

أخبار و أحداث

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

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مركز
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I'm delighted to welcome you to our newsletter from the King Fahd Center for Middle East Studies (MEST) at the University of Arkansas. As the new Director of the Center and Program, I'm proud to follow in the steps of our former Dean and eminent Arkansas Senator J. Wm. Fulbright, in creating an interdisciplinary learning community to study the critical regions of North Africa and the Middle East, in the hopes of enriching our lives, improving our minds, and deepening our relations with others.

MEST takes a unique approach to the study of regional issues and topics by linking complex aspects of landscape, with a focus on our academic partners -- artistic, cultural, environmental, geographic, historic, linguistic, and political. In the past, Middle East Studies programs have focused on political and cultural issues. However, as our World changes and the stresses of environment, migration, conflict, resource disparity, gender, art and architecture, agriculture and mining, and conflict increase, it becomes clear that a MEST Center must be interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary in its perspectives, curricula, outreach, and breadth.

Our program boasts extensive resources for study abroad, research at home, community outreach, and the interaction between visiting scholars, lectures and conferences and workshops, American and international students, cultural events, our extraordinary staff, and distinguished faculty. At the King Fahd Center we believe these links and connections represent a powerful form of diplomacy in our changing world.

"The highest function of higher education is the teaching of things in perspective, toward the purposes of enriching the life of the individual, cultivating the free and inquiring mind, and advancing the effort to bring reason, justice and humanity into the relations of men and nations."

--J. William Fulbright

Dr. Thomas Paradise, Director
King Fahd Center for Middle East Studies



Cover: Wadi Rum, Jordan; photo courtesy of Tom Paradise



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Connect with us on social media!

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

 **@KingFahdCenter**



MEST staff member Mahfuza Akhtar in the newly redesigned MEST Office space; photo courtesy of Tom Paradise

MIDDLE EAST STUDIES OFFICE UPDATE AND OPEN HOUSE

This October the Middle East Studies Program hosted its first Open House, inviting students, faculty, and interested community members to meet new MEST Director **Tom Paradise** (GEOS) and staff members **Mahfuza Akhtar** and **Nani Verzon**. More than 50 attended to view the newly reorganized Middle East Studies office in Old Main, to sample regional cuisine and talk about upcoming programming sponsored by the King Fahd Center.

Come and see us in the Middle East Studies Office! Have a cup of coffee, visit with program staff, and check out the brand new art on the walls depicting landscapes and scenes from across the MENA region.

STUDENT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

MEST Undergraduate Academic Year Scholarship

The King Fahd Center offers scholarships for advanced undergraduate MEST majors who have demonstrated a serious commitment to study and excellent performance in the classroom. Applicants must have a minimum GPA of 3.25, must attain junior status and must be declared MEST majors.

MEST Summer Study Abroad Scholarship

The King Fahd Center supports summer study abroad for undergraduate students majoring in Middle East Studies by providing scholarships. Applicants must be declared MEST majors.

Graduate Assistantships

The King Fahd Center supports graduate study for students working in academic disciplines related to Middle East/Islamic Studies by providing Graduate Assistantships. Assistantships will be awarded only after admission into the Graduate School and a related department, along with a letter of nomination from the student's proposed departmental faculty advisor.

Graduate Summer Research Grant

Graduate Students working in Middle East/Islamic Studies may apply for funding to support summer research or language study. Funds are awarded on a competitive basis, based upon submitted budget.

Undergraduate and Graduate Conference Travel Grant

MEST undergraduate majors and graduate students working in Middle East/Islamic Studies may apply for travel funds to support participation (presentation of a paper/poster or participation in a workshop/roundtable) at an academic conference. Proposals will be judged on merit and the amount of support will be determined by available funds.

For more information on deadlines and how to apply, visit mest.uark.edu or contact the King Fahd Center.

WINNERS OF THE 2014 UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS ARABIC TRANSLATION AWARD

The co-winners of the 2014 University of Arkansas Arabic Translation Award are *All Faces but Mine: The Poetry of Samih al-Qassim*, translated by Abdulwahid Lulua, and *The Perception of Meaning*, by Hisham Bustani, translated by Thoraya El-Rayyes. The winning titles are available from Syracuse University Press.

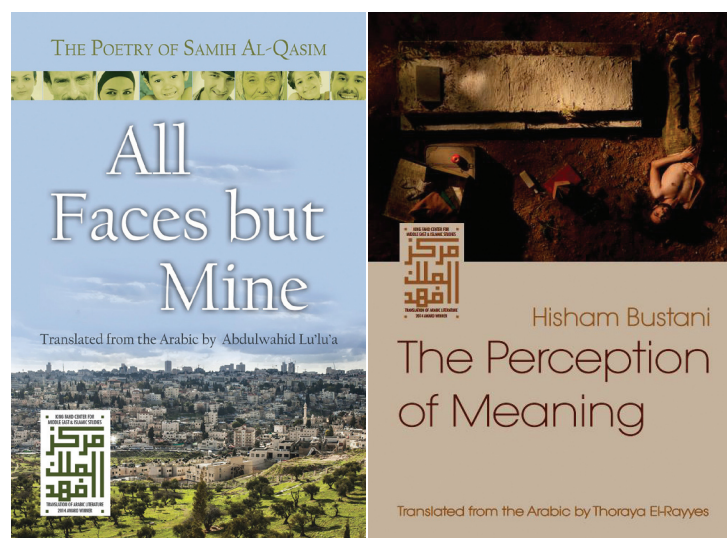
All Faces but Mine: The Poetry of Samih Al-Qasim (ISBN 978-0-8156-1052-6)

All Faces but Mine gathers selected poems from the acclaimed Palestinian poet Samih Al-Qasim (1934–2014). A contemporary of Mahmoud Darwish, Al-Qasim was a celebrated resistance poet whose passionate call for independence inspired a generation of poets. In this award-winning volume, poems are drawn from fourteen of the poet's collections published over the last twenty years in addition to some of his final works. Lu'lu'a's fluid translation captures both Al-Qasim's innovative style and the emotional tenor of his poetry.

Samih Al-Qasim was a critically acclaimed poet, essayist, and journalist. An outspoken advocate of Palestinian rights, he was imprisoned several times for his writing. He published numerous poetry collections, including *Sadder Than Water: New and Selected Poems*, the only other book-length English translation of his work. **'Abdulwahid Lu'lu'a** is an Iraqi writer based in the United Kingdom, whose previous translations have won a range of literary prizes. He has published twelve books in Arabic and forty-two books in translation, all on literary subjects.

