

MIDDLE EAST, CENTRAL ASIA & ISLAMIC STUDIES

A GUIDE TO SOAS LIBRARY RESOURCES



I. SEARCHING THE SOAS LIBRARY CATALOGUE : A FEW TIPS

The screenshot shows the SOAS Library website interface with several callouts:

- Log into your Library account to view your holdings, renew and/or reserve items, etc.** (points to the Login button in the top navigation bar)
- Some of our collections are **offsite**: you can request them online. Items delivered within 5 working days.** (points to the Off-site Materials button in the top navigation bar)
- Search all our electronic resources in one go using the EDS search tool (Articles and more).** (points to the 'Articles and more' button in the search bar)
- Keywords search is default**
 - ◆ Use this option if you're not sure of the exact title or author
 - ◆ Use this option to search for a subject/topic
 - ◆ "Books & more" searches mainly our printed collections(points to the search bar)
- Search the **Card Catalogue** for pre-1990 publications that may not appear on the online catalogue.** (points to the 'Card Catalogue' link in the 'Find More' section)
- Need Help?** (points to the 'Need Help?' section, which includes links for Search Tips, Searching Non-Roman Scripts, Subject Guides, Privacy Policy, and Contact SOAS Library)

How to search for material in non-Roman script?

SOAS Library collects a wide range of materials in non-Roman scripts. Records for these languages in the library catalogue are transliterated (romanized). Since 2000, records for Arabic and Persian can be searched in either transliterated or vernacular form.

What is transliteration?

A romanization or latinization is a system for representing a word or language with the Roman (Latin) alphabet, where the original word or language used a different writing system. Methods of romanization include transliteration, representing written text, and transcription, representing the spoken word.

Example of a transliterated title:

بنية الخطاب من الجملة الى النص = Binyat al-khiṭāb min al-jumlah ilā al-naṣṣ

See different existing transliteration norms for non-Roman scripts: <http://transliteration.eki.ee/>

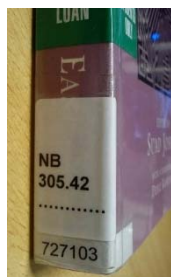
In SOAS, we use the Library of Congress Romanization Rules to transliterate most of non-Roman scripts. See the tables at: <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/roman.html>

I. SOAS LIBRARY BOOKS: HOW ARE THEY CLASSIFIED?

The Middle East, Central Asia and Islamica section includes about 150,000 items. Some sort of classification was needed. Ours is based on the Dewey classification system. i.e. it is a subject classification refined by language and geographical areas. SOAS Library items bear a classmark on their spine, by which you can locate them.

At SOAS, most classmarks are composed of a **LETTER CODE** (for language, country or topics) + **SUBJECT (DEWEY) DECIMAL NUMBER + 3 first letters of authors (optional) + ITEM NUMBER** (or accession number)

Ex.: NB305.42 = Work in English (or other Western language) on the social role and status of women / feminism in the Middle East



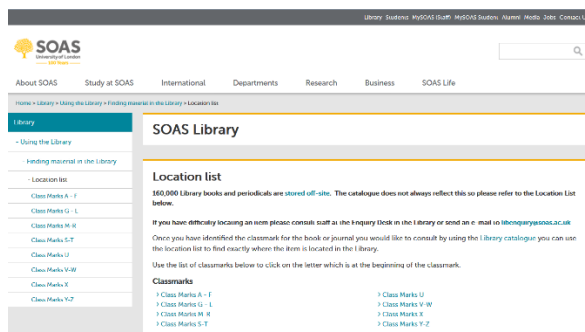
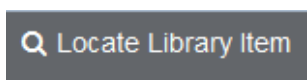
NB = Middle East **305.42** = Social role and status of women **/ 727103** = Item number

A few examples of subjects and their classification:

