



HAGOP  
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CENTER  
REVIEW  
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**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).

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## Letter from the Director

This year has been a particularly active one at the Kevorkian Center. We marked the award of our Title VI grant for the next four years by admitting the largest ever class, twenty-four students. The total numbers made increased demands on teaching and administration at a time of considerable difficulty in both areas but they also showed the deans and GSAS just how vigorously we pursue our task of running a first rate MA program at the Center while taking account of the university's needs.

I was unexpectedly asked by the deans to continue as director for a second four-year term and am very happy to do so. I shall be on leave next academic year and the Acting Director will be Professor Zvi ben Dor who has a joint History-MEIS appointment. His knowledge of China and Islam in Asia will bring a fascinating new perspective. Nadia Guessous will be with us in 2011-2012, carrying on her enormously successful role as Director of Graduate Studies. Last year, all the students handed in their theses on time and in the proper bureaucratic form-filled manner, a triumph that owes a great deal to Nadia's dedication. Greta Scharnweber, the Associate Director, wrote our successful Title VI grant as well as organizing the many, many events in our calendar and devoting herself to the Center in ways well beyond the call of duty concerning admissions and program reporting and much else. Her role was even more crucial than usual because Amal Hageb, our Program Coordinator, very unfortunately left due to health issues. We wish her a full recovery and greatly miss her contribution to the office, but welcome the capable Arthur Starr to the team in her stead. He is already an invaluable resource for the Center. Sarah Coffey was appointed to NYU in Prague, a dream post for her and full of all sorts of wonderful musical opportunities for singing and playing. We thank her warmly for all her time with us. In her place, we welcomed Lauren Marten, who has quickly become essential to the office and part of the group. Our student workers, as always, were enormously helpful and we are very grateful to them.

For students, as everyone knows, this is a very problematic time in terms of jobs and of increasingly competitive graduate school Ph.D. entry criteria. A further threat hangs over us as Congress has made large cuts in the Title VI budget. This affects language teaching and the crucial FLAS scholarships that help so many students from the Kevorkian, MEIS and other departments. It is only two years since the celebrations in Washington marking the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the program and it is not special pleading to say that the needs of government, business, media, NGOs and the academy for highly trained students who have language skills in Arabic, Persian and Turkish are as great now as ever. There were many communications to Congress to that effect, including a letter from our President, John Sexton. We have had to find creative ways to preserve the quality and funding of the MA degree, and we will continue to work unstintingly to provide the best opportunities for our students. At a time of particular upheaval in the Middle East and North Africa, it seems utterly counter-productive to damage Title VI, with which a relatively small budget helps to produce such expertise.

We have had a particular interest in the revolution in Egypt because our colleague Khaled Fahmy has been there since September as Chair of the Department of History at the American University in Cairo. So have several Ph.D students, and our own Liam Stack has been reporting for the New York Times on a regular basis. At times it has been difficult to know which news to follow, as Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Yemen and Libya have been living through political and social turbulence and change whose patterns and futures are still very unclear. Add to this catalogue the continued oppressive stalemate of Israel/Palestine, as well as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the significance of education in Middle Eastern studies becomes ever more starkly evident. We will try everything we can to increase the Kevorkian program's contribution to contemporary understanding and debate in the United States.

—Michael Gilsen

# Tunisian Immigrants in New York Demonstrate in Support of their Nation's Revolution

By Jessamy Klapper (MA NES-Journalism '12)

This piece was reported during the historic overthrow of former Tunisian President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali in January 2011. It was originally published online in *Feet in Two Worlds*, and is reprinted here with permission from the reporter and the photographer.

The political revolution taking place in Tunisia is reverberating in New York City. Over a hundred Tunisian immigrants gathered near United Nations headquarters on Monday Jan. 17, 2011 to demonstrate solidarity with their countrymen, who have overthrown President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali, a man who held his country under an iron thumb for 23 years.

In a powerful synergy, the protest fell on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and many of the demonstrators used images and words from the legacy of the great civil-rights leader.

The day also marked one month since Mohamed Bouazizi, a 26-year-old unemployed university graduate, set himself on fire in a protest of despair against high unemployment and his treatment by local police. Bouazizi's suicide sparked massive protests across Tunisia, leading to President Ben Ali's flight from his country and a power shuffle.

Near the Tunisian Mission to the U.N., many demonstrators wrapped the bright red Tunisian flag around their heavy winter coats. Handmade signs invoked King's famous words: "Tunisians Also Have a Dream" and "I Have a Dream. Free Tunisia." The crowd kept up a steady stream of chants in Arabic, English and French for a few hours.

"This is a historical moment," said Jamal Benaji, a Tunisian who has lived in New York for 15 years. "After 23 years the people arrived to overthrow a dictator."

The demonstrators also called for the removal of Mohammed Ghannouchi, the current prime minister. The acting president, Fouad Mebazaa, charged Ghannouchi with creating a national-unity government while the country gets ready for elections in two months' time, but Ghannouchi was considered by many to be part



Photo courtesy of Merel van Beeren, NES-Journalism '12  
Tunisian immigrants showed their support for the revolution in a protest outside the UN.

of the old regime's corrupt elite.

Mary Annabi, a woman from Ireland married to a Tunisian, praised the democratic system in the U.S. where she has lived for twenty years. "Here, the constitution is by the people, for the people," she said. "In Tunisia, the constitution is for the President."

Revising the constitution is one of the issues Tunisians will have to face as they attempt to reform their government, since it is thought to favor the old regime.

Other demands were for a U.N. presence at the upcoming elections and for the organization to pressure Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Canada and other countries to extradite Ben Ali and his family back to Tunisia where they can stand trial.

The Tunisian protests have unsettled many in the Arab world, where leaders are worried they may set off a domino effect. In the past week, protests in Egypt, Jordan, Libya and Algeria have bor-



Photo courtesy of Merel van Beeren, NES-Journalism '12  
A little boy, perched on his father's shoulders, led the crowd in chants.

rowed the language and symbols of Tunisia's uprising. Even Bouazizi's self-immolation has been repeated in Algeria and Egypt, with one confirmed suicide in Alexandria.

"I'm from Egypt, and I'm coming in solidarity with our brothers in Tunisia," Ahmed Lotfy said, waving an Egyptian flag outside the U.N. Mission.

Zakaria Eltouroug, a student from Morocco, focused on the revolution's positive side: the possibility for change. "I am really glad that this happens in our lifetime," he said. "Finally one Arab country woke up

and said 'Enough!'. Hopefully, this is just the beginning. I am waiting for Algeria to be changed, Egypt to be changed, even Libya."

The protest in front of the U.N. Mission was not staged by an official organization, but by a group of friends. One of the organizers was Jamal Saidi, a U.S. citizen originally from Thala, another Tunisian city rocked by protests in the last few weeks.

"We picked today, it was a coincidence," Saidi said, "but when we found out, we went for it: Martin Luther King Day."

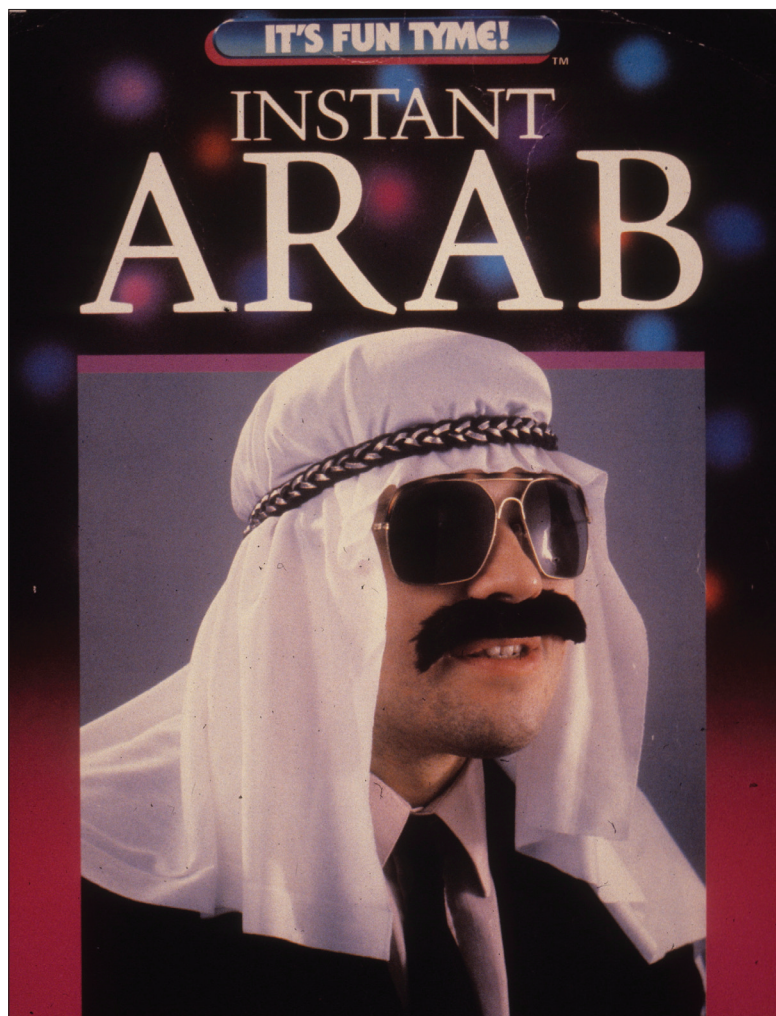
# NYU Acquires the Jack G. Shaheen Archive

## Dr. Jack on the Collection's Importance

*Edited by Lauren Marten  
(Administrative Aide for the Center)*

The Jack G. Shaheen Archive was recently acquired by New York University's Tamiment Library & Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives. The extensive collection catalogues the persistence and evolution of anti-Arab and anti-Muslim representations found in U.S. popular culture and media. The collection goes as far back as silent films dating from the early 1900s, to modern documentaries, comedies, dramas, and even children's cartoons. Beyond film and television, it is a rich archive of posters, correspondence, print advertisements, books, teleplays, essays, and personal notes by Shaheen for lectures, articles, books, and other projects throughout his career. The collection will provide ample material for researchers for years to come.

Professor Jack Shaheen, a lifelong scholar and expert on American representations of Arabs, in collaboration with the Asian/Pacific/American Institute and the Center, has been cataloguing this unique and rich collection over the past year. Below are excerpts from an interview in which Shaheen described how his collection progressed, its contributions to the academic field, and what it may mean for the future.



An "Instant Arab Costume," date unknown; The Jack G. Shaheen Archive; TAM 535; Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives at the Elmer Holmes Bobst Library.

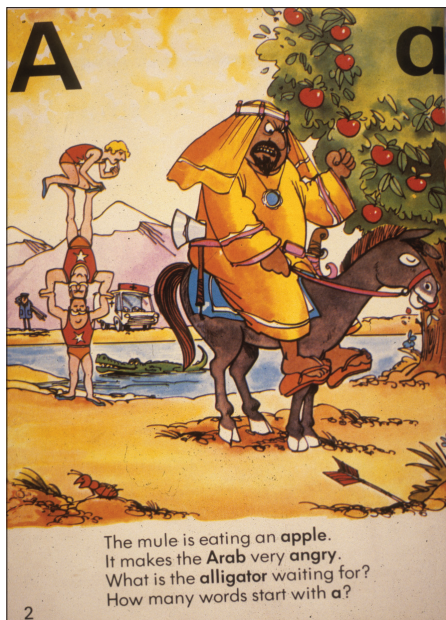
**On starting an archive:** "It was never my intent to have a collection. It just happened... I was young and full of fire, I thought I would write a dozen books, a whole series of books, Arab images in editorial cartoons, the cartoon Arab, the animated Arab, Arab in fiction, toys and games, Arabs in comic books...."

**Why it is important to understand representation and prejudice:** "It's a wonderful thing to help young people to see what they previously didn't see... particularly when it comes to identifying fellow human beings. So you see them as human beings and not as caricatures. But we still have difficulties doing this, we still don't see..."

It's almost frightening, I'm so aware now of images that do damage to people. And there are many reasons for this, as we know, the ignorance factor, which plays a role, the malicious intent—people who really have an agenda in doing it on purpose. Economics—you [can] make money based on this. Religion. And fear—of a religion you don't know.... When you demonize a people, any people, innocents die.

Nobody talks about these issues openly. These issues, for some reason, are restricted to academic circles. And even [within] the academe, very few people address these issues. Now why is that? Because they open wounds. No one wants to acknowledge their prejudices. We're comfortable with our prejudices. And we all have our prejudices. Believe me, I have mine, you have yours. We have them, but no one knows. It's a very difficult subject."

**The possibility of change:** I see a change happening for several reasons. I think today there is more awareness of the problem. The literature is out there. Not only my books but other scholars are beginning to write about it and talk about it. There's an increased presence in the media of Arab and Muslim Americans in all aspects of mass communications. These young people are the ones who have been damaged by the stereotype, and I think they're determined to make a change. That didn't exist before. You have young



A page from "A Book of Sounds ABC," 1979. From the Jack G. Shaheen Archive; TAM 535; Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives at the Elmer Holmes Bobst Library.

comedians...you know laughter's a great [tool] to shatter the stereotype. African Americans did it, Jewish Americans did it, you know, it's terrific.

There's still a long way to go. This is a tired stereotype. They've become weary of using the same images and the same stereotypes over and over again. You have to remember, these images have been with us for over a century, longer than any other stereotype. On the other hand, there are forces at work, more so now than ever before, that have an agenda to demonize all things Arab and all things Muslim.

**On the future and the collection:** So there's a lot of work that needs to be done still. What the collection can do is give impetus and motivate young scholars to write about issues that no one's touched yet.

I [see] myself as someone who is trying to reveal a gross injustice. And through exposing these horrific, damaging images, a change will take place. In order to move things and shake things up, I have to document them as a teacher.

You know, why do we teach? Isn't it to try to make – as cliché as it sounds – the world a little better, through knowledge that we spread? We're trying to impact hearts and minds. So that there would be a change. So over time people wouldn't needlessly suffer.

Photo Courtesy of Alice Moscoso  
Reel Bad Arabs: Children's cartoons and comedy films in professional formats are part of the Jack G. Shaheen Archive.



# Charles Tripp

## Iraq's Past and the Struggle for its Future

By Brian Torro, MA '11

On October 25, 2010 Dr. Charles Tripp visited the Kevorkian Center to deliver a lecture on the history of the modern Iraqi state and its implications for Iraq's future. By underscoring and elaborating on some of the central themes of Iraq's modern history, Tripp highlighted a marked continuity in the actions of stakeholders that have governed Iraq in past and present.

As a political scientist writing history, Tripp's narrative of modern Iraq is largely confined to the history of the modern Iraqi state. Accordingly, his history begins with the imperial foundation of Iraq post-World War I. The ways in which the British created certain forms of power and authority would have implications long beyond the mandate period. The state would be the vehicle for modernity and control, as the British were more interested in a revolution from above than establishing democratic and representative institutions. Early on, certain factions of Iraqi society were selected as key patrons, while others were marginalized. Sunni and Shiite tribal sheikhs were made into landowners, and the largely Sunni ex-Ottoman bureaucrats were groomed to serve in the new bureaucracy. Those who did not fit in to this rubric of power were marginalized. Kurdish leaders, Sunni and Shiite peasants, leaders of urban democratic political movements, as well as the Shiite clergy in Najaf and Karbala were particularly excluded.

The development of the shadow state is another central theme that finds its roots in the British mandate period. The British imperial practice of using land to reward allies and to punish enemies was an important tool in terms of establishing networks of patronage. It reinforced the notion that the state would rely increasingly on private relations of power – and not on state institutions – to establish its authority. Oil resources provided unprecedented revenue beginning in the 1940s, and oil began to replace land as the primary mechanism to establish patronage. The dual state, comprised of a public and a shadow state, would continue to thrive during the monarchy (1932-1958), the Republican era (1958-1968), the Baathist era (1968-2003), and up to the present.

