



HAGOP
KEVORKIAN
CENTER
REVIEW
2014/2015

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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 the Kevorkian Center was successfully renewed as a Department of Education Title VI National Resource Center for contemporary Middle Eastern Studies and was awarded Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowships (FLAS) through 2018. Along with the support of the university, these grants allow the Center to continue operating and support many of our students.

Our Master's program is among the most competitive in the nation, with our graduates going on to top doctoral programs in the social sciences and humanities and successful careers in journalism, non-profit organizations, education, and others. This year, we graduated 16 MA students, and 23 are continuing on to their second year. At the time of writing, we are preparing for a new incoming class of 20 students in Fall 2015. As you will notice through the pages of this Review, our academic seminars, workshops, conferences, and other educational programs were robust and fostered a vibrant environment for students, faculty, and the general public. We continued to provide teacher training to local middle- and high- school educators and professional development to faculty from underserved institutions through the Faculty Resource Network and launched a new partnership with CUNY's Middle East Center.

This year has seen some significant changes at the Kevorkian Center. Departures of team members is always a bittersweet – if inevitable – affair. We are extremely grateful to colleagues moving on, in particular Michael Gilsenan for his eight years of leadership as the Center's Director, as well as to Ali Mirsepassi who served as interim Director in Fall 2014. Two long-standing members have moved on this year: our Administrative Aide, Lauren Marten, who was with us for nearly four years, and Clinical Assistant Professor Benoit Challand who is taking on a tenured post in the Sociology Department at the New School. Our graduating student assistants were an indispensable part of the team, and we wish them success in their next adventures: Adnan Moussa, Brooke Fisher, Gina Hakim, Keenan Wilder, and May Darmon.

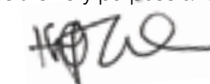
Of course with departures come arrivals, and I am absolutely delighted to welcome a number of new members to the Center. Sallie Wade joined us in the Fall as the Center's Administrative Assistant and late in the Spring we welcomed Diana Shin in a newly-created position of Outreach Administrator. Both have quickly become indispensable to the workings of the Center. Joanne Nucho, who began in Fall 2014, has been a boon to the Center in her role as the Director of Graduate Studies. She improved and streamlined the Center's advising process and students' trajectories in thesis writing, taught two new courses, contributed to the Outreach program, and has been a gracious and dynamic presence. In order to improve consistency, quality, and institutional memory in our program, in Fall 2015, Joanne Nucho steps into the Clinical Assistant Professor position while remaining DGS, and we welcome Begum Adalet as our new Faculty Fellow.

With new team members and new leadership, we are taking the opportunity to integrate what have been separate components of the Center's activities into a holistic and updated approach. Enacting this vision is an ongoing, overall restructuring of faculty and administrative roles; merging students' academic and professional needs with our events; and putting communication technology to better and broader use.

For example, this past year we introduced two new programs that help raise the Center's profile and provide more rigorous academic and professional training for our students. This included a prestigious practitioner/scholar in residence program launched in Spring 2015. The first holder of the residency was Adam Shatz, author and a Contributing Editor at the *London Review of Books*, who led a graduate workshop titled "Writing for Non-Academics" and hosted a roundtable on Syria. The second was the launch of a new research methods seminar which serves to highlight the work of our many colleagues across the university whose expertise is relevant to the study of the Middle East; feature and demystify the various "methods" of studying the region, its history, culture, and languages; and expand student-faculty relationships. As both of these programs continue in the year ahead, they will be joined by new and exciting ones as well as our recognition that we increasingly live and work, and teach and learn in a digital environment. Indeed, if you haven't yet, follow us on various social media and internet platforms as #NYUKevo.

Finally and as importantly, while change has been prevalent at the Center this past year, the continued energy, dedication, and knowledge of our Program Administrator, Arthur Starr, and our Associate Director, Greta Scharnweber, have served as the Center's bedrock. Whether admissions or government grant applications, daily finances or new programs, none would have been possible without them. Both Arthur and Greta deserve utmost recognition and gratitude for these successes and for ensuring that the Center continues to be a vibrant intellectual community that we all benefit from.

On a personal note, I am honored and delighted to be the Director of a Center as remarkable as NYU's Kevorkian, and thank each and every one of you for your continued support. I trust you will enjoy reading about our progress this past year in the following pages, and hope that it will urge you to continue contributing and participating in the Center's many facets. It hopefully goes without saying that as the Middle East goes through important and confusing – if not sometimes disheartening – transformations as we have witnessed this past year, the passion, commitment, and curiosity of our faculty, staff, and students to better understand the region's continuities and transformations invigorates the very purpose and activities of the Center.



—Helga Tawil-Souri, Director

The Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies

Memory, Space and Vision in Bourj Hammoud, Lebanon

By Joanne Randa Nucho, Director of Graduate Studies, Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies, NYU



"A street in the Naba'a neighborhood of Bourj Hammoud"

This year, 2015, marks the hundredth anniversary of the systematic massacres and deportations of Armenians in former Ottoman lands now known as the Armenian Genocide. My research, which is based in Lebanon, is deeply connected to the history of this catastrophe. Since 2008, I have been conducting ethnographic research in and around the suburb of Bourj Hammoud, just outside of Beirut's municipal boundaries. In the aftermath of the genocide in the 1920s, French Mandate officials resettled Armenian refugees in Lebanon. By the 1930s, the area known as Bourj Hammoud, which at the time was mainly agricultural lands, was urbanized through the joint efforts of Armenian town associations and French mandate officials in order to settle Armenians more permanently in what would soon become an independent Lebanon in 1943. Today, neighborhoods within Bourj Hammoud still bear the names of the towns from which the Armenians had been displaced – like Sis, Adana, Marash. Though Bourj Hammoud is popularly known as Beirut's "Armenian neighborhood," it is, in fact a highly diverse working class suburb that has long been at the center of migration within Lebanon as well as from Syria and elsewhere in the world.

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

My film project, which is currently in post-production, incorporates footage filmed in Bourj Hammoud from 2008 through 2015. The film is one way in which I will explore the interconnections between experience, space and memory in Lebanon. During my fieldwork, I used the camera not as a tool of documentation, but rather as a site from which to start conversations or collaborations. For example, I worked with many of my interlocutors in Bourj Hammoud to discuss, reenact, or sometimes stage the experiences that were meaningful to them in terms of their everyday lives in this city. We filmed activities as diverse as switching on a generator during one of the numerous rolling electricity cuts that plagued Bourj Hammoud several times a day, to going shopping or walking home from work. More recently, I returned to Lebanon to continue the final phase of the project with Lebanese artist Rosy Kuftedjian. Together, we conducted a series of "map-drawing" interviews with some of my interlocutors as well as their wider network of friends and family members. People were asked to draw a map or some other kind of visual representation of a disappeared or altered space that was meaningful to them, whether it be a childhood home, a neighborhood, a workplace or even a school, and tell some kind of story about it. The responses focused on a wide range of topics from the mundane aspects of life, such as tracing a path to work to the most intricate memories of people and places long since disappeared. One participant carefully related the names of every person living or working on his block before the ethnic cleansing of the 1970s (during Lebanon's civil war) displaced many from this neighborhood for several decades and in some cases permanently. Another participant drew a map tracing all of the various times she and her family had to move, including periods of squatting during the war. As I work towards completing the film, I aim not to make the film a kind of representation of life in Bourj Hammoud. Rather, I approach it as a collaborative exercise in remembering and reimagining the past, present and alternate possible futures through the materiality and the richness of space in Bourj Hammoud and the creativity of my interlocutors.

Views from the Margins

Historicizing the Shi'as of Lebanon through Archival Research

By Linda Sayed, Visiting Assistant Professor of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, NYU

As Lebanon continues without a president for over a year now and the ongoing Syria conflict becomes more pressing with Hezbollah's growing involvement and the rise of IS (Islamic State), interest in Shi'i political involvement and mobilization has taken center stage. Historical scholarship on the Shi'a of Lebanon has largely focused on the 1960s and 70s lead-up to the civil war, or the post-war period and rise of political groups such as Hezbollah. My research pays close attention to the earlier French Mandate period (1923-1946) to shed light on the important shifts in the way the Shi'a of south Lebanon conceptualized their place in the Lebanese nation-state, both as members of a sect and as citizens of the state.

There are many methods and strategies for conducting such research, particularly when it comes to archives. Archives are a central component of any historical analysis or research. As a historian, my research is deeply invested in archival repositories that remain untapped in the historical study of Lebanon during the French Mandate period (1923-1946).

My research takes a different perspective by shifting the focus from a narrative of the center to a narrative of periphery and marginal actors. I concentrate on the understudied Shi'i Muslims of Lebanon, where the vast majority of the population resided in the country's peripheral south and remained politically and economically marginalized. I explore different Shi'i and non-Beirut archival sources available from the mandate period, such as the Ja'fari shari'a courts' archives (located in Beirut, Tyre, Saida, and Baalback, among others) and those of Shi'i educational institutions established during the Mandate period (such as the 'Amiliyya Society in Beirut and the Ja'fariyya school system in Tyre). These sources provide a complex look into the ways in which Shi'as of Lebanon came to negotiate notions of citizenship, nationality, and sectarianism, among other issues. My investigation into the Ja'fari shari'a court records uses an interdisciplinary approach, and shows how matters of marital affairs or personal status probed issues



The image, above, is an example of the hand-written court records housed in the Ja'fari Shari'a court in Tyre, Lebanon. The court frequently administered cases dealing with matters of marriage, divorce, inheritance, and child custody. The featured case was brought before the court on August 5, 1935 by a woman making demands for alimony.

of sectarian demarcations, gender formations, transnationalism, and extraterritoriality. With unprecedented access to such archives, I have been able to reveal the complex ways in which familial affairs and educational reform were intertwined in practices of sectarianism and communal formations within the broader Lebanese national framework during the mandate.

My current project traces the historiography of educational reform and curriculum development in southern Lebanon from the mandate period to the rise of politically affiliated educational establishments by the 1970s and 1980s. I explore how pedagogical and methodological approaches to narrating history in school curricula developed over time, and especially how these materials situate southern Lebanon historically in the larger national narrative. I begin from bottom-up efforts at integrating the periphery into the Lebanese nation-state, and examine how these attempts have served to both form identifications and establish institutional bureaucracies. Through this work I aim to provide a more nuanced understanding of the growing political and social mobilization of the Shi'as in the current Lebanese context.

I tackle these issues not only in my research but also in my teaching. My seminar on "Nationalism and Nation-State" takes into account the need to focus on peripheral spaces, and explores the ways in which archival historical research can help us to better understand questions of nationality, sectarianism, law, and educational reform.

Writing for Non-Academics

The Promise (and Perils) of Popular Writing

By Simone Rutkowitz, MA NES '16

Last spring, the Hagop Kevorkian Center hosted Adam Shatz as the first practitioner in its inaugural residency program. The new program supplements the Kevorkian Center's existing course offerings by inviting individuals whose work engages with the Middle East to teach a short seminar. The program, designed to host a variety of artists, scholars, and practitioners, demonstrates how different practices and approaches can be applied to Middle Eastern Studies. "Writing for Non-Academics: The Promise (and Perils) of Popular Writing," taught by Shatz, examined the practice and art of long-form narrative non-fiction.

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

Personally, Shatz's class acted as a stylistic intervention. After a semester of consuming and producing only academic literature, my vocabulary was dense, my sentences riddled with commas. While most courses at the Kevorkian Center are content driven, "Writing for Non-Academics" aimed to develop the form and structure of students' writing. Designed to "expose students to different modes of narration," Shatz chose essays from a range of authors, including Rachel Aviv, Peter Hessler, Tony Judt, and Janet Malcolm. Covering a broad scope of topics, these selections demonstrate how well crafted writing captures and holds a reader's attention, regardless of the subject matter. During a conversation outside of class Shatz noted that, "a potential disadvantage" of a place like the Kevorkian Center is that scholars may forget that others might not share our enthusiasm for the Middle East. This point resonated with me. If scholars want to be heard outside of the academy then we need to garner interest in our findings and perspectives. Long-form non-fiction writing – when successful – holds the potential for academics to diversify and expand readership.

In his own writing, Shatz uses straightforward and precise language. Rather than hiding behind the latest jargon, he takes care to tell his story, to set the scene. Out of the clarity of Shatz's prose, the reader is able to glean the nuances and inconsistencies he identifies in his subject matter. Shatz does not shy away from controversial or unpopular positions. In "Moral Clarity," an essay from January 2015, he describes how "exercises in 'moral clarity'" – assertions like 'je suis Charlie' made by liberal hawks in the US – obfuscate the facts on the ground in France and refuse to truly engage with "the full measure of the moral and political challenge at hand." Shatz's ability to move between personal experiences, current events, historical context and individual subjects makes his writing easy and pleasurable to read. "Stranger Still," his profile on Kamel Daoud, published in April 2015 during his residency at the Kevorkian Center, served as much as a lesson on the history of Algeria as it did a profile of Daoud. While not a scholar of the Middle East by profession, Shatz's work is an example of how non-academic writing can be smart, opinionated, and relevant to both the public and academic circles.



Transnational Perspectives

on the Life and Work of

Sabahattin Ali

By Ilker Hepkaner, PhD Candidate,
Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies



Photo Courtesy of The Archives of Filiz Ali.
Sabahattin Ali in Urfa, March 1, 1948.

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

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

Since the initial stages, we had planned the workshop as an opportunity for scholars to research and present neglected aspects of Ali's life

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

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

What Went Wrong in Syria?

By Nader Attasi, MA NES '16

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

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

George Saghir, under his pseudonym “Ehsani,” became known via Joshua Landis’s blog *Syria Comment* by being a vicious advocate for neoliberal reform. While Bashar al-Asad was liberalizing the economy in a gradual manner to avoid alienating the original rural and working class base of the Ba’th party that would be most affected by said reforms, Saghir argued on *Syria Comment* that the reforms were a step in the right direction but did not go far enough, and advocated for more aggressive, shock-therapy type free market reforms. Saghir approached the topic of this panel with a similar disposition. One of his most memorable remarks was that the entire war could have been avoided had Assad reacted more harshly to the initial protests in Der’a. Even within the realm of brutal realism, such analysis misses the point complete-

ly. It was *because* of Assad’s marked brutality against, first, children in Der’a, and, later, protesters, that caused the uprising to spread like wildfire to other cities. Short of killing every protester and potential protester, the government could not have acted in a manner harsh enough to prevent protests from spreading.

But there is something larger that those brutal realists miss. Something was cultivated in those first days of the uprising that could not be anticipated by political calculations. Between the fanatical despotism of the Islamic State and the ruthless cruelty of the Assad regime, it is hard—perhaps impossible—to see the remnants of what once was a hopeful, largely nonviolent mass movement calling for genuine change in Syria. Factionalism, foreign funding, and sectarianism have rendered the rest of the Syrian opposition ineffective and marginal at best, and viciously sectarian at worst. Nevertheless, there was another strand, a strand that truly strove for a democratic and socially just Syria, despite all the odds, that dominated the initial uprising. Lisa Wedeen, professor of political science at University of Chicago and author of the book *Ambiguities of Domination*, was the only panelist who mentioned this. She pointed out that, while not everything was as clean and clear-cut as some may like to think, many Syrians did come together at the beginning of the uprising and cultivated what she called “novel forms of togetherness.” Something really different was happening, and it was this that was electrifying and prevented the uprising from being put down despite the government’s best attempts at brutality and harshness. This was what caused people in Homs to go chant in solidarity with the people of Der’a who were getting shot at, which would then lead to a protest in Hama in solidarity with the live ammo being fired at the people of Homs.

So what went wrong? This strand, despite being the best hope for Syria, lost. They lost, Lisa Wedeen suggested, because they were



Photograph by Bo Yaser, via Wikimedia Commons.
Anti-regime demonstration in the city center of Homs, 18 April 2011.

naïve to think that such forms of collective action could actually defeat tyrants of the secular or Islamist variety with expert knowledge in torture and an endless supply of jail cells. Such devastating clarity was perhaps what was needed all along. Johnathan Littell summarizes this position succinctly in his book *Syrian Notebooks: Inside the Homs Uprising*: “The people still believed that song, dance, slogans, and prayer were stronger than fear and bullets. They were wrong, of course, and their illusions would soon drown in a river of blood.” Perhaps Shatz’s skeptical friend was right after all, and such an outcome was inevitable, but not due to a latent sectarianism that was waiting to be unleashed, but rather, due to the number of political actors on both sides who were ready to ruthlessly exploit the situation to their benefit.

Syrian society is not intrinsically good and pure nor is it latently evil and sectarian. It is a society that is, like all societies, rife with contradictions. Those same impulses that caused people to come out into the streets in solidarity with their fellow countrymen caused others to wish death upon their fellow countrymen. Thus is the paradox of a civil war that began with an uprising. If we ever wish to see that strand of Syrian society that we saw at the outset of the uprising, the strand that cultivated “novel forms of togetherness,” then the first thing that needs to happen is the war needs to end in order for politics to return to Syria. In war, this tendency doesn’t stand a chance. Only in a political landscape dominated by ideas can it flourish once again.

Moroccan Poetry in Text, Translation, and Performance

Translated by Deborah
Kapchan, Associate Professor
of Performance Studies,
Anthropology, Middle Eastern
and Islamic Studies, and Music

A recent visit from two Moroccan poets illuminated a vibrant poetry scene and identified a gap in scholarship pertaining to North African literature. NYU's Deborah Kapchan, who has worked with a number of poets and is editing a forthcoming anthology, *Poetic Justice: An Anthology of Moroccan Contemporary Poetry* translated the following poems by Aissa and Mesnaoui from their original Arabic.

كتاب وحشي إدريس عيسى

غابة من نخيل
تتجلى لأعيننا، أم كتاب
متنه من شرود التبات
و من غبش الفجر إذ يعرف الضوء دربا
سظوره ربح جنوبية
و حواشيه من ظلم و سراب؟
كيف نقرؤه مستعبدين ذاكرة النخل
إذ يتعالى ليخرج من زهوه
فلك من عراجين راحلة
لا تدور على غير عزلتها؟
سوف ننسى
لنذكر مثل الأدلاء تاهوا
خرايط واحاتنا
ثم ندخل طقس غياب.

WILD BOOK

By Idriss Aissa

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

Idriss Aissa has published many pieces in newspapers and literary magazines inside and outside Morocco, including: *al-Karmil* (Paris, then Nicosia), *Mawaqif* (Paris), *al-Mada* (Nicosia), *al-Adab* (Beirut), *Nizwa* (Muscat), *Kalimat* (Manama), *al-Shi'r* (Cairo), *Ibda'* (Cairo) and *al-Naqid* (London). His 1989 volume of poetry, *A Woman from the Remotest of Winds*, won the Yusuf al-Khal prize. He is currently in contract with Tuwa Press, London to publish a new collection titled *Nimble Beings who Formulate the Verifications of the Void*.

Driss Mesnaoui is one of the major voices of the zajal form (poetry in Moroccan colloquial Arabic) in Morocco and is one of the founders of the Moroccan Association for Popular Poetry. He has published numerous poetry collections, essays, and novels, all in Moroccan colloquial Arabic. His zajal collections include *Soil of Meanings; Whose Life is it?; and Among you, who still remembers my name?* among many others.

