MIDDLE EASTERN, SOUTH ASIAN, AND AFRICAN STUDIES

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The undergraduate program in Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African studies (MESAAS) offers students the opportunity to study in depth the cultures, ideas, histories, and politics of several overlapping world regions. The program emphasizes a close engagement with intellectual traditions, creative movements, and political debates, drawing on a wide variety of historical and contemporary sources in literature, religion, political thought, law, the visual and performing arts, and new media. Courses also examine the historical and cultural contexts in which these traditions and debates have been produced.

Majors and Concentrations

Majors develop two closely related skills. The first is linguistic expertise. A minimum of two years of course work in one language is required, and further work (including intensive summer language study) is greatly encouraged, because the aim is to study a cultural field through its own texts and discourses. The Department of Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies offers courses in Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Hebrew, Armenian, Sanskrit, Hindi/Urdu, Bengali, Tamil, Swahili, Wolof, and Zulu.

The second skill is learning how to think and write about complex cultural formations, drawing on a variety of methods and disciplinary approaches. The approaches vary according to the faculty members’ expertise, incorporating methods from relevant fields in the humanities and social sciences, such as literary criticism, film studies, cultural studies, political theory, and intellectual history.

The only difference between the MESAAS major and the concentration is that the latter does not require language proficiency.

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Reem Faraj
Illan Gonen
Jacqueline Habra
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Saeed Honarmand
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On Leave
Profs. Absi, Ben Amor, Busch, Dabashi, Pollock (Fall 2019)
Profs. Absi, Ben Amor, Chatterjee, Mamdani, Mukherjee, Pollock (Spring, 2020)
### Guidelines for all Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies Majors and Concentrators

#### Introduction to MESAAS
Majors and concentrators begin their work with an introductory course that emphasizes a particular area (the Middle East, South Asia, or Africa). For instance, students interested in the Middle East would take ASCM UN2003 Introduction to Islamic Civilization or ASCM UN2008 Contemporary Islamic Civilization. Students keen on learning more about South Asia would take ASCM UN2357 Introduction to Indian Civilization, HSME UN3810, or HIST W3811 South Asia II: Empire and Its Aftermath. The introductory course generally recommended for students interested in Africa is MDES UN2030 Major Debates in the Study of Africa.

#### Required Core Courses
All majors must take two additional core courses. The first is a small seminar in which they explore some of the classic texts of the region, either AHUM UN1399 Major Texts: Middle East/India (for those focusing on the Middle East and South Asia) or AFCV UN1020 African Civilizations (for those focusing on Africa).

With this background, students are ready to take MDES UN3000 Theory and Culture generally in the junior or senior year. This course examines critical approaches to the study of language, culture, and politics and encourages students to reflect on their own work from many different perspectives.

#### Additional Requirements
Fifteen additional points (generally five courses) are chosen in consultation with the director of undergraduate studies. These may include six points of coursework from other departments, subject to the director of undergraduate studies' approval. Although students may have a particular interest (e.g., Arab political thought, Urdu literature, Armenian history, Iranian cinema, or contemporary West Africa), they are encouraged to gain exposure to the fullest range of courses and approaches offered by the faculty, and to familiarize themselves with other regions beyond their core area.

#### In Fulfillment of the Language Requirement (for Majors)
Enrollment in language courses is in some cases determined by placement exams. For more information, see Languages on the departmental website (http://www.columbia.edu/cu/mesaas/) and, if necessary, consult the relevant Coordinator listed on that page. The website includes separate pages for each language, describing the program of instruction, courses for heritage speakers, summer language programs, and more. Language courses must be taken for a letter grade. Pass/D/Fail or Registration credit (R) is not permitted. Those seeking to waive a language requirement must take a proficiency test.

Students who enter with language proficiency at only the second-year level must complete one additional year of language study and one additional MESAAS course. When students enter with language proficiency at the third year level (or in cases where only two years of a particular language are offered in MESAAS), they must substitute three additional MESAAS courses.

#### Advising
Newly declared majors and concentrators should meet with the director of undergraduate studies in order to plan a program of study. The goal is to strike a balance between courses that help a student achieve depth in a particular area/discipline and those that foster a wider perspective.

Although students are encouraged to approach faculty in the department based on their specific interests, the director of undergraduate studies functions as an ad hoc adviser for all entering students, addressing issues of course requirements, credit, approval for courses in other departments or schools, study abroad, and, eventually, honors requirements (including the senior thesis). Students should not hesitate to contact the director of undergraduate studies to set up an appointment.

#### Grading
Courses in which the grade of D has been received do not count toward the major or concentration requirements, nor do those taken Pass/D/Fail, except for the first course taken toward the major or concentration.

#### Honors Program/Senior Thesis
Students may also wish to write a thesis. While not required for graduation, the thesis enables a student to be considered for departmental honors. It is advisable to begin planning for the thesis during the student’s junior year. Interested students should attend the relevant information sessions and identify a potential faculty adviser.

All students who wish to write a thesis must enroll in MDES UN3960 MESAAS Honors Thesis Seminar, a full year course consisting of a 1-point segment in the Fall semester and a 3-point segment in the Spring semester. Students work closely with their peers in a supportive environment to produce a substantial piece of research (in the range of 40 pages). The primary intellectual guidance is provided by the faculty adviser, whereas the director of undergraduate studies and the honors seminar teaching assistant oversee the general development of the project. Every year in April, MESAAS hosts a senior colloquium in which students present their research. For more information on the honors program, see Frequently Asked Questions on the departmental website (http://www.columbia.edu/cu/mesaas/).
The MESAAS Major and its ‘tracks’

Students majoring in MESAAS are studying the languages, and cultural and political aspects of the societies of the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa, in past and present. This can be done either with a focus on one of these three regions, i.e. the ‘African Studies’, the ‘South Asian Studies’, or the ‘Middle Eastern Studies’ track, or a comparative perspective on them, the ‘combined track’.

The coursework for each of those ‘tracks’ is composed of the same five elements: 1. an approved Introductory course; 2. a seminar on texts from the region; 3. ‘Theory and Culture’; 4. five approved elective courses; 5. the regional language requirement.

Note that some MESAAS courses are already comparative by design and connect more than one region: for example, ‘Societies and Cultures Across the Indian Ocean, or Postcolonial Thought, or courses on Persianate culture that include North India, or Middle East courses that include North Africa. These may satisfy requirements for more than one track, subject to approval by the Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS).

African Studies

1. MDES UN3130 Major Debates in the Study of Africa or another approved introductory lecture course.
2. CC1020 African Civilization
3. MDES UN3000 Theory and Culture
4. Five additional courses on Africa, such as: South African Literature and Culture: Apartheid and After; East Africa and the Swahili Coast; or Pan Africanism (see the Courses page for more options). You may include up to two courses from other departments, in fields such as African history, politics, and philosophy, the anthropology of Africa, and African art, subject to the approval of the Director of Undergraduate Studies. For a listing of courses in other departments, see here [http://www.ias.columbia.edu/academics/].

