The Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies at NYU is a Title VI National Resource Center (NRC) for modern Middle Eastern Studies as named by the United States Department of Education. NRC support is essential to the Center’s graduate program (area and language studies) and bolsters outreach programs to the NYU academic community, local educators, media and culture workers as well as the general public. Title VI funding, through its Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowships, also enables important opportunities for NYU graduate students to intensively study the languages of the Middle East and South Asia (including Arabic, Hebrew, Hindi, Persian, Turkish and Urdu).
This year the Kevorkian Center was successfully renewed as a Department of Education Title IV National Resource Center for contemporary Middle Eastern Studies and was awarded Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowships (FLAS) through 2018. Along with the support of the university, these grants allow the Center to continue operating and support many of our students.

Our Master’s program is among the most competitive in the nation, with our graduates going on to top doctoral programs in the social sciences and humanities and successful careers in journalism, non-profit organizations, education, and other fields. This year, we graduated 16 MA students (staying in the field), the first holder of the residency program launched in Spring 2015. The second was the launch of a new research methods seminar which serves to highlight the work of our many colleagues across the university whose expertise is relevant to the study of the Middle East, feature and demystify the various “methods” of studying the region, its history, culture, and languages, and expand student-faculty relationships. As both of these programs continue in the year ahead, they will be joined by new and exciting ones as well as our recognition that we increasingly live and work, and teach and learn in a digital environment. Indeed, if you haven’t yet, follow us on various social media and internet platforms as @NYUKevorkian.

Finally and importantly, while change has been prevalent at the Center this past year, the continued energy, dedication, and knowledge of our Program Administrator, Arthur St. and our Associate Director, Gesa Schamwörber, have served as the Center’s backbone. Whether admissions or government grant applications, daily finances or new programs, none would have been possible without them. Both Arthur and Gesa deserve utmost recognition and gratitude for these successes and for ensuring that the Center continues to be a vibrant intellectual community that we all benefit from. On a personal note, I am honored and delighted to be the Director of a Center as remarkable as NYU’s Kevorkian, and thank each and every one of you for your continued support. I trust you will enjoy reading about our progress this past year in the following pages and hope that it will urge you to continue to integrate what have been separate components of the Center’s activities into a holistic and updated approach. Enacting this vision is an ongoing, overall restructuring of faculty and administrative roles, merging students’ academic and professional needs with our events; and putting communication technology to better and broader use.

For example, this past year we introduced two new programs that help raise the Center’s profile and provide more rigorous academic and professional training for our students. This included a prestigious practitioners scholar in residence program sponsored by the Ford Foundation. The first holder of this program was Adam Shatz, author and a Contributing Editor at the London Review of Books, who led a graduate workshop titled “Writing for Non-Academics” and hosted a roundtable on Syria. The second was the launch of a research methods seminar which serves to highlight the work of our many colleagues across the university whose expertise is relevant to the study of the Middle East, feature and demystify the various “methods” of studying the region, its history, culture, and languages, and expand student-faculty relationships. As both of these programs continue in the year ahead, they will be joined by new and exciting ones as well as our recognition that we increasingly live and work, and teach and learn in a digital environment. Indeed, if you haven’t yet, follow us on various social media and internet platforms as @NYUKevorkian.

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My ethnographic fieldwork looks at this neighborhood today to explore the many historical and material layers that make up Bourj Hammoud. Primarily, I ask, what are the ways in which everyday experiences of the built environment and public services help shape, challenge or sometimes reinforce notions of community and belonging to a sectarian public in the context of Lebanon today? My research, in conversation with other anthropologists and urban scholars who study how sectarian parties dominate urban planning processes and services in Lebanon, explores the connections between political sectarianism and the contingent processes of making and remaking social networks through various infrastructures and urban development practices, as well as NGOs and sectarian political parties.

My film project, which is currently in post-production, incorporates footage filmed in Bourj Hammoud from 2009 through 2015. This film is one way in which I will explore the intersections between experience, space and memory in Lebanon. During my fieldwork, I conducted a series of “map-drawing” interviews with some of my interlocutors as well as their wider network of friends and family members. People were asked to draw a map or some other kind of visual representation of a disappeared or altered space that was meaningful to them, whether it be a childhood home, a neighborhood, a workplace or even a school, and tell some kind of story about it. The responses focused on a wide range of topics from the material aspects of daily life, such as tracing a path to work to the most intimate memories of people and places long since disappeared. One participant carefully related the names of every person living on his block before the ethnic cleansing of the 1970s or working on his block before the ethnic cleansing of the 1970s. Another participant drew a map tracing all of the various times she and her family had to move, including periods of squatting during the war. As I worked towards completing the film, I aim not to make the film a kind of representation of life in Bourj Hammoud. Rather, I approach it as a collaborative exercise in remembering and reimagining the past, present and alternate possible futures through the materiality of space in Bourj Hammoud and the creativity of my interlocutors.

This year, 2015, marks the hundredth anniversary of the systematic massacres and deportations of Armenians in former Ottoman lands now known as the Armenian Genocide. My research, which is based in Lebanon, is deeply connected to the history of this catastrophe. Since 2009, I have conducted ethnographic research in and around the suburb of Bourj Hammoud, just outside of Beirut’s municipal boundaries. In the aftermath of the genocide in the 1910s, French Mandate officials resettled Armenian refugees in Lebanon. By the 1930s, the area known as Bourj Hammoud, which at the time was mainly agricultural lands, was urbanized through the joint efforts of Armenian town associations and French mandate officials in order to settle Armenians more permanently in what would soon become an independent Lebanon in 1943. Today, neighborhoods within Bourj Hammoud still bear the names of the towns from which the Armenians had been displaced – like Sis, Adana, Marash. Though Bourj Hammoud is popularly known as Beirut’s “Armenian neighborhood,” it is, in fact a highly diverse working class suburb that has long been at the center of migration within Lebanon as well as from Syria and elsewhere in the world.

As Lebanon continues without a president for over a year now and the ongoing Syria conflict becomes more pressing with Hezbollah’s growing involvement, many fear the rise of IS (Islamic State), interest in Shia political involvement and mobilization has taken center stage. Historical scholarship on the Shia of Lebanon has largely focused on the 1960s and 70s lead-up to the civil war, or the post-war period and rise of political groups such as Hezbollah. My research pays close attention to the earlier French Mandate period (1923-1946) to shed light on the impact of electricity cuts that plagued Bourj Hammoud several times a day, to going shopping or walking home from work. More recently, I returned to Lebanon to continue the final phase of the project with Lebanese artist Rosy Kettedjian. Together, we conducted a series of “map-drawing” interviews with some of my interlocutors, as well as their wider network of friends and family members. People were asked to draw a map or some other kind of visual representation of a disappeared or altered space that was meaningful to them, whether it be a childhood home, a neighborhood, a workplace or even a school, and tell some kind of story about it. The responses focused on a wide range of topics from the material aspects of daily life, such as tracing a path to work to the most intimate memories of people and places long since disappeared. One participant carefully related the names of every person living on his block before the ethnic cleansing of the 1970s or working on his block before the ethnic cleansing of the 1970s. Another participant drew a map tracing all of the various times she and her family had to move, including periods of squatting during the war. As I work towards completing the film, I aim not to make the film a kind of representation of life in Bourj Hammoud. Rather, I approach it as a collaborative exercise in remembering and reimagining the past, present and alternate possible futures through the materiality of space in Bourj Hammoud and the creativity of my interlocutors.

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Writing for Non-Academics

The Promise (and Perils) of Popular Writing

By Simone Rutkowitz, MA NES ’16

ast spring, the Hagop Kevorkian Center hosted Adam Shatz as the first practitioner in its inaugural residency program. The new program supplements the Kevorkian Center’s existing course offerings by inviting individuals whose work engages with the Middle East to teach a short seminar. The program, designed to host a variety of artists, scholars, and practitioners, demonstrates how different practices and approaches can be applied in the Middle Eastern Studies.

Writing for Non-Academics: The Promise (and Perils) of Popular Writing,” taught by Shatz, examined the practice and art of long-form narrative non-fiction.

A contributing editor at the London Review of Books, Shatz frequently reports on cultural and political stories from the Middle East. Occupying “a liminal space between academia and journalism,” his writing is characterized by an evenhandedness and inquisitive spirit that is hard to come by in most coverage of the region. Weaving between his central narrative and contextual material, Shatz skillfully fits out a region of the world far removed from many in his readership.

Personally, Shatz’s class acted as a stylistic intervention. After a semester of consuming and producing only academic literature, my vocabulary was dense, my sentences riddled with commas. While most courses at the Kevorkian Center are content driven, “Writing for Non-Academics” aimed to develop the form and structure of students’ writing. Designed to “expose students to different modes of narration,” Shatz chose essays from a range of authors, including Rachel Aviv, Peter Hessler, Tony Judt, and Janet Malcolm. Covering a broad scope of topics, these selections demonstrate how well crafted writing captures and holds a reader’s attention, regardless of the subject matter.

During a conversation outside of class Shatz noted, “a potential disadvantage” of a place like the Kevorkian Center is that scholars may forget that others might not share our enthusiasm for the Middle East. This point resonated with me. If scholars want to be heard outside of the academy then we need to garner interest in our findings and perspectives.

In his own writing, Shatz uses straightforward and precise language. Rather than hiding behind the latest jargon, he takes care to tell his story with clarity. Out of the clarity of Shatz’s prose, the reader is able to glean the nuances and inconsistencies he identifies in his subject matter. Shatz does not shy away from controversial or unpopular positions. In “Moral Clarity,” an essay from January 2015, he describes how “exercises in moral clarity” – assertions like “I suit Charlie” made by liberal hawks in the US – obfuscate the facts on the ground in France and refuse to truly engage with “the full measure of the moral and political challenges at hand.” Shatz’s ability to move between personal experiences, current events, historical context and individual subjects makes his writing easy and pleasurable to read.

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“Stranger Still,” his profile on Kamel Daoud, published in April 2015 during his residency at the Kevorkian Center, served as much as a lesson on the history of Algeria as it did a profile of Daoud. While not a scholar of the Middle East by profession, Shatz’s work is an example of how non-academic writing can be smart, opinionated, and relevant to both the public and academic circles.

