



**ONE YEAR CERTIFICATE
PROGRAM IN HUMANITIES**

2025–2026 Academic Year
Theme: State, Society, Freedom, and Democracy



01. GENERAL INFORMATION

OBJECTIVE

Jina Academy's One-Year Certificate in Humanities offers an interdisciplinary, multilingual, and decolonial education focused on the complex relations between state, society, and freedom. The 2025-26 theme centers on exploring governance, resistance, and transformative imaginaries through the lens of Kurdish, Iranian, and global experiences. The program seeks to:

01. Provide students with critical theoretical tools to analyze structures of power, governance, and resistance.
02. Engage with decolonial, feminist, and intersectional approaches to knowledge production.
03. Equip students with methodological skills for community-based, participatory, and activist research.
04. Endorse transnational solidarity and locally grounded engagement with democratic and emancipatory movements.

STUDY LOAD AND ACCREDITATION

- Total credits: **6 credits**
 - 5 modules (1 credit each)
 - 1 Summer School Program or Final Research Paper (1 credit)
- Each module lasts 8 to 12 weeks and includes weekly (3 hours per week) lectures, guest speaker sessions, workshops, and guided readings.
- The program follows the University of Toronto's graduate-level credit system, especially MA programs in social sciences and humanities, where applicable.
- Instruction languages: Kurdish (Sorani) and Persian, with select programs offered in English with interpretation option.

PROGRAM TIMELINE

- **Start date:** Mid-November 2025
- **End date:** June 2026
- **Summer School:** June 2026 (Optional in place of final paper)
- **Two semesters:**
 - Semester 1: November – February
 - Semester 2: March – June

02. CURRICULUM STRUCTURE

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

- **Fundamental Modules (2 credits required):**
Provide foundational theoretical and methodological knowledge.
- **Elective Modules (3 credits required):**
Allow students to tailor learning toward specific thematic interests.
- **Capstone Requirement (1 credit):**
Fulfilled through participation in the Summer School Program or submission of a final research paper



03. COURSES

SEMESTER ONE

THEORIES OF THE STATE AND SOVEREIGNTY (FUNDAMENTAL | 12 WEEKS | 1 CREDIT).

Azad Hajiagha (Persian)

Building on Stuart Elden's *The Birth of Territory* and employing a Foucauldian genealogical methodology, this module interrogates the historical constitution of the modern nation-state and the conceptualisation of political sovereignty by situating them within the problematic of property. It engages students with the genealogical roots of sovereignty and the state in political thought, while simultaneously foregrounding critical interventions that destabilise and challenge the category of the modern nation-state. Through an exploration of the entanglements between property, identity, history, and geography as mediated by relations of power, the module illuminates the conditions under which sovereignty has been historically articulated and contested. It further situates contemporary struggles for governance beyond the state within these trajectories, emphasising the epistemic and political significance of democratic practices from below as disruptive forces vis-à-vis the logics of modern governance.

RESEARCH METHODS AND DECOLONIAL EPISTEMOLOGIES (FUNDAMENTAL | 12 WEEKS | 1 CREDIT).

Atefeh Ramsari (Persian)

Focusing on qualitative, participatory, and decolonial research methods, this module equips students with tools for critical inquiry under conditions of surveillance and authoritarianism. It explores ethnography, oral history, storytelling, and digital ethnography as both scholarly techniques and modes of resistance. Students will examine the politics of knowledge production, ethical dilemmas in fieldwork, and emerging questions surrounding AI and data in social research. The course prioritizes community-based and anti-extractive research, emphasizing methodologies rooted in local struggle and solidarity.

MODERN HISTORY OF KURDISTAN AND THE KURDISH STRUGGLE FOR SELF-DETERMINATION (ELECTIVE | 8-10 WEEKS | 1 CREDIT)

Hawzhin Baghali (Persian with tutorials in Kurdish & Persian)

This module provides a critical historical overview of the Kurdish people's quest for self-determination, tracing key events, ideologies, and movements across colonial and postcolonial contexts. It analyzes the role of Kurdish intellectuals, guerrilla movements, autonomous administrations, and cultural resistance in shaping political identities and imaginaries. The course also reflects on historiographical challenges and the importance of reclaiming subjugated narratives.

POLITICAL ECONOMY, NEOLIBERALISM, AND EXTRACTIVISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST (ELECTIVE | 8-10 WEEKS | 1 CREDIT)

Qaraman Hasan (Kurdish)

Examining the political economy of the Middle East through a critical lens, this module explores neoliberal restructuring, rentier state dynamics, and extractivist regimes in Iran and the region. It analyzes the structural impacts of privatization, informal economies, and class stratification, with a focus on the lived experiences of marginalized populations in Kurdistan. The module also investigates grassroots economic alternatives and resistance movements, inviting students to consider degrowth, cooperative economies, and post-capitalist futures.

