

Arabic & Islamic Studies, PHD

Modality

On Campus

Program URL

<https://arabic.georgetown.edu/phd/>

The Ph.D. program in Arabic and Islamic Studies offers advanced training in the disciplines of Arabic linguistics, Arabic literature, and Islamic Studies with an emphasis on the close reading and interpretation of primary sources, whether linguistic or textual, or modern or classical. The department strives to educate students in current theoretical, critical, and cultural scholarly approaches as tools to explore and analyze primary sources and linguistic data and to evaluate and challenge secondary scholarship.

Academic Policies

For a successful completion of the course work for the Ph.D. degree, students must maintain a strong academic record and must score a minimum average of B+ in the major concentration with no single grade below B. Receiving grades less than A-, especially in research seminars, should be considered as a warning sign.

Requirements

Program Requirements

Candidates for the doctoral degree are expected to complete a total of 54 credits (18 courses). Students who enter the program with advanced standing must complete 36 credits of coursework (12 courses).

Core Courses

All doctoral students are required to take the three Core Courses:

Code	Title	Credits
ARAB 5555	IntroArb/Islm Stud:Sources/Met	3
ARAB 5558	Intro Linguistics Methodology	3
ARAB 5559	Intro to Literary Methodology	3

Concentrations

Students must select a major concentration from one of three available options: Arabic Linguistics, Arabic Literature, or Islamic Studies. The minor concentration is also selected from the available options, but should not be the same concentration as the major concentration.

Students with advanced standing are required to take six courses (18 credits) in their major concentration whereas students without advanced standing must take 10 courses (30 credits) in their major concentration. All students, regardless of advanced standing, take five courses (15 credits) in the minor concentration.

Concentration courses must meet the following distributional requirements:

- 4 courses on the Classical Period
- 3 courses on the Modern Period
- 5 advanced Arabic seminars that include reading and research using primary Arabic sources.

Students with advanced standing may take three courses on the Classical period and four advanced Arabic seminars.

Language Requirements

In addition to English, Ph.D. students must also have reading proficiency in at least one other European language that is relevant to their research.

Students majoring in Islamic Studies must also achieve reading proficiency in at least one other Islamicate language at the intermediate level, demonstrated by taking two years of language instruction in Georgetown University's intensive language program or taking an exam at the equivalent level. The primary recommended languages are Turkish and Persian. Depending on research interests of the student, and after departmental approval, Greek, Hebrew, Syriac or Urdu may qualify as relevant Islamicate languages.

Required Examinations

Arabic Field Language Proficiency Examination

All Ph.D. students must pass a written Arabic language proficiency examination. The exam lasts for approximately 3 hours, and students may use a dictionary for reference.

Comprehensive Examination

Once a student has successfully completed all course requirements and successfully passed the Arabic Field Language Proficiency Examination, they are eligible to take their written and oral comprehensive examinations.

The exams must be passed by the end of the semester following the completion of coursework. They combine three five-hour written exams, administered within the span of one week, with one general oral examination, taken within one week of passing the written exams and covering the same fields.

The exams are based upon three fields selected by the student. One field must relate to the field in which the student will base their dissertation. The other two fields, if not related to the dissertation research, should at least remain within the broad context of the research interests of the student and relate to the minor comprehensive examination.

Thorough descriptions of each exam, as well as guidelines for preparation, can be found in the Arabic & Islamic Studies handbook.

Thesis Requirements

After passing their comprehensive exams, students should consult with their advisors to form a dissertation committee consisting of at least one primary advisor and two additional readers. At least two of the minimum three must be members of the Georgetown University faculty. One or two members, excluding the Chair of the Dissertation of the Committee, may be a professor from outside of the University. The composition of each committee must be approved by the graduate adviser and the Director of Graduate Studies.

In the semester following the completion of all other degree requirements, the student coordinates with their dissertation committee to formulate a dissertation proposal. The proposal should identify a topic of research, provide an explanation of the importance of this topic and an overview of the scholarly literature relevant to this topic, outline of methodology and sources of research, and its projected contributions. The proposal should also include a working bibliography. The proposal must be endorsed by all members of the dissertation committee before it is submitted to the Graduate School.

Once the committee agrees that the dissertation is ready for defense, the department will schedule a public oral defense in which the members of the dissertation committee participate. The defense may be attended by scholars and students within and outside of the department. The defense itself will focus on the content and methodology of the dissertation and will run from one to two hours. To be accepted, the dissertation must be approved by all members of the oral defense committee.