



Fall 2017

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

At the start to yet another exciting and transformative year for MES, please join me in welcoming the new members of our family: Shahzad Bashir, Aga Khan professor of Islamic humanities; Amir Moosavi, visiting assistant professor of Iranian studies; Alex Winder, postdoctoral research associate in Palestinian studies; and Shamiran Mako, visiting assistant professor and director of undergraduate studies. The search for a senior anthropologist of the Middle East, to be launched this fall, will deepen our already impressive bench of core faculty. It is also with great pleasure that we announce that Saraya McPherson will be joining MES as administrative coordinator in September. Saraya is originally from Allentown, Pennsylvania. She attended Cornell University, double majoring in Government and Near Eastern Studies. She received her MA in Near and Middle Eastern Studies from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London focusing on the relationship between human rights and Islamic law, gender and sexuality in Iran, and modern constructions of masculinity in Israel-Palestine.

As usual, we will hit the ground running. Mark your calendars for the first Luncheon Seminar on September 13 with Adi Ophir, a book talk by yours truly on September 26, and the Peter Green Lecture with Laleh Khalili, professor of Middle East politics, SOAS, on November 14.

In addition to our regular programming, the annual conferences of two of our research initiatives will be held during the Fall 2017 semester: the Engaged Scholarship conference, "Middle East Toxic Wars," organized by Narges Bajoghli; and the Arts and Social Change conference, "After Witnessing: Moving Images from the Levant and the Political Imagination," co-organized by Hanan Toukan and Kareem Estefan. The annual Aga Khan conference on Islamic Humanities and the New Directions in Palestinian Studies workshop will be held in Spring, 2018. MES is also fortunate to have a very active Departmental Undergraduate Group (DUG) and Graduate Student Association (MESGSA.) This year's DUG leaders are Isabella Creatura and Pierre Lipton, and the GSA are Julia Gettle and Malay Firoz.

Since 2012 we have been vigorously expanding the ranks of our professors, growing the concentration, enriching our course offerings, building nationally recognized research initiatives, and delivering intellectually exciting and timely programming. The 2017-2018 academic year brings many of these efforts to fruition. Important steps on the institutional and financial fronts include applying to become a center at Watson, and convening the MES Advisory Council in October. Please check out our [Annual Report](#) and our [Website](#) for more information.

Allow me a personal word. Racism directly and negatively impacts our educational mission and threatens our community. As our teach-in on the [Muslim ban](#) last semester made clear, the fates of the Middle East and the United States are intertwined. MES will continue working closely with other units and with our Brown community as a whole for justice, peace, and freedom for all.

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