History of the Middle East	= in Arabic : P956 / in Western languages: NB956	} Level B
Middle East economics	= in Arabic : P330.9- / in Western languages: NB330.9	
Middle East politics	= in Arabic : P320.9- / in Western languages: NB320.9	
History of Modern Central Asia	= OP958 in Western languages / PP-PUD958 in vernacular languages	
Central Asia economics	= OP330.9	
Caucasia & Caucasus countries	= O-OJ in Western languages / PG-PJD in vernacular languages	
Hadīth	= P297.124 (→ Bukhari = P297.1241)	
Quran’s commentaries / tafsīr	= P297.1227	
Islamic philosophy	= in Arabic : P181.07 / in Western languages: N181.07	
Islamic finance	= in Arabic : P332.1 / in Western languages: N332.1	
Islam in the modern world	= in Arabic : P297.197 / in Western languages: N297.197	} Level D
Muslims in Great-Britain	= N297.30041	
Arabic literature	= P892.7-	
Persian literature	= PM891.55-	
Turkish literature	= PRA894.35-	
Turkic literatures	= PP-PWD894.-	
Palestine history	= in Arabic: P956.94 / in Western languages: QJ956-	
Islamic Arts	= FS-FSX (in Western and vernacular lang.)	
Islamic Law	= A345.6 (in Western and vernacular lang.)	

→ Large books will have a “L” added to their classmark.

→ Once you’ve got a classmark, locate it in the library using the [library location list](#) if its location is not already shown on the record.



II. ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

A. What are Electronic Resources?

Any information which is available in electronic format which you may use in your research:

1. **Bibliographic databases** – search to find what journal articles, books, books reviews, theses, etc have been written on your subject or by a certain author.
2. **Full text databases** - searchable journal and book indexes with links to the full text of journal articles where they are available.
3. **E-books and E-thesis**
4. **Freely available Internet sites and gateways** - ordered collections of web-sites, maps collections, online reports or news information. Links to information about organisations and individuals.

TIPS BEFORE YOU START TO SEARCH DATABASES

If you are at the beginning of your research, try to make a list of keywords describing your research. Including synonyms, alternative spellings, broader and narrower terms.

Keep in mind that some terms in other languages can be transliterated different ways.

Use of *wild card* or *truncation* will help retrieve all variants of a term (e.g. wom?n will retrieve *woman* and *women* ; Afghan* will retrieve *Afghanistan, Afghans, Afghani, etc.*)

Use Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT, ADJ, etc.) to broaden or restrict your search (look up the HELP section of each database about how to search it)

If you are still looking at defining your subject you may find it helpful to look at some of SOAS' online reference sources:

- Oxford Reference Online <http://www.oxfordreference.com/> : Online collection of over 100 of OUP's reference titles; including dictionaries, encyclopaedias and the Companion series
- Brill Online Reference Works: <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/>

B. Searching for electronic resources on SOAS website:

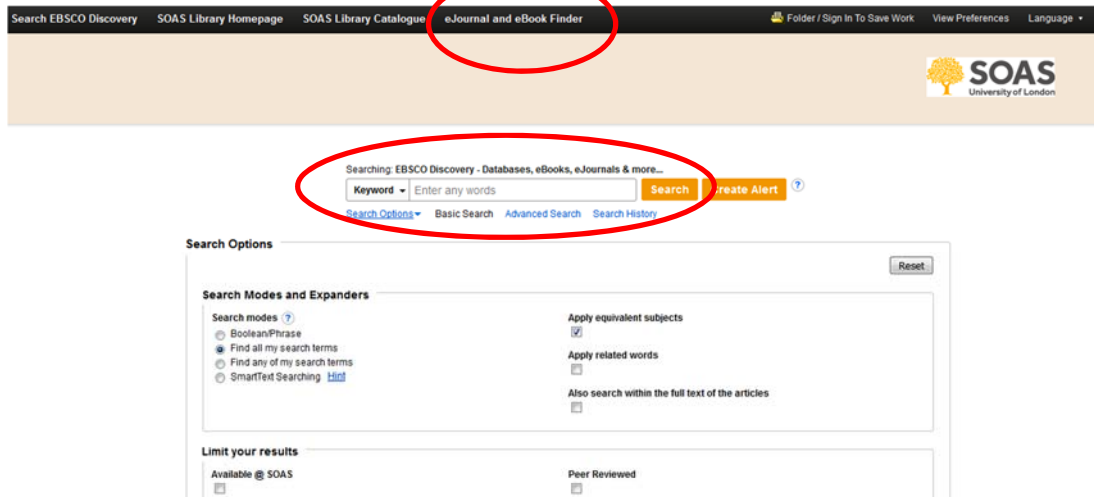
Searching a journal online

SOAS subscribes to +100,000 journals, and most of them will be only in electronic format and will not appear in the library catalogue. To find a journal online go to the [e-journal & e-book finder](#) database.
Note : You will need to login with your SOAS ID to access e-books and e-journals from offsite.

