

## MIDDLE EAST IMMERSION

*Learn. Serve. Experience the Middle East!*



### What is the Middle East Immersion?

The Middle East Immersion (MEI) was designed for students wanting to experience firsthand the opportunities and challenges of Christian service in the Middle East. Under the mentorship of respected scholars and experienced practitioners, students in the MEI program practice intercultural work in a dynamic context and engage in mutual learning between Christian and Muslim communities.

Centered on critically reflective practice, MEI provides students the opportunity to earn academic credit and fulfill practicum requirements while being exposed to the language, peoples and cultures of one of the region's most vibrant cities.

MEI is a program of the Institute of Middle East Studies (IMES), a department of the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary (ABTS) based in Beirut, Lebanon. IMES' mandate is to bring about positive transformation in thinking and practice between Christians and Muslims in the Middle East and beyond. In pursuit of its mandate, IMES prioritizes education, peacebuilding, and justice advocacy.

### What will you be doing in Lebanon?

As part of their immersive experience, students:

- *Participate in IMES' annual Middle East Consultation, exploring issues of critical concern for the regional Body of Christ*
- *Study Intensive Levantine Arabic, the spoken language of the Lebanese*
- *Acquire hands-on, intercultural experience serving at a local ministry placement in and around Beirut*
- *Explore the many historical and natural treasures Lebanon has to offer through excursions and cultural exchanges*
- *Gather together regularly with fellow students and instructors for debriefing, reflection, discussion and*



Beginning with the Middle East Consultation, MEI runs for six weeks through June and July each summer. MEC 2017 (19-23 June ) will focus on *The Church in Disorienting Times: Leading Prophetically through Adversity.*

## Academics

Students can earn academic credit for their participation in the following courses:

- **Middle East Consultation**

Hosted annually by IMES, the purpose of the Middle East Consultation (MEC) is “to equip participants to respond in prophetic and Christ-like ways to the many challenges facing Christians and Muslims in and beyond the Middle East.”

- **Intensive Levantine Arabic**

This course consists of intensive Arabic language learning through IMES’ Academy of Languages and Practical Skills (ALPS). The ALPS method, carefully developed by linguistic specialists, is designed to introduce students to Arabic culture and daily life through the study of language.

- **Cross-Cultural Work in Context**

As part of this course, MEI students acquire hands-on, intercultural experience serving at a local ministry placement in Lebanon. Students and faculty come together regularly to reflect critically and theologically upon their ministry and service in light of the religions, cultures, history and politics of the Middle East.



*Round table discussions—MEC 2015*



*Students learning Levantine Arabic at ALPS*

## Why Lebanon?

Located on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, Lebanon is rich in history, archeology, culture and religion. Exemplifying an ‘east meets west’ ethos, Lebanon has long been regarded as the gateway to the Middle East. It could be said that the capital city of Beirut embodies the beauty and pain of diversity, playing host to a dizzying array of religious and social groups.

As the epicenter of the global refugee crisis, however, Lebanon has come under immense pressure in recent years with over a quarter of its population now Syrian, Iraqi or Palestinian refugees. Yet in spite of the trauma of civil war and the current refugee crisis, Lebanon remains a place of creative ideas and intrigue, an ideal location for those called to cross-cultural ministry, Christian-Muslim engagement, community development, or peacebuilding.



*MEI students experiencing the beauty of Lebanese nature at the Cedars Forest.*



For more information about the Middle East Immersion:

- [IMES@abtslebanon.org](mailto:IMES@abtslebanon.org)
- +961 4 400250/x287
- P.O. Box 60 Mansourieh – Matn – Lebanon
- [www.abtslebanon.org/mei](http://www.abtslebanon.org/mei) | [IMESLebanon.wordpress.com/mei](http://IMESLebanon.wordpress.com/mei)

