

أخبار و أحداث

News & Happenings
The King Fahd Center for Middle East Studies Newsletter

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King Fahd Center
for Middle East Studies
at the University of
Arkansas

Volume 2 • Issue 2
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ANNOUNCEMENTS



Social Media

Follow the King Fahd Center on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), and check out video clips from our events on [YouTube](#). Want more information on our programs and other opportunities in Middle East Studies? Ask to be added to our mailing list.



Watch, Read, Listen

Keep up with the King Fahd Center in the press: podcasts, video clips and articles are regularly posted on the King Fahd Center website under [News & Media](#).



Scholarship Deadlines

The King Fahd Center offers Academic Year and Study Abroad scholarships for advanced undergraduate MEST majors who have demonstrated a serious commitment to study and excellent performance in the classroom.

The Center also supports graduate study for students at the MA and PhD level working in academic disciplines with a focus in Middle East/Islamic Studies with Summer Research and Conference Travel Grants. Details and applications can be found on the [King Fahd Center website](#).

Undergraduate Study Abroad Scholarship:

February 1, 2014

Graduate Summer Research Grant:

February 7, 2014

Undergraduate Academic Year Scholarship:

March 14, 2014

Graduate & Undergraduate Conference Travel Grants:

Accepted on a rolling basis

I want to welcome everyone back to a new semester – and hopefully a break in weather that impeded the end of last term and threatens to carry through now. As for our region, in some places things move from bad to worse, in others worse is hardly imaginable. Perhaps we may find silver linings in the tentative destruction of some chemical weapons and negotiations rather than senseless rhetoric over nuclear capabilities. True, every optimistic headline seems to be followed by a barrage of bad news. Creative artistic and cultural production, collaborative and individual, does manage to thrive even – and especially – in the face of turmoil and tyranny. Here we will continue to endeavor to understand, celebrate the best of human spirit and decry the worst.

We look forward, among other events, to lectures on Shi'i religious architecture and practice, the recent history and political future of Libya, and we hope to end the semester with a full-fledged duel – cutting words not swords and all in good spirit – by some of the masters of Lebanese oral poetry. As always, much of our most meaningful work is in the classroom and in the hallways of the university. The ongoing achievements of faculty, students, and alumni are to be applauded.

Dr. Joel Gordon, Director
King Fahd Center for Middle East Studies



*Cover features a photo from Jaime Alyss Holland's photography exhibit **Beirut Speaks** taken at the Saiji Urban Gardens in Beirut, Lebanon.*

WINNER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS ARABIC TRANSLATION AWARD ANNOUNCED FOR 2013

The King Fahd Center for Middle East Studies at the University of Arkansas and Syracuse University Press are pleased to announce the winner of the 2013 Arkansas Arabic Translation Award. Ferial Ghazoul and John Verlenden of the American University in Cairo have won the 2013 Award for their collection *Chronicles of Majnun Layla and Selected Poems of Qassim Haddad*. They will share the \$10,000 prize with the original author, Bahraini poet Qassim Haddad. Ghazoul and Verlenden's manuscript will be published by Syracuse University Press.

Born in Bahrain, Qassim Haddad rose to fame both as a poet and as a revolutionary, much of his poetry focusing on political subjects dealing with freedom and progress. He has published 15 collections of poetry and is a founding member of 'Bahrain Writers Association' established in 1969. At present he is the head of the Union of Bahraini writers.

Ferial Ghazoul is a noted Iraqi scholar, critic and translator. She was educated in Iraq, Lebanon, Britain, France and the USA, and earned her PhD in comparative literature from Columbia University in 1978. Currently, she is chair and professor of English and comparative literature at the American University in Cairo.

John Verlenden is an American academic, writer and award-winning translator of Arabic literature. He obtained a BA in English literature from Rhodes College in 1986 followed by an MFA in Creative Writing from Louisiana State University in 1988. He has taught at a number of universities in the USA and the Middle East, and currently works at the American University in Cairo.

Ghazoul and Verlenden have been translating as a team for nearly two decades. The 2013 award follows a \$100,000 translation grant the pair received from the National Endowment for the Humanities to "create a comprehensive edition of Haddad's work in English."



