

Asian and Middle Eastern Studies

<i>Director</i> , Tarik Elseewi, Film and Media Studies	Lauren E. Osborne, Religion	Wencui Zhao, Chinese
Jakobina Arch, History	Yukiko Shigeto, Japanese	Wenqing Zhao, Philosophy
Brian Dott, History	Akira R. Takemoto, Japanese	
Kathryn Frank, Film and Media Studies	Xiaobo Yuan Anthropology and Religion (on sabbatical, Spring 2024)	<i>Affiliated Faculty:</i>
Krista Gulbransen, Art History (on sabbatical, 2023-24)	Jonathan S. Walters, Religion	Shampa Biswas, Politics
Donghui He, Chinese		Gaurav Majumdar, English
Libby Miller, Art History		

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 interdisciplinary course offerings. The program offers three majors: Chinese, Japanese, and South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies (SAME).

For descriptions of the majors, please refer to the Chinese, Japanese and SAME sections of this catalog.

AMES 105-106 Special Topics: Beginning Level

4 credits

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

AMES 200 Special Topics: Summer Seminar in Chinese Studies

2 credits

This course will explore religious publics and sacred spaces in contemporary China and Taiwan. Combining lectures with student-focused discussions, the course will examine the trajectories of diverse religious traditions in China and Taiwan, including Taoism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity, and popular or folk religion. Students will learn about the histories of these traditions and their contemporary iterations, as well as explore themes such as globalization and localization, spiritual revival, and the relationship between the state and religious institutions. We will pair these academic engagements with field trips to urban religious spaces, as well as an extended road trip to sites of sacred assemblage and pilgrimage in either Taiwan or China. *Prerequisites:* one academic year of Chinese language coursework and admission to the Whitman Summer Chinese Studies program.

AMES 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.

AMES 221 Silk Roads Field Course

Not offered 2023-24

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.

AMES 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.

301 ST: Greening the Desert**Fall****Sibley****4 credits**

From the Sahara to the Empty Quarter of the Arabian Peninsula, deserts have long held an important place for different cultural and national identities associated with North Africa and the Middle East. These environments loom large in visual and written representations of the region, along with waterways and oases as their essential counterparts. Pre-modern Arab poetry establishes the importance of the desert for cultural identity and different groups have harnessed the language of “greening the desert” as a key to modernity, creating lasting impacts on the environment in ways that dramatically change the way humans live in and around these spaces. The course will consider orientalism and Western science as discourses and practices that have contributed to the way modernity has been imagined and produced. Through readings in fiction and poetry from countries that include Libya, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Palestine, and Israel, our topics may include land reclamation and agricultural reform, the impacts of dams, nomadism, and petroculturalism. We will also discuss how desert discourses ripple into the realm of politics in the cases such as imperial administration, international water rights, Zionism, the Palestinian right of return, and policy impacts on marginalized communities including Nubians, Bedouins, and Tuareg. Applies toward the Under-Represented Paradigms requirement for the Environmental Humanities Major. May be elected as Environmental Studies 302. Distribution area: cultural pluralism or humanities.

365 Confucius' Analects**Not offered 2023-24****4 credits**

This course is a close reading of the Analects, a seminal text in the Confucian tradition. As a class, we will explore the philosophy of the Analects and ways of reading the Analects as philosophy. We will also practice writing one's own philosophical commentary for the Analects following examples of historic Chinese philosophers. May be elected as Philosophy 365.

AMES 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.