Swarthmore’s Islamic Studies Program focuses on the diverse experiences and textual traditions of Muslims in global contexts. As one of the world’s great religions and cultures, Islam has shaped human experience—both past and present—in every area of the world. The academic program explores the expressions of Islam as a religious tradition, the role of Muslims in shaping local cultures, Islamic civilization as a force of development in global history, and the significance of Islamic discourses in the contemporary world. The Islamic Studies Program challenges students to consider a wide range of social, cultural, literary, and religious phenomena in both the Arabic and non-Arabic speaking parts of the world. These include aspects of life in countries with Muslim majorities such as Egypt, Syria, Indonesia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, and Turkey as well as those countries with vital minority communities such as France, Germany, and the United States. A sample of coursework includes The Qur’an and its Interpreters; Islamic Law and Society; Gender, Sexuality, and the Body in Islamic Discourses; Cultures of the Middle East; Culture, Power, Islam; Cultural History of the Modern Middle East; Cities of the Middle East; and Kathak Dance Performance.

THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Course Minor

All students must take a minimum of 5 Islamic Studies Program credits. Students must follow the guidelines below regarding the required 5 courses.

Requirements

1. The 5 required courses must cross at least 3 different academic departments.
2. Only 1 of the total 5 credits required by the Islamic studies minor may overlap with the student’s major.
3. Students must successfully complete Arabic 004 (and its prerequisites) or the equivalent. This requirement is waived for native speakers of Arabic and for students who demonstrate sufficient competence by passing an equivalency exam. Alternate fulfillment of the language requirement may also be approved by the Islamic Studies Committee if a student demonstrates competence in another language that is relevant to the study of a Muslim society and is directly related to the student’s academic program. Only Arabic courses beginning at the level of Arabic 004 or its equivalent will count toward the total 5 credits in Islamic studies required for the minor.

To supplement classes offered at Swarthmore, students are encouraged to explore and take classes at other nearby colleges, especially Bryn Mawr, Haverford, and the University of Pennsylvania. Students are also strongly encouraged to spend a minimum of one semester abroad in a program approved by both Islamic studies and Swarthmore’s Off-Campus Study Office. In addition to furthering the student’s knowledge of Islam and Muslim societies, studying abroad is a unique opportunity for personal and intellectual growth.

Acceptance Criteria

Students interested in Islamic studies are invited to consult with members of the Islamic Studies Committee before developing a proposal for a minor. The proposal should outline and establish how a minor in Islamic studies relates to the student’s overall program of undergraduate study and should provide a list of the courses to be taken. The minor is open to students of all divisions. Students will be admitted to the minor after having completed at least two Islamic studies courses at Swarthmore in different departments with grades of B or better. Applications to the program must be submitted by March 1st of the sophomore year, and all programs must be approved by the Islamic Studies Committee. Deferred students will be re-evaluated at the end of each semester until they are either accepted or they withdraw their application.
Islamic Studies

Honors Minor
To complete an honors minor in Islamic studies, a student must have completed all the course requirements for the interdisciplinary minor listed above. Students are encouraged to take a 2-credit honors seminar in an Islamic Studies topic in either their junior or senior year. Honors students are required to complete a 2-credit thesis under program supervision that will count toward the minimum of 5 credits required for the interdisciplinary minor or take a 2-credit Islamic Studies honors seminar. Students normally enroll for the thesis (ISLM 180) in the fall semester and in the spring semester of the senior year. The honors examination will address the themes explored in the 2-credit thesis or the 2-credit Islamic Studies honors seminar.

Special Major
Students are invited to consider a special major in Islamic studies in consultation with members of the Islamic Studies Committee. The proposal should include the above requirements and should provide a list of the courses.

Courses Eligible for Islamic Studies Credit
The following courses may be applied to an academic program in Islamic Studies.

This list will be affected by sabbatical leaves and changes in faculty appointments.
See individual departments to determine specific offerings.

For the updated list of Islamic courses being offered, please see our web page at http://www.swarthmore.edu/islamic-studies/courses

ISLM 180. Honors Thesis
Offered Fall and Spring (2 credits)

Anthropology
ANTH 009C. Cultures of the Middle East
ANTH 123. Culture, Power, Islam

Dance
DANC 046. Dance Technique I: Kathak
DANC 049.6 Performance Dance: Repertory Kathak

History
HIST 001T. First-Year Seminar: Cross and Crescent: Muslim-Christian Relations in Historical Perspective
HIST 006A. Formation of the Islamic Near East
HIST 006B. The Modern Middle East
HIST 111. Christians, Muslims, and Jews in the Medieval Mediterranean

Modern Languages and Literatures, Arabic
ARAB 004. Intermediate Modern Standard Arabic II
ARAB 007A. Arabic Communication Workshop
ARAB 011. Advanced Arabic I
ARAB 011A. Arabic Conversation
ARAB 012. Advanced Arabic II
ARAB 012A. Advanced Arabic Conversation
ARAB 013A. Foreign Language Teaching and Pedagogy
ARAB 014. Advanced Arabic Through Reading
ARAB 018A. Culture Context of Arabic Music
ARAB 020. Arabic Literature in Cross-Cultural Context
ARAB 021. Introduction to Modern Arab Literature
ARAB 022. Discourses of Oppression in Contemporary Arabic Fiction
ARAB 025. War in Arab Literature & Cinema (Cross-listed as LITR 025A)
ARAB 027. Writing Women in Modern Arabic Fiction
ARAB 029. Arabs Write the West (Cross-listed as LITR 029A)
ARAB 030. Literature of Resistance (Cross-listed as LITR 030A)
ARAB 040. Introduction to Arabic Literature
ARAB 045. Contemporary Thought in the Arab World (Cross-listed as LITR 045A)
ARAB 076. Contemporary Arab Women Writers (Cross-listed as FREN 076 & LITR 076AF)
Islamic Studies

Modern Languages and Literatures, French
FREN 045B. Le monde francophone: France and the Maghreb: Postcolonial Writing in a Transnational Context
FREN 111. Post Colonial Desire

Modern Languages and Literatures, Literatures in Translation
LITR 076AF. Female Authors from the Arab World

Modern Languages and Literatures, Russian
RUSS 023. Muslim in Russia (Cross-listed as LITR 023R)

Political Science
POLS 078. Iran, Islam and the Last Great Revolution
POLS 082. The Politics of Schooling in Latin America and the Middle East

Religion
RELG 001C. Fear and Terror in an Age of Hope and Fear (new course)
RELG 008B. The Qur`an and Its Interpreters
RELG 011B. The Religion of Islam: The Islamic Humanities (W)
RELG 013. The History, Religion, and Culture of India II: Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, and Dalit in North India
RELG 014A. Muhammad
RELG 053. Gender, Sexuality, and the Body in Islamic Discourses
RELG 054. Power and Authority in Modern Islam
RELG 100. Holy War, Martyrdom, and Suicide in Christianity, Judaism, and Islam
RELG 119. Islamic Law and Society
RELG 127. Secrecy and Heresy