By the late 1940s, Sabahattin Ali’s never-ending incarceration due to his influential opposition to the government had destabilized his life and writing, therefore he tried to provide for his family by driving trucks across the country. On one of his last journeys before his assassination on the Turkish-Bulgarian border, he took a self-portrait on his camera. In this picture, he stands all by himself on a rock overlooking a rural town in late afternoon, dressed in leather boots and a jacket. He doesn’t look “authorly” at all; he looks pensive. He casts a gigantic shadow over the town down the hill, thanks to the setting sun behind the camera.

When Sevengül Sonmez showed this picture following her keynote address at the research workshop “Transnational Perspectives on the Life and Work of Sabahattin Ali,” I immediately thought that this self-portrait captured—within the medium’s capacity—Sabahattin Ali’s life and works: he was a prolific author who did not conform to one’s expectations of a writer, and he left a complex yet spectacular legacy behind. Scholars from the US, Germany, and Turkey convened at the Hagop Kevorkian Center on May 6-7, 2015, in order to discuss and learn more about his life and works, but at the end of the workshop we were left with more questions, and were even more fascinated with the author. Regardless, the workshop has achieved its goals.

Since the initial stages, we had planned the workshop as an opportunity for scholars to research and present neglected aspects of Ali’s life and authorship. Alongside new, original literary analyses of his novels and short stories, each participant also shed more light on Ali’s creative process and the aftermath of his works. We discussed political and social issues crystallize over Ali’s work and life, what the author and his works stand for in Turkish literary studies today—apart from his contemporary bestselling status which came 70 years after his death—and what else can we learn about and from him regarding the role of the public during the early Republican period of the Republic. Sevengül Sonmez, the literary archivist, scholar, and editor of volumes on Sabahattin Ali’s life, enabled the workshop to have a methodological advantage: she directed scholars to primary sources on the author’s life that could sharpen their readings of his works. This advantage has made an epistemological statement: when literary criticism and historical research converge, the relevancy of scholarship increases.

With the co-organizers, we aim to extend the success of this workshop by following up on a Turkish publishing house’s request to turn the proceedings of the workshop into an academic volume dedicated to the author, and submitting our articles as a special issue to an international academic journal. When these endeavors bear fruit, not only will the groundbreaking scholarship on Sabahattin Ali contribute to methodological and contextual debates on literary studies in general and Turkish literature in particular, it will also reinforce NYU’s well-deserved place in the scholarship of Turkish literature.
What Went Wrong in Syria?

By Nader Attası, MA NES ’16

A dam Shatz, contributing editor at the London Review of Books and the Spring 2015 writer-in-residence at the Kevorkian Center recently hosted an event entitled “What Went Wrong in Syria?” The panel brought together speakers from a wide range of professions and political leanings who sought to answer how an im- mensely hopeful uprising, in the image of the rest of the uprisings throughout the region, had descended into the situation we see today of violence, destruction, and widespread warlordism.

Adam Shatz began by posing a provocative question. Citing a friend who from the very beginning of the uprising had warned that the uprising was not what it seemed and that things would take a turn for the worse, Shatz asked whether the seeds of the current impasse were already there for all of us to see at from the start. At stake in such a conversation was not only the wrong moves that led to the tragic state Syria is in today, but whether there ever was any other way—whether the large protests and hopeful slogans masked something much deeper that we could not already see but would inevitably turn the situation into a blood-soaked conflict.

George Saghir, under his pseudonym “Ehsani,” became known via Joshua Landis’s blog Syria Comment by being a vicious advo- cate for neoliberal reform. While Bashar al-Asad was liberalizing the economy in a gradual manner to avoid alienating the original protesters, Saghir approached the topic of this panel as some may like to think, many Syrians did come together at the beginning of the uprising and cultivated what she called “novel forms of togetherness.” Something really different was happen- ing, and it was this that was electrifying and prevented the upris- ing from being put down despite the government’s best attempts at brutality and harshness. This was what caused people in Homs to go chant in solidarity with the people of Der’a who were getting shot at, which would then lead to a protest in Hama in solidarity with the live ammo being fired at the people of Homs.

So what went wrong? This strand, despite being the best hope for Syria, lost. They lost, Lisa Wedeen suggested, because they were native to think that such forms of collective action could actually de- feat tyrants of the secular or Islamist variety with expert knowledge in torture and an endless supply of jail cells. Such devastating clarity was perhaps what was needed all along. Jonathan Littell summa- rizes this position succinctly in his book Syrian Notebooks: Inside the Homs Uprising: “The people still believed that song, dance, slogans, and prayer were stronger than fear and bullets. They were wrong, of course, and their illusions would soon drown in a river of blood.” Per- haps Shatz’s skeptical friend was right after all, and such an outcome was inevitable, but not due to a latent sectarianism that was waiting to be unleashed, but rather, due to the number of political actors on both sides who were ready to ruthlessly exploit the situation to their benefit. Syrian society is not intrinsically good and pure nor is it latently evil and sectarian. It is a society that is, like all societies, rife with contradictions. Those same impulses that caused people to come out into the streets in solidarity with their fellow countrymen caused others to wish death upon their fellow countrymen. Thus is the par-adox of a civil war that began with an uprising. It is no wish to see that stand of Syrian society that we saw at the outset of the uprising, the strand that cultivated “novel forms of togetherness,” then the first thing that needs to happen is the war needs to end in order for politics to return to Syria. In war, this tendency doesn’t stand a chance. Only in a political landscape dominated by ideas can it flourish once again.
A recent visit from two Moroccan poets illuminated a vibrant poetry scene and identified a gap in scholarship pertaining to North African literature. NYU’s Deborah Kapchan, who has worked with a number of poets and is editing a forthcoming anthology, Poetic Justice: An Anthology of Moroccan Contemporary Poetry translated the following poems by Aissa and Mesnaoui from their original Arabic.

**WILD BOOK**

By Idriss Aissa

A grove of palm trees
Appears to our eye, or is it a book
Whose body is made of stray herbs
And of the breaking of dawn when light finds its path
Its lines a southern wind
And its margins, are they thirst or mirage?
How do we read the memory of the palm tree
Rising so that out of its splendor
A celestial body of fleeting roots emerges
Turning around nothing but solitude?
We will forget
So as to remember the maps of our oases
Like the humble ones, the lost,
We will enter the order of oblivion

**THIRST**

By Driss Mesnaoui

Before night gathered its blankets and birds decorated their feathers with the color of morning:
I was standing on my feet
washing my face with the regard of my mother’s eyes
and wearing the day, a pure weather.
On a string of dreams I planted a footstep... sun on my shoulders.
The road was longer then my imagined exile.
I traversed two of its generations in the time allotted for me.
I waited for what my soul tasted of the fire’s heat.
The sea waves having washed my feet of fatigue.
From time to time memories splattered me, making me forget myself.
When I felt thirsty a door opened in my chest.
I threw my palms between two laughing waves.
The water swallowed me in a single gulp.
The thirst of the sea was more powerful than my own!
This year has been marked by heightened racial tension in the U.S., in part due to outrage over shootings (often by police) of unarmed black men. In Fall 2014, Shirin Barghi, a graduate of Kevorkian’s joint MA program with Journalism and the creator of Humans of Tehran, drew a parallel with her own experiences with police brutality in her native Iran, tweeting that “the struggle here to confront that violence resonated with me.” She created simple images paired with the victims’ last words in order to “raise awareness about racist police violence in America and as an expression of solidarity.” These images and captions, a selection of which follow, flooded social media and continue to circulate a year later.

Jonathan never had an opportunity to reply. He had bullets in him before he could ever hit the ground. So there was not sufficient warning. No one ever told him to stop. He didn’t have time to react. The medical examiner’s office later ruled Garner’s death a homicide, caused by the officer’s chokehold as well chest and neck compressions and prone positioning “during physical restraint by police.”

Mehserle testified that he meant to zap Grant with his Taser in an Oakland station - but instead pulled his .40 caliber handgun and blasted the man.

They said they thought McDade was armed because ... he clutched his waste band as they chased him onto a dimly lit neighborhood street.

Diallo was shot outside his Bronx apartment. The police officers had mistaken him for a serial rapist, who was later apprehended.

At one point, Guzman says, he spoke to Sean Bell and said, “S, I love you, son.” He says Bell said, “I love you too.” Then Guzman says Bell “stopped moving.”

“A man was watching him,” said Rachel Jeantel, 19, who was on the phone with Martin just before he was fatally shot. “He said the man kept watching him. He kept complaining that a man was just watching him.”

He was at the video games playing videos and he went over there by the toy section where the toy guns were. And the next thing I know, he said ‘It’s not real,’ and the police start shooting and they said ‘Get on the ground,’ but he was already on the ground because they had shot him. And I could hear him just crying and screaming. I feel like they shot him down like he was not even human.”

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“A man was watching him,” said Rachel Jeantel, 19, who was on the phone with Martin just before he was fatally shot. “He said the man kept watching him. He kept complaining that a man was just watching him.”

He was at the video games playing videos and he went over there by the toy section where the toy guns were. And the next thing I know, he said ‘It’s not real,’ and the police start shooting and they said ‘Get on the ground,’ but he was already on the ground because they had shot him. And I could hear him just crying and screaming. I feel like they shot him down like he was not even human.”

They said they thought McDade was armed because ... he clutched his waste band as they chased him onto a dimly lit neighborhood street.

Diallo was shot outside his Bronx apartment. The police officers had mistaken him for a serial rapist, who was later apprehended.
Jerusalem, Time Embodied

By Jabra Ibrahim Jabra
Translated by Thalia Beaty (MA NES/Journalism ’15)

This translation of an excerpt of Jabra Ibrahim Jabra’s 1967 essay, “Jerusalem, Time Embodied,” appeared on Jan 26, 2016, on Jadaliyya. It is excerpted and reprinted here with permission.

The city of Jerusalem is not just a place; it is also a time. One cannot understand it only in its limited physical boundaries. It must be seen in its historical perspective, as if it were history itself. As if an observer might grasp the history of four thousand years in a single glance.

In this city, history lives. Every stone pronounces it. This history is full of contradictions, full of disasters, but it is also the story of a city for which all of humanity has yearned. Because it has never been, not for one day, merely a city composed of stone and dirt, business and politics. It has always been a city of dreams and longing, and of the human spirit’s gaze toward God. The city has stood for centuries, unlike the larger extensions of the city that were completed in one moment between 1920 and 1948 to the north, west, and south.