John Verlenden and Ferial Ghazoul, winners of the 2013 University of Arkansas Arabic Translation Award

University of Arkansas Arabic Translation Award 2014

The University of Arkansas Arabic Translation Award is a prize given for a notable English translation of a book-length literary work originally written in the Arabic language, administered by the King Fahd Center for Middle East Studies. Since 2008, the prize-winning book has been published by the Syracuse University Press as part of their Middle Eastern literature series. Prior to 2008, the University of Arkansas Press published the award-winning entry. Along with the Banipal Prize, the Arkansas Award is the leading prize in the field of Arabic-to-English literary translation.

Annual prizes are awarded up to \$10,000 for the best translation of Arabic literature from any of the following genres: poetry, novel, short story collection, drama, or literary non-fiction such as autobiography or memoir.

The original author (if still holding rights to the work) will receive, in lieu of royalties, \$5,000 and the translator (or translators) will receive a total of \$5,000. Independent judges select the award winning translation, which will be published by Syracuse University Press as part of its prestigious Middle East Literature in Translation series.

Submissions for the 2014 Arabic Translation Award will be accepted through April 30, 2014. Award winners will be announced the following fall.

Submission guidelines and a list of previous winners can be found on the [King Fahd Center website](#).

NADI CINEMA SPRING 2014

7:00 PM Wednesdays

January 15 in Mullins 104: **Microphone (Egypt 2010)**

January 22 in Mullins 104: **Voice of My Father (Turkey 2012)**

February 5 in Mullins 104: **No One Knows About Persian Cats (Iran 2009)**

February 26 in Mullins 104: **The Open Door (Egypt 1963)**

March 5 in Mullins 104: **Ring of Fire (Lebanon 2004)**

March 19 in Giffels Auditorium: **Lion of the Desert (Libya 1981)**

*Post-film discussion led by Libyan historian Dr. Ali Ahmida, Univeristy of New England

April 9 in Mullins 104: **Light out of Nowhere (Israel 1973)**

April 16 in Mullins 104: **Kif al-Haal?/How's it Going? (Saudi Arabia 2006)**



Sponsored by the King Fahd Center for Middle East Studies.

All films subtitled in English. For film synopses, trailers and more information visit <http://mest.uark.edu> or call 479-575-2175

UPCOMING EVENTS

In the Presence of the Imam: Core Beliefs and Ritual Practices in Shi'ite Shrine Architecture

Friday, January 31 at 12:00 PM

Old Main, Room 203

Dr. Yasser Tabbaa, Professor of Art History and the Dorothy Kayser Hohenberg Chair of Excellence at the University of Memphis, will present a lecture based on his current book project, entitled *In the Presence of the Imam: Architecture, Ritual, and Representation in Shi'i Shrines*. The question of a specifically Shi'i aesthetic within Islamic art has been vigorously debated in the past two decades, some scholars rejecting it as disruptive of pan-Islamist essentialism and other admitting it on strictly formalist grounds that dismiss any cultural associations. Disengaging this question from its essentialist and formalist tethers, this paper asks not so much whether there are essential Shi'i descriptors in Shi'i architecture, but whether Shi'i shrine architecture responds or corresponds to fundamental tenets of Shi'ism that are rooted in past practice but also alive in the present. This presentation will examine Shi'i shrines with special emphasis on those in Damascus and Najaf, against normative and widely accepted Shi'i core beliefs and ritual practices.



Imam Ali Mosque in Najaf, Iraq; photo courtesy of Yasser Taabbaa

Arabic Conversation Table

January 29-May 1, Arkansas Union

Improve your spoken Arabic for class, for travel, for study abroad by practicing with fellow students and native speakers at Arabic Conversation Table. Meeting times and locations on [Page 11](#).

Visiting Scholar: Ali Ahmida

March 16-22, 2014

Dr. Ali Ahmida, Professor of Political Science at University of New England, will be in residence March 16-22. A return visitor to the University of Arkansas, Dr. Ahmida has expertise in political theory, comparative politics, and historical sociology of power, agency and anti-colonial resistance in North Africa, especially modern Libya. He is currently writing an oral history of the liberation struggle against Italy, focusing on the concentration camps that were a keystone of the Italian counter-insurgency strategy. Professor Ahmida will deliver a series of talks (schedule forthcoming) and will lead the discussion at a special screening of Mustapha Akkad's 'Lion of the Desert' (Libya 1981) at 7:00 PM in Giffels Auditorium on March 19 as part of Nadi Cinema.

