Middle Eastern Studies Initiative

Initiative package
Contents:

1) About

2) Goals
   a. Short term goals
   b. Long term goals

3) Related research
   a. Courses already available at UBC
   b. Courses offered by other Canadian universities
   c. Data on students coming from the Middle East
   d. Exchange opportunities that exist

4) Support
   a. Sign our petition

5) Contact us

All references to UBC refer to UBC – Vancouver campus unless otherwise indicated
About

Who we are

The Middle Eastern Studies Initiative is led by a group of student organizations who believe that it is absolutely essential for the University of British Columbia (UBC) to have wider academic options that look towards the Middle East.

Groups involved

Arab Students Association

The Arab Student Association (ASA) at UBC is an organization that serves to present Arab history and culture to the Arab and non-Arab student population. Through the understanding of such a vibrant history and culture ASA aspires to achieve 3 objectives.

1. To advocate awareness against violence and discrimination.
2. To spread Arab representation throughout the university.
3. To amplify Arab unity.

International Students Association

The International Students Association is an AMS club that exists to represent and integrate the International Student community. Our main goal is to advocate International Students' needs express their views on issues that affect the International community. We also work to create a safe space for interaction and cross-cultural awareness by working with other internationally focused groups on campus to create a shared sense of community. The ISA functions as a link between International Students, the UBC Administration, and the AMS and student societies.

Israel on Campus

The IOC is dedicated to promoting understanding between Canadians and Israelis, while fostering debate on Middle East issues. The IOC is committed to enlightening others of Israel’s positive contributions to the world, and offering educational programs and seminars on Israel’s shared values with Canada. Members believe in Israel’s right to exist as a Jewish state within secure borders.

Saudi Arabian Students Association

The Saudi Arabian Students Association intends to facilitate current and prospective Saudi students with tools necessary to make the best of their time in Vancouver at UBC. Saudi students at UBC Vancouver often come across a number of obstacles such as language barriers, cultural strain, social complexities, and legal ambiguities. We, as a club, therefore, will attempt to at the best of our abilities to ensure that these obstacles are reduced to ensure successful integration of Saudi students at UBC and the Vancouver community.
Solidarity with Palestinian Human Rights

SPHR is a non-profit student-based organization advocating on a social justice platform to uphold the rights of the Palestinian people in the face of human rights violations and all forms of racism, discrimination, misinformation and misrepresentation.

Turkish Students Society

The Turkish Student Society is a social, cultural, non-political and nonreligious voluntary organization aiming to unite and serve the Turkish community on campus. The association is committed to benefiting both Turkish and non-Turkish communities and contributing to the diversity on campus. Turkish Student Association is a student led group.

Reasons we think it is essential for UBC to have such a program

We feel that having a Middle Eastern Studies program at UBC is essential for several reasons. First, there is a lack of representation of the region and the dynamics that make up the Middle East in courses offered whether in History, Economics, Political Science or even as simple as language courses. We feel that a program like MESI will provide insight on not only the politics, culture, and history of the region, but also on the incredible importance that it has in global affairs.

Second, we believe that for UBC to compete as a "World-class" university and as an international and global university, it much provide its students with the option to study the Middle East just like any other part of the world. We see that an interdisciplinary program with such a focus is the best way to provide students with the option of learning more about the Middle East. However this is only possible when the university offers a variety of courses in different departments with such a focus.

Also, we see that it is important for the courses that do already exist to be interlinked and we believe that such an interdisciplinary program will give students the ability to make these valuable connections between all disciplines.

All the more reason to support such an initiative is to eradicate ignorance
Goals

The main aim of this collaboration is to establish a concrete and dynamic Middle Eastern Studies Program at UBC. We will advocate for this program to be a correct representation of the Middle East, with areas of focus such as history, art, political science, geography and sociology.

In the short term we aim to:

- Create more awareness on campus regarding the Middle East and the lack of availability of academic courses with such a focus.
- Establish student and faculty support to the initiative and the need for it at UBC through different means such as signing a petition.
- Establishing connections with key administration, professors and other interested individuals.
- Bring the courses that tackle issues regarding the Middle East together under the name of Middle Eastern Studies program, an interdisciplinary one.
- Expand the availability within courses that already exist especially language courses.
- Finding professors willing to expand their syllabi to include topics pertaining to the Middle East.
- Acquiring the university's approval of the MESI proposal.

