

## **CAMES Student Guide**

The MA degree program offered through CAMES is designed for students who wish to obtain a broad knowledge of the region. The program focuses on current methodologies and approaches to the general field of Middle Eastern Scholarship. Students structure their own course of study in such areas as contemporary Middle Eastern History, Politics, Sociology / Anthropology and Arabic Literature.

The purpose of this student guide is to make information regarding CAMES academic requirements, graduate student requirements, and life at AUB available to all CAMES students early on in their studies. The student guide presents some of the most important information regarding CAMES and AUB as well as advice taken from former CAMES students.

Although this guide does contain some of the information found in both the AUB catalogue and on the CAMES and AUB websites - it is not a substitute. Students are responsible for looking up all information regarding CAMES courses, thesis requirements, and graduate study at AUB. We urge all students check the CAMES and AUB websites, the AUB Graduate Catalogue and check with the CAMES office periodically for updates and further details. The AUB catalogue may be accessed online from the Registrar's website or at the following link:

<http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webregist/catalogue.htm>

### **CAMES Faculty and Staff**

CAMES is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

Professor Nadia-Maria El-Cheikh, Director

Extension: 4188

Email: [nmcheikh@aub.edu.lb](mailto:nmcheikh@aub.edu.lb)

Professor Tarif Khalidi, Shaykh Zayid Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies

Extension: 3844

Email: [tk10@aub.edu.lb](mailto:tk10@aub.edu.lb)

Dr. Aliya Saidi, Assistant Director / Academic Advisor to CAMES students

Extension: 3849

Email: [as33@aub.edu.lb](mailto:as33@aub.edu.lb) or [cames@aub.edu.lb](mailto:cames@aub.edu.lb)

Ms. Marie Therese Baaklini, Instructor of Lebanese Arabic

Extension. 3849

Email: [mb54@aub.edu.lb](mailto:mb54@aub.edu.lb) or [mariteb@hotmail.com](mailto:mariteb@hotmail.com)

Mrs. Nina Ghattas, Secretary

Extension: 3845/6

Email: [ng00@aub.edu.lb](mailto:ng00@aub.edu.lb)

Ms. Julia Samaha, Research Assistant

Extension: 3840  
Email: [js42@aub.edu.lb](mailto:js42@aub.edu.lb)

## **CAMES MA program requirements**

### **Course requirements**

CAMES students are required to complete twenty-one credit hours of coursework (seven courses of three credits each) and a thesis.

Students usually take between six and nine credits per semester, while those who wish to take twelve credits may do so with special permission from the Director. Students may register for less than six credits but will not be entitled to university health insurance in that semester.

The seven required courses must include MEST 301 Introduction to Middle Eastern Studies and, for students who are not native speakers of Arabic, two Arabic courses. No more than three Arabic courses will count for credit towards the MA degree.

MEST 301 Introduction to Middle Eastern Studies is offered each Fall semester. It is a seminar in Middle Eastern Studies designed to introduce students to the interdisciplinary study of the Middle East. Faculty from the various departments associated with CAMES such as History and Archaeology, Philosophy, Arabic, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Economics and Political Science are asked to present lectures that illustrate the approaches and methodologies used in their respective fields in studying the region.

Below is a list of the other courses offered by CAMES. Please note that these courses might not be offered each semester. In addition to the courses offered by CAMES, students may choose from graduate courses given in the History, Political Science, Archaeology, Economics, Sociology, Anthropology, and Urban Planning Departments. Before each registration period, CAMES staff will compile a list of graduate courses being offered in all AUB departments that are linked to Middle Eastern Studies and are open to CAMES students.

- MEST 310 Seminar in Early Islamic History
- MEST 311 Special Topics in Medieval Islamic Cultural History
- MEST 315 Special Topics in Modern Middle Eastern Social and Political History
- MEST 316 Special Topics in Modern Arabic Cultural and Intellectual History
- MEST 329 Special Topics in Arabic Language and Literature
- MEST 302 and MEST 305 - Graduate Tutorials

CAMES students may take no more two graduate tutorial courses as part of their elective coursework. For these tutorials students may arrange for an individualized program of study with a particular professor. Graduate tutorials are graded on a pass/fail basis.

