Letter From the Director

By any measure, 2012-2013 has been a remarkable takeoff year for Middle East Studies at Brown University. Establishing a new unit on campus, critical faculty hires, and robust programming have generated a wave of enthusiasm in the Brown community and attracted national attention. None of this would have been possible without the support of donors and the administration, the enthusiastic participation by faculty and students, and the dedication of the Middle East office staff: Anthony Watson, Associate Director; and Barbara Oberkoetter, the Academic Program Manager.

A year ago I joined Brown University to help build a new kind of area studies program that is agenda, not legacy, driven. Our aim is to integrate knowledge production on the Middle East into the DNA of Brown through thematically driven collaborative initiatives that tap into Brown’s tradition of interdisciplinary, critical, and engaged scholarship. Unburdened by the legacy of Oriental studies departments and the Cold-War-conceived Title VI program, Brown is an ideal home for this new model. Its small size and densely inter-connected faculty as well as its reinvigorated Watson Institute for International Studies, give it the kind of intellectual dynamism and agility that few institutions of its stature can match.

This is an opportune moment. The historic rupture of the popular uprisings in Iran, the Arab world, and Turkey over the past few years opens a space for a much-needed re-evaluation of how we study and teach this region. How can we rethink the past? Imagine new futures? And find creative ways to contribute to social justice, economic development, mutual understanding, and democratic political systems?

With the help of superb core faculty who anchored Middle East Studies over the past few years as well as recent critical hires, these questions were addressed in over seventy well-attended activities. These include the lecture series, the luncheon seminar, the undergraduate paper series and several major conferences and public events. This generated a wave of new concentrators (from 16 to 36 by May, 2013), making Middle East Studies the largest concentration by far in area studies.

Next year will be even bigger as we welcome new Assistant Professor in History, Faiz Ahmed; visiting professors Bashir Abu-Manneh, Adi Ophir, and Mohsen Namjoo; and post-doctoral fellows Mayssun Succarie, and Sa’ed Atshan. We will also be adding a film series and organizing major conferences on Oslo, digital humanities, engaged scholarship, the crises in Syria, U.S. and Iran, and new directions in Palestinian Studies.

It is a privilege to work with such a talented and energetic group of faculty and students and we welcome all of you to join us next year and make your voices heard.

Beshara Doumani
Joukowsky Family Professor of Modern Middle East History
Director, Middle East Studies
Faculty Fellow, Watson Institute
BESHARA DOUMANI

Beshara Doumani joined Brown University in 2012 as the Joukowsky Family Professor of Modern Middle East History. He works on the social history and political economy of the Eastern Mediterranean in Ottoman times with a focus on family, property and law. He also writes on academic freedom and the modern history of the Palestinians. Doumani is Director of Middle East Studies, and a Faculty Fellow at the Watson Institute.

ELIAS MUHANNA

Elias Muhanna, Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature, has read, digested, catalogued, and assimilated two million, three hundred thousand words in order to make sense of the 14th-century Arabic text that formed the basis of his doctoral research. It took Muhanna three years to dissect the massive work — a 30-volume encyclopedic compendium entitled The Ultimate Ambition in the Arts of Erudition — gaining insight into its author’s views on history, geography, zoology, botany, medicine, sex, wine, music, and much more. He was awarded a Ph.D. from Harvard in May 2012 for his dissertation Encyclopaedism in the Mamluk Period: The Composition of Shihab al-Din al-Nuwayri’s “Nihayat al-arab fi funun al-adab”.

Muhanna describes encyclopedism as “just a fancy name for the obsession with producing these enormous collections of knowledge.”

At Brown, Muhanna’s principal focus is on classical Arabic literature. Like those he studies, Muhanna is an avid researcher, writer, and compiler. He is the author of Qifa Nabki, a widely read blog on contemporary Lebanese politics, and he writes frequently on political and cultural topics for The New York Times, The Nation, The Guardian, and others.

