Suggested Reading for AMES applicants

AMES applicants are not expected to know the language(s) they are coming to study, but you will be asked about how your interests in the language and area have developed. What have you read that sparked your curiosities? What are you reading now that shows you are consistently interested? Have you travelled somewhere that made you want to learn more about this culture? What do you think you might find if you travelled to the Middle East, to Jordan or Palestine, or to China, Japan, Korea? Below are some introductory readings that you might find interesting. Students are encouraged to read as many translated modern works of literature as possible.

Arabic

- Novels in translation especially works by Naguib Mahfouz, Ghassan Kanafani, Mahmoud Darwish.

Further suggestions:
http://www.ames.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate/middle-east/arabic/reading

Anthropology and Politics

S. Caton. Yemen Chronicle: An Anthropology of War and Meditation. Hill and Wang (2005). This is a first-hand account of the trials, tribulations, and triumphs of one anthropologist’s fieldwork in Yemen. It’s a pleasurable read and a nice introduction to what anthropologists actually do.

- Great websites to keep you up to date on current affairs and politics in the Middle East:
  - Jadaliyya: http://www.jadaliyya.com/ Jadaliyya provides a unique source of insight and critical analysis that combines local knowledge, scholarship, and advocacy with an eye to audiences in the United States, the Arab world, and beyond.
  - Middle East Research & Information Project: http://www.merip.org/
  - The Middle East Channel: http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/
  - Al-Jazeera English: http://www.aljazeera.com/
History

William L. Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, third edition, Boulder, Colorado (2004). This is a very accessible textbook that provides a good outline of the modern history and politics of the region.

Persian

- *The Ruba’iyat of Omar Khayyam*, translated by P. Avery and J. Heath-Stubbs. London: Penguin Classics. (1979). The first sentence is “Although I have a handsome face and colour, Cheek like the tulips, form like the cypress, It is not clear why the Eternal Painter Thus tricked me out for the dusty show-booth of earth.” Doesn’t that make you want to read more from this classic Persian poet?


Further suggestions:
http://www.ames.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate/middle-east/persian/reading

Hebrew and Semitic Studies

- Have a look at what is published by Ibis Editions http://www.ibiseditions.com/home/

- S. Yizhar (Author), Nicholas de Lange (Translator), Yaacob Dweck (Translator), *Khirbet Khizeh*


Further suggestions:
http://www.ames.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate/middle-east/hebrew/reading
Chinese


  
  An overview of Chinese history, which effectively presents the grand drama of the past few centuries of political and cultural change in China.

  
  A highly insightful portrayal of Chinese social and political life in the eighteenth century. Novel in its focus on popular religious obsessions, it makes a significant watershed in Western writing about Chinese social history.

  
  Also known as *The Dream of the Red Chamber*, this eighteenth century masterpiece of Chinese fiction tells of the rise and fall of a large upper-class family. Its rich detail and psychological realism combine to fascinate the reader with the complexity of late imperial life. It is essential, and enjoyable, reading for any student of China.

Further suggestions:
http://www.ames.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate/east-asia/chinese-studies/reading

Japanese and Korean

Be sure to review the departmental webpage explaining what advance language work you’ll need to do before arriving:

http://www.ames.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate/east-asia/japanese-studies/reading

An interesting novel in translation is *Some Prefer Nettles*, by Tanizaki Jun'ichiro,

In the first year you will be following a course on East Asian history covering Japan, China and Korea. To prepare for this you should read about each area so that you have a general knowledge of the outline of the history of Japan, China and Korea.

Brigitte Steger and Angelica Koch (eds.) *Manga Girl Seeks Herbivore Boy: Studying Japanese Gender at Cambridge* (Lit Publisher, 2013) is a collection of undergraduate research dissertations by Cambridge AMES students on gender issues in Japanese culture.
Some recommended online academic sources are:

- *Japan Focus* [http://www.japanfocus.org/](http://www.japanfocus.org/)

Korea

- B. Cumings, *Korea’s Place in the Sun: a modern history*
- K. Pratt, *Everlasting flower: a history of Korea*

Recommended Modern Fiction

- Tanizaki Jun'ichiro, *Some Prefer Nettles*
- Oe Kenzaburo, *Teach Us to Outgrow Our Madness*
- Tsushima Yuko, *Child of Fortune*