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# LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

This report concludes my sixth and last year as director of Middle East Studies (MES). It has been an extraordinary journey of rapid growth and community building. What began as a concentration in 2012 is now one of the top MES programs in the United States. By the end of this year, MES will transition into a center within the Watson Institute and enter the final phase of endowing its operations.

Unlike the traditional area studies models in peer institutions, MES is organized around signature thematic research initiatives – such as Displacement and the Making of the Modern World, New Directions in Palestinian Studies, and Islam and the Humanities – that tap into Brown's tradition of interdisciplinary and engaged scholarship. Through collaborative partnerships around these themes, MES has succeeded in integrating Middle East studies into the larger streams of intellectual life at Brown University by building a cutting-edge research community, by producing innovative and relevant programming, and by offering an exciting array of courses and opportunities for students.



Over the past six years, the number of core faculty and concentrators has tripled. There are currently 28 declared concentrators, and almost 1500 students enrolled in Middle East courses in 2017-2018. The number of graduate students increased from 26 in 2014 to 38 in 2017. This has had a positive impact on student interest in Middle East languages. In Arabic, for instance, enrollments in the advanced third-year course have more than doubled over the past five years.

Shahzad Bashir, Aga Khan Professor of Islamic Humanities, joined our faculty this year, and I am pleased to report that he will succeed me as director starting July 1, 2018. I am confident that under his leadership, MES will consolidate the national reputation it has earned for its innovative approach to regional studies. I am also thrilled to report that the search for a senior anthropologist to fill the Stephen Robert Chair has concluded successfully with the hiring of Nadje al-Ali, a leading scholar of gender and politics in the modern Middle East.

MES was built from the bottom up around the engaged scholarship of our faculty and the intellectual passions of our students. Since 2012, MES has organized over 250 events, 46 of which were conferences and workshops. These resulted in several publications, including an edited volume on digital humanities, special issues of journals, and the launching by the University of California Press of two book series headed by MES faculty.

The Middle East has long been a pivotal region that is key to understanding global challenges and transformations. Yet, the contrast between mainstream public discourse and rigorous knowledge production has never been so stark. At MES, we are dedicated to producing informed and impactful scholarship and to providing our students with the tools they need to make a positive difference.

Thank you, as always, for your support.

#### **Beshara Doumani**

Joukowsky Family Distinguished Professor of Modern Middle East History Director, Middle East Studies

# ABOUT US

# MISSION

Middle East Studies at Brown University promotes knowledge, understanding, and informed discussion about the Middle East societies through research, teaching, and public engagement.

# ABOUT

Housed in the Watson Institute and supported by the Dean of Faculty, Middle East Studies (MES) has, since 2012, grown from an undergraduate concentration into one of the top programs in the country. Eschewing the hothouse legacy structures of the conventional Oriental and area studies models, MES is driven by thematic research initiatives that tap into Brown's tradition of interdisciplinary, critical, and engaged scholarship. Through collaborative partnerships around these themes, MES integrates Middle East studies into the larger streams of intellectual life at Brown University by building a cutting-edge research community, by producing innovative programming, and by offering an exciting array of courses and opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students.

(from left): Saraya McPherson, Beshara Doumani, and Barbara Oberkoetter



# ABOUT US

# RESEARCH INITIATIVES

Middle East Studies is organized around niche research initiatives that seek to shape fields of knowledge through annual workshops, publications, pedagogy, and public outreach.



ARTS AND SOCIAL CHANGE



DIGITAL ISLAMIC HUMANITIES



DISPLACEMENT AND THE MAKING OF THE MODERN WORLD



ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP



ISLAM AND THE HUMANITIES



NEW DIRECTIONS IN PALESTINIAN STUDIES

# PEOPLE



# BESHARA DOUMANI

DIRECTOR; JOUKOWSKY FAMILY DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR OF MODERN MIDDLE EAST HISTORY

During his tenure as director of Middle East Studies, the program has grown exponentially, becoming one of the top Middle East centers in the US.

# SHAMIRAN MAKO

VISITING ASSISTANT PROFESSOR IN MIDDLE EAST STUDIES; MIDDLE EAST STUDIES DIRECTOR OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES

Serves as a representative of the program for current and incoming students, oversees undergraduate advising and the undergraduate curriculum, and teaches courses.





BARBARA OBERKOETTER

PROGRAM MANAGER

Oversees administrative processes.

SARAYA MCPHERSON

ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR

Assists with administrative processes.

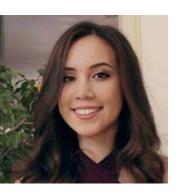


# PEOPLE



PHIL LAI '13
PHD STUDENT AT HARVARD

Is the mastermind behind Middle East Studies' visual identity, and is called upon to create graphic designs for the program's larger conferences and workshops



HANNAH CHOW '20

**GRAPHIC DESIGNER** 

Is the student behind Middle East Studies' lecture, luncheon seminar, film, and undergraduate paper series poster creation.



WEBSITE ASSISTANT

Facilitated the production of the Middle East Studies' initiatives websites; Islam and the Humanities, and New Directions in Palestinian Studies.





KATE TALERICO '18

WEBSITE DESIGNER AND COORDINATOR

Has been the talent behind Middle East Studies' initiative websites since the day she set foot on Brown's campus four years ago.



STUDENT ASSISTANT

Has been an invaluable resource for Middle East Studies' behind-the-scenes operations.



# FACULTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



# BESHARA DOUMANI

#### CHAIR: JOUKOWSKY FAMILY DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR OF MODERN MIDDLE EAST HISTORY

Social history of groups, places, and time periods marginalized by mainstream scholarship on the early modern and modern Middle East. Also writes on population displacement, academic freedom, politics of knowledge production, and the Palestinian condition.