ARIELLA AZOULAY

Ariella Azoulay joined Brown’s affiliated Middle East Studies faculty in January, 2013. A noted expert in visual culture and photography, she is a theorist, film-maker, and curator whose scholarship focuses on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Her work—most recently exploring revolution from the 18th century to the present—has brought her to Brown as an Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature and Modern Culture and Media.

Azoulay holds a Licence in Cinema and Literature and an an M.A. in semiotics from the Université Paris VIII. She earned her D.E.A. from the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales and a Ph.D from Tel-Aviv University in the History and Philosophy of Science and Ideas. She has recently published the article “Potential History” in Critical Inquiry Vol. 39, No 3, (Spring, 2013), and has another article “Palestine as Symptom, Palestine as Hope: Revising Human Rights Discourse” forthcoming.

ROBYN CRESWELL

Robyn Creswell, Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature, is a critic, translator, and scholar specializing in Arabic literature and comparative modernisms. His dissertation is a historical critique of Arab modernist poetry, a movement that flourished in Beirut between 1955 and 1975 and which radically redefined the parameters of Arabic poetry.

Among the writers whose work Creswell is particularly drawn to studying is Syrian poet Adonis, a founding member of the modernist magazine Shi’r and perennial favorite to win the Nobel Prize in literature. “I find Adonis’ poetry very challenging,” he said. “I suppose I’m one of those readers who likes difficult texts, who likes trying to figure out puzzles, and Adonis is like that. He’s difficult by design. I’m sort of sadomasochistically attracted to that kind of poem, though I have nothing against straightforward poetry — assuming there is such a thing.”

2013 Aga Khan Distinguished Visiting Professor of Islamic Humanities

Amr Shalakany is Associate Professor of Law at the American University in Cairo (AUC), where he served as founding director of the LL.M. Degree Program. He holds a joint appointment at the Civil Law Department of Cairo University Faculty of Law, and is a member of the AUC Institute for Gender and Women's Studies. Professor Shalakany teaches in the areas of Comparative Private Law, Islamic Law, and Legal History.

Before joining AUC, Shalakany was the Jeremiah Smith Junior Visiting Assistant Professor at Harvard Law School. Earlier, he served as legal advisor to the PLO Negotiations Support Unit in Ramallah, and taught at Birzeit University where he helped set up the Legal Aid Clinic at the Law Institute.

Professor Shalakany received his Licence en droit and LL.M. degrees from Cairo University Faculty of Law, and LL.M. and S.J.D. degrees from Harvard Law School. He is admitted to the New York Bar.

During a semester of residence at Brown, Shalakany taught an upper level seminar entitled “Critical Approaches to Islamic Law Reform.” Shalakany also delivered the Aga Khan Lecture as part of the Middle East Studies Lecture Series, titled, ‘The First Thing We Do, Let’s Kill All the Lawyers: Liberalism and Revolution in Modern Egypt.’

POST DOCTORAL FELLOWS

LINDA QUIQUIVIX
Linda is an Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in Critical Global Humanities at Brown’s Cogut Center for the Humanities. Her work critically examines the construction of maps and borders.

Of central interest to her is how people struggling for autonomy from a regime, nation-state, or other powerful social system contest dominant spatial arrangements and create new ones. She took her doctorate in geography from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2012.

ASSEM ABU HATAB
Assem is a researcher in the Department of Economics at the Swedish University of Agricultural Science in Uppsala. He is also a Lecturer of Economics & Rural Development at Suez Canal University in Egypt. His research interests revolve predominantly around international food and agricultural trade and trade policy, and food consumption and production and their linkages to food security. Capturing the role of global food price inflation in the political unrest of 2011 in North Africa has recently become a strong dimension in his research agenda.

He completed his PhD in Economics at Northwest A&F University in China in 2011. He worked previously assistant researcher in the Chinese Center for Agricultural Policy, and a visiting scholar at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences UMB, Corvinus University in Budapest, and Brown University. In 2013 Assem was awarded the Distinguished Scholar Award by the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development.

2013 Aga Khan Distinguished Visiting Professor Workshop

The inaugural workshop on “Law and the Arts in the Middle East Today,” the first in a three-year series, took place at Brown University on May 3rd and 4th, 2013. This launched a multiyear, interdisciplinary research project to identify and develop connections between theories and practices within the law and within the arts, and locate sites for informed intervention within these realms.