Middle Eastern Studies

1. ASCM UN2003 Islamic Civilization or another approved introductory lecture course.
2. Asian Humanities UN1399 Major Texts: Middle East/India
3. MDES UN3000 Theory and Culture
4. Five additional courses on the Middle East, such as: Arabic Self-Narratives; Central Questions in Islamic Law, Palestinian-Israeli Politics and Society, or Epics and Empires (see the Courses page for more options). You may include up to two courses from other departments, in fields such as Middle Eastern history, politics, and anthropology, or Islamic art, subject to the approval of the Director of Undergraduate Studies. Find a list of Middle East courses in other departments here [http://www.mei.columbia.edu/].
5. Language: A minimum of two years of coursework in Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, Turkish, or Armenian. See the MESAAS language programs here [http://www.columbia.edu/cu/mesaas/languages/]. Those already fluent in a Middle Eastern language may substitute other courses —see FAQ [http://www.columbia.edu/cu/mesaas/undergraduate/faqs.html#fluent]. Not required for the concentration.

South Asian Studies

1. MDES UN2357 Indian Civilization or another approved introductory lecture course.
2. Asian Humanities UN3399 Major Texts: Middle East/India
3. MDES UN3000 Theory and Culture
4. Five additional courses on South Asia, such as: Mughal India; Gandhi and his Interlocutors; or Cinemas of India (see the Courses page for more options). You may include up to six points of course work from other departments, in fields such as South Asian history, politics, and anthropology, or Indian art, subject to the approval of the Director of Undergraduate Studies. Find a list of South Asia courses in other departments here [http://sai.columbia.edu/courses/].
5. Language: A minimum of two years of course work in Hindi/Urdu, Sanskrit, Persian, or other South Asian languages. See the MESAAS language programs here [http://www.columbia.edu/cu/mesaas/languages/]. Those already fluent in a South Asian language may substitute other courses —see FAQ [http://www.columbia.edu/cu/mesaas/undergraduate/faqs.html#fluent]. Not required for the concentration.

Combined

There is also a combined option. For this, you may satisfy the five requirements by choosing courses from any of the three tracks.
1. An approved introductory lecture course.
2. Asian Humanities UN1399 Major Texts: Middle East/India OR: CC1020 African Civilization
3. MDES UN3000 Theory and Culture
4. Five additional courses, fitting one’s course of study, to be approved by DUS
5. Language: A minimum of two years of course work in any of the regional MESAAS languages, to be approved by the DUS.

Concentration in Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies

The requirements are identical with those for the major, except that there is no departmental language requirement. Fifteen points in department courses, selected with the approval of the director of undergraduate studies. These may not include elementary or intermediate language courses. Not more than two courses out of the general 15 points may be devoted to language study.

Lectures and Seminars

ASCM UN2003 Introduction to Islamic Civilization. 4 points.
CC/GS/SEAS: Partial Fulfillment of Global Core Requirement, Discussion Section Required
Lecture and recitation. Islamic civilization and its characteristic political, social, and religious institutions and intellectual traditions.
ASCM UN2008 Contemporary Islamic Civilization. 4 points.
CC/GS/SEAS: Partial Fulfillment of Global Core Requirement, Discussion Section Required

Lecture and recitation. No previous study of Islam is required. The contemporary Islamic world studied through freshly translated texts; recorded interviews with religious, political, and intellectual leaders; and films highlighting the main artistic and cultural currents. Topics include religion and society, religion and politics, issues of development, theories of government, gender issues, East-West confrontation, theatre, arts, films, poetry, music, and the short novel.

MDES UN3000 Theory and Culture. 4 points.
CC/GS/SEAS: Partial Fulfillment of Global Core Requirement, Discussion Section Required

Required of all majors. Introduces theories of culture particularly related to the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa. Theoretical debates on the nature and function of culture as a symbolic reading of human collectivities. Examines critical cultural studies of the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa. Enables students to articulate their emerging knowledge of Middle East, South Asian, and African cultures in a theoretically informed language.

AHUM UN1399 Major Texts: Middle East/India. 4 points.
BC: Fulfillment of General Education Requirement: Cultures in Comparison (CUL), BC: Fulfillment of General Education Requirement: Literature (LIT), CC/GS/SEAS: Partial Fulfillment of Global Core Requirement

AHUM V3399 and V3400 form a sequence, but either may be taken separately. V3399 may also be taken as part of a sequence with AHUM V3830. Readings in translation and discussion of texts of Middle Eastern and Indian origin. Readings include the Qur'an, Islamic philosophy, Sufi poetry, the Upanishads, Buddhist sutras, the Bhagavad Gita, Indian epics and drama, and Gandhi’s Autobiography.

MDES UN2641 Cinemas of India. 3 points.
This course offers an expansive journey through the forms, pleasures, and meanings of Indian cinema. It explores the plural beginnings of popular film; the many competing cinemas produced across India; the diverse protagonists (from vamps to vigilantes) that populate the imagined entity named ‘national cinema’; and the varied audiences addressed by these cinemas. Over the course of the semester, we will watch 15 of the most iconic narrative films produced in India, including Diamond Queen (1940), Awara (1951), Deewar (1975), Roja (1992), Mahanagar (1963), and Bandit Queen (1994). As we voyage with the dynamic, shifting codes and priorities of India’s fiction filmmaking, we also shadow the emergence of the Indian nation and contestations of its coherence.

MDES UN2650 Gandhi and His Interlocutors. 4 points.
CC/GS/SEAS: Partial Fulfillment of Global Core Requirement, Discussion Section Required

Gandhi is in two senses an extraordinary figure: he was the most important leader of anti-imperialist movements in the twentieth century; yet, his ideas about modernity, the state, the industrial economy, technology, humanity’s place in nature, the presence of God — were all highly idiosyncratic, sometimes at odds with the main trends of modern civilization. How did a man with such views come to have such an immense effect on history? In some ways, Gandhi is an excellent entry into the complex history of modern India — its contradictions, achievements, failures, possibilities. This course will be primarily a course on social theory, focusing on texts and discursive exchanges between various perceptions of modernity in India. It will have two parts: the first part will be based on reading Gandhi’s own writings; the second, on the writings of his main interlocutors. It is hoped that through these exchanges students will get a vivid picture of the intellectual ferment in modern India, and the main lines of social and political thought that define its intellectual culture. The study in this course can be followed up by taking related courses in Indian political thought, or Indian politics or modern history. This course may not be taken as Pass/D/Fail.

HSME UN2915 Introduction to Modern African History. 3 points.
Not offered during 2019-20 academic year.