The oldest extension of the city outside the walls lies in the Nabi Dawood area, south of the city. It goes back several centuries, unlike the larger extensions of the city that were completed in one moment between 1920 and 1948 to the north, west, and south.

The new parts of Jerusalem sprawling up toward the open fields, these lands were surveyed and developed by individuals from Jerusalem and Bethlehem, Fawqa, Talbiyya, and Katamon, were owned by the Englishman, Moses Montefiore. Until the end of the twenties, the neighborhoods of Ma’man Allah Cemetery, and after the YMCA was built in the 1930s, along St. Julian Street. In this way, ties were built between the distant boroughs of new Jerusalem and the old city itself.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, the Germans established a colony a few kilometers from the walls. A Greek colony followed. Then, monasteries and neighborhoods appeared here and there belonging to Catholics and Roman Orthodox and others. Jewish neighborhoods began to sprout up, funded by the Englishman, Moses Montefiore. Until the end of the twenties, the neighborhoods of Fawqa, Talbiyya, and Katamon, were owned by individuals from Jerusalem and Bethlehem, and had been little more than recreation spots for Jerusalemites. However, in the early thirties, I worked there for two consecutive summers during summer vacation, earning two and a half piasters a day.

Because of this, I do not see anywhere to start but from a purely personal perspective.

I lived in a low area outside of the walls of the heights of Nabi Dawood that was known by the name “da’ar al-Enaab.” It was one of those first neighborhoods that sprang up outside of Jerusalem at the turn of the twentieth century. I have seen its transformation—it was a single room in a big building whose ground floor lay beneath the main street. It was made up of an uncovered, square courtyard you reached by a staircase. On each side was a room. In each of these, two bullet holes in his chest, blood pooling thick, dying.

She pushed out a back door and ran into the darkness beneath overarching oaks. He lay on the floor near his kitchen, shot and killed 16-year-old Kimani Gray in East New York City police officers shot and killed him. Michael Brown was shot by a policeman in Ferguson, Missouri, two days before he was set to begin classes at Vatterott College.

Jerusalem was the walled city with its seven gates. It began to spill over these walls more than seventy years ago when, bit by bit, it started to reach the suburbs surrounding it on all sides. This expansion accelerated after the destruction of a section of the wall at Jaffa Gate in 1938. Only then was the core, walled city organically tied to its extensions.

The newly released cell phone footage undermines the statement, showing Powell approaching the cops, but not coming as close as was reported, with his hands at his side. The officers began shooting within 15 seconds of their arrival, hitting Powell with a barrage of bullets.

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Our home was a single room in a big build ing whose ground floor lay beneath the main street. It was made up of an uncovered, square courtyard you reached by a staircase. On each side was a room. In each of these, two and a half piasters a day.
lived an entire family. From the door of our room I could see the minaret of Nabi Dawood looming over us from its great height. There was only one small window next to the door leading out to the courtyard—and we would fold our books and school things in it. The landlord let us open a small square hole at the top of the back wall to help ventilate the place. The opening was exactly at the ground level of the main street. There was no applause in those days, so we put a metal screen and a small curtain over it. I was in the habit of walking before dawn to the voces of the peasant women coming from the surrounding villages carrying baskets of vegetables to the market. They would sit close to the window as they rested from their arduous walk up to the vegetable market at Jaffa Gate. They and their donkeys made a huge racket.

On school days I would climb out of the “pit” we lived in up to Jaffa Gate. The place was awash with cars and buses, crates of fruit and veg- etables, and of course, sellers and buyers and porters. Then, I would go to the Rashidiyya School—which still stands in its place outside of Herod’s Gate—either by way of Hebron Gate and the old city or by way of Jaffa Road. Then I would climb to the Old Post Office, passing by the office of Bou- lous Saeed, a publisher and the grandfather of the places that Jabra mentions. Other landmarks, like the Jewish neighborhood of Rehavia. Residents of Katamon were terrorized, and began to flee. Arabs responded to the provocations, and a few months later, new Jerusalem had become a terrifying labyrinth of barbed wire, abandoned houses, and scattered ruins. Bul- lets snarled back and forth day and night.

As for me, I remember the new Jerusalem—the Jerusalem that was stolen from us—much as Adam remembered the Garden of Para- dise. As I grew up, the city grew up with me. My childhood was a reflection of its hundreds of roads, houses, stores, alleyways, and trees. It echoed the gardens that bloom in the spring and wither in the winter, and the many scattered rocks that make up this city. Where does my self-end and the subject of my dis- cussion begin here? A street is where this boy cried, where he grew hungry, where he laughed, and where he tugged for a girl whose name he never knew because she smiled at him without meaning to. A city street is where this boy ran through the rain. This is where he tears family and friends up from their roots, when he casts a boy—now a young man—across the sea of roads, houses, stores, alleyways, and from one road to another, from one home to another, is this not a brazen attempt to save Self from Self?

From this experience comes every Palestin- ian’s feeling that he must return. Return is more than a geographical landscape, it is an enemy. It is winning back that part of the land that was taken away from us. It is the attempt to sever Self from Self?
Jon Stewart’s Favorite King

Daily Show host turned filmmaking newbie has decided to shoot in Jordan, so he overappalled its appalling human rights record

This article is reprinted with permission from a December 15, 2014 post on Al-Jazeera America by Ari Asher-Schapiro (MA NES/Journalism, ’15)

When “Daily Show” host Jon Stewart first interviewed King Abdullah II of Jordan in September 2010, the monarch and comedian really hit it off. Stewart praised Abdullah, who has spent a lifetime “fighting poverty.” The king chuckled, thanked Stewart and returned the compliment. “I watch ‘The Daily Show’ every night,” he said, half-kidding.

As the two men chatted, a student named Haliq Al-Shu’i was spending his second month in a Jordanian military prison, after he allegedly penned a poem “critical of the king” — a crime that carries a three-year sentence. (Al-Shu’i denied writing it.)

No one would ever suspect that the guest on “The Daily Show” that night, with his charming English accent and dignified demeanor, was at the helm of a family-run autocracy with a long track record of human rights abuses.

Three years later, Stewart began shooting “Rosewater,” his directorial debut film about the torture and imprisonment of the Iranian Cana- dian journalist Maziar Bahari at the hands of the Iranian police. The movie is shot in Abdullah’s backyard, Jordan’s capital, Amman.

Using an actual Iranian prison as a movie set, Stewart staged emotional scenes in which the Iranian secret police torment Bahari and beat him with knotted electrical cables and hoses.

In the wake of that report, Jordan undertook reforms, says Adam Coogle, Amnesty International’s Amman-based researcher. “Over the last decade, the kingdom upgraded its prisons and largely restricted torture to suspected members of terrorist organizations. Soon after Ab- dullah appeared on “The Daily Show,” in the face of pressure from foreign human rights organizations, he pardoned the imprisoned al-Shuli.

When asked, the producers of the Rosewater would not discuss abuses directly to the king. Inside the kingdom, questioning the political order is rarely tolerated and political opponents are often intimidated and detained.

Even after the threat of the Arab Spring subsided, significant abuses persist and Jordan's political system remains restricted. The 2014 Annual Report from Human Rights Watch finds that “perpetrators of torture or other ill-treatment continue to enjoy near total im- munity. Credible allegations of torture or other ill-treatment are routinely ignored.” Just last year the government blocked access to over 300 news websites in a nationwide crackdown on independent journalism.

This task seems perfectly suited for an iconoclastic political comedian like Stewart, who has made a career out of exposing the hypocrisy of those in power. Of course, he can’t reverse Jordan’s human record or push for regime change. But he could at least point out the absurdity that an unelected monarch with a vicious human rights record claims to Jordan’s political climate and human rights abuses, and everyone continues to say that Jordan is run by these nice guys,” Coogle said.

Stewart’s film, “Rosewater,” may win an Oscar and in doing so draw attention to the troubling atmosphere of oppression for journalists working in Iran. As an enemy of the United States, Iran’s human rights record is already the source of justifiable but also self-serving outrage. To draw public attention to the conduct of U.S. allies such as the kingdom of Jordan is a much less comfortable exercise. It upsets the fundamental fallacy that U.S. policy abroad is guided by principles beyond U.S. security and economic interests.

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A Disorderly Sense of Order
A review of the documentary Cairo Drive

Mariam Elba, MA, NES, ’16

Cairo Drive, a documentary produced and directed by Shereif Alkhatib at the Kevorkian Center recently in a series of three documentary films on urban public space in the Middle East, aptly titled Megapolis. The unique focus on traffic in particular, gives viewers another perspective of urban Cairo that is defining to daily life there. Indeed, if one has been to Cairo in recent years, even if just for one day, the most vivid memory one might leave with is the somehow functioning, yet intense disorder that exists on Cairo’s roads. The documentary is filmed mostly within the confines of a car, where we hear the stories of various drivers who are making their way through Cairo’s congested and chaotic streets, and how they collectively create their own form of order.

The documentary shows a different dimension to the practice of driving a car and regularly dealing with consistently jammed and unregulated traffic. Even when driving in solitude, interacting with other drivers and pedestrians becomes inevitable and necessary to maneuver through the jumble of cars, trucks, buses, and pedestrians attempting to cross the road. This film very thoroughly shows that driving is a public and social practice in Cairo. It requires constant and nuanced interaction with other drivers around you, whether through honking your car horn, in a certain manner a monograph along sound, music, and trauma within the surrounding drivers. Formal traffic signals are nonexistent. Instead, one might ask the driver in the car next to them if they can pass in front of them using this highly developed language of the road.

The documentary was filmed between 2009-2012, but Cairo’s traffic has always been dominant in Egyptian public discourse. It is not mentioned adequately in the film. Out of the lack of a formal system of regulations, the unorganized chaos of traffic gives rise to a kind of ad hoc system that is made by the drivers themselves. But Cairo’s streets are also a larger arena for something much greater: a street traffic subculture that emerges made by the drivers themselves. So much time is spent on the road, an informal system of rules and byways is developed on the streets. The streets become a medium through which the state frames and curates the image of the city in such circumstances.

The film also illuminates how the state has attempted to compense for the rapidly growing population in Cairo and the increase in jammed traffic. We see in the film the many extra highways, such as the Ring Road that circles around the city, and the many bridges that are built above other roads in an attempt to alleviate congestion. The absence of an adequate public transportation system in the city is evident from these details, though public transportation is not mentioned adequately in the film.