Entwined with patronage networks and the political economy of land and oil are the politics of local power. Local power dynamics became especially important during the sanctions period of the 1990s, when the Hussein regime was forced to rely almost exclusively on the shadow state and its networks of patronage in order to survive. Loci of power shifted away from Baghdad and towards the periphery, often towards the spots integral for smuggling networks.

Iraq's relations with its neighbors also contributed to the insecurities and vulnerabilities of the state. Iraq's sea outlet is miniscule and not easily defensible. Water resources flow downwards from Turkey,



Photo courtesy of Charles Tripp

On August 23, 1921, King Feisal was crowned Iraq's king.

Iran, and Syria, and development projects such as dams and canals have not left Iraq's water supply unaffected. A lack of trust between Iraq and its neighbors has only been exacerbated by foreign intervention in Iraqi politics, which typically occurs when the central government is perceived as weak.

What are the implications of these themes in light of the new "imperial moment" following the US-led invasion in March 2003? To what extent have these themes and behaviors of those in power been reproduced under the US occupation of Iraq? According to Tripp, what is notable about this new imperial moment is the tendency of the US to repeat particular British paradigms. "Modernity" would be implemented by a foreign power in Iraq once again. Yet the temptation to recognize de facto forms of local power increased as the modernizing project began to stumble. The collapse of order in 2006 accelerated foreign recognition of de facto local power.

The persistence of the dual state represents another point of continuity. Power does not rest with formal state institutions as much as it rests with communal groups, whether they be tribal, ethnic, or sectarian. As always, power relies more on personal and communal networks of trust than on the abstract authority of democratic institutions.

Given these points of continuity between Iraq's past and present, how does Tripp envision Iraq's future? One of his primary concerns is the future of Iraq's security forces. Iraq's military has a history of intervening in Iraq's politics and multiple coup d'états have occurred. Indeed, Tripp finds a troubling dynamic in the tension between the professionalism demanded and the fact that advantageous connections have become the way to get promoted in Iraq's security forces.

The authority of the central state figures as another point of ambiguity. Historically, Iraq's geographical center has also been its political center. How will the tension between this historical, political reality and a new constitution – that allocates significant power to regional authorities – be negotiated?

Finally, will Iraq ever be for Iraq alone? Foreign powers such as the United States, Iran, and Turkey wield unprecedented influence in Iraq. The recent negotiations to form a government following the March 2010 national elections demonstrate this fact; a regional consensus regarding what the next government will look like is required in order to move forward.

Fundamental to Tripp's narrative of the modern Iraqi nation-state is the notion that the British set in motion governing strategies that are repeated and reproduced throughout Iraq's history. These particular tactics have closed space for democratic political possibilities while reinforcing a logic of power based on patronage and personal trust. Is there, however, any possibility for a different pattern of governance? What will it take for an issue-based political dynamic to replace one governed by communal authority and identity politics? One wonders if the future contains possibilities for democratic politics that will work exclusively for the welfare of the Iraqi people, or if the structures of power rooted in Iraq's past will continue to be reproduced in its future.

“A lack of trust between Iraq and its neighbors has only been exacerbated by foreign intervention in Iraqi politics, which typically occurs when the central government is perceived as weak.”

# Taqwacore: Not Just about Junkie Sheikhs and Punk Sufis

By Wajiha Naqvi (MA '12)

When first mentioned, the term 'Punk Islam' is usually met with skepticism. Not only does it juxtapose two obviously opposing categories but it also makes one question the kind of relationship 'punk-rock' and 'Islam' could possibly hold. For Omar Majeed, 'punk Islam' is really about "being punk about being a Muslim, whether you are a practicing Muslim or not, or somewhere in the middle." Yet Majeed is careful not to parochialize: "I am loathe to categorize the film as being primarily about Islam/Religion/Politics, just as I'm loathe to say what people can and should get out of it."

The term Taqwacore was originally conceived in Michael Muhammad Knight's novel, where he conjures up make-believe characters that use punk music to defy and rebel against themes of Islam and Americanism. However, after Knight's book was released, his fictitious tale of punk rock Muslims turns into reality when he finds that his book spoke closely to a subculture of young punk Muslims who associated themselves with the Taqwacores. He decides to embark on a grand tour with American-Muslim punk artists from across the United States. Director Omar Majeed follows behind with a camera resulting in the culmination of this highly controversial and non-orthodox documentary film called 'Taqwacore: The Birth of Punk Islam.'

While religion is a constant theme throughout this film, it very well articulates the nuances on issues of identity. Even though the bands en route on this bus tour identify themselves as the Taqwacores and include the Kominas, Secret Trial Five, Vote Hezbollah, Al-Thawra and Omar Waqar amongst others, each artist brands their own unique positionality within the scope of Muslim punk rock in itself. It represents the disparate identities not just terms of cultural variations and/or religious inclinations but also their wide array of musical tastes including artists like rappers, Sufi musicians and queer female vocalists. Identities are seen as fluid categories that are not solely determined by religion, gender or race but a conglomeration of all.

The visit to the largest Muslim convention in North America (ISNA), typically associated with a more 'conservative' Islam, is a powerful scene because it deconstructs the stereotyped image of 'the Muslim.' On one hand, the bands are barred from performing mainly on the grounds of having a female vocalist. Yet, much to the musicians' own surprise, they leave satisfied, having riled up young females with headscarves to scream "stop the hate."

The part of the film shot in Pakistan is a rich portrayal of the local practices of Islam as carried out at shrines in Lahore, Islamabad and Multan illustrating the diverse ways in which Islam is embraced as a lived reality. For Majeed such representation was crucial to the message of the film because "for these guys to go to Lahore and find other Muslims who



Photos  
courtesy of Lorber  
Films

played street music and smoked hashish until dawn (in the name of Islam), was a testament that Taqwacore is merely a new incarnation of a very old pattern—the struggle to keep all religion free and open versus those that want to use it for power and domination."

It is during this half that the movie takes a slightly somber direction from punk rebelliousness towards Michael Knight's own personal spiritual reflections. What is truly refreshing to see in the film is that while local Islamic practices such as drug smoking devotees at shrines are shown alongside hard-lined religious preachers, Islam is represented not just as an extreme on either end but everything in between. However, the fact that the Taqwacores was one of the first punk-rock bands to bring such music to the streets of Pakistan is highly debatable, given Pakistan's history of rock music, underground concerts and revolutionary poetry.

Perhaps my only major critique for this film is that it seriously lacked female representation. The few female characters portrayed were either in the background or did not have a strong role in the story. Having asked Majeed the reasons for such a stereotypical portrayal of the Muslim woman, he explained that many girls were not comfortable being filmed or interviewed (even though the same is not the case in the Taqwacore blogosphere). According to him, ironically, this was an indicator of obvious gender imbalances that "families are more tolerant of deviant males than deviant females in Muslim cultures, but what must be realized is that Taqwacore in principle is perfect, in practice it's very flawed and messy."

Whether positive or negative, what makes this film interesting is that it will surely elicit a reaction. In Omar's own words, "it's about daring to dream beyond our usual confines and boundaries." What is important to remember is that if you leave thinking Taqwacore is only about Islam, you missed a large point of the film because, like the title of the movie, the film contradicts exactly what people would normally assume it represents.

# Coverage in Context

## On Subjectivity in History and Journalism



Photo courtesy of Joe Sacco from *Footnotes in Gaza: A Graphic Novel* (Metropolitan Books, October 2010)  
Sacco, himself, often appears in the frames of his comics (figures in shadow, left), making the reader aware of his own role in gathering and reporting the stories.

This academic year, the Center, in collaboration with the Arthur L. Carter Program in Journalism, co-hosted a series of conversations between academics and journalists about “covering” the Middle East. The events were recorded and posted online at [nyu-primariesources.org](http://nyu-primariesources.org), and were supported through a grant from the Social Science Research Council. Below is an excerpt from the first pairing in the series that featured our own NYU historian **Zachary Lockman** in conversation with comic journalist **Joe Sacco**. Their conversation focused on the role of historical memory in present-day realities with a particular focus on Palestine.

**Lockman:** One thing that really strikes me about your work is how present you are in it, which is not what journalists are supposed to do and is not what scholars are trained to do. Historians are supposed to be invisible. We’re presenting a story; it’s our best take at the truth and, of course, I think increasingly over recent decades, scholars [and] historians, among others, have been increasingly ready to cop to the fact that it is our interpretation. It is not God’s truth, it is not just the facts; it is our selection of facts in light of some understanding

we have about how the world works, how the facts fit together, and other plausible stories. But we’re telling a story that we’re not in, generally. There are some anthropologists who insist on being in the story. Sometimes, that’s fun to read; sometimes, you don’t want to hear about them as much as you have to. And certainly journalists ... there isn’t usually an “I” voice, unless ... there are certain forms of journalism [where the “I” voice is used], and they’re seen as sort of marginal. And yet, [in your work] you’re there, you’re part of the story. You’re asking the questions, you’re cruising around, talking to people, witnessing what’s going on.

**Sacco:** Well, I think I attribute that to my comics background, because when I started doing comics, I came out of this period where American cartoonists were doing autobiographical comics. Normally just talking about...breaking up with their girlfriend, they can’t get a date, that kind of stuff. And I did some of that, I did some of those autobiographical comics. So when I was going to go to the Middle East for the first time, having come out of this autobiographical comics tradition, I almost automatically thought of it as: “I will tell a story of my experiences in the Middle East.” I knew they were going to be subjective experiences, so why shouldn’t I tell them in that way? I brought my journalistic training as far as interviewing people and everything else—that sort of fit in. But I kept myself as a character, and I didn’t really think about it in terms of what it meant for the journalism of it. It’s only later that I’ve had to sort of really think about it, and realize that, well, this ends up signaling something. It signals a certain subjectivity, obviously.... The reader is going to look at this through my eyes. I think what it allows you to do is to admit your prejudices, which I think sometimes the reader might want to know. The other thing it does is it allows you to highlight [the stories] – probably the best stories you get – that journalists often leave out of their writings. The personal stories that have to do with, you know, you’re from one culture and someone else is from another culture, and now how do you sort of negotiate that? That’s happening all the time when you’re working in those situations—and they’re often the most interesting situations. They’re often when you get to understand what people are thinking. And you see them as people with humor and people who are inviting you in; you see their hospitality. I don’t want to cut that out. I think that’s part of being somewhere. That’s part of introducing the reader, as I was introduced, to those people.



The article and pictures below are excerpts from an article published by Al Jazeera's English web-site. Habib and this article won the European Union's Samir Kassir Award for Freedom of the Press, in the Investigative Report category. The full text of this article can be found at [english.aljazeera.net](http://english.aljazeera.net).

*Photo courtesy of Habib Battah (MA '10)*

The synagogue (yellow structure at the bottom left) and a few remaining buildings are all that is left of the Valley of Jews. New skyscrapers and expensive residences are the Valley's future.

## Return to the Valley of Jews

*By Habib Battah (MA NES/Journalism '10), a Beirut-based journalist and filmmaker. He blogs at [beirutreport.com](http://beirutreport.com).*

From her crumbling fourth floor apartment, Lisa Nahmoud gazes at the opulent palace of her new neighbour, Lebanon's billionaire prime minister, Saad al-Hariri. The multi-level complex with beige granite facades and Ottoman style arcades lies only metres from Lisa's shrapnel-pierced building.

"Doesn't he ever see me," she wonders, before lighting another cigarette. It is late August, and smoking seems to be the only relief from the sweltering heat of her bombed-out flat.

Lisa is alone in her building—all the other apartments have been crudely sealed with cement and breeze blocks. And except for the

Hariri mansion, ringed by multiple layers of heavily armed security agents, she is also alone in her neighbourhood, once known as the Valley of Jews.

What had been a dense cluster of red roofed homes has been almost entirely bulldozed. In its place, under a collection of construction cranes, a new district is steadily rising—one of luxury towers and gated condominiums.

As Hariri, the first high-profile resident moves in, Lisa, the last surviving link to Jewish Beirut, has been asked to leave.

## Jewish life in an Arab capital

It is hard to imagine today, but the valley was once a vibrant centre of Jewish life in the heart of an Arab capital. Halfway across the world in New York, Lisa's old neighbours – who fled decades ago – still rave about the good life in Beirut. They produce old photo albums with black and white pictures of lavish weddings attended by Muslim and Christian dignitaries at Beirut's main synagogue; they reminisce about family picnics in the mountains and long summers at the beach.

Now, for the first time since the end of the Lebanon's civil war, many Lebanese Jews are planning to revisit their homeland. They are encouraged by the ongoing renovation of Beirut's largest and only surviving synagogue—Magen Abraham. Even Hezbollah has blessed the move. "The Jews have always lived among us," a spokesman for the party told Bloomberg News when asked about the renovation of the synagogue.

### 'My life is here'

For some in Lebanon, Lisa's problems may seem minor. The country is still reeling from the devastating 2006 war, in which thousands of homes, mostly belonging to Shia Muslims, were leveled. Their owners are still waiting for compensation and these claims have been added to a long list of pending cases stretching back to the civil war, when tens of thousands of Lebanese – both Christian and Muslim – were displaced by the fighting.

Jews also faced far fewer atrocities than other communities in Lebanon—Muslims, Christians and Palestinians were massacred and while the number of Lebanese Jews killed during the fighting is estimated at 200, the war's overall casualty count is thought to be over 100,000.

"Others were treated worse than me," says 70-year-old Sireena Nassim Lawi who was forced out of her home in the Wadi at gunpoint in the 1980s. She now lives in a run-down flat in the mountains above Beirut—like Lisa's it has little furniture and no signs of her Jewish faith. Sireena also says she was never compensated for the property she abandoned, located only blocks from Magen Abraham.

But even during the worst years, Sireena, remained attached to her country of birth. She turned down Israeli soldiers who pleaded to take her back to Israel with them at the end of their occupation tour in Beirut. "They offered to take me and all my stuff. I said no, what do I have to do with them. My friends are here, my life is here."

Like the Lebanese Jews of New York, she reminisces about the old days, wistfully describing the commotion of summer when thousands of Lebanese Jews packed the mountain roads heading up to the resorts and casinos. But Sireena has no illusions about a return to that life and is even skeptical about rebuilding the synagogue. "They want to fix it, but who are they going to fix it for? No one is coming to pray."

Many in New York disagree. Early plans to make Magen Abraham a museum have been shelved. Charles El Maan is confident that



*Photo courtesy of Habib Battah (MA' 10)*

Grime-covered cabinets, a torn up couch and a few mismatched chairs are among the only possessions Lisa had between her corroded concrete walls. She is now staying with sympathetic acquaintances, but feels burdensome and has moved several times from one overcrowded house to another and expensive residences are the Valley's future.

the synagogue will become a fully functioning place of worship. But while he and others are brimming with excitement at the chance to visit, long-term repatriation seems a remote possibility. "To stay over there? I don't know," Charles laughs. Others say they are waiting for peace and would only consider repatriating if the state of war with Israel was lifted.

Abed the shopkeeper says a trickle of old Jewish residents have come back in recent years, if only for hurried day trips. Some own shares in Solidere, the company developing the area, and Abed insists that many of the new developments have significant Jewish funding. "This area is still theirs," he says.

Still many working class families, like the El Maans, rented but never owned property and thus have no physical stake in Lebanon to return to.

Two years ago, a block of red roofed Ottoman-era apartment houses adjacent to the synagogue was torn down. When I showed Charles a photograph of these buildings I took just before their demolition, his eyebrows shot up: "That's my house! Right there! Unbelievable," he says, a dimple-pocked smile on his face. It wanes only momentarily when I show him the next set of pictures where steam shovels reduce the homes to rubble.

Far from angry, he seems impressed by the pictures of glass and steel high-rises. "It's a big change. I didn't see it physically, but I think it's very nice—very modern," he says.