Non-native speakers of Arabic must take two of the following Arabic courses according to their level of Arabic:

- MEST 321 Arabic as a Foreign Language I (offered each Fall)

- MEST 322 Arabic as a Foreign Language II (offered each Spring)
- MEST 323 Arabic as a Foreign Language III (offered each Fall)
- MEST 324 Arabic as a Foreign Language IV (offered each Spring)
- MEST 325 Arabic as a Foreign Language V (offered each Fall)
- MEST 326 Arabic as a Foreign Language VI (offered each Spring)
- MEST 340 Introduction to Lebanese Arabic (offered each semester)
- MEST 341 Intermediate Lebanese Arabic (offered each semester)
- MEST 342 Advanced Lebanese Arabic (offered each semester)

All of the Arabic courses above are for non-native speakers of Arabic only. A placement interview or exam with the course instructor or the Arabic coordinator is required before registration in all the Arabic courses.

### **Transferring courses**

CAMES students may transfer a maximum of two graduate level courses (6 credits) from another university, or two graduate level courses taken at AUB as a Special or Visiting student, into their CAMES degree. Courses taken outside AUB will transfer only with a Pass / Fail grade, while courses taken at AUB will transfer with the grade received.

### **Incompletes**

The AUB catalogue states the following: Incomplete course work will be reported as an “I” followed by a numerical grade reflecting the evaluation of the student available at the end of the semester. This evaluation is to be based on a grade of zero for all missed work and reported in units of five. Thus, a grade of “I 55” (55%), for example, may appear until the coursework is completed. Students must submit a valid excuse to the instructor of the course and the appropriate faculty committee within two weeks from the date of the scheduled final exam for the course. Students permitted to complete work for a course must do so within four weeks of the start of the next regular semester. After the incomplete work is done and evaluated by the faculty member, a grade change will be considered by the dean of the faculty from which the course is listed (upon the recommendation of the Administrative Faculty Committee) and a new grade will be reported to the Office of the Registrar. If no valid excuse is presented and the work, if permitted, is not completed within the time limits specified above, the “I” will be dropped, and the numerical grade available becomes the final grade in the course. This numerical grade will be used until changed through the procedure described above. Students who are not able to complete their coursework should consult with the Assistant Director about the proper procedure to follow.

### **Comprehensive Examination**

AUB graduate students are required to pass a comprehensive examination in order to complete the MA program. CAMES is in the process of making the comprehensive exam equivalent to the thesis proposal. **All CAMES students who have not yet submitted a thesis proposal as of December 1, 2007 will be able to replace the comprehensive examination with their thesis proposal.**

Students who have already submitted a thesis proposal will have to take the comprehensive exam according to the following steps. The comprehensive exam should be taken before the thesis defense. CAMES students should contact the Assistant Director to arrange to take the comprehensive exam. The exam will usually consist of two essay questions from two different professors with whom the

student has taken courses. Students who are ready to take the exam should provide the following information after they have completed their MA course requirements.

- List of the courses taken at AUB
- Names of the professors
- The titles of all papers and presentations done in each course with a brief description
- The title of the student's thesis (if a student is working on it at the time of the exam) and the name of the thesis advisor
- The student's preferences (not binding) of professors from whom they would like to receive questions for their comprehensive examination

Two professors will be contacted to provide questions for the examination. After the professors have been selected by CAMES, students may contact the chosen professors and inquire about general topics that may be covered during the exam. The content of the exam is usually left to the discretion of the supervising professors but it usually consists of two essay topics, one from each professor, which are allotted a total of four hours for completion (2 hours for each question). Since CAMES sets the exam dates, the deadline is flexible as long as students sit for the exam before the thesis defense. Please note that the Comprehensive Exam is pass/fail. Should the student fail, he or she may re-take the exam after a three-month period.

### **Thesis**

After having completed all courses, students are required to submit a thesis, defend it, and pass its defense in order to graduate.

### **Thesis Proposal**

Before registering for the thesis, every student should first have completed his/her thesis proposal, with the approval of his/her thesis committee, and have submitted the proposal to CAMES for forwarding to the Graduate Committee of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. Students are required to hand in the thesis proposal at least four months (one semester) prior to their thesis defense. Review the graduate section of the AUB catalogue for each year's semester deadlines for submitting proposals.