The state narrative of the cause of Cairo’s traffic is that it is framed as stemming from misbehavior on the part of the average driver. This echoes a similar refrain in many academic works on urban space in Cairo that reveal a state tendency to blame the causes of many problems on the misbehavior and lack of education of citizens, particularly, the suburban citizen. In the film we see children’s play being staged in school that, almost comically, runs through the traffic rules. We see this again in the film as preparations for President Obama’s visit in 2009 are underway by clearing the streets, rerouting signals, fixing streetlights that drivers claimed have not worked for months, and even going so far as to declaring a public holiday so that regular commuters would not be out driving in the streets. The streets become a medium through which the state frames and curates the image of the city in such circumstances.

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Music has played an important role throughout the political upheavals in Iran over the last decades, and this is now only really coming to the fore. We see a great presence of women instrumentalists, and very recently, there have even been some female soloists on the scene. But at the end of the day, we have to face the truth that the policies of the Islamic Republic have drastically reduced the presence and impact of women on music.

Who makes up the primary audience of underground/socially and politically charged music, both in Iran and abroad?

You have to remember that not all underground music in Iran is necessarily socially or politically charged. Unlike its name sake in other contexts, underground music in Iran simply refers to music that has not always been released in the official setting or has failed to meet the necessary permits in order to be exhibited and traded officially. Band’s “Suskoo Khoda” is an underground sound that expressed mainstream Iranian views on marriage, for example, was played as a sort of family functions for years. So the audience of underground music can cut across age and cultural disposition. Of course there is also underground music that is very critical or violates conventional norms or beliefs, say for example Shahn Najaft’s “Najj,” which offends in the worst terms the Shah Imam Ali an-Naqi. But I would say that for the most part, Frank Zappa’s definition that “mainstream comes to you but you have to go to the underground” doesn’t apply to Iran. And that is because of the restrictions on the musical sphere. Popular songs from the underground can be so much a part of daily life that they are as present as the mainstream.

Nahid Siamdoust is a visiting research scholar at the Hagop Kevorkian Center. She presented pieces of her research in the Iranian Studies Initiative lecture series and organized a teacher-training workshop on the Center’s K-12 outreach program.
The Program in Ottoman Studies

By Alex Boodrookas, MA NES ’14, PhD Candidate MEIS

This year, the Hagop Kevorkian Center hosted Beth Baron, Günhan Börekçi, Amy Singer, Zeynep Çelik, Tuna Artun, and Adam Becker as part of the ongoing Ottoman Lecture Series.

Both Baron examined the 1933 Turkuya Hasan orphan scandal, an event that triggered a backlash against missionary institutions and helped form the three-component Muslim Brotherhood into an organization with national reach. Despite their differing worldviews, Baron drew out the similarities between the Brotherhood and the missionaries, which both sought to mobilize a network of social services in a struggle for the bodies and souls of Egypt’s children.

Günhan Börekçi, scholar and academic consultant for the Turkish TV series The Magnificent Century (Muhteşem Yüzyıl), discussed the significance of the frequenting of historical events and individuals for a broad audience. Beyond the challenge of ensuring that every set and costume piece was correctly researched, he found that it was difficult to explain the motivations and personal lives of characters without psychologizing and personalizing historical events, even as the challenge itself provoked interesting questions about the impetus behind historical change.

Amy Singer’s talk centered around Edirne, the early Ottoman city connecting Istanbul to the Balkans. However, it raised wider issues about the writing of urban history in the post-documna era, which challenges the death of work on Edirne. Her detailed parsing of the human and physical geography of the city offers an example to historians seeking to map the cities of the early empire and the local, translocal, and regional networks in which they are intimately imbedded.

In a talk entitled “Archaeology, Ethnography, and Everyday Life at the Dig,” Zeynep Çelik examined the lived experience of the diverse array of individuals who worked on archaeological excavations in the late nineteenth century Ottoman Empire. Rather than framing archaeology as the extraction of information from inert objects, she sees knowledge production as a dynamic process that was shaped by the interactions of European archaeologists and local workers. Çelik draws out the significance of the quasi-ethnographic depictions of local life that saturate archeological memoirs, revealing the privileged gaze that underpinned the work of European archaeologists.

Tuna Artun challenged the narrative of Ottoman alchemy as an inevitable victim of the scientific revolution. Instead, he sees alchemy as a field among many who were actively challenged by numerous alternative perspectives. Not only are “traditional” Muslims critiquing and challenging movements like the Taliban, Al-Qaeda, and ISIS/ISIL as theologically incorrect readings of Islam, but there are also vibrant “progressive” movements within Islam and pluralism, and Sufism in the contemporary context. These same opinions are also found in academic circles.

This summer at the Hagop Kevorkian Center, seven faculty members from across the world engaged in a rich conversation about the diverse facets of modern Muslim thought. Discussions involved the compatibility of Islam with democracy, history or languages and often no personal experience of the Muslim world. These same opinions are also found in academic circles.

The religion of Islam has been at the center of political discourse in recent years. Issues of terrorism, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the debate over the proposed Park 51 Islamic Center, “the Arab Spring” and the rise of ISIS/ISIL in Iraq and Syria have focused attention on Muslims and their religion. The ways in which Islam has been discussed within the media and certain corners of the academy since the tragic and morally inexcusable events of September 11, 2001, have often been problematic. Over the last decade there has been a veritable explosion of books and articles on Islam, many of which decay what they see as a lack of intellectual debate and moral discourse in the Islamic world. Pundits on cable news networks continually assert that “it is a shame that there are no anti-terrorist, pro-democratic voices within Islam.” Muslims are regularly accused of “whitewashing” the negative aspects of their faith by journalists and critics alike. It is generally accepted that Muslims are rarely violent. More importantly, it is actively challenged by numerous alternative perspectives. Not only are “traditional” Muslims critiquing and challenging movements like the Taliban, Al-Qaeda, and ISIS/ISIL as theologically incorrect readings of Islam, but there are also vibrant “progressive” movements within Islam and pluralism, and Sufism in the contemporary world. Among the membership of NYU’s Faculty Resource Network participated in an intensive, week-long seminar that explored some of these crucial issues and debates in the contemporary Muslim world. The course convenors, Professors Vernon Schubel and Nurten Kilić-Schubel, both of Kanyon College, presented examples of diverse theological, political, and social thought. Discussions involved the compatibility of Islam with democracy, the impact of the Islamic world, the role of Wahhabism in the construction of contemporary Islamic movements, feminist movements within Islam, and post-9/11 Muslim communities and the Arab world.

The course introduced teachable primary sources, including writings by Khalid Abou Fadl, Amina Wadud, Osama bin Laden, and Michael Mustafa Knight. Participants also explored various “Muslim Voices” through selected films and literary works created by artists from a number of different cultural contexts, and shared strategies as to how to introduce complexity and controversial issues in the classroom.
Islam and the Americas
A Summer Institute for K-12 Teachers

By Diana Shin, Outreach Administrator, Hagop Kevorkian Center

In August 2015, in partnership with the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies at NYU, the Hagop Kevorkian Center hosted its Summer Institute on «Islam and the Americas». The Institute was attended by 32 teachers based in New York City and the broader tri-state area benefited from the Summer Institute. The intensive and interactive three-day course was taught by Aisha Khan of NYU’s Anthropology department and an affiliate of both the Kevorkian Center and CLACS, and featured several guest speakers. The group also took field trips to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and to a local mosque and community center in Bay Ridge, a predominantly Arab-American neighborhood.

Throughout the course, participants learned to probe key presumptions about Muslims as well as challenge conventional views of Islam. The contours of the course topics traversed time and space: the religious festival of Hosay as practiced in the Caribbean; Islamic art in the lands of Turkey, Iran, Central Asia, and Later Southeast Asia; the Haitian Revolution; the observance of Muslim holidays in New York City and throughout the globe; cosmopolitan halal consumption; and the experiences of transnational Muslim youth growing up in the United States, Jordan, and Palestine. For the first time, the Kevorkian Center was pleased to offer the option of allowing participants to take the course for “P-credit” through the New York City’s States, Jordan, and Palestine. For the first time, the Kevorkian Center was pleased to offer the option of allowing participants to take the course for “P-credit” through the New York City's Department of Education’s After School Professional Development Program (ASPDP). We will let the teacher feedback speak for itself.

“Islam and the Americas was quite possibly the most informative and beneficial workshop that I’ve attended in my thirteen years of teaching. I went in to this with a cursory understanding of Islam and its history and then learned so very much about Islam in the Americas. I also developed a whole new understanding of the practices of Islam, how regular people actually practice these beliefs and about the challenges Muslims face today in the United States. And of course, I needed to know about specific customs and beliefs in Trinidad and Jamaica. As a Global Studies teacher, this will greatly impact my curriculum and lesson plans for so many different units, such as the Golden Age of African Empires, the Golden Age of Islam, the development of the Ottoman Empire, and Indian independence. If I also help my Imperialism module. I take my students to the Met several times throughout the year and our personal tour of the Near Eastern wing gave me many ideas on what direction to take my class next year. Additionally, a significant percent of my students are Muslim and this seminar will allow me to both include and support them. I can even explain why we have the days of Eid off. It’s not just the students though, quite a few of my fellow teachers are shockingly ignorant on this subject matter and I now feel confident teaching about it.”

— Tara Harding, NYC Museum School (Manhattan, NY), Global Studies Teacher, Grades 9-10

“This workshop really brought together a wide array of speakers and resources that helped teachers connect Islam to their teaching practice. It also illustrated some of the struggles Muslims students face “growing up Muslim in the U.S” and how we should be tolerant of all the diverse students that we teach. I look forward to taking future workshops through NYU.”

— Saji James, Concord High School (Staten Island, NY), Global History and Economics Teacher, Grades 9-10

“The course was so rich, so vast and varied, so multi-dimensional, that I am hard put to find words to capture the experience. I took this course to get an overview and better understanding of the history and culture of the Muslim communities in this city, country, and the Americas. In order to teach our K-12 students, dispel myths, we need to be informed about the history of our students’ histories. During these 3 very intensive days, which felt like a journey to another place, we received a vivid introduction from scholars, discussions, films, a curator led field trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, an outing to a Muslim neighborhood’s mosque, food shops, and a restaurant, and a talk with a speaker from the Muslim community working with schools and other social justice groups.