The Perception of Meaning (ISBN 978-0-8156-1059-5)

This award-winning collection of seventy-eight pieces of flash fiction presents an intense and powerful vision of today's world seen through the eyes of an alienated and sardonic author. *The Perception of Meaning* reads



2014 Arabic Translation Award winners *All Faces but Mine: The Poetry of Samih Al-Qasim* (ISBN 978-0-8156-1052-6) and *The Perception of Meaning* (ISBN 978-0-8156-1059-5), available from Syracuse University Press.

like an alternative history to our world—a collage of small nightmares brought to life by a canon of unlikely historical figures, including Mark Zuckerberg, the lead singer of Megadeth, Stanley Kubrick, the Korean activist Lee Kyoung Hae, and the Mayan poet Humberto Akabal, among others. A dazzling exemplar of contemporary experimental Arabic literature, *The Perception of Meaning* deftly captures a historical moment in which Arab societies are increasingly questioning the status quo and rebelling against it.

Hisham Bustani is a Jordanian writer and activist, and the author of four collections of short fiction. Renowned for his contemporary themes, style, and language, he has been described by *al-Ra'i* as “bringing a new wave of surrealism to [Arabic] literary culture, which missed the surrealist revolution of the last century.” Bustani's work has been translated into four languages with English-language translations appearing in prestigious journals across the US, UK, and Canada, including *World Literature Today*, *The Common*, and *The Literary Review*. **Thoraya El-Rayyes**, a Palestinian Canadian translator, lives in Amman, Jordan. Her translations have appeared in numerous journals, including *Banipal*, *Open Letters Monthly*, and *World Literature Today*, among others.

ETEL ADNAN POETRY PRIZE

Every year the University of Arkansas Press, together with the Radius of Arab American Writers, accepts submissions for the Etel Adnan Poetry Series and awards the \$1,000 Etel Adnan Poetry Prize to a first or second book of poetry, in English, by a writer of Arab heritage. Since its founding in 1996 the Radius of Arab American Writers has celebrated and fostered the writings and writers that make up the vibrant and diverse Arab American community; and the University of Arkansas Press has long been committed to publishing diverse kinds of poetry by a diversity of poets.

The series editors are Hayan Charara and Fady Joudah, and the prize is named in honor of the world-renowned poet, novelist, essayist, and artist Etel Adnan.

The series editors serve as the judges for the Etel Adnan Poetry Prize. Together, they will select a winning manuscript and write a preface for the book. The University of Arkansas Press, which will publish the book, provides that the author's work will be produced with all the dedication and expertise they have to offer. This includes professional copyediting by expert poetry editors, design and production by veteran designers who specialize in the typesetting of verse, and production managed by a house with a history of printing first-rate books. Additionally, the Radius of Arab American Writers will award the author a \$1,000 prize and widely publicize the winning book. We believe this offers the poet the best possible opportunity to connect with his or her audience via the printed word.

For more information on application requirements and instructions, visit the University of Arkansas Press Submission Manager at <http://www.uapress.com/>

Supported in part by the Radius for Arab American Writers and the King Fahd Center for Middle East Studies at the University of Arkansas.

About Etel Adnan

Born in Beirut, Lebanon in 1925, Etel Adnan was educated in the French schools there and later studied philosophy at the Sorbonne in Paris, the University of California Berkeley, and Harvard. She became a painter during the Algerian War of Independence and later, during the war in Vietnam, participated in the poets' movement against the war, becoming, in her own words, "an American poet." From 1972 until 1976, she lived in Beirut and worked as a cultural editor for two newspapers. Her novel *Sitt Marie-Rose*, published in 1977, has since been translated into numerous languages and is considered a classic of war literature. In 1977 she established her residence in Sausalito, California, with frequent stays in Paris.

Adnan has published nearly twenty books in English, including *The Arab Apocalypse*, regarded as "one of the most important works of literature" after the Lebanese Civil War; *In the Heart of the Heart of Another Country*, "a mix of prose, poetry, political insight, philosophic speculation, and historical remembrance honed to mineral perfection"; and *Sea and Fog*, winner of the Lambda Literary Award. Her poetry and prose has been recognized internationally and includes the France-Pays Arabes Award, the California Book Award, the PEN Oakland/Josephine Miles Literary Award, the Arab American Book Award, and a lifetime achievement award from the Radius of Arab American Writers.

In 2014, she was named a Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres by the French government. The same year, a collection of her paintings and tapestries were exhibited as a part of the Whitney Biennial at the Whitney Museum of American Art. MELUS, the journal of the Society for the Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States, called Adnan "arguably the most celebrated and accomplished Arab American author writing today." More about Etel Adnan is available at www.eteladnan.com

ONGOING EVENTS

Arabic Conversation Table

Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 4:00 PM, ARKU 312NW

Improve your spoken Arabic for class, for travel, and for study abroad by practicing with fellow students and native speakers. Led by senior graduate students **Delilah Clark** (PhD CLCS) and **Shane Elder** (PhD CLCS), Arabic Conversation Table meets twice a week from 4:00 to 5:00 PM in the Arkansas Union.

Nadi Cinema: Iranian Film Edition

Biweekly Wednesdays at 7:00 PM, Hembree Auditorium

From Morocco to Saudi Arabia, Egypt to Iran, Nadi Cinema introduces viewers to the storytelling and vision of filmmakers across North Africa and the Middle East. The Fall 2015 line-up will feature eight films from Iran produced before and after the revolution. All films are subtitled in English.

Iranian films have won numerous international awards, including the Oscar and Golden Globe, the Cannes Film Festival's Golden Palm and Jury Prize, the Venice Film Festival's Golden and Silver Lion, and the Berlinale's Golden and Silver Bear. These films approach personal as well as social and political themes, addressing war, revolution, colonial resistance, dictatorship, nationalism, modernization, ethnic strife, feminist struggle, divorce, the influence of communism and the West, and the enduring role of tradition and faith. The screenings will provide a unique opportunity to reflect on the changes in Iranian society and culture under the Pahlavi dynasty and the Islamic Republic.

This semester's screenings are hosted by **Kaveh Bassiri** (PhD CLCS) and take place in the Hembree Auditorium, room 107E in the Agricultural Food and Life Science building (AFLS), next to the Pat Walker Health Center on Maple Ave. Screenings begin at 7:00 PM and are free and open to the public (see [Page 9](#) for full schedule).

