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## Middle Eastern Studies Department

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The intellectual scope of the department is intended to move beyond the traditional regional (area studies) to take into account the fusion and fluidity of identities, cultures as well as knowledge production in the region and beyond. CHSS Middle Eastern Studies Department will transcend the geographical boundaries of MENA, Iran and Turkey, in order to cover the peoples of these areas regardless of where they are living, focusing on their interrelations and interconnectivity with the wider world. The department's interests will include the cultures, religions, geo-politics and the built environments of the MENA, its surrounding influences and interactive forces within and outside it, as well as the study of native and transient populations both in the historical and contemporary contexts.

The Department aims to draw from the best scholarship produced internationally and at the same time add to it through indigenous knowledge production and research, as well as building capacity in terms of educators and researchers in the field. The department will follow best practices in postgraduate studies and research, building a distinct reputation that will benefit from its special geo-political location in the Middle East in general, and in

the Gulf and Qatar in particular. The understanding and development of the Gulf-Qatari local perspectives will balance the emphasis on similarities that are part of the Arab regional experience with an appreciation of the social, political and demographic differences that characterize them. Furthermore, the department and its MA programs will encourage the examination of the international and indigenous scholarship production and how they enhance the understanding of Arab and Qatari development contexts for the study of women's role in society, and the impact of different digital technologies on communication, media, culture and human development needs in the region.

The Middle Eastern Studies Department currently offers two new MA programs with a projection to expand and offer other programs within a three-year time horizon. The two MA programs are as follows:

1. [Master of Arts in Women, Society and Development](#)
2. [Master of Arts in Digital Humanities and Societies](#)

The department will aim to foster collaboration with existing educational establishments in Qatar to draw on existing knowledge and expertise. Collaboration will vary from academic and research activities to foster learning for both students and educators and promote exchange of experiences among different stakeholders.

### **Departmental Courses:**

- History, Politics and Cultures of the Middle East
- Social, Economic, and Development Theory
- Research Methods

#### **History, Politics and Cultures of the Middle East**

This course uses a cultural and historical approach to the politics of the Middle East. It investigates the nature of political authority and the complex relationship between religion, traditions, social movements, class structures, and the challenges presented to Middle Eastern societies through globalization and colonialism. The course begins by providing a critical appraisal of normative paradigms and approaches through which the Middle East has been studied, and what that means for narratives covering its history. The course examines how knowledge has been organized, and analyzes the repercussions of particular approaches and theories, such as Orientalism or Coming of the West paradigms, to scholarship and cultural production about the region and its peoples.

#### **Social, Economic, and Development Theory**

This course examines major theoretical paradigms in critical social theory and economic development. It highlights the principal assumptions behind major social and economic development theories, and examines the evolution of different schools of thought and theoretical constructs. The aim is to provide a critical understanding of society and economies through an interdisciplinary approach which combines insights from sociology, economics, political economy and history. It applies models and methodologies used to conceptualize ideological frameworks and actions that guide social power and development policy.

#### **Research Methods**

This course provides students who are embarking on social science research with the necessary research methods and techniques to conduct, evaluate, and communicate qualitative and quantitative research. The course will discuss the epistemological foundations of qualitative and quantitative research and will survey some major ethical and political issues in research. Through a comparative approach, it will familiarize students with various research methods such as survey research, interviewing techniques, and electoral analysis, as well as the use of case studies and how to generate and use primary sources. Students will also be introduced to various linkages between broader theoretical and conceptual issues and alternative hypothesis through which to organize knowledge, construct ideas and present various arguments. They will utilize hands-on experiences in research design, data collection and analysis, and the writing of research findings.

### **Spring 2018**

**Core Courses: Women, Society and Development**

- Introduction to Women and Gender Studies
- Women, Work and Economic Development in the Middle East
- Critical Writing and Research Skills

**Core Courses: Digital Humanities and Societies**

- Theoretical Approaches to Digital Humanities
- Digital, Communication and Media
- Tools and Methods in Cultural Data and Digital Studies