**Students should inform their committee members that the CAMES thesis proposal is now equivalent to the CAMES comprehensive exam and should take into account the "Guidelines for Writing a Thesis Proposal" below.**

The thesis committee is usually composed of three members: one serving as a thesis advisor and the other two as readers. All three members must be of professorial rank. If one of your chosen thesis readers is not of professorial rank, you must add a fourth reader who is of professorial rank. One of your thesis readers may be from outside AUB, in which case you must submit this Professor's curriculum vitae with your thesis proposal. There is a form for all FAS thesis proposals available online [http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webfas/forms/thesis\\_proposal.pdf](http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webfas/forms/thesis_proposal.pdf) or at the CAMES office. It must be signed by the members of your thesis committee and turned in to CAMES with the thesis proposal.

Students whose thesis research proposal involves human subjects must submit their proposal to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) first. This committee is charged with reviewing all research

proposals that employ human subjects in order to ensure that they conform to international and local standards of ethical conduct and treatment, and to assure the safety and rights of all individuals involved in the proposed research. Approval by this committee is a precondition for conducting any such study by investigators at the American University of Beirut:

<http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webmedic/IRB.htm>

Students who have not yet submitted their thesis proposals should follow the guidelines for writing a thesis proposal below.

### **Guidelines for Writing a Thesis Proposal**

The CAMES thesis proposal should contain:

- A completed thesis proposal form
- Abstract (1 paragraph)
- Text (5 pages) annotated and footnoted
- Bibliography

You can find the thesis proposal form on this link or get a hard copy from the CAMES office:

[http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webfas/student\\_resources/useful\\_forms.html](http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webfas/student_resources/useful_forms.html)

There is no one formula for a CAMES thesis proposal, given the range of disciplines in which CAMES students work. Below are some general observations to be used as a guide for writing your thesis proposal.

The thesis proposal should:

- Identify a research topic
  - You should have a carefully and concisely defined topic on which you can begin systematic work immediately.
  - You should be able to articulate the issue you intend to work on in two or three sentences.
- Clarify the specific objectives and aims of the thesis
  - What do you want to find out?
  - What contribution will your thesis make to the scholarship in your field?
- Show why the proposed research topic is significant and important within the field
  - Why is this topic important?
  - What other work has been done on the problem thus far?
  - What other approaches were considered?
  - Why is your approach a more effective one?
  - Will your thesis make an original contribution to the field?
  - Will it “fill a gap”?
  - Will it contribute usefully to an ongoing debate in the field?
  - Will it evaluate and, perhaps, challenge an established interpretation?
- Describe the methodology and approach to be used

- Research methods and theoretical approaches to be used
- Materials to be used
  - Sources found in libraries and archives
  - Oral histories
  - Interviews
  - Other
- Provide a review of literature in the field of study
  - Cite the leading articles, reports, or books that have treated relevant aspects of your topic
  - Identify authors whose work is directly relevant to your topic and offer brief evaluations of their work.
  - What is the history of this topic?
  - What information is already available?
  - What information will you add to it?
  - How will your perspective contribute to an overall understanding of the topic?
  - By means of a review of what has already been written, you place your research topic in its relevant research context and establish what your contribution will be.
  - There is space in the proposal for mention of just the major writings on, or close to, your topic, and so your discussion of the literature needs to be open-ended at this point. Your finished thesis will include a much more developed discussion of the relevant literature.
  - List (a) all the sources you used when preparing your proposal, and (b) the sources that you know that you must use when researching your topic.
  - Your bibliography will grow as your thesis develops. You are not expected to produce a list that is a close-to-final list at this stage.
  - Do the bibliography in the same style your research work is going to be done
- Predict outcomes
  - foresee problems and ways of solving them
  - expected conclusions and implications of research
  - explain the results expected
  - your thesis' expected contribution to the field

A few things to remember:

- Mention the texts, topics or methods that you will not be covering as well as outlining those you will use.
- Remember that your thesis proposal is a result of preliminary research, and that the focus of your thesis might change.