This seminar is an interdisciplinary exploration of the history of the African continent, examining very closely the colonial and postcolonial periods. Its focus is the intersection of politics, economics, culture and society. Using colonialism, empire, and globalization as key analytical frames, it pays special attention to social, political and cultural changes that shaped the various African individual and collective experiences.

MDES UN3004 Islam in South Asia. 3 points.
This course explores the beginnings of Islam in South Asia, its growth over time, and the development of South Asian Muslims’ cultural, social, religious and political life from the 8th century until the present. It assumes no previous background in Islamic or South Asian studies. Readings will include not only scholarly works, but also material in translation from chronicles, biographies, memoirs, novels, stories, and other primary sources.

MDES UN3042 Palestinian and Israeli Politics and Society. 4 points.
The History of the Jewish Enlightenment (Haskala) in 19th century Europe and the development of Zionism through the current “peace process” between the state of Israel and the Arab states and the Palestinian national movement. Provides a historical overview of the Zionist-Palestinian conflict to familiarize undergraduates with the background of the current situation. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.
MDES UN3130 East Africa and the Swahili Coast. 3 points.
CC/GS/SEAS: Partial Fulfillment of Global Core Requirement

This course offers an introduction to East African history and society. It is intended primarily for those who have taken an introductory course in African studies, such as MDES W2030 Major Debates in the Study of Africa or AFCV 1020 African Civilization, or similar courses in South Asian or Middle Eastern studies. Students read anthropological and historical studies of the region, alongside works of literature by a number of leading East African writers. The course emphasizes the historical role of the Swahili coast and Swahili language as forces that shaped an interconnected world stretching far inland and across the Indian Ocean, but that also shaped adversity and antagonisms. CC/GS/SEAS: Partial Fulfillment of Global Core Requirement.

MDES UN3260 Rethinking Middle East Politics. 4 points.
CC/GS/SEAS: Partial Fulfillment of Global Core Requirement

This course examines a set of questions that have shaped the study of the politics of the modern Middle East. It looks at the main ways those questions have been answered, exploring debates both in Western academic scholarship and among scholars and intellectuals in the region itself. For each question, the course offers new ways of thinking about the issue or ways of framing it in different terms. The topics covered in the course include: the kinds of modern state that emerged in the Middle East and the ways its forms of power and authority were shaped; the birth of economic development as a way of describing the function and measuring the success of the state, and the changing metrics of this success; the influence of oil on the politics of the region; the nature and role of Islamic political movements; the transformation of the countryside and the city and the role of rural populations and of urban protest in modern politics; and the politics of armed force and political violence in the region, and the ways in which this has been understood. The focus of the course will be on the politics of the twentieth century, but many topics will be traced back into developments that occurred in earlier periods, and several will be explored up to the present. The course is divided into four parts, each ending with a paper or exam in which participants are asked to analyze the material covered. Each part of the course has a geographical focus on a country or group of countries and a thematic focus on a particular set of questions of historical and political analysis.

MDES UN3445 Societies & Cultures Across the Indian Ocean. 3 points.
CC/GS/SEAS: Partial Fulfillment of Global Core Requirement

The course is designed to introduce the Indian Ocean as a region linking the Middle East, East Africa, South and Southeast Asia. With a focus on both continuities and rupture from the medieval to the modern period, we study select cultures and societies brought into contact through interregional migration and travel from the 10th to 20th centuries. Different types of people - nobles, merchants, soldiers, statesmen, sailors, scholars, slaves - experienced mobility in different ways. How did different groups of people represent such mobilities? What kinds of cooperation, accommodation or conflict did different Indian Ocean encounters engender? Using an array of different primary sources, we look at particular case studies and their broader social and cultural contexts.

MDES UN3644 Visual Cultures of Modern South Asia. 3 points.
This lecture course introduces students to the power and meaning of popular visual cultures of South Asia. Visual culture is a crucial arena for the enactment of social transformations and the creation of collective imaginaries. We will track such varied modern media types as calendar art, photography, film, architecture, clothing, and religious festivals, loosely following key chronological signposts in the shared histories of the subcontinent. Together, we will practice a new way of understanding history and society – a visual way that will make us aware of the diversity of hopes, fears, and dreams that comprise South Asia. Designed for students with a basic understanding of South Asian history, the course aims to familiarize you with key methodological approaches in visual culture studies and current debates in South Asian art history and media theory.

MDES UN3920 Contemporary Culture in the Modern Arab World. 3 points.
Prerequisites: the instructor's permission.

This seminar, designed for seniors, aims to acquaint students with the notion and theoretical understanding of culture and to introduce them to a critical method by which they can study and appreciate contemporary culture in the Arab World. The seminar will survey examples of written and cinematic culture (fiction and autobiography), as well as music, dance, and literary criticism in the contemporary Arab world. Students will be reading novels, autobiographies and literary criticism, as well as watch films and listen to music as part of the syllabus. All material will be in translation. Films will be subtitled. Songs will be in Arabic.

MDES UN3923 Central Questions in Islamic Law. 3 points.

Through detailed discussions of certain landmarks in Islamic legal history (e.g., origins; early formation; sources of law; intellectual make-up; the workings of court; legal change; women in the law; legal effects of colonialism; modernity and legal reform, etc.), the course aims at providing an introductory but integrated view of Islamic law, a definition, so to speak, of what it was/is. Please note, this course must be taken for a letter grade.

CLME UN3928 Arabic Prison Writing. 3 points.
CC/GS/SEAS: Partial Fulfillment of Global Core Requirement

This course studies the genealogy of the prison in Arab culture as manifested in memoirs, narratives, and poems. These cut across a vast temporal and spatial swathe, covering selections from the Quran, Sufi narratives from al-Hallaj oeuvre, poetry by prisoners of war: classical, medieval, and modern. It also studies modern narratives by women prisoners and political prisoners, and narratives that engage with these issues. Arabic prison writing is studied against other genealogies of this prism, especially in the West, to map out the birth of prison, its institutionalization, mechanism, and role. All readings for the course are in English translations.
MDES UN3960 MESAAS Honors Thesis Seminar. 4 points.
Open to seniors who have declared MESAAS as their major only.

Prerequisites: minimum GPA of 3.5 in MESAAS courses.
The MESAAS honors seminar offers students the opportunity to undertake a sustained research project under close faculty supervision. The DUS advises on general issues of project design, format, approach, general research methodologies, and timetable. In addition, students work with an individual advisor who has expertise in the area of the thesis and can advise on the specifics of method and content. The thesis will be jointly evaluated by the adviser, the DUS, and the honors thesis TA. The DUS will lead students through a variety of exercises that are directly geared to facilitating the thesis. Students build their research, interpretive, and writing skills; discuss methodological approaches; write an annotated bibliography; learn to give constructive feedback to peers and respond to feedback effectively. The final product is a polished research paper in the range of 40-60 pages. Please note: This is a one-year course that begins in the fall semester (1 point) and continues through the spring semester (3 points). Only students who have completed both semesters will receive the full 4 points of credit.

