

ISLAMIC STUDIES (PH.D.)

Offered by: Islamic Studies (Faculty of Arts)

Degree: Doctor of Philosophy

Program Description

The PhD in Islamic Studies is a language- and research-intensive program that reflects the variety of specializations offered at the Institute in humanities and social-science disciplines (history, law, philosophy, literature, Qur'anic studies, gender studies, political science, anthropology), from the classical period to the contemporary era. The program focuses on language of Arabic and/or Persian, with additional Islamic language training offered in Turkish or Urdu for linguistic background in the geographic areas of specialization, and it requires reading knowledge in a research language other than English. The program should be completed within six years.

Note: For information about Fall 2025 and Winter 2026 course offerings, please check back on May 8, 2025. Until then, the "Terms offered" field will appear blank for most courses while the class schedule is being finalized.

Thesis

A thesis for the doctoral degree must constitute original scholarship and must be a distinct contribution to knowledge. It must show familiarity with previous work in the field and must demonstrate ability to plan and carry out research, organize results, and defend the approach and conclusions in a scholarly manner. The research presented must meet current standards of the discipline; as well, the thesis must clearly demonstrate how the research advances knowledge in the field. Finally, the thesis must be written in compliance with norms for academic and scholarly expression and for publication in the public domain.

Required Course (3 credits)

Expand allContract all

Course	Title	Credits
ISLA 603	Introductory: Research Materials - Islamic Studies.	3
ISLA 701	Comprehensive Examination.	0

Complementary Courses (27 credits)

27 credits of courses at the 500 level or higher, including 6 credits at the 600 or 700 level of seminars offered by the Institute of Islamic Studies.

*Note: For the three-year-level language requirement, either, ISLA 521D (9 credits) or ISLA 541D (6 credits) will not count toward the 27 complementary credits.

With the permission of the Institute, up to 6 credits could be taken in other departments at McGill or other institutions.

With the approval of the student's supervisor, courses taken with an IIS faculty member or an associate member in other departments

(i.e., History, Anthropology, Political Science) can count toward the coursework requirements in the same way as ISLA courses.

To avoid over-specialization, a maximum of 9 credits of content courses (i.e., courses that are not primarily devoted to language instruction) can be taken with a single Institute professor.

Language Requirements

All Ph.D. students are required to have completed three years of Arabic language or Persian language study at the IIS. Students who do not take the third level of Arabic at the Institute may demonstrate their competence by taking a proficiency examination set by the academic staff of the IIS.

In addition to Arabic or Persian, all Ph.D. students are required to have completed the equivalent of two years of language study at the IIS of another Islamic language. They may demonstrate competence in this language by taking a proficiency examination set by the academic staff of the IIS. Students are, of course, responsible for whatever higher levels are required for their research.

In addition to English, reading knowledge of one non-Islamic language (usually European) at a level of scholarly competence will be required for the Ph.D. Students must demonstrate their competence in the non-Islamic (usually European) research language by passing the Language Proficiency Examination administered by the Institute.