

CERTIFICATE OF STUDY OF THE HISTORICAL AND RELIGIOUS REALITY IN THE NEAR-EAST

Main Language of Instruction:French ☐ English ☒ Arabic ☐**Campus Where the Program Is Offered:** CSH**OBJECTIVES**

The Certificate of Study of the Historical and Religious Reality of the Near-East aims to define the constitutive elements of Christian, Muslim, and Jewish faiths, drawing on their official doctrinal teachings as well as on the historical, scriptural, anthropological, and political dimensions that have shaped the formation of their doctrines. It also seeks to distinguish and organize the convergences and divergences among these three monotheistic traditions, while identifying the cultural and cultic expressions of faith, particularly within the Lebanese context. The course further promotes a process of dialogue grounded in listening and mutual respect, fostering reciprocal enrichment and personal transformation. In this perspective, students are encouraged to engage in a dynamic search for truth that avoids both dogmatism and relativism, while cultivating an authentic openness toward others. Additionally, the course aims to develop the ability to use conceptual and practical tools to promote coexistence and democracy within a state governed by the rule of law, to analyze the challenges and opportunities of interreligious dialogue in the Middle East and Lebanon, and to identify the theological and sociological factors that either support or hinder such dialogue. It also invites students to assess the impact of humanitarian action in recognizing and supporting others, to analyze religious realities in their doctrinal, historical, and socio-political dimensions, to design and conduct a basic research project on an (inter)religious phenomenon, and finally to communicate, orally and/or in writing, the results of research on democratic and multiconfessional realities.

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES (COMPETENCIES)

- C.1. Define the theological and anthropological foundations of the monotheistic religions.
- C.2. Adopt a critical and responsible stance when interpreting matters of faith and life.
- C.3. Apply the foundations of interreligious dialogue across various sectors, particularly through ethical engagement aimed at promoting social peace and justice.
- C.4. Produce academic work using appropriate methodological tools.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Baccalaureate (Lebanese Baccalaureate or equivalent granting access to university studies).

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**16 Credits: Required Courses (16 credits)****Required Courses (16 Cr.)**

Interreligious Dialogue in the Middle East: The Case of Lebanon (2 Cr.); Introduction to Lebanon: Society and State (2 Cr.); Religion, Democracy and Human Rights (2 Cr.); The History of Lebanon (3 Cr.); The Religions of the Middle East: Druze (1 Cr.); The Religions of the Middle East: Eastern Christianity (2 Cr.); The Religions of the Middle East: Islam (2 Cr.); The Religions of the Middle East: Judaism (2 Cr.)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

064TDBRF1	Interreligious Dialogue in the Middle East: The Case of Lebanon	2 Cr.
Interreligious dialogue in Southwestern Asia – i.e., the Middle East – and especially between Muslims and Christians in Lebanon, has been marked by many jolts, tensions, and clashes, but also by dynamics of dialogue and conviviality. Indeed, Lebanon has been defined as a model of Christian-Muslim relations, which seems surprising at first, given its history of sectarian violence. The course explores different aspects of interreligious dialogue in contemporary Lebanon, with an emphasis on the dialogue of life (or natural dialogue), spiritual dialogue, and		



dialogue through common action. It provides an engaging environment in which students can explore approaches and possibilities for living together through a series of interactive and experiential activities.

Learning Outcomes: Upon completion of the course, students should become more familiar with local interreligious dialogue concepts and praxis, and be able to articulate the interdependent and cooperative relations between Christians and Muslims.

o64LSPSF2	Introduction to Lebanon: Society and State	2 Cr.
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The aim of this course is to deepen students' objective understanding of the interaction between the state structure and the confessional system in Lebanon through a presentation of the evolution of the confessional system from a historical, socio-political, and cultural point of view. This course helps students understand: 1. the problems arising in the political structure of the state from the interaction between confessionalism and the principles of the nation-state; 2. the characteristics of Lebanon's heterogeneous society; and 3. the conditions for establishing the rule of law and a modern society in Lebanon.

o64RDHRF1	Religion, Democracy and Human Rights	2 Cr.
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Are religion and democracy compatible, or are they mutually exclusive? Is secular fundamentalism a legitimate concept? How does religion relate to freedom of expression and human rights? The course provides an in-depth problematization of the tension between religion, secularization, and democracy, through which students acquire tools for the critical analysis of current and historical conflicts affecting power structures, legal systems, and other ideas about the "good" society.