MDES G4052 Locating Africa in the Early 20th Century World. 4 points.
CC/GS/SEAS: Partial Fulfillment of Global Core Requirement
Not offered during 2019-20 academic year.

During the early twentieth century the meaning of Africa and its location within the “universal” historical narrative was a source of discussion and debate among Western and African elites. In this seminar, we will study the ways that African and people of African descent participated in this discussion. Through primary and secondary readings, we will learn about how African, African American and European writers, artists and activists engaged and (re)interpreted imperial and international resources (including the insights of the new sciences of Man) to (re)imagine their political and social situations, and to participate in various political expressions, including surrealism, pan-Africanism, communism, feminism, black internationalism, and anti-imperialism. We will also engage critically debates (e.g., Egyptianisms and Ethiopianisms) and theoretical developments in African, imperial, transnational, international and global scholarship that seeks to understand the complex traffic of people and ideas across national and imperial boundaries.

MDES GU4122 The Novel in Africa. 4 points.
The main task of this course will be to read novels by African writers. But “the novel in Africa” also involves connections between the literary genre of the novel and the historical processes of colonialism, decolonization, and globalization in Africa. One important question we’ll consider is how African novels depict those historical experiences in their themes and plots—we’ll read novels that are “about” colonialism, etc. A more complex question is how these historical processes relate to the emergence of the novel as an important genre for African writers. Edward Said went so far as to say that without imperialism, there would be no European novel as we know it. How can we understand the novel in Africa (whether read or written) as a product of the colonial encounter? How did it shape the process of decolonization? What contribution to history, whether literary or political, does the novel in Africa make? We’ll undertake a historical survey of African novels from the 1930s to the present, with attention to various subgenres (village novel, war novel, urbanization novel, novel of postcolonial disillusion, Bildungsroman). We’ll attend to how African novelists blend literate and oral storytelling traditions, how they address their work to local and global audiences, and how they use scenes of characters reading novels (whether African or European) in order to position their writing within national, continental, and world literary space.

MDES GU4144 Africa: Modernity and the Post Colonial Experience. 4 points.
This 4000 level seminar course is organized around weekly readings that represent substantial contributions to the debate about both 'modernity' and 'postcolonial experience' in Africa, from a range of interrelated disciplinary perspectives. In readings and discussions, we will keep the relationship between the two main discursive fields in view, and also (re-)consider the ongoing relevance of colonialism and colonial experiences in relation to them. Conceptual reflections on modernity and postcolonial experience(s) need to be based upon empirical research, and underpinned by regional socio-historical knowledge of the settings and scenarios discussed - there is no 'modernity' per se and no 'postcolonial experience' as such. We will involve comparative, historical and contemporary angles of discussion, and pursue an interest in critical conceptualization in relation to social and political realities in Africa, and with a view to African thinkers.

MDES GU4160 Major Debates in the Study of Africa. 4 points.
This course will focus on key debates that have shaped the study of Africa in the post-colonial African academy.

We will cover six key debates: Historiography; Slavery: Premodern and Modern; State Formation; Colonialism and Difference; Nationalism; Political Identity and Political Violence

The approach will be multi-disciplinary. To the extent possible, readings will be illustrative of different sides in the debate.

CLME GU4226 Arabic Self-Narratives. 4 points.
This course applies current theories to the study of Arabic literary production. It focuses on forms of the 'sacred' and social critique that have developed over time and gathered momentum in the modern period. Although a number of Arab intellectual interventions are used to substantiate literary production, the primary concern of the discussion is narrative. A base for modern narrative was laid in the tenth century Maqamat of Badi al-Zaman al-Hamadhni that led in turn to the growth of this phenomenal achievement that set the stage for narratives of contestation, crisis, and critique.
CLME GU4231 Cold War Arab Culture. 4 points.
CC/GS/SEAS: Partial Fulfillment of Global Core Requirement
Not offered during 2019-20 academic year.
This course studies the effects and strategies of the cold war on Arab writing, education, arts and translation, and the counter movement in Arab culture to have its own identities. As the cold war functioned and still functions on a global scale, thematic and methodological comparisons are drawn with Latin America, India and Africa.

MDES GU4232 Arabic Literary Heritage. 4 points.
Prerequisites: one semester of fourth-year Arabic, or demonstrate equivalent competence.
The sessions for this course cover a number of excerpts from texts that are systematically arranged to enable close reading and further discussion and analysis that lead to an active engagement with Arab literary [cultural] tradition. There are samples from pre-Islamic poetry, including that of the Renegades and the Ravens, the Maqamat, al-Jahiz's oeuvre [selections from a number of books and epistles], Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi's writings, prose by ibn Wahb on use and misuse of language, epistles by prominent epistolographers, Hikayat Abi al-Qasim by al-Azdi, selections from the middle and premodern period, along with specific selections of commentaries of pertinence to the rise or devaluation of genres, modes, and practices. We address cases in which language is the contested space. The theoretical framework takes language as the dynamic force and also the battlefield through our reading of the movement of the word from transparency [where no distance exists between signifiers and signified], representation, and discourse. Every epistemic shift has its ideological base which we need to detect. The underlying premise is that through close reading and discussion we can draw a genealogy of generic growth or decay in terms of historical, geographical, and religio-political dynamics. The class involves reading, discussion, and written assignments in both Arabic and English.

CLME GU4241 Sufism: Primary Texts and Contexts. 4 points.
CC/GS/SEAS: Partial Fulfillment of Global Core Requirement
This course studies Sufism as it has emerged, developed, and assumed its presence in Sufi autobiographies and religious and literary writings. The Sufi Path is traced in these writings that include poems like ibn Tawhidi's writings, prose by ibn Wahb on use and misuse of language, epistles by prominent epistolographers, Hikayat Abi al-Qasim by al-Azdi, selections from the middle and premodern period, along with specific selections of commentaries of pertinence to the rise or devaluation of genres, modes, and practices. We address cases in which language is the contested space. The theoretical framework takes language as the dynamic force and also the battlefield through our reading of the movement of the word from transparency [where no distance exists between signifiers and signified], representation, and discourse. Every epistemic shift has its ideological base which we need to detect. The underlying premise is that through close reading and discussion we can draw a genealogy of generic growth or decay in terms of historical, geographical, and religio-political dynamics. The class involves reading, discussion, and written assignments in both Arabic and English.