# FAIZ AHMED

#### ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF HISTORY

Legal and constitutional history of the Middle East and Islamicate world, including student and scholarly networks, constitutional movements and state building, and international law and diplomacy from the Ottoman Empire to the British Raj, and from the eastern Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean.





# SHAHZAD BASHIR

#### AGA KHAN PROFESSOR OF ISLAMIC HUMANITIES; PROFESSOR OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Islamic studies with interest in the intellectual and social histories of the societies of Iran and Central and South Asia circa fourteenth century CE to the present, as well as temporality and historiography, corporeality, the study of Sufism and Shi'ism, and messianic movements originating in Islamic contexts.

# **EMILY DRUMSTA**

#### ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF MODERN ARABIC LITERATURE AND COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

Modern Arabic and Francophone literatures, with particular focus on form and disillusionment in the Arabic novel, the politics of meter in modernist Arabic poetics, and negotiations of language and identity in North African literature and culture.



# FACULTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

# YANNIS HAMILAKIS

JOUKOWSKY FAMILY PROFESSOR OF ARCHAEOLOGY

Socio-politics of the past, the body and bodily senses, the archaeology of eating and drinking, the ontology and materiality of photography, archaeology and nationalism, archaeological ethnography, and critical pedagogy in archaeology.





SREEMATI MITTER

KUTAYBA ALGHANIM ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AND INTERNATIONAL AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Legal and constitutional history of the Middle East and Islamicate world, including student and scholarly networks, constitutional movements and state building, and international law and diplomacy from the Ottoman Empire to the British Rai, and from the eastern Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean.

# ELIAS MUHANNA

#### MANNING ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

Classical Arabic literature and Islamic intellectual history in addition to encyclopedic texts in the Islamic world and Europe, the cultural production of the Mamluk Empire, and the problem of the vernacular in different literary traditions





ADI OPHIR

MELLON VISITING PROFESSOR OF HUMANITIES AND MIDDLE EAST STUDIES

Contemporary continental philosophy, political theory, and political theology, and, in particular, the socially structured existential and political nature of evil.



### **NEW DIRECTIONS IN PALESTINIAN STUDIES**

2014 WORKSHOP
POLITICAL ECONOMY
AND ECONOMY OF
THE POLITICAL

2015 WORKSHOP
PALESTINE:
POLITICAL CULTURES
AND THE CULTURES
OF POLITICS

2016 WORKSHOP

APPROACHES TO RESEARCH ON PALESTINE AND THE PALESTINIANS 2017 WORKSHOP

THE POLITICS OF ARCHIVES AND THE PRACTICES OF MEMORY 2018 WORKSHOP

THE SHADOW YEARS: MATERIAL HISTORIES OF EVERYDAY LIFE



# NEW DIRECTIONS IN PALESTINIAN STUDIES



**New Directions in Palestinian Studies (NDPS)** brings together emerging and established scholars to shape knowledge production on Palestine and the Palestinians. Since it was established by **Beshara Doumani** in 2013, NDPS has built an international community of scholars through an annual workshop that takes stock of research trends, identifies promising new questions and sources, and encourages networking across institutions. NDPS also supports the careers of young scholars through an endowed postdoctoral fellowship and a book series with the University of California Press.



The 2018 workshop, titled *The Shadow Years: Material Histories of Everyday Life*, explored everyday struggles of Palestinians for survival and dignified lives during the periods hidden in the shadows of transformative events such as World War I, 1948, and 1967. In particular, participants examined the social lives of things (including cement and tobacco), the built environment, and infrastructural projects that inform the material histories of everyday life, recasting and contextualizing trauma and violence within Palestinian society.

Papers from the workshop will appear in forthcoming special issues of the *Journal of Palestine Studies* and *Jerusalem Quarterly.* 

# RESEARCH INITIATIVES

# ISLAM AND THE HUMANITIES



**Islam and the Humanities** is a research initiative led by **Shahzad Bashir**, Aga Khan Professor of Islamic Humanities. It forges deliberate connections between the study of Islam and Muslims and topics engaged by scholars in the humanities in general. The initiative's website is intended as a hub for the relevant faculty and students at Brown, also signaling Brown's commitment to the field for the outside world.



The initiative's first conference—titled **Assessing the Islamic Past: Historical and Philosophical Interventions** —was held on April 20 and 21, 2018, with co-sponsorship from the Cogut Institute for the Humanities and the departments of History and Religious Studies. Papers and discussions at the conference explored epistemological questions and case studies pertaining to the history of Islam. Papers presented at the conference will result in a special issue of the prestigious journal *History and Theory.* 

In addition to events, *Islam and the Humanities* sponsors a new open access book series titled *Islamic Humanities*, edited by Professor Bashir and published by the University of California Press. The first book in the series (Shenila Khoja-Moolji's *Forging the Ideal Educated Girl: The Production of Desirable Subjects in Muslim South Asia*) will be released in July 2018.







IslamandtheHumanities@brown.edu

# annual conference



# **ASSESSING THE ISLAMIC PAST:**Historical and Philosophical Interventions

### April 20-21, 2018

Joukowsky Forum, Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs





# ARTS AND SOCIAL CHANGE



The arts have played a pivotal role in shaping and transforming Middle Eastern and Muslim societies, past and present. Through annual workshops, curated exhibits and performances, and visiting professorships and lectures, this research initiative cultivates a network of scholars passionate about the relationship between the arts and social agency. The aim is to support, innovate, work, and shape research agendas in the fields of Islamic art and architecture, Middle Eastern cinema and photography, fine arts and visual culture, and music and dance.

The November 3-4 symposium *The Afterlives of Witnessing: Moving Images from the Levant and the Political Imagination* brought together leading scholars, curators, and artists to consider the meanings and mediations of the act of witnessing in contemporary film/video from Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine/Israel.



