

Ph.D. Program in the Social Sciences

The Faculty of Graduate Studies offers an interdisciplinary program leading to the Ph.D. degree in the social sciences. Interdisciplinary is a growing trend in the social sciences and humanities across the world, and is based on the idea that traditional disciplines are increasingly unable to provide the analytical tools necessary for understanding complex social and cultural processes and phenomena. The main objective is to establish a strong academic program that will nurture the emergence of a new generation of social scientists and researchers capable of producing new knowledge about the Arab region from an Arab and Palestinian location. The program requires the completion of required courses, the qualifying examination, and the dissertation.

Disciplinary competence is enhanced by two tracks or specializations: (1) the political economy of development; and (2) history, space and society. The Qualifying Examination and the Ph.D. dissertation are aimed at strengthening disciplinary competence.

Full details of admission and other requirements can be found in “Regulations on the Conferral of the Ph.D. Degree” at the link [here](#).

Ph.D. Program Requirements

The completion of 54 credit hours as follows: 30 hours of courses, Qualifying Examination, taken upon the completion of all required courses (no credit), and Dissertation: 24 credit hours

Distribution of Courses:

Course No.	Course Title	Type of Course
PHSS920	Reading and Writing Seminar	Compulsory, required
PHSS921	Dissertation Research Seminar	Compulsory, required
PHSS922	Quantitative Research Methods	Compulsory, required
PHSS930	Qualitative and Historical Research Methods	Compulsory, required
PHSS931	Epistemology	Compulsory, required
PHSS932	Major Theoretical Debates in the Social Sciences	Compulsory, required
PHSS933	Studies in Colonialism and Imperialism	Compulsory, required
PHSS934	Institutions and Development	Track 1, required
PHSS935	International Political Economy	Track 1, required
PHSS936	The Social and Political History of Oil in the Arab Region	Track 2, required
PHSS937	Key Transformations in the Arab region	Track 2, required
PHSS9390	Conceptualizing Modern Palestine	Track 2, elective
PHSS9391	The History of Economic Thought	Track 1, elective

PHSS9392	Late Industrialization	Track 1, elective
PHSS9393	The Agrarian Question	Track 1, elective
PHSS9380	Special Topic in the Political Economy of Development track	Track 1, elective
PHSS9381	Gender in History	Track 2, elective
PHSS9382	Social and Spatial Inequalities	Track 2, elective
PHSS9383	The Environmental History of the Arab Region	Track 2, elective
PHSS9384	The Global and the Local: Social, Cultural and Geographical Perspectives	Track 2, elective
PHSS9385	Issues of Development in the Arab Region and Palestine	Track 2, elective
PHSS9386	Special Topic in the History, Space and Society track	Track 2, elective
PHSS	Qualifying Examination	
PHSS	Dissertation	

Assessment of Students' Work

A variety of assessment criteria and methods are used in the courses depending on the nature of each course. The assessment tools include:

- Oral presentations consisting of critical commentaries on course readings
- Short response papers on course readings
- Critical reviews of the relevant literature
- Critique of colleagues' work
- Research design for course papers
- Research paper at the end of the course (mandatory in all courses)
- Examinations

Course Description (PHSS)

PHSS920 Reading and Writing Seminar

An intensive seminar devoted to the critical reading of key texts on a theme of interest to the program, and the writing and presentation of response essays by students. Students critique each other's work and sharpen their analytical and writing skills.

PHSS921 Dissertation Research Seminar

Preparation for conducting research by engaging with theoretical and methodological issues and applying them to a particular research topic of the student's choosing. Major debates on epistemological and ontological issues in research, and an examination of research logic and strategies. A comparison of quantitative and qualitative research, and the importance of triangulation. The role of the researcher in the research process, and ethical issues in research. Preparation of proposals that can be the basis of the future dissertation, based on class discussion.

