

PERSIAN STUDIES MAJOR

Program Director: Fatemeh Keshavarz, Ph.D.

The 36-credit major in Persian Studies (PERS) offers a comprehensive study of Persian language and culture. The program’s interdisciplinary curriculum provides students with extensive training to become proficient in the language and acquaints them with the evolution of Iranian and other Persianate cultures in their diverse perspectives, practices, and products. The B.A. in Persian Studies prepares students for a range of professional opportunities, including careers in government, education, the arts, business, international relations, and communication. Many undergraduates choose to double major or do a double degree in Persian and another subject, including agriculture, arts and humanities majors, business, computer science, engineering, international relations, and journalism.

Placement in Courses

For information about the World Language Placement, go to: <http://arhu.umd.edu/academics/world-language-placement/>.

Program Learning Outcomes

- 1. LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY:** Students will be able to perform in Modern Standard Persian across the four language skills at Intermediate Level (ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, 2012).
- 2. DISCIPLINARY KNOWLEDGE:** Students will be able to demonstrate, primarily in writing, knowledge of major trends, events, texts, and figures within the social, cultural, literary and historical contexts of Iran.
- 3. ANALYTICAL AND ARGUMENTATIVE SKILLS:** Students will be able to exhibit the ability to distinguish between fact and opinion, critically read and evaluate sources, and write extended source-based texts evincing critical analysis and evidence-based argumentation.
- 4. SOCIAL JUSTICE COMPETENCIES:** Students will be able to (a) describe various aspects of diversity in the Iranian society involving language, religion, ethnicity, gender, class, and race, as well as (b) recognize, explain, and interrogate key cultural, social, political, and historical discourses and practices that shape and challenge structures of power, privilege, oppression in Iranian society, and (c) , and make informed linguistic choices with diversity in mind and understand and describe social justice issues in Persian at the target language proficiency level.

REQUIREMENTS

Notice of Addendum: requirements for this program were updated effective Spring 2025 and have been published on ADDENDA TO THIS CATALOG (<https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/undergraduate/addenda/#persian-studies-major>).

All students planning to pursue the major in Persian Studies should contact the undergraduate advisor for Persian, who will be responsible for placement, oversight, and record keeping.

Course	Title	Credits
College Requirements (https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/undergraduate/colleges-schools/arts-humanities/#collegerequirementstext)		
Prerequisites ¹		

PERS101	Elementary Persian I	
PERS102	Elementary Persian II	
Course	Title	Credits
Core Sequence ²		18
PERS201	Intermediate Persian I	
PERS211	Intermediate Conversation	
PERS202	Intermediate Persian II	
PERS212	Intermediate Reading in Persian	
PERS301	Advanced Persian I	
PERS302	Advanced Persian II	
Electives in Persian		
Select six credits of 3xx or 4xx level electives of the following:		6
PERS311	Persian Media	
PERS312	Contemporary Iranian Culture	
PERS386	Experiential Learning	
PERS402	Persian Translation	
PERS498	Special Topics in Persian Studies	
Electives in English		
Select up to 12 credits of the following: ³		12
PERS251	Modern Iran	
PERS252	Gender and Body in Iran	
PERS283	Iranian Cinema	
PERS353	Iranian Life in Literature and Film	
PERS371	Introduction to Persian Literature in Translation	
PERS398	Special Topics in Persian Studies	
Supporting Area		
Select nine 3xx or 4xx level credits in a single area of study outside Persian Studies as a complement to the major ⁴		9

¹ There are no prerequisites for students with equivalent knowledge.

² All prerequisites imply "or equivalent knowledge." In cases where a student has equivalent knowledge, required language-focus credits are replaced in consultation with undergraduate advisor. This may include courses in Arabic for those students who intend to study Persian literature in Persian, as Arabic is integral to the history of Persian Literature.

³ No prerequisites
Courses in Middle Eastern Studies taught in English outside the department may be substituted on prior approval of the undergraduate advisor.

⁴ The area of study outside Persian Studies should be cleared with the undergraduate advisor upon declaring a major. Double majors and minors fulfill this requirement.

Students must earn a grade of "C-" or higher in each course applied toward a major or minor in the School of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures. Additionally, an overall GPA of 2.0 in a major or minor is required for graduation.

GRADUATION PLANS

Click here (<https://www.arhu.umd.edu/academics/advising/academic-plans/>) for roadmaps for graduation plans in the College of Arts and Humanities.

Additional information on developing a graduation plan can be found on the following pages:

- <http://4yearplans.umd.edu>
- the Student Academic Success-Degree Completion Policy (<https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/undergraduate/registration-academic-requirements-regulations/academic-advising/#success>) section of this catalog

OPPORTUNITIES

Scholarship Opportunities for Persian Study

Persian Language Flagship Scholarship

Persian Flagship students are eligible to receive need-based funding when it is most necessary – to support intensive domestic summer study at an approved institution (such as the University of Maryland Summer Language Institute), and for the domestic capstone year.

In order to apply for funding through the Flagship Program, students must demonstrate that they have actively pursued other scholarship opportunities. Each student has a **lifetime maximum of \$20,000** that they are eligible to receive from The Language Flagship Program.

Boren Awards

Boren Scholars and Fellows study a wide range of critical languages (<https://www.borenawards.org/eligible-programs/#languages>), including **Persian**. Boren Awards are available to students of all proficiency levels who are committed to enhancing their skills.

The Boren Fellowships offer up to **\$12,000** for summer intensive language study. If requested, the maximum total combined domestic and overseas award amount is **\$30,000**. Domestic study is entirely optional but may be useful preparation for Boren Fellows whose overseas program requires that they arrive in country with strong language skills. See further guidance here (<https://www.borenawards.org/eligible-programs/#fellows-domestic>).

Critical Language Scholarship

<http://clscholarship.org>

The Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) Program is a fully funded summer overseas language and cultural immersion program for American undergraduate and graduate students. With the goal of broadening the base of Americans studying and mastering critical languages and building relationships between the people of the United States and other countries, CLS provides opportunities to a diverse range of students from across the United States at every level of language learning.

The CLS Program is a program of the U.S. Department of State.

Location: Dushanbe, Tajikistan

Requirements: One year of Persian Study before program begins, U.S.

Citizenship

Deadline: November

Minimum GPA: N/A

Amount: Full cost of attendance provided.

Middlebury Institute of International Studies-Language Flagship Scholarship

The Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey has partnered with The Language Flagship to provide a guaranteed scholarship of **\$16,000** each year to its students. We recognize Language Flagship students and their commitment to language and cross-cultural communication as a valuable part of our campus community and global alumni network.

You may also receive additional **merit and need-based scholarships** depending on the strength of your application or financial situation.

How to Apply

1. Submit your application (<http://www.miiis.edu/admissions/apply/>) for one of our degree programs by the next **priority deadline**. Please indicate that you're affiliated with Language Flagship when prompted on the online application.
2. You may also waive your application fee at <http://go.miiis.edu/LFwaiver/>.

For a Host of Other Scholarships, Please Visit:

<http://sllc.umd.edu/special-programs/arabic-persian/persian-flagship/funding/>