Al-Bisat: A Casual Forum for Discussion on the Middle East

Biweekly Wednesdays at 12:00 PM, Old Main 202

In Bedouin culture al-Bisat, the carpet, serves as a primary setting for socialization whether it be hosting guests, eating and drinking, discussions, or entertainment. Join Middle East Studies students and faculty for an informal bi-weekly coffee hour centered on conversation on the Middle East and North Africa. Led by **Matt Parnell** (PhD HIST), these meetings will offer a unique opportunity for students and faculty to openly interact outside the classroom, to discuss developments in the region, and to foster a sense of community among those interested in the Middle East and North Africa at the University of Arkansas.

Love, Peace & The Middle East Book Club

Biweekly Wednesdays at 2:00 PM, Old Main 202

A young boy seeks independence in a city that grows as he does. A girl defies tradition in a society in turmoil. Questions of sexuality, identity, and social acceptance. These are some of the themes that will be addressed in the books chosen for this year's book club. Some are translated novels; others are works by well-known Arab-American writers. Some will touch your heart; others will challenge the way you think. At least one will make you laugh – and several will make you cry. They are all great reads and they are, above all, stories that will touch you.

Meetings are led by **Nicole Fares** (PhD CLCS) and will take place from 2:00 - 3:00 PM in MAIN 202. Books are available at Barnes & Noble or on Amazon in paperback, Nook or Kindle edition. Come by for coffee, snacks and great conversation!

- Oct 21: Intro and discussion about the authors
- Nov 4: *The Journey of Little Gandhi* by Elias Khoury
- Nov 18: *A Map of Home* by Randa Jarrar
- Dec 2: Discussion on common themes

MIDDLE EAST STUDIES Undergraduate Research Conference

December 4, 2015

12:00 - 5:30 PM

Arkansas Union, Rooms 509-511

The King Fahd Center invites students to take part in an Undergraduate Research Conference on December 4th in the Arkansas Union. The conference will provide undergraduate students performing research on topics related to the Middle East and North Africa with a forum in which to present their work and collaborate with peers, and aims to advance undergraduate scholarship at the University of Arkansas, as well as encourage interest in the geopolitical region.

12:00 PM Welcome and Conference Opening (ARKU509)

*Tom Paradise, Director of the King Fahd Center;
Lynda Coon, Dean of the Honors College*

12:30 PM Lunch (ARKU510)

1:00 - 3:00 PM Israel/Palestine Project (ARKU 509)

Facilitator: Sanket Desai, History

1:00 - 2:00 PM Gender and Sexuality in Islam and Christianity (ARKU511)

Facilitator: Sarwar Alam, Middle East Studies

For the Love of Allah: Comparing Gender and Sexuality in Islam and Christianity (Kayla Cahill, University of Arkansas)

"Women, Oh Women! When Will You Learn Your Places?"
(Claire Williamson, University of Arkansas)

2:00 - 3:00 PM Religion in the Middle East (ARKU511)

Facilitator: Spencer Allen, Middle East Studies

My Blood, My Brother, My Rival, My Ruin: Brotherhood in Christianity and Islam (Meagan Mosier, University of Arkansas)

A Walk in the Fires of Love: Show Love to All, Love Only One
(Jacob McCrary, University of Arkansas)

Karnak & Luxor Temples and the Procession of the Opet Festival (Christopher Bryant, University of Arkansas)

3:00 - 4:00 PM Geopolitics of Afghanistan (ARKU509)

Facilitator: Sanket Desai, History

Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan (Nicholas Kahmann, University of Arkansas)

The New Great Game (Christopher Cowan, University of Arkansas)

3:00 - 4:00 PM Media and Imperialism in the Middle East (ARKU511)

Facilitator: Matt Parnell, History

Judging a Country by its Cover (Story): Examining the Framing of the Syrian Conflict in Middle Eastern and US Media Coverage
(Ghada ElHaffar, Drury University)

Paper, Ink and Blood: How the Sykes-Picot Agreement Shaped the Middle East (Meg Austin, University of Arkansas)

ISIS Gaining Support from Central Asia? An Analysis of Geopolitical Power Struggle Increasingly Becoming Borderless
(Joseph Largent, University of Arkansas)

4:00 - 5:00 PM Youth, Revolt and the Arab Spring (ARKU509)

Facilitator: Dan Brown, Political Science

The Young and the Restless: Egyptian Youth and the January 25th Revolution (Abigail Witty, University of Arkansas)

Students and Eslahaat in Modern Iran: A Comparative Analysis of Student Activism during the 1979 Islamic Revolution and the 2009 Green Movement (Meghan Shrewsbury, University of Arkansas)

What Sparked the Arab Spring: Unearthing Egyptians' Motivations (Christina Faoro, Drury University)

**Join the event on
Facebook and
support our
students!**



RECENT EVENTS

The Story of an Arabian Queen: `Iffat Al Thunayan October 9, 2015

Joseph A. Kéchichian, Senior Fellow at the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, delivered a lecture on his newly published book *'Iffat al Thunayan: An Arabian Queen* (Sussex Academic Press 2015). Based on interviews conducted with members of the al-Faysal family, friends, and acquaintances of the late queen, *'Iffat al Thunayan: An Arabian Queen* is the first political biography of a Sa'udi monarch's spouse.

Kéchichian received a PhD in Foreign Affairs from the University of Virginia, where he served as the Assistant Dean in International Studies (1988-1989), and has held numerous fellowships and teaching positions at other institutions. He is a Senior Writer with the Dubai-based *Gulf News*, the top-ranked English-language news daily in the United Arab Emirates. Among his publications are *Iran, Iraq, and the Arab Gulf States* (Palgrave 2001), and *Political Participation and Stability in the Sultanate of Oman* (Gulf Research Center 2005), in addition to numerous articles and essays.



Dr. Joseph A. Kéchichian signs copies of his book after his lecture; photo courtesy of Nani Verzon.

Iranian Students Association Celebrates Rumi's 808th Birthday with Music and Poetry October 2, 2015

The Iranian Students Association and the King Fahd Center co-sponsored an event honoring Jalal al-Din Rumi, one of the world's most celebrated poets. The UN declared 2007 the International Year of Rumi, honoring him with stamps, conferences, exhibitions, and a UNESCO medal. Now a best-selling poet in America and considered one of the greatest Muslim mystical scholars, Rumi wrote more than 4,000 lyrical poems of love and longing as well as *The Masnavi*, the longest single-authored mystical poem and considered by many to be the most important Muslim spiritual text.