o64HILEF1	The History of Lebanon	3 Cr.
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This course presents the history of Lebanon and covers one million years of human existence through visual materials and monuments in Lebanon, divided into four main periods: 1- the Prehistoric Ages to Classical Antiquities; 2- the Middle Ages; 3- the Ottoman Empire and the Governorate of Mount Lebanon; and 4- The French Mandate and the Republic of Lebanon. The large number of illustrations used throughout the course will help students better visualize and understand the topics covered in the most practical way. A comparative study of some characteristics of monuments in Lebanon with those of other cultures from the same chronological periods will help students understand the important place of the country between the oriental and occidental worlds. The term paper, which consists of a small research project on a specific subject related to representative sites or monuments in Lebanon and its presentation in class, can be considered a complementary and practical part of the course. Visits to some representative monuments from the four main periods in the history of Lebanon can also be considered a practical part of the course and provide better visualization and understanding of these sites in their geographical context and natural environment.

o64CDRUF1	The Religions of the Middle East: Druze	1 Cr.
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The Druze community was formed during the first half of the 5th century AH (11th century AD) in Wādī al-Taym at the foot of Mount Hermon in Anti-Lebanon, in response to a Da'wa (Divine Call), propagated from Cairo during the reign of the 6th Fāṭimid Caliph al-Ḥākim Bi-Amr Allāh (386-411AH / 996-1021AD). This call arose as an offshoot of the esoteric Ismā'īlī-Shī'ī approach to Islam, the creed of the Fāṭimid Caliphate of Egypt, in the year 408/1017, and aimed at universal acceptance. However, for several reasons, the Da'wa was closed in 435/1043. Since then, the Druze have called their faith Madhhab al-Tawḥīd (the Unitarian faith), and themselves Muwahḥidūn (Unitarians), in reference to their tawḥīd tenet. Ironically, the followers of this faith are popularly known as "al-Durūz", most commonly transliterated as "Druze", and are currently spread throughout the regions of Greater Syria – Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Palestine. Since the closing of the Da'wa, the Druze have formed an enclosed, self-contained community, with no missionary activities, no open religious rituals, and no possibility of conversion into their faith. Their religious teaching is kept secret, and their adaptation to various surroundings involves "taqqiya" (dissimulation). Despite all these realities, the Druze have attracted the attention of travelers and explorers for their robust qualities. Today, Druzism remains a living, interesting force. Its followers form, particularly in Lebanon, a vigorous and flourishing community, despite being a small religious minority in the countries where they are found.



064TOCHF1	The Religions of the Middle East: Eastern Christianity	2 Cr.
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The purpose of this course is to introduce foreign students to Eastern Christianity in its historical, liturgical, artistic, linguistic, moral, and spiritual dimensions, thus showing the richness and diversity of its ecclesiastical traditions. The course begins by presenting the historical background; then explains mass as it is celebrated in different Eastern Churches; introduces students to the understanding of icons and the art of iconography, highlighting their theological and liturgical significance; explores Syriac traditions and chants; studies texts on spirituality and morals written by prominent Eastern Church Fathers; examines the eremitic heritage of the Maronite Church; includes a visit to a holy site in Lebanon; and finally includes the screening of a movie about Eastern Christian spirituality, followed by a discussion.

064ISLMF2	The Religions of the Middle East: Islam	2 Cr.
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This course offers an introduction to Islam with a primary focus on its role within Lebanon's pluralistic and multiconfessional society. After a brief overview of the basic theological and ritual foundations of Islam, the course examines the historical presence of Muslim communities in Lebanon and the broader Middle East, highlighting their diversity in terms of traditions, institutions, and social practices. Particular attention is given to how Islamic actors participate in public life, education, social services, and political representation, and how they interact with other religious communities in a consociational system.

064JUDAF1	The Religions of the Middle East: Judaism	2 Cr.
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This course explores Jewish history, practice, texts, and culture. The Jewish people are one of the most ancient peoples on earth. They established a kingdom in the Ancient Near East. Ancient Israel bordered other ancient Semitic nations and came under Assyrian, Chaldean, Persian, Greek, Roman, Arab, Crusaders rule. Afterward, they were scattered throughout the world. The Hebrew Bible is considered among the world's cultural legacies. It has contributed to shaping human thought. Judaism is a prerequisite for understanding the other two monotheistic Semitic religions, i.e., Christianity and Islam.