In the long term we aim to:

- Have a Middle Eastern Studies program with a minor and/or major.
- Create annual fairs and conferences that will allow Middle Eastern Studies Program to reach many other UBC students.
- Expanding Go Global opportunities, including field trips, exchange partner universities, and language learning programs.
- Expanding the program to the Okanagan campus as well.
Related research

Courses offered at UBC that can be drawn from to create an interdisciplinary program in Middle Eastern Studies:

*Arabic Studies*
- ARBC 300: Introduction to the Grammar and Vocabulary of Classic Arabic  
  - Ghazi, Seemi, full (40, with waiting list of 30)
- ARBC 400: Intermediate Classical Arabic  
  - Ghazi, Seemi, full (23)

*Asian Studies:*
- ASIA 310A: History of Iran: From the Sasanians to the Safavids  
  - Askari, Nasrin
- ASIA 360B: Classical Persian Literature  
  - Askari, Nasrin
- ASIA 394: Post-Revolutionary Iranian Cinema  
  - Askari, Nasrin

*Hebrew*
- HEBR 305: Elementary Hebrew (Biblical)  
  - Milstein, Sara
- HEBR 405: Intermediate Hebrew (Biblical)  
  - Halabe, Rahel
- HEBR 479B: Seminar in Classical Hebrew  
  - Arbel, Vita Daphna
- HEBR 509B: Advanced Readings in Classical Hebrew  
  - Arbel, Vita Daphna

*History*
- HIST 403H 101: Seminar in the History of International Relations: Modern Northern African History in the Global Context  
  - Byrne, Jeffrey

*Persian Studies*
PERS 100: Basic Persian I  
  - Zolfi Sistani, Mozhgan
PERS 101: Basic Persian II  
  - Zolfi Sistani, Mozhgan
PERS 104: Persian Reading and Writing for Persian-Speaking Students  
  - Zolfi Sistani, Mozhgan
PERS 200: Intermediate Persian I  
  - Zolfi Sistani, Mozhgan  
PERS 201: Intermediate Persian II  
  - Zolfi Sistani, Mozhgan  
PERS 300: Advanced Persian I  
  - Zolfi Sistani, Mozhgan

Political Science  
- POLI 369D: Issues in International Security: Terrorism  
  - Farkasch, Robert, full (65)  
- POLI 421B: The Politics and Governments of the Modern Arab World  
  - Faris, Hani, full (19)

Religious Studies  
- RELG 207: Classical Islam  
  - Ahmed, Rumee  
- RELG 305: Prophecy and Kingship in Ancient Israel  
  - Bumann, Ernest  
- RELG 309: Jews and Christians  
  - Menkis, Richard  
- RELG 331: Medieval Jewish History  
  - Menkis, Richard  
- RELG 332: Modern Jewish History  
  - Menkis, Richard  
- RELG 448 001: Seminar in the History of the Religion of Islam  
  - Chaudhry, Ayesha  
- RELG 475B 001: Topics in Religion: Islamic Law and Legal Theory  
  - Ahmed, Rumee  
- RELG 475C 001: Topics in Religion: Embodied Islam  
  - Chaudhry, Ayesha
Exchange Opportunities that already exist at UBC

1) Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Exchange students, including law students, can take coursework in most areas of study.

Terms offered:
(Term 1, Term 2, Summer, Full year)
- HUJ Summer Ulpan: Mid-June to End of September
- HUJ Autumn Semester: Beginning of October to End of December
- HUJ Winter Ulpan: Beginning of January to Mid-February
- HUJ Spring Semester: Mid-February to End of May

Areas of study available:

Education, Engineering, Environmental Sciences, Fine Arts, Forestry, Humanities, Human Kinetics, Land and Food Systems, Law, Life Sciences, Music, Physical Sciences, Social Sciences

Other program offered:

Co-Existence in the Middle East (CME):

CME is a 6-credit academic field summer program in Israel (late June through late July), which aims to promote coexistence by providing future leaders with distinctive opportunities to gain interaction with different cultures and exposure to diverse narratives.

2) Koç University- Istanbul, Turkey:

Exchange students can take coursework in Humanities, Social Science and Engineering.

Terms offered:
(Term 1, Term 2, Full year)
- KU semester 1: Mid September to Mid January
- KU semester 2: Late January to Early June

Areas of study available:

Engineering, Humanities, Law, Life Sciences, Management (UBCO), Physical Sciences, Social Sciences

3) Middle East Technical University- Ankara, Turkey:

Only Engineering students are eligible to apply to this partner university.