PHSS922 Quantitative Research methods

Acquisition of basic analytical and technical skills to understand, design and conduct basic quantitative research in the social sciences. Basic issues in quantitative research in the social sciences: the epistemology of research, the logic of quantitative research, issues concerning data collection, sources of data, data presentation techniques (graphs, tables, descriptives), regression models, hypothesis testing, and some probability theory and statistical distributions. Acquisition of requisite skills to design and conduct statistical enquiries; the ability to proficiently blend quantitative research approaches where desirable/required; a better appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of quantitative research approaches in varying circumstances; and the ability to understand quantitative research and interpret the findings of empirical studies.

PHSS930 Qualitative and Historical Research Methods

Epistemological, practical, and ethical issues in qualitative social and historical research. The logic of qualitative research and issues of interpretation and analysis through reading different types of texts, both theoretical and methodological works and monographs, with a focus on works on Palestine and the Arab region. Defining and contextualizing the research question, selecting the method of inquiry, and the different styles of presenting the results of qualitative and historical research. Working on a research design.

PHSS931 Philosophy of Knowledge/Epistemology

A broad introduction to epistemology and its development in various historical stages including schools and trends that sought to address problems related to knowledge, including selected relevant topics in Islamic Philosophy. Major current trends as pertain to the social sciences. Focus on the following issues: the nature of knowledge, its extent and limits, different types of knowledge, the difference between rational knowledge and other kinds of "knowledge," facts, beliefs and knowledge, skepticism and certainty, situational knowledge and its implications, ideology, feminist critiques of epistemology, what is "subjective" and "objective" in knowledge, the fact-value distinction and its epistemological implications, problems of causation and induction, explanation in the social sciences and differing paradigms and analytic frameworks.

PHSS932 Major Theoretical Debates in the Social Sciences, the Study of the South and the Arab Region

A critical discussion of key debates in the social sciences, debates relevant to the study of the Global South, and debates surrounding the study of the Arab region. Universalism versus cultural specificity; essentialism and culturalism; agency versus structure, objectivism versus subjectivism; critiques of modernity; the cultural turn in the social sciences and humanities. The political, economic, social and cultural effects of colonial rule (direct and indirect); debates about post-colonialism, colonial modernity, and pre-colonial traditions; the role of violence in the making of political communities in different post-colonial contexts; debates about the state; theories of revolution; geopolitics in a globalizing world; poverty; the urban transition; the political economy of human settlements. Key debates that have shaped the study of the Arab region: critical study of the genealogy of the terms “Arab region,” “the Middle East,” “the Middle East and North Africa,” “Southwest Asia;” debates about religion, polity, and society; the relationship between culture and politics in the formation of nationalist thought and mobilization; geopolitical tectonics: the Arab region on the margins of Eurasia.

PHSS933 Studies in Colonialism and Imperialism

Close reading of pre-colonial classics such as Ibn Khaldun’s *Muqaddimah*, and key texts that reflect on colonialism, post-colonialism, postmodernism, decolonization, and imperialism. A comparative study of nationalist and anti-imperialism thought as produced by Arabs, Africans, and Asians. Contemporary debates on nationalist and post-colonial thought and the response to imperialism. Critical assessment of postcolonial and postmodern theory, particularly as it pertains to the history of colonialism and struggles for decolonization in the Arab region and in Palestine. Conceptualizing contemporary Palestine: critical study of the paradigms of settler-colonialism, apartheid, and occupation. Zionist settler colonialism in Palestine: the systematic uprooting of the Palestinian people and the creation of the Palestinian diaspora.