Organized by **Hanan Toukan**, Adrienne Minassian Visiting Professor in History of Art and Architecture and in Middle East Studies, and **Kareem Estefan**, PhD student in Modern Culture and Media, the symposium provided a forum to discuss how artists in the Levant are transforming documents of violence into forms and narratives that propose new ways of understanding history, identity, and community. The program served as a meeting point for thinkers hailing from various arts and humanities disciplines, including history, anthropology, art history, media studies, film studies, curatorial practice, and art practice.

On the evening before the symposium, Magic Lantern Cinema screened political and experimental video/film works from the Levant to a large audience of students, faculty, and community members at the List Art Center.

The symposium organizers plan to publish a selection of texts on symposium themes in a journal such as *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication, Middle East Critique*, or *Studies in Documentary Film*.

# RESEARCH INITIATIVES

# ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP



**Engaged Scholarship: The Politics and Ethics of Knowledge Production** is a Middle East Studies initiative that aims to generate a critical conversation among scholars from across the disciplines and area studies about what it means to put intellectual work in the service of engaged scholarship, broadly defined.



Organized by **Narges Bajoghli**, postdoctoral research associate in international affairs at the Watson Institute, and hosted by Middle East Studies, the fifth Engaged Scholarship Conference, titled *Middle East Toxic Wars*, took place on November 10, 2017.

This conference brought together scholars and filmmakers from around the world to discuss the three main themes of the conference: *Investigating Ground Zero, Illicit Trade of Deadly Bombs*, and *Global Legacies of Toxic Landscapes*. The Middle East has been ground zero for the major chemical attacks of the past 40 years. From the Iran-Iraq War (1980-88), to the Persian Gulf War (1991), to the Syrian Civil War (2011-present), countless civilians and soldiers have been exposed to chemical agents and hundreds of thousands of survivors live with the long-term consequences of these bombs. Yet, there has been limited scholarly and public work about chemical warfare and the traces it leaves behind in the region: from its illicit international trade, to the lives of survivors post-exposure, to the environmental disasters these bombs unleash.









**Critical Conversations 9** 

# PERMISSION TO SPEAK:

**BOYCOTT AND THE POLITICS OF SOLIDARITY** 

with Panelists

NASSER ABOURAHME, Columbia University
ARIELLA AZOULAY, Brown University
KAREEM ESTEFAN, Brown University
LAURA RAICOVICH, former director of Queens Museum
SHERENE SEIKALY, University of California, Santa Barbara

and Chair

**BESHARA DOUMANI**, Brown University

THURSDAY MARCH 8, 2018 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Friedman Auditorium Metcalf Research Building, 190 Thayer Street

OPEN TO THE BROWN COMMUNITY BROWN ID REQUIRED





# CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS

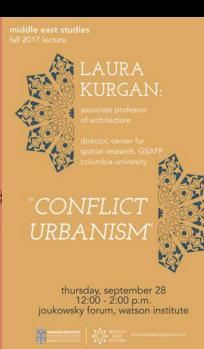
Critical Conversations is Middle East Studies' public discussion on issues of particular political urgency and historical significance. Featuring distinguished panelists from both inside and outside of Brown, Critical Conversations brings together academics, practitioners, and audience members for informal, invigorated discussions. The primary purpose of each Critical Conversations meeting is to detail the fundamental structures, power relations, and deep politics of the topic at hand.

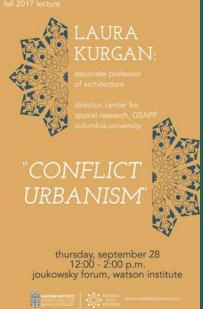
# PERMISSION TO SPEAK: BOYCOTT AND THE POLITICS OF SOLIDARITY

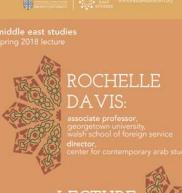
The ninth Critical Conversations panel engaged with the politics of boycott and solidarity, grappling with the question of whether boycotts foreclose or open up socially productive conversations about the ethics of cultural and academic production as well as the possibility of intersectional solidarity such as the BDS movement. Panelists Nasser Abourahme, Ariella Azoulay, Kareem Estefan, Laura Raicovich, and Sherene Seikaly and panel chair Beshara Doumani engaged a large audience on March 8, 2018.

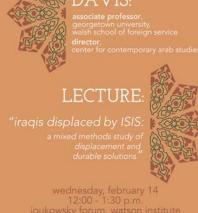
# PROGRAMMING LECTURES

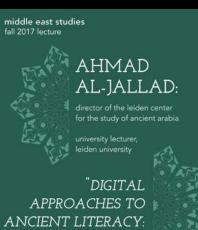


















THE CASE OF SAFAITIC



ALIA

'03 AM'04

AL-SENUSSI:









# LECTURE



### middle east studies

middle east studies

fall 2017 lecture











# Laleh Khalili

professor of middle east politics SOAS, university of london

Quartermasters of Capital:

US Army Corps of Engineers and the Making of Infrastructures in the Arabian Peninsula

> 12:00 - 2:00 p.m. tuesday, november 14, 2017 brown faculty club, by invitation



# Khaled Fahmy

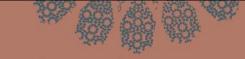
sultan qaboos bin sa'id professor of modern arabic studies, faculty of asian and middle eastern studies, university of cambridge; AMES director of studies, king's college, cambridge