Zajal Poetry

Saturday, April 5 at 7:00 PM; Venue to be announced

In early April the KFC will sponsor an extemporaneous oral poetry duel by two of Lebanon's most distinguished *zajal* masters. Oral poetry is practiced – and celebrated – throughout the Middle East and adjacent areas. Lebanese *zajal* is a particularly rich – and dramatic – art form that incorporates verbal play, punning, rhyme, and chanting accompanied by musical background and punctuated by audience exclamation. Adnan and Paula Haydar, who are experts on the *zajal* tradition and its relationship to similar expressive art forms, will introduce this event, which promises to be memorable.

Arabic Speech Contest

April 2014

Arabic language students of all levels will compete in the annual Arabic Speech Contest in April. Specific dates and details will be forthcoming.

RECENT EVENTS

Visiting Student Delegation from King Saud University

October 6-10, 2013

In October the King Fahd Center hosted a visiting delegation of nine history graduate students from King Saud University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The delegation, sponsored by the Saudi Ministry of Higher Education, was accompanied by Dr Abdullah al-Subaiy, Professor of History and the Prince Salman bin Abdullaziz Chair for Historical and Civilizational Studies of the Arabian Peninsula at KSU. The visitors met with MEST graduate students and faculty, attended class lectures, visited the Office for International Students and Scholars, hosted an informal Arabic table and visited Crystal Bridges Museum. Professor Subaiy met with Todd Shields, Dean of Fulbright College and the Graduate School, and with representatives from the Office of Sponsored Students, International Admissions, and the Spring International Language Center. After leaving Fayetteville, the delegation attended the Middle East Studies Association annual meeting in New Orleans, LA.

On the Ground in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran: Current Events and Stories from Abroad

October 25, 2013

The King Fahd Center continued its monthly round-table series with a discussion on Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran. King Fahd Center director Joel Gordon, doctoral student Kaveh Bassiri and undergraduate Khalid Ahmadzai discussed their experiences abroad and fielded questions from the audience.



Round-table participants Khalid Ahmadzai, Joel Gordon and Kaveh Basiri; photo courtesy of Nani Verzon.



Dr. Omar Dewachi lectures at Hembree Auditorium; photo courtesy of Khalid Ahmadzai.

Ungovernable Life: Health Care Crises in the Aftermath of War in Iraq October 28, 2013

Dr. Omar Dewachi, assistant professor of medical anthropology and public health at the American University of Beirut (AUB), trained as a medical doctor in Iraq during the 1990s and received his PhD in Social Anthropology from Harvard University in 2008. Dewachi's work explores what he calls the tensions between the 'necropolitics' of war and the 'biopolitics' of statehood in post-US invasion Iraq. He examines the state of public health, the role of state-sponsored medicine, and the 'toxicity of daily life' in Iraq since the invasion and occupation of 2003, the toppling of Saddam Hussein and the insurgency that followed. His work is based on research undertaken in Iraq with doctors, public health and other government officials, and patients.

Beirut Speaks

November 7-30, 2013

Coco's Lebanese Cafe in Fayetteville hosted 'Beirut Speaks', a photography exhibit by MA Anthropology student Jaime Alyss Holland. 'Beirut Speaks' chronicles the contemporary street art scene in Beirut, Lebanon. During field research in Beirut during summer 2013, Holland encountered a small but significant group of street artists that have developed their own unique style of street art, distinguished from Western and European graffiti, and based on Arabic letters and Arabic calligraphy. This style, referred to as *calligraffiti*, is claimed to be the first of its kind in the world.

