because our current faculty benefits from a large and distinguished concentration of scholars working on Iran—with specializations that cross the boundaries of archaeology, art history, history, and linguistics and language—we are uniquely positioned to design a comprehensive, competitive, multi-disciplinary program that would be unparalleled in the U.S.

VISITING PROFESSORSHIP OF IRANIAN STUDIES

Endowed funding in the amount of \$1M is needed to host a visiting distinguished scholar for one semester each year to expand and bring fresh perspectives to the program. We envision a highly prestigious fellowship awarded to a distinguished scholar across a wide range of Iranian studies—from the Iranian Revolution to Sufism, Shi'ism, Iranian cinema, ancient Iranian history, art and archeology. The Visiting Professor would spend a semester on campus, teach a course in the area of her/his specialization, meet with students and faculty, and possibly present a public lecture.

Bringing renowned scholars to campus is a critical priority to maintain Michigan as a thought leader in the field, and would be of great interest to the U-M academic community, the Iranian community in Michigan, and the general public.

ENDOWED PROFESSORSHIP IN ISLAMIC LAW AND INTELLECTUAL HISTORY

Islamic law is an area of compelling interest to students. The holder of this endowed professorship would significantly enrich current curriculum by promoting the appreciation of Islamic law as one of the world's major legal systems.

Since contemporary Islamic law draws continually on fourteenth-century Islamic juristic writings and legal practice, Islamic intellectual history plays an essential role in understanding Islamic civilization in all its aspects. Islamic law also crucially shaped the religious, ethical, political, and social beliefs and practices of Muslim societies through the centuries. A gift of \$2.5M to establish a named endowed professorship would enable the department to attract a world-acclaimed scholar for this important field of study.

ENDOWED PROFESSORSHIP IN PERSIAN LITERATURE AND CULTURAL STUDIES

The department is home to one of the most comprehensive Middle East Studies programs in North America, and serves as a model for all other such programs. A gift of \$2.5M to fully endow a named Professorship in Persian Literature, Film Studies, or a related area, is the best means of attracting and retaining top faculty. The holder of this position would offer classes that will allow students to delve deeper into Persian writing, film, art or other works and explore how these works have been interpreted and incorporated into Iranian culture and thought.

WAYS TO FUND YOUR GIFT

Your gifts of cash, pledges, or appreciated securities change lives. Wills, estate, and planned gifts allow you to create a lasting legacy that will enable the best and brightest minds to experience a liberal arts education, solve problems in a changing world, and yield ideas and innovations that will make a difference in Michigan and around the globe.

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