العطش إدريس مسناوي

قبل ما يجمع الليل غطاء وتزوّق الطيور ريشها بلون
الصباح
كنت واقف على رجلي
غسلت وجهي بالشوفه ف عيون امي
لبست النهار جو صافي
على خيط لحلام زرعت الخطوه... الشمس على اكتافي
كانت الطريق طويله اكثر من الغربه اللي كنت نتصور
قطعت فيها مسافة جوج اجيال ف وقت كتاب علي فيه
نصبر على ما ذاقت روحي من حر لعوافي
كانت امواج لبحر كتغسل رجلي م لعيا
كانت من حين الحين كترشني بذكريات نسيت فيها راسي
ملّي حسيت بلعش كحل باب ف صدري
رميت كفوفي بين جوج موجات ضاحكات
شربني الما ف جفمة وحده
كان عطش لبحر أقوى من عطشي!

THIRST

By Driss Mesnaoui

Before night gathered its blankets and birds decorated their feathers
with the color of morning/
I was standing on my feet
washing my face with the regard of my mother's eyes
and wearing the day, a pure weather.
On a string of dreams I planted a footstep ... sun on my shoulders.
The road was longer than my imagined exile.
I traversed two of its generations in the time allotted for me.
I waited for what my soul tasted of the fire's heat.
The sea waves having washed my feet of fatigue.
From time to time memories splattered me, making me forget myself.
When I felt thirsty a door opened in my chest.
I threw my palms between two laughing waves.
The water swallowed me in a single gulp.
The thirst of the sea was more powerful than my own!

#LastWords

by Shirin Barghi (MA NES/Journalism, '12)

This year has been marked by heightened racial tension in the U.S., in part due to outrage over shootings (often by police) of unarmed black men. In Fall 2014, Shirin Barghi, a graduate of Kevorkian's joint MA program with Journalism and the creator of Humans of Tehran, drew a parallel with her own experiences with police brutality in her native Iran, tweeting that "the struggle here to confront that violence resonated with me."

She created simple images paired with the victims' last words in order to "raise awareness about racist police violence in America and as an expression of solidarity." These images and captions, a selection of which follow, flooded social media and continue to circulate a year later.



Jonathan never had an opportunity to reply. He had bullets in him before he could ever hit the ground. So there was not sufficient warning. No one ever told him to stop. He didn't have time to react.



The medical examiner's office later ruled Garner's death a homicide, caused by the officer's chokehold as well chest and neck compressions and prone positioning "during physical restraint by police."



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



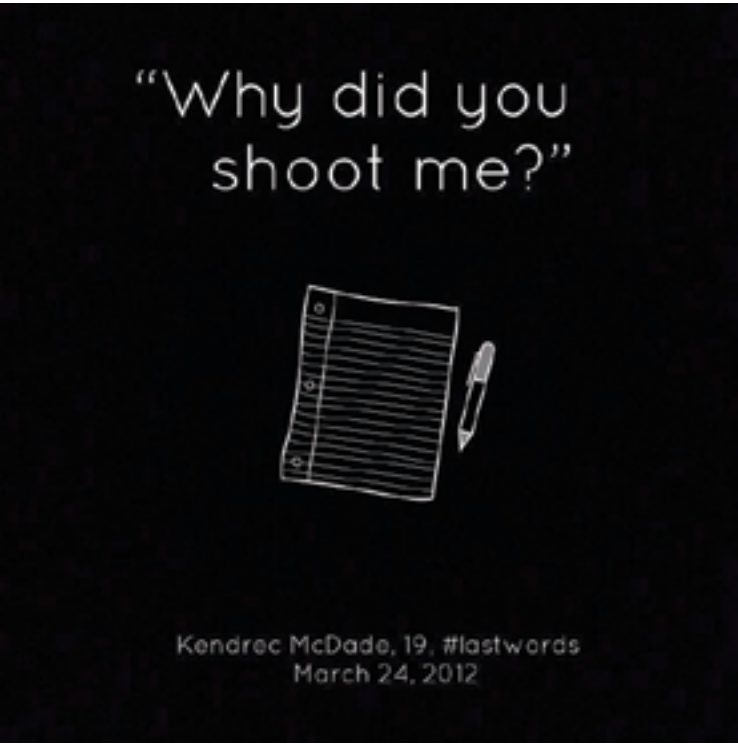
At one point, Guzman says, he spoke to Sean Bell and said, "S, I love you, son." He says Bell said, "I love you too." Then Guzman says Bell "stopped moving."



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



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



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



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



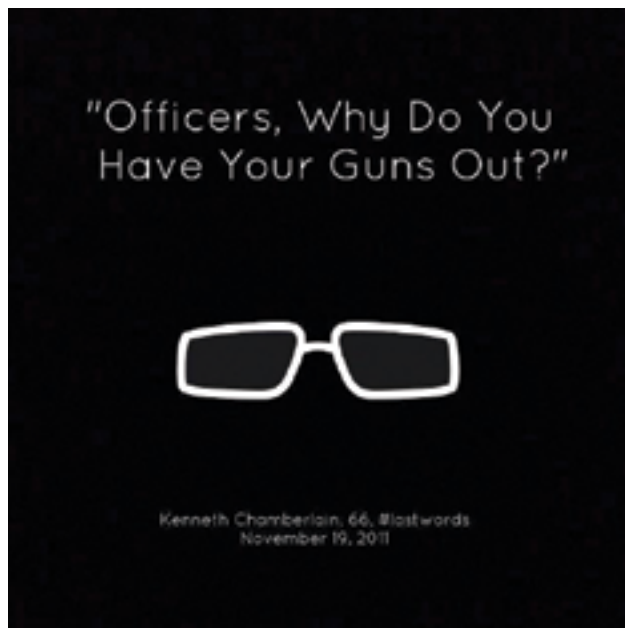
Originally stopped for walking in the street, Michael Brown was shot by a police officer in Ferguson, Missouri, two days before he was set to begin classes at Vatterott College.



New York City police officers shot and killed 16-year-old Kimani Gray in East Flatbush, Brooklyn.



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



She pushed out a back door and ran into the darkness beneath overarching oaks. He lay on the floor near his kitchen, two bullet holes in his chest, blood pooling thick, dying.

Jerusalem, Time Embodied

By Jabra Ibrahim Jabra

Translated by Thalia Beaty (MA NES/Journalism '15)

This translation of an excerpt of Jabra Ibrahim Jabra's 1967 essay, "Jerusalem, Time Embodied," appeared on Jan 26, 2015, on Jadaliyya. It is excerpted and reprinted here with permission.

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

In this city, history lives. Every stone pronounces it. This history is full of contradictions, full of disasters, but it is also the story of a city for which all of humanity has yearned. Because it has never been, not for one day, merely a city composed of stone and dirt, business and politics. It has always been a city of dreams and longing, and of the human spirit's gaze toward God. The city has stood as a tower on a mountain. On the one side, it looks towards the sea. On the other, toward the barren desert. And between its walls, the city joined together both of these spirits, these two civilizational forces—the sea and the wilderness—in a never-ending back and forth. This interplay is the secret of its tragedy and of its greatness.

Originally and until the end of the last century, Jerusalem was the walled city with its seven

gates. It began to spill over these walls more than seventy years ago when, bit by bit, it started to reach the suburbs surrounding it on all sides. This expansion accelerated after the destruction of a section of the wall at Jaffa Gate in 1898. Only then was the core, walled city organically tied to its extensions.

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

The new parts of Jerusalem sprung up then. They extended on one side along Jaffa Road, and from the other, along Mamilla Street and Ma'man Allah Cemetary, and after the YMCA was built in the 1930s, along St. Julian Street. In this way, ties were built between the distant boroughs of new Jerusalem and the old city itself.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, the Germans established a colony a few kilometers from the walls. A Greek colony followed. Then, monasteries and neighborhoods appeared here and there belonging to Catholics and Roman Orthodox and others. Jewish neighborhoods began to spring up, funded by the Englishman, Moses Montefiore. Until the end of the twenties, the neighborhoods of Fawqa, Talbiyya, and Katamon, were owned by individuals from Jerusalem and Bethlehem and had been little more than recreation spots for Jerusalemites. However, in the thirties, these lands were surveyed and developed in one massive tract that encircled the walled city on most of its sides. With that, the establishment of modern Jerusalem with its two parts—the old and the new—was com-

plete. Similarly, in just a few years, the desert regions scattered with houses and filled with olive groves, transformed into upscale neighborhoods with stone buildings and many gardens, all of modern design.

Now, the first thing that the observer must say about Jerusalem is that it is an Arab city—Arab to the core!—even though Zionists occupied its new half. The new half under occupation remains as Arab as its old half does, as Arab as the rest of occupied Palestine. When one of Jerusalem's children speaks about his city, it is impossible for him to restrict himself to the walled city and to the buildings and expansions that have appeared around it in the period after the Nakba.

For Jerusalem is a single, natural entity whose separation is as illogical as it is criminal. The division of Jerusalem is but a miniature version of the insanity that arbitrarily partitioned one piece of Palestine for the Jews. Years have passed since this injustice, but the Jerusalemite will never imagine his city without the occupied half, with its Arab neighborhoods, Arab houses, and Arab color.

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

I lived in a low area outside of the wall under the heights of Nabi Dawood that was known by the name "Jawrat al-Enaab." It was one of those first neighborhoods that sprung up outside of Jerusalem at the turn of the twentieth century. I have seen its transformation—it used to have an animal market every Friday, and turned into an industrial area with blacksmith, carpenter, and plumbers' shops. In the early thirties, I worked there for two consecutive summers during summer vacation, earning two and a half piasters a day.

Our home was a single room in a big building whose ground floor lay beneath the main street. It was made up of an uncovered, square courtyard you reached by a staircase. On each side was a room. In each of these,

lived an entire family. From the door of our room I could see the minaret of Nabi Dawood looming over us from its great height. There was only one small window next to the door leading out to the courtyard—and we would pile our books and school things in it. The landlord let us open a small square hole at the top of the back wall to help ventilate the place. The opening was exactly at the ground level of the main street. There was no asphalt in those days, so we put a metal screen and a small curtain over it. I was in the habit of waking before dawn to the voices of the peasant women coming from the surrounding villages carrying baskets of vegetables to the market. They would sit close to that window as they rested from their arduous walk up to the vegetable market at Jaffa Gate. They and their donkeys made a huge racket.

On school days I would climb out of the “pit” we lived in and go up to Jaffa Gate. The place was awash with cars and buses, crates of fruit and vegetables, and of course, sellers and buyers and porters. Then, I would go to the Rashidiyya School—which still stands in its place outside of Herod’s Gate—either by way of Hebron Gate and the old city or by way of Jaffa Road. Then I would climb to the Old Post Office, passing by the office of Boulous Saeed. Then I would descend Aqbat al-Manzil passing by the New Gate and the French Hospital, which is attached to Notre Dame Monastery. Then I would pass by Musrara to Damascus Gate. But today, all of this is part of the forbidden zone full of debris and barbed wire. Looking west from Damascus Gate, you see the big monastery across the wires. It was destroyed and abandoned after the violent battle that took place there between Arab and the Jewish forces in 1948. Jewish units wanted to use the monastery as a platform from which to attack Damascus Gate and invade the old city. The fighters and the Arab armies defied them. After a fierce confrontation, they were driven back.

We moved after that to a different neighborhood between Mamilla Street and Shamaa. Before the famous general strike in 1936, Jerusalem had been growing rapidly. After the strike, the city’s expansion resumed. In this period, the Arab College was built on Mount Scopus, south of the city. Its provost was the Professor Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi, God have mercy on him. After riding the bus, I would get off

and walk south, behind the British military base, arriving at the top of Mount Scopus where the college sat in the middle of a wide-open expanse, some of it composed of sports fields. Around the edges, hundreds of pine seedlings had been planted. Between 1935 and 1938, we watched those trees grow.

I spent my last year inside at the Arab College, and I will never forget the view of Jerusalem across the Valley of Rababa. In the day the city was covered with purple clouds. At night it gleamed and lit up.

In those days, about 120 students attended the Arab College, and they were selected from among the very best graduates of Palestine’s schools. This remained the case until the Nakba. Apart from their intelligence, most of the students were distinguished by an amazing capacity for intense study. One of the duties of the administration was to restrain students from the desire to continue all-night “secret” study in their beds after the lights had gone out! It is not surprising that a large number of the young men that graduated from the college went on to become famous in the Arab world. At night, we would gaze across to Jerusalem from there, our place of devotion. On that same mountain, thirteen hundred years before us, ‘Umar bin al-Khattab had stood to look upon the holy site for the first time. “A chain of chandeliers stretching to the stars in the heavens.” That is how we would describe the city, radiant in the darkness, across the valley that was called in times past the Valley of Jehenem (Hell). We would talk and talk about the things that young people talk about—especially literature and politics, not to mention our ferocious lessons that some of us would memorize by heart, by walking around and around the huge playing fields, “cramming” endlessly.

A few years later, we moved again, this time west, to the suburb of Katamon. It was on the summit of a hill that overlooked rocky slopes on one side – that reached a valley with the road that leads to the village of Maliha – and on the other side, slopes full of the beautiful, stone houses for which Jerusalem is known. Now, in the beginning of 1947, the city had reached its greatest extent and splendor, even though three years prior, the Jewish terrorists had a brutal plan to destroy the new Jerusalem. They

began first by blowing up government buildings, one after another, including, famously, the King David Hotel, seat of the Mandate government. After the UN Partition was announced in November 1947, they began to blow up Arab houses at night. In Katamon it was particularly bad, since it abutted the

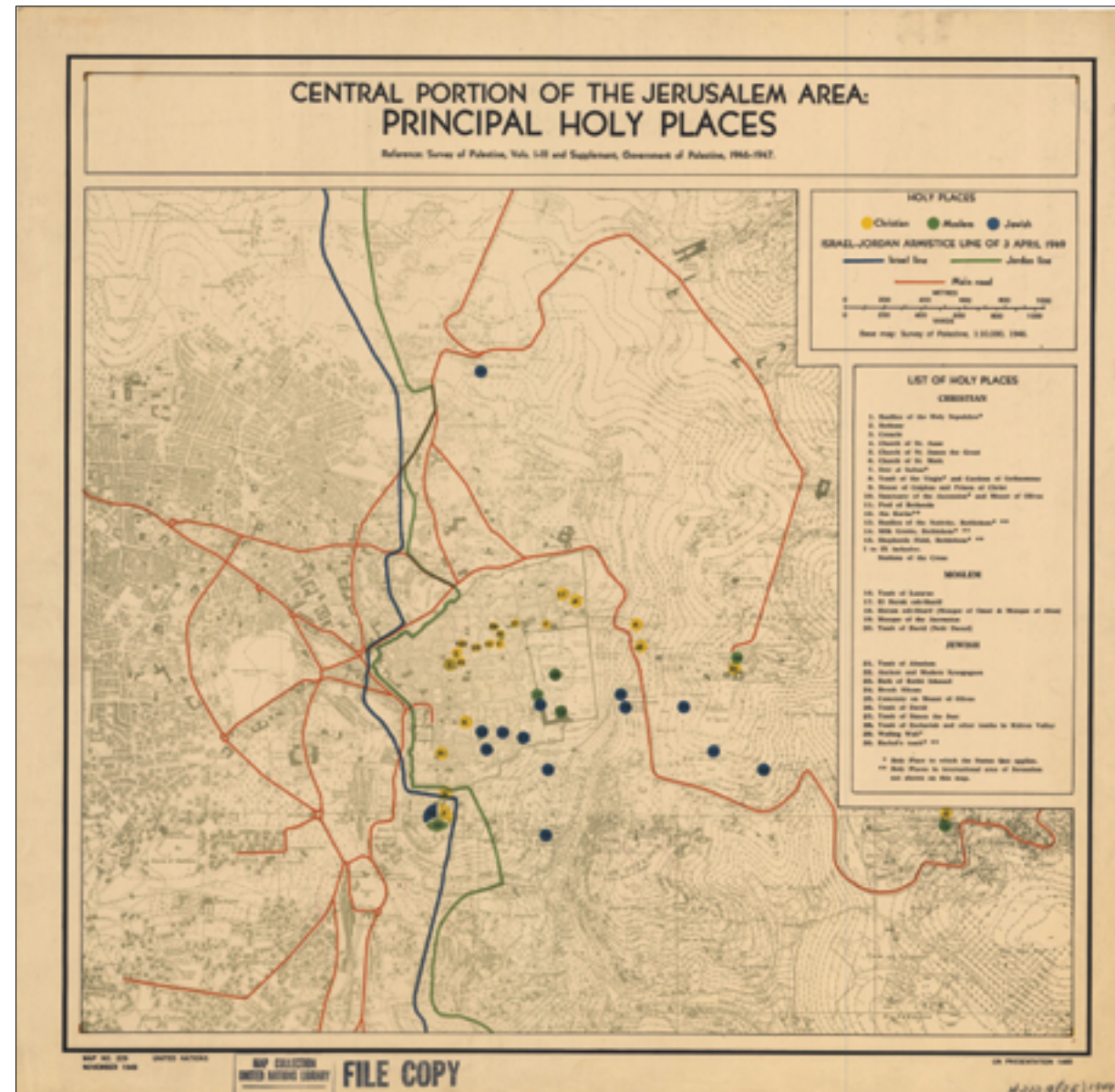
Jewish neighborhood of Rehavia. Residents of Katamon were terrorized, and began to flee. Arabs responded to the provocations, and a few months later, new Jerusalem had become a terrifying labyrinth of barbed wire, abandoned houses, and scattered ruins. Bullets snarled back and forth day and night.

As for me, I remember the new Jerusalem—the Jerusalem that was stolen from us—much as Adam remembered the Garden of Paradise. As I grew up, the city grew up with me. My childhood was a reflection of its hundreds of roads, houses, stores, alleyways, and trees. It echoed the gardens that bloom in the spring and wither in the winter, and the many scattered rocks that make up this city. Where does my self end and the subject of my discussion begin here? A street is where this boy cried, where he grew hungry, where he laughed, and where he longed for a girl whose name he never knew because she smiled at him without meaning to. A city street is where this boy ran through the rain. This is where he sat in the dark with his brothers, with his parents, with tens of his friends whose voices he can still hear in his mind ringing between the buildings. Could such a street remain merely an objective, technical extension?

When an enemy comes and crushes sidewalks with armored cars, when he blows up houses with everyone in them, when he tears family and friends up from their roots, when he casts a boy—now a young man—across valleys and deserts, from one road to another, from one home to another, is this not a brazen attempt to sever Self from Self?

From this experience comes every Palestinian’s feeling that he must return. Return is more than a reclamation of the land stolen by an enemy. It is winning back that part of the Self that had been taken, and returning it to itself so it can be whole again.

UN Map No. 229 (1949): Central Portion of the Jerusalem Area, Principal Holy Places. This map shows some of the places that Jabra mentions. Other landmarks, like the offices of Boulous Saeed, a publisher and the grandfather of Professor Edward Said, are not marked



Jon Stewart's Favorite King

'Daily Show' host turned filmmaker needed to shoot in Jordan, so he overlooked its appalling human rights record

This article is reprinted with permission from a December 15, 2014 post on Al-Jazeera America

by Avi Asher-Schapiro (MA NES/Journalism, '15)

When "Daily Show" host Jon Stewart first interviewed King Abdullah II of Jordan in September 2010, the monarch and comedian really hit it off. Stewart praised Abdullah for his moderation, saying he had spent a lifetime "fighting poverty." The king chuckled, thanked Stewart and returned the compliment. "I watch 'The Daily Show' every night," he said, half-kidding.