> Open Up a Few Corpses: Dissection, Shari'a, and Justice In Modern Egypt

> > 12:00 - 2:00 p.m. tuesday, april 17, 2018 brown faculty club, by invitation



# PETER GREEN LECTURES ON THE MODERN MIDDLE EAST



middle east studies

# Adi Ophii

mellon visiting professor of humanities & middle east studies

"Israel/Palestine the Exception, the Example. viddle east studies

unchean seminar series

### Amir Moosavi

visiting assistant professor in modern iranian studies

"Writing After the Middle East's 1979 Moment': middle east studies luncheon seminar series

# Shahzad Bashir

aga khan professor of islamic humanities

"Time Interrupted: Islamic Lives of a Historiographical Seduction"

# LUNCHEON SEMINARS

middle east studies

# Shamiran Mako

visiting assistant professor in middle east studies director of undergraduate studies

"Institutions, Exclusion, and Communal Conflict in Irag" middle east studies luncheon seminar series

# Guy Ben-Porat

visiting associate professor of international and public affairs senior fellow in international and public affairs

"Police, Violence, and Legitimacy: middle east studies

# Alex Winder

postdoctoral research associate in palestinian studies

"Race, Religion, Empire and the Palestine Police: In Pursuit of a 'Suitable Proportion of Neutrals"

# PROGRAMMING

# SCREENINGS

Special appreciation is extended to:

Vangelis Calotychos, visiting associate professor of comparative literature, who organized Confined Spaces, Political Choices in New Films from the Middle East:

Dr. Pelin Kadercan, affiliated scholar, Middle East Studies, who organized the screening of Araf (Somewhere in Between) and Abluka (Frenzy);

and Mai Masri, for the screening of her 2016 film 3000 Nights.



director jafar panahi organized by vangelis calotychos, visiting associate professor of comparative literature

82 minutes first in the series of "confined spaces, political choices in new films from the middle east"

tuesday, october 3 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

joukowsky forum, watson institute

director mohamed diab organized by vangelis calotychos, visiting associate professor of comparative literature

wednesday, november 15 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

joukowsky forum, watson institute

97 minutes

second in the series of "confined spaces, political choices in new films from the middle east"



middle east studies film series spring 2018







CONFINED SPACES, POLITICAL CHOICES IN NEW FILMS FROM THE MIDDLE EAST



WATSON INSTITUTE MISSING BUFF

77 minutes

third in the series of "confined spaces, political choices in new films from the middle east"

director youssef chahine

organized by vangelis calotychos visiting associate professor of comparative literature

> comments by emily drumsta assistant professor of comparative literature to follow film screening

tuesday, january 30, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. joukowsky forum, watson institute





2016

86 minutes

final in the series of "confined spaces, political choices in new films from the middle east'

director yanis sakaridis

comments by organizer vangelis calotychos visiting associate professor of comparative lite to follow film screening

> tuesday, march 6 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. joukowsky forum, watson institute













september 19 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

turkey; 106 minutes turkish with english subtitles

PELIN KADERCAN SERIES

MAI MASRI'S 3000 NIGHTS

middle east studies film series spring 2018
3000 nights

# PROGRAMMING

# UNDERGRADUATE EVENTS

In addition to the **Undergraduate Paper Series**, an opportunity for junior scholars to present their research to their peers and faculty with constructive feedback, this year's Departmental Undergraduate Group (DUG) cohort organized film screenings highlighting the intersection of identity, politics, and gender with Nadine Labaki's Caramel (2007) and Marjane Satrapi's Persepolis (2007). Their efforts to highlight the undergraduate-oriented nature of the department were complemented by the hard work of the Middle East Studies Undergraduate Fellows' outreach efforts to potential concentrators through a fall MES student luncheon and spring MES undergraduate research and internship panel. The latter highlighted the exciting research and internship opportunities undertaken by current concentrators, as well as tips and best practices for underclassmen in seeking out and successfully applying for research funding and internship opportunities.



# Middle East Studies Concentration Declaration Day

date
Friday April 13
time

Lunch, 12:00-1:30 p.m., 3rd Floor Landing 1:30-3:00 p.m., North Common Room

venue Watson Institute



" 'S' for Sultan or Secularism? Education, Legitimacy, and Identity in the Ottoman Empire"

- Luqmaan Bokhary, '21

"Syria and Israel: War and Peace between 1949 and 2000"

- Anchita Dasgupta, '21

middle east studies undergraduate paper series

"Arab Mathematics on the Silk Road"

- Juan Colin '19

"Readings from the 'Ingathering of Exiles' in Operation on Eagles Wings: A Study of the Trilateral Relations between the Israeli Political Establishment, the American Jewish Cultural Establishment, and the Yemeni Jewish Community"