### **Thesis Format**

There is a strict format for the submission of all theses. A booklet is available at the Archives and Special Collections section of Jafet Library with complete instructions and regulations. Additionally, the Department of Archives and Special Collections as well as the Department of Automation have put online templates of the preliminary pages and the text set-up of theses and projects. These templates are available on the AUB website under:

<http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webjafet/researchassistance/tclinics/tclinics.htm>

<http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webjafet/researchassistance/thesismanual/thesismanual.htm>

Libraries > Jafet Library > under Research Assistance > Thesis/Term Paper Clinics > Thesis Manual

For more information please contact:

Archives and Special Collections

Ext: 2609/10

Email: [specialcollections@aub.edu.lb](mailto:specialcollections@aub.edu.lb)

### **Thesis and Term Paper Clinic**

The University Libraries/Information Services Department offers students a one on one Thesis and Term Paper Clinic service. For those students having problems finding materials suitable for their topics or for those who are simply interested in starting off their research on the right foot, this service provides students with information on how to locate and print materials, how to find and use electronic resources, and also gives instruction on citation management (using the RefWorks software). Each session is expected to last approximately one hour. Interested students may email the Information Services Librarian, Ms. Samira Rafidi-Meghdessian, at [s09@aub.edu.lb](mailto:s09@aub.edu.lb) to set up an appointment.

### **Thesis Registration**

The current cost of registering for the MA thesis can be found on Registrar's website on this link:

<http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webcompt/docs/Tuition%20Fees%202007-2008.pdf>

The thesis registration fee is valid for a total of four semesters. Thus students may register three additional times after their first registration before they need to pay again. Students who have not completed their thesis by their fourth thesis registration will have to pay the cost of just one graduate credit for each additional semester in which they register. Students are not obliged to register for the thesis each semester and may space out their thesis registrations as they like. You may register for the thesis for four consecutive semesters or take semesters off between them. It is important to note that at the time of writing, not registering for the thesis in any given semester will cancel your insurance, your library borrowing rights and your AUB email / Internet account for that semester.

### **Thesis Defense**

Copies of the finalized thesis must be given to all the members of the thesis committee well before the defense date. Students should discuss the timeframe with their thesis committee members.

The thesis defense itself may be open to the public if the student wishes. It is reported on a pass/fail basis only. If a fail is reported, the student may resubmit the thesis and defend it after a period of at least three months. Failure on the second attempt results in discontinuation from graduate work.

For each semester, there are deadlines for the thesis defense and for depositing the thesis at Jafet Library. Please check this link, page 45: <http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webregist/catalogue-graduate/admissions.pdf>

Finally, after a student successfully completes his/her defense, there is another form available in the CAMES office, (Report on the Comprehensive Examination and Thesis Defense of Graduate Students) that must be filled out and turned in to the Registrar.

All graduate students must provide two printed copies and a CD-ROM copy of their corrected MA thesis, saved in PDF or RTX.

## **Carrels**

Graduate students who are already registered for their MA thesis may reserve a carrel in the Jafet Library carrel room, which provides a quiet area in which to research and write. The carrels are cubicles for individual use in which students may plug in their own laptop computers and store their books and research materials.

Access to the carrel room is available during regular library working hours. Students who wish to use the carrel room must provide the Circulation Librarian with a statement of fees showing their thesis registration or a letter from the CAMES Director stating that the student is indeed involved in the writing stage of their thesis. After the necessary documents are given to the Circulation Librarian, the student must pay a deposit of 100,000 LBP (subject to change) to the Cashier's Office and return a copy of the receipt to the Circulation Librarian. The student will then be allowed to choose from the available spaces and will be issued a key to the Carrel Room. If a key is lost, the student will be responsible for paying a fine of \$30 (subject to change).

Students may maintain the allotted space given to them in the carrel room until they complete their MA thesis, provided that they continue using it. Due to the high demand for spaces in the carrel room and the limited number available, students who do not use their cubicle for a prolonged period of time will be contacted and required to give up their space to others who need it.

When students no longer need the carrel room, they must first return the key to the Circulation Librarian who will then issue a voucher for the deposit to be returned to the student. The student may then provide the Cashier's Office with the voucher in order to have the deposit refunded in full.