This research project is supported by Brown University’s Middle East Studies Program, Cornell University’s Clarke Initiative for Law and Development in the Middle East and North Africa, and Harvard University’s Institute for Global Law and Policy.
FACULTY UPDATES 2012/13

Visiting Assistant Professor of History Shiva Balaghí’s article “Covering Iran’s Ninjas” appeared in Mediating the Arab Uprisings, edited by Adel Iskander and Bassam Haddad. Another article, “Silenced Histories and Sanitized Autobiographies: The 1953 CIA Coup in Iran,” was published in the journal Biography. She was also part of the Focus Group consulting on the new collection for Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, and presented a chapter of her forthcoming manuscript Power, Culture, and Knowledge in Iran at a workshop at the University of Hawaii. She also gave a lecture on “Masculinity in Contemporary Iranian Art” at LACMA, and published an essay on “Islam, the West, and the Arts in Iran” for the catalog Long Live Free Art published by Art Talks in Cairo.


Associate Professor of Political Science Melani Cammert received a Mellon Foundation New Directions Fellowship to spend the 2013-2014 academic year at Harvard School of Public Health for a new project on primary health care in the Arab world. Her new book, Compassionate Communalism: Welfare and Sectarianism in Lebanon (Cornell University Press) will be published in spring 2014, and she recently co-authored (with Ishac Diwan) the epilogue to the revised 3rd edition of A Political Economy of the Middle East. Cammert and Diwan are currently working on the 4th edition of the book to be released next year. She also recently published “The Political Economy of Development in the Middle East.” In Ellen Lust, ed., The Middle East, 13th ed. (CO Press, 2013), among other publications.

Sherine Hamdy, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, was awarded a prestigious Greenwall Foundation Scholarship for Bioethics and a Pembroke Seed Grant from Brown. She continues to work on a project “Doctors of the Revolution” on the role of medics in Egypt’s political uprisings, with co-author Soha Bayoumi of Harvard University (Department of History of Science). She had two article publications this year: “Not Quite Dead: Why Egyptian Doctors Refuse the Diagnosis of Death by Neurological Criteria” in the Journal of Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics, and “Political Challenges to Biomedical Universalism” in Medical Anthropology. She has been giving talks about her research on Islam and Bioethics: this year in Qatar, Abu-Dhabi, New York, Washington, Notre Dame, Paris, Chicago, Baltimore, Tunis, San Francisco. Her book Our Bodies Belong to God: Organ Transplants, Islam, and the Struggle for Human Dignity in Egypt, is being translated into Arabic by Professor Muhammad Sharkawi (former Arabic instructor at Brown).

Ömür Harmanşah, Assistant Professor of Archaeology and Egyptology and Ancient Western Asian Studies, has a new book out from Cambridge University Press, titled Cities and the Shaping of Memory in the Ancient Near East. This book investigates the founding and building of cities in the ancient Near East. The creation of new cities was imagined as an ideological project or a divine intervention in the political narratives and mythologies of Near Eastern cultures, often masking the complex processes behind the social production of urban space. This volume combs through archaeological, epigraphic, visual, architectural, and environmental evidence to tell the story of a region from the perspective of its spatial practices, landscape history, and architectural technologies. It argues that the cultural processes of the making of urban spaces shape collective memory and identity as well as sites of political performance and state spectacle.

Assistant Professor of Religious Studies Nancy Khalek’s Damascus After the Muslim Conquest: Text and Image in Early Islam (Oxford University Press, 2012), was recognized by the American Academy of Religion as a Top Five finalist for Best First Book in the History of Religion. She was also recognized with a Richard B. Soloman award by Brown University.

The translation by Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature Robyn Creswell of Sonallah Ibrahim’s That Smell and Notes from Prison was published by New Directions this past spring. In March, the New York Public Library hosted a conversation about the novel between Creswell and Adam Shatz, a journalist at the London Review of Books, in March.

