

MIDDLE EASTERN LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

Major Map

Explore the rich cultures of the Middle East while cultivating critical skills for today's globally interconnected world.

The **Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures (MELC) BA** program in the College of Letters & Science offers students an interdisciplinary exploration of the ancient and modern Middle East. The ancient track examines the region as the cradle of civilization, investigating the rise of early cities, empires, writing systems, and scientific thought through linguistic, textual, artistic, and archaeological analysis. The modern and language-focused tracks expand this study to later societies, exploring their languages, histories, literature, philosophies, religions, and legal traditions. All specializations are grounded in a diverse range of disciplines, including history, anthropology, international studies, gender studies, and law.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Customize your studies with a **major specialization**, study abroad, internships, and museum-based research.
- Explore talks, workshops, and funding opportunities at the **Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES)**.
- Design and carry out independent research in the **MELC Honors Program**.



Photo credit: MELC Department

“

The MELC program offers a window into a world of philosophical, artistic, and religious richness that spans millennia of human history, while also engaging with the region's modern political urgency.

”

—Nora Jacobsen Ben Hammed,
Assistant Professor of Islamic Thought

UC Berkeley

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM

Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures

CURRICULUM

The MELC major offers a discovery-driven academic experience that is innovative, collaborative, and transdisciplinary. Students engage with cutting-edge digital research tools and methods while exploring a wide range of topics. The faculty's diverse specializations span ancient Middle Eastern arts, archaeology, literature, modern cultural and political studies, linguistics, philosophy, and digital humanities, providing students with mentorship and unique opportunities for specialized research.

The core requirements for the major include two lower division courses: MELC 10 Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia and MELC 11 Medieval and Modern Middle East. Instruction is available in several modern languages—Arabic, Hebrew, Modern Greek, Persian, and Turkish—as well as ancient languages such as Akkadian, Biblical Hebrew, Egyptian, Ethiopic, Iranian, and Sumerian.

Learn more at melc.berkeley.edu/undergraduate

DECLARING THE MAJOR

To **declare the MELC major**:

1. Review Major Course Requirements in the **Berkeley Academic Guide**.
2. Meet with the **Undergraduate Major Advisor** to discuss the major requirements and course options.
3. Submit an L&S Major Declaration Form and a Program Plan for approval to the Undergraduate Major Advisor.

The department recommends that students declare a major as soon as they begin their studies at UC Berkeley.

STUDY OPTIONS

The MELC major offers two specializations and five concentrations:

- Middle Eastern Languages and Literature
 - Arabic
 - Hebrew
 - Persian
- Middle Eastern Worlds
 - Ancient Middle Eastern Worlds
 - Modern Middle Eastern Worlds

Students choose a concentration and follow the recommended curriculum in the **Undergraduate Catalog**.



Photo credit: MELC Department

WHAT CAN I DO WITH MY MAJOR?

Students in the MELC major gain advanced language proficiency, analytical thinking, and cross-cultural communication skills that prepare them for careers in global sectors, public service, and cultural institutions, as well as graduate study in the humanities, social sciences, and law. Program alumni work in fields such as academia, translation, diplomacy, journalism, research, and more. They pursue advanced degrees in Middle Eastern studies, business, foreign language, law, and other disciplines. Alumni also pursue post-graduate opportunities such as professional fellowships and public service programs.

UC Berkeley offers a number of career resources for students studying Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures. The College of Letters & Science spotlights **career pathways** for students in the Arts & Humanities, and offers **advising** for undergraduates pursuing medical or health professions programs, law school, or masters and PhD programs. Additionally, **Berkeley Career Engagement** provides career and graduate school advising, job and internship listings, and events such as career and graduate school fairs.



SPOTLIGHT

Nicholas, class of 2020

Nicholas Shafer graduated with a double major in Arabic and Anthropology. He is the founder of Global Community College Transfers and a recipient of the Boren Scholarship, Fulbright Grant, and John Gardner Fellowship. Nicholas was also awarded the Marshall Scholarship for graduate study in the United Kingdom, and completed an MA in Governance, Development, and Public Policy at the University of Sussex. He is currently pursuing an MSc in Modern Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Oxford.

"It's never too late to reach for an opportunity, even if you don't recognize the value that you bring to the table. If you've overcome an obstacle....it makes you a more well-rounded person and makes you resilient, and that resiliency is ultimately what interviewers and scholarship advisors are looking for."

