

The Middle East and North Africa Studies Collection Development

The Middle East and North Africa Studies librarian collect materials in a wide range of Middle Eastern languages and European languages to support scholarship in the languages, literatures, civilizations, and cultures of the Middle East, North Africa, and their diasporas.

Purpose:

To support teaching, research, and the public.

The collection caters to diverse research interests encompassing the ancient Near East, Islamic and Jewish religions, Christianity, and other minority religions like the Bahá'í Faith. It also spans literature, modern architecture, and contemporary political movements, including Arabic and Islamic manuscripts from regions such as Africa. The collection features newspapers dating back to 1890 and major journals from the region. The library carries materials in various formats, including databases, microfilms, microfiche, visuals, and print."

The Middle East and North Africa collection includes countries in Africa and Asia, such as Iran, Afghanistan, Turkey, Mali, Libya, Egypt, Sudan, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Israel, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and the United Arab Emirates. It also encompasses diasporic communities from these regions worldwide.

The collection supports teaching and research for undergraduates, graduates, and faculty and serves students and researchers across various departments, including Anthropology, Art History, Cinema and Media Studies, Comparative Human Development, and Comparative Literature. It benefits area centers like the Center for South Asia and Middle Eastern Studies, the Center for African Studies, and the Center for Global Studies, among others. The collection also aids the CRLI consortia and neighboring universities without local Middle Eastern Studies resources, including UIC, Northwestern, DePaul, and Notre Dame. It addresses the needs of the public, international organizations, and universities."

Collecting Guidelines:

Due to the multidisciplinary nature of Middle Eastern and North African studies, the resource collection supports the work of many students and faculty in a wide range of disciplines, including the arts, humanities, social sciences, and sciences.

Location of the Collection:

The Middle East collection is spread throughout most of the library system, depending on the subject, formats, and condition of the materials. Much of the collection utilizes the Library of Congress call number system. For example:

- Islam (BP1-299): Research level in Middle Eastern vernaculars (Arabic, Persian, Turkish). Materials in Western languages are selected by the bibliographer for Religion and Philosophy.
- History: Research level in Middle Eastern vernaculars and Western languages with overlap in areas selected by the bibliographer for Social Sciences.
- Language and Literature: Research level for scholarly works and literary works themselves, in original languages and English translations. Effort is made to distinguish serious literary works from more ephemeral, popular works, which are not collected.
- Bibliography (Z): Research level for works cataloging manuscript or other collections related to Middle Eastern Studies.
- History of Science: Research level for historical works related to the Middle East.

Types of Materials Included and Excluded:

Generally excluded are textbooks, religious texts, translations into non-English languages, and language learning materials. However, Rosetta Stone is offered online for learning languages from around the world.

Physical Formats Included and Excluded:

All formats are included, from print monographs and serials to microformat materials, films, DVDs, CD-Roms, photographs, and electronic resources. Notable online resources include Index Islamicus, Encyclopaedia Iranica, and the Encyclopaedia of Islam.

Publication Dates Collected:

There are no strict limits, but the challenges of retrospective purchasing in the Middle East mean most materials acquired are current. Special older collections are acquired as available.

Languages:

Arabic, Persian, Hebrew, Pashto, Kurdish, Turkish, and languages of Western scholarship (primarily English, German, French, and Italian).

Geographical Range:

The collection covers Middle East countries, Israel-Palestine, Iran, Afghanistan Turkey and Arabic speaking countries in Africa, minorities in the Middle East, and diasporic .

Areas of Distinction:

The size, range, and quality of the collection are significant, with notable components such as the collection of Ibadi Islam and Arabic manuscripts from Africa, as well as Arabic and Persian journals, newspapers. The collection also boasts unique holdings of classical and modern Arabic, Persian, and Hebrew literature.

Types of Materials:

Primary, secondary, and bibliographic reference materials are acquired, along with selective audio and audio-visual materials in microfilm format and electronic resources (databases).

Date of Publication:

Some materials date back to the 18th century, alongside current publications.

Place of Publication:

Materials are published in the Middle East and beyond.