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

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

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

Using an actual Jordanian prison as a movie set, Stewart staged emotional scenes in which the Iranian secret police torment Bahari and accuse him of being a foreign spy. Stewart later said that he hoped that audiences would take away from the movie that "those who wish to express themselves should not ever be subjected to the terrible conditions that Maziar found himself in."

Unfortunately for many in Jordan, Bahari's plight would not be unfamiliar. For the past 15 years, political life in the kingdom has been dominated by Abdullah, Queen Rania and a close network of allied families known as east bankers, who hail from the east side of the Jordan river.

Abdullah inherited the throne from his father, Hussein, who inherited it from his father, Abdullah I, who inherited it from the British Empire. The small kingdom, which is about the size of Indiana, has always been a close ally of the United States.

In the early days of the "war on terrorism," the Central Intelligence Agency would send terror suspects to Jordan to be tortured by Jordan's General Intelligence Directorate, a secret police force that reports directly to the king. Inside the kingdom, questioning the political order is rarely tolerated and political opponents are often intimidated and detained.

A 2008 Human Rights Watch report on the Jordanian prison system found torture to be "routine and widespread" for both political prisoners and ordinary criminals. Every prison in the country had a special iron holding pen where inmates were often suspended by their wrists and beaten with knotted electrical cables and hoses.

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

Still, when the Arab Spring protests hit Amman, Jordanian police rounded up protesters, beat them and quickly quashed any hope of significant political change. A few months after the crackdown, Abdullah again appeared on "The Daily Show," where he expressed support for the idea of the Arab Spring, but claimed that each country should have its "own unique experiment" with democracy. Stewart didn't ask for specifics, and instead suggested that it was the king's "humility" that "earned him the authority" to govern Jordan as a hereditary monarch.

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

The irony of shooting a movie intended to criticize the abuses of Iran, all the while cozying up to Abdullah, seems to escape Stewart. In promoting "Rosewater," he has often recounted to interviewers that filming in the family-ruled kingdom was both cheap and easy. "The general tenor of Amman is very calm," he told National Public Radio's Terry Gross.

A few months after Stewart finished filming, Jordanian military police arrested three opposition activists — Hamam Qafisheh, Ayman al-Bahrawy and Daa al-Shalaby — for producing and distributing posters associated with the Muslim Brotherhood. According to the Geneva-based Human Rights watchdog Al-Karama, the organizers were tortured by Jordanian police and then transferred to Al-Ramimeen prison, just outside of Amman — the very prison Stewart used to film "Rosewater."

When asked, the producers of the Rosewater would not discuss abuses in the Jordanian prison system. And they would not speak more broadly about Stewart's approach to the king, and why in two interviews on "The Daily Show," the host failed to ask Abdullah a single question about Jordan's human rights record. When Rolling Stone asked Stewart about the decision to shoot in Jordan, which requires permission from the Royal Film Commission of Jordan run by Abdullah's brother, he responded vaguely. "Uh ... people on the set have certain connections with people who were maybe in the government there," he said.

That Stewart appears completely unconcerned with Jordan's political climate is not entirely unsurprising. In fact, Adam Coogle, of Human Rights Watch, says the comedian's attitude is typical of Westerners, whose perception of Jordan is limited to its role as a strong ally to the United States and a necessary interlocutor with Israel. "Jordan spends a fortune on PR, and it works," Coogle said. "Then they can say one thing to people like Stewart, and then turn around and do whatever they want at home."



"Honestly, it makes my job very difficult when I'm trying to call attention to Jordan's political climate and human rights abuses, and everyone continues to say that Jordan is run by these nice guys," Coogle said.

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

This task seems perfectly suited for an iconoclastic political comedian like Stewart, who has made a career out of exposing the hypocrisy of those in power. Of course, he can't reverse Jordan's human record or push for regime change. But he could at least point out the absurdity that an unelected monarch with a vicious human rights record claims the mantle of the Arab Spring. And that the premier U.S. ally in the region imprisons students for their poetry.

In the end, by lobbing softballs at the king of Jordan and accepting his political authority at face value, Stewart ducked both a political and comedic opportunity. Imagine if Stewart interviewed Abdullah wearing a Burger King crown. Or if he sat the king in an ornamented throne.

Now that would have been gutsy political humor worthy of "The Daily Show."

A Disorderly Sense of Order

A review of the documentary *Cairo Drive*

Mariam Elba, MA, NES, '16

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

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

The documentary was filmed between 2009-2012, but Cairo's unbearable traffic has always been dominant in Egyptian public discourse. Once can trace Cairo traffic's presence in pop culture as far back as 1977 with *sha'abi* singer, Ahmed Adaweya's popular song, "zahma



ya donya zahma," roughly translated as "it's crowded everywhere" as indicative of how Cairo's characteristic over-crowdedness has historically been present and continues to be part and parcel with Cairene public consciousness. The film shows how the overcrowded environment in the city is very much entrenched in the way in which Cairo is spoken about in popular discourse. There is a distinct culture surrounding traffic and being in one's car. Whether it's vendors offering shisha to drivers during a traffic jam, or others offering water and dates to drivers still on the road at sunset during Ramadan. Because so much time is spent on the road, an informal system of rules and a street traffic subculture emerges made by the drivers themselves.

But Cairo's streets are also a larger arena for something much greater: neoliberal urban expansion. Foreign investors and state officials who have been pushing for urban development under neoliberal terms have used the over-crowdedness and traffic as the primary reason to establish a "new capital city" to the east of Cairo. The current plan for the new capital city was revealed in the recent economic development conference in Sharm el Sheikh last March. An Emirati firm, the same one behind the construction of the Burj Khalifa in Dubai, is set to house 5 million Cairenes and establish a Gulf-like metropolis next to Cairo proper, if indeed construction is to take place. Many residents and scholars have decried the move as one that inflicts further neglect on Cairo, and pushing forth a neoliberal version of modernization that excludes over 13 million Cairenes who live in informal housing.

The state narrative of the cause of Cairo's traffic is that it's framed as stemming from misbehavior on the part of the average driver. This echoes a similar refrain in many academic works on urban space in Cairo that reveal a state tendency to blame the causes of many



problems on the misbehavior and lack of education of citizens, particularly, the subaltern citizen. In the film we see a children's play being staged in an elementary school that, almost comically, runs through the traffic rules. We see this again in the film as preparations for President Obama's visit in 2009 are underway by cleaning the streets, repainting signals, fixing streetlights that drivers claimed have not worked for months, and even going so far as to declaring a public holiday so that regular commuters would not be out driving in the streets. The streets become a medium through which the state frames and curates the image of the city in such circumstances.

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

Out of the lack of a formal system of regulations, the unorganized mess of roads and bridges that proves to be impractical for the city's needs, comes an informal system of orders produced by the cab drivers, microbus drivers, and car drivers that routinely make their way through the city's streets. This sense of chaotic disorder stems from the interactions that happen regularly between drivers, whether it's the language of horn honks, headlight flashes, or hand waves to signal each other.

Alkatsha aptly summarized the culture around traffic and driving in the streets of Cairo with a Maria Golia quote that he displayed at the very beginning of his film: "Cairo is an essay in entropy, a measure of disorder or randomness. But order is nonetheless maintained, if barely."

Research off the Record

By Greta Scharnweber,
Associate Director, Hagop Kevorkian Center

What is interdisciplinary research? What are the limits of area studies and how do we challenge and/or overcome those limits? How and why do scholars do what they do? What questions do they ask? What are the unexpected joys and challenges that arise in the everyday life and practice of an academic? What are the untold stories of academia--the behind-the-scenes deliberations made by scholars that never make it into the final publications?

In an effort to both demystify research methodologies and learn more about faculty projects across NYU, the Kevorkian Center has launched its new series Research Off the Record, in Spring 2015 featuring an historian, a business and policy expert, and an ethnomusicologist.

Notes from the Archives: Zachary Lockman's latest project explores how the field of Middle East studies in the United States was built after WWII. Utilizing the archives of the big foundations, academic organizations like the SSRC and ACLS, and various universities, he seeks out funding rationales, follows efforts to shape a coherent vision of area studies, and traces the development of what he terms the field's infrastructure (as well as the anxieties that accompanied these developments).

Notes from the Scaffold: Natasha Iskander's research seeks to understand how untrained migrant workers in Qatar's construction industry develop skills on-the-job and how they learn to advocate for better working conditions. She examines the institutional structures and regulations that govern migration, employment, and labor standards in Qatar and the ways in which these shape worker access to skills training.

Notes from the Firing Range: Professor Daughtry recently completed a monograph about sound, music, and trauma within the context of the Iraq war. While he was researching the book, he began collaborating with a group of technicians on a virtual-reality platform that is used to help treat war-related post-traumatic-stress disorder. He described the logistical and intellectual challenges of working on these two intersecting projects, as well as the hoops he had to jump through in order to make a short research trip to U.S. military bases in Iraq.

These inaugural conversations have launched for us a new way of reflecting upon and teaching about diverse research methods across disciplines, geographies, sectors, and time periods.

Soundtrack of the Revolution

Music as Politics in Iran

An interview with Nahid Siamdoust, Research Scholar, Hagop Kevorkian Center
Questions by Nafi Dhanani, MA NES ‘16

Given the controls placed upon musical production in Iran, what is one strategy employed by the artists you have researched that you feel has been effective in communicating their politically and socially critical messages?

I think the preeminent vocalist of Persian classical music, Ostād Mohammad Reza Shajarian, has been the most successful musician in creating a discursive field wherein protest or discontent of a political nature has been expressed for nearly the entirety of the Islamic Republic. He has done this by drawing on the nuances of Persian poetry, using typical tropes of Persian literature – ‘*gol o bolbol*’ (the rose and nightingale) – to signify loss and mourning, not for the lover but for a political struggle, but also by plugging into a “protest repertoire” that hails from the era of Iran’s constitutional revolution (1906-11) when songs were for the first time used in an activist political context. Other musicians have facilitated a sphere of critical discourse by offering a sort of alternative religiosity to that of the state’s officially propagated religion. I study the work of one of post-revolutionary Iran’s most popular pop stars, Alireza Assar, who relies on Sufi signifiers to defy official norms, for example.

In your opinion, what has been the biggest shift post-revolution in music’s social and political role in Iran?

Music has played an important role throughout the political upheavals in Iran over the past century, but its significance has depended on available media forms. So, not surpris-

ingly, the biggest shift in post-revolutionary Iran happened with new media. Thanks to the Internet, all of a sudden, musicians no longer needed permits from the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance in order to publish their work and reach thousands of people and even achieve fame. Aside from distribution, they also wielded freedom over the content so musicians started making work that was explicitly political, or broke social taboos on sex and religion.

Has the ease of access to musical production technology had a discernible role to play in music’s social and political role?

Audio production technology has been instrumental to music’s capacity to have reach and impact. At the time of the constitutional revolution, for example, when musical productions were extremely costly, the “inventor” – if you will – of critical music, Aref Qazvini, could not on his own afford the production of a record of his will. Musical groups often traveled to other countries with more advanced technology to record, and many musicians refused to play political pieces in fear of persecution. Hence, the most important medium for spreading music was the concert itself, and subsequent reports of the concert via word of mouth. With the advent of the more affordable and easily produced small medium of the cassette tape in the years leading to the 1979 revolution, the Chavosh group could get together in a basement, produce a record, and distribute it in squares the next day. Fast forward less than three decades and musicians can very cheaply produce tracks and distribute them



Alireza Assar, one of the musicians Siamdoust researches, is one of post-revolutionary Iran’s most successful pop stars. He relies on Sufi signifiers to defy official norms.

with great impact over the Internet, though the interpersonal medium of the concert is still of great relevance because it is the only setting in which large numbers of strangers can come face to face and unite in their sentiments.

What does it look like to be a musician in the Iranian diaspora, and what does this music communicate in contrast with or in relation to the artists in Iran?

The shape and importance of diaspora music has evolved somewhat over the last three decades. At the time of the revolution, many of Iran’s famous musicians left the country for fear of persecution and eventually established a vibrant scene in Los Angeles. Subsequently, music coming from LA was called “musiqi-ye los anjelesi.” For the most part, this music remained consistent in form and spirit, meaning it was dance or melancholic pop music with themes of love or nostalgia. What is astonishing is that for a decade and a half, these musicians continued to supply Iranian music to Iranians inside (and outside) the country. There weren’t really any alternatives to it in terms of Iranian pop or dance music. Interestingly, this music remained fairly apolitical throughout. There were occasional songs that commented on the situation back in the homeland, and some singers – like Dariush – were more likely to sing songs with critical content, but for the most part it was as if time stood still. This music, and the kitschy videos that accompanied it – viewed by many if not

most Iranians on satellite television – presented a sort of “what life would be if the revolution had never happened.” It supplied the music for parties and weddings in Iran. But in the late 1990s the situation started to change. Once the Islamic Republic stopped its ban on pop music, homemade pop music offered an alternative to “musiqi-ye los anjelesi.” Musicians inside and outside of Iran started collaborating and both scenes benefitted. And then over the last decade famous musicians have left Iran for Los Angeles and some of them, like Googoosh, have taken advantage of the freedom they have to express political criticism or broach taboo subjects.

How would you characterize the shift in women’s participation in music before and after the revolution? Are there any other interesting developments that you have observed along gender lines?

Some of the most popular Iranian musicians of the past century have been women, starting with Qamar ol-Muluk Vaziri, who in a concert in 1924 broke the norm by singing unveiled in front of a mixed audience, to the sensual cabaret dancer/singer Mahvash or the vocalist diva Delkash in mid-century, and pre-revolutionary pop stars, with the most famous among them, Googoosh. After the revolution, the solo female voice was banned. This meant the female voice was practically eliminated from the official realm. Half the population was told their voice was not halal for male audiences. But girls and women have been studying music in great numbers over the last decades, and this is only now really coming to the fore. We see a great presence of women instrumentalists, and very recently, there have even been some female solo semi-mixed-gender public consumption. Women musicians continued making music in Los Angeles and elsewhere, but female singers in Iran were relegated to dubbing for children’s programs, and eventually, to singing for all-fe-



The famous pre-revolutionary pop singer Googoosh appeared on the cover of “Javanan” magazine in 1975, with the caption “Beauty queen of the year, chosen by the people.”

sations. But at the end of the day, we have to face the truth that the policies of the Islamic Republic have drastically reduced the presence and impact of women on music.

“We have to face the truth that the policies of the Islamic Republic have drastically reduced the presence and impact of women on music.”

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

You have to remember that not all underground music in Iran is necessarily socially or politically charged. Unlike its namesake in other contexts, underground music in Iran simply refers to music that has not attempted or succeeded in receiving the necessary permits in order to be exhibited and traded officially. Barobax’s “Susan Khanum,” an underground song that expressed mainstream Iranian views about marriage, for example, was played at all sorts of family functions for years. So the audience of underground music can cut across age and cultural disposition. Of course there is also underground music that is very critical or violates conventional norms or beliefs, say for example Shahin Najafi’s “Naqi,” which offends in the worst terms the tenth Shia Imam Ali an-Naqi. But I would say that for the most part, Frank Zappa’s definition that “mainstream comes to you but you have to go to the underground” doesn’t apply to Iran. And that is because of the constrictions on the musical sphere. Popular songs from the underground can be so much a part of daily life that they are as present as the mainstream.

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

The Program in Ottoman Studies

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

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

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

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

Amy Singer's talk centered around Edirne, the early Ottoman city connecting Istanbul to the Balkans. However, it raised wider issues about the writing of urban history in the pre-document era, a challenge that helps explain the dearth of work on Edirne. Her detailed parsing of the human and physical geography of the city offers an example to historians seeking to map the cities of the early empire and the local, translocal, and regional networks in which they are intimately imbedded. In a talk entitled "Archaeology, Ethnography, and Everyday Life at the Dig," Zeynep Çelik examined the lived experience of the diverse array of individuals who worked on archaeological excavations in the late nineteenth century Ottoman Empire. Rather than framing archaeology as the extraction of information from inert objects, she sees knowledge production as a dynamic process that was shaped by the interactions of European archaeologists and local workers. Çelik draws out the significance of the quasi-ethnographic depictions of local life that saturate archeological memoirs, revealing the privileged gaze that underpinned the work of European archaeologists.

Tuna Artun challenged the narrative of Ottoman alchemy as an inevitable victim of the scientific revolution. Instead, he sees alchemy as one field among many that embraced a new method of inquiry that relied on experimentation and observation. His work uncovers a global network of alchemists, from Istanbul to Hyderabad, who maintained and expanded on the alchemical tradition well into the twentieth century. By salvaging a field now dismissed as "unscientific," Artun presents a non-teleological history of science, one that acknowledges the significance of both dead ends and triumphs.

Using a close reading of a nineteenth century neo-Aramaic travelogue, Adam Becker traced the emergence of Assyrian identity in contestation and conversation with American evangelical missionaries and their "native assistants." As they traveled from the mountains of Hakkari to Mosul in the south, these new arrivals brought conceptualizations of modernity and nation that were rejected, modified, and redeployed in a struggle between the reform church and its indigenous counterparts that would help shape the contours of ethnic nationalism into the twentieth century.

Voices of Contemporary Islam

The Faculty Resource Network at NYU

Vernon Schubel, Professor of Religious Studies, Kenyon College &
Nurten Kilic Schubel, Associate Professor of History, Kenyon College

The religion of Islam has been at the center of political discourse in recent years. Issues of terrorism, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the debate over the proposed Park 51 Islamic Center, "the Arab Spring" and the rise of ISIS/ISIL in Iraq and Syria have focused attention on Muslims and their religion. The ways in which Islam has been discussed within the media and certain corners of the academy since the tragic and morally inexcusable events of September 11, 2001, have often been problematic. Over the last decade there has been a veritable explosion of books and articles on Islam, many of which decry what they see as a lack of intellectual debate and moral discourse in the Islamic world. Pundits on cable news networks continually assert that "it is a shame that there are no anti-terrorist, pro-democratic voices within Islam." Muslims are regularly accused of "whitewashing" the negative aspects of their faith by journalists and commentators who have little or no scholarly knowledge of Islamic culture, history or languages and often no personal experience of the Muslim world. These same opinions are also found in academic circles.

These kinds of opinions are at best rooted in ignorance and, at their worst, in prejudice and hostility. While it is true that there are "fundamentalist" voices within Islam which resist complex and multi-vocal interpretations of the basic sources of the tradition, they do not now, nor have they ever, represented the mainstream of Muslim thought. Islam has always maintained a variety of philosophical, theological and mystical expressions. It is Islam's diversity and ability to adapt to changing historical and cultural circumstances that is one of its primary characteristics and greatest strengths. This remains true today as Muslim intellectuals trained both in the West and in the Islamic world continue to address the complexities of the contemporary world. Among the numerous problems and issues that have drawn the attention of today's Muslim intellectuals has been the rise to prominence of "fundamentalists" and "Islamists" willing to use violence to achieve their goals. "Political Islamism" it must be noted is only one strain of thought in the Muslim world and it is rarely violent. More importantly, it is actively challenged by numerous alternative perspectives. Not only are "traditional" Muslims critiquing and challenging movements like the Taliban, Al-Qaeda, and ISIS/ISIL as theologically incorrect readings of Qur'an and *hadith*, but there are also vibrant "progressive" movements which draw upon feminist theory and liberation theology to develop radical new expressions of Muslim piety and political action.

This summer at the Hagop Kevorkian Center, seven faculty members from



Photo Courtesy of Nafi Dhanani.

