



**Universität
Zürich^{UZH}**

**Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies,
Department of Social Anthropology and Cultural Studies
Department of Religious Studies**

Study guide

**Specialized Master of Arts in Modern Asian and Middle Eastern
Studies (MAMES)**

Major program

Chairs of Chinese Studies, Indian Studies, Islamic Studies, Japanese Studies

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Welcome to the specialized Master of Arts in Modern Asian and Middle Eastern Studies (MAMES)!

We are delighted that you have decided to enrol into our interdisciplinary MAMES program. The core assumption behind this specialized master program is that in an interconnected world, socio-economic, political, and cultural developments transcend national borders. This is why the MAMES program offers the opportunity to study nations within their regional contexts, and in relation to broader global processes of socio-economic and cultural transformation. It does so by allowing students to draw upon the expertise of scholars not only from four departments within the Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies, but also from expertise within the Department of Social Anthropology and Cultural Studies and the Department of Religious Studies. Our academic rigour, extensive original language resources, committed team, and international connections, will provide you with a stimulating and supportive learning environment and with opportunities to connect with universities abroad.

We very much look forward to welcoming and meeting you and wish you all the best in your studies with us.

Your MAMES team

1 Specialized MA Program in Modern Asian and Middle Eastern Studies (Major)

1.1 Program objectives

1.1.1 Why MAMES?

The MAMES program allows students to benefit from the extensive regional and linguistic expertise of scholars throughout the Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies (IAOS), and to make connections with students from a wide variety of academic and cultural backgrounds. It allows graduates from Bachelor programs in the Humanities, the Social Sciences, and the Natural Sciences, to learn about Asia and the Middle East within the global context and to acquire a new language. The program's main language of instruction – English – makes it accessible to students from around the world, and its flexible structure provides students with the possibility to specialise in one of four regions while exploring broader theoretical and comparative issues through MAMES core courses. Most of the modules are designed so as to foster critical thinking through active class discussions, and to thereby equip graduates with the analytical skills necessary for a number of career paths.

Through the major in MAMES, **students whose undergraduate degree was in one of the disciplines of the Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies** (Chinese Studies, Indian Studies, Islamic Studies, Japanese Studies) either deepen their existing regional expertise, or acquire a new one. Moreover, they develop the theoretical and methodological tools necessary to compare and contrast developments across regions, as well as the ability to work or to carry out research in a selected region by acquiring expertise in one or – for those with previous knowledge in an Asian language and a focus on language acquisition – two Asian or Middle Eastern languages¹.

Students who enrol in MAMES without having previously studied Asia and the Middle East learn about all of the regions and their interconnections while specialising in one particular region of their choice. Furthermore, students acquire foundational skills in one Asian or Middle Eastern Language that will allow them to scan and grasp the general contents of original language sources with the help of dictionaries². Those students who wish to obtain an introduction to the different regions can audit the introductory lectures of the respective Bachelor programs on offer at the IAOS (mostly

¹ Students can either deepen their knowledge of an already acquired language or choose to learn a second Asian or Middle Eastern language. In the latter case, the extra efforts and time needed for studying a second language need to be critically assessed beforehand. If uncertain please consult with the study advisor.

² If students wish to gain a higher proficiency in their chosen language they will need to enrol in more than the required elementary level language module of 9 ECTS. Given that such additional amount of time for language studies limits the time of non-language related modules we recommend to consult with the study advisor of the respective language.

in German). The credits obtained in these lectures also count towards the MAMES degree. Particularly suitable for acquiring foundational knowledge in the respective countries and regions are the following BA program lectures cross-listed in the Society and Culture modules of the MAMES program:

Chinese Studies

- Gesellschaft Chinas (Einführung) [Introduction to Chinese society]
- Moderne und zeitgenössische chinesische Literatur (Einführung) [Introduction to modern and contemporary Chinese literature]

Indian Studies

- Democracy and Citizenship in Modern India
- Hinduismus [Hinduism]
- Geschichte Indien/Südasiens [History of India/South Asia]

Islamic Studies

- Geschichte der islamischen Welt ab ca. 1800 [History of the Islamic World from 1800]

Japanese Studies

- Japanische Gesellschaft nach 1945 [Japanese society after 1945]
- Japanische Politik und Wirtschaft nach 1945 [Japanese politics and economy after 1945]