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MIDDLE EAST STUDIES, SUMMER 2013/VOL. 1, ISSUE 1


27-Feb. 2013: Katharina Galor, Visiting Assistant Professor of Judaic Studies, Brown University. “Jerusalem’s Archaeopolitics.”

3-Apr. 2013: Parmenion Papamichos Chronakis, Visiting Assistant Professor of History, Brown University. “Revisiting the late Ottoman bourgeoisie. The entrepreneurs of Salonica in the Second Constitutional Period, 1908-1912.”


Rahel Dette ’13 and Linda Quiquivix, Postdoctoral Fellow in Critical Global Humanities, Cogut Center, at West-Eastern Divan panel event, Jan. 25, 2013

Tony Watson, associate director Middle East Studies, with undergraduates at year-end reception, May 8, 2013.

150% increase in Concentrators
36 concentrators make for a 150% increase over the prior year. 13 seniors graduated, two with Honors.

2013 GRADUATING MES SENIORS
Jonathan D. Bateman
Laura E. Curlin
Rahel K. Dette
Sarah L. Forman
Benjamin Zvi Kamm
Sureya M. Kopruhu
Meghana R. Koushik
Ezra P. Mauer
Yasmin Or
Samier Saeed
Harry B. Samuels
Andrew J. White
Daniel L. Wilkofsky

3 Brown Students admitted to CASA 2013

SARAH FORMAN ’13, Winner 2013 Undergraduate Student Prize:

“Because more and more students are now concentrating in MES — or even just adding significant MES coursework to their other concentrations — I’ve had plenty of new chances to hear from my peers about their individual ways of engaging with the region. That "cross-pollination" has let me expand and challenge my understanding of the concentration, and been very eye opening.

Similarly, the bevy of outside lecturers and co-sponsored programs within other departments has exposed me to new ways of studying and working with the Middle East and North Africa.”

FACTS

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Andrew J. White
Daniel L. Wilkofsky

3 Brown Students admitted to CASA 2013

Katherine Long ’14:
“Presenting my own paper...affirmed to me that the research I was completing was interesting and relevant...I tell my friends at other schools about this paper series and they are jealous.”

March 5 - “Islamism: Threatening or Threatened?” Andrew White ’13 & Meghan Koushik ’13
March 21 - "Iran: Gender, Politics and Social Media." Nasim Azizgolshani ’14 & Katherine Long ’14
April 4 - “Art & Revolution.” Spencer Parson ’13, Aly Abouzeid ’14
April 11 - "Actors in the Transnational Public Sphere: Creating, Riding, or Bypassing the Wave?" Julia Ellis-Kahana ’13 & Sarah Forman ’13
April 18 - "Crusading as an Act of Love" Patrick Meehan ’13
Other Events in 2012/13

25-Oct. 25, 2012
Reception to launch the Middle East Studies initiative
Middle East Studies celebrated the launch of its new initiative and introduced its staff at a reception at the Watson Institute. The event included live music by Iranian musician, Mohsen Zayernouri.

14-Dec. 2012
Reception to celebrate Nihad Sirees, 2013 PEN award recipient

25-Jan. 2013
Maestro Daniel Barenboim and the West Eastern Divan Orchestra.
Panel discussion, reception, and entertainment *see page 8

22/23-Feb., 2013
Engaged Scholarship Workshop
Knowledge Production, Ethics, Solidarity: Stories from the field. * see page 8

15-Mar. 2013
Adonis - Reception and dinner in honor of famed Syrian poet.

May 3/4, 2013
Aga Khan Distinguished Visiting Professor in Islamic Humanities Workshop.
Amr Shalakany. “Law, Art and Revolution in the Middle East.”

7-May, 2013
MES Year-End Celebration Reception

26-May, 2013
MES Undergraduate Diploma Ceremony and Reception

May 17/18, 2013
MES Digital Workshop – PROSOP, a social networking tool of the past.

12/13-Mar., 2013
Urgent Witness Event
Organized by the IWP (International Writers’ Project), a reading by and conversation with the famed Syrian poet, Adonis.

