

# Degree Requirements, Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures

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Graduate handbook information is updated and maintained by each program. Graduate handbooks are available within each program's office and online at <https://utexas.box.com/v/UTAustinGraduateHandbooks>. Please contact the program with concerns or questions.

## Master of Arts

Both the thesis and report options require 30 semester hours of coursework, which is to be chosen in consultation with the student's supervisor or the graduate advisor. The thesis option requires at least 24 semester hours of coursework, to be taken on a letter-grade basis, and six semester hours (Middle Eastern Studies 698A and 698B) of thesis coursework culminating in an approved thesis. The report option requires 27 semester hours of coursework, to be taken on a letter-grade basis, and three semester hours (Middle Eastern Studies 398R) of report coursework culminating in an approved report.

All students are expected to maintain a minimum 3.50 grade point average in order to remain in good standing. Failure to maintain this minimum average will result in a warning letter and one semester of warning, during which time the student is expected to return to a minimum 3.50 average. The program has the discretion to dismiss students who are unable to meet this requirement after one additional semester.

## Doctor of Philosophy

The program is designed to increase the breadth and depth of the student's knowledge and to develop a capacity for independent scholarly research. The courses required are determined by the student's interests in consultation with the doctoral supervisor.

The aim of the program is to educate and mentor scholars and teachers of the languages and cultures of the Middle East with the depth to support a sustained research career and the breadth to teach a range of courses on Middle Eastern topics. Students learn to design and execute research projects that will help redefine the frontiers of discovery in their field. Teaching experience helps prepare them to communicate new knowledge to experts and non-experts alike.

In applying to the program, students select an area of study from among the following: linguistics (historical linguistics or language pedagogy), literature & culture, history, Hebrew Bible/ancient Near East, or Islamic studies. Through the course of their studies, they develop methodological expertise in at least one of the following areas: textual analysis, literary theory, linguistic theory, cultural theory, or the theories and methodologies of historical inquiry. During their first year, incoming students choose or are assigned a faculty mentor with whom they plan to work in their major field. This mentor oversees the student's selection of courses for registration and the design of the student's course of study. Students are also encouraged to seek the advice of other faculty members in the program on their studies and their progress.

Students must develop a mastery of at least one major Middle Eastern language and must demonstrate scholarly research skills and potential. A period of study abroad in the region of specialization is strongly recommended for students of living languages. Study of a second Middle Eastern language is strongly encouraged, and competency in a research language (typically German or French) is required. Doctoral candidates

are also expected to present papers at academic or professional conferences before graduation.

PhD students normally take three years of coursework beyond the master's degree. Before taking the comprehensive examinations, each student must demonstrate, through formal testing, proficiency in the language required by their major field. Reading knowledge in one research language (typically German or French) is required and must be demonstrated by passing a reading test administered by the department.

To be admitted to candidacy for the degree, the student must pass comprehensive written and oral examinations. The purpose of the examinations is to certify that the student has sufficient knowledge for an academic career, and has the skills and abilities required to complete a doctoral dissertation. Examinations are normally taken during the fourth year of the program.

After passing these examinations, candidates set up a dissertation committee with the help of their supervisor. This committee approves the dissertation prospectus as a prerequisite to candidacy, guides the student in writing and revising the dissertation, and administers the final oral dissertation defense.

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