

## Introduction to the Anthropology of the Middle East and North Africa (A005480)

**Course size** *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

**Credits 5.0**

**Study time 150 h**

**Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2025-2026**

A (semester 2)

English

Gent

lecture

**Lecturers in academic year 2025-2026**

Mercier, Ophélie

LW21

staff member

Kreil, Aymon

LW21

lecturer-in-charge

**Offered in the following programmes in 2025-2026**

Bachelor of Arts in Oriental Languages and Cultures (main subject Arabic and Islamic Studies)

crdts 5

offering A

Bachelor of Arts in History

5

A

Bachelor of Science in Political Science

5

A

Exchange Programme African Languages and Cultures

5

A

Exchange Programme Cultures and Languages in Context

5

A

Exchange Programme Global Studies and World Societies

5

A

Exchange Programme History

5

A

Exchange Programme in Political and Social Sciences

5

A

Exchange Programme Oriental Languages and Cultures

5

A

Elective Set Culture and Society

5

A

**Teaching languages**

English

**Keywords**

Middle East, North Africa, Arab Countries, Islam, Anthropology, Ethnography

**Position of the course**

This course aims to introduce the students to the anthropology in the Middle East and North Africa. It offers a reflection on the history of the discipline in the region, on its main concepts and topics and on its contemporary debates. The course sessions give an insight into the conditions of knowledge production and its political, social and cultural implications combined to learning key elements for understanding Middle Eastern and North-African countries.

**Contents**

This course offers an introduction to:

1. The history of anthropology in the Middle East and North Africa and its main authors and fields of inquiry;
2. The social conditions of knowledge production in and on the Middle East and North Africa in the colonial time and after the independences;
3. Main concepts and debates shaping the anthropology of the Middle East and North Africa today;
4. Social commonalities and differences across the regions known as the Middle East and North Africa;
5. The social conditions of life in the Middle East and North Africa.

**Initial competences**

Learning outcomes secondary education.

**Final competences**

- 1 The student understands and critically reflects upon the social and political implications of knowledge production;
- 2 The student situates the actors and topics of main debates in the anthropology of the Middle East and North Africa;
- 3 The student gains critical insights into ethnographical knowledge, its assets and its challenges;
- 4 The student situates the contribution of Middle Eastern and North-African fieldworks for anthropology;
- 5 The student has acquired key anthropological concepts for understanding norms, aspirations and constraints shaping life experiences in the Middle East, North Africa and beyond;
- 6 The student can assess the impact of culture and religion on life experiences in the Middle East, North Africa and beyond;
- 7 The student has the anthropological tools to assess debates on the history and the current situation of the Middle East and North Africa.

#### **Conditions for credit contract**

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is unrestricted: the student takes into consideration the conditions mentioned in 'Starting Competences'

#### **Conditions for exam contract**

Access to this course unit via an exam contract is unrestricted

#### **Teaching methods**

Lecture

#### **Extra information on the teaching methods**

Lectures: courses in relation to the study material prepared for the classes and for the exams.

#### **Study material**

Type: Syllabus

Name: Syllabus Anthropology of the Middle East and North Africa

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

#### **References**

Soraya Altorky (ed.) 2015. *A Companion to the Anthropology of the Middle East*. Chichester: Wiley Publishing.

Dale F. Eickelman. 1989. *The Middle East: An Anthropological Approach* (Second Edition). Engelwood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.

Michael Gilsenan. 2000. *Recognizing Islam: Religion and Society in the Modern Middle East* (Revised Edition). London: IB Tauris.

#### **Course content-related study coaching**

Feedback on participation during classes, by appointment and over e-mail or Ufora.

#### **Assessment moments**

end-of-term assessment

#### **Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period**

Written assessment with open-ended questions

#### **Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period**

Written assessment with open-ended questions

#### **Examination methods in case of permanent assessment**

#### **Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment**

not applicable

#### **Calculation of the examination mark**

Final examination: 100%

#### **Facilities for Working Students**

1. No possible exemption from educational activities requiring student attendance;

2. Possible rescheduling of the examination to a different time in the same academic year

3. Alternative time for feedback

For more information concerning flexible learning: contact the monitoring service of the faculty of Arts and philosophy