"Everyone is saying Beirut is even nicer than Switzerland and Paris and London altogether. And better than New York too," he says. "Unfortunately the house is not there but that's okay. We are very happy for the synagogue."

# The Politics of Water

## A Study Tour of the Jordan Rift Valley

Eleven K-12 teachers from NYC's Friends Seminary spent 10 days in Jordan, Israel and Palestine in March 2011.

Associate Director Greta Scharnweber led the trip in collaboration with Friends of the Earth-Middle East ([www.foeme.org](http://www.foeme.org)).

Photo courtesy of Deanna Yurchuk  
Ben Horner explores the receding  
water-line and sinkholes near the  
Dead Sea at Ein Gedi, Israel.

One of the most renowned rivers of the world is the Jordan River, which today marks the border between Jordan, Israel and the West Bank. Conflict, occupation and military fences are only partially responsible for the divide of the Jordan River Valley. Diversion and heavy agricultural use has turned the Jordan into a sewage canal and shrinks its terminus, the Dead Sea, by more than a meter annually. The local economies are exporting the little water available through highly subsidized cultivation of exotic fruits and

flowers, while many in the region suffer from a chronic shortage of water. All of this happens at a steep environmental cost. Teacher-participants in the 10-day program explored the Jordan River Valley and met with Jordanian, Palestinian and Israeli environmental experts, representatives of grass-root organizations, teachers and students in local schools, all of whom are working on the environment, water, and peace-building in particular ways. Some of their reflections are captured here alongside images from the trip.

“For me, the more eye-opening aspects of the trip were the constant contrasts we observed and experienced. One day we traveled by bus from Auja, in the West Bank, into Beit She'an, Israel, and experienced the stark physical contrast of water availability for people living in the neighboring regions. In the West Bank, we passed farms irrigated by costly pumped-in water, green oases in the otherwise dusty brown landscape in a region where drinkable water has begun to disappear from peoples' homes due to aquifer-tapping by the Israeli government, where instead residents are forced to purchase water in bulk amounts to be stored for drinking or washing in large plastic bins kept in the front yard or poised on the rooftop. We proceeded northward across the checkpoint, staffed by armed guards, into Israel where quickly the arid lots and golden rocky hillsides turned to casual green pastures and rolling lush hillsides. It felt more familiar here, like driving through suburban New Jersey with a touch of Northern California. Later, when we had arrived at our destination, we were met with a flash rainstorm, making clear the cause of that abundant foliage and exemplifying the difference of water availability to citizens of these two neighboring, yet vastly unbalanced populations. To experience firsthand the devastatingly obvious discrepancy of such a basic human need as that of water made clear the imbalance of power and rights in the Middle East.”

—Ben Horner, Grades K-4, 7-8 Science Teacher



*Photo courtesy of Deanna Yurchuk*

A boy stands outside his home in the al-Amary refugee camp near Ramallah, Palestine.

“Sipping tea with our gracious host Suad in her home at the Al Amar'y Refugee camp near Ramallah, we were captivated and stirred by her family's story. In my very elementary Arabic I tried to grab onto whatever words I could understand. After a while, Suad said calmly, 'Sabr. Patience is good for your health. I have learned that when challenged, it is best to resort to patience.' Her words stayed with me as we left her home. I have always seen patience as a worthy virtue, and I am aware that true change takes time. But traveling through an environment scarred by landmines from wars of decades past and receding shorelines due to years of mismanagement, I started to worry that this enduring nature of the population is not equipped to address the urgency of the water crisis at hand. It felt hopeless. But every now and then I was calmed by the passionate students we met, all hungry for change. '[We] have the opinions, [we] have the power, [we] have the energy, [we] have everything to change the situation that we're living in,' said an eleventh-grade girl from Ramallah Friends School about the youth in her country. An eleventh grader from King's Academy in Jordan retold a story about the first time he and his peers met with Israeli and Palestinian students to discuss water issues. 'That day we met the enemy. And the enemy was ignorance. People really don't know the other side, or what the other side is going through, and that is what gives you a starting point,' he said.”

—Deanna Yurchuk, Grades 5-12 Experimental Education Teacher

“Despite a bleak situation set in a beautiful backdrop, I emerged from our trip to the Middle East hopeful and in love, not with the Holy Land, but with the profound narratives of the people I encountered, stories told and untold that left a lifelong impression on me. I sat with a family in a refugee camp and listened to a mother describe how her son was stripped from their home and sentenced to nearly 13 years in prison. I heard the voices of Palestinian teenagers hopeful because of their privileged education, but humiliated and affected every day by life in a giant cell. I met young students so passionate and full of life being guided down the path of environmental responsibility and global citizenship that every child should follow. I watched three empowered young adults beam with pride as they showed the film they produced about environmental issues in their small Jordanian town. I joined soccer games where my words could only be lost in translation, but I shared the universal language of a familiar sport. I joined with inspiring, devoted teachers, organizers, and activists who with limited resources are positively influencing and educating so many.”

—Luca Fiore, Kindergarten Teacher



*Photo courtesy of Deanna Yurchuk*

Luca Fiore plays soccer with students at the Terra Sancta school in Jericho, Palestine.

“Rather than the familiar political debate, the trip focused on the region's resources, which the people living there, regardless of color or creed, must share. This widened my lens dramatically. The landscapes spoke for themselves: sinkholes yawning where the Dead Sea has receded, plastic bags blowing through desiccated vegetable rows, sewage pouring into a holy river. The political conflict now appeared as a mere side effect of an ecosystem in crisis. But despite the alarm that this evoked in all of us, witnessing the region through its land, standing in places where borders were invisible, and hearing the same words spoken by people on all sides made me feel the overpowering Oneness of the place. Even as we witnessed violent junctures in this ecosystem, I saw myself, my colleagues, and the people we met as integrated, empowered actors in that system. Microscopic maybe, but fully alive and working together.”

—Anna Swank Bothwell, Grades 9-12 Arabic Teacher

“Water” continued on next page.



*Photo courtesy of Deanna Yurchuk*  
The historic Rutenberg Dam on the Jordan River, south of Lake Tiberias.

a Russian socialist who emigrated to Palestine and built a massive dam. The 10-year project of building the dam highlights the British Mandate period of Palestine and the Zionist vision of creating a 'modern' Jewish state in Palestine. The dam itself now sits in ruins highlighting the conflict that has dominated the Jordan River Valley since 1948. In the last few years, the area has become the sight for a proposed Peace Park maintained by FOEME. This latest vision for the region offers a hope of a new future for the greater Jordan River Valley in which Israelis, Palestinians, and Jordanians all participate equally.

—Bram Hubbell, Grades 9-12 World and Middle East History Teacher

“This trip not only allowed me to see how political decisions directly affect the environment, but it also helped me to see the impact on people. As a scientist I have long known that the decisions politicians make often have negative effects on the environment. This trip allowed me to see changes at a macro-level plain for anyone to see. One example that particularly stuck out to me was seeing – and smelling – the human waste that was being pumped directly into the Jordan River... The effect on the people in the region was also plain for us to see. We saw the channels that, until recently, carried an open sewage system through the streets of the tiny village. We visited a woman's home and learned about the variable water availability and how recently they acquired indoor plumbing. We saw how water sources were reduced by millions of cubic meters, which caused huge sinkholes and the subsequent end to the way of life of farmers in the area. These farmers then had to live in small, claustrophobic neighborhoods with limited access to water. We spoke to residents who explained how they were allocated a certain amount of water and that the weekly volume depended on their family size. I can't imagine not having a consistent water source or not even having a choice but to drink water that would make me sick. This trip showed me the direct impact of political decisions on the quality of human life. The damage to our species is happening now, not in some unknown time in the future.

—Kerry Kline, Grades 10-11 Biology and Chemistry Teacher

“Naharayim means two rivers in Hebrew, but it is more than the place where the Yarmouk River joins the Jordan. Within the area of that confluence, there are many eras of history coming together. Just south of the confluence, three parallel bridges span the Jordan River. The oldest bridge dates back to the Byzantine era (c. 500 CE), but it was rebuilt by the Egyptian Mamluk dynasty in the thirteenth century. Next to that bridge is the early twentieth-century Ottoman bridge built for the Hejaz Railway line, a symbol of late Ottoman modernization. The bridge was a key link connecting Haifa to Damascus. And finally, there is the British bridge from the 1920s designed to accommodate cars driving the same route. A short walk from the three bridges is the 'Naharayim Experience,' which is a bit like a Zionist Epcot Center heralding the marvels of the Rutenberg Dam. There is a light show, models of the dam, flowing water, and a 1970s era video projection that tell the story of Pinchas Rutenberg,

For more teacher reflections, see [www.friendsseminary.org/politicsofwater](http://www.friendsseminary.org/politicsofwater) For more information on the Jordan River Valley and its water challenges, see [www.foeme.org](http://www.foeme.org)



*Photo courtesy of Barbara Petzen*

The 13 participants in “The Politics of Water” pose next to one of the springs that used to feed into the Jordan River in the West Bank. Due to water diversion, the spring no longer reaches the river.



A 1978 self-portrait of Ardeshtir Mohassess, acclaimed Iranian artist and intellectual. The Gallatin School and the Iranian Studies Initiative hosted a multi-day retrospective of Mohassess' work the Fall.

## Iranian Studies Initiative Launches Inaugural Program of Events

The Iranian Studies Initiative at NYU was inaugurated this past fall. ISI-NYU is supported by the Gallatin School of Individualized Study and the Kevorkian Center. ISI-NYU provides an intellectual and academic space for NYU faculty and students to study modern Iranian history, culture and society. ISI-NYU draws on faculty members from departments and centers across the university, including Peter Chelkowski, Farhad Kazemi, Arang Keshavarzian, Mehdi Khorrami, and Sholeh Vatanabadi as members of its steering committee and Ali Mirsepassi as the director. Please see the Initiative's website for additional information at <http://isi-nyu.org>.

This past year ISI organized a lecture series focused on the diversity of approaches to the study of Iran as well as the state of Iranian Studies. Lectures included Reza Baraheni's comments on modern Persian literature, Michael Fischer's reflections on recent ethnographic studies of Iran, Minoo Moallem's analysis of the dialogue between Iranian studies and feminist/gender studies, Mehrzad Boroujerdi's presentation about post-revolutionary politics and the political elite, and finally Firoozeh Kashaneh-Sabet's examination of the state of Iranian historiography. Each of these talks featured discussants from NYU and the greater New York academic community. ISI also hosted four special events, including a retrospective on Ardeshtir Mohassess's life and work, a panel discussion of Hamid Dabashi's new book, *Iran, the Green Movement and the USA: The Fox and the Paradox*, Nahid Mozaffari presented new research on slavery in Iran, and finally, ISI cosponsored a lecture by Nobel Prize winner Shirin Ebadi on the topic of her new book, *The Golden Cage*. The events of the past year mark a vibrant beginning to what we expect will be a long-term enterprise at NYU.

## The Program in Ottoman Studies

The Program in Ottoman Studies, established in 2006 to organize public events related to Ottoman Studies, had its busiest year in 2010-2011 with 10 events. The Program aims to sample the broad chronological and geographic expanse that was the Ottoman empire as well as its legacy, and to feature both younger and established scholars. The Program is directed by Leslie Peirce, Silver Professor in the History department and Associate in the MEIS department, and is assisted by Hasan Karatas, Lecturer in MEIS. This year's events featured archaeologists, corsairs, eunuchs, mulberry trees, stacks of wood, bones of the dead, a map, and galleries at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Audiences learned about eminent historical figures such as Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the first president of Turkey or Osman Hamdi, an artist, statesman, and founder of the Istanbul Archaeology Museum, but for the most part it was ordinary individuals who were the subject of talks and discussion.

The fall program was comprised of five lectures on aspects of Ottoman economy and culture. Giancarlo Casale (University of Minnesota) spoke about the Ottoman view of what it meant to be European in the 16th century, Najwa Al-Qattan (Loyola Marymount University) about the practice of Shari'a in 19th century Beirut and Christian involvement in the silk economy, Robert Ousterhout (University of Pennsylvania) about three lives—German, Turkish, American—that intersected as America entered the field of archaeology, Molly Greene (Princeton University) about conflict between Greek merchants and Christian corsairs and the Mediterranean as an international legal space, and Alan Mikhail (Yale University) about how demand for natural resources, specifically grain and wood, linked many actors in different parts of the empire. In the spring, Navina Haidar, (curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art) spoke about the extensive planning for the new galleries that

will house the collections of the Department of Islamic art, Jane Hathaway (The Ohio State University) about the chief eunuch of the imperial harem and his links to the Ottoman dynasty as well as to the legacy of the Prophet Muhammad, and Sükrü Hanioglu (Princeton University) about the intellectual backdrop of radical reforms and the westernization of Turkey under Atatürk. In January, the Program organized a panel discussion on the Ottoman-Iranian border in the 19th century with Sabri Ates (Southern Methodist University) and Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet (University of Pennsylvania) that focused on disease and its political implications for the formation of modern international borders. In March, a workshop on histories of violence in Ottoman Anatolia featured five speakers from Turkey and the US and two discussants, with presentations focusing on enslavement, bandits, honor, ethnic atrocities, and approaches to studying the phenomenon of violence.

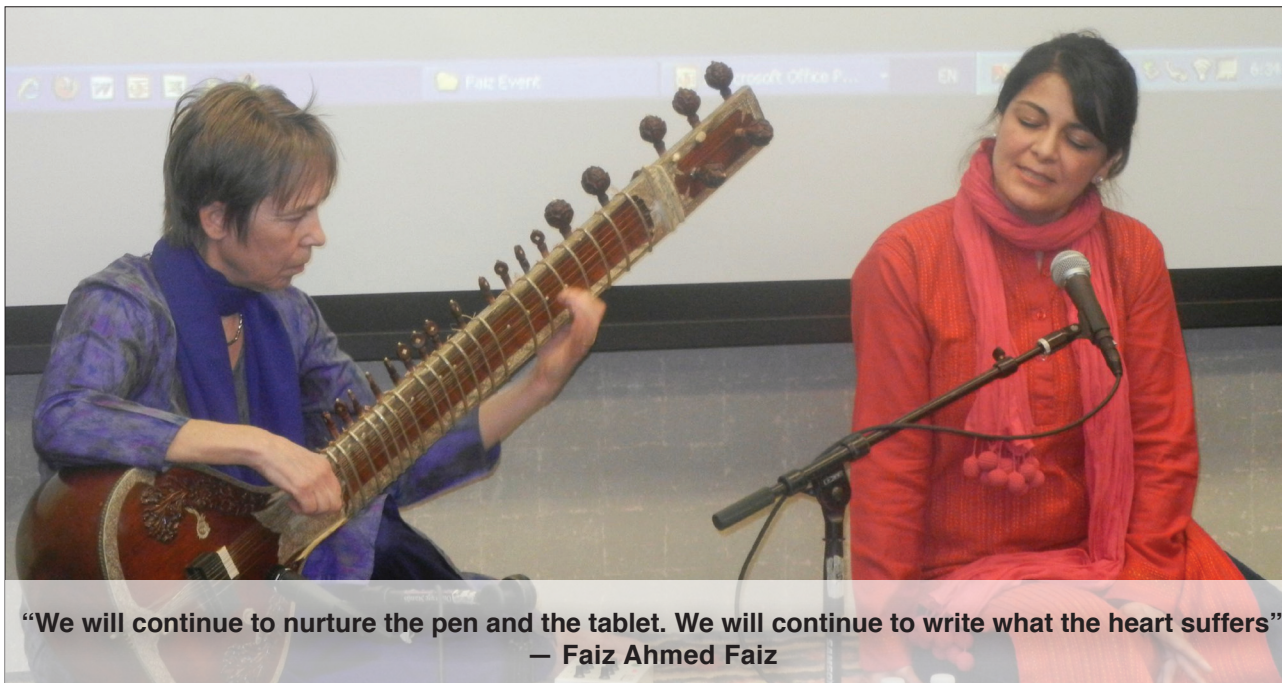


Photo courtesy of Shagufta Khan  
Dr Allyn Miner (Senior Lecturer of Music and South Asia Studies at the University of Pennsylvania), accompanies Romeena Qizilbash-Qureishy (Instructor of Urdu at the University of Pennsylvania) on the sitar as she sings the poems of Faiz Ahmed Faiz.