Poetics without borders – Communicating sensibility in times of change. Adonis, Robyn Creswell, Mehrangiz Kar, Shahriar Mondanipour, Nihad Sirees. Organized by IWP.

5-Apr. 2013
Remi Kanazi, acclaimed poet, writer, and activist invited to speak at Brown University by BSJP (Brown Students for Justice in Palestine.)

5-Apr. 2013
Art and War in Iraq Symposium
Organized by the David Winton Bell Gallery, Brown University, included Wafaa Bilal, Daniel Heyman, Meir Wigoder, Susanne Slavick, Rijn Sahakian, and Nada Shabout.

11-Apr., 2013
An evening of Poetry and Music organized by Persian Language Lecturer Iraj Anvar.

18-Apr., 2013
Lital Levy, Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature at Princeton University, organized by Chana Morgenstern, graduate student in Comparative Literature.

Lateral exchanges: Comparative approaches to non-western literary modernities.

19-Apr., 2013
Lital Levy, Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature at Princeton University, organized by Chana Morgenstern, graduate student in Comparative Literature.

Master Seminar - The Nahda and the Haskala: Comparing “Revival” and “Reform” in Arabic and Hebrew Modernity.

22-Apr., 2013
Guest speaker Ayşe Ozil, post-doctoral fellow at the Center for Hellenic Studies, Princeton University, on “Non-Muslim communal property ownership from the late Ottoman empire to republican Turkey.” Organized by Modern Greek Studies at Brown.

25-Apr., 2013
Dr. Marwan Muasher, vice president for studies at the Carnegie Endowment, on “The Arab Awakening: Two years on.” Organized by Brown’s Arab Society.

CO-SPONSORED EVENTS

2-Nov., 2012,
Engaged Scholarship Workshop
Knowledge Production, Ethics, Solidarity: Stories from the field.

22/23-Feb., 2013
Hosted by the Middle East Studies Initiative at Brown University, this closed workshop, ‘Knowledge Production, Ethics, Solidarity: Stories from the field,’ was the first annual workshop hosted by the Middle East Studies Initiative around the general theme of ‘The Politics and Ethics of Knowledge Production.’ The aim was to generate a critical conversation among scholars from across the disciplines and area studies around the question of what it means to put intellectual work in the service of emancipatory politics, broadly defined.

Attendance was by invitation only, the aim being to keep attendance relatively low in order to promote in-depth, productive discussion. Knowledge production invariably involves a myriad of political and ethical questions. For those scholars committed to emancipatory aims, perhaps the two most important questions are: What constitutes emancipatory politics? And who gets to define them? This workshop critically examined how academic practices in the field are in tension with emancipatory engagements and how bottom-up moral and ethical issues can be made legible.

“Dissonance & Harmony: The Arab-Israeli conflict through Music and Academic discourse”
Barenboim and the West Eastern Divan Orchestra

25-Jan., 2013
Barenboim and the West Eastern Divan Orchestra’s week-long residency at Brown University was hosted by the Cogut Center for the Humanities. WEDO was founded in 1999 by maestro Barenboim and the late scholar Edward Said to enable intercultural dialogue and to promote the experience of collaborating as a matter of common interest. WEDO comprises 100 musicians from Israel, Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Turkey, Jordan and Spain.
Brown’s Middle East Studies initiative sponsored and organized the second of two Campus Conversations entitled “Dissonance & Harmony: The Arab-Israeli conflict through Music and Academic discourse” on January 25th at the Granoff Center for the Creative Arts between Brown students and faculty on the one hand and members of the orchestra on the other. This was followed by an unexpected and impromptu performance by members of the West Eastern Divan orchestra led by concert master Michael Barenboim playing the 1st movement of the Mendelssohn octet.

The evening was rounded off by good food and jazz music.

The well-attended event was free and open to the Brown community.