Searching journal articles

You can run a cross-search of several databases through our [Ebsco Discovery Service](#) search tool. Most databases focusing on Middle Eastern studies such as Index Islamicus, MECAS, Confidential Print: Middle East, etc. would be included in the EDS cross-search.

Some others are not and must be searched individually: Bibliography of Arabic Books Online (BABO), Mideast Wire, DNSA, etc. See the full list of those on: <http://www.soas.ac.uk/library/resources/ebsco-discovery-service/eds-additional-databases/>



The key databases for MECAI studies are listed below.

Search the [A-Z electronic databases](#) to see the full list of resources available at SOAS.

1. Bibliographic databases

➔ Search them to find what journal articles, books, theses, etc. have been written on your subject or by a certain author (no full-text attached).

Clicking on the [Check full text](#) link will show whether the book/article is available at SOAS.

- ISI Web of Knowledge
- IBSS (International Bibliography of the Social sciences)
- OCLC Firstsearch

- Index Islamicus
- Middle East and Central Asia Studies (MECAS)
- BABO (Bibliography of the Arabic Book Online)
- Abstracta Iranica <http://abstractairanica.revues.org/document1522.html>
- RAMBI Web (Index of articles on Jewish studies)
- Bibliography of Asian Studies
- Theses databases: Index to Thesis of Great Britain and Ireland / Ethos / Foreign Doctoral Dissertations (Center for Research Libraries) / The DART-Europe E-theses Portal (DEEP), etc. / [OATD](#) (Open Access Theses and Dissertations : near to 3 millions theses indexed)

2. Full-text electronic resources

➔ SOAS students can access the full-text articles from over 100,000+ journals online, as well as thousands of electronic books:

A. Full text databases

1. References databases / Primary sources databases

- Encyclopaedia of Islam
- Encyclopaedia Iranica
- Encyclopaedia of the Arabic Language and Literatures (EALL)
- Oxford Islamic Studies Online

- Confidential Print: Middle East 1839-1969 (UK & the Middle East relations)
- DNSA (Digital National Security Archive) – (USA & Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan relations).

2. Journals Articles databases

- JSTOR
- EBSCOhost
- IngentaConnect
- Project MUSE
- ...and many others.

B. E-books & E-thesis

a. E-books

- Proquest Ebooks Central (formerly *Ebrary*) : access to 100,000+ e-books
- Dawsonera : access to 900+ e-books
- Cambridge Core : access to 500+ e-books
- Other free e-books online : al-Warrāq (www.alwaraq.net) / al-Mawsū'ah al-Shāmilah = رشف قاعدة بيانات الكتب العربية = الموسوعة الشاملة (<http://www.islimport.com>) / *Rashf* = رشف قاعدة بيانات الكتب العربية (<http://rashf.com/>) / Noor Digital Library (<http://www.noorlib.ir>) / [Afghanistan Digital Library](#) / [Avestan Digital Archive](#) / [Internet Archive](#) / [Project Gutenberg](#) / MenaDoc - Digital Collections at Halle University (<http://menadoc.bibliothek.uni-halle.de/>) / CARRIE (<http://vlib.iue.it/carrie/index.html>) /and many other digital collections online...

b. E-thesis (full-text)

- [Ethos](#) (hosted by the British Library): UK PhD dissertations online
- [Proquest Dissertations & Theses Online](#) : US MA & PhD Dissertations online

C. Freely available Internet sites and gateways

a. News Information

In addition to articles from academic journals you can also find newspaper articles and reporting services online. SOAS Library subscribes to two online services from which you can read the full versions of UK, US and European newspapers and reports from international agencies: *Access World News* and *Lexis Library*. *MidEastWire* provides a daily newsletter of concise, translated briefs into English from the Arabic and Persian media. (See list under <http://www.soas.ac.uk/library/resources/a-z/news/>).