CLME GU4248 Iraq: War, Love and Exile. 4 points.
This course explores three major thematic concerns that distinguish Iraqi narrative after 2003. War, love, and exile are at the center of Iraqi writers' narrative which has been winning the attention of very large audiences in Iraq, the Arab world, the US and Europe. These narratives demonstrate richness and dexterity and have been winning high acclaim as great writings of war, estrangements and love.

MDES G4253 Islamic Law: The Three Debates. 4 points.
Not offered during 2019-20 academic year.
Prerequisites: ASCM V2003 or equivalent.
This seminar deals with three paradigmatic sets of questions in the history of Islamic law, each set representing and encompassing key themes pertaining to three important historical phases. Long-standing debates on the “origins” of the Shari’a will be explored, as will the constitution of the formative period, which is variably claimed to stretch from two to four centuries. Scholarship on this period will be examined as ideology. In the second set of questions, squarely situated in the post-formative period (ca. 11th – 17th c.) we examine the relationship between and among social custom, juridical practice and formal legal doctrine, discussing in outline the structural mechanisms the Shari’a has developed to accommodate legal change. Scholarship on this period and on what the features of this period came to represent in the overall constructed history of the Shari’a will also be examined as ideology. In the third set of questions, we analyze so-called legal reform and the role of state in converting the Shari’a to a modern institution that is qualitatively different from its pre-modern predecessor. Scholarship on the Shari’a in the modern period will also be examined as ideology. Finally, but not necessarily at the end of the course, we will pose questions about the nature of interpretation and language in the construction of a paradigmatic idea (and history) of the Shari’a.

CLME G4261 Popular Islam: Asia and Africa. 4 points.
CC/GS/SEAS: Partial Fulfillment of Global Core Requirement
This course explores common beliefs and practices that are held by Muslims across ethnicities and national borders. It looks at these not only from a Herder’s perspective of a national-popular dynamic as a formative part in cultural capital, but also from a deep-rooted Islamica as an accumulated faith that got woven into local and indigenous cultures. Hence, it questions the whole idea of Islamic modernity, in its ethnic and national images, as a culmination of the encounter with Europe. It interrogates the premise as an elitist worldview that has overlooked the formation processes in the makeup of cultural and identitarian politics and poetics. Laying emphasis on the shared and common beliefs among the Muslim mass audience, it studies visitations, sites of intercession like shrines, amulets, encomiums to the Prophet, Sufi tales, dhikr recitations, dreams and their interpretation, divination, and many other common beliefs and practices that cut across modernity paradigms and binary structures. Through close analysis of these practices in texts, poetry, narrative, travelogue and memoirs, it argues that the bane of modernity is its subordination to a Western ideal that minimizes or even negates its engagement with Islamic and Arabic-writing tradition. The nation state and through codification processes and as led by the intelligentsia forged a social program that usually invalidates common practices and rural culture. Only after 1967, the unsettling experience of total bankruptcy, that intellectually questions the dichotomies of science versus religion and the myth of progress versus tradition. The rise of Islamic movements since the Iranian Revolution began to pose questions with respect to modernity and the viable means of economic and social welfare. New writings, forms and modes of expression take to the street where they find substance and faith that has been ignored for long under cultural dependency. Under the increasing role of social media and cyberspace, non-traditional forums, modes of expression and mediums gradually take over the right to speak for religion and disseminate its own languages that ironically converse with pre-modern venues and means of dialogue. These works receive due attention in relation to theoretical studies that may help increase readers’ critical insight. No prior knowledge of Arabic language is required.
MDES G4347 Origins of Armenian Art: Creating an Identity. 4 points.
Working with objects in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in the Medieval Department's offices, the course will be an interdisciplinary exploration of the creation of a sense of self-identity for the Armenian people through visual media and material culture. Coins, manuscript illuminations, stone carvings, ceramics, textiles and other media will be studied to determine the means by which the Armenian people at the level of elite and popular culture identified themselves and positioned themselves in relation to neighboring, or dominating, cultures. Relevant works from other cultures in the Museum's encyclopedic collections will be used for comparative study. Students will do a paper on an Armenian work selected from the Museum's collection and present an aspect of their research in class. Hands on experience with the Museum's works of art will allow consideration of means of manufacture as well as style and iconography.

MDES GU4601 Politics in India. 4 points.
This course will combine study of long-term historical sociology with more short term understanding of policies and their possible effects. Though its main purpose will be to provide students with an understanding of politics after independence, it will argue, methodologically, that this understanding should be based on a study of historical sociology – plotting long-terms shifts in the structure of social power. The course will start with analyses of the structures of power and ideas about political legitimacy in pre-modern India, and the transformations brought by colonialism into that order. After a brief study of the nature of political order under the colonial state, the courses will focus primarily on the history of the democratic state after independence.

MDES GU4630 Histories of Translation in Premodern India. 4 points.
This course will provide a survey of the historical practices of textual translation in India as well as some of the ways in which translation has been used to open up analysis of a broad set of cultural practices. Discussion topics will range from methods of translation to conceptual commensurability, translatability, patronage and vernacularization, as the class rigorously examines how to approach the following questions: What was translation in India? What were the ways in which it was theorized? What was the relationship between translation and political power? How does a history of translation challenge nationalist narratives of culture, if at all?

MDES GU4652 Mughal India. 4 points.
The Mughal period was one of the most dynamic eras in world history, when India was the meeting place of many cultures. Of Timurid ancestry, the earliest Mughal rulers drew upon the heritage of Central Asia in their ruling styles and cultural practices, but they would soon adapt to the complexities of their Indian milieu, which had longstanding traditions that were a blend of Sanskrit and Persian, Hindu and Muslim idioms. European culture, whether filtered through Jesuit sermons, itinerant merchants, or Flemish engravings, was also making inroads into India during this period. This course is a broad cultural history of Mughal India as seen from a range of perspectives and sources. We consider the Mughals' major achievements in visual culture as manifested in painting and architecture, as well as exploring diverse topics in religion, literature, politics, and historiography. Yet another approach is to listen to the voices of the Mughal rulers as recorded in their memoirs, as well as investigating the signal contributions of the dynasty’s women.

MDES GU4654 Gender, Power and Culture in Early Modern India. 4 points.
Explores gender, culture, power in India, c. 1500-1800 by reading theoretical works on gender and sexuality, historical scholarship relevant to early modern India, and a variety of primary sources. Topics include morality, mysticism, devotion, desire, kingship, heroism, homosocial relations, and homoerotic practices. The focus is largely on Persisanate contexts, in conversation with broader South Asian and Islamic studies. This discussion seminar is designed for graduate and advanced undergraduate students, with some previous background in South Asian, Islamic, or gender studies.

CLME G4760 Shi‘ites and Shi‘ism. 4 points.
Not offered during 2019-20 academic year.