1.1.2 Considerations for combination: which minor?

As an interdisciplinary program, the MAMES major provides students with the theoretical and methodological tools necessary to understand larger trends and connections across Asia and the Middle East and to gain a deeper understanding of philosophical, historical, sociological, political and economic developments mainly within one of the four IAOS regions. For their minor, students have the possibility to specialise in one of the disciplines on offer at the IAOS (i.e. Chinese Studies, Indian Studies, Islamic Studies, Japanese Studies), or to select a minor program in disciplines such as Anthropology, Cultural Studies, Gender Studies, History, Political Science, Religious Studies or Sociology. Most of the minor programs external to the IAOS are consecutive study programs, which require previous knowledge in that discipline. Please consult the respective departments directly as to inquire about the possibility of entering the minor program without a degree in that discipline. Additionally, all students have the option to enrol on cross-listed methods modules offered by other departments in order to acquire working knowledge of research methods in the

humanities and social sciences. While the majority of cross-listed modules are in English a few modules are only offered in German.

1.1.3 After MAMES: Potential career paths

MAMES graduates are in a position to embark on a variety of different career paths. Those with an undergraduate or minor in economics, business and political science will be suitable candidates for jobs in areas such as policy or business consulting, R&D, interdisciplinary think tanks, and diplomacy. Those with strong language skills obtained through the consecutive study of one of the IAOS languages since the Bachelor program, and a background in the cultural or social sciences, will be able to pursue careers within cultural institutions such as museums, non-profit and international organizations, and in research institutions. Finally, MAMES major graduates will also be in a position to join UZH's vibrant international research community by enrolling into a PhD program. They will have the option to pursue their PhD's either in one of the regional sub-disciplines at IAOS, or alternatively – depending on their undergraduate and graduate minor program studies – in Anthropology, Cultural Studies, Gender Studies, History, Political Science, Religious Studies or Sociology. Students who are interested in pursuing doctoral studies are encouraged to discuss PhD program entry requirements, and also possible dissertation topics, with their potential supervisor(s).

1.2 Notes on the content and structure of the Master's degree program

1.2.1 Admission requirements and options of combination

There are no admission requirements apart from a Bachelor's degree, and a C1 English Language Certificate³ or a C1 German Language Certificate for students whose mother tongue is neither of the two languages or who have not graduated from a bachelor program in either language. The major in MAMES (90 ECTS credits) can be combined with any minor (30 ECTS credits). For legally binding documents please consult the [Rahmenverordnung and the Studienordnung](#) (in German) as the legal framework for studying at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

1.2.2 Requirements for obtaining the Master's degree

The major in MAMES consists of 90 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credits. The program structure ([Table 1](#)) provides a list of compulsory and optional modules. The modules come in a variety of formats – including both seminars and lectures – with different coursework requirements which may include independent research papers, written examinations, and oral presentations. Students

³ Please see the [Language Requirements section](#) of UZH's Admission website for cases where no C1 Language Certificate is required (e.g. a Bachelors degree in German or English from UZH) and contact the [Admissions Office](#) in case of questions.

are encouraged to approach their lecturers in order to receive feedback for marked written or oral assignments. The most common format of MAMES modules are approximately 14 weekly sessions over the course of the semester, each lasting 90 minutes. The most common format of MAMES modules are approximately 14 weekly sessions over the course of the semester, each lasting 90 minutes. More information can be found on the [prospectus](#) (Modulkatalog) which contains more details of the individual modules.

Table 1: Major program: Guidelines for module selection and required credits

Master Thesis	30 ECTS	Compulsory
Foundations and Current Debates	At least 18 ECTS credits	Compulsory courses and core electives
Culture Society	At least 6 ECTS credits each in Culture and in Society, for both categories combined at least 18 ECTS credits	Core electives, electives
		Core electives, electives
Theory and Methods	At least 6 ECTS credits	Core electives, electives
Language	At least 9 ECTS credits	Core electives, electives
A minimum of additional 9 ECTS are to be obtained by individual choice of courses offered by the degree program.		

1.2.3 Grouping by module category

To obtain the Master's degree in the major in MAMES, students need to complete courses from five different module categories. These categories and the minimum number of ECTS credits required in each category are set out in Table 1.