Participants in the "Contemporary Voices of Islam" intensive seminar contemplated Islam's diversity and ability to adapt to changing historical and cultural circumstances through discussion of a wide range of writings by contemporary Muslims ranging from "fundamentalists" and political Islamists to passionate advocates for gender equality and human rights. Clockwise from back left: Lynn Rozzi (Nassau Community College), Joyce Zonana (Borough of Manhattan Community College), Vernon Schubel (Kenyon College), Nurten Kilic-Schubel (Kenyon College), Ashton Loye (Tougaloo College), Silvia Marsans-Sakly (Fairfield University), Brian Royster (Saint Peter's University), P.V. Viswanath (Pace University), Hector Martinez (University of Puerto Rico), and Greta Scharnweber (NYU's Hagop Kevorkian Center).

among the membership of NYU's Faculty Resource Network participated in an intensive, week-long seminar that explored some of these crucial issues and debates in the contemporary Muslim world. The course conveners, Professors Vernon Schubel and Nurten Kilic-Schubel, both of Kenyon College, presented examples of diverse theological, political, and social thought. Discussions involved the compatibility of Islam with democracy, the connections between Islam and terrorism, the role of Wahabism in the construction of contemporary Islamic movements, feminist movements within Islam, Islam and pluralism, and Sufism in the contemporary context. The course introduced teachable primary sources, including writings by Khaled Abou Fadl, Amina Wadud, Osama bin Laden, and Michael Muhammad Knight. Participants also explored varied "Muslim Voices" through selected films and literary works created by artists from a number of different contexts, and shared strategies as to how to introduce complex and controversial issues in the classroom.

Islam and the Americas

A Summer Institute for K-12 Teachers

By Diana Shin, Outreach Administrator, Hagop Kevorkian Center

In August 2015, in partnership with the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies at NYU, the Hagop Kevorkian Center hosted its Summer Institute on «Islam and the Americas.» 32 teachers based in New York City and the broader tri-state area benefited from the Summer Institute. The intensive and interactive three-day course was taught by Aisha Khan of NYU's Anthropology department and an affiliate of both the Kevorkian Center and CLACS, and featured several guest speakers. The group also took field trips to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and to a local mosque and community center in Bay Ridge, a predominantly Arab-American neighborhood. Throughout the course, participants learned to probe key presumptions about Muslims as well as challenge conventional views of Islam. The contours of the course topics traversed time and space: the religious festival of *Hosay* as practiced in the Caribbean; Islamic art in the lands of Turkey, Iran, Central Asia, and Later Southeast Asia; the Haitian Revolution; the observance of Muslim holidays in New York City and throughout the globe; cosmopolitan halal consumption; and the experiences of transnational Muslim youth growing up in the United States, Jordan, and Palestine. For the first time, the Kevorkian Center was pleased to offer the option of allowing participants to take the course for "P-credit" through the New York City's Department of Education's After School Professional Development Program (ASPDP). We will let the teacher feedback speak for itself:

"Islam and the Americas was quite possibly the most informative and beneficial workshop that I've attended in my thirteen years of teaching. I went in to this with a cursory understanding of Islam and its history and then learned so very much...I didn't just learn about Islam in the Americas. I also developed a whole new understanding of the practices of Islam, how regular people actually practice these beliefs and about the challenges Muslims face today in the United States. And of course, I next to knew nothing about specific customs and beliefs in Trinidad and Jamaica. As a Global Studies teacher, this will greatly impact my curriculum and lesson plans for so many different units, such as the Golden Age of African Empires, the Golden Age of Islam, the Development of the Ottoman Empire, and Indian Independence. It'll also help my Imperialism module. I take my students to the Met several times throughout the year and our personal tour of the Near Eastern wing gave me many ideas on what direction to take my class next year. Additionally, a significant percent of my students are Muslim and this seminar will allow me to better include and support them. I can even explain why we have the days of Eid off. It's not just the students though, quite a few of my fellow teachers are shockingly ignorant on this subject matter and I now feel confident teaching them about it."

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



Photo Courtesy of Diana Shin.
A Teacher regards a piece in the New Galleries for the Art of the Arab Lands, Turkey, Iran, Central Asia, and Later South Asia at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art.

"As an NYC public school teacher, it's invaluable to have the opportunities to take advantage of the myriad academic institutions the city has to offer. Making the world relevant and accessible for students is my everyday job, and the Kevorkian Center has helped bridge higher education and secondary education - something that is easily forgotten by the wayside. Most importantly, the urgency of this particular course in today's political climate excites and empowers me as an educator to make more immediate change in my classroom and our many communities."

—Charles FitzGibbon, Metropolitan Expeditionary Learning School, (Queens, NY), Social Studies Teachers, Grades 11-12

Photo Courtesy of Diana Shin.
During a field trip to an Arab neighborhood in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, teachers enjoyed lunch at the acclaimed Yemen Café.



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

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

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

"Islam and the Americas was truly an experience, an immersion experience, lacking only the language component. It was a comprehensive introduction to the history of the Muslim people and cultures here, emanating from the Middle East, Africa and Asia; it put many faces to Islam, not sensational, helping to correct misconceptions spread by the media."

—Miriam Pope, PS 321K (Brooklyn, NY), Library/Social Studies Teacher, Grades k-5

"Each presentation deepened my understanding of Islam and the issues facing Muslims living in United States today on a personal level, and the presentation on the role that Islam played in the Haitian revolution will allow me to enrich our study of the island and examine the presence of a growing Muslim community there today in a new light."

—Brittan Lambrix, Scarsdale High School, French Teacher, Grades 11-12

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

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

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

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

"When I thought about Islam, it was defined to me as the old world; however taking Islam in the Americas has opened a new school of thought for me-it was here too. This will be a great segue into my teaching unit on the explorers."

—Maria Sanchez, Department of Education (Queens, NY), Social Studies Teacher, Grades k-5



Beyond the Binary Beirut and the Dahiye

By Adnan Moussa, MA NES '15

Urban Data--2007/Flickr
Protestors blocked off the Prime Minister's Headquarters until the government met their demands.

Recent research and publications have tried to deconstruct the binary that is often thought to separate the Lebanese capital, Beirut, from its southern suburb, the Dahiye. Although these works provide alternative ways to reconceptualize these particular urban spaces, many politicians and members of the press continue to espouse certain rhetoric that reifies the imagined boundary separating the capital from its suburb.

This binary came to strong light during the 2006-2008 sit-ins, when thousands of Lebanese descended to Beirut's Central District demanding economic justice. Rather than understanding this moment as a call for political redress, the press reshaped the sit-ins in ways that drew a clear line between "us," residents of Beirut, and "them," the Hezbollah-supporting Shi'a in the Dahiye.

In order to better understand how this binary is evoked and imagined in popular discourses, I traveled to Beirut this past winter to interview with people living in the Dahiye. Almost all of my interlocutors described a certain reluctance to leave their neighborhoods and enter Beirut. Many felt that Beirutis would give them scrutinizing glances that would make them feel "less entitled" to public spaces in the capital; others felt the pressure to be on their "best behavior" to disprove the binary that reserves adjectives like "crass" and "uncouth" for them specifically. These interviews helped me understand how many residents of the Dahiye internalize the binary, and their consequential responses to it.



Farah Kobaissy--2007/Flickr
Thousands of protestors from various backgrounds took to the streets of Beirut demanding economic justice.

I returned to the Kevorkian Center and began writing my thesis using these interviews, as well as newspaper articles and statements made by prominent politicians. In doing this, I found it challenging to account for popular understandings of the binary without reproducing the categories "Beirut" and "the Dahiye" as undisputed, diametrical opposites. At the same time, however, it was important for me to challenge recent scholarships that reduce the binary, and denounce it as a political fabrication. On the contrary, the binary is not exclusive to the political, but it also plays a significant role in popular discourses where it intimately impacts how people lead their lives.

Human Rights Watch Internship Provides Insights into Palliative Care in Morocco

By Jeffrey Eamon, MA NES '15

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

This past fall, I had the opportunity to work as an intern for Human Rights Watch (HRW) in the Health and Human Rights department where I contributed to their upcoming report on Morocco's palliative care system. Morocco represents one of the countries that has taken positive steps towards provid-

ing access to pain relief in public medical facilities, however palliative care in the country is still in its nascent stages and, in some respects, remains limited. Working under the guidance of associate director Diederik Lohman and HRW fellow Matt Simon, I conducted research on Morocco's existing health care system, its legal statutes pertaining to access to essential medicines, and also conducted phone surveys with health care facilities in Morocco.

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

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

By Keith Colella, MA NES '16

I recently interned for the United Arab Emirates' Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York. My duties were split between two functions: reporting on proceedings in the Security Council, and providing preparatory briefs for H.E. Ambassador Lana Nusseibeh. I learned a great deal during this time, both about the UAE, the Gulf, and the UN. I became familiar with the UAE's policy on a number of regional and international issues; I learned how GCC states coordinate with one another and with the wider Arab group on the international stage; and I saw first-hand how the Security Council functions and responds to international crises.

I think what was most valuable about

this internship was the detailed, personal knowledge I was able to obtain about a number of landmark regional events. In addition to attending meetings on Syria, Sudan, Libya and the nuclear negotiations with Iran, I was able to watch the events leading up to the Saudi-led "Operation Storm of Resolve" in Yemen unfold in real-time. I witnessed how diplomats from the UAE—who remain closely involved in the campaign—reacted to changing conditions on the ground and tried to gather international support for their intervention. What was most interesting was how the international community's stance began to shift as the campaign wore on and humanitarian truces—carefully brokered through continued negotiations—were violated.



Photo Courtesy of the UAE Mission.
UAE Ambassador Lana Nusseibeh, (for whom Keith helped prepare briefs at the Mission), speaking on 20 April at an event leading up to the World Humanitarian Summit's "ReShape Aid" campaign.

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

In Fond Memory of Falak Sufi

Scholarships and Essay Prize

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. However, no list 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. With the generous support of her family, Kevorkian has awarded an annual scholarship in honor of her memory.

The Falak Sufi Scholars have had a very busy year. Maham Javaid, '15 interned at CNN's Fareed Zakariya GPS show while continuing to study Persian and Political Economy at the Kevorkian Center. Maham went back to Bannu over the winter break to complete filming for her documentary (about the Pakistani Taliban's takeover of North Waziristan) which she submitted as part of her thesis prior to graduating in May. The other part of her thesis, a narrative about her trip and the stories she found there, were published as an article, "Pakistan's Neocolonial War," in *The Nation* magazine in June. Maham also interned at Women's eNews, a news website that focuses solely on women's issues, and covered stories from New York, London and New Delhi. She took a writing workshop for non-academic at the Kevorkian Center with writer-in-residence Adam Shatz. She has been working since graduation as a freelance reporter based in NYC.

Aqsa Khalid '16 enjoyed her first year at the Center, noting the thriving intellectual environment at the center—from the events and classes to her new friendships with fellow students. Managing (and surviving) the everyday rigors of life in New York City will, she says, contribute to her mental and physical strength for years to come! She has been pushing herself out of her comfort zone academically and engaging in coursework completely different from her previous training in economics. This summer she heads to the UK and Paki-

stan to see family and begin conducting archival research for her thesis project which tentatively will explore the narratives of national identity and affiliation based on communal violence experience by the groups during the '47 partition. Next year she hopes to intern at the UN, continue her studies of Arabic (perhaps partially abroad), and continue exploring the inexhaustible collection of cuisine options in NYC.

This Fall, Sabahat Zakariya will be joining us as our newest Falak Sufi scholar in the class of 2017. She is a BA graduate (English Literature and Mass Communication/Journalism) of the Lahore College for Women, and holds previous Master's Degrees in English Literature from the Kinnaird College for Women and the University of Punjab. She has been a writing/literature teacher of middle and high school students in Lahore, and has found her own voice as a writer and editor for various print and online publications in Pakistan, including *The Nation*, the *Daily Times*, and *The Friday Times*. At the Kevorkian Center, through our joint program in Near Eastern Studies and Journalism, Sabahat plans to develop her academic skills to engage with popular culture seriously, and has a particular interest in critiquing the very powerful social messages of Pakistani television programs. She is also excited to delve into Middle East studies and reinvigorate a personal and past academic connection to Iranian/Persian studies.

Kevorkian also awarded the seventh annual Falak Sufi Memorial Essay Prize that recognizes originality and promise in M.A. scholarship in April 2015 to Jeffrey Eamon '15. An honorable mention went to Anna Reumert '15.

A number of outstanding essays were submitted for competition on a wide diversity of topics, geographies, historical time periods, and from a variety of methodological approaches. The subject matter ranged among the following topics: Tunisian agricultural cooperatives; Pakistani returning migrants from the Gulf; NYC and the 9/11 memorial; urban movements of Syrian refugees in Lebanon; Lebanon's urban renewal; a Marxist critique of 'green capitalism' in the UAE; legacies of British colonialism in Bahrain; visual analyses of solidarity and awareness campaigns; sites of memory



The Falak Sufi Scholars and Essay Prize Winners celebrate with members of Falak Sufi's family at the Kevorkian Center on April 2, 2015. From Left to Right: Raza Sufi; Azhar Sufi; Aqsa Khaled, '16; Maham Javaid, '15; Anna Reumert, '15; Jeffrey Eamon, '15; and Rashid Sufi.

among Palestinian and Israeli communities; post-freedom struggles by black slaves in 19th-century Egypt. The papers relied on archival work, on ethnographic methods, on visual cultural analyses and political economy, and everything in between.

The paper that received honorable mention was Anna Reumert's "Intimate Strangers: Practices of Syrian Refugees in Beirut." This essay is a beautifully written piece that weaves together interview testimony, empirical evidence and complex theoretical analysis and presses us to rethink our conceptions of refugee life. Reumert explores the territory (spatial, discursive, and bureaucratic) inhabited by Syrian "refugees" in Beirut. Her exploration of their practices reveals, at a minimum, the yawning gap between those displaced and those who officially navigate the insuf-

ficient humanitarian services; the ways in which the concepts of "refugee," "displaced person" or "asylum seeker" fall terribly short in describing Syrians displaced to Beirut; and the complex landscape of identity that these individuals negotiate through their struggles to exist and survive in a "temporary" space.

The winner of the Falak Sufi memorial essay prize was Jeffrey Eamon, whose paper, "Colonial Policing in the Bahrain Islands: Labor, Migration, and the Outsourcing of Bahrain's Security Apparatus" is an ambitious analysis of labor unrest and policing in Bahrain. He traces the early 20th-century relevance of Britain's commercial interests in the region and the tandem recruitment of foreign workers for both security services and skilled labor in this period, and then profiles the practices of the Bahrain Petroleum Company (Bapco) af-

ter the discovery of oil in 1932. Here he links Bapco's policy of relegating unskilled Bahrainis to low-paying manual labor positions to the longer-term cultivation of animosities and unrest among the local population. In the decades that follow, Eamon argues, this worker unrest (in comparison with sectarian difference) serves as a crucial catalyst for Bahrain's gradual institutionalization of state repression, thereby laying the groundwork for the Bahraini regime's undeniably effective suppression of dissent today.

Applications for next year's scholarship will arrive in Fall 2015, and the essay prize competition will take place in Spring 2016. The Hagop Kevorkian Center remains indebted to the family of Falak Sufi for supporting this recognition of outstanding M.A. candidates and their writings.

MA Student News: *Class of 2016*

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

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

Paul Bielecki: This summer I am studying Arabic in Oman. I am also excited to spend some time in Iran at the University of Tehran to conduct research for my MA thesis in medical anthropology. My French translation of “Molekularbiologie der Zelle” written by Ulrich Schafer (Germany) will be published this year by the Sorbonne University. This summer my artwork exhibition (28 pieces-oil on canvas) sold out so I was able to buy new medical equipment for a hospital in the Bourj el-Barajneh Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon where I will be working at the end of the summer.

Keith Colella: I have just completed a six-month internship with the UAE Mis-

sion to the United Nations. In addition to beginning preliminary research for my thesis—which will offer a critical analysis of micro-finance/multilateral development efforts in the Middle East—I am currently applying for internships in financial analysis and market research.

Jessica DeOliveira: I spent my summer working at a Management Consulting firm in New York City. Following graduation, I have plans to continue my career in consulting abroad, focusing on strategy for the public sector in Abu Dhabi, Doha, and Dubai.

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

contact me if you want to contribute!

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

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

Alex Kane: Everything about my first year at the Kevorkian Center was fantastic, from digging into academic work on the Arab revolts to attending various events at the center. My summer is shaping up to be just

as good. I am studying Arabic on a Foreign Language Area Studies Fellowship in Amman, Jordan and reporting and researching my thesis in Israel/Palestine. My thesis is about Israel's internet-based surveillance of Palestinians, particularly Palestinian social media activity. I am investigating why Israeli authorities are arresting Palestinians based on Facebook posts and what these arrests say about the larger surveillance apparatus Israel has constructed in the West Bank and Gaza.

Aqsa Khalid: During the summer, I am taking a trip back to Pakistan and the UK to visit family and simply unwind. I will start planning my thesis and shall utilize my time in Pakistan to conduct archival research which tentatively would explore the narratives of national identity and affiliation based on communal violence experienced by the groups during the '47 partition. I hope to come back and find an internship in the city to apply the knowledge and skills that I have acquired at the Kevorkian Center and continue studying Arabic.

Brian Lewis: I have greatly enjoyed and appreciated the shift from the working world back to academia. The intellectual challenge has been immensely gratifying and fulfilling and I am excited to continue my studies in the fall. I am continuing my Arabic studies at the New York office of Lebanese American University and working for the NYU Sociology Department. My strongest potential thesis topic is to explore if and how Orientalist tropes are being expressed through the current generation of “post-LGBTQ” queer institutions in the West and how these tropes are being engaged with and challenged by queer voices in the Middle East. I may potentially focus on how Israeli pinkwashing reflects new discourses in queerness.

Soleiman Moustafa: My main area of interest is Egyptian, Israeli, and Palestinian politics in the 20th century. Before joining

the program, I studied Arab-Israeli relations at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Now I am working on my Arabic at Al-Azhar University in Cairo. My thesis research should tentatively be on the modernization of the Egyptian prison system.

Colin Murtha: This summer I've gone to Boğaziçi University for intensive Turkish language training after receiving a FLAS grant. I've also been teaching myself the Ottoman Alphabet in an effort to ready myself for my thesis and ultimately PhD work (I've also been looking into programs). I am thinking I will be writing my thesis on the intersection of law, religion, and legitimization in the Ottoman Empire.

Paris Osmanovic: This summer I have been consulting with and meeting working professionals across the public and private sectors to explore employment opportunities after graduation. I have also been researching PhD and MBA programs that may support further study of Islamic Finance and Shariah-Compliant Investments. More than anything, I have enjoyed spending time with my son this Summer and teaching him Persian as he is learning to speak.

Julian Phillips: I was awarded fellowships to study missionary papers in two archives in Pennsylvania. I was also awarded a fellowship to study Arabic at the Qasid Institute in Amman during the summer break.

Simone Rutkowitz: I was fortunate to receive a FLAS scholarship for Spring 2015 and this coming academic year. This summer I am strengthening my Arabic skills through tutoring sessions with MEIS PhD candidate Eman Morsi. I am looking forward to working as a research assistant to Prof. Joanne Nucho and exploring topics for my thesis.

Nadeen Shaker: I am currently in Egypt covering protest issues and the prison

system for my thesis under at the Gallatin Global Fellowship in Human Rights, awarded by NYU. I am also interning in an Egyptian NGO that focuses on criminal justice. In the Spring semester, I was awarded a Deadline Club scholarship.