PHSS934 Institutions and Development

A critical examination of the economic problems of countries of the South by using economic theories and their applications, and the role of national institutions in economic development. The challenge of social and economic transformation in the global South; what economic theories tell us that should be achieved in order to foster economic development; what has been done during the past decades and what is being done now both by practitioners and researchers in the field of development economics. Macroeconomic and microeconomic approaches to development economics, with more coverage of the microeconomics theories and applications. In macro-economics, focus on theories of growth and development. In microeconomics, topics such as education, health, credit market, inequalities, history dependence, and political institutions. The role of national institutions in economic development (governments, central banks, capital and money markets, etc.). Neoliberal models of development and the role of the nation-state. Data mining and cognitive biases in development. Foreign aid. Thinking Big vs. Thinking Small in Development

PHSS935 International Political Economy

Providing students with analytical tools vital for understanding and criticizing the outcome of the interface between domestic institutions, international politics, economics, policymaking, and the resultant welfare of peoples around the world. A survey of classical and pioneering research in International Political Economy (IPE) in a multidisciplinary setting. The key areas are Foreign Direct Investment (FDI); global trade and changing dynamics; regional and international money markets and fiscal policies; international labor regimes; and global development trends. Helping students grasp the development and direction of international political economy: an overview of the history of the field and introduction to the main analytical frameworks and methods of inquiry. The state-market interaction and the problem of

cooperation among states in international economic relations, analyzing the unequal power between state players and the potential threats and opportunities they present, especially in the era of globalization driven by ICTs. Foreign aid and development, the causes and consequences of globalization, and immigration.

PHSS936 The Social and Political History of Oil in the Arab Region

The history of oil and its central impact on the development of Arab society, the Arab state and Arab economies over the course of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Distortions in Arab development as a result of colonial interventions related to oil. "The politics of oil" until the present time. The discovery of oil in the Arab Peninsula and in Iran. The transformation of Arab society and Arab politics in the Arab Peninsula ("Cities of Salt"). The role of oil imperialism. New regional powers as a result of oil: Saudi Arabia, Iran, Libya. Migration to the oil-states of the Gulf and its impact on the sending societies (Islamist movements). The impact of oil on Palestinian society and politics and economic development in Palestine. The destruction and transformation of Iraq. The conflict over Iran: From the Carter Doctrine to the threat of war against Iran. Qatar and al-Jazeera

PHSS937 Key Transformations in the Arab Region

A study of the major social, cultural, and political transformations in the Arab region during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, primarily those that have had lasting effects on society and polity in the colonial and post-colonial periods. The impact of colonialism on indigenous societies. Anti-colonial movements, Arab nationalism, and state formation. Modern Islamist movements. Major transformations in class structure and the rise of the middle strata. Transformations in agrarian relations. Urbanization and urban culture. Changing gender relations. The social and economic impact of neoliberal policies. Social and political movements for social equality and regime change, especially in light of "the Arab Spring."

PHSS9380 Conceptualizing Modern Palestine

An in-depth examination of some of the issues raised in PHSS933, particularly those that pertain to analytical frameworks and concepts used for studying (and theorizing) Palestine in the modern period. An examination of the concepts of settler colonialism, colonialism, apartheid, and occupation; a systematic investigation of the usefulness and relevance of these concepts at different periods in Palestine's modern history. Other concepts that will be critically examined include class, ethnicity, race, religion, indigeneity, the state, civil society, community, mode of production, diaspora, and modernity.

PHSS9381 Gender in History

A study of key texts that outline the debate on universalism and particularism in the study of patriarchy and an understanding of the articulation of gender, class, ethnicity and nation in different historical contexts. Introducing students to the historical context and social significance of patriarchal versus matriarchal societies through a reading of key theoretical/historical texts and through a study of different historical case studies. The implications of current debates for the study of Arab/Muslim societies. Key non-Western studies of development of the concept of gender. The debate on patriarchy: Is it universal or particular? The debate on social inequality: relations between gender, class, ethnicity and nation. The study of gender in colonial and neo-colonial contexts, especially in the Arab region.