-Benjamin Gladstone '18



WORKSHOP IN COLLABORATION WITH THE CENTER FOR LANGUAGE STUDIES

# Arab Arts VS. Cultural Stereotyping:

Multimedia Interactive Lecture & Concert

with Karim Nagi



# FACUITY

# FACULTY IN 2017-18

RUTH ADLER BEN YEHUDA, Judaic Studies

FAIZ AHMED, History

IRAJ ANVAR, Center for Language Studies

ARIELLA AZOULAY, Modern Culture and Media, Comparative Literature

ABED AZZAM, Comparative Literature and Middle East Studies

**OMER BARTOV, History, German Studies** 

SHAHZAD BASHIR, Religious Studies

**REDA BENSMAIA**, French Studies, Comparative Literature

**SHEILA BONDE**, History of Art and Architecture

**PALMIRA BRUMMETT, History** 

VANGELIS CALOTYCHOS, Comparative Literature

MIRENA CHRISTOFF, Center for Language Studies

JONATHAN CONANT, History

**LEO DEPUYDT, Egyptology, Assyriology** 

LISA DICARLO, Sociology

BESHARA DOUMANI, Middle East Studies, History

**EMILY DRUMSTA**, Comparative Literature

MILED FAIZA, Center for Language Studies

LINA FRUZZETTI, Anthropology

YANNIS HAMILAKIS, Archaeology, Modern Greek Studies

JO-ANNE HART, Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs

SUSAN HARVEY, Religious Studies, Medieval Studies

**ALLA HASSAN**, Center for Language Studies

**DENNIS HOGAN, Sociology** 

DAVID JACOBSON, Judaic Studies

JENNIFER JOHNSON, History

MARTHA JOUKOWSKY, Archaeology

NANCY KHALEK, Religious Studies

STEPHEN KINZER, Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs

SHAMIRAN MAKO, Middle East Studies

MAUD MANDEL, History, Judaic Studies

SREEMATI MITTER, History, International and Public Affairs

AMIR MOOSAVI, Middle East Studies

**OURIDA MOSTEFAI**, French Studies, Comparative Literature

**ELIAS MUHANNA**, Comparative Literature

PAUL NAHME, Judaic Studies, Religious Studies

**SAUL OLYAN**, Comparative Literature and Middle East Studies

ADI OPHIR, Cogut Center for Humanities, Middle East Studies

EFSTRATIOS PAPAIOANNOU, Classics, Medieval Studies

**AMY REMENSNYDER, History** 

RACHEL ROJANSKI, Judaic Studies

MATTHEW RUTZ, Egyptology, Assyriology

JOHN STEELE, Egyptology, Assyriology

NINA TANNENWALD, International Relations, Political Science

HANAN TOUKAN, Middle East Studies

**MELTEM TOKSOZ**, History and Middle East Studies

VAZIRA F-Y ZAMINDAR, History

MIDDLE EAST STUDIES POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATE

**ALEX WINDER** 

WATSON POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

**NARGES BAJOGHLI** 

M. ALI KADIVAR



### SHAMIRAN MAKO

is visiting assistant professor of Middle East studies and director of undergraduate studies for Middle East Studies. Her research focuses on the international relations and comparative politics of the Middle East and North Africa, with a focus on state formation, authoritarianism, democratization, communal politics, civil wars, and post-conflict state building.



### ABED AZZAM

is a visiting assistant professor affiliated with Comparative Literature and Middle East Studies. His field of research is in the philosophy of religion.





### ADI OPHIR

is a visiting professor affiliated with the Cogut Center for the Humanities and Middle East Studies, a professor emeritus at Tel Aviv University, and a coordinator of the Political Concepts initiative at Brown University.

### AMIR MOOSAVI

is visiting assistant professor in modern Iranian studies at Middle East Studies. His research and teaching interests include modern Persian and Arabic literatures, war and cultural production, and the cultural histories of the modern Middle East.





### MELTEM TOKSOZ

is an associate professor of history, Bogazici University, Istanbul, and a visiting associate professor of history and Middle East studies in Middle East Studies and the Department of History. Her field of study is Ottoman Intellectual history and historiography.

### HANAN TOUKAN

is Adrienne Minassian Visiting Professor in History of Art and Architecture and in Middle East Studies. Her research is on visual cultures and postcolonial and transnational politics of culture in Jordan, Palestine, and Lebanon.



# FACULTY ANNOUNCEMENTS



### INCOMING MIDDLE EAST STUDIES DIRECTOR: SHAHZAD BASHIR

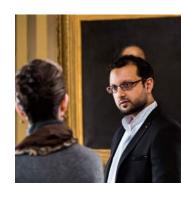
#### AGA KHAN PROFESSOR OF ISLAMIC HUMANITIES; PROFESSOR OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

specializes in Islamic Studies with an interest in the intellectual and social histories of the societies of Iran and Central and South Asia circa fourteenth century CE to the present. He is currently finishing a book titled *Islamic Pasts and Futures: Conceptual Explorations*. This is a wide-ranging treatment that critiques the way Islamic history has been conceptualized in modern scholarship and suggests alternatives, with emphasis on the multiplicity of temporal configurations found in Islamic materials. The project engages contemporary academic debates regarding historiography and history.

### AWARDED TENURE: FAIZ AHMED

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF HISTORY

is a specialist in the legal history of the modern Middle East and Islamicate world. From the Ottoman Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean, Ahmed's primary research interests include student and scholarly networks, constitutional movements, and international law and diplomacy during the long nineteenth century. His first book, *Afghanistan Rising: Islamic Law and State-craft between the Ottoman and British Empires* (Harvard University Press, 2017) unearths a lost history of Muslim debates and exchange across regional divides by tracing the struggle of a diverse cast of jurists in winning Afghanistan's independence and promulgating its first constitution from the late Victorian era to the fall of the Ottoman Empire.



### EFFECTIVE SPRING 2019: NADJE AL-ALI

#### PROFESSOR IN SOCIO-CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE MIDDLE EAST

Nadje Al-Ali is professor of gender studies at the Centre for Gender Studies (CGS), SOAS University of London. She is currently chair of CGS and head of the Doctoral School at SOAS. Her main research interests revolve around feminist activism, transnational migration and diaspora mobilization, war, conflict, and peace, and art and cultural studies, mainly with reference to Iraq, Egypt, Turkey, and the Kurdish political movement. Her most recent research and publications focus on the Turkish-Kurdish conflict and the Kurdish women's movement.

Professor Al-Ali was previously president of the Association of Middle East Women's Studies (AMEWS) and an elected board member of the Middle East Studies Association (MESA). She is a longstanding member of the *Feminist Review* Collective, and more recently has joined the advisory board of *Kohl: a Journal of Body and Gender Research*. She has been engaged in various forms of feminist activism and solidarity with organizations in the Middle East and transnationally.



### EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2018: ALEX WINDER

#### PALESTINIAN STUDIES POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATE 2017-2018

will assume the position of **visiting assistant professor in Middle East studies** and **MES director of undergraduate studies**. His research focuses on policing and crime in British Mandate Palestine, with attention to the tensions and accommodations between legal and social order, and the role of Arab policemen and Arab communities in negotiating these domains.