Kat Thornton: I spent the summer in Istanbul, Turkey, participating in Boğaziçi University's intensive Turkish language course while also doing research for my joint Middle Eastern Studies-Journalism MA thesis. This year I hope to return to the Kevorkian Center to finish my MA and continue my research on journalistic practices and foreign correspondents in southeastern Turkey.

Jeremy Wheatley: I'm currently in Jordan studying Arabic (been here since June). Looking forward to the coming semester of coursework and research. My thesis will likely focus on visual culture and control, potentially in regards to ISIS or Israel-Palestine.

Zavier Wingham: As an incoming first year, I was not quite sure what to expect. There was not a “here's how to be a graduate student” checklist, which I found to be one of the beautiful charms of Kevo. The academic freedom to pursue my own interests, assisted with the guidance of our stellar faculty and a fantastic group of Kevo friends that have become my NYC family, encouraged me to present at several conferences in my first year, winning second best graduate paper at one conference. Many might know about the academic rigor of the program, but the heart, inspiration, and dedication that's behind the vigor is the true beauty of our program. It's the reason why I'm spending my summer in Ankara, Turkey on a Critical Languages Scholarship for Intensive Turkish, and the following academic year on a Fulbright Research Grant in Istanbul and Kayseri, Turkey conducting research on Iranian migrants.

MA Student News: *Class of 2015*

Dima Abi Saab: This summer, I am traveling to Lebanon to expand on my research on the way in which experiences of reincarnation impact familial relations and political affiliations in Mount Lebanon. In the Fall of 2015, I will begin the Ph.D program at NYU’s Departmetn of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, expanding on the research I conducted for my Master’s thesis titled: “Beyond Death: How Reincarnation and Memory Reshape Kinship and Politics in Mount Lebanon.”

Thalia Beaty: I am spending the summer working part-time as a producer for a podcast and for a couple of shows at WNYC, and am currently figuring out the next steps!

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

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

Brooke Fisher: This year I competed my MA thesis which focused on the memorialization of the 1991 uprisings in Iraq by various groups in Iraqi society and examines the use of these memories as a mechanism of inclusion or exclusion from belonging to the national community. Moving forward I will be joining the Global Exploration for Educators Organization as their Outreach Director.

Gina Hakim: Following graduation, I spent some time over the summer traveling in Lebanon after which I began working at a school in the Los Angeles metropolitan area. In December I hope to move to Egypt where I will expand on my thesis, focused on economic development, tourism and terrorism in the Sinai Peninsula, and conduct additional research.

Shima Houshyar: From learning to play the setar to protesting police brutality to presenting my first paper at the OASIES conference, it has been a productive year. I wrote my thesis on evolving notions of motherhood and

citizenship in post-Green Movement Iran. For the summer, I am planning to take advantage of all of the things that New York City has to offer before starting my PhD in Anthropology at City University of New York in the Fall.

Maham Javaid: I am moving to San Francisco to work as an Editorial Assistant for Timeline magazine. I will also be working on editing my documentary film (part of my MA thesis) so that I can start screening it by the start of next year.

Hannah Lawrence: A rewarding development internship with Just Vision this past spring prepared me to join Ceres -- an environmental nonprofit based in Boston -- as a Development Associate on their Foundations Team. In this role, I work closely with program staff to track and articulate Ceres’ campaigns and initiatives, support the output stream of proposals and reports, and manage a portfolio of foundation grants.

Adnan Moussa: I completed my thesis on urban spaces in Beirut, focusing particularly on how the binary between the capital and its southern suburb is often shaped and discussed in popular discourses. This summer, I will travel to NYU Abu Dhabi where I intend to gain further experiences in higher education, not as a student myself, but as an instructor helping other students prepare their college applications.

Anna Reumert: After two very fruitful and informative years at the Kevorkian center, where I had the opportunity to conduct fieldwork among Syrian refugees in Beirut for my thesis, I am now embarking on the world of humanitarianism and refugee policy. I am currently enrolled in the intensive Arabic summer program at American University of Beirut, after which I will return to NYC to intern with the Afghanistan mission at the UN general assembly in the fall. After that, I’m hoping to work with refugee resettlement either in NYC or back in Beirut.

Keenan Wilder: My second year at Kevorkian was a great experience, I did my thesis work on the labor movement in Tunisia and was able to make two trips to Washington DC to do archival research. Since graduating I got a job teaching at Amideast in Tunisia, and am planning to stay here for at least the coming year.

Ella Wind: This past year I finished my thesis on the implementation of industrial planning in Turkey and applied for PhD programs. I will begin a PhD in sociology at NYU in the fall. I also continued studying Turkish and I am taking an advanced intensive Turkish course at Bogazici University over the summer through a scholarship from the American Research Institute in Turkey. Outside of my schoolwork, I served as a bargaining committee member in the NYU graduate student union and helped organize the Historical Materialism 2015 conference held in New York.

PhD Student News

Dena al-Adeeb: In the Summer, I will present a paper at the “Precarious Radicalism on Shifting Grounds: Towards a Politics of Possibility,” International Conference of Critical Geography in Ramallah, Palestine. I will also defend my dissertation prospectus. In the Spring, I taught a course titled “Media and Globalization,” in the Department of Media, Culture and Communication at NYU. I also taught a course titled “Transdisciplinary Writing for Architecture,” in the Humanities and Media Studies Department at Pratt School of Architecture. My video work was exhibited at “Ten: The Exhibition,” at the Arab American National Museum, Dearborn, Michigan. I presented several papers at numerous conferences including; “Radical Increments: Toward New Platforms of Engaging Iraqi Studies” at Colombia University, “The Language of Architecture and Trauma” at Pratt Institute, “Open Engagement 2015: Place and Revolution” at Carnegie Mellon University, “Color of Violence 4: Beyond the State: Inciting Transformative Possibilities: Women of Color Against Violence.”

Ryvka Barnard: In March I presented a part of my dissertation at the Brown University “New Directions in Palestine Studies/Palestine: Political Cultures and the Culture of Politics” conference. I also had the GRI fellowship at NYU London in the spring semester. Mainly, I started a new job as the Senior Campaigner on Global Justice at the London-based NGO War on Want. In that role, I published several articles on the UK-Israel arms trade and a research report on the same topic.

Nadim Bawalsa: As a 5th-year joint MEIS and History PhD candidate, I used my SSRC funds to conduct archival research in Chile, England, and Palestine/Israel during 2014-

2015 for my dissertation project which examines the emergence of a Palestinian diaspora in Latin America during the first decades of the 20th century. I will spend the summer of 2015 conducting final dissertation research in Mexico and Palestine/Israel in order to continue the writing process which I also began over the last year. I hope to defend my dissertation in the spring of 2016.

Alex Boodrookas: Having completed my first year in the joint PhD program, I am spending this summer studying Farsi and Tajiki in Tajikistan on a CLS scholarship.

Sheida Dayani: In Fall 2014, I taught Beginner Persian I and Intermediate Persian I courses at NYU. In Spring 15, I defended my PhD prospectus (became ABD) and got a full-time faculty position at Harvard as a Persian Preceptor. I also attended the annual conference of the American Comparative Literature Association.

Aviv Derri: I finished my second year in the joint PhD program in History and MEIS. I was awarded the GSAS pre-dissertation research fellowship for this summer, as well as a scholarship from Koç University in Istanbul for an Ottoman language course. I plan to spend July and August 2015 in Istanbul, learning Ottoman and working in the Ottoman archives.

Ahmad Diab: While I worked on my dissertation over the past months/years, I worked at Google on Arabic language-related issues. I successfully defended my dissertation on July 30th, 2015 and will begin in a new job soon!

Samuel Dolbee: I was in France for most of the academic year 2014-2015 while beginning to write my dissertation and continuing

research in the Foreign Ministry Archives at La Courneuve and Nantes. In May I published an article with fellow NYU Ph.D. student Shay Hazkani in the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* titled “‘Impossible is not Ottoman’: Menashe Meirovitch, ‘Isa al-‘Isa, and Imperial Citizenship in Palestine.” I’ll be in London through NYU’s Global Research Initiatives program in the fall.

Ilker Hepkaner: My second year at the department was very exciting. I was a teaching assistant in the undergraduate courses “Islam in the World” and “Literature and Society in the Middle East,” and I learned a lot about pedagogy from the professors and colleagues I worked with. I co-organized the international research workshop “Transnational Perspectives on the Life and Work of Sabahattin Ali” at the Hagop Kevorkian Center, and I presented a paper at this workshop. I also passed my first round of comprehensive exams on the culture and representation track, and prepared for the second round during summer.

Matthew Keegan: In the fall, I completed my coursework and took a comprehensive exam on Islamic studies. I presented a MESA paper on legal riddles in Islamic legal discourse. In the spring, I organized a seminar on commentaries in the Islamicate world at the American Comparative Literature Association annual meeting. In the summer of 2015, I prepared for my second comprehensive exam and wrote my dissertation prospectus on the 12th century commentaries on al-Ḥarīrī’s Maqāmāt.

PhD Student News

Shimrit Lee: This year I worked towards completing my coursework and preparing for comprehensive exams. In the summer, I began preliminary fieldwork in Israel/Palestine and France for my dissertation project on Israel's arms industry. I contributed my writing to *Jacobin*, *Warscapes*, and *Ballast* Magazines.

Matt MacLean: I spent the 2014-2015 academic year as a Humanities Research Fellow at NYU Abu Dhabi, conducting research for his dissertation on the history of infrastructure and national identity in the United Arab Emirates. I presented my work at NYU Abu Dhabi, MESA, WOCMES, the Gulf Research Meeting, and Exeter, and will return to the UAE this fall as a visiting researcher at the al-Qasimi Foundation in Ras al-Khaimah.

Zainab Mahmood: My paper, "A Kingly Appointment: al-Malik, Fir'awn and concepts of kingship in medieval Muslim exegetical writing" was accepted for the upcoming MESA panel "The Language of Power: Articulating Kingship in the Medieval Islamic World," chaired by Roy Mottahedeh and sponsored by the Middle East Medievalists association.

Amir Moosavi: This year I was a fellow at the NYU Humanities Initiative. I made significant progress on my dissertation and hope to defend in early fall 2015. During the spring, aside from dissertation research, I taught Elementary Persian II and presented dissertation research the NYU Iranian Studies Initiative.

Eman Morsi: This year is my seventh and final year. I received a postdoctoral fellowship at the Core Curriculum program and I am currently finalizing my dissertation for a september defense and graduation. I also co-curated an Algerian film program in Fall 2014

with MA student Adnan Moussa as part of the Kevorkian Center's Visual Culture Series.

Suneela Mubayi: I am working full time on my thesis, and was awarded the Mellon-GSAS fellowship for the upcoming academic year to finish it. I also hosted a visit from Palestinian writer Raji Bathish this Spring that focused in Queer writing in Palestine.

Jennifer Pineo-Dunn: This was my first year in the program, and I was fortunate enough to receive the Dean's Student Travel Grant which allowed me to attend and to present a paper at the American Comparative Literature Association's Annual Meeting in Seattle. I also received the Betty Jones Scholarship to attend Middlebury College's Master's in Arabic program (Pedagogical Track) held at Mills College in California, where I completed the first of four summer semesters of intensive Arabic immersion, research and pedagogical training.

Tara Stephan: This past year, I finished my comprehensive exams and began developing my dissertation topic. I have spent the summer researching chronicles, biographical dictionaries, and other materials, looking at women's involvement in Mamluk urban life. I am currently honing in on my thesis so I can defend my prospectus soon and make plans for archival research.

Ian Vandermeulen: It has been an inspiring and challenging first year in the MEIS PhD program, capped by my wedding at the end of May! I've spent the early part of the summer developing a research interest in Egypt's Shi'ite minority and will be spending the second half studying Arabic at the Qalam wa Lawh institute in Rabat, Morocco. I also look forward to my first teaching assignment in the Fall.

Jennifer Varela: This past academic year, I prepared and wrote my two comprehensive exams and worked two terms as a research assistant for Ella Shohat. I also presented at the 2015 ACLA conference in Seattle and had a paper accepted to the upcoming 2015 MESA conference. I was awarded the GRI fellowship for the NYU Tel Aviv site and this summer I will be working on my prospectus and traveling in the field.

Rustin Zarkar: This year I managed to juggle coursework and teaching while passing the first of my comprehensive exams. I presented my paper, "Monuments, Memory, and the Politics of National Delimitation in Uzbekistan" at the OASIES Conference held at the Kevorkian Center in March. I also earned a summer fellowship from the Jordan Center for the Advanced Study of Russia to conduct language study and archival work in St. Petersburg. My translation of Farhad Behbahani's 1990 prison memoir, "The Story of a Confession," will be published by the Association for the Study of Persian Literature this fall.

Ayelet Zoran Rosen: This year I had a baby, wrote two chapters of the dissertation (now working on the last one, wish me luck!), participated in one conference (The Australia and New Zealand Medieval and Early Modern Studies 10th Biennial Conference) and recently started working as an assistant editor at the university of Auckland's Europe Institute peer-reviewed journal, *The New Zealand Journal for Research on Europe*.

Faculty News

Richard Allen: At the end of last year I relinquished (for good!) the role of Cinema Studies department chair and embarked on semester's sabbatical leave and a semester at NYU Abu Dhabi where I taught (for the first time) a course in film production, "Film Style: Theory and Practice," and a core class on "Art and Emotion" which included a comparative discussion of "affective piety" in medieval Christianity, Sufism, and the Krishna tradition. Both classes were extremely rewarding. In the meantime, in the current work of mine that may be of interest to readers of this bulletin, I have been chipping away at my book manuscript on the poetics of recognition in Hindi Cinema entitled *Bollywood Poetics*. I published a part of this as "Comedies of Error: Shakespeare, Indian Cinema, and the Poetics of Mistaken Identity" in a book entitled *Bollywood Shakespeare*, and a spin-off essay on filmmaker Rituparno Ghosh, "Closeted Desires and Open Secrets: Raincoat and Noukadubi," that is out in the next issue of *South Asian History and Culture* and was a keynote talk at the Global Women's Cinema Conference at Stony Brook.

Ali Adeeb Alnaemi : This is my first academic year as a full time Arabic language lecturer. I taught three elementary classes in the fall semester and two elementary II and one intermediate II in the

spring semester. Although I have taught here before, it feels different when I continue teaching with the same group of students and am able to see them advance and improve in their language skills. One of the highlights of the past academic year was receiving an FAS Office of Educational Technology Innovation grant. The Office has agreed to my proposal to support the creation of an Arabic language resource site for the 3 main language levels at NYU. I have discussed the project with officials in the office, and hopefully my colleagues and I will be able to secure a bigger budget for an even more ambitious project that will take our Arabic program to a different level. The idea of this project came as a result of continuous discussions with my colleagues at the Arabic language program, and comments and feedback from our students. We strongly feel that this project, once it is in place, will provide efficient and attractive tools to help our students learn Arabic faster and more easily. I am hopeful that my entry in next year's HK Review will talk about how the students are benefiting from this new platform that reflects a new approach to teaching Arabic.

Adam Becker: This past academic year I was happy to see the publication of my book, *Revival and Awakening: American Evangelical Missionaries and the*

Origins of Assyrian Nationalism (UChicago Press, 2015). I in fact gave a talk for Ottoman Studies on one of my chapters and also had an opportunity to discuss some of the book in Prof. Keshavarzian's graduate seminar. I also gave two lectures on the so-called Persian Martyr Acts, a large corpus of Syriac texts that describe the purported Christian martyrdoms in Sasanian (pre-Islamic) Iran. My research has returned primarily to antiquity after the mission book but I continue to have 19th and 20th century interests. One recent project was on the reception of certain late antique scholastic texts in Syriac among Chaldean Catholic intellectuals in turn of the century Iraq.

Peter Chelkowski: After 45 years of teaching at NYU, suddenly one day in a classroom I had the feeling that my lecture was not reaching my students. The next day despite the fact that the class was smaller, the feeling persisted. I had very good students - intelligent, hard-working, and friendly, but the feeling went on for two or three weeks. At that point, I decided to retire. I went to see the chairman of the Department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies and the Director of the Kevorkian Center and announced my decision. It was a mistake: I should have overcome my malaise and kept on teaching. Retirement is not what one conceives it to be while

one is still working -- it is not free time, only the tasks are different. I miss the students and University atmosphere. As my first task, I decided to take care of my private library -- I had many books in three locations: my office on the 4th floor of Kevorkian (all three walls); my office at home; and the upper level of the Kevorkian library. When I studied at my first alma mater, Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland, there was a great shortage of books. During WWII, the Nazis had forbidden all education above the elementary school level and had systematically destroyed libraries. I had attempted to read the great Persian epic, *The Shahnameh*, but there were no Persian/English, Persian/French, or Persian/German dictionaries. Not even Persian/Russian. I ended up reading it with a Tajik/Russian dictionary! So when I retired, I decided to send a great part of my library to Jagiellonian. I have shipped 52 boxes of books to the Department of Iranian Studies there. Middle Eastern Studies have a long tradition in Poland since the country needed translators and interpreters during the wars with the Ottoman Empire (for almost 300 years). As for my research, I'm going to work on several subjects which I started years ago and now hope to bring to completion. Aside from this, my biggest project this year was to prepare to move out of our apartment in Silver Towers, where

we have lived since 1968. Since it was not possible to find anything affordable in NYC, we are migrating to Torino, Italy where our daughter lives. Since we have 47 years worth of belongings to pack, this has been a huge undertaking! We are grateful to have been part of the NYU Community for all these years and are sad to be saying farewell. Please visit if you are in Torino!

Sibel Erol: Turkish classes, assisted by our Fulbright assistant Yavuz Özdemirel, had an excellent year. Students from various levels, Nader Atassi, Aviv Derri, Isaac Hand, Colin Murtha, Ella Wind and Zavier Wingham have participated in summer programs in Turkey with support from a variety of scholarships. I attended two conferences in Turkey last year and gave two papers on two Turkish women writers. In October, I presented a paper on Adalet Ağaoğlu, “A Baroque History and A Novel with Tics: Adalet Ağaoğlu’s novel Romantic, A Vienna Summer” at Bilgi University, and in December a paper on Halide Edib, “Emotion as Basis for Ethics: George Sand, George Eliot and Halide Edib” at Şehir University. In March we hosted a successful workshop on the works and life of Sabahattin Ali organized by İlker Hepkaner and Kristin Dickinson. My paper at this workshop was on Ali’s second novel, “Dreaming Up a Different: Sabahattin Ali’s The Devil Within Us.” Last year, I published an essay entitled “Does Turkish Literature Exist?: An Attempt to Answer Through the Works of Leyla Erbil, Şavkar Altinel and Atol Behramoğlu” in The Journal of Levantine Studies. My essay “Sevgi

Soysal’s Hanife” is in print in an edited book on the works of Sevgi Soysal. I completed my term on the editorial board of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* in March. I was elected to the executive board of the Institute of Turkish Studies and started serving in November. I am currently on the best book prize committee for the Association of Ottoman and Turkish Studies, which will announce its decision at the MESA conference in November.