## Remembering Faiz: An Evening of Film, Poetry and Music

By Tahira Naqvi (Lecturer, MEIS)

Faiz Ahmed Faiz, (1911-1984), a renowned Pakistani poet and one of the most famous poets of the Urdu language, was born in Sialkot, India, which is now part of Pakistan. He was a member of the Progressive Writers' Movement, a Marxist, and a revolutionary imprisoned for his involvement in a political conspiracy. He was awarded the Lenin Peace Prize in 1962, and by the time of his death in 1984, was the most widely-read, recited, and sung poet in South Asia. In his poetry, he presents the political and social elements of his times in both collective and personal terms, moving effortlessly in his *ghazals* and *nazms*, from romantic lyricism to gritty, subversive rhythms that have come to be known as anthems of protest. Political assassinations, suffering at the hands of oppressive rulers, social injustice, religious intolerance—there is always a Faiz verse that one can recite or write to mark the spirit of protest. For this reason, he is always relevant.

Wherever and whenever Urdu is taught, Faiz's poetry becomes a valuable pedagogical tool. We use it to teach the intricacies of language, the poetic forms, metaphor and imagery, and also culture and literary history. I have been using one particular verse to teach aspirations as well as its related Arabic and Persian variants.

This is the year of Faiz's birth centenary and the Urdu program, with support from the Hindi program, organized "Remembering Faiz: An evening of Film, Poetry and Music" to mark the occasion. It was free and open to the public and was attended by more than 100 guests. We are hoping to make events like this a regular feature of our Urdu program at NYU. Such an event not only conveys to our students a sense of the importance of Urdu, its location in academic discourse, its cultural and historical distinctions but also helps create bridges with our communities.

The event provided our audience with a wide

spectrum of presentations. Our special guest was Professor Hassan Abbas, the Quaid-e-Azam Chair at Columbia University, who spoke about the importance of Faiz as a poet of the people. I spoke about my reasons for liking Faiz. This was followed by two short films, one in which Faiz is reciting his own poetry, the other exploring Faiz's wide appeal not only in Pakistan, but also in India, especially in regions where he can only be read in translation. Poet Zahira Hussain recited a "*tazmeen bar Faiz*," her own *nazm* based on a *nazm* by Faiz. Dr. Allyn Miner, Senior Lecturer of Music in South Asia Studies (University of Pennsylvania) accompanied Romeena Qizilbash-Qureishy an instructor of Urdu (University of Pennsylvania) on the sitar as she sang *ghazals* and *nazms*. Two of our former students, Adeeba Talukder and Shagufta Khan, then sang two more poems. Professor of English Dr. Fawzia Afzal Khan (Montclair University), accompanied by Naren Budhekar on tabla, sang two *ghazals* and a *nazm* by Faiz.

# 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. Among her interests were women and gender in South Asia, the historiography of this region, and the strength of the humanities. No list, however, can capture the range of subjects about which she thought, spoke and wrote. She was a much beloved, deeply admired graduate student in Near Eastern Studies at New York University when she died tragically in Spring 2008.

## The Falak Sufi Scholarship

This was the inaugural year of the Falak Sufi Scholarship, which is awarded annually to support students from countries with a majority Muslim population in South Asia who might not otherwise be able to obtain a graduate education in the US. These students, preferably female, enroll in the two-year master's program in Near Eastern Studies. The scholarship recipients embody the intellectual spirit and promise of Falak Sufi, and possess a deep and abiding commitment to the role of women in academia and to the questions that she explored, primarily the study of gender in the countries of the Near East, Middle East, and/or South Asia with a majority Muslim population.

**Wajiha Naqvi** of Pakistan is the first recipient of the award. She has completed her first year of the program and plans to graduate May 2012. Ms. Naqvi holds a BS in Anthropology from the Lahore University of Management Sciences and researches Islamic feminism. The Falak Sufi Fellowship for 2011-2012 has been awarded to **Mehvash Ansari**, also of Pakistan, who holds a BA from Mount Holyoke College, where she majored in History as well as a tailored program in Law, Jurisprudence and Social Thought. At the Center, she will pursue research on the growth of nationalism and its relationship with the history of liberal thought and practice in the Middle Eastern Levant.

## The Falak Sufi Memorial Essay Prize

In honor of her memory and with the support of her family, the Kevorkian Center awarded the Third Annual Falak Sufi Memorial Essay Prize in May 2011 to **Sophie Chamas** for her essay entitled "The Honourable People: Becoming Hezbollah." An honorable mention went to **Laura Goffman** for her essay, "Education and the New Egyptian: Producing Class Distinctions in Nineteenth-Century Egypt."

A number of essays were submitted for competition, including (in



This Year's Essay Contest Finalists at the award ceremony. From left-right: Laura Goffman '12, Acting Dean Malcolm Semple, Former Dean Catharine Stimpson, Sophie Chamas '11, Rashiq Sufi, Seemi Sufi.



The first recipient of the Falak Sufi Scholarship stands with the Sufis. From left-right: Seemi Sufi, Wajiha Naqvi '12, Rashiq Sufi.

alphabetical order by last name):

- *Nadia Dropkin*, "The Politics of Coherence: An exploration of an encounter between differently located people and different lifeworlds."
- *Susanna Ferguson*, "Claiming the Past: Modernity, Tradition, and the Formation of Modern Female Subjects."
- *Lila Nazemian*, "Commerce and Cosmopolitanism in Seventeenth-Century Tabriz."
- *Rosa Norton*, "Breaking the Bonds of Nineteenth-Century Thought? Feminist Economic Geography and the Possibilities of Place."

Competition for next year's award will take place at the beginning of the spring semester 2012. The Center remains indebted to the family of Falak Sufi for supporting this recognition of outstanding, original MA scholarship.

# Interning for Peace at JVP

By *Antonia House (MA '11)*

In September I began working as an intern with Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP), "The largest US-based grassroots organization dedicated to promoting full equality, democracy and self-determination for both Israelis and Palestinians." Based in the New York office with JVP's executive director, Rebecca Vilkomerson, my work throughout the year has been both local in New York City (for example, coordinating with other NYC-based groups working on similar issues) and national.

I began the year as the JVP point-person for a national campaign to secure the release of a Palestinian human rights activist from Israeli prison and writing a position paper for the organization about Israel's targeting of such activists. In November, I was part of a group of about a dozen young JVP activists who went to New Orleans for the General Assembly of the Jewish Federations of North America, where we disrupted Benjamin Netanyahu's speech and his message that sought to demonize advocates of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement. In New Orleans, we also unveiled a spoof Birthright trip that was reported in Ha'aretz, and collectively wrote the 'Young Jewish Declaration,' which was part of JVP's efforts to open up the conversation about Israel/Palestine within the Jewish community.

In December, I was one of four coordinators for a national day of action, calling on retirement

giant TIAA-CREF to divest from companies that profit from the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land. This is JVP's primary campaign, and simultaneous actions took place in 23 cities around the country. I was also able to present this campaign on behalf of JVP at various conferences and events in New York City, Ithaca and Seattle, and since NYU's Students for Justice in Palestine began their own campaign targeting TIAA-CREF in January, I have served as an informal point person between the NYU campaign and the national campaign.

My biggest project was the coordination of a national speaking tour: JVP invited three young Palestinian activists to speak about the Right to Education in Palestine and in support of JVP's TIAA-CREF divestment campaign. The activists spoke on college campuses in 16 cities around the country during March and April.

I have been active on the issue of Palestine for many years, and Jewish Voice for Peace is an organization that I have long admired. Events in Washington notwithstanding, the discourse in the United States surrounding the conflict is changing rapidly, and I believe that JVP is among the organizations that are crucial to this shift. Given the amount of work it accomplishes, it is remarkable that JVP has only seven full-time



*Photos courtesy of Antonia House (MA '11)*

**Top:** Young Jews celebrate interrupting Netanyahu's keynote speech at the Jewish Federation of North America's annual conference.

**Bottom:** Antonia House holds a JVP banner at an anti-Islamophobia rally in New York City.

staff members. But the fact that it has such a small staff means that I was able to become an important part of JVP, to take on an enormous amount of responsibility and to do truly meaningful work. Not only am I very proud of what I have accomplished during my time at JVP, it has also been an exhilarating experience to work with such dedicated and talented people and to be an active part of a movement that is catalyzing significant changes in this country.

## Defining New Americans Interning at CIANA

By *Sophie Chamas (MA '11)*

Last fall I interned at CIANA, the Center for the Integration and advancement of New Americans, a Queens-based social services agency that assists new immigrants from South Asia and the Middle East with the transition to life in America. I served as the agency's outreach and grant-writing intern. As part of my outreach responsibilities, I was asked to visit schools in Queens with significant immigrant populations to discuss and offer our services to their counsellors. I also spent a lot of time on Steinway street in Astoria visiting Middle Eastern stores and cafés, promoting CIANA and its services to employees, and asking them to help

spread the word. During my time at CIANA I also designed a summer youth program for Arab-American teens meant to help them deal with discrimination through artistic means such as slam poetry. Along with designing the program I wrote a grant requesting funding for it.

My decision to intern at CIANA was motivated by my desire to carry out some form of 'field research' as part of my training for the thesis-related field work I carried out during the summer. Through daily journal entries, I attempted to construct an ethnography of an NGO from within. I explored the politics of funding (which I repeatedly came across through grant-writing), the ways in which the agency defines the communities it works with by adjusting them to fit within the limits of its mission statement, and the discomfort I felt with some of the internal dynamics of the agency, as someone grounded in a particular form of academia. My time at CIANA was very rewarding both for the academic insights and the practical experience it provided.

**Dena Al-Adeeb (MEIS):** My publications this year include: "Dissidents, Displacements and Diasporas," in *Nation, Identity, Gender and Belonging: Arab and Arab American Feminist Perspectives* (Syracuse University Press). I presented "Beyrouth: Baghdad," at "DIWAN: A Forum for the Arts" at the Arab American National Museum in New York; "Transnational and Transdisciplinary Turns in Middle Eastern Art," at College Art Association's 99th Annual Conference in New York and "Migratory Sacred Spaces," at MESA. I also presented at the "Comparative Approaches to Middle Eastern Cultural and Literary Studies Colloquium" at the Kevorkian Center. I exhibited "Breaking Ranks: Human/Nature," at the Headlands Center for the Arts, Sausalito, and at the Georgia 13 exhibition and the 2011 Society of Photographic Education National Conference in Atlanta. Dr. M. Neelika Jayawardane reviewed "Algurabaa' (The Strangers): on Dena Al-Adeeb and Sama Alshaibi's "Baghdadi Mem/Wars," in the Dubai-based journal *Contemporary Practices, Visual Arts from the Middle East*.

**Ryvka Bar Zohar (MEIS):** I was awarded a 2011-2012 research fellowship from the Palestinian American Research Center for my dissertation research in Palestine.

**Nadim Bawalsa (MEIS/History):** I am a joint Ph. D. candidate in History/MEIS and received support through MEIS to present a paper at MESA. I also received two grants through MEIS and the Taub Center to visit the Israel State Archives in Jerusalem and the Institute for Jerusalem Studies in Ramallah (summer 2011). I published my most recent essay titled "Trouble with the In-Laws: Family Letters between Palestine and the Americas (1925-1939)" in *The Jerusalem Quarterly* this summer.

**Dale J. Correa (MEIS):** My research is primarily concerned with the epistemology of Islamic legal theory and theology – particularly theories of the transmission of knowledge

– and centers on Transoxania and Khurasan in the classical period. I will begin dissertation research in Uzbekistan and Turkey next fall, with the assistance of an Individual Advanced Research Opportunities fellowship from the International Research and Exchanges Board, and an International Dissertation Research Fellowship from the Social Science Research Council.

**Samuel Dolbee (MEIS/History):** I presented a paper on rural development in Mandate Syria at Yale's graduate environmental history conference in March. I was fortunate to receive a FLAS to support Turkish studies in Istanbul this summer. I also hope to spend some time in the Ottoman archives, looking at peasant education and public health schemes in late Ottoman Syria.

**Mohamed Elshahed (MEIS):** I received the 2010-2011 Social Science Research Council International Dissertation Research Fellowship and was the 2011 American Research Center in Egypt Fellow. I have been in Egypt since August 2010 conducting research on the modernist movement (in architecture) 1930s-1960s. During the summer, I continued research and focused on state resources at the Ministry of Culture. I also delivered a keynote speech about public space, urban design and democracy at the 48th International Congress of landscape architecture.

**Irfana M. Hashmi (MEIS/History):** I'm an all-but-dissertation Ph. D. student in the Joint Program between History and MEIS. The fellowships and awards that I received during this academic year are: the Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Fellowship from the US Department of Education; The Dolores Zohrab Liebmann Fellowship from NYU; The Dean's Dissertation Fellowship from NYU; The American Research Center in Egypt Fellowship from the US Department of State (which I declined). I am investigating how an ethnic-based

system (riwaqs) at Al-Azhar produced, reinforced and mobilized ethnic identity in 16th and 17th century Egypt for material or symbolic gains. During the year, I conducted research in Istanbul and Cairo using documentary and narrative sources in Arabic, Ottoman Turkish, and Siyaket. I will undertake a second year of research in Cairo, focusing on Ottoman court records preserved at the Egyptian National Archives.

**Aaron Jakes (MEIS/History):** Since October 2010, I have been in Cairo conducting research for my dissertation, "The Scales of Public Utility: Agrarian Transformation and Colonial Rule in Egypt, 1882-1922." This year, I have been fortunate to receive funding from both Fulbright-Hays and the Social Science Research Council. I will travel to England for the summer and then return to Cairo next year on a fellowship from the American Research Council in Egypt. I feel extraordinarily fortunate to be living in Egypt during this exciting moment.

**Rania Jawad (MEIS):** I was the 2010 runner-up in *The Drama Review* annual student essay contest and my essay "Staging Resistance in Bil'in: The Performance of Violence in a Palestinian Village" will be published in an upcoming edition of the review. I was selected to participate in the "Emerging Scholars' Panel" of the International Centre for Performing Studies conference in Tangier, Morocco in June 2011. I also published a film review for the Jadaliyya website titled "Narrating the Past, Confronting the Present" (review of film titled "The Kingdom of Women: Ein El Hilweh") and spent the year teaching part-time at Birzeit University in Palestine.

**Masha Kirasirova (MEIS/History):** This year, I received: The Social Science Research Council International Dissertation Research Fellowship; the NYU Torch Prize Fellowship; and a Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) for Persian. I am doing dissertation research in Moscow on Soviet cultural

policies targeting the Middle East and on Arab impressions of the USSR, its society, and forms of modernization it represented. Over the summer, I completed the CLS Persian language program in Tajikistan, did some work in the Dushanbe archives, and then returned to my regular research in Moscow and Damascus.

**Amir Moosavi (MEIS):** In addition to teaching two courses and finishing coursework and exams, during the academic year, I began work on my dissertation prospectus on literary narratives of the Iran-Iraq War in Arabic and Persian fiction. I presented three papers related to that topic at the MESA, ACLA, and NYU-AD sponsored "Moments of Silence" conferences. This summer, I worked to finish my prospectus and turn two of those papers into publications.

**Suneela Mubayi (MEIS):** I gave a paper on Mahmoud Darwish's memoir "Memory for Forgetfulness" on the 1982 Israeli siege of Beirut at a panel "Worlding Modern Arabic Literary Geographies." The panel was organized by our very own Nader Uthman at the American Comparative Literature Association's meeting in Vancouver. Versions of the papers at this panel may be published in an upcoming edition of the *Journal of Arabic Literature*.