# SAMPLING OF MES COURSES

Brown University's MES program has gained a reputation for being a regional, national, and international interdisciplinary gateway to the study of the Middle East and North Africa. Faculty and disciplinary diversity have grown to include special topics on Iran, policing in the MENA, and Middle East politics, which students have found invigorating.

Students' enthusiasm for learning MENA-region languages has reflected a deepening interest in studying the region. It is common for students to want to learn more than one Middle Eastern language, and their ability to do so makes the program highly attractive. This is reflected in the exponential growth of the program and the breadth of courses being offered each semester.



Middle East Studies has also attracted highly qualified high school students who this year alone have visited from Switzerland, Palo Alto and Los Angeles, California, and Princeton, New Jersey. These students have expressed an interest in seeking early admission to Brown specifically to concentrate in Middle East Studies – signaling the growing reputation of the Program beyond Brown and the northeast of the United States.

Lastly, our students have benefited from and appreciated the funding available to them to conduct research outside the university, which many have noted as a major draw.

#### MFS 1200

### Ways of Seeing: The Arab World in Global Perspective

#### **HANAN TOUKAN**

The course examines visual politics in contemporary Middle Eastern society and grapples with fundamental debates in the study of the cultural politics and visual cultures of the Arab region in a global context. The course contextualizes the region's contemporary visual cultures within wider debates and scholarship on the construction of subjectivities, the distribution of power, the formation of identity and belonging, and culture and representation. Emphasis is on translation and reception in a global context and transnational frame by focusing on how states and security, conflicts and displacements, social movements and revolution, aesthetics, art and global media are linked, characterized, and analyzed.

### MES 1985 Understanding Modern Iran

#### **AMIR MOOSAVI**

This interdisciplinary course looks at the history of modern Iran through an examination of translated primary historical documents, secondary studies, and various forms of cultural production. The course begins with a broad historical overview and looks at some attempts to give historical narrative to Iran in the modern era. The instructor goes back to the latter half of the Qajar dynasty (approximately 1850) and moves forward until the present day. Throughout the course, students study topics such as modernist reform in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, questions of Iranian identity, various attempts at political reform, the women's movement, and the country's relationships with its neighbors and the West. The course emphasizes the debates and challenges that have occupied Iranian intellectuals and artists, broadly conceived, and encourages students to think about how cultural representations of major historical events and socio-political changes contribute to and challenge historical narratives, as well as how contemporary history and politics affect cultural representation.

### COLT 1440P

### Nationalism and Transnationalism in Film and Fiction

#### **VANGELIS CALOTYCHOS**

Reports of the demise of nationalism always seem greatly exaggerated. How are notions of transnationalism dependent on rewriting the nation? This course revisits films of world cinema acclaimed for their national cachet from a transnational perspective and in dialogue with their literary intertexts. Students will study these films' fictional narration, cinematic articulation, and critical reception and consider how they signify in multinational networks of funding, distribution, production, conception, and critical reception. They will analyze the political, ethical, and artistic stakes of confronting difference as both a located and a universal stance or commodity. Films and texts from across the globe will be chosen.

### GNSS 1961G Framing Gender in Middle Eastern Cinema

#### **THOMAS THOMPSON**

This course examines how gender is framed in Middle Eastern cinema. Through weekly readings in film theory and culture, in-class discussion, and written and oral assignments, students will learn not only how to analyze cinema but also about gender in the modern and contemporary Middle East more generally. Most weeks students will also attend the screening of a film dealing in some way with gender in the Middle East. They will watch films from or about: Iran, Afghanistan, Egypt, Tunisia, Palestine, Israel, Iraq, Lebanon, and Canada.

#### INTL 1803M

### Reassessing Contentious Politics, and Social Movements

#### M. ALI KADIVAR

This course introduces the major theories of social movements that explain the origins, dynamics, and consequences of contentious politics. Instruction will concentrate on the Middle East, the First and Second Palestinian Intifadas, and Arab Spring uprisings; examining how social movement theory helps us to understand these major episodes of mass mobilization and how these episodes prompt us to change our way of thinking about social movements and contentious politics more generally. The course investigates social movement attributes such as movement emergence, member recruitment, leadership, organization, tactics, targets, and goals.

### MFS 1993 Middle Fast Politics

#### **SHAMIRAN MAKO**

The Middle East and North Africa region has consistently dominated global headlines as one of the most penetrated regional state systems in the world. Analyses of the MENA region are often bound by this monolithic rubric that has shaped how we view and understand state-society relations across the region. Students examine historic and contemporary dynamics that have shaped domestic, regional, and international politics and analyze issues relating to comparative politics and international relations of the region, colonialism and state formation, institutional configuration, authoritarianism and regime typologies, the politics of oil, identity politics, and social and economic development.

### RELS 0096 The Imaginary Lives of Muslims

#### SHAHZAD BASHIR

How have Muslims understood the natural and social world that forms the back-drop for human lives? The course uses this question to chart a variety of Islamic perspectives pertaining to thought and action. Topics include worldviews contained in the Quran and other early Islamic materials; formal cosmologies that reflect continuity with late antique ideas; mystical thought pertaining to Sufis and Shi'is; reflection on politics and ethics; impact of modern science; and contemporary perspectives concerning the environment, gender, race, and class.

### HIST 1969D Palestine versus the Palestinians

#### **BESHARA DOUMANI**

This course explores alternatives to the common view that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is a struggle between two nationalist movements over the same land. Moving away from state-centric political discourse, it engages the questions of imperialism, settler-colonialism, and displacement from a bottom-up perspective of everyday life of Palestinian communities in historic Palestine and the diaspora. How do these internally divided and spatially fragmented communities negotiate the present and imagine the future? Ultimately, the course asks: What does it mean to be a Palestinian? And what can the Palestinian condition teach us about the modern world?