Finbarr Barry Flood: At the start of the 2014-15 academic year, I gave a lecture at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco and the Wilkinson Lecture at the Metropolitan Museum of Art on the topic “From Mali to Alchi: Art on the Margins of the Caliphate.” In December I was in Ethiopia, continuing ongoing research on early histories of globalization, and traveling on to India to give a series of seminars on Islamic art at Jnanapavaha, Mumbai. While there, I also delivered a lecture on “Deccani Art Across the Ocean: Hoysalas, Kadambas and Medieval Ethiopia” in Mumbai and at the National Gallery Of Modern Art, Bangalore, India. I ended my time in India by participating in two panels, one on the Buddhas of Bamiyan and the other on The Rise of Monotheism at the Jaipur Literary Festival, the world’s largest literary festival. In April, I spoke on my research in Ethiopia and India at the University of Pennsylvania and presented a talk on “Sanctified Sandals: Polemics and Relics in an Era of Technological Reproducibility,” in the History, Theory and Criticism Lecture Series of MIT. In May, I made my first visit to the Gulf, to

speak at the Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah in Kuwait. In June, I spoke on “Stories in Stone: Self-Made Images in Mosques and Modernism” in a symposium organized to honor Professor Dame Marina Warner, this year’s recipient of the Holberg Prize, in Bergen, Norway. While in India in January, I traveled in the Deccan region of the south, visiting medieval and early modern sites with Dipti Khera and other colleagues in preparation for a graduate colloquium that we co-taught this spring in connection with the exhibition Sultans of Decan India, 1500-1700: Opulence and Fantasy at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. During the year I organized, with the help of Fatima Quraishi, a new lecture series on Islamic Art, *Points of Contact: New Approaches to Islamic Art*, which brought scholars working on Islamic art in regions ranging from Spain and Ukraine, East Africa and Indonesia, to the Institute of Fine Arts to speak about their research. I also published an article on the theme of “Bodies and Becoming: Mimesis, Mediation and the Ingestion of the Sacred in Christianity and Islam,” published in Sally M. Promey, ed., *Sensational Religion: Sensory Cultures in Material Practice* (Yale University Press, 2014). I am about to co-teach a session entitled “Interrogating the Late Antique Visual Tradition and Its Legacy” in a summer school organized by the Humboldt University in Berlin under the rubric of Globalized Classics. During the academic year 2015-16 I will be a fellow at the Wissenschaftskolleg, Berlin.

Michael Gilsenan: Apart from a short research visit to London in

January, I spent my sabbatical year in New York. Part of the time was spent in reading up on discussions of translation, language and the role of interpreters in colonial/imperial politics. I decided that working on Singapore in the 1880-1914 period demands at least some understanding of the extraordinary violent pressures by Britain, France and others on the Qing Empire in China from the Opium Wars of the 1840s right through to the dynasty’s fall in 1911. Hence the London visit to track down records concerning young elite Chinese naval officers who started going to the Royal Naval College at Greenwich in the 1870s. Some of them becoming key naval or imperial officials, including in Singapore, while one of them became perhaps the most important translator in modern Chinese history. There followed months of reading on a period and political relations of which I knew virtually nothing. Humbling and highly instructive. The rest of the time is being spent writing chapters on matriarchs and patriarchs for my book on law, conflict, and the transmission of goods among Arab families of Hadhrami descent in Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia. At the Kevorkian we held the sixth of our workshops on Islamic Law and Society, with a record number of circulated papers, fourteen, that seemed only to energize our remarkable participants even more than usual.

Faye Ginsburg: I was fortunate to have Sabbatical for the 2014-15 year to carry out research and writing for a book entitled *Disability, Personhood, and the New*

Normal in 21st Century America, with support from the NYU Humanities Initiative and a Collaborative Research/Writing Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. I have been carrying out work on this project since 2007, along with my colleague in the Department of Anthropology, Rayna Rapp. Together we are looking at how activists, innovators, schools, scientists, artists, museum professionals and media makers are changing the face of the American body politic to include the broad face of humanity that includes people with a wide variety of disabilities 25 years after the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act. While attending a think tank this summer, Lights, Camera, Access, 2.0, I had the opportunity to encounter the extraordinary Palestinian American actress, comedian and disability activist Maysoon Zayid, considered one of America’s first Muslim women comedians and the first person ever to perform standup in Palestine and Jordan. She had the most viewed Ted talk in 2014. She tours the US, Canada and the Middle East with a band of Arab-American comedians under the banner Arabs Gone Wild. Her organization, Maysoon’s Kids, works with children across the West Bank, using art to help them deal with the difficulties of lives under occupation. I am hoping to persuade her to come to NYU and the Kevorkian Center to talk about her life and work.

Jeff Goodwin: During the fall of 2014 I taught an undergraduate sociology seminar called “Understanding Terrorism,” which in-

cluded material on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, U.S. sanctions on Iraq during the 1990s, and the conflict between the U.S. and Al Qaeda. In the spring of 2015 I taught both undergraduate and graduate courses on social movements. Speaking of which, 2015 saw the publication of the third edition of *The Social Movements Reader: Cases and Concepts* (Wiley-Blackwell), which I coedited with James Jasper. This edition includes some new material on the Arab Spring. In November of 2014 I was a speaker on a panel called “Studying Contentious Politics and Social Movements after the Arab Uprisings” at the annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association (MESA) in Washington, DC. In June I delivered a keynote presentation called “Problems in the Study of State Terrorism: The Question of Intent” at a conference on “Understanding Conflict” at the University of Bath. In this talk I examined several Israeli tactics during Operation Protective Edge in the summer of 2014 which resulted in large numbers of civilian casualties and can be fairly considered as state terrorism. I continue to work on a book on violence and terrorism, which looks at several case studies of both state and insurgent terrorism.

Bruce Grant: This past year I was pleased to see the release of a new essay in *Public Culture*, “The Edifice Complex,” on the stunning and sometimes violent transformations of the once diverse Azerbaijani capital into a new, nationalizing metropolis. I have also remained part of a Germany-based, international team

of scholars writing on sacred shrines in the Caucasus region. This summer, I returned to the Caucasus to spend time in Tbilisi, Georgia, for archival research on a project on the role of satire in authoritarian settings as seen through the life and work of Celil Memmedquluzade, editor of the Azeri-language, Tbilisi-based, multi-regional journal, Molla Nesreddin, which was published from 1906-1931. I am full time again in the Department of Anthropology for 2015-2016, where I will be offering a graduate seminar in political anthropology in the spring, among other courses.

Hala Halim: In fall 2014, I had the pleasure of leading a four-part discussion of Naguib Mahfouz’s *Cairo Trilogy* and *Miramar* at the Brooklyn Public Library with a delightfully engaged group of readers. March 2015 saw me travel to Seattle for the American Comparative Literature Association annual meeting at which I organized a three-day seminar entitled “Bandung, Afro-Asianness, Non-Alignment, Tricontinentalism and Global South Comparatism,” the theme of which was drawn from a graduate seminar I taught at NYU in fall 2013. Indeed, two among the excellent presentations given at the ACLA seminar were by NYU graduate students who had taken my course. In April I traveled to Athens, at the invitation of the Cavafy Archive and the Onassis Foundation, to give a presentation on my book, *Alexandrian Cosmopolitanism*, at a roundtable entitled “Alexandria Still. Returning to the Cavafian Alexandrian” moderated by Dimitris Papanikolaou (Oxford Univer-

sity) with a presentation responding to the book by Alexander Kazamias (Coventry University). The interaction with colleagues and the audience’s impassioned responses to the intersections of things Egyptian and things Greek were quite enriching.

Gabriela Nik Ilieva: During the last academic year I continued teaching Hindi and Ancient Indian as well as Modern South Asian literature. I continued working on developing and organizing Hindi and Urdu materials for the study and training of Hindi and Urdu teachers. I advised last year’s Foreign Language Teaching Assistants from India and Pakistan, Madri Kakoti and Bushra Mahmood, who did a remarkable job working with our students, facilitating extracurricular activities and supporting their projects. In addition, under the umbrella of the Alliance for the Promotion of Urdu Studies (APUS) we established an NYU Student Initiative in Brooklyn to help children from under-privileged immigrant families with their school studies. I received several awards recognizing my community work, including a citation from the Brooklyn Borough President. I have also enjoyed serving on the advisory board of the STARTALK initiative and as the curriculum committee chair of the first Master’s in Hindi and Urdu Language Pedagogy Program at Kean University. My translation work continued with short stories by Yashpal. I also co-authored an article “Assessment in the Heritage Language Classroom: Towards HL proficiency standards,” forthcoming in *Innovative Approaches to Her-*

itage Language Teaching: From Research to Practice, Georgetown University Press.

Asli Igsiz: This year I taught four new courses (two undergraduate and two graduate seminars), published two articles and gave two interviews, one of which appeared in the Ottoman History Podcast. One of the articles draws from my current work on liberal multiculturalism in Turkey, and the other one is partly related to my future project on cultural policy, nation branding, and the UN Alliance of Civilizations initiative. Both nation branding and Alliance of Civilizations had important implications for the Middle East, with claims to fix the image of the countries in the region after 9/11. Yet, seeking to remedy a position (seeking a better brand image of a nation or “civilization”) vis-à-vis a discourse (“clash of civilizations”) without putting into question the discourse itself in the first place risks reproducing the same dynamics rather than debunking it. This was also the theme of the Ottoman History Podcast and two of the courses I taught this past year. I look forward to completing my manuscript on diversity in Turkey and to focus more on this new project.

Deborah Kapchan: 2014-15 was a very exciting year for me. I received a Collaborative Teaching Award from the Humanities Center to teach a graduate seminar entitled “Listening” with my colleague Martin Daughtry in the Music Department (we are also writing a book together on the same theme). The students had a chance to witness collabora-

tion as a co-labor and a co-inspiration. I have added a writing component to two of my graduate seminars – The Performance of Everyday Life and Memoir and Ethnography. I run these classes as writing workshops. The students write every week and four students read each week. While we read theory, ethnography and literature in these classes, the hour we devote to reading and writing critique each week transforms the class, encouraging trust, but also fostering an attention to style and voice in writing. This year acclaimed memoirists, Nick Flynn (*Another Bullshit Night in Suck City*) and Danielle Trussoni (*Falling Through the Earth*) led stimulating discussions about writing. I also organized a 3-hour writing workshop with Kathleen Stewart, author of *Ordinary Affects* (a book of ficto-criticism that I teach in the Memoir and Ethnography class). In collaboration with the PEN World Voices Festival and the Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies, I organized and moderated a panel with Moroccan poets Idriss Aissa and Driss Mesnaoui, “Moroccan Poetry Between the Lines: Text, Translation and Performance.” In October 2014 I organized, with visiting scholar, Maria Malmstrom (Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala) a 2-day conference entitled The Materiality of Affect: North African Politics in Flux. I participated in a Cross-Tisch presentation on the theme of “trance” with Robert Stam and Awam Amkpa. I received a fellowship and writing residency from the Bergman Foundation to spend six weeks on the Bergman Estate on Faro Island, Sweden in the summers

of 2014 and 2015. It began as a sound study of the island and an analysis of the diegetic sound tracks of Bergman’s films, but it has expanded to become a poetic and critical evocation of the sensory ecologies and ontologies of the island itself. I had several invited speaking engagements this year. I was the keynote speaker at the University of Chicago for a conference entitled, “Music, Islam and the Sublime.” I also gave a keynote address for the International Society of Ethnology and Folklore -- SIEF -- in Zagreb, Croatia in June 2015, entitled “Slow Ethnography, Slow Activism: Listening in the Longue Durée.” I was also invited to speak at Washington University in St. Louis and Brown University in Providence. In May 2015, I spoke at an international conference on Sufism in Fes, Morocco. This year saw the publication of a volume that I edited and contributed to entitled *Cultural Heritage in Transit: Cultural Heritage and Human Rights* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014). Also published: 2015 “The (Sound) Body”. In Matt Sakakeeny and David Novak, Eds. *Keywords in Sound Studies*. Durham: Duke University Press. In addition, I have two full-length manuscripts currently under review: *Theorizing Sound Writing*. Deborah Kapchan, Editor, Wesleyan University Press, and *Poetic Justice: An Anthology of Moroccan Contemporary Poetry*, Center for Middle Eastern Studies Translation Series, printed by the University of Texas Press.

Marion Katz: I was on leave for the the 2014-2015 academic

year, and spent it in residence at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton. (I also had funding from an ACLS Fellowship.) In addition to enjoying peace, quiet, and the company of rabbits and deer, I had the opportunity to pursue research on the history of domestic labor as a topic in Islamic legal texts from the 11th to 14th centuries. As I pursued the issue of domestic labor through debates in areas such as the validity of contracts of hire and the evaluation of competing claims to ownership of marital goods, it became clear that this issue was deeply embedded in conceptual questions regarding the valorization of the human person and its various capacities (both sexual and productive). Jurists also grappled with the coexistence of legal and moral entitlements to labor within the family. I’m looking forward to pursuing these questions further in the coming years. The year was a wonderful opportunity to immerse myself in fiqh texts and in secondary reading far beyond my field. The fall also saw the publication of my most recent book, *Women in the Mosque: A History of Legal Thought and Social Practice* (Columbia University Press).

Philip Kennedy: I signed a contract with Edinburgh University Press to publish *Recognition in the Arabic Narrative Tradition* (Volume 1) in their new series on Classical Arabic Literature. Finalizing the type script has taken most of my spring and summer, since it is due in September. I carried on as Vice Provost for Institute Public Program this year and hosted and moderated some interesting

events, including a conversation with Amitav Ghosh and Marc Cohen on the Cairo Geniza and it’s significance. I co convened with Marina Warner a workshop on “A Corpus not a Canon: The Library of Arabic Literature” at All Souls College, Oxford. This was full of comparatists and produced some very insightful conversations about how non-Arabists might read pre-modern Arabic works. I took part in a conference on Falconry in December in Abu Dhabi and in May in Cambridge I spoke at a conference on the Qur’an, discussing how the LAL might consider producing a new translation in its series. For the second year running I taught a survey course on the history and culture of the UAE.

Arang Keshavarzian: During the 2014-5 academic year I returned to full-time teaching after several years as the department’s director of undergraduate studies. Among other courses, I devised a new undergraduate seminar titled “The Persian Gulf and the U.S. from ARAMCO to NYU-AD.” We read works and discussed issues related to understanding the rise of US global power through is engagements with the Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, and the UAE since World War I. This enabled us to interpret the transformations in the region’s politics and society in relationship to the formation of US global hegemony. I thoroughly enjoyed debating these issues with the students; both my experience and the comments of the students have encouraged me to offer it again in the future. I have worked closely with graduate students in various programs and stages of

their studies and witnessed them winning grants, conducting original field research, and producing promising early dissertation chapters and proposals as well as completed theses on topics ranging from the political economy of labor in Tunisia to the development of policing in British-ruled Bahrain to ethnographic work on Syrians in Beirut. My own research on the Gulf region has continued with writing standalone essays as well as trying to marshal my analysis into a book-length manuscript. Meanwhile, an essay on smuggling in postrevolutionary Iran that I co-authored with Narges Erami, an anthropologist at Yale, was published in *Economy and Society*. This essay builds on two separate ethnographies of bazaars in Iran and an engagement with political economy and anthropological of studies of informality. However, I will remember this past academic year as Minu’s first year and my (not always successful) attempt to juggle teaching, research, writing, and academic labor, while enjoying my time with both her and Leo.

Aisha Khan: During 2014-2015, I offered a new, interdisciplinary graduate seminar, “Islam and the Americas,” drawing in part from my newly published anthology of the same name, which was launched recently at the Kevorkian Center. I was invited to present papers on my new research on Islam in Haiti (begun in 2013) at the Museu Nacional, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), Columbia University, and Brooklyn College. With a National Endowment for the Humanities summer grant I was able to conduct research in

the National Archives at Kew Gardens, London, where I continued my exploration of British colonial policy toward religious traditions in the Caribbean—the subject of my monograph, “Sacred Sacrilege,” on which I am currently working. For an anthology on Caribbean popular culture I contributed a chapter, now in press, on “Hosay,” this region’s version of Muharram. I also accepted an invitation to join the editorial board of a new book series, “Islam of the Global West,” with Bloomsbury Academic Publishing. As part of a New York Council for the Humanities educational outreach program, I served as scholar-facilitator for a six-month, local community-targeted seminar, “Muslim Journeys.” In conjunction with the Kevorkian Center, this summer (August 2015) I am holding a three-day seminar, “Islam and the Americas,” for local K-12 teachers, combining group discussion of assigned readings, field trips, films, and guest speakers as we explore new and better ways to teach about Islam and Muslims in this hemisphere. Finally, I received NYU’s Golden Dozen Award for Teaching Excellence.

Mikiya Koyagi: I am joining NYU as new faculty in Fall 2015 and am excited about working with new colleagues and students in this intellectually vibrant environment. The academic year of 2014-2015 was a year of changes for me. In Spring 2015, I defended my dissertation, entitled “Mobilizing Iran: Experiences of the Trans-Iranian Railway, 1850-1950,” and received a doctoral degree in history from The University of Texas at Austin. During the summer of 2015, I visited Iran

for the first time in six years in order to thank my colleagues and friends who helped me during that 2009 research trip. Then I traveled to Tokyo briefly to start working on an article on the journeys of the first Japanese haji, who traveled around the world in the first few decades of the 20th century. Upon my return to the U.S., I have been preparing for my relocation to New York City. I very much look forward to the new experiences at NYU in the coming year.

Zachary Lockman: During the 2014-2015 academic year I was a fellow at NYU’s Humanities Initiative. It was a pleasure to get to know my fellow fellows (so to speak), a very interesting group of faculty and graduate students most of whom I would otherwise probably never have encountered. Whether we actually advanced the humanities is not for me to say; but I learned a lot about a range of fields and disciplines, and the reduced teaching load accompanying this fellowship enabled me to complete a draft of my book manuscript on the histories of area studies and Middle East studies in the United States. I gave a talk about that book project at the Kevorkian Center in February 2015, to kick off a new series titled “Research Off the Record.” Anyone who was at the talk can confirm that the account of my talk that promptly appeared on the Jihad Watch website (<http://www.jihadwatch.org/2015/03/nyu-prof-admits-mesas-anti-israel-stance-rails-against-israel-lobby#comments>) bore very little relation to reality, providing yet another illustration of the kind of craziness

to which scholars in Middle East studies are routinely subjected. Such incidents bolster my commitment to the Middle East Studies Association's Committee on Academic Freedom, whose North America wing I continue to chair. Though my CAF colleagues who focus on violations of or threats to academic freedom in the Middle East and North Africa unfortunately had a much busier year, the North American academic scene was by no means free of incidents in which we were compelled to intervene. As the old saying goes: the struggle continues.

Ali Mirsepassi: This was a very eventful year for me. I stepped in as the acting director of the Kevorkian Center in the Fall and the acting dean of the Gallatin School in Spring. In addition to teaching and advising, I was able to finish a documentary film and a book manuscript. My book manuscript, *Islam After Islam: The Life and Thoughts of the Ahmad Fardid*, is now complete and being reviewed for publication. But, a more exciting experience for me is the film ("The Fabulous Life and Thought of Ahmad Fardid") based on my book manuscript. We were fortunate to access rare and previously inaccessible footage to include in this documentary. The film explores the life and thought of Ahmad Fardid, who is also known in Iran as the Iranian Heidegger. Fardid called for the recovery of modern Iran to its spiritual and Islamic roots, a project fueled by his concept of Ghabzadegi ("Westoxification")—which would quickly become a buzzword in the Iranian critique of the modern and sec-

ular West. The film also features extensive interviews with Fardid's former colleagues, associates, students, as well as scholars of modern Iran. I am pleased to say that on October 14, there will be a screening of the film and a panel discussion about the documentary, at NYU. Richard Wolin, Asef Bayat, Andrew Arato, and I will discuss the documentary film. I also have a piece, "Debating Marshall Berman in Iran," in *Urban Research* 5, ed, Jennifer Corby and Michael Sorkin. This volume is published to honor our late friend and colleague Marshal Berman's tremendous contribution to the intellectual and academic life of our time. This was also another successful year for the Iranian Studies Initiative. We organized 11 lectures and other events for ISI-NYU. We have planned several very interesting lectures and other events for this coming fall. We have worked out a collaboration with Princeton University's Center for Iran and Persian Gulf Studies, and the University of Pennsylvania's Middle East Center to organize an annual, "the Iran Graduate Student Workshop (IGSW)." The workshop will provide a valuable venue for academic exchange and production, giving distinguished young scholars of the field an unrivalled opportunity to present and promote their research. On April 29-30, 2016, Princeton University will host the first meeting of this joint workshop.

