

# Asian and Middle East Studies

## *Interdisciplinary*

Asian and Middle East Studies at Kenyon is an interdisciplinary program that offers two concentrations and a joint major. In the major, students combine their study of Asia and the Middle East with major requirements in one of several departments: anthropology, art history, history, modern languages and literatures (Chinese), or religious studies. Students may also opt for concentration in Asian studies and/or Islamic civilizations and cultures. In addition, students will find courses in Asian and Middle East studies in anthropology, music, philosophy, political science and sociology.

The Asian and Middle East studies curriculum encourages students to acquire the analytical and critical ability to explore the linguistic, literary, historical and cultural traditions of Asia and what is commonly referred to as the Middle East to develop the cultural sensitivity and humanistic knowledge needed in our increasingly globalized world. Students come to understand the interconnected worlds of Asia and North Africa as a culturally diverse region with deeply intertwined histories, and to understand the peoples of Asia and the Middle East as major actors in regional and world history, rather than as objects of other peoples' enterprises and observations. An important goal of the curriculum is the development of a critical understanding of the ways in which people of the interrelated regions of Asia and the Middle East have historically defined and expressed themselves. The program also sponsors films, invites speakers to the College, and promotes other social and cultural events to stimulate campus awareness of the societies of East Asia, South and Southeast Asia, and Central Asia, West and Southwest Asia and North Africa.

## The Curriculum

Students hoping to spend all or part of their junior year in China, Japan or the Arabic speaking world, should begin to study the appropriate language in their first two years at Kenyon. New students interested in Asia, even those who have not yet declared a major or a concentration, may enroll in any 100- or 200-level course offered by an Asian studies faculty member or should consider taking ASIA 201, which provides an introduction to the entire region.

## Requirements for the Joint Major

The Asian and Middle East studies joint major provides a structured yet flexible curriculum to enable students to focus their work on the region while acquiring a solid methodological grounding in an academic discipline. Students must fulfill all the requirements of the departmental major, in addition to the specific requirements of the Asian and Middle East Studies Program as described below. The Senior Capstone will follow the requirements of the joint department and will focus on the area of Asia and the Middle East in which the student's relevant language and study-abroad requirements were fulfilled.

Unlike in a double major, in a joint major there is only one Senior Capstone. Double-counting of courses for the departmental major and for the Asian and Middle East Studies Program is permitted.

### 1. Language Study — two to five semesters

For Asian and Middle Eastern languages taught at Kenyon — at present Chinese, Japanese and Arabic — two years of language study are required. Students electing a joint major with modern languages and literatures (Chinese) will take more than two years of language. One semester of intensive language study in a country where the language is spoken will be considered equivalent to a full year at Kenyon.

For languages not taught at Kenyon, one year of intensive study abroad (or an approved intensive summer program combined with a semester abroad) will fulfill the requirement. In the case of transfer students, credit will be accepted for a year of relevant language study pursued at another institution.

If the program committee determines that a student possesses native proficiency in an Asian language, both oral and written, it will waive this requirement, but only if the Senior Capstone focuses on populations that speak that language.

## 2. Study Abroad

At least one semester or one summer (minimum six weeks) in an approved study-abroad program is required. The program must be in a country where the student's Asian and Middle East language is spoken. A full year of study abroad is highly recommended.

## 3. Foundation Courses — two courses

At least two courses from the following list, in two different areas and two different departments or programs. Areas are defined as East Asia (China, Japan, Korea), South/Southeast Asia (India, Vietnam, Indonesia) and the Islamicate world (which includes West, Southwest and Central Asia as well as North Africa). With the approval of the director, other courses can be counted.

### **East Asia:**

ASIA 201 The Silk Road  
 ARHS 114 Introduction to Asian Art  
 HIST 160 Modern East Asia  
 HIST 161 East Asia to 1800  
 HIST 162 Modern Japan  
 HIST 163 Modern China  
 INST 131 China in Transition  
 PHIL 212 Early Chinese Philosophy  
 RLST 260 Buddhist Thought and Practice  
 RLST 251 East Asian Religions

### **South/Southeast:**

ARHS 114 Introduction to Asian Art  
 HIST 156 History of India  
 HIST 166 History of the Islamicate World (covers South Asia every other year)  
 HIST 260 Medieval Islamic Empires  
 RLST 250 South Asian Religions  
 RLST 260 Buddhist Thought and Practice

### **The Islamicate World:**

ASIA 201 The Silk Road  
 HIST 166 History of the Islamicate World  
 HIST 260 Medieval Islamic Empires  
 HIST 261 The Mongol Empire  
 HIST 264 History of Modern Middle East  
 RLST 240 Classical Islam