# STUDENTS

# THE DUG

The **Departmental Undergraduate Group**, or DUG, is run by students in the Middle East Studies program who wish to build community both inside and outside of the concentration. The DUG aims to highlight the undergraduate-oriented nature of the program and encourage the expansion of the concentration into related fields. This year's DUG leaders were **Isabella Creatura '17, Pierre Lipton '19,** and **Ryan Saadeh '20.** They organized a number of events, including the Undergraduate Paper Series and film screenings, in addition to spearheading outreach such as office hour information sessions on the concentration.



(from left): Isabella Creatura, Pierre Lipton, Ryan Saadeh

### THE MUF

Eligible to rising seniors writing an honors thesis and concentrating in Middle East Studies, the **Middle East Studies Undergraduate Fellows** play an active role in MES life and assist with outreach efforts to underclassmen interested in becoming concentrators. In addition to organizing events for potential Middle East Studies concentrators, this year's fellows—**Alexander Abuaita '18** and **Oona Cahill '18** – supported communication efforts, such as the Student Spotlight series and the creation of print media material for Middle East Studies.



(from left): Oona Cahill, Alexander Abuaita

# MESGSA

Led by **Julia Gettle** and **Malay Firoz**, the **Middle East Studies Graduate Student Association** is an interdisciplinary group united by a shared scholarly interest in the Middle East and North Africa. Combining diverse humanities and social sciences backgrounds with regional expertise, the association aims to foster conversations that are theoretically diverse and regionally focused.



(from left) : Julia Gettle, Malay Firoz

# GRADUATING SENIORS



### ALEXANDER ABUAITA

is a double concentrator in Middle East studies and computer science. With interests in how authoritarian regimes exploit pseudo-democratization practices to sustain their autocracies, his thesis examines the devolution of the Egyptian education system under Hosni Mubarak. He will begin working in Systems at D.E. Shaw in New York City next year.

### OONA CAHILL

is a double concentrator in Middle East studies and history from New York City. Her interests include statelessness and immigration policy and have culminated in a thesis focusing on the development of an exclusionary nationality law in Kuwait during the 1950s that subsequently created a large stateless population there.



### BENJAMIN GLADSTONE

is a double concentrator in Middle East studies and Judaic studies. His thesis explores the relations between the Israeli, American, and Yemeni Jewish communities during the mass migration of Jews from Yemen to Israel in the late 1940s and early 1950s. He looks forward to beginning a PhD program in Israel studies at New York University this fall.

### SOPHIE KASAKOVE

graduated in December '17. Her thesis focused on the use of urban planning as a tool of British and Zionist counter-insurgency during the Arab Revolt of 1936-1939. She is pursuing a career in journalism and currently works as an editorial intern at *The Nation*.





### NATHAN VANELLI

is a double concentrator in Middle East Studies and History. Interested in the histories and literatures of the Middle East and North Africa, his thesis is a translation of *Trente-Six*, a collection of short stories written in Arabic by the Moroccan author Malika Moustadraf. He will be teaching in Nablus, Palestine next year.

# CAPSTONE



### MARIA ALEM

is a double concentrator in Middle East studies and philosophy. She is interested in decentering the Western focus of gender studies by studying constructions of gender in the Middle East, specifically in her home country of Saudi Arabia.

### NOUR ASFOUR

is a double concentrator in Middle East studies and public health. Her thesis focuses on the delivery of medical aid to Syria and surrounding countries during the Syrian Civil War and analyzes this as a model for the remote operation and financing of hospitals in conflict zones. She will pursue a Master of Public Health degree at the Brown School of Public Health next fall.





### ISABELLA CREATURA

is a double concentrator in Middle East studies and international relations from New York City. Her interests include refugee and forced migration, media sociology, and diplomacy. When she's not reading, you can find her singing opera in the Department of Music.

### ISABEL DEBRÉ

is a double concentrator in Middle East studies and comparative literature. Her Arabic comparative literature honors thesis analyzes how novels about the Palestinian refugee camp experience can reshape our understandings of trauma. With plans to pursue a career as a foreign correspondent in the region, next year she will be based in Jerusalem, where she'll report on Israel/Palestine for the Associated Press.





### EMMA JERZYK

is a double concentrator in computer science and Middle East studies. Her capstone paper focused on literature from minority populations in the Middle East. After graduation, she will work in Boston for Bain and Company as an associate consultant

### IAN PEARSALL

is a double concentrator in Middle East studies and archaeology from Michigan. Ian spent the summer of 2017 furthering his study of Arabic in Amman, Jordan. His capstone focuses on the use of animal imagery in 20th century Arabic novels of the desert. Ian is particularly interested in the use of cultural heritage in state-legitimization.





### ANDRE VOGEL

is a double concentrator in Middle East studies and chemistry. His interests lie in global health, the role of gender in Iranian society, and Iranian medical systems. He plans to do clinical research in Boston for a year before entering medical school.