The event included a poetry reading, music, and a guest lecture by **Franklin Lewis**, Associate Professor of Persian Language and Literature and the Chair of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at the University of Chicago. Among his many books are a translation of Rumi's poetry, *Rumi: Swallowing the Sun*, and the seminal scholarly work *Rumi: Past and Present, East and West*, which was awarded Best Book in Middle East Studies published in the UK in 2000 by the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies and the British-Kuwaiti Friendship Society.



Dr. Franklin Lewis with Sayed Omid of the Iranian Students Association; photo courtesy of Afroz Moghimi.

Second Annual Islamic Studies Forum: Belief, Expression, Journey, Debate

April 29, 2015

Select students from **Sarwar Alam's** (MEST) courses (MEST 2003 and PLSC 400V) who submitted research papers to regional conferences presented their papers at a second annual Islamic Studies undergraduate paper forum sponsored by the King Fahd Center.

- Nathaniel Bailey, 'Brother Whom I Love: Alternative Sexual Relations in Turkey'
- Abram Greenbaum, 'Desecration of the Body: Tattoos in Middle Eastern Culture'
- William Harris, 'In Order That He May Rest in Peace'
- Austin Keefer, 'Glory be to God, I Have Killed My Daughter': The Tradition of Honor Killing in Jordan'
- Viktoria Lawler, 'Getting Freedom Back in Cadillacs: Women, Religion, and the State in Saudi Arabia'
- Christian McCall, 'To Sin or Not to Sin: Mankind's Intentions and Inclinations'

Several students went on to have their papers accepted for presentation at regional conferences with sponsorship from the King Fahd Center. For more information on Conference Travel Grants, see [Page 3](#) or visit the King Fahd Center website.



Sarwar Alam and the student presenters at the Second Annual Islamic Studies Forum; photo courtesy of Nani Verzon

***Petra: Lost City of Stone*, Screening and Q&A**

April 14, 2015

Tom Paradise (GEOS) spoke about his work in Petra, Jordan during a special question and answer session after a screening of *Petra: Lost City of Stone*, one episode of a three-part series on *Building the Wonders of the World*. The screening was co-sponsored by the King Fahd Center and the Gamma Kappa chapter of geography honors society Gamma Theta Upsilon (GTU).

Paradise, whose work has focused on the ruined classical city of Petra in southern Jordan since 1990, was part of a team that worked with carvers and masons to sculpt a full-scale tomb into a cliff face to discover how the ancient Nabateans built Petra, the rock-carved city in Jordan made famous by *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*. The project was filmed and produced by Providence Pictures for NOVA, a science documentary series on PBS.

Along with being the most-watched show on PBS, beating out perennial favorites such as the *Downton Abby* series, *Petra: Lost City of Stone* also won the Favorite Audience Award in the archaeology category at Italy's Rovereto Film Festival. *Petra: Lost City of Stone* is available for viewing at the [NOVA website](#).



Tom Paradise with GTU student organizers at the Petra: Lost City of Stone screening; photo courtesy of Nani Verzon

Cultural Heritage Crisis in the Middle East Symposium

March 5-6, 2015

The King Fahd Center hosted Cultural Heritage Crisis in the Middle East, a conference that brought together 10 leading authorities on the archaeological heritage of the region and the threats posted by civil conflict, intra-state warfare, government negligence, urbanization, tourism, and the international market in illegal antiquities. MacGuire Gibson, Professor of Archaeology at the University of Chicago, delivered the keynote address 'Attempting to Protect Cultural Heritage in the Middle East.' Gibson is a leading authority on ancient Mesopotamia and one of the most vocal advocates for the protection of cultural heritage in Iraq and the broader Middle East.

Conference presenters included: Jesse Casana (Syria); Michael Danti, Boston University (Syria); Susan Kane, Oberlin College (Libya); Morag Kersel, DePaul University (Jordan/Palestine); Sarah Parcak, University of Alabama-Birmingham (Egypt); Gil Stein, University of Chicago (Afghanistan); Elizabeth Stone, Stony Brook University (Southern Iraq); and Jason Ur, Harvard University (Iraqi Kurdistan). Andrew Vaughn of the American Schools of Oriental Research presented concluding comments and kicked off a lively panel discussion. Papers from the conference were compiled into a special issue of the *Near Eastern Archaeology* (September 2015).



Roundtable discussion at the Cultural Heritage Crisis in the Middle East Conference; photo courtesy of Joel Gordon.

Recital and Lecture featuring Pianist Annie Balabanian

February 27 - March 2, 2015

Award-winning Lebanese maestro Annie Balabanian performed a solo piano recital sponsored by the Fulbright College Piano Performance Program in partnership with the King Fahd Center. Her recital included works by notable Armenian composers who adapted local and regional folk tunes and melodies into Western classical composition. Balabanian also gave a lecture entitled 'West Meets East: Classical Music and Culture in Lebanon,' speaking to students about her experience teaching music at the National Higher Conservatory of Music in Beirut.

Candlelight Vigil in Memory of Chapel Hill Students

February 19, 2015

Students from the MEST Program partnered with the Muslim Students Association to organize a candlelight vigil in remembrance of Deah Barakat, Yusor Abu-Salha, and Razan Abu-Salha, the three UNC students who were murdered on February 10th. Over 200 people from the university and broader community attended to pay respects to the victims and listen to a series of speakers. Student organizers of the vigil spoke to the local press about raising awareness of the problems Muslims and many other minorities face across the country each day.



Candlelight vigil attendees hold up a banner for support slogan 'Arkansas Chooses Solidarity'; photo courtesy of Bailey Cox.

NADI CINEMA

Fall 2015 Iranian Film Edition

7:00 PM Wednesdays

AFLS107E

Sept 2: Leila (1997)

Sept 16: Still Life (1974)

Sept 30: The Report (1977)

Oct 14: Nargess (1992)

Oct 21: Bashu, The Little Stranger (1986)

Nov 11: Marriage of the Blessed (1989)

Nov 18: Baran (2001)

Dec 2: The Protest (2000)



Sponsored by:

The King Fahd Center for Middle East Studies

All films subtitled in English. Free and open to the public. For film synopses, trailers and more visit <http://mest.uark.edu> or call 479-57-2175



Please join the King Fahd Center in welcoming instructor **Dr. Spencer Allen**, who will offer courses on early monotheism and Christian history.