## 4. Area Courses — three courses

Students must complete three courses in additional courses in one area. One additional foundation course in the area of the student's focus can count as an area course (i.e. the other two must be from the list below). Courses not specifically focused on Asia will not be counted toward the joint major. Language courses beyond the intermediate level that focus specifically on literature, film or culture may count as area courses. Equivalent courses taken abroad may also count as area courses. Area courses currently offered at Kenyon include:

**East Asia:**

ARHS 235 Art of China  
ARHS 238 Modern Chinese Art  
ARHS 239 Contemporary Chinese Art  
CHNS 321, 322 Advanced Chinese Language and Culture  
CHNS 324 Modern China through Film and Fiction  
CHNS 325 Chinese Literary Tradition  
CHNS 326 Women of the Inner Chambers  
HIST 262 Japan to 1850  
HIST 263 Imperial China  
HIST 353 Tibet Between China and the West  
HIST 450 Chinese Topics in History  
HIST 452 Women, Gender, and State in China  
JAPN 322 Advanced Japanese: Language and Culture  
JAPN 323 Advanced Reading and Composition  
JAPN 325 Introductory Japanese Linguistics  
PHIL 212 Early Chinese Philosophy  
PSCI 346 Riots, Ballots and Rice: Comparative Asian Politics  
RLST 360 Zen Buddhism  
RLST 471 Confucian Thought and Practice  
RLST 472 Daoism  
SOCY 221 Global Religions in Modern Society  
SOCY 249 Knowledge of the Other: Journey to the East

**South/Southeast Asia:**

HIST 260 Medieval Islamic Empires  
HIST 345 History of the Indian Ocean  
HIST 353 Tibet Between China and the West  
HIST 356 Vietnam  
HIST 358 Imagined India: Film and Fiction  
MUSC 206 Seminar in Ethnomusicology  
MUSC 485 Indonesian Music Ensemble  
PSCI 346 Riots, Ballots and Rice: Comparative Asian Politics

**The Islamic World:**

HIST 258 Ottoman Empire  
HIST 261 The Mongol Empire in World History  
HIST 264 History of Modern Middle East  
HIST 365 Middle East through Film and Fiction  
HIST 370 Women and Gender in the Modern Middle East  
RLST 440 Seminar on Sufism  
RLST 443 Voices of Contemporary Islam  
RLST 447 Islam in North America

**5. Senior Seminar: Asia and the Middle East in Comparative Perspective**

This course is required for both the joint major and the concentration. It is offered every spring under the direction of a selected Asian and Middle East studies faculty member and meets in a seminar format. Topics will vary with the instructor. Majors and concentrators must take the course in their senior year, unless there are special circumstances preventing them from doing so.

## Senior Capstone

The Senior Capstone will follow the requirements of the joint department. It will focus in a significant way on the area in which the student's relevant language and study-abroad requirements were fulfilled, and will be supervised by an Asian and Middle East studies faculty member in the joint department.

## Honors

Honors in the Asian and Middle East studies joint major will follow the requirements for honors in the joint department. The supervising faculty member in that department will present the honors proposal to the Asian and Middle East studies faculty for approval early in the fall semester. An Asian and Middle East studies faculty member in the joint department will participate in the project's evaluation.

## Requirements for the Concentration in Asian Studies

The concentration in Asian Studies enables students to integrate their studies of the histories, cultures and societies of Asia in a comparative and interdisciplinary format. It comprises three elements: (1) at least one year of language study; (2) three courses in at least two departments other than Modern Languages and Literatures and representing at least two regions of Asia and the Middle East; and (3) the senior seminar.

### 1. Language Study

For Asian languages taught at Kenyon — at present Chinese and Japanese — one year of instruction is required. The equivalent of one year of approved relevant college-level language instruction at another accredited academic institution also will meet the requirement, as will an approved intensive summer program.

For languages not taught at Kenyon, one semester of intensive language study in a country where the language is spoken, or an approved intensive summer program, will be considered equivalent to a full year at Kenyon. In the case of transfer students, credit will be accepted for a year of relevant language study with a grade of C+ or better pursued at another institution.

If the program committee determines that a student possesses native proficiency in a relevant language, both oral and written, it will waive the requirement.

The program committee strongly recommends that students continue language study beyond the first year.

### 2. Area and Disciplinary Coursework

Students are required to take three courses about Asia other than language courses. These courses must be from the list of courses offered under Asian studies at Kenyon but may also include relevant courses taken in study-abroad programs. Students must take at least one course representing a region different from that of their language study. For example, students who are primarily focused on East Asia and are studying Chinese or Japanese at Kenyon (or taking Korean abroad or off-campus) must take at least one course focused on South/Southeast Asia or the Islamic world (see lists under Requirements for the Joint Major). A course that covers more than one region of Asia — e.g., "Asian Art," "The Silk Road" or "Comparative Asian Politics" — will also fulfill this requirement.