**Ehsan Siahpoush (MEIS):** I am a 2010-2015 MacCracken Fellow. My interests include: contemporary Persian literature with an emphasis on the intersection of literary genres and particular historical moments in contemporary Iranian history; Persian diasporic literature; Persian folklore literature; narrative studies; post-structuralist literary theory; literature and society; theory of novel.

**Alex Winder (MEIS):** For the academic year, I was a Center for Arabic Study Abroad fellow in Damascus, Syria.

**Ayelet Zoran-Rosen (MEIS/History):** I am working on Bosnia under Ottoman rule (15th and 16th centuries). I won the GSAS 2011 Pre-doctoral Summer Fellowship and the Council for European Studies Pre-Dissertation Research Fellowship, which I will use for research trips to Sarajevo and Istanbul.

## MA Student News 2010-2011

**Matthieu Aikins (MA '12)** is interested in the geopolitics of South and Central Asia. His reporting from Afghanistan appeared in Harper's Magazine and the Walrus, and he received the Canadian Association of Journalists Award for best print feature. His thesis is about the growth of the private-security industry in Afghanistan post-2001.

**Rafat Azad (MA '12)** attended an intensive summer Islamic Studies program at Madonna University in Michigan. In his thesis, Rafat intends to focus on the human body as conceptualized in Sufism and Islamic law.

**Phil Beverly (MA '12)** was awarded a Summer FLAS fellowship to study Arabic at Yarmouk University, in Jordan. His research interests include questions of orientalism, representation, and empire. Additionally he has a growing interest in the history of counterinsurgency, especially with regard to the Middle East.

**Melissa Brown (MA '11)** received an AY FLAS this year. Her thesis is a policy paper about insurgent targeting of Iraqi police, with recommendations for improving public security in Iraq. During the past year, Melissa interned at the Christian Embassy to the UN while working as a Program & Fiscal Assistant at the Center. She is interested in working in foreign policy analysis.

**Matthew Carrieri (MA '12)** is a MacCracken Fellow and was awarded a Critical Language Scholarship to study Persian in Tajikistan but instead spent the summer interning at the UN Department of Peace Keeping Operations. He is interested in Iranian politics and the political economy in the Gulf.

**Killian Bartlett Clarke (MA '12)** conducted research for a thesis on the 2011 Egyptian revolution in July and August in Egypt. He has a forthcoming article entitled

"Saying Enough: Authoritarianism and Egypt's Kefaya Movement" in the journal *Mobilization* (issue not yet determined).

**Nadia Dropkin (MA '11)** received an AY FLAS fellowship and a Thesis Research Grant. She presented a paper at MESA and has been invited to speak at a number of conferences, including "Interrogating Complicities: Postcolonial, Queer and the Threat of the Normative" conference at the University of Michigan. In the fall, she will begin second masters program in anthropology at the American University of Cairo. She recently published a review of "Bareed Mista-3jil" by Meem in the *Journal for Middle East Women's Studies* (Vol. 7 #2).

**Sarah Edkins (MA '11)** turned her internship at the Iraq Veterans Against the War into a job as the Coordinator in charge of interns, media, and administration this past year. Her long-range plans include work in the public relations/publicity sector. Her research interests continue to be US Middle Eastern policy and public sentiment towards Muslims and the Arab world.

**Susanna Ferguson (MA '12)** is a MacCracken fellow and studied Arabic on a Summer FLAS in Beirut. She conducted research for her thesis, an anthropological study of the local circulation of "women's rights" discourses in Syria. During the past academic year, Susanna interned at the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security at the United Nations.

**Justin Finkelstein (MA '12)** is primarily interested in competing histories of the Arab-Israeli conflict. He attended the Middlebury Arabic program this past summer in California.

**Clémence Fonalladosa (MA '11)** received a Travel Grant from the Center this past year. She intends to pursue a career at international institutions such as the UN or

in European institutions that focus on Middle Eastern political issues.

**Laura Goffman (MA '12)** is an AY FLAS Fellow and studied Arabic in Amman over the summer on a Summer FLAS. She hopes to write her thesis on education in 19th century Egypt, and she received an honorable mention for her submission in the Falak Sufi Memorial Essay contest.

**Walker Gunning (MA '12)** traveled to Egypt this summer for Arabic instruction and to conduct thesis research. His research interests are about the idea of watching the Egyptian revolution in Egypt and the mediaization and spectacle of revolution.

**Gözde Güran (MA '12)** received a GSAS fellowship and worked as an Outreach Assistant at the Center. Her thesis will focus on the politics of economic sanctions in the Middle East with a particular emphasis on the energy networks between Iran and Turkey under the sanctions regime.

**Deborah Guterman (MA '12)** received a GSAS fellowship and her interests include the Jewish Diaspora, Palestine-Israel identity politics, race and discourse, the politics of translation and anti-Zionist practice.

**Antonia House (MA '11)** was a MacCracken Fellow, and spent the year interning at Jewish Voice for Peace. She presented part of her thesis, "Outlawing Palestinian Memory: Implication for Democracy in Israel," at the Association of American Geographers annual conference in April. She plans to work at Dirasat, an Arab civil rights organization in Israel, before going to law school in fall 2012.

**Becca Keleher (MA '12)** was awarded an AY FLAS Fellowship and spent the summer in Lebanon doing thesis research.

**Nadia Khalaf (MA '11)** was funded by the Crown Prince's International Scholarship Program. Nadia's research surrounds heritage, history and memory in modern Manama. She is interested in how paying

attention to material and oral histories aid in dismantling the assumed exceptionalism of the evolution of Persian Gulf "oil cities." She presented the paper "Bringing Bahrain Back into the Bitter Sea: [De/Re] constructing Maps of a Small Island" at the University of Pennsylvania last spring.

**Grace Maalouf (MA '12)** is a student in the joint NES/Journalism Program and received a fellowship from the Journalism program. She was in Beirut for the summer to research her thesis about the disappearance of people during Lebanon's civil war.

**Sarah Meyrick (MA '11)** was a GSAS Fellow whose research interests include democracy and democratization, modern Iraqi politics, and political discourses through new media. At the 2010 MESA conference she presented, "Neoliberalism in an Increasingly Digital Political Age: the Case of Queen Rania and Jordan," which will be published in the forthcoming edited volume *Muslim Women's Digital Geographies* by Brill Books in October 2012. She has been invited to present at the upcoming MESA conference on the "Trust, Values, and Democracy" Panel.

**Isaac Molho (MA '12)** conducted research for his thesis, focusing on the history of Islamic law in the Ottoman Empire during the late 19th century over the summer. He also studied Arabic and held an internship in New York.

**Wajiha Naqvi (MA '12)** is the first recipient of the Falak Sufi award. Her research covers topics ranging from gender to Islamic feminism and Sufism, particularly within the context of Pakistan. Her internship at the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council this past year motivated her to explore the area of religious performance as thesis topic.

**Rosa Norton (MA '12)** received an AY FLAS and studied on a Summer FLAS at the Arabic Language Institute in Fez. She also conducted thesis research in Granada, Spain during the summer.

**Melissa Runstrom (MA '11)** received an AY FLAS award and has been invited to present at the upcoming MESA meeting. She submitted a thesis entitled "Being Local: Egyptian Return-Migrant Conceptions of Homeland," and is interested in the anthropology of globalization and migration.

**Max Shmookler (MA '11)** was a MacCracken Fellow and plans to apply to law school. His research and career interests focus on immigration and asylum issues for Middle Eastern refugees. He works as a researcher at the US Middle East Project.

**Alexandra Sprano (MA '12)** received a GSAS Fellowship and has a Museum Studies concentration. Her interests include nationalism and identity formation as articulated in ethnographic museums in Turkey. She spent part of her summer in New York finishing up a project with the American Turkish Society and then some time in Turkey visiting museums and conducting thesis research.

**Liam Stack (MA '12)** took a leave of absence in the Spring semester to cover the Egyptian revolution and the popular uprising in Syria for the New York Times. He has reported for a range of media outlets from Cairo, Egypt. He also received an AY FLAS award for Arabic.

**Brian Torro (MA '11)** received a AY FLAS for Arabic. His primary research interests focus on understanding sectarianism in modern Iraq. His future plans include finding policy-related work.

**Merel van Beeren (MA '12)** is a Foreign Fulbright fellow and a student in the joint NES/Journalism program, and spent a month in Istanbul during the summer, interning at the English language daily *Hürriyet*. She also spent time researching the Turkish community of New York with emphasis on their lives in the 10 years since 9/11.

**Miriam Wakim (MA '12)** is interested in discourses of gender, economics, and citizenship in Syria during the Bashar Al-Asad period.

# Faculty News 2010-2011

**Ari Ariel:** This was my first year at NYU, and it was both productive and enjoyable. I spent much of the beginning of the year acclimating myself, focusing on teaching “Jews in the Islamic World in the Modern Period” and preparing a paper on the Hummus Wars for the MESA conference. I also developed a new course on food and identity in the Middle East that I taught this Spring, along with a course on ethnicity in Israel. In January, I taught a portion of the Kevorkian Center’s teacher training workshop on Jews in the Arab World, which I found particularly enjoyable. In April, I presented a paper on the impact of Jewish emigration on Yemen at a conference at Temple University. Throughout the year, I have been preparing my dissertation on Yemeni Jewish Emigration and Jewish-Muslim relations in Yemen for publication. I have also published an article on Imam Yahya’s attitude toward the conversion of Jewish Orphans, and have submitted articles on colonialism and transitions in Jewish-Muslim relations, the Hummus Wars, and a book chapter about ethnic diversity in Israel for publication. To close out the year, I presented a paper on the role of Middle Eastern Jewish foods in the formation of an Israeli national cuisine at the Association for the Study of Food and Society conference in June.

**Adam Becker:** I continued to work on a book about American missionaries in Iran in the 19th century and the relationship between the missionary encounter and the development of ethnic (“Assyrian”) nationalism among the indigenous Christians of Mesopotamia and northeastern Iran. Next year, I will be a fellow at the Straus Institute for the Advanced Study of Law and Justice, which is part of NYU’s law school. Along with my project on the origins of “Assyrian” nationalism, I continue to work on Syriac Christian martyr acts from the Sasanian Empire, as well as other classical Syriac sources. For example, I am writing an article on the comparative study of Syriac mystical literature, which could possibly shed light on the development of early Jewish mystical literature.

**Zvi Ben-Dor:** The past year has been rewarding. An invitation to speak on Islam in China and the Jesuit mission, for the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the death of Father Matteo Ricci (1552-1610), led me into the world of small and big encounters between Jesuits and Muslims in Southern China and the Indian Ocean during the 16th and 17th centuries. The documents I have been discovering and reading on the topic suggest that these encounters have much to teach us—not only about the Christian-Muslim encounter in the Indian Ocean, but also about the ways in which European perceptions of Islam “back home” in Europe changed as a result. I have written three different essays on the subject, which are all now in different stages of publication. At the end of May, my colleague Dr. Moshe Behar (University of Manchester) and I completed an anthology of Middle Eastern Jewish political thought (1893-1958). I am almost sure that no such volume yet exists, and we are both proud to make such a contribution to the field. The anthology contains translations of essays by Jewish intellectuals from Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Palestine. Originally written in Arabic, French, Hebrew and English, these essays, let us enter a world of Jewish and Middle Eastern politics and political thinking that until now has been almost completely obscured because of the rise of nationalism(s) in the Middle East. Many of the authors themselves are completely unknown, and we hope that this anthology will raise interest in them and their milieux. My time in France is about to be over, and I am eager to return to the New York campus after a long absence. I have so many old friends to reconnect with, and many new friends in the department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies to meet. Above all, I am excited to come to the Center, always my favorite place on campus, as Professor Gilsenan’s interim replacement for the next academic year.

**Yogesh Chandrani:** This year, I designed and taught two new courses at the Center while working on my dissertation at Columbia University. In the Fall semester I taught a course on religion and secularism

in comparative perspective and in the Spring semester I taught a course about anthropological approaches to the study of war and violence with a focus on the current wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and the occupation of Palestine. Throughout the year, I kept working on my dissertation, which is on the politicization of religious identities in the Western Indian state of Gujarat. In January, I spent time in India doing follow up research for my dissertation and was invited to present my work at a faculty seminar organized by the Center for Knowledge and Social Action in Ahmedabad, India. I spent the summer writing and expect to complete and defend my dissertation in the Fall.

**Peter Chelkowski:** I continued to teach very large MAP courses; one on Islamic societies and one on Iran. Both classes contained at least 125 students and continue to be very popular. I also taught graduate courses on Modern Iran and Shi’i Islam. Last fall, I was very happy to see the publication of a book that I edited, *Eternal Performance: Ta’ziyeh and Other Shiite Rituals*, which was several years in the making. This spring I had the opportunity to visit the NYU-Abu Dhabi campus for a conference on the Iraq-Iran War, 1980-1988. It was my second visit to the campus, and I am very impressed by this new NYU endeavor. I delivered a paper entitled, “All’s Not Quiet on the Western Front: Graphic Arts in the Iranian War Effort,” focusing on the role of propaganda in the war effort. Graphic propaganda was also the subject of a commentary entitled, “Iranian Graphic Arts in the Service of Revolution and War,” for a catalog published in conjunction with a prior exhibition at California State University, Fullerton, “Hidden Wounds, Paper Bullets: Contemporary Iranian Art.”

**Tamer El-Leithy:** This past academic year, I was on sabbatical leave from NYU and on a research fellowship at the Wissenschaftskolleg in Berlin. Over the course of the year, I delivered three conference papers in Marburg, Princeton and Berlin (at Free University). In the course of my relaxing year in wonderful Berlin, I completed the final revisions on my

book manuscript (based on my dissertation research), now entitled "Converting Cultures in Medieval Cairo." In addition, I wrote an article entitled "Living Documents, Dying Archives" on new ways of studying medieval Arabic archives (submitted to *al-Qantara*). I also begun work on two new articles: the first on modern Egyptian historiography of religious conversion (which I presented at a seminar in Berlin); the second, an essay on Mamluk sovereignty and the relationship between political and religious authority in late-medieval Egypt-Syria. I am looking forward to coming back to New York, where I will return to teaching my Freshman (MAP) survey of early Islamic history and a seminar on conversion and apostasy in the middle ages; both of my graduate courses will be hands-on colloquia on medieval documents (the first on Arabic court documents; the second on reading Judeo-Arabic letters from the Geniza collection).

**Sibel Erol:** The community of Turkish students had a busy and successful year, with four students at NYU receiving Critical Language Scholarships: Naz Yalbir, Amanda McCabe, Nicholas Glastonbury and Jareka Dellenbaugh-Dempsey. Savannah Shipman won the departmental Evliya Celebi Turkish prize. Advanced students read their first Turkish novel, a psychological murder mystery by Perihan Magden with our Fulbright assistant Celile Bozkir who also worked on speaking skills with all levels. As for me, in addition to my language classes, last spring I taught an undergraduate course on masculinities and Turkish cinema within a Middle Eastern context. In February, I gave a talk about the Turkish-German director Fatih Akin's use of literature in his film "The Edge of Heaven" at Florida State University. Two of my articles were published last year: A review essay on Turkish theater, "Modern Turkish Plays: The Idea of Being Human," appeared in the *International Journal of Turkish Studies*; and "Reading Orhan Pamuk's Snow as Parody: Difference as Sameness" was reprinted in *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. I also served on MESA's Graduate Student Paper Prize committee.

**Michael Gilsenan:** A three-week trip in December to Tokyo and Kyoto for lectures and a conference was the highlight of the year for me.