EMPLOYMENT

Alumni find employment in a variety of fields and industries after graduation. Examples include:

- Author and Writer
- Copy Editor
- Entrepreneur
- Film Editor
- Global Supply Manager
- International Policy Associate
- Marketing Associate
- Military Officer
- Museum Curator
- Operations Director
- Professor
- Project Manager
- Public Defender
- Research Analyst

GRADUATE STUDY

Alumni pursue graduate education to gain more depth of knowledge in their field as well as prepare for jobs that require advanced degrees. Examples include:

- Archaeology
- Art History
- Business Administration
- Conflict Resolution
- Creative Writing
- Diplomacy and International Affairs
- History
- International Political Economy
- Languages and Literature Studies
- Law
- Modern Middle Eastern Studies
- Philosophy and Religious Studies
- Public Policy

FOUR-YEAR STUDENT TIMELINE

Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures

FIRST YEAR

SECOND YEAR

Plan your studies

Start exploring with **L&S 1** and first-year guides from **L&S** and **Arts & Humanities**.

Visit **L&S Advising** for help with **major exploration** and **degree requirements**.

Familiarize yourself with the **MELC major**; explore major specializations.

Start on **lower division requirements** (MELC 10 + 11 and language courses).

Join **Berkeley Connect** for 1:1 mentoring and to meet peers with shared interests.

Discover new interests in a **Freshman Seminar, Berkeley Changemaker, or A&H Compass or Gateway** course.

Continue with language sequence and finish lower division requirements.

Meet with your **major** and **college advisor** to discuss your academic plans.

Continue exploring with a **Sophomore Seminar** or **Big Ideas** course.

Look into **study abroad**; see **resources** from the department.

Enrich your studies with a **certificate** or minor such as **Applied Language Studies**.

Meet with the undergraduate major advisor and **declare the major**.

Engage outside the classroom

Get involved with a **student organization**.

Visit **Berkeley Discovery** to get started with research, entrepreneurship, public service, and creative projects.

Browse campus **library collections** related to MELC.

Learn how to **prepare for office hours** and build relationships with faculty.

Attend events hosted by **MELC** and **affiliated programs**.

Live and learn as part of the **SSWANA Living Community**.

Explore the **Center for Middle Eastern Studies**.

Develop your skills in the **Berkeley Student Leadership Academy**.

Explore research opportunities on the **OURS** website; apply to **URAP** to work on a faculty research project.

Apply for funding from **FLAS, Boren Awards, Stevens Memorial Fund, or Sultan Program**.

Pursue your career goals

Visit **UHS Career Counseling** and **Berkeley Career Engagement**.

Start exploring **career paths** for the major; check out career resources on the **Arts & Humanities** website.

Begin **making a plan** to get career ready.

Create or update your **resume** and **LinkedIn** profile.

Use **Handshake** to start connecting with career events and opportunities.

Meet with a BCE **career educator** to discuss career options and goals.

Build your **network** and explore career fields via **job shadowing** and **informational interviews**.

Pursue an **internship** to build skills and explore fields.

Considering graduate school? Explore resources from the **Graduate Division, L&S Advising, and BCE**; look into the **Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship**.

THIRD YEAR

Begin taking upper division **requirements** in the major.

Review your **degree progress** with your major and college advisor.

Develop your writing and critical thinking in an **Art of Writing seminar**.

Spend a term off-campus with **UCDC** or the **Intercampus Visitor Program**.

Consider applying to the **MELC Honors Program**; look into the **Haas Scholars** and **SURF** programs.

Help other students as a member of the **A&H Dean's Leadership Team**.

Check out the **Public Service Internship, College Corps, and Haas Public Service Leaders Program**.

Welcome new students to Berkeley as a **Golden Bear Orientation Leader**.

Share your language skills in the **SLC Language Exchange Program**.

Speak with faculty, advisors, and career educators about post-graduate options.

Join a professional association such as the **Middle East Studies Association**.

Interested in public service careers? Consider applying to the **John Gardner Fellowship, Huntington Award, or Truman Scholarship**.

FOURTH YEAR

Finish all upper division requirements and electives.

Join a thesis writing workshop at the **Townsend Center** or the **Student Learning Center**.

Complete any remaining **degree requirements** and **prepare for graduation**.

Interested in teaching? Give it a try by teaching your own **DeCal course**.

Submit a course research project for the **Library Prize, American Cultures Student Prize**, or other awards.

Get published! Submit your work to the **Berkeley Undergraduate Journal**.

Pursue a special project after graduation with the **Stronach Prize**.

Check in with a BCE **career educator**. Start connecting with **alumni groups** and **events**.

Apply to graduate school or post-graduate programs.

Meet employers at **info sessions, on-campus recruiting, and career fairs**.

Utilize **job search tools** from BCE and apply for job opportunities.

Learn about **alumni career services**.

SUMMER

Make progress on degree requirements with a **Summer Sessions** course such as ARABIC 1A and 1B.

Level up your learning with a **summer language program**; look into the **Critical Language Scholarship Program** to learn Arabic, Persian, or Turkish abroad.

Look into a summer internship with **Cal in the Capital, Cal in Sacramento**, or **Berkeley Global Internships**.