Courses not specifically focused on Asia will not be counted toward the concentration. Where any doubt arises, please ask a member of the Asian studies faculty. Double-counting for a student's major and the concentration is permitted.

### 3. Senior Seminar: Asia and the Middle East in Comparative Perspective

This course is required for both the joint major and both concentrations. It is offered every spring under the direction of a selected Asian studies faculty member and meets in a seminar format. Topics will vary with the instructor. Majors and concentrators must take the course in their senior year, unless there are special circumstances preventing them from doing so.

#### Off-Campus Study

Off-campus study in Asia is not required for the concentration but it is highly recommended. Students should consult with Asian studies faculty members and the director of the Center for Global Engagement to learn about the numerous opportunities available to Kenyon students to study in Asia for one semester or a year. Summer language-study programs are also available for students who need to prepare for off-campus study or desire to learn an Asian or Middle East language not offered at Kenyon (e.g., Hindi, Urdu, Korean, Vietnamese).

### Islamic Civilization and Cultures

The focus of this concentration is the study of Islamic civilization as a global and multicultural phenomenon. There are currently more than a billion Muslims in the world. They live in dozens of countries and speak hundreds of languages and dialects. They are the majority population in a region spanning from Morocco to Indonesia.

The impact of the civilization connected with Islam on world history has been complex and profound. The founding of the religion of Islam and the first Islamic polity by the Prophet Muhammad was a major turning point in human history. The subsequent Islamic empires that arose in the immediate wake of the rise of Islam — the Umayyad and the Abbasids — not only had a tremendous effect on the political and economic nature of the global system, they also became centers of intellectual and cultural fluorescence. Following the fall of Baghdad to the Mongols in the 13th century, the conversion of Turko-Mongol tribes to Islam led to a remarkable new series of Islamic polities that transformed the Eurasian world not only through military conquest but also by providing links for trade and diplomacy. Islam played similarly crucial roles in the histories of Africa and Southeast Asia.

From the Taj Mahal and the libraries of Timbuktu to the Blue Mosque in Istanbul and the Alhambra palace in Spain, Islamic societies generated remarkable works of art, architecture and literature. The rise of European power and the subsequent colonization of much of the Islamic world brought new challenges. In the contemporary world, the role of Islam in global and local affairs is deeply contested. The purpose of this concentration is to allow students to study systematically and coherently the global civilization of Islam and its religious traditions, histories and cultures in all of its diversity.

#### Beginning Studies

First-year and sophomore students may begin with any introductory course that deals with Islamic civilization or its cultures. RLST 240 Classical Islam, HIST 166 History of the Islamic World or HIST 264 History of Modern Middle East are especially designed as introductory courses and are open to first-year students. Students hoping to spend all or part of their junior year in the Arabic-speaking world should begin their study of Arabic in the first two years at Kenyon.

#### Area and Disciplinary Coursework

Students are required to take at least four courses which focus on the Islamic world, outside of the Department of Modern Languages and Literature. Courses should be chosen from at least two different departments. These courses may be chosen from a list of courses approved by the program committee of the Islamic Civilization and Cultures Concentration and may include up to two relevant courses taken in study abroad programs. These courses must have a substantial amount of work that deals specifically with an aspect or aspects of the Islamic world. One of the courses may be a comparative course that examines

the Islamic world together with another cultural region. At least one of the courses must be an advanced seminar. One of the courses must be an introductory course chosen from the following: RLST 240 Classical Islam, HIST 166 History of the Islamicate World or HIST 264 History of Modern Middle East.

### Language Study

At least one year of instruction in a relevant Islamicate language is required. Currently, this requirement can be met by taking the two-semester sequence of Arabic at Kenyon, ARBC 101Y-102Y. The equivalent of one year of approved college-level language instruction in Arabic or another relevant language such as Farsi, Turkish, Urdu, Swahili, Uzbek or Bhasa Indonesian at another accredited academic institution will also meet the requirement, as will some intensive summer programs or a semester of language study abroad when paired with language immersion. In the case of transfer students, credit will be accepted for a year of Islamicate language study with a grade of C+ or better pursued at another institution. If the program committee determines that a student possesses native proficiency in a relevant language, it will waive the requirement. Students are encouraged to continue language study beyond one year. It is strongly recommended that students continue their language study beyond the first year.

### Off-Campus Study

Off-campus study in the Islamicate world is not required, but it is highly recommended. Students should consult with Islamic Civilization and Cultures Concentration faculty and the director of international education for opportunities available to Kenyon students to study in the Islamicate world for one semester or a year. Summer language-study programs are also available for students who need to prepare for off-campus study or desire to learn an Islamicate language not offered at Kenyon (e.g., Hindi-Urdu, Farsi, Turkish, Swahili, Bhasa Indonesian). Students who wish to study abroad in the Arabic speaking world need to complete one year of Arabic at Kenyon before going abroad.