Joanne Nucho: The 2014-2015 academic year was my first as Director of Graduate Studies at the Kevorkian Center. I enjoyed working with our incredible MA

students and overseeing some of their thesis projects on a diverse set of topics and subjects. This year I taught two graduate level courses, one on the "Urban Anthropology of the Middle East" and another interdisciplinary seminar on "Syria and Lebanon." I also had the opportunity to participate in a K-12 outreach Saturday seminar, where I gave a brief talk about my ethnographic research in Lebanon. This past April, I was honored to give a talk at the Middle East and Middle Eastern American center at the CUNY graduate center as part of the Armenian Genocide Centenary series. In November, I screened an excerpt from my film-in-progress at an LA Free-waves event in Los Angeles. The Wenner-Gren Foundation has generously supported the completion of my ethnographic film project, shot in Lebanon, which will be in post-production for much of this year. I am currently revising my book manuscript, which is under contract with Princeton University Press. The manuscript is tentatively titled *Everyday Sectarianism: Infrastructures, Public Services and Power in Urban Lebanon*, and will focus on the relationship between urban infrastructures, services and the production of sectarian publics in Lebanon. I am also currently revising an article about transnational infrastructure building projects in Lebanon. I look forward to another productive year at Kevorkian this fall in my new role as Clinical Assistant Professor.

Asli Peker: The 2014-2015 academic year for me was marked

by a major transition: My home base, the International Relations program, separated from the Politics Department and became a free-standing graduate program under GSAS. Aside from the logistics of the transition, on the personal front, this meant developing new courses better fit for the new program and redesigning my old ones. I taught two new courses, "International Political Development" and "State Failure and State Building." Although neither of these were exclusively about the Middle East, in both courses, we made heavy use of case studies from the region. I also taught my staple "Middle East Politics" course in the Spring, but this time with a stronger focus on the regional and transnational dynamics, which added a whole new dimension to the class. On the research front, I have been working on a paper on the evolution and current state of political science in the United States, which I will be presenting at a conference in Belgium in September.

Nathalie Peutz: This past year, I taught my course on "Anthropology and the Arab World," which engages students on the ever-relevant topic of Gulf labor, and "Heritage, History and Memory in the Modern Middle East," which includes a weekend seminar in Oman. A highlight was designing and teaching a new core course on "Extinction" (biotic, cultural, and metaphorical), through which I had the great privilege of bringing my students to Uganda to encounter endangered mountain gorillas and to meet with the "conservation

refugees" their preservation endangered—not my usual course material. I also had the honor of participating in several stimulating conferences: in a workshop on the "public humanities" at NYU-La Pietra, Florence; in a scientific conference convened by the "Friends of Socotra" in Rome; on my own recent archival research on British policies in Socotra and al-Mahra in the 1940s-1960s at the University of Malaysia and at an Indian Ocean Studies Conference at NYUAD; and on a Socotra museum project at the Agha Khan Symposium on the "Politics of Time, Material Heritage and Islamic Religiosity" at Brown University. When not teaching or traveling, I completed a draft manuscript on the Socotra Archipelago under British Protection (17th century–1967) and worked on my book manuscript titled, *Islands of Heritage: Revolutionizing Patrimony and Sovereignty at the Margins of Arabia*. Pleased to have passed my third-year review in the spring, I will be on leave this fall and look forward to an extended period of writing.

Maurice Pomerantz: This academic year has passed perhaps more quickly than any other in recent memory. I taught and co-taught several courses in the NYUAD Literature major, "Foundations of Literature I & II," as well as a course on the figure of the "Trickster in World Literature." These courses were a delight mainly for the wonderful discussions and energy that my students and co-teacher (Bryan Waterman NYU English) brought to the classroom. Perhaps the most significant event in my academic

life has been that I've completed three book projects. I served as editor for the *Festschrift* in honor of my adviser, Wadad Kadi, entitled, *The Heritage of Arabo-Islamic Learning* (Brill: Leiden, 2015). I submitted the book manuscript for another volume of collected works provisionally entitled, *In the Presence of Power: Court and Performance in the Pre-Modern Middle East*. I also completed a revised version of my dissertation on the letters of the tenth-century Buyid statesman and polymath, Al-Ṣāhib b. 'Abbād. My current book project is a monograph focusing on the circulation and transformation of *maqāma* genre over the *longue durée*. I recently presented a paper at the School of Mamluk Studies in University of Venice Ca' Foscari which dealt with the ways that a unpublished picaresque tale collection of *maqāmas* from the 14th century represented features of geography and economy of the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt. I've subsequently published a detailed description of this manuscript in "A *Maqāma* collection by a Mamluk Historian: *al-Ma-qāmāt al-Jalāliya* by al-Ḥasan b. Abī Muḥammad al-Ṣafadī (fl. 8th/14th c.)." *Arabica* 61 (2014): 631-66. I was invited to take part in a conference in Abu Dhabi on «Islam in the Eighteenth Century» organized by Sajjad Rizvi (University of Exeter) and my colleague Justin Stearns (NYUAD) where I presented another paper devoted to Arabic Picaresque Tales set in late Mughal India, entitled, "Cosmopolitan Confidence Men in 18th-century India: Bā 'Abbūd al-Ḥadramī and his *al-Ma-qāmāt al-Hindiyya*." My long-term collaboration with my colleague Bilal

Orfali at the American University in Beirut on the *maqāmāt* of Badī' al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī continues to move forward. We finished several publications: including "*Maqāmāt Badī' al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī: al-Naṣṣ wa-l-Makḥṭūṭāt wa-l-Tārīkh*." *Ostour* 1 (2015): 38-55 which is a general study of the manuscript tradition of Hamadhānī's *Maqamat*; "Three *Maqāmāt* Attributed to Badī' al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī (d. 398/1008)." *Journal of Abbasid Studies* 2.1: 38-60 which provides further materials for the study of the historical evolution of this important collection of Arabic tales; we submitted a further study on Hamadhānī as an author to a volume edited by Lale Behzadi and Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila on the question of authorship in pre-modern Arabic and Persian texts which will be published in 2016. I am happy to report that I will spend next year at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Princeton, where I plan to work on my monograph on the *maqāma* genre, work on a critical edition of a *maqāma* collection, spend time with my parents in Philadelphia, and go for long walks in the woods. I'll look forward to trips to New York city to reconnect with my friends and colleagues at MEIS and other departments at NYU.

Everett Rowson: Among the pleasures of the past year for me was the publication of an Italian translation of my article "Homosexual Liaisons among the Mamluk Elite in Late Medieval Egypt and Syria", in a volume of essays titled "Le trasgressioni della carne: Il desiderio omosessuale nel mondo islamico e cristiano,

secc. XII-XX" ("The transgressions of the flesh: Homosexual desire in the Islamic and Christian worlds, twelfth through twentieth centuries"). I did, however, have to check the translation carefully, despite my somewhat limited knowledge of Italian: at one point my "stable master" became "a master of stability," with no horses in sight, until I corrected it.

Ella Shohat: This year my co-edited volume *Between the Middle East and the Americas: The Cultural Politics of Diaspora* received an Honorable Mention in the Non-Fiction category for the 2014 Arab American Book Award, The Arab American Museum. My book *Unthinking Eurocentrism* (coauthored with Robert Stam) was honored for its 20th Anniversary with a 2nd Edition, for which we wrote a new Afterward chapter, "Thinking about Unthinking: Twenty Years After." Our co-authored *Race in Translation: Culture Wars around the Postcolonial Atlantic* was translated into German, entitled *Race in Translation: Kulturkämpfe rings um den postkolonialen Atlantik*, while a number of our essays were published as book chapters: "Race in Translation: The Red, Black, and White Atlantics" in Sabine Broeck and Carsten Junker's *Postcoloniality, Decoloniality, Black Critique: Joints and Fissures*; "Tropical Orientalism: Brazil's Race Debates and the Sephardi-Moorish Atlantic" in Paul Amar's *The Middle East and Brazil: Perspectives on the New Global South*; and "Afterword: History, Empire, Resistance"

to Rebecca Weaver-Hightower & Peter Hulme's *Postcolonial Film:History, Empire, Resistance*. Some my essays have also been republished: "Remembering a Baghdad Elsewhere: An Emotional Cartography" (2013), in *A Biography: An Interdisciplinary Quarterly*; "Dislocated Identities: Reflections of an Arab-Jew," (1992) in *Live Encounters* Magazine; "The Imperial Imaginary," sections from *Unthinking Eurocentrism* (1994) republished in Rijin Sahakian's *Shangri LA: Imagined Cities*; and a brief text for the Exhibition "Protest against Forgetting," Curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist, the Italian Pavilion for the 56th Venice Biennial, in Vincenzo Trione's Codice Italia. I enjoyed participating in the following conversations and interviews: "Intellectual Journey: Language, Identity, and Dislocation" by Bassam Haddad, Inaugural Interview for the new series, "Status Hour," *Jadaliyya*; "You are Eating a Dying Language: Arab Jewish Identity and the Art of Hospitality-- a Conversation" (with Michael Rakowitz and Regine Basha), first published in Creative Time Reports and republished in *Jadaliyya* ((2014); and "Bodies and Borders" by Manuela Boatca and Sergio Costa (first published in *Jadaliyya* (2013) and translated into German: "Über Körper und Grenzen," Zeitschrift für Weltgeschichte, Berlin. My recent lectures included: Keynote address, "Disorienting Cleopatra: A Modern Trope of Mediterranean Identity," in "Lines Between: Culture and Empire in the Eastern Mediterranean,"

the European University, Cyprus, Nicosia; Opening Panel Presentation, "The Janus-Faced Blackamoor: Figuring Africa and the Orient," in "Black Portraiture[s] II: Imaging the Black Body and Re-Staging Histories" Conference, Villa La Pietra, Florence, Italy; "The Question of Judeo-Arabic(s)," Arab Crossroads Lecture Series, NYU-Abu Dhabi; "Genealogies of Fear: Jews, Muslims, and the West," a lecture delivered at the Musée Des Civilisations De l'Europe Et De La Méditerranée and co-sponsored by Mediapart, Marseille, France; Presentation and conversation with filmmaker Avi Mograbi, Musée Jeu de Paume, Paris; and "The Question of Judeo-Arabic(s)," Cultural Studies & Middle East Studies Programs, George Mason University.

Mark Smith: The challenge for me is to continue on several projects at the same time. In the spring semester I began a research project on the production of the core tradition of the biblical book of Isaiah (specifically in the seminal chapters 6-8). I am offering a paper on this project at the summer 2015 meeting of the Catholic Biblical Association. In May I completed *Where the Gods Are*, a study of the anthropomorphism of deities in relation to place and space (Yale University Press). Most of my efforts in the summer of 2015 are going into a detailed commentary on the biblical book of Judges that I am pursuing with my wife, the archaeologist Elizabeth Bloch-Smith. For the Colloquium for Biblical Research in August of

2015, I will make a seminar presentation trying to demonstrate that two of the late passages in Judges are answering questions raised by earlier material, somewhat like Jewish midrash.

Dris Soulaïmani: During the previous academic year (2014-2015), I published a new article entitled "Writing and rewriting Amazigh identity: Orthographies and language ideologies" in the journal of *Writing Systems Research*, a study which addresses the ideological issues surrounding Berber/Amazigh script selections in Morocco. Currently in summer 2015, I have received a grant from the American Institute for Maghrib Studies (AIMS) to conduct research in Morocco on Amazigh manuscripts written in Arabic script for insight into the historical and sociolinguistic contexts within which these documents are written. In addition to offering a language class to heritage language learners, I taught an advanced content course called "Arab Cultural Explorations," which focused on the cultural and artistic diversity of the Arab world in modern and pre-modern eras through analysis of linguistic documents and literary genres written in Arabic.

Justin Stearns: This was a busy year for me (but then, isn't every year?), between teaching and running Arab Crossroads Studies. The ACS weekly lecture series was a success, bringing in scholars from across the Gulf and beyond to talk about their work. Similarly, our annual public lecture series with the NYUAD Institute, which brought four scholars

throughout the year to address Religious Diversity and Sectarianism in Islamic History, attracted a large audience (next year we're organizing a series on Syria). In addition — the joys of tenure — I spent time on hiring and promotion committees, as well as serving as co-Chair of the Faculty Advisory Committee on Labor and Social Responsibility, which submitted a report and series of recommendations to NYUAD's Vice-Chancellor and Provost at the end of the year. On the research front, I continue to slowly work on translating al-Yusi's Muḥadarat for the Library of Arabic Literature, and at the beginning of the summer traveled to Morocco with the help of an AIMS grant to continue researching seventeenth century Moroccan intellectual history. This past spring, I received a Research Enhancement Fund (REF) grant from NYUAD to help continue work on the same project over the next two years. Aside from speaking about the importance of the rational sciences in 17th century Morocco at TALIM in Tangiers this past June, in December I also spoke at a conference on Mathematics and the exact sciences in Tialet, Algeria, which was a first trip for me to a country to which I hope to be able to return.

Helga Tawil-Souri: I spent Fall 2014 at NYU-Abu Dhabi and taught "War and Media in the Middle East." Interacting with what really are top-notch students and faculty there, being more closely involved with the Arab Crossroads major, and living and working on the new campus were all noteworthy ex-

periences. I also used the opportunity of being in the UAE to travel through the country and across in the region, including a class-trip to Bahrain, a relaxing visit to Oman, and research trips to Palestine/Israel and Lebanon. I am happy to share that a number of articles have been published this past academic year: "Occupation Apps" in *Jacobin*; "Media, Globalization, and the (Un)Making of the Palestinian Cause" in *Popular Communication*; "Cinema as the Space to Transgress Palestine's Territorial Trap" in *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication*; and a co-written piece, "Intifada 3.0? Cyber Colonialism and Palestinian Resistance" in *Arab Studies Journal*; as well as a number of book chapters. It was bittersweet to have a two-year long research workshop on "Producing the Arab Public" funded by the Arab Council for the Social Sciences end with a culminating conference in Beirut in March. The Spring semester was a busy time between teaching and stepping in as the Kevorkian Center's new director. I thank everyone - students, faculty, staff, and administrators – for your help and support in making the transition seamless. I look forward to working with all of you in the coming year.

Shouleh Vatanabadi: I was on medical leave during the spring semester and could only teach my courses in the fall semester of the past academic year. As for my scholarly work, I have been busy writing on my ongoing project on politics of translation and cultural flow across the different regions of the Middle East. I have presented

my writing on this subject at different conferences. At the 2014 American Comparative Literature Association conference at NYU, I presented, "Global South to Global South: Intersections of Global Capital and Politics of Translational Cultural Flow." In May 2014 I participated at the "Transnational Media and Film Studies" Conference, organized by Ella Shohat and Robert Stam at NYU, Abu Dhabi Institute, "Transnational Connections, Translational Disconnects: Turkish Soap Operas and Global Mediascape.. In May 2015 I presented "Borders, Translations, Trans/nations", at the International Conference on Language, Literature and Culture, B/Orders Unbound: Transgressing the Limits in Arts and Humanities at the Suleiman Demirel University in Turkey. Since the month of May, I have been staying in Istanbul to continue the research on my current project.

Musseref Yetim: The 2014-2015 academic year was one of the busiest with new courses, but the biggest achievement for me for was the completion of my book manuscript, tentatively entitled, *Bargaining for International Water Rights: The Euphrates and Tigris Basin*. In this book I seek to respond to growing concerns over the supply and management of scarce water resources and to provide a political economy analysis of the determinants of the emergence of property rights regimes in international basins.

Ted Ziter: Last December I published *Political Performance in Syria: From the Six-Day War to the Syrian Uprising* with Palgrave Macmillan. It's a subject I first

started researching back in graduate school when I audited classes at the High Institute of Theatre Arts in Damascus. Then in the Spring semester I got a chance to co-teach a course on Syrian theatre with the Syrian theatre director, Naila al-Atrash who was at NYU through a Vivian G. Prins Global Scholars Fellowship. I'll get a chance to teach again with Naila in the Fall 2015 semester. Last Fall I served as Naila's dramaturg for a production of the play *The House of Wives* by Fatima Gallaire at the Experimental Theatre Wing. I'll be her dramaturg again Fall 2015 for a production of Tawfiq al-Hakim's *The Sultan's Dilemma* at the New School.

Angela Zito: I spent Fall 2014 in Shanghai setting up the work there that will continue in fall 2015 on the revival of old discourses of filiality or xiao by the government. These old styles of organizing social life are now being taken up as a mode of state-influenced ethical reflection in post-socialist China, and as a means of extracting tighter familial care for the elderly in the wake of state draw-down in healthcare. This year saw the publication of *DV-Made China: Digital Subjects and Social Transformations after Independent Film*, co-edited with Zhang Zhen. This collection of essays draws on our decade-long commitment to the ethical work done through independent documentary in China, something funded in part by the NYU Center for Religion and Media which I co-direct. My latest essay on Chinese film, "The Act of Remembering, the Xianchang of Recording: The Folk/Minjian

Memory Project in China" will be published this fall in *Film Quarterly*. After a year's sabbatical leave, I will return to NYU in fall 2016 to resume teaching "Religious Bodies" and "Religion as Media" in both Anthropology and the Religious Studies Program, and once again do exciting, media-centered programming with our partners in the Hagop Kevorkian Center.

2014-2015 Events Archive

RESEARCH OFF THE RECORD

A new series designed to introduce students and others to the variety of ways research is done, thus rendering the ‘methods’ aspects of research more transparent and concrete whilst engaging with faculty across NYU who work on issues related to the Middle East.

Notes from the Archives: Anxieties of Field-Building in U.S. Middle East Studies
Zachary Lockman, Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, NYU

Notes from the Scaffold: Research on Migrant Workers in Qatar
Natasha Iskander, Wagner School of Public Policy, NYU

Notes from the Firing Range: Collecting the Sounds of the Iraq War
Martin Daughtry, Music, NYU

SEMINARS

An interdisciplinary series of lectures and presentations pertaining to the field of Middle East Studies.