“After this experience, I feel more confident teaching Islam, the Muslims living in United States today on a personal level, and the presentation on the struggles Muslims students face “growing up Muslim in the U.S” and how we should be tolerant of all the diverse students that we teach. I look forward to taking future workshops through NYU.”

— Maria Sanchez, Department of Education of the Island, Global History and Economics Teacher, Grades 9-10

“Island and the Americas was such a wonderful course. The course opened up a dialogue for teachers on Islam and the community that was very much needed. Dr. Aisha Khan led energetic discussion sessions with fantastic speakers. The Kevorkian Center is truly a fantastic resource for teachers, and I will definitely be utilizing the resources I have gained from this course to enrich aspects of my Global History and U.S. History curriculum.”

— Mariam Rizvi, M.S. 354 The School of Integrated Learning (Brooklyn, NY), History Teacher, Grades 6-8

“I am so glad to have been in this workshop, as I am currently receiving lots of newly identified immigrant students from East Africa and Middle East, and most speak Arabic or are of Muslim background. I am currently also teaching a summer refugee camp, and all 150 students are from these countries. This workshop has assisted me in improving my instructional as well as intervention practices tremendously.”

— Montana Lee, Brooklyn High School for Law and Technology, ESL Teacher, Grades 9-10

“When I thought about Islam, it was defined to me as the old woman wearing a hijab in the American. The presentation on religion in the new school of thought for me it was here too. This will be a great segue into teaching about the customs.”

— Maria Sanchez, Department of Education of the Island, Social Studies Teacher, Grades 9-10
Human Rights Watch Internship Provides Insights into Palliative Care in Morocco

By Jeffrey Eamon, MA NES ’15

Over three quarters of the world’s populations has limited or no access to adequate pain treatment. Most within this group suffer from chronic pain associated with cancer, HIV/AIDS, or non-fatal threatening, yet incurable, illnesses. Palliative care describes the variety of pain reduction and prevention treatments used to improve a patient’s quality of life while not being used to cure his or her condition. While many developed and developing countries have taken positive steps towards incorporating palliative care into their existing healthcare systems, many have yet to have made such progress and continue to provide inadequate access. 

This past fall, I had the opportunity to work as an intern for Human Rights Watch (HRW) in the Health and Human Rights department where I contributed to their upcoming report on Morocco’s palliative care system. Morocco represents one of the countries that has taken positive steps towards providing access to pain relief in public medical facilities, however palliative care in the country is still in its nascent stages and, in some respects, remains limited. Working under the guidance of associate director Diederik Loonman and HRW fellow Matt Simon, I conducted research on Morocco’s existing health care system. Its legal statutes pertaining to access to essential medicines, and also conducted phone surveys with health care facilities in Morocco.

Working at HRW gave me insight into the actual impact of the work of international human rights organizations and also provided the opportunity to employ my Arabic and research skills. Prior to my internship, I was aware of HRW’s literature as well as the public outreach campaigns that it carries out, but it was only during my internship that I witnessed the ways in which it collaborates with government actors to enact meaningful, positive change where it is needed.

Between Theory and Practice
Six months at the UAE’s Mission to the UN

By Keith Colella, MA NES ’16

I recently interned for the United Arab Emirates’ Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York. My duties were split between two functions: reporting on proceedings in the Security Council, and preparing preparatory briefs for H.E., Ambassador Lana Nusseibeh. I learned a great deal during this time, both about the UAE, the Gulf, and the UN. I became familiar with the UAE’s policy on a number of regional and international issues; I learned how GCC states coordinate with one another and with international issues; I learned how GCC and international human rights organizations and also provided the opportunity to employ my Arabic and research skills. Prior to my internship, I was aware of HRW’s literature as well as the public outreach campaigns that it carries out, but it was only during my internship that I witnessed the ways in which it collaborates with government actors to enact meaningful, positive change where it is needed.

Working at HRW gave me insight into the actual impact of the work of international human rights organizations and also provided the opportunity to employ my Arabic and research skills. Prior to my internship, I was aware of HRW’s literature as well as the public outreach campaigns that it carries out, but it was only during my internship that I witnessed the ways in which it collaborates with government actors to enact meaningful, positive change where it is needed.

However engaging and instructive this experience was, it also presented many challenges. At the Center, we strove to apply critical perspectives to developments in the region, but was often disappointed with the lack of nuance in a number of the debates I witnessed at the UN. This experience therefore reinforced how important it is that these critical insights we work so hard to develop are brought to the mainstream and into the political realm.
in Fond Memory of Falak Sufi

Falak Sufi was born in Pakistan in 1983. She possessed a generous heart, the urge to engage with and change the world, and a brilliantly original, vivacious mind. She graduated from the National University of Singapore with first class honors in Political Science. While young, she began to publish the work that showed her great gifts and talent. Aqsa Khalid ’16 interned at CNN’s Fareed Zakariya GPS show while continuing to study Persian and Political Economy at the Kevorkian Center. Hanaa Javaid, ’15 interned at the Kevorkian Center while working on a writing workshop for non-academic at the Kevorkian Center in New York City. She has been working with writer-in-residence Adam Shatz. She has been writing stories from New York, London and New Delhi. She took a winter break to complete filming for her documentary (about US-Iranian relations) which tentatively will explore the narrative of their practices reveals, at a minimum, the inexhaustible collection of cuisine options in NYC.

The Falak Sufi Scholars have had a very busy year. Maham Javaid, ’15 interned at CNN’s Fareed Zakariya GPS show while continuing to study Persian and Political Economy at the Kevorkian Center. Hanaa Javaid, ’15 interned at the Kevorkian Center while working on a writing workshop for non-academic at the Kevorkian Center in New York City. She has been working with writer-in-residence Adam Shatz. She has been working stories from New York, London and New Delhi. She took a winter break to complete filming for her documentary (about US-Iranian relations) which tentatively will explore the narrative of their practices reveals, at a minimum, the inexhaustible collection of cuisine options in NYC.


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Scholarships and Essay Prize

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The winner of the Falak Sufi memorial essay prize was Jeffrey Eamon, whose paper, “Colonial Policing in the Bahraini Parliament: Labor, Migration, and the Outsourcing of Bahrain’s Security Apparatus” is an ambitious analysis of labor unrest and policing in Bahrain. He traces the early 20th-century relevance of Britain’s commercial interests in the region; the tandem recruitment of foreign workers for both security services and skilled labor in the decades that follow, Eamon argues, this paper is cited to delive into Middle East studies and reincorporate personal and past academic connection to Iranian/Persian studies.

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This essay is a beautifully written piece that weaves together interview testimony, empirical evidence and complex theoretical analysis and presses us to rethink our conceptions of refugee life. Reumont explores the territory (spatial, discursive, and bureaucratic) inhabited by Syrian “refugees” in Beirut. Her exploration of their practices reveals, at a minimum, the yawning gap between those displaced and those who officially navigate the insufficient humanitarian services; the ways in which the concepts of “refugee,” “displaced person” or “asylum seeker” fall terribly short in describing Syrians displaced to Beirut; and the complex landscape of identity that these individuals negotiate through their struggles to exist and survive in a “temporary” space.

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Nader Atassi: During my first year in the MA program, I took classes in political economy and history, and began learning Modern Turkish. This summer, I was awarded a FLAS scholarship to take an intermediate Modern Turkish intensive course at Bogazici University. Next year, I plan to continue studying Turkish and start work on a thesis focused on the economic history of Syria under the Ottoman Empire.

Emily Bader: After an invigorating first year with the Kevorkian Center, I flew to Amman to join the first cohort of scholars at Sijal Institute.

Paul Bielicke: This summer I am studying Arabic in Oman. I am also excited to learn more about the history and culture of the Gulf region through travel and research. I am particularly interested in the history of the Gulf War and its impact on the region.

Nafi Dhanani: I am spending the summer researching the jirga system in the Pashhtun regions along the Afghanistan/Pakistan border for my thesis. The jirga decisions have tended to have a highly negative effect on the rights of women and children, and I am exploring community awareness programs currently in place to mitigate the effects of these decisions. My hope is that this will help me to devise strategies for the prevention of future occurrences. In other words, I am working on a student blog for the Kevorkian Center so that we can all have a platform to contribute to academic discourse and show the world how great we are! It’ll also be a great resource for incoming students and where current students will be able to stay abreast of our crazy event calendar. See http://studentblog.lykuveo.com and contact me if you want to contribute!

Maram Elbar: This summer, with the help of a FLAS, I am continuing my studies in Arabic at the Lebanese American University in New York, and will be spending a number of weeks in Egypt to begin thesis research in Cairo. I also hope to do further research and reporting on ways in which public spaces in Cairo and Alexandria are utilized and changing in light of continuing contestation between the state and various youth movements.

Ezgi Aydin: I am planning to write my thesis on the Arab Alawis in Anatolia and how they reacted to the forces of nationalism in Turkey and Ottoman Empire, so I have been spending the summer conducting research in the Ottoman Archives in Istanbul and Republican Archives in Ankara. I have been doing an independent study (Master’s Research) with Dr. Joanne Nuchi and reporting to her about my progress in the archives. I also began conducting research in the Ottoman Empire in order to transcribe and comprehend the Ottoman documents on the Alawis.

Alex Kane: Everything about my first year at the Kevorkian Center was fantastic, from digging into academic work on the Arab revolt to attending various events at the center. My summer is shaping up to be just as good. I am studying Arabic on a Foreign Language Area Studies Fellowship in Amman, Jordan and reporting on and researching my thesis in Israel/Palestine. My thesis is on the internet and social media. My research should tentatively be an extant of the Egyptian prison system.

Colin Murtha: This summer I’ve gone to Bogazici University for intensive Turkish language training after receiving a FLAS grant. I’ve also been teaching myself the Ottoman Alphabet in an effort to ready myself for my thesis and ultimately PhD work. I plan to continue my thesis and shall utilize my time in Pakistan to conduct archival research which tentatively would explore the narrative of national identity and affiliation based on communal violence experienced by the groups during the 147 partition. I hope to come back and find an internship in the city to apply the knowledge and skills that I have learned at the Kevorkian Center and continue studying Arabic.