Arabic Language Courses
MDES UN1208 Arabic For Heritage Speakers I. 5 points.
Intended for heritage speakers only.
As of academic year 2016-17, this course is now MDES 2208. This is an intensive course that combines the curriculum of both First and Second Year Arabic in two semesters instead of four, and focuses on the productive skills (speaking and writing) in Modern Standard Arabic (Fusha). Students are exposed intensively to grammar and vocabulary of a high register. After successful completion of this course, students will be able to move on to Third Year Arabic. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

MDES UN1210 First Year Arabic I. 5 points.
Fee: Materials Fee - 10.00
An introduction to the language of classical and modern Arabic literature. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

MDES UN1211 First Year Arabic II. 5 points.
Fee: Materials Fee - 10.00
Prerequisites: First Year Arabic I or instructor permission.
An introduction to the language of classical and modern Arabic literature. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

MDES GU4210 Third Year Arabic I. 5 points.
NOTE: There are 2 sections of Third Year Arabic I. Section 001 follows the standard curriculum building all 4 language skills, as described below. Section 002 follows a reading-intensive curriculum, with less emphasis on listening and writing while still conducted in Arabic, and is intended for those preparing for advanced research in modern or classical Arabic texts. Students in the regular third-year Arabic track improve reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills through close reading, compositions, class discussions, and presentations in Arabic on topics such as cultures of the Arab world, classical and modern Arabic literature, and contemporary Arabic media. Review of grammatical and syntactic rules as needed. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

MDES GU4211 Third Year Arabic II. 5 points.
Students in the regular third-year Arabic track improve reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills through close reading, compositions, class discussions, and presentations in Arabic on topics such as cultures of the Arab world, classical and modern Arabic literature, and contemporary Arabic media. Review of grammatical and syntactic rules as needed. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

4 points.
4 points.
5 points.
4 points.
5 points.
Armenian Language Courses

MDES UN1301 Elementary Armenian I. 4 points.
In Elementary Armenian I, students learn the Armenian script and the basic grammar that will enable them to communicate about topics relating to themselves and their immediate surroundings: family, school, daily occupations, describing people, expressing likes and dislikes, requesting and giving information about themselves and others, proper forms of greetings, etc. They also begin to read signs, advertisements, and develop the skills to read texts like short stories and Armenian fables. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

MDES UN1309 Intensive Armenian for Heritage Speakers. 4 points.
Intensive Armenian for Heritage Speakers is an accelerated course for students of Armenian origin who already have basic knowledge of the spoken language and are able to converse on familiar topics relating to themselves and their immediate surroundings. The course will focus on developing their skills in reading, writing, and speaking Armenian grammar and vocabulary. By the end of the course, students will be able to read, write and discuss simple texts. Placement will be based on an interview and questionnaire about their background. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

MDES UN2301 Intermediate Armenian I. 4 points.
Fee: Language Resource Center Fee - 15.00
Prerequisites: MDES UN1301 and MDES UN1302 or the equivalent.
A continuation of the study of reading, writing and speaking of Armenian. In Intermediate Armenian I, students learn to communicate about a wide range of topics. Such topics include biographical narration, cooking and recipes, health and well-being, holidays and celebrations, travel and geography, etc. At this level, students continue to develop their skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening while perfecting the grammatical concepts to which they were introduced in the first year. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

MDES UN2302 Intermediate Armenian. 3 points.
Prerequisites: MDES UN2301 and MDES UN2302 or MDES UN2301 and MDES UN2302, Intermediate Armenian or equivalent.
Readings in Armenian Texts is the highest-level language course offered by the Armenian Language Program at MEALAC. It is designed for students who have a good foundation of the language or have attained the equivalent of Intermediate level Armenian and wish to perfect their knowledge of grammar while developing their skills in independent reading. The content of the course will change each term. Students will be introduced to a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts in Armenian. Texts will consist of full length short stories and newspaper articles as well as excerpts from lengthier works, all in modern Western Armenian. The emphasis will be on analyzing context, syntax and grammatical structures as clues towards comprehension. In addition to grammar and vocabulary analysis, students will produce translations, brief summaries and commentaries on the texts they read, both orally and in written form. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

MDES UN2501 Second Year Modern Hebrew: Intermediate I. 5 points.
Prerequisites: 1st Year Modern Hebrew II or the equivalent and instructor’s permission.
Equal emphasis is given to listening, speaking, reading and writing. Regular categories of the Hebrew verb, prepositions, and basic syntax are taught systematically. Vocabulary building. Daily homework includes grammar exercises, short answers, reading, or short compositions. Frequent vocabulary and grammar quizzes. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

MDES UN2517 Hebrew for Heritage Speakers I. 4 points.
Fee: Language Resource Center Fee - 15.00
Prerequisites: Permission of instructor.
Hebrew for Heritage Speakers I forms part of a year-long sequence with Hebrew for Heritage Speakers II. The course is intended for those who have developed basic speaking and listening skills through exposure to Hebrew at home or in day-school programs but do not use Hebrew as their dominant language and have not reached the level required for exemption from the Columbia language requirement. Heritage speakers differ in the degree of their fluency, but their vocabulary is often limited to topics in daily life and many lack skills in reading and writing to match their ability to converse. The course focuses on grammar and vocabulary enrichment, exposing students to a variety of cultural and social topics in daily life and beyond. By the end of the semester students are able to read and discuss simple texts and write about a variety of topics. Successful completion of the year-long sequence prepares students to enroll in third-year modern Hebrew. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

Persian Language Courses

MDES UN1701 Elementary Persian I. 4 points.
An introduction to the spoken and written language of contemporary Iran. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

MDES UN2701 Intermediate Persian I. 4 points.
Prerequisites: MDES W1710-W1711 or the equivalent.
A general review of the essentials of grammar; practice in spoken and written Persian; Arabic elements in Persian; selected readings emphasizing Iranian life and culture; materials from Tajikistan and Afghanistan, Indari. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.
MDES GU4710 Advanced Persian I. 3 points.
While helping students advance their levels of oral and written expression, this course focuses on literature of the modern and medieval periods, with particular emphasis on the development of the modern novella and traditional and new forms of poetry. In addition to literature, students are introduced to a wide variety of genres from political and cultural essays and blogs to newspaper translations of the early 20th century. They will be further exposed to ta’rof in reference to a wide variety of socio-cultural contexts and be expected to use ta’rof in class conversations. Students will be exposed to popular artists and their works and satirical websites for insight into contemporary Iranian culture and politics. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

Turkish Language Courses
MDES UN2901 Intermediate Modern Turkish I. 4 points.
A continuation of the study of the written and spoken language of Turkey, with readings of literary, historical, and other texts. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

MDES UN2902 Intermediate Modern Turkish II. 4 points.
A continuation of the study of the written and spoken language of Turkey, with readings of literary, historical, and other texts. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

