

Asian and Middle Eastern Studies

Director: Yukiko Shigeto, Japanese
Jakobina Arch, History (on Sabbatical,
Spring 2019)

Brian Dott, History

Arash Davari, Politics

Tarik Elseewi, Film and Media Studies

Krista Gulbransen, Art History and Visual
Cultural Studies

Donghui He, Chinese

Daniel Kent, Religion (on
Sabbatical 2018-2019)

Charles McKhann, Anthropology

Lauren Osborne, Religion

Elyse Semerdjian, History

Akira R. Takemoto, Japanese

Jonathan S. Walters,
Religion

Wenqing Zhao, Philosophy

Affiliated Faculty:

Shampa Biswas, Politics (on
Sabbatical 2018-2019)

Gaurav Majumdar, English (on
Sabbatical, Fall 2018)

Adjunct Language Faculty:

Hitomi Johnson, Japanese

Wencui Zhao, Chinese

The Asian and Middle Eastern Studies Program (AMES) aspires to create a better understanding of Asian and Middle Eastern cultures and their place in the world through an integrated course of interdisciplinary study. The structure of requirements and electives (see below) is designed to ensure a comprehensive education, while still allowing participating students latitude to develop their own interests. Guidance will be provided by an adviser chosen from among the faculty who regularly offer Asia and Middle East-related courses.

Learning Goals: Upon graduation, a student will be able to:

- **Major-Specific Areas of Knowledge**

- Identify and interpret important ideas, assumptions, and debates that are central to the study of Asia and the Middle East.
- Develop an interdisciplinary approach to understanding and engaging in discussions about issues in the field of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies.

- **Accessing Academic Community/Resources**

- Comprehend, digest, and analyze scholarly works with attention to the author's thesis, methodology, structure of argument and use of evidence.

- **Critical Thinking**

- Develop skills of critical analysis that are broadly transferable.
- Analyze issues with a variety of tools and approaches from a range of disciplines.

- **Research Experience**

- Conduct a substantial academic inquiry about a focused research question, demonstrating a depth of understanding of a research area, the mastery of relevant methods, and a capacity to generate substantive results in the form of a senior thesis.

The Asian and Middle Eastern Studies major: The major consists of 53 credits divided into the following areas: language courses (16 credits), required courses (9 credits), concentration courses (usually 12 credits) and elective courses (16). Students must take classes covering at least two regions (see below), with all three regions being strongly encouraged. No more than 17 credits earned in off-campus programs or transfer credit, and no more than 4 credits in independent study may be used to fulfill major requirements.

Language Courses: AMES majors must complete two years of a language at Whitman, or the equivalent (16 credits). Students placing into second-year language classes will be exempted from eight credits from the language requirement. Students placing into third-year language classes or higher will be exempted from all 16 credits from this area. Language beyond the second year is strongly encouraged and can be used to fulfill elective credits. Taking course work in an additional language, if approved by the AMES faculty (see below), can also be used to fulfill elective credit. While students are not required to study abroad, this is highly encouraged.

Required Courses: All AMES majors must take Asian and Middle Eastern Studies 160, 490, and 492 or 498 (nine credits). In the final year students must pass a senior assessment consisting of an oral defense of their thesis.

Concentration Courses: Three courses at the 300 or 400 level from at least two disciplines (typically 12 credits) defining focus of study in a topic or region, providing context for the thesis. Two of the three courses must be taken at Whitman. Independent study and language classes cannot be used to fulfill the concentration. The proposed concentration and list of classes for the major must be submitted to the AMES faculty by the end of the week following Thanksgiving break in the fall semester of the junior year. The proposal must include a title, the names of the three proposed classes for the concentration, an explanation of how the courses fit together and complement each other, a statement about the student's methodological preparation to pursue the concentration, and a list of the rest of the classes for the major. As appropriate, the AMES faculty may require a student to take a non-AMES disciplinary introductory or methods course (this could count as elective credit towards the major).