Brian Lewis: I have greatly enjoyed and appreciated the shift from the working world back to academia. The intellectual challenges are both stimulating and fulfilling, and I am excited to continue my studies in the fall. I am continuing my Arabic studies in New Hampshire and will be doing an internship at the Lebanese American University and working for the NYU Sociology Department. My strongest potential thesis topic is to explore how and what Orientalist tropes are being used in the current generation of “post-LGBTQ” queer institutions in the West and how these tropes are being employed by mainstream society and by queer voices in the Middle East. I may potentially focus on how Israel/pan-Arabism reflects these new discourses.

Soleiman Moustafa: My main area of interest is Egyptian, Israeli, and Palestinian politics in the 20th century. Before joining the program, I studied Arab-Israeli relations at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Now I am working on my Arabic at Al-Azhar University in Cairo. My thesis research will focus on the internet and social media. My research should tentatively be on the Egyptian prison system.

Julian Phillips: I was awarded fellowships to study missionary papers in two archives in England and writing a thesis to study Arabic at the Qasid Institute in Amman during the summer break.

Simone Rutkowski: I was fortunate to receive a FLAS grant for my second year in Egypt and this coming academic year. This summer I am strengthening my Arabic skills by taking part in intensive tutoring sessions with a local student as candidate Eman Morsi. I am potentially focusing my research on kleistian pan-Arabism reflects these new discourses.

Nadeen Shaker: I am currently in Egypt covering protest issues and the prison system for my thesis under the Gallatin Global Fellowship in Human Rights, awarded by NYU. I am also interning in an Egyptian NGO that focuses on criminal justice, human rights and poverty. I was awarded a Deadline Club scholarship.

Kat Thornton: I spent the summer in Is- tanbul, Turkey, participating in Bogazici University’s intensive Turkish language program. I’ve also been teaching myself the Ottoman Alphabet in an effort to ready myself for my thesis and ultimately PhD work. This year I hope to return to the Kevorkian Center and continue studying Arabic. I am planning to do further research and reporting on ways in which public spaces in Cairo and Alexandria are utilized and changing in light of continuing contestation between the state and various youth movements.
Dima Abi Saab: This summer, I am traveling to Lebanon to expand on my research about the social justice movement against the Palestine Israel conflict and the relations and political affiliations in Mount Lebanon. In the Fall of 2015, I will begin the PhD program at NYU’s Department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies. I am expanding on an argument I conducted for my Master’s thesis titled “Beyond Death: New Recomposition and Memory Reshape Kinship and Politics in Mount Lebanon.”

Thalia Beatty: I am spending the summer working part-time as a producer for a podcast and for a couple of shows at WNYC, and am currently working on a documentary film about the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. Following graduation, I spent some time over the summer helping other students prepare their college applications. I am taking an advanced intensive Turkish course at Bogazici University here for at least the coming year. I am currently mulling over plans to pursue the research further in the form of a Fulbright or journal article. My last year at Kevo I also did internships at the Kevorkian Center, where I had the opportunity to conduct fieldwork among Syrian refugees in Beirut for my thesis. I am now embarking on the world of humanitarianism and refugee policy. I am currently enrolled in the intensive Arabic summer program at American University of Beirut, after which I will return to NYU to intern with the Afghanistan mission at the UN. I am spending the year in Cairo as a CASA fellow.

Belle Cheves: My final year at Kevorkian was incredibly rewarding. I finished my thesis on prison memoirs in 1970s Iran, and am extremely excited to continue and expand my research as I begin my PhD in the fall at Harvard in their dual History and Middle Eastern Studies program. I will miss Kevorkian dearly, and so am grateful for everything I learned in my two years here—can’t wait to come back for events!

Jeffrey Eamon: Starting in fall 2014 I began my thesis research on the origins of Bahrain’s internal security forces, some of which I carried out at the Bahrain Institute for Middle Eastern Studies. In the spring I was awarded the Falak Suli Memorial Prize Essay for my research on the topic and am currently mulling over plans to pursue the research further in the form of a Fulbright or journal article. My last year at Kevorkian I also did internships at Human Rights Watch and Physicians for Human Rights researching Mo- rocco’s nascent palliative care system and attacks on medical personnel in Syria’s ongoing civil war. Currently I am spending the year in Cairo as a CASA fellow.

Brooke Fisher: This year I competed my MA thesis which focused on discrimination in the prison population in the New York City jail system. I am now embarking on a new project on the role of the prison population in shaping post-Civil War society in the New South. I am currently conducting a research project in New Orleans, LA on the 1968 race riot, and also continue to do research on the Civil War era in Maryland and Virginia for the Forum on Civil War and Reconstruction.
This is my seventh and final year. I worked towards completing my dissertation and am able to see them advance and improve in their language skills. One of the highlights of the past academic year was receiving an FAS Office of Educational Technology Innovation grant. The Office has agreed to my proposal to develop a comprehensive course in Persian language study and to work on a book manuscript on the poetess of recognition in Hindi Cinema and to receive the Dean’s Student Travel Grant which will take our Arabic program to a different level. The idea of this project came as a result of continuous discussions with my colleagues at the Arabic language program, and communications and feedback from our students. I strongly feel that this project, once it is in place, will provide effective and attractive tools to help students learn Arabic faster and more easily. I am hopeful that our efforts will continue. The course will be a part of the Global Women’s Cinema Conference at Story Brooke.

All Adobet Almaani: This is my first academic year as a full time Arabic language lecturer. I taught three elementary classes in the fall semester and two elementary classes in the spring semester. Although I have taught here before, it feels different when I continue teaching with the same students and am able to see them advance and improve in their language skills. One of the highlights of the past academic year was receiving the Kevorkian Center Seed Grant. The Center was founded in 1997 as a result of continuous discussions with the Kevorkian Center. The Center was small, the feeling persisted. I ended up reading it with a Tajik/Russian dictionary! So when I re-read, I decided to take care of my primary source, the publication of my book, The Shahnameh (UChicago Press, 2015). I in fact gave a talk for Ottoman Studies on the origins of Assyrian nationalism at the same group of students and one is still one is working on it as it is not free. Why, the only tasks are different. I miss the students and Universi- ty life! I have many books in three locations: my office on the 4th floor of Kevorkian (all three languages); my apartment in Silver Towers, where I used to prepare to move out of our old apartment and now hope to continue to come with new platform that reflects a new and attractive tools to help our students learn Arabic faster and more easily. I am hopeful that our efforts will continue. The course will be a part of the Global Women’s Cinema Conference at Story Brooke.

Richard Allen: At the end of last academic year (for good!) the role of Cinema Studies de- partment was to graduate one of my students and to offer an opportunity to discuss some of the books in Prof. Keshavarzian’s seminar and research. I also gave two lectures on the so-called “Per- sian Martyr Acts” in a book entitled Bollywood Poetics. I pub- lished a part of this as “Comedies of Emir: Shakespeare, Indian Cinema, and the Poetics of Mis- take” in a book entitled Bollywood Poetics, and a spin-off essay on “Hollywood and the Kevorkian Center” in Open Secrets: Raincoat and Tombstone. I have been working on the role of Cinema Studies de- partment was to graduate one of my students and to offer an opportunity to discuss some of the books in Prof. Keshavarzian’s seminar and research. I also gave two lectures on the so-called “Per- sian Martyr Acts” in a book entitled Bollywood Poetics. I pub- lished a part of this as “Comedies of Emir: Shakespeare, Indian Cinema, and the Poetics of Mis- take” in a book entitled Bollywood Poetics, and a spin-off essay on “Hollywood and the Kevorkian Center” in Open Secrets: Raincoat and Tombstone. I have been working on the role of Cinema Studies de- partment was to graduate one of my students and to offer an opportunity to discuss some of the books in Prof. Keshavarzian’s seminar and research. I also gave two lectures on the so-called “Per- sian Martyr Acts” in a book entitled Bollywood Poetics. I pub- lished a part of this as “Comedies of Emir: Shakespeare, Indian Cinema, and the Poetics of Mis- take” in a book entitled Bollywood Poetics, and a spin-off essay on “Hollywood and the Kevorkian Center” in Open Secrets: Raincoat and Tombstone. I have been working on the role of Cinema Studies de- partment was to graduate one of my students and to offer an opportunity to discuss some of the books in Prof. Keshavarzian’s seminar and research. I also gave two lectures on the so-called “Per- sian Martyr Acts” in a book entitled Bollywood Poetics. I pub- lished a part of this as “Comedies of Emir: Shakespeare, Indian Cinema, and the Poetics of Mis- take” in a book entitled Bollywood Poetics, and a spin-off essay on “Hollywood and the Kevorkian Center” in Open Secrets: Raincoat and Tombstone. I have been working on the role of Cinema Studies de- partment was to graduate one of my students and to offer an opportunity to discuss some of the books in Prof. Keshavarzian’s seminar and research. I also gave two lectures on the so-called “Per- sian Martyr Acts” in a book entitled Bollywood Poetics. I pub- lished a part of this as “Comedies of Emir: Shakespeare, Indian Cinema, and the Poetics of Mis- take” in a book entitled Bollywood Poetics, and a spin-off essay on “Hollywood and the Kevorkian Center” in Open Secrets: Raincoat and Tombstone. I have been working on the role of Cinema Studies de- partment was to graduate one of my students and to offer an opportunity to discuss some of the books in Prof. Keshavarzian’s seminar and research. I also gave two lectures on the so-called “Per- sian Martyr Acts” in a book entitled Bollywood Poetics. I pub- lished a part of this as “Comedies of Emir: Shakespeare, Indian Cinema, and the Poetics of Mis- take” in a book entitled Bollywood Poetics, and a spin-off essay on “Hollywood and the Kevorkian Center” in Open Secrets: Raincoat and Tombstone. I have been working on the role of Cinema Studies de-
This past year I was fortunate to have worked on several projects and received support from a variety of scholarly programs in Turkey with which I have participated in summers. Students from various levels, Nadir Alavi, Devir Isaac, Hanan Collin and Omayra Atassi, Aviv Derri, Isaac Hand, Colin Murtha, Ella Wind and Zavi Ozdemirel have worked with children across the New York metropolitan area. Students from various levels, Nadir Alavi, Devir Isaac, Hanan Collin and Omayra Atassi, Aviv Derri, Isaac Hand, Colin Murtha, Ella Wind and Zavi Ozdemirel have participated in summer programs in Turkey with support from a variety of institutions.