Allen holds a doctorate in Hebrew

Bible and Assyriology from the University of Pennsylvania and a Master's of Theological Studies in Scripture and Interpretation from Harvard Divinity School, and he spent a year studying Semitic languages at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Allen has taught courses on ancient Near Eastern history and religion, biblical and early Christian history, and early biblical interpretation at the King Fahd Center for Middle East Studies at the University of Arkansas, in the Division of Biblical Studies at John Brown University, and in the critical writing program at the University of Pennsylvania.

He has published articles on the use of rhetorical questions in Amos, Assyrian political treaties, the grammar of divine names in the biblical world, the biblical dimension of rock superstar Bruce Springsteen's music, and local cult leader Tony Alamo's views on Christian polygamy. His book, *The Splintered Divine: A Study of Ishtar, Baal, and Yahweh Divine Names and Divine Multiplicity in the Ancient Near East*, came out in February as the fifth volume in the De Gruyter series 'Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Records' (SANER).

Allen will teach four MEST courses during Spring 2016: The Rise of Monotheism, Women of the Bible, Early Christian History, and The Apostle Paul and His Legacy (Jan Intersession)

FACULTY NEWS

Sarwar Alam (MEST) was cited in the *Northwest Arkansas Democrat Gazette* article 'Respect for the Holy' (June 6, 2015), and presented paper 'In Search of God, In Search of Humanity: Vilayat-e-Mutlaqa of Hazrat Delaor Husayn Maizbhandari' at the XXI Quinquennial World Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR) at Erfurt University, Germany in August 2015. He is co-editing (with Clinton Bennett of SUNY-New Paltz) a volume on *Sufism, Pluralism and Democracy* (Equinox, forthcoming December 2015) that will include his essay 'In Search of God and Humanity: Vilayet-e-Mutlaka of Hazrat Delaor Husayn Maizbhandari.' His paper 'Sufism Without Boundaries: Pluralism, Coexistence, and Interfaith Dialogue in Bangladesh' will appear in *Comparative Islamic Studies* (Vol 9, Issue 1).

Nikolay Antov (HIST) had two papers accepted for publication: 'Emergence and Historical Development of Muslim Communities in the Ottoman Balkans: Turcoman Colonization, Conversion to Islam and the "Indigenization of Islam" in the Balkan Peninsula (late 14th – 18th cc.)' in Theodora Dragostinova and Yana Hashamova (eds.), *Beyond Mosque, Church, and State: Negotiating Religious and Ethno-National Identities in the Balkans* (Central European University Press, forthcoming 2015); and 'Crusading in the Fifteenth Century and Its Relation to the Development of Ottoman Dynastic Legitimacy, Self-Image, and the Ottoman Consolidation of Authority' in Norman Housely (ed.), *The Crusade in the Fifteenth Century: Converging and Competing Cultures* (Ashgate Crusades: Subsidia series, forthcoming 2015).

He is also working on a chapter of translated primary sources with commentary for Hani Khafipour (ed.), *Empires of The Near East and India: Sources for the Study of the Safavid, Ottoman, and Mughal Societies* (Columbia University Press, forthcoming).

Daniel Brown (PLSC) appeared on UATV show ‘Campus Crossfire’ to discuss the spread of ISIS and Islamic extremism on March 6, 2015 and took part in ‘Pathways to International Careers: A Symposium’, co-organized by the Department of Political Science in October 2015. Brown published (co-authored with Ariel Ahram) ‘Jordan and the United Arab Emirates: Arab Partners in Afghanistan’ in Gale Mattox and Steve Grenier (eds.), *Coalition Challenges in Afghanistan: The Politics of Alliance* (Stanford University Press 2015). He currently has two articles under review.

Robert Brubaker (HIST) published his monograph *Vijayanagara: Warfare and the Archaeology of Defence* (Manohar/American Institute of Indian Studies 2015).

Mounir Farah (CIED) submitted for review his book manuscript on the Dawn of US-Syrian Relations, a study based on archival research for the 19th Century, with a conclusion that carries through until the early 1920s and establishment of the French mandate. During Summer 2015 he travelled to Jordan, conducting research with a focus on current developments in the Middle East, especially on Syria. He met with numerous reporters, Syrian refugees, and faculty at Jordanian universities – many of which whom are graduates from the U of A. While in Amman, Farah was interviewed on *KNWA TV* in Arkansas and appeared four times on *Ikhbaria Syria TV* to discuss topics including US policy in the Middle East, the 5+1 agreement with Iran, the Saudi coalition air attacks on Yemen, and the results of the Turkish parliamentary election and its ramifications. Upon returning to Arkansas, he conducted a workshop on the Middle East for teachers at Fayetteville High School in August. In November, Farah was the keynote speaker at the Arkansas Council for the Social Studies Luncheon at the 2015 Arkansas Curriculum Conference held in Little Rock, AR. He spoke on ‘Teaching Social Studies and Current International Issues’.

Farah will retire in December 2015 and become the first King Fahd Center emeritus faculty member.



Mounir Farah commentates on Ikhbaria Syria TV; photo courtesy of Mounir Farah

Joel Gordon (HIST) was interviewed by Paul Crompton of *al-Arabiya.net* for retrospective pieces on **Winston Churchill** and the Magna Carta in the Middle East, by Gabriela Valente of *Correio Braziliense* on the situation in Yemen, and by *al-Ghad TV* in Washington, DC. He also discussed the Egyptian national anthems with Alexander Marshall of *The Guardian* for a book on national anthems. He is gathering essays for a collection on Gamal Abd al-Nasser that he is editing for Cambridge University Press and serves as a chief consultant for an NEH-funded documentary on Nasser that is currently under production by filmmaker Michal Goldman.

Gordon submitted a book review to the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (SOAS-London). He published ‘Stuck with Him: Bassem Youssef and the Egyptian Revolution’s Last Laugh’ in the *Review of Middle East Studies* (2014) and ‘Piety, Youth and Egyptian Cinema: Still Seeking Islamic Space’ in Abir Hamdar and Lindsey Moore (eds.), *Islamism and Cultural Expression in the Arab World* (Routledge 2015). His book *Nasser: Hero of the Arab Nation* (Oneworld Publications 2006) is now available in paperback and Kindle edition.

