

Revised undergraduate programme specification 2016/17

School of Oriental and African Studies

The following information forms the programme specification at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. It gives definitive information relating to a programme of study and is written for a public audience, particularly prospective and current students. It is also used for other purposes such as initial programme approval, and is therefore produced at the start of the programme development process. Once approved, it forms the base-line information for all statements relating to the programme and is updated as approved amendments are made.

CORE INFORMATION

Programme title	BA Hebrew and Israeli Studies
Final award	BA Honours
Intermediate awards	n/a
Mode of attendance	Full-time
UCAS code	QTY6 BA/HEIsrSt
Professional body accreditation	n/a
Date specification updated	February 2014

WHY CHOOSE THIS PROGRAMME?

Why study at SOAS?	SOAS is unique as the only higher education institution in the UK specialising in the study of Africa, Asia and the Middle East. The School also has the largest concentration of specialist faculty concerned with the study of these areas at any university in the world. SOAS is consistently ranked among the top higher education institutions in the UK and the world and it also offers a friendly, vibrant environment for students in a diverse and close-knit community. Click here for more information.
What is special about this programme?	The degree in Hebrew and Israeli Studies focuses on Modern Hebrew language and contemporary history, culture and literature of Israel. Situated within the Department of Languages and Cultures of the Near and Middle East, Hebrew and Israeli Studies is taught with an awareness of the regional, cultural and political context in the Middle East and

	<p>allows for a richer understanding of modern Israel, its history, culture and its people. SOAS is the first UK university to appoint a Professor in Israeli Studies and is now home for the European Association of Israeli Studies.</p>
<p>Who would it suit?</p>	<p>Israeli Studies is a new academic field, which is gradually growing and includes professionals from various disciplines such as linguistics, literary studies, cultural studies, history, social and political science and more. Our BA offers students the opportunity to achieve near-native proficiency in modern Hebrew as well as become familiar with the different aspects of Israeli Studies.</p> <p>Former students find themselves working in the region, with NGOs, as journalists, in think tanks, or work in the civil service or the private sector in fields where familiarity with Israel and the region is an advantage.</p> <p>Some graduates continue to postgraduate degrees in Israeli Studies, Jewish Studies, Holocaust Studies, War Studies or Political Science and history.</p>
<p>Programme structure</p>	<p>Hebrew and Israeli Studies is a four-year degree, combining the study of modern Hebrew with courses on the history of Zionism and the conflict, Israeli culture and literature.</p> <p>Each year students have to study four units, and aside from Hebrew, Israeli culture, literature and history, they can also choose courses on literature, cinema and culture of the Near and Middle East within the department, or Judaism and Jewish music taught elsewhere at SOAS. In the first year, students take an introductory course on literatures of the</p>

	<p>Near and Middle East. From the second year, students can choose as their ‘open option’ to study a second foreign language. Students spend the third year at the Rothberg International School at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem where they get a chance to advance with their Hebrew as well as take other courses from a wide selection relating to Israel and the region.</p> <p>Upon their return to SOAS, in the fourth year, students engage in Independent Study Project, under the supervision of an academic member of staff and prepare a 10,000 words dissertation. The students have a chance to explore and research a topic they are interested in, relating to Israel, Hebrew, or the recent history of both. In recent years students wrote their dissertation on a wide range of topics such as Israel-EU economic relations, the history of the Jews of Bukhara, the writings of a leader of the political right wing movement in pre-State Israel, the Israeli theatre of the absurd and women in the IDF.</p>
<p>Assessment summary</p>	<p>Hebrew language courses (elementary, intermediate and advanced) are assessed by a three-hour written exam and an oral exam in May-June. Regular attendance, submission of homework and occasional quizzes are essential for a continuing progression in language acquisition. Other courses are usually assessed by a written exam at the end of the academic year, as well as two coursework essays.</p>

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

SOAS has general minimum entrance requirements for registration for an undergraduate degree and these can be viewed at <http://www.soas.ac.uk/admissions/ug/entryreq/>

- **A Levels:** AAB
- A Level language preferred
- **IB:** 36 (6/6/6)
- **BTEC:** DDM