Three websites are worth mentioning that provide links to the main newspapers of the Arab World, sorted by country:


- Arabic Media - Arabic Newspapers & Magazines : الإعلام العربي
<http://arabic-media.com/arabicnews.htm>
- Mafhoum - Database for the Arab world News and Media :
http://mafhoum.com/en/en_index.htm
- [AMIR List of Open Access Historical Newspapers and other periodicals in Middle East & Islamic Studies](#)

Arabic and Persian **TV channels** are available for viewing on SOAS IPTV:

<http://iptv.lang.soas.ac.uk/portal/>

b. Subject guides and websites

Further information on useful resources on each region and subject taught at SOAS at <http://www.soas.ac.uk/library/subjects/>



The screenshot shows the SOAS Library website. On the left is a navigation menu with links: Home > Library > Subject guides, Library, - About SOAS Library, - Using the Library, - Subject guides (highlighted), - Archives & Special Collections, - Electronic resources, - Library news, - Feedback Form, - Staff, and - Training & Events. The main content area is titled 'SOAS Library' and 'Subject Guides'. Below the title, it says 'Select a subject to find out more about the Library collection, other useful libraries, recommended web-sites and electronic journals for that subject.' There are two columns of subject links: Africa, Ancient Near East, Semitics & Judaica, Anthropology, Art and Archaeology, China and Inner Asia, Development Studies, Economics, Finance and Management, History, Japan and Korea, Linguistics & Languages, Law, Literatures, Media and Film Studies, Middle East & Central Asia, Music, Politics and International relations, Religions & Philosophy, South Asia, and South East Asia.

III. SPECIAL COLLECTIONS/ ARCHIVES

Located on Level F (basement of the Library).

You can consult archives, manuscripts, photographs, maps, audio-visual material and rare books there. Broadly speaking, collections reflect the British experience in Africa and Asia over the last 250 years, and include archives of missionary societies, businesses, NGOs and charities, and papers of individuals, including academics, diplomats and colonial administrators.

Relevant collections for the MECAL section include:

- More than 850 Arabic, Persian, Turkic and Armenian manuscripts dated from the 8th to 19th century (see the card catalogue in the SCRR or *Fihrist*, the union catalogue of UK manuscripts in Arabic Script: <http://www.fihrist.org.uk/>)
- Ottoman early printed books by Ibrahim Müteferrika (monographs and microfilms)
- Rare Persian map collection: A significant collection of specialist maps of Persia
- The Yale/SOAS Islamic Manuscript Gallery

Some of those Middle Eastern material is available online in the SOAS Digital Library at: <http://digital.soas.ac.uk>

Contact Detail: Telephone: +44(0)20 7898 4180/ Email: docenquiry@soas.ac.uk

IV. BEYOND SOAS: ACCESS TO OTHER LIBRARIES CATALOGUES AND COLLECTIONS

If you do not find the material you require in SOAS Library you may wish to see if it is held by another library (see [Search Other libraries Catalogues](#) on the SOAS library catalogue's webpage). The main union catalogues to search first are [Search25](#), [Copac](#), [KVK](#) and [WorldCat](#).



As SOAS student you have free access to other university libraries in London (including University of London, Senate House Library). For more information about membership at those libraries, check: <http://www.soas.ac.uk/library/using/others/access/>

For further information, browse the website of the library you wish to visit.

If the item is found somewhere outside London, you can ask for an **inter-library loan** (interlibraryloan@soas.ac.uk). You will be charge £3 per successful request and be allowed to consult the item(s) in the Special Collections Reading Room, but you won't be allowed to borrow it.

Undergraduates and taught postgraduate can access and Research Postgraduates and staff may borrow books from approximately 150 academic libraries in the UK under the SCONUL Access Scheme. Apply online to the **SCONUL Access Scheme**. SOAS Library Customer Services will then send you a confirmation email that you can use to join other libraries participating in the scheme. See: <http://www.sconul.ac.uk/sconul-access> for more information.

V. MANAGING YOUR BIBLIOGRAPHY

You may want to use a bibliographic referencing software such as Reference Manager, ProCite, RefWorks, BibTeX, EndNote or Zotero.

EndNote is a software which helps you search online bibliographic databases, organise your references, images and PDFs in any language, and create bibliographies and figure lists instantly. This link : <http://endnote.com/training/> leads to EndNote's tutorials which offer you a variety of ways to learn how to use their products.