### SENIOR PROJECTS

# STUDENTS

#### THESIS

### Alex Ahuaita

Schooling Mubarak's Egypt: Facts, Fictions, and the Right to Education in an Age of Privatization

### Oona Cahill

The Power to Exclude: Rethinking the Role of the Merchant Class in the Construction of Kuwaiti Nationality

### Benjamin Gladstone

Scattered Nation: The "Ingathering of Exiles" in Trilateral Relations between the Israeli, American, and Yemeni Jewish Communities during Operation On Eagles' Wings

### Nathan Vanelli

A Translation of Malika Moustadraf's Trente-Six

#### CAPSTONE

### Maria Alem

Backseat Drivers: Women and (Auto)Mobilization in Saudi Arabia

### Isabella Creatura

#HolySelfie

### Nour Asfour

The Iraqi Refugee Crisis as a Conduit for Authoritarian Upgrading in Syria

### Isahel deRre

Topographical Traumas: Revising History in Ghassan Kanafani's Returning to Haifa and Sonallah Ibrahim's That Smell

### Emma Jerzyk

What counts as Egyptian literature? Situating Paula Jacques' Light of My Eye within Egyptian literature

### Ian Pearsall

Gendered Imagery of the Gazelle Hunt in Three Arabic Novels

### Andre Vogel

The Source of Change within Society: Modern Iranian Women's Movements

# **ALUMNI FEATURES**



### RAFAEL CONTRERAS '15

Following his graduation in May 2015, Rafael moved to Washington, D.C., and joined the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) as an operations analyst. While his job has a strong Latin America focus, his knowledge of and passion for the Middle East have become an asset. He is currently exploring how the experiences of Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey as host countries for Syrian refugees can be case studies for Colombia and Brazil as they deal with the arrival of refugees from Venezuela, his home country.

This fall, Contreras will begin a Master of Public Policy degree program at Georgetown University, where he will focus on the design of education interventions in emergency settings.

### EMILY GOLDMAN '14.5

After graduating from Brown, Emily moved to Jordan, where she worked in humanitarian aid and the performing arts for almost two years. She joined Middlebury's School in Jordan as a resident coordinator in 2016. Last summer, while in Connecticut visiting her family, she began to talk with refugee and recently arrived Arabic-speaking families in the area about the hardships they have faced upon arriving in the US. Through these conversations, she began to realize that the Arabic students she was working with in Jordan could make an impact in these families' lives, and vice-versa.

Middlebury College agreed to support the kind of program she envisioned, and the result is Jiran, a brand-new summer program for colloquial Arabic. The program pairs Arabic students with underserved Arabic-speaking families in New Britain, Connecticut, for an intensive linguistic and intercultural learning experience. Students receive daily Arabic instruction, volunteer placements with organizations serving refugees and immigrants in the US, and lectures by experts in forced migration and intercultural development.





### KATHERINE LONG '15.5

After completing her Fulbright research project in Tajikistan, Katherine moved to Washington, DC, where she works as a project management associate for USAID contractor Chemonics International Inc., overseeing a literacy project in Kyrgyzstan and an agriculture project in Tajikistan. She also collaborates with the International Rescue Committee and Vox Media on the podcast Displaced, where she searches for solutions to end human suffering every week. She plans to attend Columbia Journalism School in the fall.

### NIKHITA MENDIS '17

has been selected as a Gates Cambridge Scholar to study at the University of Cambridge. She recently graduated with concentrations in International Relations and Middle East Studies and represented graduating MES seniors as keynote speaker at her Commencement diploma awarding ceremony. Her thesis was on the ways in which Sri Lankan migrant domestic workers in Lebanon articulate their experiences as empowered women using Buddhist practices to navigate everyday life.





### SOPHIA SEPULVEDA '15

works as an intelligence analyst in Houston, Texas, in United Healthcare's Global Risk department. There she provides analysis of geopolitical developments and security threats to clients with operations or business interests in Asian countries. Prior to her promotion to this position last year, she worked on a 24-hour rotational basis (primarily graveyard shift) monitoring the world for any event that could affect traveler security. "It's been nice to work in an industry that is tied in some capacity to the courses I took at Brown," Sophia says. She has accepted a full scholarship offer to the University of Houston Law Center starting in August, and is getting married in December.

### KATHRYN THORNTON '14

has been living in Istanbul, Turkey, for the past two years teaching English at Bahçeşehir University in its school of foreign languages. She has started learning Arabic and recently received a small Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) alumni grant to make a YouTube series about Syrian restaurants in Istanbul. Kat and her Syrian husband are hoping to move to the States. She is looking for full-time work in media, production, and publishing.



# AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

### FACULTY FELLOW 2017-18

FAIZ AHMED, Associate Professor of History

# INCOMING FACULTY FELLOW 2018-2020

**ELIAS MUHANNA**, Manning Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature

### MIDDLE EAST STUDIES UNDERGRADUATE FELLOWS 2017-18

ALEXANDER ABUAITA '18
OONA CAHILL '18

### INCOMING MIDDLE EAST STUDIES UNDERGRADUATE FELLOWS 2018–19

MARGARET FOLLETT '19 ANNA MURPHY '19

### UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH TRAVEL AWARDS

HUMA RAMAZAN ALI '21 MARGARET FOLLETT '19 BENJAMIN GLADSTONE '18 RHEA STARK '18.5

### GRADUATE RESEARCH TRAVEL AWARD

**ELIZABETH WOLFSON** 

# MES ADVISORY COUNCIL

# **MEMBERS**

ALIA AL-SENUSSI '03 AM'04

SALEH AL-TURKI P'03, P'05 AND FAWZIA ALGOSAIBI P'03, P'05

HASSAN ALAGHBAND P'15 AND FARAH ASEMI P'15

AMMAR A. ALKHUDAIRY P'17 AND RAGHAD F. ALKHUDAIRY P'17

**FOUAD DAJANI '95** 

**RIYAD K. DAUD '89** 

FARUK R. ECZACIBASI P'14 GS' AND FÜSUN ECZACIBASI P'14 GS'

**NATHALIE F. FARMAN-FARMA '90** 

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**SAMER M. KHALIDI '90** 

**TAREK M. KHANACHET '03** 

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**MUSTAFA N. ZAIDI '90** 

### YOUNG ALUMNI MEMBER

**KAWTHER ALKHUDAIRY '17** 