The Sea of Galilee Boat: A 2,000 Year Discovery

November 5, 2013

In 1986, the Sea of Galilee Boat was uncovered on the north-west shore of the Sea of Galilee in Israel. Radiocarbon-dated to roughly 15 B.C., the 2,000-year-old vessel is representative of the large fishing boats common on the ancient lake, and the type of boat used in the Gospels by the disciples of Jesus. It is also the type of boat used by the Jews in the nautical Battle of Migdal in AD 67 against a makeshift Roman fleet. Dr. Shelley Wachsmann, nautical archaeologist and former-Inspector of Underwater Antiquities for the Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums led the team that excavated the Sea of Galilee Boat. The lecture described the adventure of the boat's discovery and excavation, and explained the revealing research about the vessel and its milieu.

Women in Syria's Civilian Resistance: Two Nonviolent Campaigns

December 8, 2013

[Watch on YouTube](#)

Dr. Mohja Kahf, Associate Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Arkansas, analyzed two nonviolent protest campaigns in the Syrian Revolution (Stop the Killing and Brides of Freedom March), examining them at the intersection of factors of gender, class, religion, and the body, and discussed their significance in the overall context of the uprising through its three major phases.

From Bollywood to Hollywood: The Middle East and Global Cinema

January 15, 2014

Dr. Joel Gordon spoke to undergraduates from the Honors College at the first Spring session of Hotz Hall's 'Professor, and Pizza on the Patio' program, introducing Middle East and global cinema, and providing an introduction to the Nadi Cinema series. 'Professor and Pizza on the Patio' is a monthly program sponsored by the Honors College that connects Honors freshmen with faculty members through research and shared interests.



*Mohja Kahf at Georgia Southern University;
photo courtesy of Mohja Kahf*

FACULTY NEWS

Sarwar Alam (MEST) presented 'O Murshid, My Heart Cries for Thee: Devotionalism and Gender Transgression in the Songs of Miazbandariyya Tradition in Bangladesh' at the American Academy of Religion 2013 Annual Meeting in Baltimore, MD. Four undergraduates in his Introduction to Middle East Studies and Introduction to Islam courses had papers accepted for regional AAR meetings in March.

Nikolay Antov (HIST) presented 'Patterns of Formation of Muslim Communities and Varieties of Islam in the Early Modern Ottoman Balkans (15th–17th c.)' at the Sixteenth Century Society Conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico in October 2013.

Joel Gordon (HIST) published 'Chahine, Chaos and Cinema: A Revolutionary Coda' in *Bustan* 4:2 (2013), 99-112. He presented 'Hasan and Marcos – Where's Cohen?: Screen Shots of a Changing Egypt' and chaired the section 'Responses to Kemalism in the Middle East from 1920s through 1940s' at the Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting in New Orleans, LA in October 2013. He was also appointed to the board of the Center for Arabic Study Abroad.

Adnan and Paula Haydar (WLLC) completed work on *Haki bi Lubnani*, the Lebanese dialect companion to the *Al-Kitab* Arabic language series. They collaborated with **Nadine Sinno**, Assistant Professor of Arabic in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at Virginia Tech University, and a 2009 UA PhD in Comparative Literature and 2004 MFA in Translation.

Mohja Kahf (ENGL) presented 'Women & the Arab Uprisings: Political, Economic & Gender Violences' at the Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting in New Orleans, LA in October 2013, and 'Women in Non-Violent Peace Movements in Syria' at Georgia Southern University in November 2013. She represented the Syrian Nonviolence Movement at a press conference in New York City on January 10, 2014 about the International Solidarity Hunger Strike for Syria. Among the group's demands are a binding resolution from the United Nations Security Council requiring unhampered access across borders and military lines, for international humanitarian agencies to bring food and medicine to besieged populations in Syria without preconditions or discrimination based on sect, ethnicity, gender, or political views, and with a monitoring provision to ensure compliance.

Tom Paradise (GEOS) will serve as the site consultant for the upcoming *NOVA* special (PBS-TV) *Petra, Lost City of the Nabateans*, consulting on environmental history, geography, geology, and architecture in script and on screen for the series. The one-hour special will air in the Fall of 2014. In March 2014 he will speak to a plenary session on 'Sandstone deterioration in Nabatean and Roman Architecture, and Thamudic petroglyphs, architecture, and dressed surfaces, Wadi Rum' at the UNESCO World Heritage Site Meeting in Wadi Rum.



Wadi Rum, Jordan; photo courtesy of Tom Paradise.

