

INSTITUTE OF ORIENTAL STUDIES (ILO)

HISTORY

The Saint Joseph University of Beirut (USJ) founded the Oriental College in 1902, which later evolved into the Institute of Oriental Studies (ILO). The College aimed to educate students on the rich cultural heritage of the Arab East and to advance research in related disciplines. Aligned with the Arab literary revival, it emerged as a central force in shaping the region's intellectual and cultural landscape.

Jesuit scholars, including Louis Cheikho and Henry Lammens, shaped generations of specialists in Arabic and Oriental literature, sociology, and Islamic studies. The College's publications, notably the Saint Joseph University Journal, the Mashriq Journal, and other research works, championed rigorous scholarship and highlighted the depth and diversity of Eastern and Arabic culture.

After a suspension of activities during World War I, the College resumed activities in 1933, focusing on Oriental literature. Key figures of this period include the Jesuit fathers Motard and Mesbian, Professor Fouad Afram al-Bustani, and Prince Maurice Chehab.

In 1936, USJ formalized its programs under the Institute of Oriental Studies, with oversight from the Faculty of Arts at the University of Lyon, France. ILO attracted distinguished scholars, including Father Henry Fleish, an expert in Arabic linguistics, and Professor Khalil Jarr, a specialist in Arabic philosophy. In 1977, USJ formally established the Faculty of Humanities, integrating ILO, ensuring its continued growth and influence.

Since 2002-2003, ILO has adopted the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) enhancing academic standards, fostering global collaboration, and reinforcing its distinctive focus on Arabic and Islamic studies while strengthening ties with the Arab and Islamic worlds.

MISSION

The Institute of Oriental Studies upholds the legacy of the Oriental College, founded in 1902 to study Arab Eastern culture and related disciplines. Established as an institute in 1933 and incorporated into the Faculty of Humanities in 1977, it has remained committed to the advancement of Arab culture. ILO focuses on Arabic language and literature, Islamic and Arab philosophy, Arab and Islamic history, and Islamic studies. Through this mission, it delivers high-quality education that engages the local community and the broader Arab world, while continuously enhancing research methodologies and evaluating its academic programs.

ADMINISTRATION

Director: Tony KAHWAJI

Program Directors

Bachelor and Master Programs: Pamela (El) ACHKAR SAHYOUN

PhD Program: Nada MOUAWAD

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Director of the Institute of Oriental Studies: Tony KAHWAJI

Academic Affairs Administrative Coordinator: Pamela (El) ACHKAR SAHYOUN

Institute Secretary: Tamara KARAM

Administrative Coordinator: Nadine YAMMINE

Archivist: Rima (El) HOUT

FACULTY

Associate Professors

Tony (El) KAHWAJI, Nadine ABBAS

Assistant Professors

Nada MOUAWAD, Ahmad (El) ZOABI

Lecturers

Assia (EL) MOUHTAR KAIS, Antoine (EL) SAYAH, Pamela (EL) ACHKAR SAHYOUN, Tracy AZAR, George SALHAB, Joelle FADDOUL, George YARAK, Nada EID (EL) TAYARA, Katia (EL) TAWIL, Basem (EL) RAI, Khaled SOUBEIH, Ali ABDOUN, Suzanne WAKIM, Joe (EL) KHOURY, Dorine NASR, Chadi (EL) KAHWAJI, Rose ABI AAD

DEGREES, DIPLOMAS AND CERTIFICATES AWARDED

Bachelor in Arabic Language and Literature

Bachelor in Arabic Philosophy and Civilization

Master in Arabic and Islamic Philosophy

Master in Arabic Language and Literature

Master in Islamology

PhD in Arabic and Islamic Philosophy

PhD in Arabic Language and Literature

PhD in Islamology

University Diploma in Contemporary Approaches to Religious Texts (Exegesis, Interpretation, and Deconstruction)

University Diploma in Arabic Digital Content

University Diploma in Arabic Screenwriting I

University Diploma in Arabic Screenwriting II

University Diploma in Journalism and Investigation in Arabic

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Teaching Arabic Language and Literature

Teaching Philosophy

Teaching Islamic Studies

Conducting Research in These Fields

Working in Journalism

Working in Publishing

Providing Language Editing Services

Practicing Creative Writing

Managing Communication and Social Media

Creating Content

TUITION FEES

Bachelor in Arabic Language and Literature, Bachelor in Arabic Philosophy and Civilization: 63 Fresh US Dollars and 2,412,000 Lebanese Pounds (for semester 1), equivalent in Fresh US Dollars to 90 (exchange rate = 89,500 LBP).

Master in Arabic and Islamic Philosophy, Master in Arabic Language and Literature, Master in Islamology: 63 Fresh US Dollars and 2,412,000 Lebanese Pounds (for semester 1), equivalent in Fresh US Dollars to 90 (exchange rate = 89,500 LBP).

PhD in Arabic and Islamic Philosophy, PhD in Arabic Language and Literature, PhD in Islamology: 76 Fresh US Dollars and 2,865,000 Lebanese Pounds (for semester 1), equivalent in Fresh US Dollars to 108 (exchange rate = 89,500 LBP).