Another tool which is facilitating the building up of a bibliography is **zotero**. It is a free Firefox extension to help you collect, manage and cite your research sources: <http://www.zotero.org/>

Zotero can import, store, and cite items of any language.

VI. ENQUIRIES AND FURTHER HELP

The Enquiry Desk on Level E (Ground Floor) is staffed from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. Enquiry Desk staff will be able to help you locate materials and resources for your research, including electronic sources of information. You can also email libenquiry@soas.ac.uk.

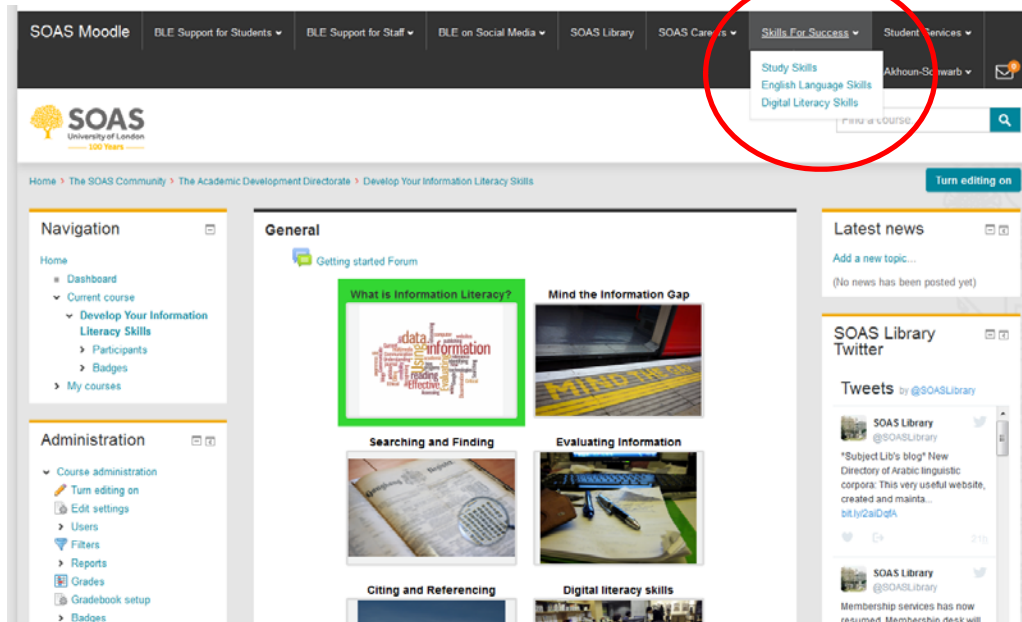
Subject Librarians are also here to help you with your more subject specific queries. Our contact details are on the library homepage under the Contact Us tab: <http://www.soas.ac.uk/library/contact/>

You may suggest that we acquire resources. These are assessed on a case-by-case basis and budgetary constraints may apply. Details and online forms here: <http://www.soas.ac.uk/library/contact/recommendation-forms/>

Moodle Information and Digital Literacy Skills

The *Digital Literacy Skills* site on Moodle (<http://ble.soas.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=14>) can be found under the tab "Skills for Success".

This site has been designed to support your studies at SOAS by providing a series of general and subject-based guides to resources available to SOAS students and staff.



Keep up with the Library

You can find out what is going on in the library, including hints and tips on useful resources by following us:



- <http://twitter.com/#!/SOASLibrary>.
- <https://www.facebook.com/SOASLib>
- <http://blogs.soas.ac.uk/librariannews/>



Maintain your current awareness

- **Sign up for journal alerting services** such as [ZETOC](#) or [JournalTOCs](#). You will be notified when any new journal articles in your specified subject interests become available, either by email or RSS.
- **Use RSS feeds to collect updates from your favourite web resources in one place.** Feed readers such as [Feedly](#) or [Inoreader](#) are free to use.

Extend and use your academic network

- Check out who is researching the same fields than you on [Academia.edu](#) or [ResearchGate.net](#).
- Subscribe to academic groups lists. Browse [JISCMail.ac.uk](#) for the UK academic mailing lists. See [H-Net](#) for over 100 academic mailing lists covering a wide range of subjects (not just UK based).

Finally...Good luck with your research!