On Egypt, Revolt, & Music: A Conversation with Ramy Essam
Ramy Essam, Egyptian Rock Musician

Queer Writing in Palestine: Between Resistance and the Deconstruction of Nationalism
Raji Bathish, Palestinian Writer; Sinan Antoon, Gallatin School, NYU; Suneela Mubayi, MEIS, NYU

Rethinking the Arab Conquests and the Remaking of the Late Antique Middle East
Robert Hoyland, Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, NYU

Pioneering Modern Arabic Poetry
Amjad Nasser, Jordanian Writer, Poet, and Journalist; Sinan Antoon, Gallatin School, NYU

A Short History of the Israeli and American Discourses on Terrorism
Remi Brulin, Journalism and History, NYU

What is Left of Arab Hope? The Challenge of Democracy and Security in the Middle East
Sarah Leah Whitson, Executive Director, Middle East Division, Human Rights Watch

Reassessing The Turkish ‘Linguistic Revolution’: Toward a Working Model
Emmanuel Szurek, Near Eastern Studies, Princeton University

Can Palestinian Men Be Victims? Gendering Israel’s War on Gaza
Maya Mikdashi, Women and Gender Studies, Rutgers University
With the History of Women and Gender Program, NYU

Inter/Nationalism: Encountering Palestine in American Indian Studies
Steven Salaita, Independent Scholar

The Warm Sands of the Coast of Tantura: History and Memory in Israel After 1948
Alon Confino, University of Virginia, Ben-Gurion University

Citizen Strangers: Palestinians and the Birth of Israel’s Liberal Settler State
Steven Salaita, Independent Scholar

The Warm Sands of the Coast of Tantura: History and Memory in Israel After 1948
Alon Confino, University of Virginia, Ben-Gurion University

Citizen Strangers: Palestinians and the Birth of Israel’s Liberal Settler State
Shira Robinson, History, George Washington University
With the Taub Center for Israel Studies

Building Mental Walls: Israeli Textbooks as a Means of Legitimation
Nurit Peled-Elhanan, Language and Education, Hebrew University of Jerusalem
With the Department of Media, Culture, and Communication, Steinhart, NYU

Social Stimulants: Performing Practices in Sultanate India
Emma Flatt, History, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill
With South Asia @ NYU, the Gulnar K. Bosch Lecture Fund and the Department of Art History

The Art and Politics of Translation: A Conversation with Maureen Freely
Maureen Freely, English and Comparative Literary Studies, University of Warwick, and translator of Nobel Laureate Orhan Pamuk’s works. Moderated by Sibel Erol, MEIS, NYU.

RESEARCH WORKSHOPS

The program’s academic cornerstone features new unpublished work by established and up-and-coming scholars of the region. Promotes cross-regional and interdisciplinary engagement of analytical issues in Middle Eastern Studies and beyond.

Jihad in a World of Sovereigns: Violence, Islam, and the Bosnia Crisis
Darryl Li, Law, Yale University; Discussant: Lauren Benton, History, NYU

Western Promises: Abbas Hilmi II and the Pursuit of Sovereignty in Siwa
Matthew Ellis, International Affairs and Middle Eastern Studies, Sarah Lawrence; Discussant: Khaled Fahmy, History, American University in Cairo

The Political Geography of Protest in Jordan
Jillian Schwedler, Political Science, Hunter College (CUNY); Discussant: Jeff Goodwin, Sociology, NYU

Transnational Islamic Pedagogical Networks
Zareena Grewal: American Studies and Religious Studies, Yale Univeristy; Discussant: Leslie Turnbull, Anthropology, NYU

The Cinematic World of Arab Oil
Mona Damluji, Asian and Islamic Art History and Visual Culture, Wheaton College; Discussant: Pascal Menoret, Arab Crossroads Studies, NYU Abu Dhabi.

NEW BOOKS

A series featuring new, groundbreaking publications with relevance to the field of Middle East Studies.

Rebel Music: Race, Empire, and the New Muslim Youth Culture (Pantheon, 2014)
Hisham Aidi, International and Public Affairs, Columbia University

The Way It Was: The US, Israel and Palestine 1948-9 (Columbia University Press, Forthcoming)
Irene Gendzier, History, Boston University

The History Of Afghanistan: Fayz Muhammad Katib Hazarah’s Siraj Al-Tawarikh (Brill, 2013)
Robert McChesney, MEIS, NYU; Mehdi Khorrami, MEIS, NYU

Poetic Trespass: Writing between Hebrew and Arabic in Israel/Palestine (Princeton University Press, 2014)
Lital Levy, Comparative Literature, Princeton University
With the Taub Center for Israel Studies

Islam and the Americas (University Press of Florida, 2015)
Aisha Khan, Anthropology, NYU
With the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, NYU

CONFERENCES

Inner Eurasia Then and Now: Legacies of Thought , Space, and Empire
A graduate student conference with OASIES, the Organization for the Advancement of Studies of Inner Eurasian Societies at Columbia, Princeton, and NYU
Participants: Abby Amanda Downing-Beaver, Harriman Institute, Columbia

University; Gulnar Kendirbai, History, Columbia University; Clayton Merkley, Slavic Department, Columbia University; Hamed Kazemzadeh, Center for East European Studies, University of Warsaw; Zhumatay Gabit, Harriman Institute, Columbia University; Christopher Edling, School of the Arts, Columbia University; Rustin Zarkar, MEIS, NYU; Aura Young, Slavic Languages and Literatures, Yale University; Shima Houshyar, Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies, NYU; Belle Cheves, Near Eastern Studies, NYU; Serkan Yolacan, Anthropology, Duke University; Ilke Denizli, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University; Marantha Miles, Anthropology, George Washington University; Shoshana Keller, History, Hamilton College

Transnational Perspectives on the Life and Work of Sabahattin Ali: Seminal Author of Turkish Literary Modernism, 1907-1948
A closed research workshop chaired by Sibel Erol, MEIS, NYU, and Ilker Hepkaner, MEIS, NYU, and cosponsored by the Program in Ottoman Studies, the Department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, and the German Department at NYU
Participants: Sibel Erol, MEIS, NYU; Ilker Hepkaner, MEIS, NYU; Zeynep Seviner, University of Washington; Ali Bolcakan, U Michigan - Ann Arbor; Kader Konuk, University of Essen; Sevengul Sonmez Independent Scholar, Editor; Kristin Dickinson, UC-Berkeley; Elizabeth Nolte, University of Washington; Nicholas Glastonbury, Penn State University

Approaches to Islamic Law in Society
A closed research workshop chaired by Michael Gilsenan, Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies and Anthropology, NYU
Participants: Ghislaine Lydon, History, UCLA; Jonathan Brown, School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University; Guy Burak, History and MEIS Librarian, NYU; Morgan Clarke, Social Anthropology, Oxford, Samera Esmeir,

Rhetoric, Berkeley, Khaled Fahmy, History, American University in Cairo; Michael Peletz, Anthropology, Emory; Benam Sadeghi, Religious Studies, Stanford; Omar Farahat, Anthropology, Columbia University; Sohaib Khan, Anthropology, Columbia University; Adam Mestyan, History, Harvard; Beshara Doumani, History and Middle East Studies, Brown University; Tamir Moustafa, Politics, Simon Fraser University; Linda Sayed, MEIS, NYU; Darryl Li, Law, Yale University; Iza Hussin, Politics and International Studies, Cambridge; Daragh Grant, Anthropology, University of Chicago; Jessica Marglin, Religion, University of Southern California, Brinkley Messick, Anthropology and MEESAS, Columbia University

New Directions in the Cultural and Intellectual History of China: Conference in Honor of Benjamin Elman

A closed workshop chaired by Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, History and MEIS, NYU, cosponsored by Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, Global Research Initiatives (GRI) and NYU Abu Dhabi
Participants: Sheldon Pollock, Columbia University; Brigid Vance, Princeton University; Ori Sela, Tel Aviv University; Carla Nappi, University of British Columbia; Pingyi Chu, Academia Sinica (Taiwan); Minghui Hu, University of California Santa Barbara; Bruce Rusk, University of British Columbia; Susan Naquin, Princeton University; Miaw-fen Lu, Academia Sinica (Taiwan); Roger Hart, Stanford University; Chunmei Du, Western Kentucky University; Yuan-ling Chao, Middle Tennessee State University; Yang, Jui-Sung, National Chengchi University (Taiwan); Shellen X. Wu, University of Tennessee; Eugenia Lean, Columbia University; Meng Yue, University of Toronto; Benjamin Elman, Princeton University

Historical Materialism: Returns of Capital: Revolutions in the Middle East and North Africa

Deniz Solmaz, Transformation of Northern Iraq: An Analysis of Class Struggle And Possibility of a “Passive Revolution”; Keenan Wilder, Representative and Policeman?:

Explaining Labor Autonomy in Tunisia; Philip Marfleet, Egypt's Revolution: The Left Reflects; Ozgur Genc and Ozgur Narin, Kobane, Gezi and Other Communes: A Critique on Autonomy and Rethinking Communes; Chaired by Ella Wind, Hagop Kevorkian Center, NYU

IRANIAN STUDIES

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

The Effects Of Coercive Diplomacy On The Iranian Public’s Attitudes Towards Iran’s Nuclear Program

Ebrahim Mohseni, World Studies, University of Tehran

Aesthetic and Power in the Islamic Republic (1978-1988)

Hamed Yousefi, Freelance Journalist

Time Will Say Nothing: A Philosopher Survives an Iranian Prison

Ramin Jahanbegloo, Islamic Studies, York University

The Politics of Honor and Rights in Iran

Ziba Mir-Hosseini, School of Oriental and African Studies, London

Courtier, Laborer, Dancer, Spouse: The Multiple Dimensions and Histories of Slavery in Qajar Iran

Nahid Mozaffari, MEIS, NYU

Revolution Street: Tehran, Trapped Between the Past and the Future

Amir-Hassan Cheheltan, Karnameh Cultural Institute, Tehran

Battling Truths: Defending the Islamic Republic of Iran’s Sacred Memories in Film and Literature

Narges Bajoghli, Anthropology, NYU; Amir Moosavi, MEIS, NYU

Soundtrack of the Post-Revolution: Music as Politics in Iran

Nahid Siamdoust, Hagop Kevorkian Center, NYU

Mojtahed Shabestari: On Faith and Revelation

Soroush Dabbagh, Historical Studies, University of Toronto

#Iranslection: How Solidarity Around a Hashtag Transformed the Ecology of Online Life During the 2009 Election Crisis

Negar Mottahedeh, Literature, Duke University

OTTOMAN STUDIES

Professor of History Leslie Peirce curates this wide-ranging interdisciplinary series on the Ottoman Empire and its legacies.

Turkiyya Hasan, The Orphan Scandal And The Rise Of The Muslim Brotherhood

Beth Baron, History, The Graduate Center, CUNY

Choreographies of Sharing: Sacred Sites in Ottoman and Contemporary Turkey

Karen Barkey, Sociology, Columbia University

Featuring Fictionalized Ottomans: ‘The Magnificent Century’ and the Problem of Historical Accuracy in Turkish TV Series

Gunhan Borekci, History, Istanbul Sehir University

Destination Edirne: Approaching the Early Ottoman Capital

Amy Singer, Middle Eastern and African History, Tel Aviv Univeristy

Archaeology, Ethnography, and Everyday Life at the Dig

Zeynep Çelik, Architecture, New Jersey Institute of Technology

The Last Alchemists: Practicing al-Kimye in the Modern Era from the Ottoman World to South Asia

Tuna Artan, History, Rutgers University
Yes, We are Syrians: National Contestation and Evangelical Consciousness in a Neo-Aramaic Travalogue from 19th-century Hakkari
Adam Becker, Religion, NYU

PANEL DISCUSSIONS

Reflections on Gaza

Helga Tawil-Souri, Media, Culture, Communication, NYU; Zachary Lockman, MEIS, NYU; Ron Zweig, Hebrew and Judaic Studies, NYU; Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, History and MEIS, NYU; Jihad Abusalim, Hebrew and Judaic Studies, NYU; moderated by Arang Keshavarzian, MEIS, NYU
With the Taub Center for Israel Studies and the Department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies

Interpreting the ISIS Threat

Sinan Antoon, Gallatin, NYU; Mohamad Bazzzi, Journalism, NYU; Arang Keshavarzian, MEIS, NYU; Joanne Nucho, Hagop Kevorkian Center, NYU; Sara Pursley, MEIS, NYU

Beyond the Arab Spring: Political (De) formation and Social Revolution in Rojava

Nazan Ustundag, Sociology, Bogazici University; Sirwan Kajjo, Journalist; Christian Sinclair, Middle Eastern Studies, University of Arizona; Hisyar Ozsoy, Anthropology, University of Michigan, Flint

Who Enjoys Human Rights in Abu Dhabi?

Nicholas McGheehan, Human Rights Watch; Sean O’Driscoll, Independent Journalist; Vasuki Nesiah, Gallatin Human Rights

Initiative, NYU; Sarah Leah Whitson, Human Rights Watch

With the NYU Coalition for Fair Labor, the Departments of Social and Cultural Analysis, English, History, and Anthropology; the American Studies Program; the Asian/ Pacific/American Institute; the Coalition for Fair Labor; the Gallatin Human Rights Initiative; South Asia at NYU; the Center for Media, Culture and History; and Human Rights Watch

Notes from the Field: A Human Rights Briefing on the Middle East

Adam Coogle, Jordan and Saudi Arabia Specialist, Human Rights Watch; Lama Fakh, Syria and Lebanon Specialist, Human Rights Watch

What Went Wrong in Syria?

Adam Shatz, Contributing Editor, London Review of Books and Spring 2015 Writer-in-Residence, Hagop Kevorkian Center; Mohamad Bazzzi, Journalism, NYU; Steven Heydemann, VP of Applied Resesarch, US Institute of Peace; George Saghir, Business Analyst; Lisa Wedeen, Political Science, University of Chicago

Labor In Abu Dhabi 101: A Cross-Campus Teach-In

Kristina Bogos; Coalition for Fair Labor, NYU; Jess Champagne, Workers Rights Consortium; Arang Keshavarzian, MEIS, NYU; Martin Klimke, History, NYUAD; Erum Raza, Compliance and Risk Management, NYUAD; Kimberly Rodriguez, Advocacy, NYUAD; Andrew Ross, Social and Cultural Analysis, NYU; Justin Stearns, Arab Crossroads Studies, NYUAD
With the American Association of Univeristy Professors, Asian/Pacific/American Institute, the Center for Media, Cutlure and Hsitory, Anthropology, English, History, Social and Cultural Analysis, South Asia @ NYU

BDS: Israel, the US, and the Struggle for Palestinian Rights

Omar Barghouti, Human Rights Activist and Founder of the BDS Movement; Corey Robin, Political Science, Brooklyn College; J Kehaulani Kauanui, American Studies, Wesleyan

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

Reading between the Lines/Languages: Moroccan Poetry in Text, Translation, and Performance

Idriss Aissa, Author of A Woman from the Remotest of Winds; Driss Mesnaoui, Renowned zajal poet (colloquial strophic poetry), founder of the Moroccan Association for Popular Poetry; Omar Berrada, Director, Library and Translation Center, Dar al-Ma'mûn (Marrakech); Alexander Elinson, Arabic, Hunter College, CUNY; and Deborah Kapchan, Performance Studies, Anthropology, Music, and Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, NYU
With the Maison Francaise at NYU and PEN World Voices

Careers: MA Alumni Open House

Rachel Smith-Levy, US Foreign Service Officer; Cyrus Roedel, Preventive Case Planner, Arab American Family support Center; Mara Kronenfeld, Director, MENA Partnership Development, International Youth Foundation; Anjali Kamat, Fault Lines Correspondent, Al-Jazeera English; Killian Clarke, Politics, Princeton University

POINTS OF CONTACT:
NEW APPROACHES
TO ISLAMIC ART

This ongoing series is curated by Finbarr Barry Flood and Dipti Khera of the Art History Department and the Institute of Fine Arts

Persianate Images Between Europe and China:The “Frankish Manner” in the Diez and Topkapi Albums, ca. 1350-145
Gulru Necipoglu, Hilstory of Art, Harvard University

A Tumulus in the Pontic Steppe: Reconstructing Ritual, Community and Polity in the early Thirteenth Century CE
Renata Holod, History of Art, University of Pennsylvania

A Receptacle for the Absent Body: The Chasuble of Thomas Becket in Fermo
Avinoam Shalem, Art History and Archaeology, Columbia University

Regional and Transregional Negotiations in Southeast Asia’s Islamic Architecture
Imran bin Tajudeen, Architecture, National University of Singapore

Islamization and Material Culture in Eastern Africa: Recent Fieldwork
Mark Horton, Archaeology, University of Bristol; Bertrand Hirsch, History, University of Paris and Director, Center of African Research

Art and Architecture of the Deccan: A Conversation
Navina Haider, Islamic Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art; Phillip B. Wagoner, Art History and Archaeology, Wesleyan University

VISUAL CULTURE

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

Gaza Film Festival
A series of documentaries curated by Eman Morsi, PhD Candiate, MEIS, NYU, and cosponsored with the Asian/Pacific/American Institute at NYU, The Taub Center for Israel Studies, and the Department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies

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

Flying Paper (2013, 71 min) A film by Nitin Sawhney and Roger Hill

Strawberry Fields (2006, 60 mins) A film by Ayelet Heller

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

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

Algerian Cinema
A selection of Algerian films curated by Eman Morsi (PhD Candidate, MEIS) and Adnan Moussa (MA ‘15, NES)

Chronicle of the Years of Embers (1975, 175 min) A film by Mohamed Lakhdar-Hamina

Omar Gatlatto (1976, 90 min) A film by Merzak Allouache

Une Femme Taxi à Sidi Bel-Abbès (Female Cabby in Sidi Bel-Abbès) (2000, 52 min) A film by Belkacem Hadjadj

The Desert Ark (L’arche du Desert) (1997, 90 min) A film by Mohamed Chouikh

Afghan Cinema 1946-2014: A Bittersweet Narrative
Habib Sadaat, Visiting Scholar, Tisch Film and TV; moderated by Dana Polan, NYU and Lynne McVeigh, NYU

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

Shattered Rhymes: The Life and Poetry of Erez Bitton (2014, 63 Min) A film by Sami Shalom Chetrit
Discussion with Ella Shohat, Art and Public Policy, Tisch, NYU; Sami Shalom Chetrit, poet, thinker, and filmmaker; and Erez Bitton, pioneer of Mizrahi poetry

Megalopolis
A film series about life in the Middle East's three largest cities curated by Greta Scharnweber, Associate Director, Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies

Tehran Has No More Pomegranates! (Iran, 2006, 68 min) A film by Massoud Bakhshi
After-film discussion with Arang Keshavarzian, MEIS, NYU

Cairo Drive (Egypt, 2013, 79 min) A film by Sherief ElKatsha
After-film discsusion with filmmaker

Ecumenopolis: City Without Limits (Turkey, 2012, 93 min) A film by Imre Azem
After-film discussion with Duygu Parmaksizoglu, Anthopology, CUNY

Making the Invisible Visible
Artists' Talk with Wafaa Bilal, Arts, NYU, and creator of the performative art project *Domestic Tension*

Logical Revolts
(2012, 44 min) A film by Louis Henderson
After-film discussion with the filmmaker and Khaled Fahmy, History, American University in Cairo
With the Colloquium for Unpopular Culture

K-16 TEACHER TRAINING

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

Spotlight on Lebanon: Pluralism, Citizenship, and Daily Living 1900-2015
How does pluralism affect daily life for individuals and families as they interact with each other across multiple scales and settings (i.e. private/public, urban/rural, family/community/city/state)? What is sectarianism and how do we understand it historically?
Joanne Nucho, Hagop Kevorkian Center, NYU; Linda Sayed, Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, NYU

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

University of Toronto; Salmak Khaledi, musician and producer.

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

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

JACK G. SHAHEEN
ARCHIVE

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

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

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

HAGOP KEVORKIAN CENTER REVIEW 2014/2015

