

Sept. 2, 2016

Dear Colleagues, Students, and Friends of Middle East Studies,

Fall 2016 marks the beginning of the fifth year of the Middle East Studies initiative launched in 2012, and we have much to celebrate and look forward to. Our community is growing, and this will be yet another transformative year in terms of additional courses for our concentrators, expansion of ongoing research initiatives, and capacity for new and exciting programming. Please join me in welcoming several incoming professors and postdocs. Two assistant professors in the Department of History will begin teaching this year: Sreemati Mitter, who works on the economic history of the Modern Middle East, and Jennifer Johnson, who recently published her first book on modern Algeria. Professor Meltem Toksöz will offer courses on intellectual and Ottoman history as a visiting scholar from Boğaziçi University. Emily Drumsta, who works on modern Arabic literature, starts her first year as assistant professor in the Department of Comparative Literature. We are also excited to welcome Hanan Toukan, the Adrienne Minassian Visiting Professor in Art History; and Areej Sabbagh-Khoury, the inaugural postdoctoral research associate in Palestinian Studies.

In addition to our regular activities, Middle East Studies is organizing a yearlong series of events on the theme, “Displacement and the Making of the Modern World,” funded by a Mellon Sawyer Award. A terrific steering committee of Brown professors –Ariella Azoulay, Barrymore Bogues, Tamara Chin, Beshara Doumani (chair), Leela Gandhi, Brian Meeks, Rebecca Nedostup, Keisha-Khan Perry, Leah VanWey, Vazira Zamindar—is providing intellectual guidance. The Mellon Sawyer Postdoctoral Research Associate, Vikramaditya Thakur, is the point person. Two graduate students, Julia Gettle and Francesco Monar, will provide research and support.

It is my great pleasure to announce that Rachel Easterbrook will join the MES staff as administrative coordinator. Rachel holds a BA in History from the University of Pennsylvania and an MA in Middle East History from Florida State University. She has an extensive background in communications and media, and will help us consolidate our quickly growing program. MES is also fortunate to have a very active DUG and Graduate Student Association. The new DUG leaders are Anna Murphy and Nathan Vanelli.

As usual, we will hit the ground running. Mark your calendars for the MES reception (Sept. 13), the first Luncheon Seminar (Sept. 14 with Sreemati Mitter), a teach-in on Turkey (Sept. 15), the Peter Green Lecture (Sept. 29), and the opening workshop of the Mellon Sawyer Seminar on Displacement (hosted by the Cogut Center for the Humanities on Sept. 30). Please check out our Annual Report and our Website for more information.

Enjoy the last few days of the summer and best wishes for a great 2016-2017 academic year.

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