It was refreshing to get a sense of a very different university and intellectual world, to meet and listen to some excellent young anthropology and history researchers and to begin to explore the rich world of Kyoto thanks to the graciousness of graduate guides to mountains, temples, shrines, gardens, noodles, sushi and hot baths. At Tsukuba University I gave a lecture and tutorials to a remarkable group of students interested in Central Asia. The catastrophes of the tsunami, the earthquakes and the nuclear disaster now, alas, are even more horrifying. In early April, I went to Berlin for four days for discussions about the huge new cultural project bringing together Asian and ethnographic collections in a museum linked to Museum Island. It will take about 10 years. Being associated with the Advisory Board for one of the biggest projects in Europe is a quite new experience. Teaching the first year graduate course "Problems and Methods" for the first time was demanding, but the students saw me through. Otherwise, I have a long article coming out shortly on my colonial-legal material, and a chapter of a conference collection just finished. And a year's research leave coming up!

**Ogden Golet:** As in past years, I continued to teach Ancient Egyptian history and religion at the undergraduate level, in addition to two graduate courses at the introductory and advanced levels of Ancient Egyptian language. The language courses are especially important to me at the moment, because I am preparing a reading-book of Middle Egyptian texts with commentary for Cambridge University Press. One of the aims of the work is to acquaint students with the way which Egyptian hieroglyphic texts actually appear on stelae, tomb walls, coffins, and in graffiti, so the inscriptional material will be accompanied by photographs and line drawings of the text in its original form. Adela Oppenheim and I are currently co-editing a large Festschrift (55 articles) in honor of Dorothea Arnold, the curator of Egyptian Art at the Metropolitan Museum. We hope to have all the articles with the publisher by the end of the summer. My main project outside teaching responsibilities is the publication of the scenes and inscriptions of the Temple of Ramesses II at Abydos, a large temple in the southern part of Egypt, a project now in its fourth year. Along with my colleague, Dr. Sameh Iskander, a graduate of

MEIS, and the assistance of two other NYU graduates, Drs. Katherine Eaton and Heather McCarthy, I have now completed collating the line drawings for over two-thirds of the temple decorations. We hope to be able to finish all the work this coming winter and go to press sometime in 2012.

**Bruce Grant:** This past year, I was pleased to join an excellent set of research workshops at the Center, and took part as a discussant in an especially well organized day-long program, "Violence in Anatolia," in March through the Program in Ottoman Studies. I was grateful that my recent book, *The Captive and the Gift: Cultural Histories of Sovereignty in Russia and the Caucasus*, won an honorable mention for the Harvard Davis Center Book Prize in Political and Social Studies, and I have continued related research on how very plastic idioms of historical consciousness and belonging find expression in religious practices across the rural Caucasus. I headed back Azerbaijan this summer for more fieldwork on this topic. On the same front, a new article, "Shrines and Sovereigns," appeared in July from *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. I continue to serve as President for the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies, where we are working hard to build up our "Eurasian" resources, particularly for new research and programming on the Caucasus and Central Asia.

**Nadia Guessous:** This year, the Center had a historically unprecedented entering class of 24 MA students; it was therefore a busy year of advising and teaching. In addition to teaching graduate seminars on gender and sexuality and on the anthropology of Islam to talented MA students, highlights for me this year include seeing students whom I have known for the past two years complete the program, and advising students on their MA theses. Indeed there is no greater pleasure as a teacher than seeing students grow intellectually as they explore new territories and navigate the ups and downs of long-term research projects. Other highlights include being invited to share my work on Moroccan leftist feminist subjectivity with generous and thoughtful audiences at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University, the department of Anthropology and the Femi-

nist, Gender and Sexuality Studies program at Cornell University, and the anthropology department at MIT. I particularly enjoyed presenting my work at the MESA meeting this year, where many of our students and alumni were in attendance. This summer, I hope to stay in New York City and to do more research and writing. I will be working on a book review for the *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* and an article for publication based on my dissertation. I also plan to begin the process of turning my dissertation into a book manuscript. In the midst of all of this, I will be teaching a six-week summer course at Columbia University, which will give me a good excuse to go back to my favorite reading and writing spot at Butler Library and to reminisce about my graduate-school days.

**Hala Halim:** In the fall semester, the graduate course I taught on autobiography, designed to address the topic in an interdisciplinary manner, drew students from about five different departments, and their quite varied perspectives enriched the discussion. On research leave in spring 2011, I settled down to the task of wrapping my first book manuscript. Then the Arab spring magnificently took over. As I watched in awe the revolution in Tunisia, I had little inkling that Egypt would soon follow suit. Late January saw me on a flight to Egypt where I was immensely privileged to participate in the demonstrations in Alexandria then the protests in Tahrir in Cairo, returning to the US two days after Mubarak's ouster.

**Amani Hassan:** As was the case in previous years, I taught three Arabic courses in the fall and another three in the spring. Classes were filled to capacity. This meant more exams to correct, more recommendation letters to write and less time to do anything else. However, nothing makes me happier than seeing that our Arabic program is so popular and that an increasing number of NYU students are willing to embark upon the difficult yet rewarding experience of studying Arabic. I also taught the Arabic summer 2010 intensive course at NYU in collaboration with my colleague Nader Uthman. A small group of NYU and non-NYU students finished the Intermediate level in the summer and many of them started the Advanced level in the fall. During the summer, I spent more than 20

hours with my students every week. Whether we were in the classroom, in Washington Square Park doing language drills or eating Falafel together, it was a lot of fun. Here is what a student wrote to me about it: "The intensive Arabic summer course at NYU is one of the most rewarding experiences I had in college. Working with two incomparable language professors – Amani Hassan and Nader Uthman – and a small group of dedicated students was crucial in developing my language skills. While the course is certainly intensive, the humor of the professors and the collegiality of my peers made the summer so fun. I went right into Advanced Arabic I in the fall semester after, and felt more than prepared for the next level."

**Gabriela Nik Ilieva:** This year, I continued working as Coordinator of the Hindi and Urdu Language programs. I taught Hindi language courses, as well as Ancient Indian literature and Modern South Asian literature courses. My paper "The Hymns of Apala and Ghosha: Production of Gender Self-Identity" was published in *Vedic Investigations*, edited by Asko Parpola and Petteri Koskallio, and published by Motilal Benarsidass. I am also working as the Director of the South Asian Languages Database Project, National Heritage Language Resource Center, UCLA and Academic Director of the Hindi-Urdu and Arabic-Persian two-week teacher-training Program at NYU funded by STARTALK grants awarded by the National Foreign Language Center at the University of Maryland. In December, I ran a four-day OPI ACTFL workshop for Hindi-Urdu teachers. I organized a three-day-series workshop, which took place in November, December, and January. It was co-sponsored by the Center, NYU, Columbia University's South Asian Institute and STARTALK NYU. The workshop focused on hands-on training in backward design of teaching units and development of the assessment tools related to the lessons. Rosanne Zeppieri, a curriculum expert from the Board of Education of New Jersey, was invited as a consultant. Also, my colleague Mehdi Khorrami and I developed a proposal for an ACTFL Reading Proficiency Assessment Workshop for Arabic, Hindi, Persian, and Urdu instructors as a continuation of the Assessment Conference that we organized in 2009. The Workshop was funded by

STARTALK NYU and was held in February. In addition, I am co-directing a three-year project "Language for Health: The Practice of Medicine in Hindi-Urdu" in partnership with the University of Texas, funded by a grant from the Flagship Initiative of the National Security Education Program. I work as a Project Consultant on the review of the Urdu and Hindi Reading Proficiency Guidelines. I also presented at a number of conferences, including at the NCLCTL conference.

**Deborah Kapchan:** This year, I received an American Institute for Maghreb Studies grant for research on listening as performance among Moroccan Sufis. I also taught a course called Sound and Sensibility that explored sound theory through the lens of Middle Eastern and North African musical cultures. Next year, I will be chairing a double panel on the anthropology of music in the MENA at the MESA meeting, as well as teaching a graduate seminar called "Aesthetics in the Middle East and North Africa."

**Philip Kennedy:** This year, I carried on as Faculty Director of the NYU Abu Dhabi Institute, building on the programs established in 2008. We hosted in total more than 60 public events across the liberal arts, including 19 conferences; a theater production; two art exhibits; in all our programs involved 430 scholars from 205 institutions worldwide from over 35 countries—it was a busy time. Highlights of the year included visits from several MEIS colleagues, including Mehdi Khorrami and Michael Gilseman. This year the Library of Arabic Literature Parallel Text Translation project, of which I am Principal Investigator and General Editor, was established; the NYU-AD Institute hosted the Library's Editorial Board for the first time in May. I gave papers at two conferences in Paris in December 2010 (at the Sorbonne and The Foundation Singer-Polignac, respectively—on approaches to medieval Arabic literature and world literature). I moderated a number of discussions for NYU-AD including a lively public interview at Abu Dhabi Art with Iraqi artist, Dhia Az-zawi and Iranian Sculptor Parveez Tanavoli. In March, for the Abu Dhabi Book Fair, I interviewed the renowned South African writer Breyten Breytenbach and took part in a panel about Naguib Mahfouz and Egyptian Cin-

ema. I am finalizing a manuscript for publication entitled, "The Arabian Nights: Encounters and Translations in Literature and the Arts" (co-edited by Marina Warner). I look forward to a year's sabbatical (2011-2012) when I will see this volume through production; finish a monograph on anagnorisis/recognition in Arabic literature; and begin work on a translation/edition for the Library of Arabic Literature about the literary works of the 11th century Arab author, Ibn Butlan.

**Arang Keshavarzian:** A significant portion of the academic year revolved around curriculum matters, mentoring students and producing material for teaching. I began my tenure as the Director of Undergraduate Studies in September, which meant a crash course in the MEIS undergraduate program, college-wide requirements, and how to keep up with the steady stream of emails from and meetings with deans and students. While there were definite hiccups along the way, thanks in large part to Jessica Thomas' and Haley Peele's support and the former DUGS, Everett Rowson, sharing his experiences and knowledge, the challenges of modifying the curriculum and enhancing relations with majors and minors were ultimately rewarding. Additionally, I was busy working with several students working on MA and honors theses on topics ranging from analysis of Hezbollah's media production and subject formation to the political economy of Iranian subsidy policies to a study of contestation around heritage preservation in Bahrain. The diversity and quality of these projects made the experience intellectually stimulating. Much of my writing also had a certain pedagogical bent. I wrote or re-wrote two chapters on Iranian politics for textbooks—*Comparative Politics Today* (co-authored with Houchang Chehabi) and *Politics and Society in the Contemporary Middle East*. Finally, I examined the often forgotten eight-year Iran-Iraq war in a co-authored essay with Nida alAhmad, published in *Middle East Report's* special issue on the 30th anniversary of the start of the Iran-Iraq war. This study investigated the legacies of the war for both Iran and Iraq's political economy by arguing that much of what is assumed to be an outcome of the 1979 revolution and Gulf War I and sanction periods were contingent and structural products of the mobilization and dislocation of war and its immediate aftermath.

**Mehdi Khorrami:** In addition to teaching undergraduate and graduate courses, I continued working on my book project "Who Writes Iran: Literary Discourses and Counter-Discourses in Contemporary Persian Fiction." My colleague Robert McChesney and I also completed the translation of the third volume of Fayz Muhammad Katib's "Siraj al-tawarikh" (The History of Afghanistan 1747-1901). I participated in a number of conferences, the most notable one being the three-day conference "Moments of Silence: The Authentic Literary Narratives of the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988)," which I co-organized with my colleague Shouleh Vatanabadi. The conference was held at the NYU-AD Institute ([nyuad.nyu.edu/institute/conference.Moments.of.Silence.html](http://nyuad.nyu.edu/institute/conference.Moments.of.Silence.html)). On the language front, in collaboration with the American Institute of Iranian Studies, I co-organized, once again, the annual teacher training workshop for instructors of Persian in Tajikistan, and I taught at NYU's STARTALK teacher training program. Also, following the Assessment Conference that my colleague Gabriela Ilieva and I organized in 2009, we developed a proposal for an ACTFL Reading Proficiency Assessment Workshop for Arabic, Hindi, Persian, and Urdu instructors. The workshop was funded by STARTALK NYU and was held in February. My article "The Image of Modern Persian Fiction in the Broken Mirror of Neo-Orientalism" also appeared in the third volume of *Oriental Languages in Translation* published by the Polish Academy of Science Press.

**Zachary Lockman:** I concluded my second term as chair of MEIS at the end of summer 2010; as a result, the 2010-2011 academic year was the first since I came to NYU in 1995 in which I either did not hold some administrative post in the department or the Center, or was not slated to assume or resume one shortly. I have enjoyed my parole greatly, among other things because it enabled me to focus more on teaching (the fun part of this line of work) and on research, for which I have not had a lot of time in recent years. But what most marked this past year for me was the eruption of popular uprisings across the Arab world, especially the revolt in Egypt, which took just 18 days to bring down Hosni Mubarak. Egypt is dear to my heart, and like many people, I'd been waiting for many years for Egyptians

(and other Arabs) to finally decide that enough was enough, so when the explosion finally came I was (again like many others) transfixed and rarely able to tear myself away from al-Jazeera. I did, however, make time for all the public speaking and media work I could manage; it was the least I could do. V.I. Lenin is reputed to have said that sometimes decades pass and nothing happens; and then sometimes weeks pass and decades happen. This year we had the rare privilege of witnessing decades happen and history being made, and the end is not yet in sight. It's certainly made my work as a scholar and an educator feel all the more worthwhile.

**Maria Malmström:** During the academic year, I have been involved in the inter-disciplinary research project " Hamas between Sharia rule and Demo-Islam" (together with Michael Schulz et al) as well as in ground research on sexual violence and armed conflict in a globalized world (together with Maria Stern and Maria Eriksson Baaz). I have developed the project "Bodies and Bombs: Productions of Violent Militarized Masculinities among Male Hamas Youths." I have given a brown bag lunch talk "Creating Proper Men: Masculinities, Embodiment and Agency in the West Bank" at the Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality, NYU and at the Columbia Law School Center for Gender & Sexuality Law. The latter event was co-sponsored with the Center for Palestine Studies and the Institute for Research on Women and Gender. I attended the third meeting of the Think Tank for Arab Women in Amman in January/February. One purpose of the meeting was to hold the consultation of the 2011 topic for the Think Tank's research: war's impact on women in the region. During the summer of 2010, I attended the Third World Congress for Middle Eastern Studies (WOC-MES), Barcelona, where I presented the paper "Inner and Outer Sexual Desire among Muslim Women in Cairo." Later in the fall, I attended the American Anthropological Association Annual Conference. I was accepted for presentation of the paper "Bodies and Bombs" at LOVA conference "Ethnographies of Gender and Conflict," in Amsterdam in July.

**Ali Mirsepassi:** In September, we inaugurated the Iranian Studies Initiative at NYU. I spent most of my time organizing programs

and am now working on a series of public lectures for the next academic year. My new book, "Political Islam, Iran, and the Enlightenment: Philosophies of Hope and Desire" (Cambridge University Press) was published in December. I published a piece, "The Politics of Reconciliation: Secularism and Tolerance," on the Jadaliyya website and several other articles in Iranian newspapers and journals. I presented several papers: "The Subversive Inspiration of Human Sciences and Religious Intellectuals in Iran," at the Middle East Center at the University of Pennsylvania; "A Critique of Modern Violence in Iran," NVID at Boston University; "Iran: The Green Path of Hope: Historical Contexts of Democracy in Iran" at Wagner College; "New Media and Iran: Where is the Story?" in Vienna, Austria; "Religious Intellectuals: Disenchantment and Passion," at the Iranian Studies Seminar, Columbia University; "Current Democracy Discourses in Iran, Roshan Center for Iranian Studies," at the University of Maryland. I am now working on finishing a new book manuscript tentatively titled "Islam and Modernity: A Theoretical Dialogue on Tradition, Cosmopolitanism, and Democracy."