Rahel Dette ’13 and Linda Quiquivix, Postdoctoral Fellow in Critical Global Humanities, Cogut Center, at West-Eastern Divan panel event, Jan. 25, 2013

Appreciative audience at the Granoff Center for the Creative Arts

Michael Steinberg, Director, Cogut Center for the Humanities; Mariam Said, widow of the late Edward Said; Beshara Doumani, Director, Middle East Studies
NEW in 2013 - 2014

VISITING PROFESSORS

BASHIR ABU-MANNEH

Bashir Abu-Manneh joins the Brown University Comparative Literature and Middle East Studies faculties in an adjunct capacity in 2013. A scholar of literatures of the Middle East, Marxist and Postcolonial Literary and Cultural Theory, Abu Manneh most recently held a position at Barnard College at Columbia. His current project is on the aesthetics and politics of the modern Palestinian novel, a topic that fits very well with the After Oslo programming theme that will be undertaken by Middle East Studies in the 2013-2014 academic year. The author of Fiction of the New Statesman, 1913-1939 (Delaware, 2011) and numerous articles, Dr. Abu Manneh holds a D.Phil. in English Literature from Oxford University, an MA from the University of Warwick, and a BA from the University of Haifa.

FAIZ AHMED

Faiz Ahmed, Assistant Professor in Middle East Studies in the History Department, is a specialist on modern Islamic legal history. His primary research focuses on the “socio-legal” history of the Ottoman Empire, Iran, and Afghanistan, with particular attention to students, scholars, and constitutional movements in the long nineteenth century. In addition to his historical inquiries in law, education and transnational scholarly (‘ulamā’) networks, Ahmed occasionally publishes on contemporary affairs in Afghanistan and U.S.-Mideast relations. Earning his Ph.D. in History from the University of California, Berkeley in 2013, he also holds a Juris Doctorate from the University of California’s Hastings College of Law.

MOHSEN NAMJOO

Namjoo is an Iranian artist, songwriter, singer, music scholar and setar player who will be in residence at Brown in 2014. His unique music style resembles a patchwork of Persian classical poetry, with western music, namely rock, blues, and jazz.

Hailed as “the Bob Dylan of Iran” by the New York Times, Mohsen Namjoo is a visionary artist who speaks for and touches the souls of today’s youth. Seamlessly blending the Classical with the Modern, the ancient with the current, Mohsen Namjoo is a true musical maverick.

SA’ED ATSHAN

Sa’ed Atshan, Watson Institute Post Doctoral Fellow, is a Joint PhD Candidate in Anthropology and Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University where he is a Soros Fellow and National Science Foundation Fellow. He received an MPP from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government in 2008. His doctoral research is on the politics of international aid provision in the Palestinian Territories.

Atshan has worked for the American Civil Liberties Union, the UN High Commission on Refugees, Human Rights Watch, Seeds of Peace, the Palestinian Negotiations Affairs Department, and the Government of Dubai. He is a member of Al-Qaws, an organization promoting LGBTQ rights for Palestinians in Israel and the Occupied Territories.

MAYSSUN SUCCARIE

Mayssun Succarie joins Middle East Studies as the inaugural Cogut Postdoctoral Fellow in International Humanities and Modern Arab Culture and Society. Succarie is an ideal candidate for the post, which has an emphasis on social movements and youth culture in a global context. She has extensive ethnographic field experience in Lebanon, Jordan, the Gulf States, Iraq, and Egypt. Her work examines the flow of ideas between global centers of power and capital through the Arab region, with a particular critical emphasis on the construction and transformation of neoliberal ideology and power. She has served as a postdoctoral fellow at Colombia University, and is a visiting assistant professor at American University of Cairo, American University of Beirut. She holds a PhD in Anthropology and Education from University of California, Berkeley, and an MA and BA from the American University of Beirut.
Preview of Middle East Studies Events 2013 - 2014

Our programming reflects the passions of our faculty and students, and addresses key thematic issues of interest to the Brown community and beyond. In planning our lectures, conferences, workshops, and major public events, our aim is not simply to insert expert opinion into public debates, but to question how these debates are framed and to suggest innovative lines of inquiry grounded in intimate knowledge of the region.

In 2012-2013, we introduced the Lecture Series, the Luncheon Seminar, and the Undergraduate Paper Series. Starting the Fall 2013 semester, we are adding a Film Series, beginning with the theme “Love in the City: Urban Lives in the Middle East.” The poignant stories and rich imagery delve into the intimacy and texture of everyday life in ways that only film can deliver.