Ted Swedenburg (ANTH) was a panelist on the workshop 'Research Methods, New Media, and Politically Volatile Issues' organized by the Task Force for Middle East Anthropology at the American Anthropological Association meetings in Chicago in November 2013. He wrote the program notes ('**Electro Sha'abi: Autotune-Rebels in Cairo**') on *mahragan* (electro *sha'bi*) music for the Norient Music Film Festival in Bern, Switzerland that took place from January 9-11, 2014. He also testified as an expert witness in October 2013 at US District Court, Western District of Virginia, on behalf of a Virginia inmate who belongs to the Nation of Gods and Earth, an offshoot of the Nation of Islam, who brought a case against the Department of Corrections of the Commonwealth of Virginia (*Infinite Allah v Commonwealth*) to have his religious rights recognized.

GRADUATE NEWS

Kaveh Bassiri (PhD CLCS) published a translation of Nima Yushij's poem 'It's Time' as part of **Poetic Voices of the Muslim World 2013**. Translations of Yushij's poems 'Night' and 'Phoenix' have been accepted by *Two Lines Online* (forthcoming). His posting, '**Tremors of Iranian American Writing**' appeared recently on the blog site of *Michigan Quarterly Review*.

Dhia Ben Ali (MA PLSC) was invited to take part in a panel discussing regional developments and global impacts of the Arab Spring in November 2013 at Missouri State University.

Clayton Clark's (MFA TRANS) translation of poems 'The Treasure' and 'Stars Above the Jungle' by Zakaria Tamer have been accepted for publication in a forthcoming issue of *Banipal Magazine of Arabic Literature in Translation*.

Charles Davidson (MA ANTH) will present 'Mitigating the Effects of Poverty Through Closed Religious Community' at the Southwestern Social Science Association Annual Meeting in San Antonio, TX in April.

Sanket Desai (ABD HIST) passed his comprehensive exams in September 2013.



Jaime Holland introduces the 'Beirut Speaks' exhibit at Coco's Lebanese Cafe; photo courtesy of Jo Potts.

Nicole Fares (MFA TRANS) read excerpts from her translation of Sahar Mandour's novel *32* as part of the *9 By the Light Reading Series* in Fayetteville, AR and the Bilingual Series at the American Literary Translators Association Conference in Bloomington, IN.

Kaelin Groom (MA GEOG) has been invited to speak before the Wadi Rum UNESCO Conclave in March 2014. She will speak on 'Assessment and preservation of rock art: a proposal for the Thamudic petroglyphs of Wadi Rum' in Wadi Rum, Jordan.

Lama Hamoudi (ABD CLCS) passed her comprehensive exams in October 2013.

Jaime Holland (MA ANTH) will present 'Beirut Speaks: Street Art as an Urban Capability in Beirut Lebanon' at the Southwestern Social Science Association Annual Meeting in San Antonio, TX in April. Her photography exhibit 'Beirut Speaks' was displayed at Coco's Lebanese Cafe during the month of November.

Sonia Kapur (ABD PBPL) has accepted a tenure-track offer in International Studies at the University of North Carolina-Ashville.

Matthew Parnell (ABD HIST) presented 'On Whose Shoulders? – Investigating the Diverse Concepts of Youth in Interwar Egypt' at the Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting in New Orleans, LA in October 2013. He also presented 'The History and Culture of Modern Egypt', developing and presenting two lessons as part of the cultural studies curriculum at the Prism Education Center in Fayetteville, AR.

Simon Reid (MA GEOG) defended his thesis 'Perceptions of Equality and National Identity amongst Young British South Asian Muslims in Bradford, England' in December 2013, and will graduate in May 2014.

Teresa Wilson (PhD ANTH) completed her residency at the American Center for Oriental Research in Amman, Jordan, where she studied 'Developmental Features and Defects of Teeth from four Bronze Age, Roman and Byzantine Cemeteries in Northern Jordan'. She currently holds a National Science Foundation Fellowship in the Graduate STEM Fellows in K-12 Education (GK-12) program at the University of Arkansas.



Teresa Wilson on a visit to Pella, Jordan; photo courtesy of Jerry Rose.