1.2.4 Overview of categories and compulsory/ core elective modules

a. Master Thesis

The Master Thesis accounts for 30 ECTS credits. Regarding the supervision of the Master thesis in MAMES, please consult the [website](#). In case of failure, students have to determine a new thesis topic and then have one more chance to submit the thesis on the new topic.

b. Module category "Foundations and Current Debates"

The five modules in this category cover central theoretical and empirical issues that form the core of the MAMES degree program (Table 2). Students are required to obtain

a minimum of 18 ECTS points from within this category, and therefore need to keep them in mind when designing their individual course plan.

Table 2: Modules of the category “Foundations and Current Debates”

Title of module	Typ of module	Term and frequency	ECTS	Mode of teaching
Colonialism, Nationalism, Globalisation: Asia and the Middle East	Compulsory	Every fall term	6	Lecture
Asia and the Middle East in Current Debates	Core elective	Every spring term	6	Exercise
Anthropology of Asia and the Middle East	Core elective	Start every second spring term, two semesters*	6	Seminar
Culture and Society in Asia and the Middle East	Core elective	Every second spring term	6	Seminar
Core Readings	Core elective	Every term	6	Self-study course

The lecture *Colonialism, Nationalism, Globalisation: Asia and the Middle East* is the introductory module of the MAMES program and is **compulsory** for all MAMES students. We therefore recommend that students complete this module at the beginning of their degree program. The reading and discussion-based exercise *Asia and the Middle East in Current Debates* complements the lecture course, and we recommend that students complete it in the term subsequent to the one in which they completed the lecture-based module.

Two seminars and one self-study course complete the modules in this category. The seminar *Culture and Society in Asia and the Middle East* **alternates each spring semester** with the seminar *Anthropology of Asia and the Middle East*. The *Anthropology of Asia and the Middle East** takes place over either one or two semesters. However, even as a two-semester module the second semester is reserved for writing a final paper and does not involve classes meaning that students who wish to do so may submit their paper during the summer break – and thereby complete their module before the second semester. The self-study module Core Readings MAMES is offered every semester and covers a comprehensive reading list that spans the three regions covered in the MAMES program (East Asia, South Asia, Middle East).

c. Language Classes

The major in MAMES requires a minimum of 9 ECTS module credits in one of the following six Asian and Middle Eastern languages: Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, Japanese, Persian, or Turkish. Students have the option to either deepen their knowledge of a language previously acquired (e.g. during a BA program) or to start an entirely new language at beginner level.⁴ Expertise in other Asian and Middle Eastern languages not listed in the module catalogue can be obtained by enrolment in otherwise available modules. For specific information on the language modules, students can directly contact student advisors in the relevant departments (see link under 2.2). Students who enrol in the spring term should note that most of the departments of the IAOS offer the elementary language modules only in the fall term. Please consult with the respective departments beforehand.

The first semester and enrolment in the elementary language module will have a strong focus on language acquisition in order to obtain beginner level language skills in the selected language. This will enable students to search for and classify resources in their language of choice. **Students who wish to obtain communication skills and proficiency in academic reading and writing will need to enrol in further language modules.** We therefore encourage students to design their study plan in view of their individual career goals and to consult with the academic advisor in case of doubt (see 2.1).

1.3 Sample curriculum

1.3.1 Notes on the sample curriculum

When compiling their study plan, we recommend that students make sure that they can acquire all necessary ECTS within the time period in which they intend to complete their studies. Table 3 provides an example of one possible way to structure the MAMES studies. The sample curriculum presented is based on enrolment in the fall term.

Within the 18 compulsory ECTS credits from the modules in the category “Foundations and Current Debates”, the lecture “Colonialism, Nationalism and Globalisation: Asia and the Middle East” is – apart from the Master thesis – the only compulsory module. In the sample curriculum below, after completing this compulsory module, students proceed to complete the exercise “Asia and the Middle East in Current Debates” and the seminar “Culture and Society in Asia and the Middle East” in the spring semester thereafter. In this manner students acquire all mandatory 18 ECTS credits from the category “Foundations and Current Debates” by the end of the second semester. In the category “Languages”, all 9 ECTS credits are obtained

⁴This allows students with proficiency in one Asian or Middle Eastern language to add another language to their skill set.

through the beginner level language module in the selected Asian or Middle Eastern language in the first semester. The requirement of 6 ECTS credits in the category “Theory and Methods” is met by completing the course “Theories in Anthropology” in the second semester.