### Courses That Meet the Concentration Requirement

- ARBC 101Y Beginning Arabic
  - ARBC 102Y Beginning Arabic
  - ARBC 201 Intermediate Arabic I
  - ASIA 490 Senior Seminar: Asia in Comparative Perspective (comparative, when the topic is appropriate)\*
  - HIST 156 History of India (comparative)
  - HIST 166 History of the Islamicate World\*\*
  - HIST 237 History of Spain: Pliny to the Guggenheim (comparative)
  - HIST 258 Ottoman Empire
  - HIST 261 The Mongol Empire in World History (comparative)
  - HIST 264 History of Modern Middle East\*\*
  - HIST 345 History of the Indian Ocean (comparative)
  - HIST 365 Middle East through Film and Fiction\*
  - HIST 370 Women and Gender in the Modern Middle East\*
  - HIST 438 The Medieval Spains: Antiquity to the New World\* (comparative)
  - MATH 128 History of Mathematics in the Islamic World
  - MUSC 485 Asian Music Ensemble (Gamelan)
  - RLST 240 Classical Islam\*\*
  - RLST 440 Seminar on Sufism\*
  - RLST 443 Voices of Contemporary Islam\*
  - RLST 447 Islam in North America\*
- \* *Course fulfills the seminar requirement*  
 \*\* *Course fulfills the introductory course requirement*

## Courses in Asian and Middle East Studies

### First Year Seminar: Introduction to Asian and Middle East Studies

AMES 101 CREDITS: 0.5

This course is designed to introduce students to the study of Asia and the Middle East within the context of the global humanities. It serves as a sampler, which will expose students to the rich diversity of Asian and Islamicate humanities. The seminar will explore a wide range of primary sources from different places and historical periods. These may include such diverse materials as the memoirs of the medieval Muslim traveler Ibn Battuta, "The Analects of Confucius," readings from the "Vedas" and "Upanishads," Farid ud din Attar's "The Conference of the Birds," Kurosawa's "Rashomon," Rabindranath Tagore's "The Home and The World," short fiction from the modern Palestinian author Ghassan Kanafani and examples of contemporary Chinese science fiction. This interdisciplinary course does not count toward the completion of any diversification requirement. Only open to first-year students.

### The Silk Road

AMES 201 CREDITS: 0.5

"The Silk Road" is a rather misleading term coined in 1877 by Ferdinand von Richthofen. It refers to a vast network of trade routes that connected East, South, and Southeast Asia with the Mediterranean region, North Africa, and Europe. While travel and migration along these routes date back to prehistoric times and continue today, communication via the land routes across the Eurasian continent primarily flourished from the second century BCE through the 15th century CE, most notably linking China with western Asia and the Mediterranean region. And while silk was one of the major products transported from China to the West as far back as the Roman Empire, the trade, especially in such other luxury goods such as spices (from India) and gemstones (from western Asia), was active in both directions. Along with the trade in material goods, the Silk Road was the medium for cultural exchange. One of the prime examples of this was the spread of Buddhism from India into Afghanistan, China, Korea, Japan and Southeast Asia. As an extensive and many-layered system of economic and cultural exchange, the Silk Road can therefore be considered a pre-modern example of what today we call globalization. This course will survey the history of economic and cultural exchange along the Silk Road from prehistoric times to the present day. We specifically will examine geographic factors, the various ethnicities and empires that contributed to Silk Road history, the exchange of goods and technologies, the religions of the Silk Road, and the spread of artistic traditions across Asia. The general aims will be to enable students to think critically about Asia (or Eurasia) in a more holistic way, to understand the interconnections of our various academic disciplines and to appreciate some of the rich cultural heritages and exchanges that have contributed to our world. This interdisciplinary course does not count toward the completion of any diversification requirement. No prerequisite.

### Senior Seminar: Asia in Comparative Perspective

AMES 490 CREDITS: 0.5

This capstone seminar is taught by Asian Studies Program faculty in rotation and is organized around a common theme that integrates the various disciplines and regions of Asia. Through readings, films, guest lectures and other activities, the course will lead students to synthesize their academic and personal (e.g., off-campus) experiences in a broader comparative perspective. Students will produce work that examines one or more topics of their own interest within the comparative Asian framework. Required for Asian studies concentrators and joint majors. Permission of instructor required. This interdisciplinary course does not count toward the completion of any diversification requirement. No prerequisite. Offered every spring.

## Concentration

Courses that meet the requirement for this concentration:

HIST 390 Modern Iran  
RLST 325 Christianity in the Global South