M.A. in Middle Eastern Cultures and Religions

Purpose and Objectives
The Department of Middle Eastern Cultures and Religions offers students the opportunity to learn about the peoples, societies and cultures of modern Israel and other countries in the Middle East. This interdisciplinary program, which combines studies in religion, language, history and social sciences and provides an opportunity for field education, utilizes the wealth of institutional and personal resources available for study and interaction in Jerusalem.

During the two-year, 49-credit hour program, participants have the opportunity to gain a working knowledge of modern Hebrew or Arabic. Study outings to historical sites, meetings with diverse segments of the population, and daily life in Jerusalem expose the student to a broad range of educational experiences. Both in and out of the classroom, students encounter a variety of viewpoints regarding the character of the country and the current political process. The rare combination of Israeli and Palestinian scholars, together with Christian faculty members from abroad in a non-denominational Christian institution located in Jerusalem, makes Jerusalem University College a unique meeting place for examining and interacting with these views.

In today’s competitive environment, the personal and educational experience of cross-cultural study is considered a major professional advantage. Students interested in political science, history, education or overseas employment, especially in the Middle East, will find the program a valuable contribution to their professional and personal development.

Field Education
Students have the option of completing up to six hours of field education and/or practicum in ministry. Field education is designed to provide an opportunity for students to integrate classroom learning experiences with practical field experiences in a variety of Middle Eastern contexts. For this reason, field education should be related as closely as possible to the student’s academic program, vocational goals and/or the development of leadership skills in an international context, broaden their experiential knowledge in relevant areas, enhance self-directed learning and engage in personal, social and spiritual formation.

Modern Language Acquisition
One of the unique opportunities afforded to students in Jerusalem is learning modern Hebrew and/or Arabic. Indeed, a working knowledge of one or both of these languages is essential for understanding developments in the modern Middle East, as well as for preparing for a career in the Middle East or in a Middle East related context. Thus, students in the MA program in Middle Eastern Cultures and Religions are strongly encouraged during their two years of course work to augment their curriculum with a parallel track of either modern Hebrew or Arabic language acquisition. A student’s advisor will direct the student to the Hebrew or Arabic courses that best suit each individual situation, and provide a proficiency exam at the end of the program to monitor and gauge the student’s progress in language acquisition. At the student’s request, the level of proficiency, as gauged by the exam, will be indicated on the student’s official transcript.
Required Curriculum for the M.A. in Middle Eastern Cultures and Religions

Survey Courses: 10 hours
Introduction to the Modern Middle East (3)
Historical and Social Settings of Modern Israel (3)
Physical Settings of the Bible (4)

History: 9 hours
History of the Church in the East (3)
History of the Jews during the Medieval and Modern Period (3)
History of the Holy Land from the Rise of Islam to 1948 (3)

Religious Studies: 6 hours
Jewish Thought and Practice (3)
Islamic Thought and Practice (3)

Society and Politics: 6 hours
Palestinian Society and Politics (3)
Christian Communities in the Middle East (3)

Practicum and Seminars 6 hours
Practicum in Ministry (3)
Departmental Seminar (topic to be announced each year) (3)

Thesis-track degree: 12 hours additional
Guided Research on thesis Topic (2)
Thesis Writing (4)
Two Electives (6)

Non-Thesis-track degree: 12 hours additional
Four Electives (12)

Two Bible Content Examinations
Two Comprehensive Examinations
Proficiency Examination in Modern Hebrew or Arabic

Total Credit Hours: 49
M.A. in Biblical History and Geography

Purpose and Objectives
The Department of Biblical History and Geography enables students to become well-versed in the history of the biblical world and in the sub-fields of historical geography, archaeology and biblical Hebrew. Upon completing the M.A. degree, students will have had the opportunity to receive a strong foundation in the basic historical and physical realities of the land. At the same time, by studying under leading Jewish and Christian scholars in Jerusalem, students are exposed to the current flow of scholarly discussions and are able to keep abreast of recent discoveries in the field.

Students enrolled in the M.A. in Biblical History and Geography have ample opportunity to draw upon the rich resources of Jerusalem and the lands of the Bible. Numerous field studies provide the student with a first hand understanding of the geographical and historical issues that underlie the ancient history of these lands. By participating in archaeological surveys and excavations, students are exposed to ancient material cultures and the methodology of fieldwork. Students may also become involved with local cultures such as the Palestinian, Bedouin and Druze communities which in many ways reflect the life styles, ways of thinking, interrelationships and ethnic movements of biblical times.

The M.A. in Biblical History and Geography is designed to provide all graduates with a core understanding of the historical and physical realities of the land of the Bible, while allowing the flexibility necessary for individual students to pursue their own interests within the field. By carefully choosing elective courses, students are able to plan a program that emphasizes either the periods of the Old or New Testaments, and either history, archaeology, historical geography or biblical Hebrew.

The M.A. in Biblical History and Geography can prepare a student to pursue further studies at the doctoral level, enhance a preaching or pastoral ministry, or broaden one's general biblical knowledge for teaching in the humanities, ministering overseas, or doing Bible translation. At the same time, students are challenged to incorporate the fruit of their critical inquiry with a deepening of their personal walk with the Lord.

