



**Universität  
Zürich<sup>UZH</sup>**

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

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## **Study guide**

**Specialized Master of Arts in Modern Asian and Middle Eastern Studies  
Minor 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

## Information on the program

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

#### 1.1 Program objectives

##### 1.1.1 Why MAMES?

The MAMES program allows students to benefit from the extensive regional expertise of our scholars, and to make connections with peers from a wide variety of academic and cultural backgrounds. **Language however is not part of the MAMES minor program** so students who wish to learn an Asian or Middle Eastern language might be interested in enrolling on the MAMES major. Thanks to the program's flexible structure and its language of instruction—English—it is accessible to students from around the world. 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 explore 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.

##### 1.1.2 Minor in MAMES

The program's approach to Asian and Middle Eastern Studies is interdisciplinary and trans-regional and thereby provides students with multifaceted knowledge of modern and contemporary Asia and the Middle East. Additionally, it allows students to learn about key social-scientific and cultural theories, and to apply them to specific contexts. Thus MAMES minor students obtain compelling regional, theoretical, and methodological expertise in addition to the competences acquired in their major.

**Students who enrol in MAMES without having previously studied Asia and the Middle East** learn about all of the regions and their interconnections and can decide to further specialise in one particular region of their choice. 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 in German). Please bear in mind that no credits can be obtained when auditing. Particularly suitable for acquiring foundational knowledge in the respective countries and regions are the following lectures of the BA 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]

### 1.1.3 Considerations for combination: which major?

The minor in MAMES adds to students' academic profile by complementing their major with a specialisation in one of the IAOS regions. Combining a minor in MAMES with a major in one of the Asian or Middle Eastern studies disciplines—such as Chinese studies, Indian studies, Islamic studies or Japanese studies—can help contextualise specialized knowledge of one Asian or Middle Eastern nation within broader regional and global developments. Other major programs suitable for combination with the MAMES minor include the standard disciplines in the Humanities and Social Sciences such as Anthropology, Art History, Gender Studies, Literature, Political Science, Religious Studies, or Sociology. Most of the major programs external to the IAOS are consecutive study programs, which require a Bachelor degree in that discipline. Please consult the respective departments directly.

### 1.1.4 After MAMES: Potential career paths

Students who have completed the minor in MAMES add unique regional specialization to their resumé. Graduates from major programs in Social Science disciplines such as Economics, Political Science or Sociology, or in Humanities disciplines such as Art History or Literature, who additionally obtain a MAMES minor stand out from among their peers upon entering the job market. A high command of written and spoken English and intellectual openness to engage with foreign concepts, cultures and customs, make them sought-after employees in the fields of business, politics, international cooperation, and culture. Finally, students with a MAMES minor who decide to enrol on a PhD programme in their major discipline are in a strong position to use Asia and the Middle East as case studies for their dissertations.

## 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 Certificate 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.<sup>1</sup> The major in MAMES cannot be combined with the minor in MAMES. 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 minor in MAMES consists of 30 ECTS, of which at least 15 ECTS are to be obtained by graded courses. 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 coursework requirements which may include independent research papers, written examinations, and oral presentations. Students 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. More information can be found on the [prospectus](#) (Modulkatalog) which contains more details of the individual modules.

### 1.2.3 Grouping by module category

To complete the minor program in MAMES, students need to obtain credits within four module categories. The categories and the minimum number of credits required in each category are set out in [Table 1](#).

**Table 1: Minor program: Guidelines for module selection and required credits**

Foundations and Current Debates	At least 12 ECTS credits	Compulsory courses and core electives
Culture	At least 6 ECTS credits	Core electives, electives
Society	At least 6 ECTS credits	Core electives, electives
Methods and Theory	At least 3 ECTS credits	Core electives, electives

Additional 3 ECTS or more to be obtained by individual choice of courses offered by the degree program.

### 1.2.4 Overview of module categories and compulsory/ recurring modules

#### a. 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

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<sup>1</sup> Please see the [Language Requirements section](#) of UZH's Admission website for cases where no C1 English Language Certificate is required (e.g. a Bachelors degree from UZH) and contact the [Admissions Office](#) in case of questions.

a minimum of 12 ECTS points from within this category, and therefore need to keep these modules in mind when designing their individual course plan.

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 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).

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

Title of module	Type 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, one or 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

## 1.3 Sample curriculum

### 1.3.1 Notes on the sample curriculum

When compiling their study plan, we recommend students to 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 12 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 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” in the spring semester thereafter. In this manner students acquire all mandatory 12 ECTS credits from the category “Foundations and Current Debates” by the end of the first year. In this sample curriculum, the student chooses to focus on social and cultural issues and therefore obtains more ECTS credits from the category ‘Society’ than the minimum required. Other options would be to increase the ECTS credits obtained through more modules in the category “Foundations and Current Debates”, in the category “Culture” or to enrol in more methods classes.



<b>Table 3: Sample curriculum, minor in MAMES</b>					
<b>Term</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>ECTS Credits</b>	<b>Credits/Term</b>
1	Foundations and Current Debates	Colonialism, Nationalism and Globalisation: Asia and the Middle East	Compulsory	6	12
	Culture	History, Society, Culture (Seminar)	Elective	6	
2	Foundations and Current Debates	Asia and the Middle East in Current Debates	Core elective	6	9
	Methods and Theory	Introduction to Research Methods/ Einführung sozialwissenschaftliche Methoden	Core elective	3	
3	Society	Research Seminar on Transformation and Development*	Core elective	9	9
4					
*The core elective "Research Seminar on Transformation and Development" spans over two semesters.					<b>30</b>

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 minor) in the respective semester or to use the refined search and look for modules by module category within the MAMES 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 organization of a study abroad term. 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). Also, we recommend to check out the UZH website, which gives 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>

## **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](mailto:Helena.hof@uzh.ch)).

### **Program administration**

For technical questions concerning your degree path, the current course offering, 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](#).

## Vorbemerkung: Rechtliche Grundlagen (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](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.