## **Clearance**

After passing the thesis defense and completing all CAMES requirements, the student must complete the Graduation On-Line Clearance in order to complete the graduation process and receive his/her degree. The clearance process is to ensure that students have returned all post office, dormitory, and library keys, paid all fines, returned all books to the library, etc. The procedure will start directly after the graduate student hands in two copies of their thesis to the library. The library will give the student a document confirming receipt of the thesis to submit to the Registrar's Office. The Registrar's Office will then confirm the student's graduation and initiate the On-Line Clearance. Once the clearance process has been initiated, it takes between two working days and one week to be finalized. Students may check their clearance status online or at the Registrar's Office to make sure it has been completed. After the process is completed, students may pick up their General Deposit (250,000LL) refund from the Comptroller's Office - Student Accounts Section.

It is extremely important for students to be aware that without completing the clearance procedure, they will NOT be able to receive their degrees.

## **Graduation**

Degrees are granted three times every year: around the months of March for Fall graduates, June for Spring graduates and October for Summer graduates. The dates are subject to change so students are advised to check the AUB catalogue for the correct date.

Students will need to fill out a Graduation Application Form when nearing their thesis defense, or shortly thereafter. The form will ask, among other things, for the correct spelling of the student's

name in both English and Arabic. When the form is completed it should be turned in with all required documents to the Registrar's Office. Students can download the form from <http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webregist/> (or go to AUB's home page and click on the Registrar's link for more information). The deadline for submitting the Graduation Application Form is located on the form itself, which is subject to change on a semester basis. Therefore, students are advised to check this date periodically to avoid missing any deadline. Once it is time for degrees to be granted, students have a few options from which to choose:

Students who are in Lebanon must pick up their degrees in person from the Registrar's Office. If unable to pick up the degree in person, the student may send a family member to do so. However, this can only be done if the student sends written consent stating his/her desire to have a family member pick up the degree and indicating the family member being sent. This must be presented by the designated family member when picking up the degree.

Students in the USA may have AUB send the degree to the New York Office where the student may pick it up in person or have it mailed to their home address. To do this, the student must attach a note with the Graduation Application Form indicating this as the preferred method. The note must include the student's full mailing address, email address, and phone number in the USA on the form and email this information to Mrs. Julie Millstein ([mills@aub.edu](mailto:mills@aub.edu)) in the NY office as well.

Students outside both Lebanon and the USA may have AUB send the degree to them via Aramex as long as the student agrees to take full responsibility if the degree is lost in the mail. The student will need to attach a note with the Graduation Application Form indicating this as the preferred method. Additionally, students must include the mailing address to which they would like the degree sent as well as their email address and phone number. Finally, the student will be required to pay the cost of shipment prior to leaving Lebanon. To do so, students should check with the Registrar's Office before leaving Lebanon.

### **Graduate Assistantships**

Applications for graduate assistantships can be found in CAMES or maybe downloaded from the AUB Admissions webpage. Applications are reviewed on a semester basis. Please check with CAMES for application deadlines. After the application is completed and turned in to CAMES, it is reviewed with all other applications by CAMES, who will then recommend students for graduate assistants to the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences who makes the final decision as to who will be awarded assistantships and what type of assistantship they will receive. Students who are awarded assistantships will be notified by the CAMES office.

Graduate assistantships are awarded to cover either six credit hours per semester or thesis registration and provide a small monthly stipend. As part of the assistantship, graduate assistants are required to work for 14 hours per week at CAMES. Graduate Assistants will be required to attend a general meeting with the Director and the Assistant Director at the beginning of each semester where their duties will be assigned. They will be asked to give their course schedules to the CAMES office at the beginning of each semester so that the schedule of working hours may be set.

Graduate assistants will need a bank account in Lebanese Lira for the direct deposit of their monthly stipends. Once a bank account has been opened, graduate assistants must take their account

information to the Payroll Section of the Comptroller's Office. After filling out the appropriate forms, the monthly stipends for the graduate assistantships will be directly deposited in their accounts.

