12-Month Option for CMES Master’s Degree

The MA degree in the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at UT Austin generally takes two years (specifically 21 months) to complete, with students typically taking the minimum full-time course load of 9 credit hours (3 graduate courses) over four long semesters. While 9 credits/semester over 4 long semesters yields 36 credit hours – in slight excess of coursework requirements – many students must be full-time for funding reasons.

Language Requirement

Students pursuing the 12-month track must enter the program with at least intermediate proficiency (advanced preferred) in Arabic, Hebrew, Persian or Turkish. Our language courses follow an “intensive” model; as a result, one year of our language courses tend to be the equivalent of two years at many other institutions. If the student does not have the requisite language skills upon entering the program and studies Arabic, a possible condition of admission may be that s/he is asked to pay for and complete our Arabic Summer Institute prior to starting the degree.

Semester of Admission

Students on a 12-month track may only matriculate in fall semesters. All incoming students must take a required graduate seminar in their first semester, which is only offered in the fall.

Faculty Committee

By entering in the fall semesters, summer becomes the final semester. It is therefore important to realize that some faculty are not available to work with students over the summer. One must identify their thesis/report supervisor (and 2nd reader) as early as possible – typically by the start of the spring semester – in order to develop a plan of action to finish the degree.

Challenges

- Graduate-level courses are generally not offered in summers in Middle Eastern Studies. However, some upper-division courses are offered in summers, and up to two of these may be applied to the MA. Students can also do graduate-level conference courses in the summer, but this is not always easy to do, since most faculty are away during the summer.
- A typical student usually identifies the thesis/report supervisor and second reader by the end of the first year (thesis) or third long semester (report). It can take time to develop this relationship and have the professors agree to serve on the committee. Students on a 12-month track would have to identify these two professors by the end of the 1st semester (thesis option) or, at the very latest, end of the 2nd semester (report option).
- We would encourage the student to reduce his/her course load by transferring any relevant graduate-level coursework that hasn’t already been applied to another degree. Up to two graduate courses for 6 credit hours, with a grade of A or B, can be transferred. The ability to do this would relieve the student of some academic pressures. Please see this page for details:

http://www.utexas.edu/ogs/pdn/transfer.html
Sample timelines for compressed 12-month plan

Report Option: 33 hours

- 4 courses in fall (12 credits)
- 4 courses in spring (12 credits)
- 2 courses in summer (6 credits, 1 course in each summer session)
- 1 Report course in summer (3 credits)

Thesis Option: 30 hours

- 4 courses in fall (12 credits)
- 3 courses in spring + Thesis A (12 credits)
- 1 course + Thesis B in summer (6 credits)

Sample Degree Plans

1. Thesis Option: Fall through Summer (starting and ending in August)

**Fall Semester: 12 credits**

Arabic III
Islamic Historiography
Emerging Markets
Political Economy of the Middle East

**Spring Semester: 12 credits**

Arabic IV
Islamic Revolution of Iran, 1978-90
Communication for Development and Social Change
Thesis A

**Summer Semester: 6 credits**

Minorities in Israel (upper-division level)
Thesis B

2. Report Option: Fall through Summer

**Fall Semester: 12 credits**

Persian II, 1st semester
Contemporary Historiography of the Middle East
Authoritarianism
Global Marketing

**Spring Semester: 12 credits**

Persian II, 2nd semester
European Imperialism: Modern Middle East
Modern Arab Renaissance: An Inquiry
Theory/Practice in Literary Translation

**Summer Semester: 9 credits**

Egyptian Politics and Society (upper-division level)
Suicide Terrorism (upper-division level)
Master’s Report