MASTER OF ARTS IN
MIDDLE EAST STUDIES

OVERVIEW

Today’s Middle East is home to dynamic social movements, fluid identities, and shifting prospects for durable peace. The Elliott School’s Master of Arts in Middle East Studies program (MES) draws its student body and faculty from a large cross-section of academic and professional backgrounds—from the disciplines of anthropology, history, geography, and political science, to the private sector and the halls of government. This diversity of theoretical approaches and lived experience promotes a synthesis of critical scholarly inquiry and pragmatic problem-solving aimed at addressing the pressing issues confronting the contemporary Middle East. Through an emphasis on regional language acquisition, in-country study, professional development, and a close-knit community of students and alumni, the MES program equips graduates with the knowledge and skills they need to achieve their professional and intellectual goals.

IS THIS PROGRAM FOR YOU?

The MES program combines a rigorous multi-disciplinary academic foundation with a strong professional orientation. Each student develops a personalized program that combines core disciplinary courses with a professional specialization based on the student's individual career goals. The program offers:

• Evening classes to encourage off-campus professional pursuits
• The capstone project, a final, partner-based research project based on original research & in-country fieldwork

• Competitive funding for regional language study
• Free on-site language tutoring to achieve advanced language proficiency
• Partnership with the Institute for Middle East Studies, allowing students to work as research assistants and attend closed events with officials
• A dedicated Middle East reference librarian in the GW library’s Global Resource Center

The Middle East Studies faculty and staff are housed within GW’s Institute of Middle East Studies (IMES), which hosts dozens of conferences, book launches, panels, lectures, and private events every year.

CURRICULUM

The MES program curriculum is designed to give students a firm foundation in interdisciplinary approaches to the Middle East, while also allowing students freedom to create their own course of study.

Cornerstone (1 credit)
Provides a survey of contemporary issues in the Middle East.

Core Courses (12 credits)
Four regional courses from core disciplines - such as political science, history, international affairs, or geography.

Professional Specialization (12 credits)
Four courses that are centered around a functional specialization of the student's own choosing, such as International Security, Conflict Resolution, US Foreign Policy, and International Development.
The majority of MES students study abroad at some point during the program through intensive language study overseas, internships, or for research purposes.

MES MA students have access to the Aramex-GW grants, which combine language study with an internship with a local NGO in the Middle East as well as the IMES Summer Language Grant. Through these programs, students have studied and worked for local NGOs in Morocco, Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia, and the West Bank. MES students have also been very competitive candidates for GW’s Foreign Language Area Studies (FLAS) fellowships, which provide full tuition and a living stipend.

MES students are also eligible for a stipend to conduct research overseas for their capstone projects. This travel allows students to conduct in-person interviews, gather archival material, and visit important research sites. Previous MES students have conducted capstone-related research in Bahrain, Kuwait, Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia, Turkey, Egypt, and the West Bank.

The George Washington University’s Elliott School of International Affairs is one of the world’s leading schools of international affairs. Located in the heart of Washington, DC, its mission is to educate the next generation of international leaders, conduct research that advances understanding of important global issues, and engage the policy community in the United States and around the world. In the January/February 2015 issue of Foreign Policy, the Elliott School’s undergraduate and master’s programs were ranked among the top ten international affairs programs in the United States by the Teaching, Research, and International Policy (TRIP) survey.