2013 is also the 60th anniversary of the US-British coup that overthrew the government of Iran and transformed the Middle East. A daylong conference in December, The U.S., Iran, and the Cold War: Global Perspectives on the 1953 Coup, rethinks this seminal moment in world history context and explores its impact on U.S. involvement in the region.

The crisis in Syria has been headline news for two years, but little is known about the daily lives and perspectives of most Syrians. Syria: Beyond Geopolitics, is a day long conference featuring journalists and scholars who regularly go there and who are experts on public health, political economy, and social movements.

The fall 2013 semester opens with a major international conference in October on Digital Humanities. The Conference on Digital Humanities and Islamic & Middle East Studies is a pioneering event bringing together scholars from around the world who are developing and experimenting with digital methodologies in their study of Middle Eastern history, language, art, culture, and society. The conference is the start of a multi-year initiative that will sponsor regular gatherings, workshops, symposia, and other kinds of research projects, all oriented around the digital Islamic humanities.

The year concludes with three other major events. In February will be the first international conference to be held in the United States on the famous Turkish poet and activist, Nazim Hikmet. Two annual workshops take place in April: The Aga Khan workshop on Islamic Humanities, and the Engaged Scholarship Workshop. The latter addresses various topics under the theme of the politics and ethics of knowledge production. Last year we discussed lessons from field research. This year, the focus will be on the militarization of knowledge production, and the dilemmas faced by Anthropologists, Archaeologists, and other scholars doing research in conflict zones.

Beshara Doumani
Director, Middle East Studies

Hanan Ashrawi will be speaking at Brown University on September 25th, 2013
UPCOMING EVENTS
2013 / 2014

LECTURE SERIES

12-Sept., 2013
Kirk Johnson, founder of the List Project, and author. "To Be a Friend is Fatal: Saving The Iraqis America Left Behind."

19-Sept., 2013
William Gallois, Senior Lecturer in the History of the Modern Middle East, Exeter University
"Terror and Violence in Early Colonial Algeria"

17-Oct., 2013
Lisa Hajjar, Professor of Sociology, University of California, Santa Barbara
"Classified Memories: Trying To Try Terror Suspects Who Were Tortured By The CIA."

31-Oct., 2013
Romano Prodi, former Prime Minister of Italy, Professor-at-Large, Brown University, "European Mediterranean and Middle East Policy."

14-Nov., 2013
Rabab el Mahdi, Associate Professor of Political Science, American University Cairo
"Challenges to Democratization in the Arab Uprisings."

13-Feb., 2014
Elias Khoury, Global Distinguished Professor of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, New York University
Lecture title pending

13-Mar., 2014
Fred Donner, Professor of Near Eastern History, University of Chicago
Lecture title pending

17-Apr., 2014
Lecturer Name pending

LUNCHEON SEMINARS

11-Sept., 2013
Omur Harmansah, Assistant Professor of Archaeology and Egyptology and Ancient Western Asian Studies, Brown University
"Cities and the Archaeology of Place."

9-Oct., 2013
Sa’ed Atshan, Watson Institute Post-Doctoral Fellow, Brown University

"The Geography of International Aid in the Palestinian Territories."

6-Nov., 2013
Kevin DeJesus, Adjunct Professor in Social Sciences, Johnson & Wales University
"Signifying Geographies, Mapping Violent Contestations: The Making of Symbolic Landscapes."

4-Dec., 2013
Faiz Ahmed, Assistant Professor of History, Brown University
"The Sultânîs of Kabul: Ottoman Experts in Afghanistan, 1877-1923."

5-Feb., 2014
Mayssun Succarie, Cogut Postdoctoral Fellow in International Humanities and Modern Arab Culture and Society, Brown University
Title pending.

5-Mar., 2014
Adi Ophir, Visiting Associate Professor, Cogut Center for Humanities, Brown University
"The One State Condition."

