The Religious Studies program at the University of Utah, in conjunction with the Classics Section of the Department of Languages, offers a two-year sequence in the Coptic language. During the first year, students not only learn the grammar and syntax of Sahidic Coptic, but also read selections from Coptic Christian text (primarily from the New Testament and the Nag Hammadi library). The second year is devoted to intensive reading of Coptic texts, including some of the works of Shenouda, Abbot of the White Monastery and prolific author of original (i.e., non-translated) Coptic works. At the end of this sequence, the student is well equipped to read and understand any Coptic text independent of the classroom.

Although this two-year sequence focuses on the language of Egypt in the Christian era, students also learn much about the history of Egypt—its language, religion, and culture—as well as about early Christianity and Gnosticism, a theology that pervades the Nag Hammadi library.

The development of a curriculum in Coptic studies at the University of Utah was initiated many years ago thanks to the generosity of the Atiya family and their commitment to Middle East studies at the UU. The UU is now one of the rare American universities offering course in Coptic. Students who are interested in studying Coptic should contact the undergraduate director in the department of Languages and Literature.

Marriott Library Middle East Collection

History of the Atiya family at the University of Utah
    Middle East Center Website
    Marriott Library Website

RESOURCES

International Association for Coptic Studies

Claremont Graduate University/Coptic Studies Council

Minor in Coptic Studies at the American University in Cairo

Coptic at the University of Toronto