MDES GU4910 Advanced Turkish I. 3 points.
As of academic year 2016-17, this course is now MDES W3901. Advanced Turkish I is designed to use authentic Turkish materials around projects that are chosen by the student in a research seminar format where students conduct their own research and share it in class in a friendly atmosphere. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

MDES GU4921 Elementary Ottoman Turkish I. 3 points.
Prerequisites: two years of modern Turkish.
Elementary Ottoman Turkish aims to focus on reading selected authentic print materials that are enjoyable and interesting, such as authentic detective novels, historical documents, and literary materials. The class materials are designed according to the interests of students in a fast-paced learning environment. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

MDES GU4926 Intermediate Ottoman Turkish I. 3 points.
Prerequisites: Elementary Ottoman Turkish.
Intermediate Ottoman deals with authentic Ottoman texts from the early 18th and 19th centuries. The class uses Turkish as the primary language for instruction, and students are expected to translate assigned texts into Turkish or English. A reading packet will include various authentic archival materials in rika, talik and divani styles. Whenever possible, students will be given texts that are related to their areas of interest. Various writing styles will be dealt with on Ottoman literature, history, and archival documents. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

Hindi-Urdu Language Courses
MDES UN1601 Elementary Hindi-Urdu I. 5 points.
An introduction to the most widely spoken language of South Asia. Along with an understanding of the grammar, the course offers practice in listening and speaking. The Hindi (Devanagari) script is used for reading and writing. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

MDES UN1608 Hindi for Heritage Speakers I. 5 points.
This is an accelerated course for students of South Asian origin who already possess a knowledge of basic vocabulary and limited speaking and listening skills in Hindi. They may not have sufficient skills in reading and writing but are able to converse on familiar topics such as: self, family, likes, dislikes and immediate surroundings. This course will focus on developing knowledge of the basic grammar of Hindi and vocabulary enrichment by exposing students to a variety of cultural and social topics related to aspects of daily life; and formal and informal registers. Students will be able to read and discuss simple texts and write about a variety of everyday topics by the end of the semester. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

MDES UN1614 Urdu for Heritage Speakers I. 5 points.
Prerequisites: a knowledge of basic vocabulary and limited speaking and listening skills in Urdu.
This is an accelerated course for students of South Asian origin who already possess a knowledge of basic vocabulary and limited speaking and listening skills in Urdu. They are not expected to know how to read and write in Urdu but are able to converse on familiar topics such as self, family, likes, dislikes and immediate surroundings. This course will focus on developing knowledge of the basic grammar of Urdu and vocabulary enrichment by exposing students to a variety of cultural and social topics related to aspects of daily life; and formal and informal registers. Students will be able to read and discuss simple Urdu texts and write about a variety of everyday topics by the end of the semester. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

MDES UN1615 Urdu for Heritage Speakers II. 5 points.
This is an accelerated course for students of South Asian origin who already possess a knowledge of basic vocabulary and limited speaking and listening skills in Urdu. They are not expected to know how to read and write in Urdu but are able to converse on familiar topics such as self, family, likes, dislikes and immediate surroundings. This course will focus on developing knowledge of the basic grammar of Urdu and vocabulary enrichment by exposing students to a variety of cultural and social topics related to aspects of daily life; and formal and informal registers. Students will be able to read and discuss simple Urdu texts and write about a variety of everyday topics by the end of the semester. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

MDES UN2601 Intermediate Hindi-Urdu I. 5 points.
Prerequisites: (MDES UN1601) and (MDES UN1602) MDES UN1601-UN1602 or the instructor’s permission.
Continuing practice in listening, speaking, and grammatical understanding. Along with the Hindi (Devanagari) script, the Urdu (Perso-Arabic) script is taught in the class; both scripts are used for reading and writing. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

MDES UN2602 Intermediate Hindi-Urdu II. 5 points.
Prerequisites: MDES W1610-W1611 or the instructor’s permission.
Continuing practice in listening, speaking, and grammatical understanding. Along with the Hindi (Devanagari) script, the Urdu (Perso-Arabic) script is taught in the class; both scripts are used for reading and writing. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.
MDES W4610 Readings In Hindi Literature I. 4 points.  
May be repeated for credit; content varies.  
Prerequisites: MDES W1613 or the instructor’s permission.  
The course introduces students to the riches of the classical Hindi tradition. We read bhakti and Sufi literature in tandem, with a special interest in Tulsidas and the Indo-Islamic romance. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

MDES GU4611 Readings In Hindi Literature II. 4 points.  
May be repeated for credit; content varies.  
Prerequisites: MDES UN2602 or the instructor’s permission.  
This course introduces students to the riches of the classical Hindi Tradition. We read Bhakti and Sufi Literature in tandem, with a special interest in Tulsidas and the Indo-Islamic Romance.

Eligibility: The class is open to undergraduate and graduate students with two or more years of Hindi-Urdu (or permission of the instructor).

MDES GU4624 Advanced Hindi I. 5 points.  
Advanced Hindi I and II are third year courses in the Hindi-Urdu program that aim to continue building upon the existing four language skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) along with grammar and vocabulary in a communicative approach. The objective of these courses is to strengthen students’ language skills and to go beyond them to understand and describe situations and the speech community, understand and discuss Hindi literature and films, news items, T.V. shows and current events. Students will also be given opportunities to work on their areas of interest such as popular culture, professional and research goals in the target language. Students will be expected to expand their vocabulary, enhance grammatical accuracy and develop cultural appropriateness through an enthusiastic participation in classroom activities and immersing themselves in the speech community outside. This course will be taught in the target language. All kinds of conversations such as daily life, on social/public interests’ topics as well as on academic interests, will occur in the target language. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

MDES GU4625 Advanced Hindi II. 5 points.  
Advanced Hindi I and II are third year courses in the Hindi-Urdu program that aim to continue building upon the existing four language skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) along with grammar and vocabulary in a communicative approach. The objective of these courses is to strengthen students’ language skills and to go beyond them to understand and describe situations and the speech community, understand and discuss Hindi literature and films, news items, T.V. shows and current events. Students will also be given opportunities to work on their areas of interest such as popular culture, professional and research goals in the target language. Students will be expected to expand their vocabulary, enhance grammatical accuracy and develop cultural appropriateness through an enthusiastic participation in classroom activities and immersing themselves in the speech community outside. This course will be taught in the target language. All kinds of conversations such as daily life, on social/public interests’ topics as well as on academic interests, will occur in the target language. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

MDES GU4635 Readings In Urdu Literature I. 4 points.  
Prerequisites: two years of prior coursework in Hindi-Urdu (MDES UN1612 & MDES UN1613), one year of Urdu for Heritage Speakers (MDES UN1614 & MDES UN1615), or the instructor’s permission.  
This course is a literary course, with in-depth exposure to some of the finest works of classical and modern Urdu prose and poetry. In the fall semester, our focus will be on some of the most famous Urdu short stories while, in the spring semester, we will focus on various genres of Urdu poetry. The content may change each semester. This course is open to both undergraduates and graduates. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

MDES GU4636 Readings In Urdu Literature II. 4 points.  
Prerequisites: two years of prior coursework in Hindi-Urdu (MDES W1612 & MDES W1613), one year of Urdu for Heritage Speakers (MDES W1614 & MDES W1615), or the instructor’s permission.  
This course is a literary course, with in-depth exposure to some of the finest works of classical and modern Urdu prose and poetry. In the fall semester, our focus will be on some of the most famous Urdu short stories while, in the spring semester, we will focus on various genres of Urdu poetry. The content may change each semester. This course is open to both undergraduates and graduates. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

MDES GU4640 Art and Aesthetics in Colonial India. 3 points.  