Adnan Haydar (WLLC) spent Spring 2015 in Lebanon on sabbatical leave, completing work on his book-length study of 'The Role of Music in Lebanese Zajal Poetry: A Radical Alternative to Traditional Metrics.' His translation (with Michael Beard) of '**Walt Whitman and Me: Notes on a Poetic Education,**' an essay by Egyptian poet Abdel-Moneim Ramadan, was published on *WordsWithoutBorders.org*. He is currently translating (with Michael Beard) 'Questions in Rose Form,' a poem by celebrated Syrian poet Ali Ahmad Said (Adonis), and an article on the 'Influence in Arabic and Western Literature.'

Haydar delivered the keynote address 'Al-Zajal al-Lubnani: Buhuruha wa Musiqaha' (Lebanese Zajal: Poetic and Musical Meters) in February 2015 at a conference at the Lebanese American University in Beirut. The lecture, marking the inclusion of Lebanese oral poetry by UNESCO on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, will be published in a forthcoming volume, *Al-Turath al-Lubnani* (LAU 2015). His 1989 article 'The Development of Lebanese Zajal: Genre, Meter, and Verbal Duel' published in *Oral Tradition* was one of four influential articles cited in the Lebanese Ministry of Culture's UNESCO application.

Haydar will co-organize, with **Paula Haydar** and **Joel Gordon**, a verbal duel between master poets of Lebanon, Antoine Saade and Elias Khalil, at the 2015 Annual Meeting of the Middle East Studies Association.

Paula Haydar (MEST) received the 2015 Outstanding Mentor Award from the U of A Office of Nationally Competitive Awards, and was nominated for the ASG-sponsored Outstanding Faculty Member Award for 2015. In August, she was promoted to Clinical Assistant Professor of WLLC, recognizing her many years of contributions to the MEST Program.

Mohja Kahf's (ENGL) book of poetry, *Hagar Poems*, will be published by the University of Arkansas Press.



Tom Paradise in Petra, Jordan; photo courtesy of Kaelin Groom

Tom Paradise (GEOS) served as on-screen specialist, scriptwriter, and graphics and cartography coordinator for *Petra: Lost City of Stone*, part of the NOVA series ***Building the Wonders of the World***. Since its premiere on February 18, 2015 the special has garnered the interest of millions of viewers. Paradise recently addressed the University of Arkansas Board of Regents annual meeting in Little Rock with a presentation about the behind-the-scenes filming of the NOVA special. State legislators, University officials, historic preservation and Middle East specialists from the region were in attendance.

Paradise was invited to be the keynote speaker at the National Geospatial Conference (GIS-CAMA) in Oklahoma City on March 3, 2015. He spoke to an audience of over 800 participants on '25 years of working in Petra, Jordan: research, issues, Jordan, and Bedouin life'. The conference brought in attendees from across the US and abroad, and lasted four days.

Paradise was appointed Director of the King Fahd Center for Middle East Studies in August 2015.

Jerry Rose (ANTH) directed a **bioarchaeological field school** in Upper Egypt, at Amarna from May to June with U of A alumna **Gretchen Dabbs** (PhD ANTH 2009), partially supported by funding from the King Fahd Center. This summer his field school included 10 students from 7 universities, including institutions in Egypt, Denmark, Spain, Australia and the UK.

He presented, with **Nicole Smith** (PhD ANTH), 'The Hittite Plague of 1322 BCE: A Multidisciplinary Diagnosis' at the North American Paleopathology Association Annual Meeting in St. Louis, MO in April 2015. He also co-authored, with former students **Gretchen Dabbs** (PhD ANTH 2009) and **Melissa Zabecki** (PhD ANTH 2009), 'The Bioarchaeology of Akhetaten: Unexpected Results from a Capital City' in S. Ikram, J. Kaiser and R. Walker (eds.), ***Egyptian Bioarchaeology: Humans, Animals, and the Environment*** (Sidestone Press 2015).

Rose was promoted to University Professor in Fall 2015.

Ted Swedenburg (ANTH) was quoted in Jared Malsin's '**Legal battle over Jay Z's sampling on Big Pimpin' comes to head after eight years,**' published in *The Guardian* (April 5, 2015). The article is about Jay Z's sampling of a song by Egyptian singer Abdel Halim Hafez. His article 'Beur/Maghrebi Musical Interventions in Contemporary France: Rai and Rap' was published in *Journal of North African Studies* (2015).

He presented 'Culture, Violence, Palestine: Reem Kelani' at 'Art in a Time of Violence: Cultural Production in the Contemporary Middle East' during the Annual Conference of the Institute for Middle East Studies at George Washington University in April 2015. He will be a discussant on panel 'Anthropology of Hope and the Future of the Middle East' at the Middle East Studies Association 2015 Annual Meeting, and was recently elected to the MESA Board of Directors.

Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting 2015

November 21-24, 2015 in Denver, CO

The Middle East Studies Association (MESA) is the primary interdisciplinary professional association for scholars engaged in study of the region. Every year a substantial representation of UA faculty, students, and alumni participate by presenting papers, serving as discussants and chairing panels.

Kaveh Bassiri (PhD CLCS) 'Whatever Happened to The Little Black Fish?: Defanging a Classic Iranian Revolutionary Text'

Dhia Ben Ali (PhD PUBP, with Jeff VanDenBerg) 'All Politics Is (Not) Local: The Regional Impact on Democratization in Tunisia'

Joel Gordon (HIST) 'A New 'Crisis of Orientation': Egypt's Liberals after Tahrir and Rab'a'

Mehreen Jamal (PhD HIST) 'Images of Women in Egyptian and Pakistani Literature: Two Classic Works by Latifa al-Zayyat and Khadija Mastoor'

Ethan Morton-Jerome (PhD ANTH) 'Enforce the Law? Politics and Labor Organizing with Palestinians on Israeli Settlements'

Suncem Kocer (MA ANTH 2005) 'New Politics of News Circulation and Reception in Turkey'

James Redman (MA ANTH 2003) 'Guestrooms and Public Property Law in Kuwait: Demarcating the Boundaries of Tradition and State'

Nadine Sinno (PhD CLCS 2009) 'Scandalous Women, Gay Men, and Biracial Children: Exploring Emergent Subjectivities in the Contemporary Lebanese Novel'

GRADUATE NEWS

Mohammed Abdalhadi (PhD CIED) completed his comprehensive examinations and began research towards his dissertation on 'The Impact of First Language and Culture Interference on English Writing Skill for Arab Students at the Spring International Language Center in Fayetteville.'