PHSS9382 Social and Spatial Inequalities

An interdisciplinary approach that contributes to an evidence base for policy development aimed at reducing spatial and social inequalities. Absolute measures of spatially distributed social and economic development. Mapping and visualizing inequalities, with special focus on the importance of space in recognizing and understanding social patterns and social change. Themes include: poverty, place and

inequality; spatial distribution of poverty as a result of social policies, segregation, deprivation, economic and educational inequalities, global inequality; efforts to reduce global inequality; urban and regional inequalities in the Global South and North; health inequalities. Theoretical and practical concepts of inequalities in health in the context of social and spatial inequalities.

PHSS9383 Environmental History of the Arab Region

The theory and methodology of environmental history. Historiography of environmental history. The pre- and post-colonial environmental history of the Arab region; the impact of colonial expansion and penetration on the Arab landscapes and resource use; overgrazing and wildlife conservation; forests and forestry history; soil erosion and conservation; drought and desertification; nature reserves and recreational areas. The environmental history of Palestine beginning with Zionist colonial settlement in the 19th century. Examining claims that the Arab region/the Middle East is a region plagued by desertification, drought, overpopulation and pollution. Population and environmental change, soil and agriculture, wildlife, forests, nature reserves and recreation areas

PHSS9384 The Global and the Local: Social, Cultural and Geographical Perspectives

The interplay between social and cultural globalization processes, places, regions and people. Central issues examined: how places are simultaneously a part of the global and the local; why and how places continue to have meaning; and how places and people are mutually constituted. Insights into concepts such as difference, identity, meaning, representations and social practice, as well as empirical-oriented research objectives linked to these (i.e. the significance of class, gender, sexuality, rurality, urbanity, race, and ethnicity. The image of the local as part of the global and their interaction. Case studies from Palestine.

PHSS9385 Issues of Development in the Arab Region and Palestine

A critical examination of the theory and practice of development in the Arab region and in Palestine. Discussion of various theoretical frameworks, such as world system theory, dependency theory, and neoliberal theories and their relevance for understanding the history and modalities of development. The practice of development in selected Arab countries. De-development under conditions of colonial control in Palestine. Critiques of development theory. The legacy of colonialism and settler colonialism. The political economy of international aid. Inequality and poverty. Neoliberal development models.

PHSS9386 Special Topic in the History, Space and Society track

In-depth examination of a special topic chosen by the program, offered as a seminar.

PHSS9390 The History of Economic Thought

An introduction to key theoretical paradigms in economic theory beginning with classical political economy to Marxist political economy, welfare economics, neo-classical rational choice, Keynesian and post-Keynesian theory, dependency theory, and other theories. Islamic economic thought.

PHSS9391 Late Industrialization

A comparative study of different phases of late industrialization: Germany and the USA (19th century); the USSR (early 20th century); and Brazil, India, China, and South Korea (late 20th century). Industrialization theories and development; possibility of non-European models of industrialization. The giants of the globalized industrial future: geographical expansion, population size and the role of the state. The post industrial period: IT, the new media, and their social implications.

PHSS9392 The Agrarian Question

Comparative study of various agrarian transitions, with a new understanding and knowledge of colonial modes. Distinctions include agrarian transitions from above versus from below and those based on large plantation or capitalist agriculture versus those based on small peasant or community-based agriculture. Agrarian transition and the state; economic analysis of resource issues, policies and management (land fragmentation, mineral extraction issues, conservation easement, water rights etc). Zionist settler colonialism in Palestine and its impact on the structure and organization of Palestine's land tenure system and the agriculture-food system. The political economy of agriculture under Israeli occupation since 1967, land and water issues past and present.

PHSS9393 Special Topic in the Political Economy of Development track

In-depth examination of a special topic chosen by the program, offered as a seminar.

PHSS909 Qualifying Examination (no credit)

An assessment of students' mastery of the core themes covered in the program. Written responses to a set of questions in the program's core areas and in the student's chosen track, taken upon the completion of all required courses.

PHSS999 Dissertation

The completion of an original scholarly work based on primary sources and/or research-generated empirical data written under the close supervision of dissertation advisors. The maximum dissertation length is 400 pages or 80,000 words, all inclusive.