Table 3: Sample curriculum (major in MAMES)					
Term	Category	Title	Type	ECTS Credits	Credits/Term
1	Foundations and Current Debates	Colonialism, Nationalism and Globalisation: Asia and the Middle East	Compulsory	6	21
	Languages	Arabic/Chinese/ Hindi/ Japanese/Persian/Turkish	Core elective	9	
	Culture	History, Society, Culture (Seminar)	Elective	6	
2	Foundations and Current Debates	Asia and the Middle East in Current Debates	Core elective	6	18
	Foundations and Current Debates	Culture and Society in Asia and the Middle East	Core elective	6	
	Methods and Theory	Theories in Anthropology	Core elective	6	
3	Culture	Cultural Transformations (Arabic World and Near East)	Core elective	6	27
	Society	Research Seminar on Transformation and Development	Core elective	9	
	Society	Governance and Development in South Asia	Core elective	6	
		Master thesis (first part)	Compulsory	6/30*	
4	Foundations and Current Debates	Master thesis (second part)	Compulsory	24/30	24
*The writing of the Master thesis stretches over two semesters, so ECTS credits are distributed proportionally.					90

In this sample curriculum, the focus is on social and cultural issues and therefore more ECTS credits from the categories 'Society' and 'Culture' are obtained than the minimum required. Alternatively, students may decide to obtain more than the minimum ECTS credits within the language category, to enrol in more methods classes, or to obtain ECTS credits by enrolling in classes within "Other Curricular Modules" or "Transferable Skills". The latter two module categories extend the offer of the degree program, for instance by additional language courses and courses from other institutes. It is not compulsory for students to obtain credits within these two module categories. Please also see the [prospectus](#) (Modulkatalog) or the [online course catalogue](#). The latter allows students to either search for all modules offered in the degree program (MAMES major) in the respective semester or to use the refined search and look for modules by module category within the MAMES major program.

The MAMES major requires students to obtain additional 9 ECTS beyond the minimum ECTS credits stated for each of the five main module categories. This provides students with the flexibility necessary for them to pursue their individual interests. Additionally, as outlined above, students need to obtain a total of 18 ECTS credits from the two module categories 'Culture' and 'Society', but can freely select courses from either module category for a total of 6 ECTS credits. Students should nevertheless keep in mind that some modules are not offered each semester – or each year – and that others are offered only sporadically. Students who wish to attend some such courses might find it necessary to extend their master studies beyond the usual two-year period for the 90 ECTS major program.

1.3.2 International mobility during the Master's degree program

The [International Relations Office](#) at UZH provides information on mobility schemes, partner universities overseas, and helps organise a study term abroad. It also supports and advises students with individual questions regarding international mobility.

A stimulating and highly effective way for MAMES students to immerse themselves in the language and culture of their region of interest is to complete a study term abroad. The departments of the Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies (IAOS) support students who take the initiative to plan a study term at one of the partner universities in Asia or the Middle East. Some of these partner universities offer scholarships. Please consult the homepages of the departments concerned and their academic advisors for detailed information on language modules and overseas partner institutions (see 2.2). The UZH website also provides an overview of the exchange agreements with universities overseas: <https://www.int.uzh.ch/en/out/program/world.html>
<https://www.int.uzh.ch/en/out/program/world/gu.html>

Participation at summer schools or the completion of traineeships at institutions in Switzerland or abroad are another way to obtain practical experience in a prospective professional field or to improve communication skills in the language of one's choice. Summer schools and traineeships need to be planned and organized by students themselves and need to be approved by the IAOS by consultation with the MAMES study advisor before completion of the program. Thematic Summer schools (Comprehensive Traineeship / Summer School in MAMES) and language-study summer schools (Comprehensive Traineeship / Summer School: Language) can be counted towards the MAMES degree and allow students to obtain either 6 ECTS credits or 3 ECTS credits depending on the length of the summer school. For more information, please consult the module catalogue.

2 Student Advisory Services

2.1 Academic advisor MAMES

For questions concerning the program structure, program objectives and the contents of the modules, please contact Dr. Helena Hof (Helena.hof@uzh.ch).