Mohammad Alshammari (PhD CLCS) presented 'Anti Radical Discourse in Saudi Culture' at the American Comparative Literature Association's Annual Meeting in Seattle, WA in March 2015.

Kaveh Bassiri (PhD CLCS) organized and moderated sessions 'Translating Prosody' and 'Poetics Theater: A Textual and Theatrical Performance and Discussion' at the Association of Writers & Writing Programs Annual Meeting in Minneapolis, MN in April 2015. His translations (with Jean Valentine) of Sohrab Sepehri's poems 'Clarity, I, Flower, Water', 'Time-Oasis' and 'From Green to Green' appeared in the Spring 2015 issue of *Colorado Review* (42.1, pp 152-154). He continues to write regularly for *Michigan Quarterly Review*, contributing the recent postings: 'Grammar of Touch' (January 2, 2015); 'Modern Iranian Poetry in Translation' (March 27, 2015); and 'The Enduring Disappointments of Orientalism' (April 13, 2015).

He was awarded a Sturgis International Fellowship to undertake research on Persian poetry in Iran during Spring 2016.

Baris Basturk (PhD HIST) presented 'Contending Visions of Imperial Religion: State and Religion in the 15th-Century Ottoman Empire' at the Phi Alpha Theta Arkansas Regional Conference in Fayetteville, AR in February 2015, and was awarded the 2015 George Billingsley Award for the Best Paper on a Middle Eastern or Asian Topic from the U of A Department of History.



Dhia Ben Ali at the Bardo Museum in Tunis, Tunisia; photo courtesy of Dhia Ben Ali

Dhia Ben Ali (MA PLSC) graduated with an MA in Political Science in Fall 2014 and began a PhD program in Public Policy in Spring 2015. He presented 'Regional Influences on the Democratization Process in Tunisia' (co-authored with Jeffrey VanDenBerg) at the CSID-Tunisia 4th Annual Conference in Tunis, Tunisia in March 2015 with support from the U of A Graduate School and the King Fahd Center.

Ali Capar (PhD HIST) presented 'The Activities of Protestant Missionaries in Ottoman Syria, 1820-1876' at the Phi Alpha Theta Arkansas Regional Conference in Fayetteville, AR in February 2015, and 'The Activities of American Protestant Missionaries among the Alawites in the 19th Century' at the Lines Between: Culture and Empire in the Eastern Mediterranean conference in Nicosia, Cyprus in June. He completed his comprehensive examinations in May and will undertake research in Turkey through December 2015 supported by the Turkish Government and the King Fahd Center.

Delilah Clark (PhD CLCS) attended classes at the Sultan Qaboos College for Teaching Arabic Language to Nonnative Speakers in Manah, Oman from May to July 2015. She also leads weekly sessions of the King Fahd Center-sponsored Arabic Conversation Table.

Heidi Davis (PhD ANTH) accompanied **Jerry Rose** (ANTH) to Amarna, Egypt during Summer 2015 to continue skeletal analysis from prior excavations.

Sanket Desai (PhD HIST) presented 'Scoundrels and Scallywags: Development Dissonance between the British and Iraqi Frontier, 1933-1945' at the British Scholar Society's Britain and the World Conference in Austin, TX in April 2015 and 'Impact Beyond the Official: Corporations, Aid and Development in Iraq, 1945-1958' at the Society for the Historians of American Foreign Relations (SHAFR) Annual Meeting in June 2015 in Arlington, VA. He was awarded the 2015 Willard B. Gatewood History Graduate Fellowship from the U of A Department of History, and conducted research at National Archives in the United Kingdom and India, and the National and World Bank Archives in Washington, D.C. supported by funding from the King Fahd Center.

Nicole Fares (PhD CLCS) travelled to Lebanon to undertake preliminary dissertation research during Summer 2015. Her translation of Sahar Mandour's novel 32 has been accepted for publication by Syracuse University Press.

Kaelin Groom (PhD ENDY) was awarded a Sturgis International Fellowship to live and research in Petra, Jordan for six months starting this January 2016. She will be researching the impacts of tourism of Petra's landscapes and working with the Petra National Trust.

Mehreen Humayun (PhD HIST) will present 'Images of Women in Egyptian and Pakistani Literature: Two Classic Works by Latifa al-Zayyat and Khadija Mastoor' at the Middle East Studies Association 2015 Annual Meeting in Denver, CO.

Steven Meizler (MA GEOG) undertook an exploratory research trip to a Baha'i temple in Wilmette, IL in January 2015, and travelled to Israel during Summer 2015 to conduct further research with support from the King Fahd Center.



Ali Capar with conference organizers and attendees in Nicosia, Cyprus (top); Kaelin Groom in Wadi Rum, Jordan (center); Steven Meizler in Haifa, Israel at the Shrine of the Báb (bottom). Photos courtesy of Ali Capar, Kaelin Groom, Steven Meizler

King Fahd Center Graduate Student Support

The King Fahd Center for Middle East Studies supports graduate study for students at the MA and PhD level working in academic disciplines with a Center-affiliated faculty specialist in Middle East/Islamic Studies by providing graduate assistantships.

The following students will be supported by King Fahd Center assistantships during Academic Year 2015-2016:

Kaveh Bassiri (PhD CLCS)
Baris Basturk (PhD HIST)
Dhia Ben Ali (PhD PUBP)
Stephanie DeMora (MA PLSC)
Sanket Desai (PhD HIST)
Kathleen Doody (MA PSLC)
Blake Duffield (PhD HIST)
Nicole Fares (PhD CLCS)
Mehreen Humayun (PhD HIST)
Mona Malkawi (PhD CLCS)
Steven Meizler (MA GEOG)
Joshua Moore (MFA CRWR)
Erika Morey (PhD ANTH)
Mitra Panahipour (PhD ANTH)
Keith Whitmire (PhD ANTH)
Wawan Yulianto (PhD CLCS)
Malek Zuraikat (PhD CLCS)

Each Graduate Assistantship is a 50%, nine-month appointment that currently offers a stipend and tuition waiver. In order to qualify, candidates must be accepted by the U of A Graduate School and an academic department affiliated with the King Fahd Center. Contact the King Fahd Center for more information on the application process and upcoming deadlines.