Terms offered:
(Term 1, Term 2, Summer, Full year)

- METU semester 1: Late September to Mid January
- METU semester 2: Mid February to Mid June
- METU Summer semester: Early July to Mid August

Areas of study available:

Engineering
Middle East-related Programs offered by other Canadian Universities

# 1: University of Toronto (Major/Minor)
- Language courses offered: Akkadian, Arabic, Aramaic/Syriac, (Ancient) Egyptian, Coptic, Hebrew, Persian, Turkish, Kurdish (TBA). Levels are from Intro - Advanced.

- Offers more than 30 courses on Middle Eastern cultures, religions, politics, and histories.
  Examples: Intro to Islamic World, Early Islamic History, Middle East Christians, Eurasian History, Intro to Modern Middle East, Modern Arab History, Modern Arab Societies, Arab Intellectuals, etc.

- Offers six individual scholarships for students pursuing a Near Eastern or Middle Eastern Studies Major.

- Offers Independent Study opportunities for students wishing to take graduate level Near Eastern Studies courses for undergraduate credit. Also allows second year students to participate in Faculty members' research.

- Includes more than 25 Undergraduate and Graduate instructors.

- Will announce partnerships with Middle Eastern Universities this year.

- Offers a graduate degree in 13 different areas including: Arabic Studies, Turkish and Ottoman Studies, Persian Studies, History of the Islamic World and the Middle East, etc.

# 2: McGill University (Major/Minor)
- Language courses offered: Arabic, Turkish, Persian, and Hebrew. Levels are from Intro-Advanced.

- Offers more than 40 courses on Middle Eastern politics, histories, religions, philosophies, and cultures.
  Examples: Arab-Israeli Conflict, History of Zionism, Islamic Civilization, Bible/Quran Interpretations, Muslim Societies, Islam and Politics, Foreign Policy: Middle East, Politics in Israel, Arab Woman's Literature, etc.

- Offers no scholarships for Middle Eastern Studies but has an Undergraduate and Graduate Journal.

- Includes more than 20 Undergraduate and Graduate instructors.

- The Program has no official ties with Middle Eastern Universities.
- McGill is home to the Institute of Islamic Studies and offers MA and PhD level courses on Islamic history, theology, law, and culture, plus full instructional support in Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Urdu, and Hebrew. It is comprised of 15 faculty members and more than 60 graduate students. It is one of the largest programs outside the Islamic World.

# 3: University of Alberta (Major/Minor)
- Language courses offered: Arabic. Levels are from Intro-Advanced.

- Offered several courses on the Middle East. Examples: Politics of Middle East and North Africa, Colonialism and Populism in Middle East, Religion of the Middle East, etc.

- Offers no scholarships but hosts a yearly conference on the Middle East.

- Has 6 full-time instructors.

# 4: University of Waterloo
- Language courses offered: Arabic. Levels are from Intro-Advanced.

- Does not offer any courses on the Middle East.

- Recently constructed a campus in Abu Dhabi. This has allowed students from Waterloo to go on exchange and learn Arabic first-hand.
## International Students by Country of Citizenship (UBC Vancouver & UBC Okanagan), Nov 1 2002-2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Sum of REGISTERED STUDENTS</th>
<th>Column Labels</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western Asia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>126</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azerbaijan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahrain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>296</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuwait</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupied Palestinian Territory</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qatar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>48</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syrian Arab Republic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Africa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Support

If you are interested in supporting our initiative in one or more of the following ways, please sign our petition below. Also, please indicate whether you will be willing to have your name included within our proposal package that we will eventually be submitting to the University.

Date: _________________

Dear MESI team,

I, ______________, choose to support the Middle Eastern Studies Initiative at UBC to continue working on providing more Middle Eastern related material and content in certain courses such as ___________. And hereby I am signing below.

Signature: _________________

I also grant permission to have my name included in the proposal package that will be submitted to the University. (Please circle)

YES / NO
Contacts:

We appreciate your time and interest in the Middle Eastern Studies Initiative. If you would like to receive more information regarding this initiative, please send your feedback or concerns to our general email:

Mesi.ubc@gmail.com

We also invite you to check our facebook page at:

https://www.facebook.com/TheMiddleEasternStudiesInitiativeAtUbc