Elective Courses: AMES majors must complete at least 16 credits of elective courses, of which at least 8 must be above the 100 level. These courses complement the concentration, such that, in combination the student has worked in three disciplines and two geographic areas.

Capstone: A senior seminar (3 credits) in the fall, in which students expand on themes and ideas about the study of Asia and the Middle East, and formulate a thesis topic based on a firm foundation of methodological and theoretical discussions; followed by completion of thesis (2 credits) in the spring. Senior assessment consists of an oral defense of the thesis.

Most of the classes which count towards the Asian and Middle Eastern Studies major are offered through other departments (see list below). These courses can be broadly divided into three geographic areas (identified after each course): 1. East Asia 2. South/Southeast Asia 3. Middle East/Islamic World

- | | |
|--|--|
| Anthropology 257 <i>Chinese Society and Culture</i> (1) | Japanese 405, 406 <i>Fourth-Year Japanese</i> (1) |
| Anthropology 258 <i>Peoples of the Tibeto-Burman Highlands</i> (1) | Japanese 491, 492 <i>Independent Study in Japanese Language</i> (1) |
| Art History 243 <i>Buddhist Art in Asia</i> (1, 2) | Japanese 491, 492 <i>Independent Study in Japanese Calligraphy</i> (1) |
| Art History 246 <i>The Art of India</i> (2) | Japanese 491, 492 <i>Independent Study in Japanese Tea Ceremony</i> (1) |
| Art History 248 <i>Ways of Seeing: Japanese Art and Aesthetics</i> (1) | Philosophy 110 <i>Introduction to East Asian Philosophy</i> (1) |
| Art History 356 <i>The Taj Mahal & Beyond: The Art & Architecture of Mughal India</i> (2) | Philosophy 251 <i>Chinese Philosophy and Contemporary Issues</i> (1) |
| Art History 357 <i>Art of Colonial India</i> (2) | Philosophy 360 <i>Asian Philosophy of Women, Gender, and Sexuality</i> (1) |
| Asian and Middle Eastern Studies 200 <i>Summer Seminar in Chinese Studies</i> (1) | Politics 207 <i>Islam and Politics</i> (3) |
| Asian and Middle Eastern Studies 315/ <i>World Literature 315 Between History and Fiction: Classical Chinese Narrative</i> (1) | Politics 208 <i>Middle Eastern Politics</i> (3) |
| Chinese 210 <i>Conversational Chinese II (summer)</i> (1) | Politics 225 <i>Introduction to Indigenous Politics</i> (2) |
| Chinese 305, 306 <i>Third-Year Chinese</i> (1) | Politics 236 <i>Concepts of the Political in Southeast Asia: An Introduction</i> (2) |
| Chinese 310 <i>Conversational Chinese III (summer)</i> (1) | Politics 303 <i>Gender and Feminism in Southeast Asia</i> (2) |
| Chinese 405, 406 <i>Fourth-Year Chinese</i> (1) | Politics 337 <i>Globalizing Southeast Asia</i> (2) |
| Chinese 417 <i>Walking the Talk: Chinese-English Translation</i> (1) | Politics 359 <i>Gender and International Hierarchy</i> (1, 2, 3) |
| Chinese 491, 492 <i>Independent Study in Chinese Language</i> (1) | Religion 154 <i>Yoga, Meditation and Mindfulness (no specific area)</i> |
| Film and Media Studies 307/ <i>Religion 307 Mediating Religion</i> (3) | Religion 160 <i>Asian Religions and the Environment</i> (1,2) |
| Film and Media Studies 345 <i>The Middle East in Cinema & Media</i> (3) | Religion 207 <i>Islamic Traditions</i> (3) |
| History 109 <i>East Asian History to 1600</i> (1) | Religion 217 <i>Qur'an</i> (3) |
| History 110 <i>East Asian History 1600 to the Present</i> (1) | Religion 221 <i>Brahmins, Buddhists and Jains</i> (2) |
| History 127 <i>Islamic Civilization I: The Early and Medieval Islamic World</i> (3) | Religion 222 <i>Hindu India</i> (2) |
| History 128 <i>Islamic Civilization II: The Modern Islamic World: The Ottomans to Arafat</i> (3) | Religion 250 <i>Theravāda Buddhism</i> (2) |
| History 235 <i>Arab Spring</i> (3) | Religion 251 <i>Mahāyāna Buddhism</i> (1) |
| History 241 <i>Early Japanese History</i> (1) | Religion 304 <i>Muslim Bodies</i> (3) |
| History 247 <i>Early Chinese History</i> (1) | Religion 307/ <i>Film and Media Studies 307 Mediating Religions</i> (3) |
| History 248 <i>Topics in Asian History</i> (1) | Religion 310 <i>Hearing Islam</i> (3) |
| History 300 <i>Gender in Chinese History</i> (1) | Religion 321 <i>Islamic Mysticism</i> (3) |
| History 302 <i>The Syrian War: From the Rise of Asad to the Specter of ISIS</i> (3) | Religion 347 <i>The Buddha</i> (2) |
| History 305 <i>World War I: Nationalism, Genocide, and the Imperial Mappings of the Modern Middle East</i> (3) | World Literature 217 <i>Gender and Sexuality in Pre-modern Chinese Society and Literature</i> (2) |
| History 325 <i>Women and Gender in Islamic Societies</i> (3) | World Literature 222 <i>Introduction to Modern Japanese Literature and Culture</i> (1) |
| History 344 <i>China in Revolution</i> (1) | World Literature 301 <i>Chinese Literature and Film Adaptation</i> (1) |
| History 346 <i>Modern Japanese History</i> (1) | World Literature 312 <i>Solitude and Literary Imagination</i> (1) |
| History 348 <i>Horseriders and Samurai: Comparisons in Early Modern East Asia</i> (1) | World Literature 315/ <i>Asian and Middle Eastern Studies 315 Between History and Fiction: Classical Chinese Narrative</i> (1) |
| History 349 <i>Topics in Asian History</i> (1) | World Literature 322 <i>Eccentric Monks and Hermits in Japan</i> (1) |
| History 490 <i>Seminar in Asian History</i> (1) | |
| Japanese 305, 306 <i>Third-Year Japanese</i> (1) | |