The two banks most commonly used by AUB students are HSBC (located on Abdel Aziz Street one block before Hamra Street) and Bank AUDI (located on Bliss Street). For a complete list of all other banks used by AUB and their locations, please visit the Payroll Section of the Comptroller's Office College Hall, 2nd Floor, or call extension 2484.

### **International Student Services**

If you are an international student, the International Student Services Office (ISSO) will be of great help to you. The ISSO is the first place to go for information on any non-academic matters affecting international students and provides orientation, counseling, advising, and referral services especially designed for international students. They assist international students with visa details and the Lebanese residence permit, support students' cultural adaptation, assist with students' vital needs and help students obtain their educational objectives. They also keep students posted on issues pertaining to them as international students within Lebanon. In addition to international student advising, ISSO also provides all AUB students with advice and resources for study abroad opportunities. Students may pick up the AUB student handbook from West Hall, Room 103.

Some of the services the ISSO provides to students are: sessions on cross-cultural adaptation; orientation to AUB and Lebanon; visa information; help in finding housing; counseling.

For more information please visit the International Student Services Office in room 113, West Hall or contact Ms. Rania El-Murr, the International Student Coordinator on extension 3176 or [intlstds@aub.edu.lb](mailto:intlstds@aub.edu.lb). Check also the ISSO website: <http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webiss/> or go to the AUB website > Current Students> Office of Student Affairs> International Student Services.

### **Housing**

There are a variety of housing possibilities available for students studying at AUB. On-campus housing in the student dorms is available on a semester basis or for a shorter time period if necessary. For more information about on-campus housing, deadlines for applications, costs, and temporary stays on campus please check the Office of Student Housing web page: <http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~websao/house/index.html> or go to the AUB website > Current Students> Office of Student Affairs>Student Housing. You may also contact Ms. Nawal Semaan, the housing coordinator on extension 3179 or on [ns25@aub.edu.lb](mailto:ns25@aub.edu.lb).

For off-campus housing you may contact the ISSO (International Student Services Office) for help. You may also contact the CAMES office for further information and help in finding housing.

### **Health Insurance Plan (HIP)**

All registered students of AUB, enrolled in at least six credit hours, are automatically enrolled in the Health Insurance Plan of AUB (HIP) unless they present proof that they are covered by another plan and sign an HIP waiver form. Graduate students registered for a thesis are eligible to continue HIP coverage for a period of two consecutive years only. However, graduate students only registered for the thesis are not automatically enrolled for HIP. In this case, students must visit the Benefits

Coordinator's Office (College Hall, 3rd Floor) in order to enroll. Once covered by HIP, students are provided with medical and hospital care but are required to use exclusively the University Health Service (UHS) and the AUB Hospital for their medical needs and the plan is limited to Lebanon only.

HIP Benefits include:

- General and Specialist Physician Consultation Services
- Diagnostic X-Ray and Laboratory Examinations
- Therapy Treatment (Radiotherapy, Chemotherapy, and Physiotherapy)
- Emergency Room
- Hospital Stays

For an in-depth listing of all rules and regulations, payment costs and timelines, students should contact the Benefits Coordinator's Office, College Hall on Ext: 2310, 2328, 2329 or email [benefits@aub.edu.lb](mailto:benefits@aub.edu.lb). Information on HIP care can also be found at the ISSO office in West Hall.

### **University Health Services (UHS)**

All students are urged to pick up a brochure on all UHS services from the Infirmary, located behind the Green Oval next to Nicely Hall or from the ISSO office in West Hall. Students may also visit the UHS website: AUB website > Current Students > Infirmary / University Health Services.

Although UHS offers walk-in appointments during operating hours, students should be prepared to schedule appointments at later dates since the infirmary is often crowded and overbooked. It is often the case that walk-in appointments are unavailable. Students should also be aware that they may visit the American University Hospital's (AUH) Emergency Room for any medical attention needed outside of UHS operating hours (evenings and weekends).

Appointments Secretary (for everyday appointments)

Ext: 3000/1

Triage Nurse

Ext: 3005

Reception (for general information)

8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Director's Office

Ext: 3020/1

Students may contact Ms. Rita Doudakian, the Community Health Nurse, for all health questions and concerns on extension 3015/6 or [rd01@aub.edu.lb](mailto:rd01@aub.edu.lb).