2.2 Program administration

For technical questions concerning your degree path, courses on offer, module booking, cancellation, module evaluation, and transcripts of record, please consult the [Student Administration of the Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies](#).

2.3 Student advisories at the participating institutes

[Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies \(IAOS\)](#)

[Department of Social Anthropology and Cultural Studies](#)

[Department of Religious Studies](#)

2.4 Central Student Advisory Services at UZH and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

- [Student Advisory Services UZH](#)
- [Service Desk for Students at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences](#)
- [Contact Information for all Study Program Advisories at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences](#)

2.5 Libraries and resources

MAMES students benefit from access to the rich stock of texts and other study materials and resources available at the many UZH libraries. The three institutes that coordinate MAMES – the Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies (IAOS), the Department of Social Anthropology and Cultural Studies and the Department of Religious Studies – all have their own libraries. Moreover, the IAOS library contains a large array of original-language texts. Certified librarians are on site to advise and assist students in their research. All institutes provide further helpful information about online resources and research strategies on their websites (listed under 2.3). Additionally, UZH offers a large array of free courses, webinars and trainings on various topics related to literature search and data management. Please consult the [website of the Main Library](#).

Preliminary matters: Legal regulations

Please note that this study guide is not legally binding. All relevant information regarding planning and structuring your studies can be found here:

<https://www.phil.uzh.ch/de/studium/rechtsgrundlagen.html>

https://www.phil.uzh.ch/de/studium/rechtsgrundlagen/rechtsgrundlagen_master.html

This table briefly explains the legal documents to be found online (in German).

Tabelle 1: Einordnung der Dokumente zum Programm

Dokument	Erläuterung
Rahmenverordnung	Die Rahmenverordnung über die Bachelor- und Masterstudiengänge an der Philosophischen Fakultät der Universität Zürich (RVO PhF) bildet den rechtliche Rahmen für das Studium in den Bachelor- und Master-Studienprogrammen der PhF.
Studienordnung der Studienprogramme der Philosophischen Fakultät	Die Studienordnung enthält die Ausführungsbestimmungen zur Rahmenverordnung. Sie besteht aus einem Allgemeinen Teil und den programmspezifischen Anhängen. Der Allgemeine Teil regelt die programmübergreifenden Aspekte des Studiums.
Programmspezifische Anhänge zur Studienordnung	In den programmspezifischen Anhängen zur Studienordnung finden Sie die Regelungen zu jedem Programm. Kernelement jedes Anhangs ist der Studienplan. Dieser enthält die Informationen zur inhaltlichen Struktur des Programms und zu den Bestehensvoraussetzungen. Bestehensvoraussetzungen sind Regeln zur Wahl der Module. Sie sagen Ihnen, wie viele ECTS Credits Sie in den verschiedenen inhaltlichen Bereichen erwerben müssen. Ausserdem enthält der programmspezifische Anhang allfällige Kombinationsverbote und – sofern es sich um ein Masterprogramm handelt – die Zulassungsvoraussetzungen.
Modulkatalog	Der Modulkatalog umfasst alle Module, die das beständige Angebot im Programm darstellen. Er enthält die überdauernden Informationen zu den Modulen. Zusätzliche semesteraktuelle Informationen finden Sie im Vorlesungsverzeichnis.
Wegleitung zu einzelnen Programmen	Die Wegleitung informiert Sie über die Besonderheiten des Programms oder der Programme und dient als Orientierungshilfe im Studium. Die Wegleitung hat erläuternden, nicht regulierenden Charakter.
Wegleitung für das Studium an der PhF	Fakultätsweit geltende Erläuterungen zur Rahmenverordnung und zur Studienordnung stellt das Studiendekanat in einer geeigneten Form zur Verfügung. (z.B. Abmeldung vom Leistungsnachweise, Modulbuchung, Anmeldung zur Abschlussarbeit, Anerkennung externer Leistungen etc.). Die Informationen sollen Studierende darin unterstützen die zur Verfügung gestellten programmspezifischen Dokumente (Anhang zur Studienordnung, Mustercurriculum, Modulkatalog und Vorlesungsverzeichnis) bei der Planung und Gestaltung ihres Studiums effizient zu nutzen.