Modern Language Acquisition
One of the unique opportunities afforded to students in Jerusalem is learning modern Hebrew. The acquisition of modern Hebrew not only helps to solidify a student's work in the language of the Hebrew Bible, but also opens a world of scholarship not readily available otherwise. Thus, students in the M.A. program in Biblical History and Geography are encouraged during their two-years of course work to augment their curriculum with a parallel track of modern Hebrew acquisition at an area Ulpan (a modern Hebrew language learning institute). A student's advisor can best direct the student to the Hebrew courses that best suit each individual situation. At the end of the degree program, the student will be able to sit for a proficiency exam that will gauge the level of modern Hebrew attained. At the student's request, the level of proficiency, as gauged by the exam, will be indicated on the student's official academic transcript.
Required Curriculum for the M.A. in Biblical History and Geography

Archaeology Emphasis

Archaeology: 18 hours
- Biblical Archaeology I—Old Testament Period (3)
- Biblical Archaeology II—Persian through Byzantine Periods (3)
- Archaeology of Jerusalem I—Prehistoric Period through the Iron Age (3)
- Archaeology of Jerusalem II—Persian through Byzantine Periods (3)
- Archaeological Field Excavation (6)

Geography: 4 hours
- Physical Settings of the Bible (4)

History: 6 hours
- History of Ancient Israel (3)
- History of the Second Temple Period (3)

Biblical Languages: 11 hours
- Biblical Hebrew I (4)
- Biblical Hebrew II (4)
- Readings in Historical and Geographical Texts (3)

Thesis-track degree: 9 hours additional
- Guided Research on Thesis Topic (2)
- Thesis Writing (4)
- One Elective (3)

Non-Thesis-track degree: 9 hours additional
- Three Electives (9)

Two Bible Content Examinations
Two Comprehensive Examinations
Proficiency Examination in Modern Hebrew or Arabic (optional)

Total Credit Hours: 48
Historical Geography Emphasis

Geography: 13 hours
- Physical Settings of the Bible (4)
- Historical Geography of the Land of the Bible During the Old Testament Period (3)
- Regional Explorations in the Historical Geography of the Holy Land (3)
- Seminar in Historical Geography (3)

Archaeology: 6 hours
- Biblical Archaeology I—Old Testament Period (3)
- Biblical Archaeology II—Persian through Byzantine Periods (3)

History: 9 hours
- History of Ancient Israel (3)
- History of the Second Temple Period (3)
- Cultural Background of the Bible (3)

Biblical Languages: 11 hours
- Biblical Hebrew I (4)
- Biblical Hebrew II (4)
- Readings in Historical and Geographical Texts (3)

Thesis-track degree: 9 hours additional
- Guided Research on Thesis Topic (2)
- Thesis Writing (4)
- One Elective (3)

Non-Thesis-track degree: 9 hours additional
- Three Electives (9)

Two Bible Content Examinations
Two Comprehensive Examinations
Proficiency Examination in Modern Hebrew or Arabic (optional)

Total Credit Hours: 48
History Emphasis (Old Testament Period)

History: 15 hours
- History of Ancient Israel (3)
- History of the Second Temple Period (3)
- Cultural Background of the Bible (3)
- History of Egypt and Its Contact with Canaan and Israel (3)
- History Seminar (3)

Archaeology: 6 hours
- Biblical Archaeology I—Old Testament Period (3)
- Biblical Archaeology II—Persian through Byzantine Periods (3)

Geography: 7 hours
- Physical Settings of the Bible (4)
- Historical Geography of the Land of the Bible During the Old Testament Period (3)

Biblical Languages: 11 hours
- Biblical Hebrew I (4)
- Biblical Hebrew II (4)
- Readings in Historical and Geographical Texts (3)

Thesis-track degree: 9 hours additional
- Guided Research on Thesis Topic (2)
- Thesis Writing (4)
- One Elective (3)

Non-Thesis-track degree: 9 hours additional
- Three Electives (9)

Two Bible Content Examinations
Two Comprehensive Examinations
Proficiency Examination in Modern Hebrew or Arabic (optional)

Total Credit Hours: 48
**History Emphasis (Second Temple Period)**

*History: 15 hours*
- History of Ancient Israel (3)
- History of the Second Temple Period (3)
- Intertestamental Literature (3)
- Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls (3)
- Rabbinical Thought and Literature (3)

*Archaeology: 3 hours*
- Biblical Archaeology II—Persian through Byzantine Periods (3)

*Geography: 7 hours*
- Physical Settings of the Bible (4)
- Historical Geography (3)

*Biblical Languages: 14 hours*
- Biblical Hebrew I (4)
- Biblical Hebrew II (4)
- Post-biblical Hebrew: Second Temple Period (3)
- Readings in Historical and Geographical Texts (3)

*Thesis-track degree: 9 hours additional*
- Guided Research on Thesis Topic (2)
- Thesis Writing (4)
- One Elective (3)

*Non-Thesis-track degree: 9 hours additional*
- Three Electives (9)

Two Bible Content Examinations
Two Comprehensive Examinations
Proficiency Examination in Modern Hebrew or Arabic (optional)

**Total Credit Hours: 48**
**Biblical Hebrew Emphasis**

**Biblical Languages: 17 hours**
- Biblical Hebrew I (4)
- Biblical Hebrew II (4)
- Readings in Biblical Hebrew Narrative (3)
- Readings in Historical and Geographical Texts (3)
- Post-biblical Hebrew: Second Temple Period (3)

**Archaeology: 6 hours**
- Biblical Archaeology I—Old Testament Period (3)
- Biblical Archaeology II—Persian through Byzantine Periods (3)

**Geography: 7 hours**
- Physical Settings of the Bible (4)
- Historical Geography (3)

**History: 9 hours**
- History of Ancient Israel (3)
- History of the Second Temple Period (3)
- Cultural Background of the Bible (3)

**Thesis-track degree: 12 hours additional**
- Guided Research on Thesis Topic (2)
- Thesis Writing (4)
- Two Electives (6)

**Non-Thesis-track degree: 12 hours additional**
- Four Electives (12)

**Two Bible Content Examinations**
**Two Comprehensive Examinations**
**Proficiency Examination in Modern Hebrew or Arabic (optional)**

**Total Credit Hours: 48**