- **Scottish Highers:** AAABB
- **Scottish Advanced Highers:** AAB
- **Irish LC:** 340 points from 5 Higher level subjects at grade C1 or above
- **Advanced Placement:** 4 4 5 (Two semesters - UCAS Group A) plus US HSGD with GPA 3.0
- **Euro Bacc:** 80%
- **French Bacc:** 14/20
- **German Abitur:** 2.0
- **Italy DES:** 80/100
- **Austria Mat:** 2.0
- **Polish Mat:** 75%

PROGRAMME AIMS

- To provide an in-depth and wide knowledge of Modern Israel: its history, language, culture, literature and people.
- To gain good proficiency in Modern Hebrew, in writing and spoken language.
- To allow students to experience academic studies in an outstanding Israeli university as well as partake in everyday life in Israel through the provision of a year abroad programme.
- To prepare students for work where they can use their knowledge of Hebrew or familiarity with Israel and contemporary issues concerning the region.

PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES

Knowledge

- Competence in reading, writing and speaking Modern Hebrew
- Understanding the roots of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
- Familiarity with major Israeli authors and a variety of literary genres both in translation and in the original Hebrew, and awareness of links between Hebrew and Arabic literary cultures.
- Familiarity with cultural and social aspects particular to Israel (such as Judaism, the Kibbutz, the legacy of the Holocaust, etc.)

Intellectual (thinking) skills

- The ability to identify, describe and analyze problems and devise appropriate strategies for their resolution
- The ability to communicate information and ideas and to argue critically both in writing and orally.
- The ability to apply literary and linguistic terms and concepts.
- To demonstrate and exercise independence of mind and thought.

Subject-based practical skills

- The ability to communicate in Modern Hebrew, fluently, appropriately and with a high degree of grammatical accuracy, with native and other competent speakers.
- The ability to read and make good use of a variety of texts written in Hebrew, from poetry to newspaper articles as well as archive material and formal documents.
- To apply linguistic concepts to the study of other Semitic (and non-Semitic) languages.

Transferable skills

- The programme will assist students in the acquisition in a new foreign language.
- The programme will teach students to manage time and work to deadlines.
- The degree allows students to work independently and instructs them on how to produce critical and analytical essays of original thinking.
- The programme will enable students to demonstrate their ability to work with others, as well as be independent and self-reliant..

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND REQUIREMENTS FOR GAINING AN AWARD**Structure, duration and requirements for gaining an award**

SOAS has standard requirements relating to the structure and duration of undergraduate programmes and for the award and classification of these programmes.

Details can be found at

<http://www.soas.ac.uk/registry/degreeregulations/file60378.pdf>

Programme structure diagram

Below is a structure diagram for this programme.

Level	Year of study	Course code	Course title	Credit	Status	Notes
4	1	n/a	Modern Hebrew language: elementary	30	core	Students who already have prior knowledge of Modern Hebrew may be permitted to begin language study at an appropriate higher level.
4	1	155900991	Literatures of the Near	30	compulsory	

			and Middle East			
4	1	155900947	Introduction to Israeli Culture	30	compulsory	
4	1		Open option	30		
5	2	155900713	Modern Hebrew Language: intermediate	30	core	
5	2	155901167	Israeli history and the Israel-Palestine conflict	30	compulsory	
5	2	155901380	Nation and Nationalism in Middle Eastern Fiction (in Translation)	30	compulsory	
5	2	n/a	Open option	30		
5	3	n/a	Year Abroad in Israel	4 units = 120	core	The third year is spent at the Rothberg International School in Jerusalem, where the students continue with their Hebrew language courses, as well as choose from a wide selection of courses in English relating to Hebrew and Israeli Studies. For more information visit RIS website at: http://overseas.huji.ac.il
6	4	155900714	Modern Hebrew language: advanced	30	Compulsory	
6	4	155900738	Independent Study Project	30	Compulsory	
6	4	155901411	Identity and Language in	30	Compulsory	

			Hebrew literature			
6	4		Another unit from the Hebrew-related courses OR an open option	30	Optional	

The availability of optional/elective courses may vary in a given academic session due to factors such as staff absence and student numbers. For an up to date list of courses running in a given academic session please refer to the degree structures as listed on the SOAS website for the degree programmes taught by each Department.

TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

What methods will be used to achieve the learning outcomes?

Knowledge

- Intensive and thorough teaching of Modern Hebrew language from basic to advanced level over four years. The language is taught *in* Hebrew, using textbooks written by professional teachers from the Hebrew university. Alongside the textbooks, the students will encounter Hebrew on the internet, in song, Israeli media, as well as through role play, and dialogues. Written and oral exams assess the students' progress in language acquisition.
- An academic course in years 2 designed to give the students the necessary background information and recent research into the history Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This course is assessed by a three-hour written exam at the end of the year and two essays.
- The course Language and identity in Hebrew literature exposes the students to a variety of literary works by Jews from Arab lands, and Arabs from Israel who write in Hebrew. Issues of cultural heritage, identity, language and locality will be examined. Two essays and a written exam allow the students to look closely at some of these works. Poetry is read in a bi-lingual edition, and SOAS library has copies of all the literary works in both Hebrew and in English translation.
- Concepts and issues central to Israeli life and culture are the basis for the course Introduction to Israeli culture, where Israeli society is examined through cultural manifestation of these issues. The course is assessed by two essays and a written exam.

Intellectual (thinking) skills

- A critical approach to both primary and secondary sources encourages an analytic investigation and demonstrates ways of problem solving.
- We promote and encourage class participation and discussion in our seminars,

and students need to express their views and thoughts on the subject at hand in informal conversations in the classroom and in written essays.

- While Hebrew is taught as an organic language, grammar and syntax is explained and used throughout. Literary terms, and academic jargon is explained, demonstrated and used in lectures and students are encouraged to incorporate them in their own analysis and writings.
- From the first essay in the first year, students are encouraged to find topics that interest them and are given the option to engage in independent research.
- This prepares them for their fourth-year Independent Study Project where they are asked to demonstrate original thought and independent research.

Subject-based practical skills

- Language classes based on oral communication, listening to Israeli media recordings, and a year abroad in Jerusalem all prepare the students to the oral exams in Modern Hebrew at the end of each academic year.
- Alongside the textbooks used for teaching Hebrew, the students will encounter a variety of other written texts, from recipes to parking tickets and will also write in Hebrew. A short composition is part of the end of year written exam in all levels of Hebrew instruction.
- When applicable, grammatical features of Modern Hebrew will be compared to those of other Semitic and non-Semitic languages, and terms of grammar and syntax will be explained in general terms.

Transferable skills

- After four years of studying Hebrew, students have a good level of proficiency in the language.
- Students prepare presentations, write essays and exams to strict deadlines.
- The students receive detailed feedback on their written essays, thus learning how to produce well-argued and well-written academic papers.
- Small group language classes and seminars enable students to share their views and learn from each other.
- Spending the third year abroad in Jerusalem is an opportunity for students to learn to manage their everyday life in a new and foreign environment.

REFERENCE POINTS

The following reference points were used in designing the programme:

- School Learning and Teaching Strategy
- QAA framework for higher education qualifications
- QAA subject benchmark statement Languages and related studies (2007)

QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT

SOAS has internal procedures to assure the quality of provision to be offered to students and to enhance the quality in the light of experience following delivery, taking into account the input of external experts and students. The procedures are set out in the School's Quality Assurance Handbook and can be viewed at (<http://www.soas.ac.uk/add/qualityassurance/quality-assurance-handbook/>).

SOAS is also subject to periodic external review from bodies such as the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education and relevant professional and statutory regulatory bodies.

The procedures described in the Quality Assurance Handbook are in place to provide a high quality student experience for those choosing to study at SOAS, and student input and evaluation of their experiences is greatly valued. Students make an input to the ongoing development of their programmes, and the environment in which they operate, in a number of ways, including:

- formal student evaluation as part of the annual programme review;
- student representation on School committees at various levels (through the Students' Union) where many relevant issues are discussed;

FURTHER INFORMATION

Add in links to other relevant information, both internal and external, including:

- [SOAS Vision and Strategy Statement](#);
- [Undergraduate](#) and [Postgraduate](#) Handbooks;
[Quality Assurance Handbook](#);
- [UCAS website](#);
- [QAA website](#);