World Literature 325 *Imagining Community Through
Contemporary Japanese Fiction and Film (1)*

World Literature 328 *Haiku and Nature in Japan (1)*

World Literature 330 *Introduction to Chinese Film (1)*

World Literature 338 *Undoing the Japanese National Narrative
through Literature and Film (1)*

World Literature 343 *Women Writers in Imperial China: In
Search of the "Real" Female Voice (1)*

World Literature 349 *China through the Cinematic Eye (1)*

World Literature 359 *A Brave New World: Contemporary
Chinese Literature (1)*

World Literature 388 *ST: Youth and Revolution in 20th
Chinese Culture (1)*

160 Introduction to Asian and Middle Eastern Studies**Spring****Gulbransen****4 credits**

Taught once a year by a faculty member in the Asian and Middle Eastern Studies program, this course provides an introduction to different scholarly approaches to the study of Asia and the Middle East. The course examines topics such as Orientalism, colonialism and post-colonialism, gender and class, ethnography, religious and philosophical traditions, nationalism, globalization, and notions of tradition and modernity. Explorations into the nature and history of area studies will help to frame the study of various themes and debates. The course is not designed to offer an overview of all of Asia and the Middle East or any particular academic discipline within Asian and Middle Eastern Studies. Rather, this interdisciplinary class analyzes the history of how Asia and the Middle East have been defined and studied. Reflecting this interdisciplinary focus, this course engages with a mix of different types of texts and media, including literature, architecture, visual culture, film, ethnography and critical theory. Open to seniors only by consent of instructor.