UNDERGRADUATE NEWS

Joseph Largent's (GEOL) paper 'The Light of the Prophet, The Light of the Soul: The Musical Traditions of Sufism' was accepted for presentation at the SE Regional conference of the American Academy of Religion in Irving, TX in March 2014.

Brendan Sparks (IREL/MEST) will present 'The Last Frontier on Basic Human Rights: Western Influence and its Effects on the LGBTQ Community in Oman' at the SE Regional conference of the American Academy of Religion in Atlanta, GA in March 2014.

Derek Walker's (COMM) paper, 'The Logical Standpoint of Islam and Atheism', was accepted for presentation at the SE Regional conference of the American Academy of Religion in Irving, TX in March 2014.

Walt Wright's (IREL/MEST) paper 'Martyrdom and Jihad in the Arab Spring' was accepted for presentation at the SE Regional conference of the American Academy of Religion in Irving, TX in March 2014.



*Burj al-Mamlaka/Mamlaka Tower in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia;
photo courtesy of Joel Gordon*

ALUMNI NEWS

Ahmet Akturk (PhD HIST 2013) presented 'Kurdish Nationalists Respond to Kemalism in Syria and Lebanon: Rival Nationalisms and Similar Visions' and chaired the panel 'Revisiting Arab Theater: The Construction of Resistance' at the Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting in New Orleans, LA in October 2013.

Cole Bockenfeld (BA 2008), Advocacy Director for the Project on Middle East Democracy, co-authored with Stephen McInerney '**US must restructure aid to Egypt,**' an op-ed essay in *The Washington Post*, October 27, 2013.

Mohamed Daadaoui (MA PLSC 2002) presented 'Morocco's Spring: Monarchical Advantage and the Limits of the Protest Movement' and organized the panel 'It's Good to be the King: The Arab Uprising and Monarchical Exceptionalism' at the Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting in New Orleans, LA in October 2013.

Suncem Kocer (MA ANTH 2005) recently published '**Making transnational publics: Circuits of censorship and technologies of publicity in Kurdish media circulation**' in *American Ethnologist* (November 2013).

Robert Moore (BA 1996) presented 'Building a Madrasah and a Community: A Convert's Integration into Muslim social Groups in Mamluk Cairo' at the Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting in New Orleans, LA in October 2013.

Asaad al-Saleh (PhD CLCS 2010) presented 'Dialogue in the Legacy of Saadallah Wannous' and organized the panel 'Revisiting Arab Theater: The Construction of Resistance' at the Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting in New Orleans, LA in October 2013.



الطاولة العربية

ARABIC CONVERSATION TABLE

Wednesdays & Thursdays in the Union Jan 29 - May 01

Practice your Arabic conversational skills with fellow students and native speakers

Learn to speak about daily life and current events with confidence

Improve your spoken Arabic for class, travel, and study abroad

مرحبا!

DATE	TIME	ROOM
Wed, 01/29	4-5 PM	AU312NW
Thurs, 01/30	5-6 PM	AU514
Wed, 02/05	4-5 PM	AU312NW
Thurs, 02/06	5-6 PM	AU504
Wed, 02/12	4-5 PM	AU312NW
Wed, 02/19	4-5 PM	AU312NW
Thurs, 02/20	5-6 PM	AU504
Wed, 02/26	4-5 PM	AU312NW
Wed, 03/05	4-5 PM	AU312NW
Wed, 03/12	4-5 PM	AU312NW
Thurs, 03/13	5-6 PM	AU514
Wed, 03/19	4-5 PM	AU312NW
Thurs, 03/20	5-6 PM	AU305
Wed, 04/02	4-5 PM	AU312NW
Thurs, 04/03	5-6 PM	AU305
Wed, 04/09	4-5 PM	AU312NW
Thurs, 04/10	5-6 PM	AU503
Wed, 04/16	4-5 PM	AU312NW
Thurs, 04/17	5-6 PM	AU504
Wed, 04/23	4-5 PM	AU312NW
Thurs, 04/24	5-6 PM	AU504
Wed, 04/30	4-5 PM	AU312NW
Thurs, 05/01	5-6 PM	AU504

Join the Facebook group
Arabic Table at University of Arkansas
for updates and changes to the schedule.



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