I attended two conferences in Turkey last year and gave two papers on Alexandria, a roundtable and several short research visits to London. In October, I presented a paper on Adalet Ağaoğlu, “A Balance Between Reform and Tradition and Its Legacy” in a symposium organized to honor Colin Murtha, who had taken my course. In April I traveled to Athens, at the invitation of Dipti Khera and other members of the faculty, to co-teach a session entitled “Alexandria: Alexandrian Cosmopolitanism and Disability Politics.” I delivered a lecture on “Deccani Region of the South,Visions and Realities” at the MESA conference in November. I was elected to the executive board of the Istanbul University’s Department of Urdu Studies (APUS) we established in 2014-15. I will be a fellow at the Wissenschaftskolleg, Berlin.

I was fortunate to have published an article entitled “Does Turkish Literature Exist?” An attempt to Answer Through the Works of Leyla Erbil, Şehrin Altner and Ali İrhan Dervişlı, both faculty members at Kean University. My essay “Sevgi Soyals’s Hanefi” is in print in an edited book on the works of Sevgi Soyals. I completed my syllabus for the editorial board of the International Journal of Middle East Studies in March. I was elected to the executive board of the Institute of Turkish Studies in Turkey where I will be serving in November. I am currently on the best paper prize committee for the presentation of papers at the Institute of Turkish Studies, which will announce its decision at the MESA conference in November.

Finnbar Flood:

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Falling Through the Earth

Michael Corby: "Afterword: My experience with this wonderful collaboration with my colleague Bilal al-Hindiyya.

Nathalie Peutz: "Islam in the Eighteenth Century"

Asli Peker: "The Struggle Continues"

Maurice Pomerantz: "Trickster in World Literature."

Justin Stearns (NYUAD) where I was adjunct visiting faculty in the fall of 2015. I also presented a paper at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies Conference at NYUAD; a revised version of this paper was published in Global South (2015): 38-55 which is a general section on the question of authorship in pre-modern Arabic and Persian texts which will be published in The Encyclopedia of World Literature in Translation (co-edited by Ella Shohat and Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila)

Ella Shohat: "She will spend next year at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Princeton, where I plan to work on my monograph on the maqama genre, edited and introducted by a Marlik historian. I am currently revising my manuscript, which is under contract with the Pennsylvania State University Press. I am currently working on a draft manuscript on the Socotran wilderness and mountain gorillas and through which I had the great personal front, this meant developing and teaching a new course titled "Trickster in World Literature." I also had the honor of being invited to attend the "Friends of Socotra" in Rome; on my own recent archi- tectonic project, I will be presenting at the Aga Khan Symposium on the "Politics of Time, Material Heritage and Memory." In addition, I had the opportunity to meet with the "conservation of political science in the United States, which I will be presenting at a conference in Belgium in the upcoming spring. I will be revising my manuscript which I am currently working on a new research project, shot in Lebanon, which I have been working on a mobile, "Trickster in World Literature." I also completed a revised version of this paper which was published in Global South (2015): 38-55 which is a general section on the question of authorship in pre-modern Arabic and Persian texts which will be published in The Encyclopedia of World Literature in Translation (co-edited by Ella Shohat and Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila)

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to Rebecca Weaver-Hightower & Peter Huljat’s Postcolonial Film History, Empire, Resis-
tance: Some my essays have been presented at the "Good Shanghai, Bad Shanghai,
memorizing a Baghdad Else-
where: An Emotional Cartog-
raphy." 2014, "The Challenge for
During the

; as well

. In this book I seek

36x64] Mediterranean Identity," in "Lines

2014); and "Bodies and Bor-

and republished in

and Regine Basha), first pub-

location" by Bassam Haddad.

Vincenzo Trione’s Codice Italia.

Ulrich Obrist, the Italian Pavilion

Forgetting," Curated by Hans

ined Cities

"The Imperial Imaginary," sec-

tions of an Arab-Jew," (1992)

membering a Baghdad Else-

ture series with the NYUAD Insti-

beyond to talk about their work.

scholars from across the Gulf and

year?), between teaching and

2014 at NYU-Abu Dhabi and

Helga Tawil-Souri:

This was a busy

March. The Spring semester was

and Social Transformations af-

work on translating al-Yusi’s Mu-

cooperative project on Jordanian

of the Arab world in modern and

the cultural and artistic diversity

I taught an advanced content

I published a new article

in

Arab Studies Journal

and Culture, B/Orders Unbound:

American Comparative Literature

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at a conference on Mathematics

and could only teach

semester and could only teach

work on the revival of old dis-

a large audience (next year

The Sul-

work in Global Water Rights: The Euphrates and

our partners in the Hagop Kev-

2016 to resume teaching "Reli-

published this fall in Film Quar-

Faculty News
2014-2015 Events Archive

RESEARCH WORKSHOPS

T he program’s academic cornerstone features new unpublished work by established and up-and-coming scholars of the region. Promotes cross-regional and interdisciplinary engagement of analytical issues in Middle Eastern Studies and beyond.

Jihad in a World of Sovereignties: Violence, Islam, and the Bosnia Crisis

Darniy Li, Law, Yale University; Discussant: Lauren Benton, History, NYU

Western Promises: Abbas Hilmi II and the Pursuit of Sovereignty in Swa

Matthew Ells, International Affairs and Middle Eastern Studies, Sarah Lawrence; Discussant: Khaled Fahmy, History, American University in Cairo

The Political Geography of Protest in Jordan

Jillian Schwieder, Political Science, Hunter College (CUNY); Discussant: Jeff Goodwin, Sociology, NYU

Transnational Islamic Pedagogical Networks

Zareena Grewal: American Studies and Religious Studies, University of Pennsylvania

The Cinematic World of Arab Oil

Mona Damjuly, Asian and Islamic Art History and Visual Culture, Wheaton College; Discussant: Pascale Monot, Arab Crossroads Studies, NYU Abu Dhabi

Congresses

Inner Eurasia Then and Now: Legacies of Thought, Space, and Empire

A graduate student conference with OASIES, the Organization for the Advancement of Studies of Inner Eurasian Societies at Columbia, Princeton, and NYU Participants: Abay Amanda Downing-Bever, Hamilton Institute, Columbia University; Guhan Kondribal, Columbia University; Clayton Merkley, Slavic Department, Columbia University; Hamed Kazemzadegan, Center for East European Studies, University of Warsaw, Zhunatay Gabit, Harlan Institute, Columbia University; Christopher Edging, School of the Arts, Columbia University; Rustin Zarkar, MEIS, NYU; Aara Young, Slavic Languages and Literatures, Yale University; Shima Houshyar, Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies, NYU; Befi Cheves, Near Eastern Studies, NYU; Torquand Yolacan, Anthropology, George Washington University; Shoshana Keller, History, Hamilton College

New Books

Rebel Music: Race, Empire, and the New Muslim Youth Culture

Hisham Aidi, International and Public Affairs, Columbia University; Robert McChesney, MEIS, NYU; Mehrzad Moniri, MEIS, NYU

Poetic Trespass: Writing between Hebrew and Arabic in Israel/Palestine

Steven Salaita, Independent Scholar

Islam and the Americas

Irene Gendzier, History, Boston University

Transnational Perspectives on the Life and Work of Sababtullah Al Sar

A close research workshop chaired by Sibel Erol, MEIS, NYU, and Iker Hepkans, MEIS, NYU, and co-sponsored by the Program in Ottoman Studies, the Department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, and the German Department at NYU Participants: Sibel Erol, MEIS, NYU, Iker Hepkans, MEIS, NYU, and Zarkar, MEIS, NYU; Belle Yolacan, Anthropology, Duke University; Shima Houshyar, Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies, NYU; Morgan Clarke, Georgetown University; Guy Burak, History, NYU Participants: Ghislaine Lydon, History, UCLA; Jonathan Brown, School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University; Guy Burak, History and MEIS Librarian, NYU; Morgan Clarke, Social Anthropology, Oxford, Samer Esmir, Approaches to Islamic Law in Society

A closed research workshop chaired by Michael Glissant, Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, NYU, and MEIS Librarian, NYU Participants: Ghislaine Lydon, History, UCLA; Jonathan Brown, School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University; Guy Burak, History and MEIS Librarian, NYU; Morgan Clarke, Social Anthropology, Oxford, Samer Esmir,
Events Archive

Wilder, Representative and Policeman?: Possibility of a “Passive Revolution”; Keenan and North Africa

Capital: Revolutions in the Middle East

Historical Materialism: Returns of Toronto; Benjamin Elman, Princeton University

Columbia University; Meng Yue, University of Tennessee State University; Yang, Jui-Sung, Stanford University; Chunmei Du, Western Academia Sinica (Taiwan); Roger Hart, Naquin, Princeton University; Miaw-fen Lu, Academia Sinica (Taiwan); Minghui Hu, University of British Columbia; Pingyi Chu, University; Brigid Vance, Princeton University; Research Initiatives (GRI) and NYU Abu Dhabi by Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, Global

A closed workshop chaired by Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, History and MEIS, NYU, cosponsored with the Taub Center for Israeli Studies; Chaired by Ella Wind, Hagop Critique on Autonomy and Rethinking Kebane, Gezi and Other Communes: A

Explaining Labor Autonomy in Tunisia; Philip Marlet, Egypt’s Revolution. The Left Reflects: Ozgur Genc and Ozgur Nairn, Kobane, Gazi and Other Communities: A Critique on Autonomy and Rethinking Communities; Chaired by Ella Wind, Hagop Kevoorian Center, NYU

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scholarly presentations on Iran, moderated by Professor Ali Mirsepassi with a steering committee drawn from MEIS and other faculty and students with support from the Gallatin School for Individualized Study and the Hagop Kevoorian Center.