**Shahan Mufti:** In the fall of 2010 I taught the Reporting the Middle East graduate course at the Center. I also taught a Media Law and Ethics course in the fall and a Public Affairs Reporting course in the spring at Marymount Manhattan College. During the year, I published reportage and essays in Harper's Magazine, The New York Times Magazine, Columbia Journalism Review and other publications. I served as a consultant for the Asia Society project, "Pakistan 2020: A Vision for a Better Future and a Roadmap for Getting There," and a resultant task force report was released this spring at the Asia Society and the US Institute of Peace. I also delivered public lectures at SUNY Plattsburgh, the Bar Association of New York City and at the Center. I have been invited once again by the Donahue Center at the University of Massachusetts Amherst to conduct a series of lectures for college students this summer. I am currently writing a book about the cultural and religious roots of modern Pakistan, which will be published by Other Press.

**Tahira Naqvi:** The year was dominated by matters related to various aspects of lan-

guage pedagogy. I saw an increase in heritage learners in my Urdu classes, also a very interesting and encouraging increase in enrollment of students from Pakistan who bring proficiency levels to the classroom that need to be addressed in specific ways and whose demands for literature give rise to new challenges in language teaching. In addition, the search for authentic materials for use in my classroom led to newer and much more effective approaches to language instruction. Also, I had more students conducting Independent Study with me this year, a total of nine this last semester, some of these involved in language study, others writing about Urdu literature or engaged with topics related to Pakistan. Conferences and workshops kept me busy as well. In June 2010, I worked with the Urdu students at the NYU STARTALK teacher-training workshop, in April 2011 I attended the NCOLCTL conference in Madison, and participated in the STARTALK 2011 Teacher Training Workshop in Albuquerque. I also participated in the STARTALK workshop in June 2011. I participated in two four-day OPI ACTFL workshops for Hindi-Urdu school and college teachers. I am also involved with the three-year project "Language for Health: the Practice of Medicine in Hindi-Urdu," co-directed by Gabriela Ilieva. I also co-taught the "Modern South Asian Literature" class with Gabriela in the spring 2011 semester, an opportunity that helps me maintain my connection with literature. Fortunately, my interests do extend beyond teaching. I completed my translation of Ismat Chughtai's Urdu novel, *Masooma*, published this summer. I also began a translation of another collection of Chughtai's short stories, to be published next year. I completed a first novel in English and also edited *Colors of India*, Gabriela Ilieva's book on her India travels.

**Leslie Peirce:** Returning from the previous year's leave in Istanbul was both challenging and invigorating. In the fall semester, I taught a new graduate course, The Ottoman empire in Europe, which drew a relatively large and varied group of students and for this reason provided lively discussion. The Program in Ottoman Studies, which sponsors lectures and workshops, had its biggest year so far, keeping Hasan Karatas and me very busy. I presented my recent work at Duke, Cornell, and Yale Universities, and participated in a

presidential panel at the American Historical Association meeting "Generations: The Past, Present, and Future of Histories of Women and Gender." In May I was keynote speaker at Central European University's conference on the Ottoman 18th century, and in July I participated in a Cambridge University conference on Ottoman women. Two articles appeared in 2010: "Domesticating sexuality: Harem culture in Ottoman imperial law," in *Harem Histories: Lived Spaces and Imagined Places* edited by M. Booth (Duke University Press) and "Polyglottism in the Ottoman Empire: A Reconsideration," in *Braudel Revisited: The Mediterranean World, 1600-1800* edited by G. Piterberg, T. Ruiz, & G. Symcox (University of Toronto Press).

**Nathalie Peutz:** During the 2010-2011 academic year, I enjoyed a very welcoming "integration year" at NYU in New York while preparing to move to NYU-Abu Dhabi this summer. Two of the highlights were events hosted by the Center: the first, a panel discussion in November on my co-edited volume, *The Deportation Regime: Sovereignty, Space, and the Freedom of Movement* (published in the spring of 2010 by Duke University Press), which included presentations by my co-editor, Nicholas De Genova, and two of the book's contributors; the second, a research paper workshop in April on my experiences among self-identified "Bedouin" pastoralists in Yemen's Soqatra Archipelago, with Michael Herzfeld as discussant. This paper, "Bedouin 'Abjection': World Heritage, Worldliness, and Worthiness at the Margins of Arabia" was recently published in *American Ethnologist* (May 2011). Additionally, in the fall, I presented papers at both MESA and AAA, and in the Spring I participated as a discussant in a two-day symposium "Globalization and Migration" hosted by Indiana University Maurer School of Law in Bloomington. During the spring semester, I taught an undergraduate seminar titled "Heritage, History, and Memory in the Modern Middle East" with an eye to tailoring this class to its future Abu Dhabi-resident students, and a graduate-level reading course on sovereignty and (im)mobilities, which provided a valuable forum for my own thinking on modes of cultural sovereignty in Soqatra. Between the two semesters, I traveled to Yemen to attend the annual poetry contest in Soqatra, and although the trip was much delayed by the NYC snow-

storms in December, it was nevertheless a productive visit to my former and ongoing research site, which I hope to be able to visit more easily from Abu Dhabi in the future. As I pack up my office here in NY, I am very appreciative of the many conversations I enjoyed with colleagues I met through the Center, the Anthropology Department, and the NYU-AD “standing faculty” bimonthly lunches, and look forward to seeing many of you in Abu Dhabi or during future visits to New York.

**Maurice Pomerantz:** The past year has been filled with so many intellectually fulfilling moments that it is difficult to select a few highlights. However I continue to draw my inspiration from the truly outstanding undergraduate and graduate students here in MEIS and the Center. In the fall semester, I taught a new undergraduate course, “Masterpieces in Middle Eastern Literature” which I am hoping will become a more regular part of the departmental undergraduate course offerings. In the spring semester, I designed a new graduate course in Classical Arabic poetry that began with Pre-Islamic poets wandering the deserts of Arabia and quite fittingly concluded with a lovely afternoon in which our small circle recited Andalusian muwashshahat poems and sipped qahwah in the garden oasis of La Lanterna on MacDougal Street. In my own research, I began work on several new projects this year. At the American Oriental Society meetings in Chicago in March, I presented a paper applying theories from performance studies to the works of the tenth-century litterateur Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi. The paper grew out of conversations with Prof. Evelyn Birge Vitz (NYU French) who has published widely on the topic of performance in medieval European literatures, and with whom I have been exploring ways to foster new interdisciplinary approaches to the study of premodern literatures. I have also recently begun work in collaboration with Prof. Wadad Kadi (UChicago) on a text and translation of the epistles of the Umayyad scribe ‘Abd al-hamid al-Katib, a foundational corpus of texts for Early Islamic history and Arabic prose literature that is to be published in NYU’s Library of Arabic Literature series. This summer, I went to Beirut, where I worked on a project with my colleague Bilal Orfali at the American University in Beirut to collect and collate manuscripts of the famed collection of *maqamat* of

Badi al-Zaman al-Hamadani (398/1008), a major work of Classical Arabic Literature.

**Everett Rowson:** This was a fairly frenetic year for me. A sabbatical leave in the fall allowed me to cope with a gratifying but disruptive move from NYU rental housing into a newly purchased (with NYU help) apartment, get my personal library and files in order, and take a deep breath before embarking on my new duties as departmental chair in January. The spring has been a whirlwind of administrative responsibilities, but leavened by a graduate seminar, “Introduction to Islamic Studies,” which turned out to be a very rewarding experience in which I initiated a group of MA (NES and Religious Studies) and Ph.D. (MEIS) students into the esoterica of how to study the pre-modern Islamic world—and they enhanced my awareness of how many of the resources to which I was introducing them are now available on the internet—to our mutual benefit. I was able in the interstices to make some progress in my research on medieval Islamic conceptions of gender and sexuality, and look forward to further publications in that area during the coming academic year.

**Abigail Schade:** I had the pleasure of teaching two graduate seminars at the Center, “Global Environmental History: Middle East Perspectives” and “Water in the Middle East.” As a historian of global environment and technology, working with Center’s MA students gave me many opportunities to be impressed with their depth of knowledge, commitment to the region, and, through extended conversations, to explore what is particular, or universal, about environmental histories and issues in the Middle East. I also supervised one MA thesis, and served as a second reader on two others. After finishing my Ph. D. in History at Columbia, I am looking forward to revising my dissertation, “Hidden Waters: Groundwater Histories of Iran and the Mediterranean,” for publication. From 2011-2013, I will be the Mellon/ACS Fellow in History and Environmental Studies at Davidson College, North Carolina. I plan to continue research and teaching on water issues, global environmental history, and, particularly inspired by my year at the Center, the MidEast region.

**Ella Shohat:** In the Fall, a new edition of my 1989 book *Israeli Cinema: East/West and*

*the Politics of Representation* was published by IB Tauris London, for which I wrote a new chapter discussing the past two decades in terms of revisionist trends in the representation of Israel/Palestine, including the issue of Arab-Jews/Mizrahim; and in New York, Alwan for the Arts organized a book reading and conversation that reflected on the vital role the media has played in the region. One of my lectures took place at the “Unsettling Languages: Jewish Lingualisms in Global Contexts” conference at the University of Michigan, focusing on Judeo-Arabic. My keynote lecture at the “12th Annual Kyoto University International Symposium” in 2008 was recently published as an essay in *Transforming Racial Images: Analyses of Representations*, ed., Yakuso Takeza (Kyoto University Press, Japan 2011). And the interview, “Arab-Jews, Diasporas, and Multicultural Feminism,” with Evelyn Alsultany, was published in the anthology *Arab and Arab American Feminisms: Gender, Violence, and Belonging*, eds., Rahab Abdulhadi, Nadine Naber, and Evelyn Alsultany (Syracuse University Press, 2011). My essay “Gender and Culture of Empire: Toward a Feminist Ethnography of the Cinema,” (first published 1991) was republished in *Popular Culture* (vol. 1), Michael Pickering, ed. (Sage Publications) and “The Postcolonial in Translation: Reading Said in Hebrew,” (first published 2004) was republished in *Edward Said: A Legacy of Emancipation and Representation* Adel Iscandar and Hakem Rustom, eds. (University of California Press). I have spent the spring semester teaching at NYU-Abu Dhabi and researching Iraqi diasporic culture. It has been an incredible moment to be in the region and conduct conversations. I also co-curated “Cinema Chats,” a series of film screenings with presentations and discussions, which was a joint collaboration between the NYU-Abu Dhabi Institute and the Abu Dhabi Film Festival. I had the pleasure of meeting there some of our colleagues at the “Moments of Silence: The Authentic Literary Narratives of the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988)” conference, co-organized by Mehdi Khorrami and Sholeh Vatanabadi. My paper focused on “Lost Homelands and the Imaginary of Return” in memoirs and novels. And in homage to Juliano Mer-Khamis, I co-organized a memorial event, screening the documentary “Arna’s Children” and discussing the recent events.

**Justin Stearns:** It was my pleasure to join the faculty of NYU-Abu Dhabi in the fall of 2010. I spent the academic year on the square in New York, in the MEIS department. This has been a sabbatical year for me, and I spent a month in the fall at the Rockefeller Center in Bellagio, Italy, beginning work on a new book project on the natural sciences in seventeenth century Morocco. Much of my subsequent time this year was spent expanding on this initial research, a project which also has involved my beginning to translate the *Muhadarat* of the Moroccan scholar al-Hasan al-Yusi (d. 1691) for inclusion in NYU-AD's Library of Arabic Literature. Finally, this spring my first book, *Infectious Ideas: Contagion in Premodern Islamic and Christian Thought in the Western Mediterranean* was published by Johns Hopkins University Press. Currently, I'm looking forward to moving to Abu Dhabi this summer.

**Helga Tawil-Souri:** It has certainly been an exciting year to be a scholar of media and technology in the Arab world. It has been an opportune time to be completing my manuscript on media technologies' role in political control in Palestine/Israel. Connected to this research, I have published articles on other mediated forms of control. Two articles on checkpoints have been published in *Space and Culture* and *Jerusalem Quarterly*. One article on ID cards as mediated spaces was published in *Social Text*, while another focused on ID cards as bordering mechanisms is forthcoming in *Geopolitics*. I gave a number of talks on my research on various aspects of Palestinian culture, cinema, and hi-tech infrastructure, some at the newly launched Center for Palestine Studies at Columbia, others in as far afield locations including Birzeit, Sicily, and Shanghai. My undergraduate and graduate classes on Islam and media and on international development included vibrant discussions on the events in the region. It was exciting to see students engaged in current events and I hope the trend will continue in the class I will be teaching in fall 2011 called "Mediating Israel/Palestine."

**Nader Uthman:** Alongside my courses in Arabic, I continue to translate Arabic literature: I recently embarked on the English edition of a contemporary Arabic novel, to be published by Bloomsbury-Qatar Foundation

Publishing. I am grateful for a grant-in-aid in support of this translation from the Humanities Initiative at NYU. On the graduate level, I served as the advisor for a comparative thesis on modern Arabic and Hebrew poetry. In the fall, I co-organized a panel for the MESA meeting in San Diego, "Beyond the Nation-State?" at which I presented research on the work of Waguhi Ghali, a crucial yet neglected literary figure. In the spring, I co-organized a seminar for the American Comparative Literature Association's annual meeting in Vancouver, entitled "Worlding Modern Arabic Literary Geographies." The papers from this seminar will form a special issue of the *Journal of Arabic Literature*, for which I am serving as guest editor. In June, I led the Arabic segment of NYU's STARTALK teacher training workshop, before teaching another rewarding summer session of intensive Arabic.

**Shouleh Vatanabadi:** During the past year, I have continued writing for my current book project on the politics of translation in the Middle East as well as papers for different conference presentations. My paper, "Staging Dissent: Cultural Politics of Theatre in Contemporary Iran" was presented at the Middle East Studies Conference, organized by California State University, Fresno. I presented a paper entitled "Narratives of Borders and Beyond" at the NYU-Abu Dhabi Institute conference, "Moments of Silence: The Authentic Literary and Artistic Narratives of the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988)," which I co-organized with my colleague Mehdi Khorrami. The papers presented at this conference will be published as a collection of articles on the subject, edited by me and my colleague. We are also working now on possible follow up projects as collaborative interregional research workshops for NYU-AD Institute. On the teaching front, I taught a newly designed seminar for the Liberal Studies Program entitled "European Global Cities: Middle Eastern Europeans". This course was designed for our students who will be spending their junior year in NYU's international sites in Europe. During this summer I presented a paper, "Pedagogies of the Global: Overlapping Geographies and Intertwined Histories" at the International Arts and Science conference in Aix en Provence, France followed by teaching for the summer session at Bogazici University in Istanbul.

**Jeremy Walton:** As always, the academic year offered ample occasions for expanding both my scholarly and pedagogical horizons; I'm especially pleased that the Center continues to be one of the most vibrant and encouraging contexts for this expansion. I settled into teaching more thoroughly during my second year here at NYU, in which I offered "Religion and Capitalism, Theories and Methods in the Study of Religion," and a general "Introduction to Islam" (the latter class in particular benefited from the contributions of MEIS students). The conference and lecture circuit was especially demanding this year, and I never seemed to have time to cool my heels in Manhattan—among other themes and locations, I offered presentations on Turkish Islamic civil society, Kemalism, and Turkish popular culture at Princeton (on several occasions), Columbia, the University of Zagreb, and in New Orleans, Chicago, Istanbul and Santa Fe. In rare, spare moments, I also found the time to work on a variety of publications. I was particularly gratified to see the publication of my essay, "Neo-Ottomanism and the Pious Aesthetics of Publicness: Making Place and Space Virtuous in Istanbul" in the volume *Orienting Istanbul: Cultural Capital of Europe?* Deniz Göktürk, Levent Soysal and Ipek Türel, eds. (Routledge); I hear that the volume will also appear in Turkish soon. I am equally enthusiastic about the imminent publication of a critical essay that I co-authored with my friend and colleague Noah Salomon (Carleton College), "Religious Criticism, Secular Critique, and the 'Critical Study of Religion': Lessons from the Study of Islam," which will appear in the forthcoming *The Cambridge Companion to Religious Studies* (Robert Orsi, ed.). Finally, one of the most rewarding experiences of the past year was the opportunity to serve on the Falak Sufi Memorial Essay Prize Committee—the exceptional quality and breadth of the essays submitted for the competition was a superb testament to the unique rigor and vibrancy of Middle Eastern and Islamic studies here at NYU. Over the summer, I hope to spend an equal amount of time at the keyboard and on the dusty streets of Istanbul and Ankara as I revise my dissertation research for eventual publication as a monograph, even as I look forward to the resumption of classes and conversations come September.