2-Apr., 2014
Danya Qato, Graduate Student, Public Health, Brown University

16-Apr., 2014
Nikolaos Panou, Visiting Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature, Brown University
"Against Tobacco: An Eighteenth-Century Controversy."

30-Apr., 2014
Anthony Watson, Adjunct Assistant Professor, Brown University
"Between Pope, Caliph and Il-Khan: Minority Churches in Medieval Persia."

MAJOR EVENTS

25-Sep., 2013
Twenty-Year Anniversary of the Oslo Peace Accord
Hanan Ashrawi, "Process versus Peace"
Salomon 001, 4:00-5:30PM

26-Sep., 2013
Critical Conversations #1
After Oslo: On Israel and Palestine Panel discussion. 4:00-5:30PM

25/25-Oct., 2013
Digital Humanities and Islamic & Middle East Studies

8-Nov., 2013
SYRIA: Beyond Geopolitics
2:00 - 5:30PM

6-Dec., 2013
1953 - Anniversary of the Iran Revolution - 60 years

7-Dec., 2013
Mohsen Namjoo concert
Grant Center for the 11-Feb., 2014
Nazim Hikmet
On the Turkish Poet and Activist

27-Feb., 2014
Critical Conversations #2
After Oslo: On Israel and Palestine Panel discussion.
4:00-5:30PM

28-Feb. / 1-Mar., 2014
New Directions in Palestinian Studies

3-Apr., 2014
Aga Khan Visiting Professor Lecture
5:00-7:00PM
Title pending

4/5-Apr., 2014
Aga Khan Visiting Professor 2- day Workshop

25/26-Apr., 2014
Engaged Scholarship Workshop

FILM SERIES

LOVE AND THE CITY: URBAN LIVES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

27-Sept., 2013
ABU DHABI “Sea Shadow”

25-Oct., 2013
BEIRUT “Caramel”

15-Nov., 2013
JERUSALEM “Eyes Wide Open”

13-Dec., 2013
TEHRAN “A Separation”

MORE IN THE SPRING SEMESTER

UNDERGRADUATE PAPER SERIES

08-Oct., 2013
22-Oct., 2013
05-Nov., 2013
19-Nov., 2013
MORE IN THE SPRING SEMESTER

For additional events see www.middleeastbrown.edu
Three poems by lecturer of Arabic Miled Faiza were published in the French literary magazine Siècle 21, issue nº21, Fall-Winter 2012. The poems were "Au bord de la terre" ("On the edge of the world"), "Interprétation du couchant" ("An interpretation of absence"), and "Interprétation de la maison durant l'absence" ("An interpretation of the house during our absence"). These three poems deal with themes of erotic love and the connection between the body and the intimate space. They were translated from the Arabic by acclaimed French poet Vénus Khoury-Ghata, and were included as part of a special feature on modern Tunisian literature. Siècle 21 is a bi-annual French magazine edited by a committee of writers including the National Book Award-winning American poet Marylin Hacker.

Maud Mandel, Associate Professor of Judaic Studies, completed final revisions to her book, Muslims and Jews in France: History of a Conflict, which will appear in January 2014 with Princeton University Press and hosted an international conference at Brown on Jewish history and imperialism in which she presented a piece entitled, "What's in a Riot? Tunisian Antisemitism, French Police, and International Jewish Politics in Tunis, June 1952." Mandel is currently working with her two co-editors to publish a volume of the papers presented at the conference. In addition, she was invited to give presentations at the University of Chicago and the University of Michigan and she presented a paper on French Jewish politics at the annual Association for Jewish Studies conference. In 2012-13, Mandel also became Director of the Program in Judaic Studies at Brown.

Anthony Watson, Adjunct Assistant Professor of History, Associate Director Middle East Studies, Brown University, was named to the geographic advisory board of the Syriac Reference Portal (Syriaca.org). He also completed the chapter "The Early Franciscan Mission to Asia as Related in William of Rubruck’s Itinerarium." In Nirit Ben-Aryeh Debby, Sally Cornelison, and Peter Howard, eds. Word, Deed, & Image: Mendicants to the World (Brepols, forthcoming 2015).