SEMESTER TWO**CITIZENSHIP AND STATE: IDENTITY, RIGHTS AND BORDER****Atefeh Ramsari (Persian)**

Citizenship is a central topic in political and academic debates, shaping discussions on who has the right to enter, reside, work, study, and participate in the social and political life of a society. This course examines how citizenship constructs and dissolves boundaries, influencing social inequalities both within and beyond state borders. Divided into three parts, the course provides a comprehensive introduction to key perspectives and contemporary debates on citizenship. The first part explores the concept of citizenship, tracing its historical evolution and defining its core meanings. The second part examines various theoretical frameworks that shape our understanding of citizenship. Finally, the third part analyzes the opportunities and challenges that citizenship presents at individual, national, and international levels across different contexts.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, ANTI-COLONIAL STRUGGLES, AND RADICAL PRAXIS (ELECTIVE | 8-10 WEEKS | 1 CREDIT)**Seevan Saeed (Kurdish)**

Centering the role of popular mobilization in transforming society, this module introduces key theories of social movements, including revolutionary, legal, and abolitionist frameworks. It explores anti-colonial uprisings, feminist revolts, labor strikes, and student movements with a focus on Kurdish and Iranian contexts. Highlighting the Jina uprising and Rojava's social revolution, the module foregrounds the agency of subaltern actors and the practical challenges of sustaining radical praxis in repressive environments.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, LAND, AND CLIMATE STRUGGLES (ELECTIVE | 8-10 WEEKS | 1 CREDIT)**Nastaran Saremy (Persian)**

Exploring the political ecology of Iran and Kurdistan, this module examines the environmental consequences of state policy, extractivism, and climate crisis. It highlights the centrality of land and ecological knowledge in Indigenous and grassroots movements, while investigating the intersection of environmental and social justice. Students will study ecofeminism, land reclamation, and alternative models of sustainability rooted in local communities.

NATION, NATIONALISM, AND MINORITIZATION (ELECTIVE | 8-10 WEEKS | 1 CREDIT)**Sara Kermanian (Persian)**

This module critically engages with the concepts of nation and nationalism, tracing their historical development and examining how they contribute to the processes of minoritization and exclusion. Focusing on the Middle East, and particularly on Iran and Kurdistan, the course investigates how modern states construct national identity while marginalizing ethnic, linguistic, and religious minorities.

WOMEN, GENDER LIBERATION, AND INTERSECTIONAL STRUGGLES (ELECTIVE | 8-10 WEEKS | 1 CREDIT)**Rojin Mukriyan (Kurdish)**

This module offers a critical feminist and queer analysis of the state, nationalism, and patriarchy, focusing on gendered forms of violence and resistance. It explores the role of women and queer communities in shaping uprisings, organizing autonomously, and envisioning liberatory futures. Drawing on decolonial and Indigenous feminist perspectives, students engage with the Kurdish Women's Movement and feminist resistance in Iran as key case studies of intersectional struggle.

04. CAPSTONE COMPONENT (1 CREDIT – MANDATORY)

OPTION A: SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAM

The summer school is a three-week (total of 8 sessions each 3-4 hours) immersive experience combining theoretical instruction with activist training. Students will engage in workshops related to the certificate program's focus as well as on topics such as democratic alternatives, gender justice, youth organizing, media literacy, and participatory governance. Facilitated in collaboration with regional and international scholars and organizers, the summer school offers an opportunity to synthesize learning through collective engagement. The theme of the summer school will be finalized at a later date.

OPTION B: FINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Students who opt not to attend the summer school will complete a supervised research paper (approximately 6000 words) drawing on program content and independent inquiry. This capstone paper may include field research, virtual ethnography, or critical theoretical analysis and is intended to reflect the students' cumulative learning and intellectual growth.

05. PROGRAM FEATURES

RADICAL INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

Courses integrate multiple disciplines—political theory, history, anthropology, gender studies, sociology, critical geography—while prioritizing decolonial, feminist, and participatory pedagogies.

MULTILINGUAL AND DECOLONIZED CURRICULUM

With instruction primarily in Persian and Kurdish and selected modules in English, the program centers indigenous knowledge and regional languages while fostering international dialogue.

ACCESSIBLE AND HYBRID LEARNING

Students across Kurdistan, Iran, and the diaspora can access the program through a flexible online format complemented by hybrid workshops and the summer school.

PRIVACY AND SECURITY

Strong privacy and security protocols ensure safe participation in all aspects of the program, including anonymized platforms, encrypted communications, and protective policies for students at risk.





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