## RESEARCH WORKSHOPS

As the program's academic cornerstone, these workshops feature new, unpublished work by established and up-and-coming scholars of the region. They promote cross-regional and interdisciplinary engagement of analytical issues.

*Scientific Knowledge, Liberalism and Empire:*

*American Political Science in the Middle East*

**Lisa Wedeen (University of Chicago)**

**Discussant: Michael Gilensan, New York University**

*Death, the Maiden, and Dreams of Revival:*

*Protestant Reform and the Cult of the Dead in 19th-Century Urmia, Iran*

**Adam Becker (New York University)**

**Discussant: Patricia Spyer, New York University**

*Hip Hop and Urban Politics in Morocco*

**Zakia Salime (Rutgers University)**

**Discussant: Deborah Kapchan, New York University**

*World Heritage, Worldliness, and Worthiness at the Margins of Arabia*

**Nathalie Peutz (New York University-Abu Dhabi)**

**Discussant: Michael Herzfeld, Harvard University**

*Of Empires and Citizens: Authoritarian Persistence in the Arab World*

**Amaney Jamal (Princeton University)**

**Discussant: Curtis Ryan, Appalachian State University**

*The Search for Origins, Again: The Biological Sciences and the Jewish Self*

**Nadia Abu El-Haj (Barnard College)**

**Discussant: Rayna Rapp (New York University)**

*The Legal Personality (Dhimma) as Collateral: The Function of a Legal Category*

**Baber Johansen (Harvard University)**

**Discussant: Marion Katz, New York University**

## SEMINAR SERIES

These seminars are part of the Center's interdisciplinary series of lectures and presentations pertaining to the field of Middle East Studies.

*A Theory of Terrorism*

**Jeff Goodwin (New York University)**

*Causality and Knowledge in the thought of al-Yusi (d. 1691): Situating the Natural Sciences in Early Modern Morocco*

**Justin Stearns (NYU-Abu Dhabi)**

*Elections in the Arab World: Who Votes, Why and What it Means*

**Ellen Lust (Yale University)**

*Iraq's Past and the Struggle for its Future*

**Charles Tripp (SOAS, University of London)**

*Contemporary Arab Thought: Between Despair and the Struggle for Enlightenment*

**Suzanne Kassab (Author of Contemporary Arab Thought)**

*Colored Identity: The Politics and Materiality of ID Cards in Palestine/Israel*

**Helga Tawil-Souri (New York University)**

*Islam in Russia Today*

**Vitaly Naumkin (Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies)**

*Towards a Global History of the Intellectual Eastern Mediterranean Literati in the World*

**Andrew Arsan (Princeton University)**

*Can the "Gay International" (Not) Speak?: Experiences of Agency, Rights, and Desire*  
**Scott Long**

*Israel's 'Enlightened Public' and the Remilitarization of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*  
**Yoav Peled (The New School & Tel Aviv University)**

*Islamic Humor: A Cultural Space for Negotiating Identities*  
**Iren Ozgur (Princeton University)**

*Revolution in Egypt?*  
**Khaled Fahmy (American University of Cairo)**

## Visual Culture Series

*The series hosts films and presentations centered on visual art and media from and about the modern Middle East.*

### The Oath

Directed by Laura Poitras (USA, 2010)

### Masquerades

Directed by Lyes Salem (France/Algeria, 2008)

### Taqwacore: The Birth of Punk Islam

Presented by Director Omar Majeed (Canada, 2009)

### Special Focus: Lebanese Cinema

#### Filming Absence: Chronicles of a Paradise Lost

*Presented with: ArteEast, The Center for Religion and Media and The Center for Media and History*

#### Little Wars

Directed by Maroun Baghdadi (Lebanon/France, 1982)

#### A Letter From Beirut

Directed by Jocelyne Saab (France, 1979)

#### The One Man Village

Directed by Simon El-Habre (Lebanon, 2009)

### Lebanese Short Films

#### After Shave

Directed Hani Tamba (France, 2005)

#### Tomorrow 6:30

Directed by Gilles Tarazi (Lebanon, 2008)

#### Tripoli Quiet

Directed by Rania Attieh (Lebanon, 2009)

## NEW BOOK SERIES

*This series features new, ground-breaking publications with relevance to the field of Middle East Studies.*

### The Obama Syndrome: Surrender at Home, War Abroad (Verso Books, 2010)

**Tariq Ali.** Chaired by: **Joel Whitney** (Founding Editor in Chief of Guernica Magazine)

### The Arabs and the Holocaust: The Arab-Israeli War of Narratives (Metropolitan Books, 2010)

**Gilbert Achcar** (School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London)

### Women in Conflict: Iraq and Afghanistan

**Christina Asquith** (author of "Sisters in War"), **Manal Omar** (author of "Barefoot in Baghdad")  
Partners: Prosperity Candle and Women's Voices Now

### The Deportation Regime: Sovereignty, Space, and the Freedom of Movement (Duke University Press, 2010)

**Nathalie Peutz** (NYU), **Nick DeGenova** (University of Amsterdam), **Andrew Gardner** (University of Puget Sound), **Sarah Willen** (Southern Methodist University)

### In the Time of Oil: Piety, Memory, and Social Life in an Omani Town (Stanford University Press, 2010)

**Mandana Limbert** (CUNY Graduate Center and Queens College)

### The Eastern Mediterranean and the Making of Global Radicalism (University of California Press)

**Ilham Khuri-Makdisi** (Northeastern University)

### The Golden Cage (Kales Press)

**Shirin Ebadi** (2003 Nobel Laureate for her efforts in human rights, and author of *Iran Awakening*)  
Partners: The Iranian Studies Initiative and the Center for Law and Security

## Iranian Studies Initiative

*A new initiative hosted by the Gallatin School at NYU with advisory and in-kind support from the Center.*

*Bridging the Gap or Filling in the Precipice? The Poetics of Passage in Contemporary Persian Literature*

**Reza Barahani** (University of Toronto)

*On the Life and Work of Ardeshtir Mohassess: a Conference and Exhibit Commemorating the Legacy of One of Iran's Greatest Graphic Artists*

**Ehsan Yarshater** (Columbia), **Ali Mirsepassi** (New York University), **Ulrich Marzolph** (Akademie der Wissenschaften), **Nahid Mozaffari** (New York University), **Dagmar Riedel** (Columbia), **Reza Barahani**, **Shahri-**

**yar Mandanipur**, **Shirin Neshat**, **Firoz Nodjomi** (Nassau Community College), **Houra Yavari** (Columbia), **Behrooz Moazami** (Loyola University), **Hadi Hazavei**, **Nicky Nodjoumi**, **Abbas Amanat** (Yale University), **Peter Chelkowski** (New York University), **Majid Roushangar**, **Behrooz Moazami**, **Nicky Nodjoumi**

*Raising/ Lowering the Tones ([Dis]Harmonically) of Ethnographies of Iran and its Diasporas*  
**Michael Fischer** (Mass. Institute of Technology)

*Modern Iranian Historiography*

**Nahid Mozaffari** (New York University)

*Feminist Studies Encountering Iranian Studies: Gaps, Contradictions and Elisions*  
**Minoo Moalem** (University of California Berkeley)

*Iranian Elite Studies: A Historical Retrospective*  
**Mehrzad Boroujerdi** (Syracuse University)  
Discussant: **Hamid Dabashi** (Columbia)

*The History of Slavery in Modern Iran: Preliminary Questions and Observations*  
**Firoozeh Kashani Sabet** (Pennsylvania University), **Ervand Abrahamian** (CUNY)

## Conferences, Symposia, and Special Events

### **The Meaning of Averroes and Maimonides for Our Times:**

#### **How to Make the Mediterranean Space a Community of Reason, Tolerance, Progress and Prosperity**

**Mustapha Tlili** (New York University), **John Brademas** (New York University), **Jacob Bender**, **Jacques Lezra** (New York University)

### **Censuring the Middle East: BDS, International Sanctions, and Campus Politics**

**Asli Bali** (University of California LA), **Rochelle Davis** (Georgetown), **Noura Erakat** (Georgetown), **Bassam Haddad** (George Mason), **Bayann Hamid** (MERIP), **Arang Keshavarzian** (New York University), **Zachary Lockman** (New York University), **Khalid Medani** (McGill), **Pete Moore** (Case Western), **Norma Claire Moruzzi** (University of Illinois at Chicago), **Paul Silverstein** (Reed College), **Ted Swedenburg** (Arkansas), **Helga Tawil-Souri** (New York University), **Chris Toensing** (MERIP)

### **Approaches to Islamic Law and Society**

**Jonathan Brown** (Georgetown), **Iza Hussin** (University of Massachusetts), **Maya Mikdashi** (Columbia), **Michael Peletz** (Emory), **Eric Beverly** (SUNY Stony Brook), **Brinkley Messick** (Columbia), **Amin Venjara** (Princeton), **Intisar Rabb** (Boston College), **Morgan Clarke** (Manchester, UK), **Michael Gilsenan** (New York University)

### **I Have Dipped My Fingers in My Heart's Blood: Remembering Faiz Ahmed Faiz**

**Hassan Abbas** (Columbia), **Tahira Naqvi** (New York University), **Zahira Hussain**, **Romeena Kizilbash-Kureishy** (University of Pennsylvania), **Allyn Miner** (University of Pennsylvania), **Shagufta Khan** (New York University), **Adeeba Talukder** (New York University), **Fawzia Afzal-Khan** (Montclair University), **Naren Budhkar**

### **Egypt Rising?: A Discussion of the Egyptian Political Crisis and its Implications for the Mid-East and Beyond**

Presenters: **Saad Eddin Ibrahim** (Drew University), **Michael Gilsenan** (New York University), **Craig Calhoun** (New York University), **Zachary Lockman** (New York University), **Aaron Jakes** (New York University), **Khaled Fahmy** (The American University of Cairo), **Ahmad Shokr** (New York University), **Helga Tawil-Souri** (New York University), **Arang Keshavarzian** (New York University)

## TEACHER TRAINING (SATURDAY SEMINARS)

*As stipulated by our Title VI grant, Saturday Seminars are hosted by the Center in collaboration with the Steinhardt School of Education at New York University. 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 K-16 curriculums.*

### **Arab Cinema: Media, Culture, and Modernity**

**Karim Tartoussieh** (New York University), **Livia Alexander** (ArteEast)

### **Labor and Migration in the Middle East**

**Nathalie Peutz** (NYUAD), **Nicholas DeGenova** (University of Chicago), **Sarah Willen** (Southern Methodist University), and **Andrew Gardner** (Puget Sound University)

### **Spotlight on Afghanistan**

**Benjamin Hopkins** (George Washington University), **Shahan Mufti** (New York University), **Helena Zewer** (New York University), **Leeza Ahmady** (Independent Curator)

### **Jews in the Arab World**

**Uri Ariel** (New York University), **Joshua Schreier** (Vassar College)

### **The Ottoman Empire**

**Ayelet Zoran-Rosen** (New York University), **Mostafa Minawi** (New York University), and **Leslie Peirce** (New York University)

### **Teaching About Islam: Well-Tempered Answers to Hot-Button Questions in Your Classroom**

**Susan Douglass** (Georgetown University)

### **Introduction to Arab Music, Dance and Culture**

**Karim Nagi** (Turbo Tabla)

### **Coverage in Context: Media and the Middle East**

**Chris Toensing** (Middle East Report) and **Rochelle Davis** (Georgetown University) and others.

Cosponsored with NYU's Faculty Resource Network of Community Colleges and Minority-Serving Institutions.

## Program in Ottoman Studies

*The Program in Ottoman Studies is led by Professor of History Leslie Pierce (MEIS) and Hasan Karatas (MEIS). The series focuses on the interdisciplinary study of the periods and geographies associated with the rule of the Ottoman Empire.*

*What did it mean to be European in the Sixteenth Century?: A view from the Ottoman Empire*  
**Giancarlo Casale** (University of Minnesota)

*In the Shade of the Mulberries: Qadi Courts and Shari'a Law*  
**Najwa al-Qattan** (Loyola Marymount University)

*Archaeologists and Travelers in Ottoman Lands*  
**Robert Ousterhout** (University of Pennsylvania)

*Perilous Voyages: Crossing the Mediterranean in the Age of Piracy*  
**Molly Greene** (Princeton University)

*Sacks of Grain, Stacks of Wood, and Some Limits of the Early Modern Ottoman Economy*  
**Alan Mikhail** (Yale University)

*Bodies and Borders: The Ottoman-Iranian Frontier in the 19th Century*  
**Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet**, (University of Pennsylvania) and **Sabri Ates** (Southern Methodist University)

*New Galleries at the Metropolitan Museum of Art: A Preview of the Arts of the Arab Lands, Turkey, Iran, Central Asia and Later South Asia*  
**Navina Haidar** (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Workshop: Violence in Ottoman Anatolia  
**Başak Tuğ** (Bilgi University); **Josh White** (University of Michigan); **Leslie Peirce** (New York University); **Bruce Grant** (New York University); **Lerna Ekmekçioğlu** (University of Michigan); **Ryan Gingeras** (Naval Postgraduate School); **Oktay Özel** (Bilkent University); **Christine Philliou** (Columbia)

*The Chief Eunuch of the Ottoman Harem: Servant of the Sultan, Servant of the Prophet*  
**Jane Hathaway** (The Ohio State University)

*Ataturk and the Early Republican Westernization*  
**Sukru Hanioglu** (Princeton)

## Comparative Approaches to Middle Eastern Literatures

*A series of lectures curated by graduate students participating in the Arab Literature Colloquium. The series is sponsored by the Department of Comparative Literature and the Department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, with additional support from the Humanities Initiative and the Center.*

**Necrology and Sectarianism in Iraq: Writing Occupation and the Civil War**  
**Sinan Antoon** (New York University)

**Cousins and Other Strangers: Elias Khoury, Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Intertextual Identities**  
**Christina Civantos** (University of Miami)

**Poetics of the Popular Revolution**  
**Muhsin al-Musawi** (Columbia)

**Beyrouth\_Baghdad\_Istanbul**  
**Younna Chlala** (Pratt Institute) and **Dena Al Adeeb** (New York University)

**Al-Jahiz's Dog-Cock Debate: Disgust between Poetry and Law**  
**Jeannie Miller** (New York University)

## Coverage in Context

*This year-long project is funded by the Social Science Research Council in collaboration with the Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute. Conversations are posted online at nyuprimarysources.org.*

### On Historical Memory, Cartoon Journalism, and the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict

Joe Sacco (Author/Illustrator of *Footnotes from Gaza*),  
Zachary Lockman (New York University)

### On the Question of Identity in the Middle East

Anthony Shadid (The New York Times), Jillian Schwedler (University of Massachusetts Amherst)

### Public Opinion: Polling and the Arab Street

Rami Khoury (The Daily Star & The American University of Beirut),  
Shibley Telhami (University of Maryland)

### Authoritarianism and Resistance

Borzou Daragahi (LATimes), Farideh Farhi (University of Hawaii),  
Roza Eftekhari (Institute for War and Peace Reporting)

### Political Islam and the Media

Lawrence Wright (The New Yorker) and Marc Lynch (George Washington University)







# HAGOP KEVORKIAN CENTER REVIEW 2010/2011