200 Special Topics: Summer Seminar in Chinese Studies – History of Ethnic Interactions in Yunnan**Summer 2019****McKhann****2 credits**

Course offered at the Whitman Summer Studies in China program. Taught in China over a period of six weeks by the Whitman faculty member who is resident director. The course explores selected topics in Chinese studies and incorporates classroom and field studies. *Prerequisite:* admission to the Whitman Summer Studies in China program. *Prerequisite:* Acceptance into the Crossroads WSSC Summer 2019 course. *Course fees and international airfare estimated will be announced in Fall 2018.*

201-204 Special Topics: Intermediate Level**4 credits**

The course explores selected topics in Asian and Middle Eastern studies at the intermediate level. Any current offerings follow.

221 Silk Roads Field Course**Not offered 2018-19****2 credits**

This course looks in depth at selected sites along the silk roads of Asia, both in the classroom and during a field trip. One hour per week throughout the semester, and a field trip to Asia over the spring break. Students will explore the past and current situations of specific sites to be visited during the field trip through pre-trip readings and research presentations, keep a detailed journal during the field trip, and give a multimedia or poster-style presentation of a researched aspect of the trip to the college community near the end of the semester. Students must apply for the course, and pay a course fee to be announced. *Corequisites:* Biology 121 and History 121.

301 Special Topics: Advanced Level**4 credits**

The course explores selected topics in Asian and Middle Eastern studies at the advanced level. Any current offerings follow.

315 Between History and Fiction: Classical Chinese Narrative**Not offered 2018-19****4 credits**

This course familiarizes participants with the major works of traditional Chinese narrative. In order to broaden general knowledge of this rich literary heritage and to acquaint students with works from historical narratives in the Han dynasty to the great 18th century novel *Dream of the Red Chamber*, the course will combine a close reading of texts with broader questions about literature and culture across different periods of Chinese history. We will explore how these works reflected and influenced the changing ideals of Chinese society—of its readers, writers and critics—paying special attention to issues such as the concept of “fiction” and “fictionality,” the birth of the novel in traditional China, the portrayal of heroic figures, the representation of history, and the treatment of gender relations, among others. Skills emphasized will include close reading, writing analytical papers, and verbal

expression. Readings and discussion will be in English. May be elected as World Literature 315. May be taken for credit toward the Chinese minor.

411, 412 Individual Projects

Fall, Spring

Staff

1-4 credits

Directed individual study and research. *Prerequisites:* appropriate prior coursework in Asian and Middle Eastern studies and consent of the supervising instructor.

490 Senior Seminar in Asian and Middle Eastern Studies

Fall

Shigeto

3 credits

Taught by an Asian and Middle Eastern Studies faculty member with guest participation by others. This class expands on themes and ideas about the study of Asia and Middle East first examined in Asian and Middle Eastern Studies 160. Like Asian and Middle Eastern Studies 160 the course is not limited to a particular part of Asia or the Middle East nor to a particular disciplinary approach. The class also will provide seniors a structured program for helping them to formulate a thesis topic based on a firm foundation of methodological and theoretical discussions in the discipline of Asian and Middle Eastern studies. Students will conduct research related to their thesis topic resulting in a detailed research proposal. Open only to Asian and Middle Eastern Studies seniors.

492 Thesis

Fall, Spring

Staff

2 credits

Senior majors will work with an adviser to record in a thesis a substantial original research project based on the research proposal completed in Asian and Middle Eastern Studies 490. Open only to Asian and Middle Eastern studies seniors.

498 Honors Thesis

Fall, Spring

Staff

2 credits

Designed to further independent research leading to the preparation of an undergraduate honors thesis in Asian and Middle Eastern studies. Required of and limited to senior honors candidates in Asian and Middle Eastern studies. *Prerequisite:* admission to honors candidacy.