The Effects Of Coercive Diplomacy On Iran’s Nuclear Program Ebrahim Mohseni, World Studies, University of Tehran


Courtier, Lover, Dancer, Spouse: The Multiple Identities and Histories of Slavery in Gajar Iran Nahid Mozaffari, MEIS, NYU

Revolution Street: Tehran, Trapped Between the Past and the Future Ami-Hassan Chehelnat, Kamran Cultural Institute, Tehran

Battling Truths: Defending the Islamic Republic of Iran’s Sacred Memories in Film and Literature Narges Baghchi, Anthropology, NYU, Amir Mosavii, MEIS, NYU

Soundtrack of the Post-Revolution: Music as Politics in Iran Nathel Samidoust, Hagop Kevoorian Center, NYU

Mohjahed Shabestari: On Faith and Revelation Scores Under Baghchi, Historical Studies, University of Toronto

Iranian Studies

Panel: How Solidarity Around a Hashtag Transformed the Ecology of Online Life During the 2009 Election Crisis Negar Msheleh, Literature, Duke University

Panel Discussions

Reflections on Gaza Helga Taiw-Sowi, Media, Culture, Communication, NYU; Zachary Lockman, MEIS, NYU; Ron Zwig, Hebrew and Judaic Studies, NYU; ZV, ZV-Den Bon Beijen, History and MEIS, NYU; Jahad Abusalim, Hebrew and Judaic Studies, NYU, moderated by Arash Keshavarzian, MEIS, NYU;

With the Taub Center for Israel Studies and the Department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies

Interpreting the ISIS Threat Simon Anton, Gallatin, NYU; Mohammad Ba- zii, Journalism, NYU; Arash Keshavarzian, MEIS, NYU; Joanne Nuncio, Hagop Kevoori- an Center, NYU; Sara Pursley, MEIS, NYU

Beyond the Arab Spring: Political (De) Formation and Social Revolution in Rojava Nasrin Urgun, Sociology, Bogazici University; Sirwan Kajo, Journalist, Christian Solidarity, Rojava; Middle Eastern Studies, University of Arizona; Hoya Ozzy, Anthropology, University of Michigan, Flint

What Went Wrong in Syria? Adam Shatz, Contributing Editor, London Review of Books and Spring 2015 Writer-In-Residence, Hagop Kevoorian Center; Mohammad Bazzi, Journalism, University; Heydemann, VP of Applied Research, US Institute of Peace; George Saghir, Business Analyst; Lisa Weidman, Political Science, University of Chicago

Labor in Abu Dhabi 101: A Cross-Campus Teach-In Jason Rezaian, Correspondent, Al-Jazeera English; Killian Youn, Youth Foundation; Anjali Kamat, Fault Lines Center; Mara Kronenfeld, Director, MENA Initiative, NYU; Sarah Leah Whitson, Human Rights Activist

With the American Association of University Professors, Anjali Kamat, Fault Lines Center; Mara Kronenfeld, Director, MENA Initiative, NYU; Sarah Leah Whitson, Human Rights Activist

BDS: Israel, the US, and the Struggle for Palestinian Rights Omar Barghouti, Human Rights Activist and Founder of the BDS Movement; Corey Bingo, Political Economy; Michael, J Khojali, Kaunau, American Studies, Wesleyan University.

With Gender and Sexuality Studies, American Studies, Social and Cultural Analysis, Asian/Pacific/Asian Studies, and Students for Justice in Palestine, Jewish Voice for Peace

Reading between the Lines/Languages: Moroccan Poetry in Text, Translation, and Performance Idriss Aissa, Author of A Woman from the Remotest of Winds; Driss Mesnaoui, Renowned zajai poet (colloquial street poetry), founder of the Moroccan Association for Popular Poetry; Omar Berrada, Director, Library, and Translation Center, Dar al- Mam’ûn (Marrakech); Alexander Elison, Arabic, Hunter College, CUNY; and Deborah Kaplan, Performance Studies, Anthropology, Music, and Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, NYU

With the Maison Francaise at NYU and PEN World Voices

Careers: MA Alumni Open House Rachel Smith-Levy, US Foreign Service Officer, Cyrus Rostoml; Preventive Care Plan, Daytime Support Center, Mara Kronenfeld, Director, MENA Partnership Development, International Youth Foundation; Anjali Kamat, Fault Lines Correspondent, Ajaazara English; Killian Clarke, Politics, Princeton University

Events Archive

Archaeology, Ethnography, and Everyday Life at the Dig Zeynep Cikic, Architecture, New Jersey Institute of Technology

The Last Alchemists: Practicing al-Kimye in the Modern Era from the Ottoman World to South Asia Amin Moosavi, MEIS, NYU; Tuna Aran, History, Rutgers University

Yes, We are Syrians: National Conflation and Visual Consciousness in a Neo-Ar ferment Travallogue from 19th-Century Hakkari Adam Becker, Religion, NYU

Notes from the Field: A Human Rights Briefing on the Middle East Arash Keshavarzian, MEIS, NYU; Narges Bajoghli, Anthropology, NYU; Amir-Mojtamed, Specialist, Human Rights Watch; Lama Fakih, Syria and Lebanon Specialist, Human Rights Watch

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Events Archive
**POINTS OF CONTACT: NEW APPROACHES TO ISLAMIC ART**

A series of films, presentations, and performances centered on visual art and media from and about the modern Middle East.

**VISUAL CULTURE**

Gaza Film Festival: A documentary series curated by Eman Morsi, PhD Candidate, MEIS, NYU, and co-sponsored with the Asian/Pacific-American Institute at NYU. The Taub Center for Israel Studies, and the Department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies.

Tears of Gaza (2010, 81 mins): A film by Vibeke Løkkeberg


Gaza: Another Kind of Tears (2006, 55 mins): A film by Abdel Salam Shehada

Where Should the Birds Fly (2012, 58 mins): A film by Fida Qishra

Algerian Cinema: A selection of Algerian films curated by Greta Scharnweber, Associate Director, Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies

Tehran Has No More Pomegranates! (2013, 68 mins) A film by Massoud Bakhtiar: After-film discussion with Arang Keshavarzian, MEIS, NYU

Cairo Drive (Egypt, 2013, 79 mins): A film by Sherif El-Khatsh

After-film discussion with filmmaker

Ecumenopolis: City Without Limits (Turkey, 2012, 93 mins): A film by Imre Azem

Making the Invisible Visible: Artists’ Talk with Wahba Bial, Arts, NYU, and creator of the performative art project


Afghan Cinema 1946-2014: A Bittersweet Narrative: Habib Sadaat, Visiting Scholar, Film, TV, and Modern Art, NYU and NYU’s McNair, NYU

The Emergence of a New Afghan Cinema: Political Economies of Filmmaking after 9/11: Wazhmah Osman, Temple University: Habib Sadaat, Afghan Filmmaker


Discussion with Elsa Shohat, Art and Public Policy, Tisch, NYU. Sami Shaloun Chett, poet, thinker, and filmmaker; and Erez Bitton, pioneer of Mizrahi poetry

Megapolis: A film series about life in the Middle East’s third-largest city, curated by Greta Scharnweber, Associate Director, Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies


Discussion with Elsa Shohat, Art and Public Policy, Tisch, NYU. Sami Shaloun Chett, poet, thinker, and filmmaker; and Erez Bitton, pioneer of Mizrahi poetry

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Domatic Tension

Logical Revolts (2012, 44 mins): A film by Louis Henderson

After-film discussion with the filmmaker and Khaled Fahmy, History, American University in Cairo

With the Colloquium for Urban Culture

**K-16 TEACHER TRAINING**

A series mandated by our Title VI grant: K-16 workshops are hosted by the Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies in collaboration with the Steinhardt School of Education at New York University as well as NYU’s Faculty Resource Network. Middle and High School teachers as well as Community College faculty from the tri-state area regularly attend alongside teachers-in-training from Steinhardt. The programs increase the quality of Middle East-related content in our region’s K-16 curriculum.

**Spotlight on Lebanon: Pluralism, Citizenship, and Daily Living 1900-2005** How does pluralism affect daily life for individuals and families as they interact with each other across multiple scales and settings (i.e. private/public, urban/rural, family/community/state)? What is sectarianism and how do we understand it historically? Joanne Nucho, Hagop Kevorkian Center, NYU; Linda Sayed, Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, NYU

**Music Inside-Out Iran: Popular Music, Politics, and Culture** An exploration of music production and consumption and their effects on culture both inside Iran and in the diaspora throughout Iran’s major political changes prior to and since the 1979 revolution. Nahid Siamdoust, Hagop Kevorkian Center, NYU, Farzaneh Hemmasi, Ethnomusicology, University of Toronto; Salmak Khaliadi, musician and producer.

**Voices of Contemporary Islam** This seminar explores some of the crucial issues and debates in the contemporary Muslim world and presents examples of diverse theological, political, and social thought. Issues examined include the compatibility of Islam with democracy, the connections between Islam and terrorism, the role of Wahabism in the construction of contemporary Islamic movements, feminist movements within Islam, Islam and pluralism, and Sufism in the contemporary context. Led by Vernon Schubel, Religious Studies, Konyan College, Kurtan Alik Schubel, History, Konyan College, and Greta Scharnweber, Associate Director, Hagop Kevorkian Center

With the Faculty Resource Network at NYU

**Islam and the Americas** Participants will explore the complexity and diversity of daily life among Muslims in the Americas (the U.S., the Caribbean, and Latin America), probing key assumptions about Muslims and challenging conventional views of Islam. Sessions focus on cross-cultural comparisons of Muslims as they craft Islam in the “New World” of the Americas, where Muslims make their presence felt in both daily and oblique ways. Led by Aisha Khan, Anthropology, NYU and Diana Shin, Outreach Administrator, Hagop Kevorkian Center

With the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, NYU

**Visions from the Shaheen Archive**

This year, the exhibit was featured at several universities, organizations, and conferences, including:

- Boise State University
- University of San Diego
- George Mason University
- Pepperdine University
- Stony Brook University
- Lebanese American University
- National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education (NCORE)
- Asian/Pacific-American Institute, NYU

**JACK G. SHAHEEN ARCHIVE**

NYU holds the archive of media scholar Jack Shaheen, which includes over 3,000 TV shows, feature and documentary films, movie posters, comic books, editorial cartoons, and personal papers focused on stereotypes and images of Arabs and Muslims in U.S. popular culture.

Powerful, accessible and compelling, the A is for Arab traveling exhibition, which features images from the Jack G. Shaheen Archive, reveals and critiques the stereotypical portrayals of Arabs and Muslims in U.S. popular culture. Providing historical context about these images, which range from film stills to comic books to editorial cartoons, this traveling exhibition aims to educate and stimulate discussion about the impact of stereotypes on both historical perceptions and national policy. This year, the exhibit was featured at several universities, organizations, and conferences, including:

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