Sanskrit Language Courses  
MDES UN1401 Elementary Sanskrit I. 4 points.  
This course constitutes the first half of a year-long introduction to Classical Sanskrit, the translocal language of religious, intellectual, and literary life in South Asia for nearly two millennia. Assuming no prior experience with the language, this introductory sequence provides students with the grammar, reading strategies, and cultural context necessary to begin accessing the language’s many rich textual traditions, including scripture (śruti), epic (iṭhāṣa), poetry (kāvyā), drama (nāṣaka), systematic thought (śāstra), and more.

MDES UN2401 Intermediate Sanskrit I. 4 points.  
Fee: Language Resource Center Fee - 15.00  
Prerequisites: Elementary Sanskrit II or instructor permission.  
This course constitutes the first half of a year-long reading course designed to give students the tools necessary for advanced study in Classical Sanskrit. Readings in epic (iṭhāṣa), poetry (kāvyā), systematic thought (śāstra), and commentary (vāykhāṇa) will introduce students to a variety of important genres and their distinctive conventions. A focus upon the Sanskrit tradition’s own categories of analysis—grammatical, commentarial, and prosodic—will enable students to begin to make sense of original Sanskrit texts as generations of the tradition’s own readers have. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

MDES GU4810 Advanced Sanskrit I. 4 points.  
Prerequisites: Two years of Sanskrit or the instructor’s permission.  
Prerequisites: Two years of Sanskrit or the instructor’s permission. The two levels of advanced Sanskrit, which introduce students to philosophy or literature, are given in alternate years. In 2018-2019 philosophical texts will be treated. Close reading of major works, exploring both philological and philosophical issues. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.
MDES GU4812 Advanced Sanskrit II. 4 points.
Prerequisites: Two years of Sanskrit or the instructor’s permission.
Prerequisites: Two years of Sanskrit or the instructor’s permission. The two levels of advanced Sanskrit are given in alternate years. In 2017-2018 court literature (fall) and literary criticism (spring) will be offered; in 2018-2019, philosophy. Close reading of major works, exploring both philological and literary-theoretical aspects of the texts. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

Tamil Language Courses
MDES UN1101 Elementary Tamil I. 4 points.
This course constitutes the first half of a year-long introduction to Tamil, the official language of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu as well as an official language of Sri Lanka and Singapore. In addition to being spoken by almost 80 million people worldwide, Tamil also has an impressive classical past, having served as a language of religious, intellectual, and literary life in South India for nearly two millennia. Assuming no prior experience with the language, this introductory sequence provides students with the grammar, language skills, and cultural context necessary for achieving their individual Tamil language goals, whether they be conducting fieldwork or scholarly research, chatting with relatives back home, or simply waxing poetic over an artful dosai. In order to cultivate students’ reading, writing, speaking, and listening comprehension skills, this course draws upon a wide variety of teaching materials, including the core textbook, oral drills, audio recordings, short films, music videos, memes, and more. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

MDES UN1102 Elementary Tamil II. 4 points.
Introduces students to the basic grammatical and syntactical skills required to function adequately in a Tamil-speaking environment. Of particular interest to students planning to conduct scholarly research or fieldwork in that region of the world. Introduces students to the rich culture of the Indian subcontinent where Tamil is spoken. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

MDES UN2101 Intermediate Tamil I. 4 points.
Prerequisites: MDES W1101-W1102 or the instructor’s permission. Further develops students’ written and oral proficiency in order to allow them to function adequately in a Tamil-speaking environment. Of particular interest to students planning to conduct scholarly research or fieldwork in a Tamil-speaking context. Develops the students’ appreciation for the rich culture of the Indian subcontinent where Tamil is spoken. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

MDES UN2102 Intermediate Tamil II. 4 points.
Prerequisites: MDES W1101-W1102 or the instructor’s permission. Further develops students’ written and oral proficiency in order to allow them to function adequately in a Tamil-speaking environment. Of particular interest to students planning to conduct scholarly research or fieldwork in a Tamil-speaking context. Develops the students’ appreciation for the rich culture of the Indian subcontinent where Tamil is spoken. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

MDES UN3301 Advanced Tamil I. 3 points.
Prerequisites: MDES W1201-W1202 or the instructor’s permission. This course aims at students improving further their language proficiency. It aims at students getting introduced to the long and continuous literary history of Tamil by reading non-contemporary Tamil writings, sometimes the ancient Tamil literary works.

MDES UN3302 Advanced Tamil II. 3 points.
Prerequisites: Advanced Tamil I or instructor permission. This course aims at students improving further their language proficiency. It aims at students getting introduced to the long and continuous literary history of Tamil by reading non-contemporary Tamil writings, sometimes the ancient Tamil literary works.

Pulaar Language Courses
Swahili Language Courses
SWHL UN1101 Elementary Swahili I. 4 points.
Essentials of grammar, basic vocabulary, practice in speaking and reading Swahili the most widely used indigenous language of East Africa. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

SWHL UN1102 Elementary Swahili II. 4 points.
Essentials of grammar, basic vocabulary, practice in speaking and reading Swahili the most widely used indigenous language of East Africa. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

SWHL UN2101 Intermediate Swahili I. 4 points.
Prerequisites: SWHL W1101-W1102 or the instructor’s permission. A review of the essentials of Swahili grammar; detailed analysis of Swahili texts; practice in conversation. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

Wolof Language Courses
WLOF UN1101 Elementary Wolof I. 4 points.
Introduction to the basic grammatical structures of Wolof, a major language of West Africa spoken in Senegal and Gambia. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

WLOF UN2101 Intermediate Wolof I. 4 points.
Prerequisites: WLOF W1101-W1102 or the instructor’s permission. Further develops a student’s knowledge of Wolof, a major language of West Africa spoken primarily in Senegal and Gambia. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

WLOF UN3301 Advanced Wolof I. 4 points.
Prerequisites: Two years of Wolof or instructor permission. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

Of Related Interest
History (Barnard)