Pursue a **summer minor or certificate**—check out programs in **Teaching English and Journalism**.

Apply to the **GiGS program** to learn about graduate school.

Use this major map to help plan your undergraduate experience, including academic and co-curricular opportunities. Activities in this map are suggestions—always consult with your advisors whenever possible.

TRANSFER STUDENT TIMELINE

Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures

FIRST SEMESTER

SECOND SEMESTER

Plan your studies

Get your bearings with **L&S 198 Transitioning to Cal** and transfer guides from **L&S** and **Arts & Humanities**.

Meet with your **major** and **college advisor** to discuss your academic plans.

Enroll in MELC 10 and start on requirements for your specialization, including language courses.

Join **Berkeley Connect** for 1:1 mentoring and to meet peers with shared interests.

Meet with the undergraduate major advisor and **declare the major**.

Enroll in MELC 11 and continue requirements for your specialization.

Look into **study abroad**; see **resources** from the department.

Explore new interests in a **Berkeley Changemaker** or **DeCal course**.

Enrich your studies with a **certificate** or minor such as **Applied Language Studies**.

Consider applying to the **MELC Honors Program**; look into the **Haas Scholars** and **SURF** programs.

Engage outside the classroom

Get involved with a **student organization**.

Connect with the **Transfer Student Center** or **Re-entry Student Program**.

Browse the campus **library collections** related to MELC.

Visit **Berkeley Discovery** to get started with research, entrepreneurship, public service, and creative projects.

Learn how to **prepare for office hours** and build relationships with faculty.

Attend events hosted by **MELC** and **affiliated programs**.

Explore the **Center for Middle Eastern Studies**.

Explore research opportunities on the **OURS** website; apply to **URAP** to work on a faculty research project.

Check out the **Public Service Internship, College Corps**, and **Haas Public Service Leaders Program**.

Apply for funding from **FLAS, Boren Awards, Stevens Memorial Fund**, or **Sultan Program**.

Pursue your career goals

Visit **UHS Career Counseling** and **Berkeley Career Engagement**.

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Meet with a BCE **career educator** to discuss career options and goals.

Build your **network** and explore career fields via **job shadowing** and **informational interviews**.

Pursue an **internship** to build skills and explore fields.

Considering graduate school? Explore resources from the **Graduate Division, L&S Advising**, and **BCE**.

Speak with faculty, advisors, and career educators about post-graduate options.

THIRD SEMESTER

Focus on upper-division **requirements** for your specialization.

Review your **degree progress** with your major and college advisor.

Develop your writing and critical thinking in an **Art of Writing seminar**.

Spend a term off-campus with **UCDC** or the **Intercampus Visitor Program**.

Help other students as a **Transfer Peer Advocate** or member of the **A&H Dean's Leadership Team**.

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Meet employers at **info sessions, on-campus recruiting**, and **career fairs**.

Utilize **job search tools** from BCE and apply for job opportunities.

Start connecting with **alumni groups** and **events**.

Learn about **alumni career services**.

SUMMER

Get ready for Berkeley with **RHETOR 100 Writing at the University**.

Thinking about a PhD? Apply to the **Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship** before your first semester.

Make progress on degree requirements with a **Summer Sessions** course such as ARABIC 1A and 1B.

Level up your learning with a **summer language program**; look into the **Critical Language Scholarship Program** to learn Arabic, Persian, or Turkish abroad.

Look into a summer internship with **Cal in the Capital, Cal in Sacramento**, or **Berkeley Global Internships**.

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LEARN MORE

Undergraduate Advising

Have questions about Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures or choosing a major?

Students interested in the MELC major or minor are encouraged to consult with the Undergraduate Major Advisor for declaring, academic planning, course selection, study abroad opportunities, and other program-related needs. Advising is available both in person and virtually. Additionally, students are encouraged to meet with a Faculty Advisor to discuss course offerings, the MELC honors program, postgraduate career pathways, and further academic enrichment opportunities, including scholarship applications and research projects at UC Berkeley and abroad. For advising contacts, office hours, and to schedule an appointment, visit melc.berkeley.edu.

The College of Letters & Science helps students with non-major-specific academic topics, including major exploration, general program planning, finding campus resources, and pre-professional graduate programs. L&S College Advisors are available for in-person and virtual meetings. Visit lsadvising.berkeley.edu or email asklms@berkeley.edu.



Scan to explore more
Major Maps!

majormaps.berkeley.edu

Related Programs

Looking for programs similar to Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures? UC Berkeley also offers the following major, minor, and certificate programs:

- **Ancient Greek and Roman Studies**
- **Anthropology**
- **Architecture**
- **Comparative Literature**
- **Economics**
- **Film and Media**
- **Global Studies**
- **History**
- **History of Art**
- **Jewish Studies**
- **Linguistics**
- **Political Science**



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Updated: 02.02.2026