



BROWN UNIVERSITY
**CENTER FOR
MIDDLE EAST
STUDIES**

Dear Friends,

As the academic year begins, it is our pleasure to extend greetings from the new Center for Middle East Studies at Brown. For those returning to campus, welcome back, and for those recently arrived at Brown; we hope you will regard CMES as an integral part of your intellectual and social community.

CMES came into being on July 1, 2019, and will begin its activities in earnest this semester. As you will see from the new [website](#), the change from Program to Center has led to some rearrangement that makes room for current and future expansion. Since the transition is ongoing, your feedback is sure to help us become better at representing the many constituencies that intersect in the space of CMES.

CMES is pleased to welcome two new colleagues. [Samine Tabatabaei](#) joins as Visiting Assistant Professor in Iranian Studies and [Paul Kohlbry](#) is our incoming Postdoctoral Research Associate in Palestinian Studies. Samine and Paul will present in colloquia on [September 26](#) and [October 17](#) respectively. I hope you can join us to learn more about their work. Our close partner, [the Center for Language Studies](#), welcomes Esra Ozdemir as Senior Lecturer in Turkish and Mohamed Bayoumi as Visiting Lecturer in Arabic. In conjunction with Esra's arrival, please stay tuned for our efforts toward enhancing Turkish studies on campus.

A rich array of [events](#) are scheduled for the semester. We host two major conferences: "[Death and Afterlives in the Middle East](#)" on September 27, and an *Islam and the Humanities* two-day conference, this year titled "[The Primacy of Form](#)," on October 25-26. Attending to matters in the news, we present "[New Voices from Sudan](#)" with guest speakers Khalid Medani and Nada Mustafa Ali, and on October 22, [a lecture by Adeb Khalid](#) on the historical and contemporary situation of the Uyghur Turkic minority in Xinjiang, China. In addition, we host separate lectures on the art world by Alia Al-Senussi '03 A.M. '04, and by [Clare Davies](#), Assistant Curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Two events highlight new books in the field: [Gender, Governance and Islam](#) by Deniz Kandiyoti, Kathryn Spellman Poots and Nadjé Al-Ali and [The Palestinian Idea: Film, Media, and the Radical Imagination](#) by Greg Burris. The semester will culminate in a concert by students from Berklee College of Music at the Agora, Stephen Robert '62 Hall.

Please have a look at the usual long list of [Middle East Studies related courses](#) available this semester. The offerings are especially rich this year as Professors Doumani, Drumsta, and Mitter are back on campus after sabbatical leaves. Our thriving undergraduate concentration is in the hands of Director of Undergraduate Studies [Alex Winder](#), who last year helped to simplify and rationalize the requirements. We will continue engaging graduate students across the disciplines in the Center's

work through programming aimed at intellectual and professional concerns pertaining to our vibrant community of scholars-in-training.

As a Center, our ambition is to increase resources to be able to expand our coverage of research and teaching on the Middle East. As this occurs, it is key to ensure that all those who wish to participate in our work feel welcome. We hope that our striving for inclusivity and the highest academic standards is visible in the Center's profile. Any suggestions for improvements on both counts are always most welcome.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Shahzad Bashir'.

Shahzad Bashir
Director, Center for Middle East Studies
Aga Khan Professor of Islamic Humanities