Ethan Morton-Jerome (PhD ANTH) presented 'Trials and Tribulations: Palestinian Workers in Israeli Settlement Industrial Zones Demand Their Rights' at the International Conference on Critical Geography in Ramallah, Palestine in July 2015, 'Seltzer Colonialism: Palestinian Labor in Israeli Industrial Zones' at the Conference on Settler Colonialism in Palestine & Workshop on the Naqab Bedouin at Exeter University in October 2015, and will present 'Enforce the law? Politics and labor organizing with Palestinians on Israeli settlements' and 'Palestinian Labor in West Bank Settlement Industrial Zones' at the Middle East Studies Association and American Anthropological Association 2015 Annual Meetings to be held in Denver, CO in November 2015.

Matthew Parnell (PhD HIST) presented 'Childishness, Manliness, and the 'Egypt Question': The Politics of Gender and Age in the British Discourse on Egypt during the Nineteenth Century' at the British Scholar Society's Britain and the World Conference in Austin, TX in April 2015. He was invited to speak about his experience as a Fulbright Program Fellow at Fulbright College's Fulbright Birthday Commemoration, and served as a delegate from the U of A to advocate for increased federal funding toward international educational exchange in discussions with the Office of Arkansas Senator John Boozman in April 2015. He was invited to present 'Lessons learned from my Fulbright Experience to Egypt' to Fulbright International Scholars in August 2015, and was a discussant on Ozarks at Large segment '**The Fulbright Impact**' that aired September 2nd.

Mitra Panahipour (PhD ANTH) carried out an initial season of landscape survey in Iranian Kurdistan during Summer 2015. She aims to explore landscape transformations in the form of settlement expansion and agricultural intensification during the late antiquity. This project, along with her Iraqi Kurdistan research will enhance the archaeological knowledge of this transitional area between Iranian Central Plateau, Zagros Mountains and Central Mesopotamia.



Aaron Shew (PhD ENDY) spent academic year 2014-2015 undertaking language study with the national Hindi Language Program Immersion and Research Center in Rajasthan, India. He has received a full NSF grant supporting his PhD work in Environmental Dynamics. He will examine the relationships between crop accessibility, soil fertility, market accessibility, food trends, climate variability, and population demographics in India.

Ashley Shidner (PhD ANTH) accompanied **Jerry Rose** (ANTH) as part of his team to Amarna, Egypt in Summer 2015 to continue analysis of skeletal remains.

Bradley Wilson (PhD GEOS) was awarded an NSF grant supporting his PhD work in Geosciences beginning Fall 2015, focusing on developing a new regional risk index for the Middle East, particularly on the implications of cultural factors on risk.

Wawan Yulianto (PhD CLCS) presented 'Explicitly Heretical, Unconsciously Political: The Unspoken Subversion in "Blasphemous" American Muslim Novels' at the 24th Annual British Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies Conference in Savannah, Georgia in February 2015 and 'American Islamic Literature: A New Frontier in Islamic Studies/Comparative Literature' at Transference: An Interdisciplinary Graduate Student Conference in Fayetteville, Arkansas in March 2015.

Malek Zuraikat (PhD CLCS) presented 'The Future of English Loanwords into Arabic' at the 3rd Annual Student Research Symposium, held at Central Arkansas University in April 2015 and 'Courtly Love in Nabokov's *Lolita*' at the St. Louis University Annual Symposium on Medieval and Renaissance Studies in May 2015. He was awarded a Sturgis International Fellowship to pursue his English-to-Arabic translation of Chaucer's *Troilus and Cressyde* in Jordan.



Aaron Shew in Rajasthan, India (top); Students from Tom Paradise's course 'Geography of the Middle East' pose with prepared dishes at a Moroccan-themed banquet (bottom); Photos courtesy Tom Paradise, Nani Verzon

UNDERGRADUATE NEWS

Nathaniel Bailey (PLSC) presented 'Brother Whom I Love: Alternative Sexual Relations in Turkey' at the 2nd Annual King Fahd Center Symposium in Islamic Studies entitled 'Islamic Studies: Belief, Expression, Journey, Debate' in April 2015. This paper was also accepted for presentation at the annual meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion/Religious Research Association in Newport Beach, CA in October 2015.

Kalynn Barlow (IREL; MEST minor) studied abroad in Amman, Jordan during Summer 2015 supported by a Project GO scholarship.

Andrew Billingsley (IREL/MEST) attended an ISA study abroad program in Morocco during Spring 2015.

Luke Burton (BSIB) undertook an internship in Amman, Jordan during Summer 2015, and will study Jordanian Dialect through the Shababik Program.

Sydney Cason (PLSC/MEST) received a Minna Rosenbaum Divers Memorial Scholarship from the U of A Department of Political Science.

Sarah Cory (ANTH/MEST) will study abroad in Amman, Jordan during Spring 2016 with support from the Honors College Study Abroad Scholarship.

Christopher Cowan (IREL/MEST) was selected for Cleveland C. Burton Internship in International Relations. He worked at the British Consulate-General Houston during Summer 2015 in the Press, Political, and Public Affairs department where he gained valuable insight into international relations from a ground level perspective.

Jessica Garross (BSIB) will spend Fall 2015 studying abroad in Morocco.

Abram Greenbaum (PLSC/MEST) presented 'The People of Lot: Does God Hate Them?' at the Annual Meeting of the SW Commission on Religious Studies in Irving, TX in March 2015. He also presented 'Desecration of the Body: Tattoos in Middle Eastern Culture' at the 2nd Annual King Fahd Center Symposium in Islamic Studies in April 2015. This paper was also accepted for presentation at the 2nd Annual Undergraduate Research Workshop at the Middle East Studies Association 2015 Annual Meeting in November.

William Harris (NDS) presented 'In Order That He May Rest in Peace' at the 2nd Annual King Fahd Center Symposium in Islamic Studies in April 2015.

Isaac Hood (IREL) attended an AMIDEAST study abroad program in Amman, Jordan during Summer 2015.

Macyn Hunn (COMM/MEST) will study Arabic in Jordan with AMIDEAST during Fall 2015, supported by funding from the King Fahd Center.

Austin Keefer (PLSC/MEST, IREL) presented 'Glory be to God, I Have Killed My Daughter: The Tradition of Honor Killing in Jordan' at the 2nd Annual King Fahd Center Symposium in Islamic Studies in April 2015. His paper was also accepted for presentation at the annual meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion/Religious Research Association to be held in Newport Beach, CA in October 2015.

Joseph Largent (GEOG/MEST) spent part of Summer 2015 volunteering at Mashjar Juthour, an arboretum/eco-park north of Ramallah in the Palestine Authority. He was also selected as a semi-finalist for the US State Department's Critical Language Scholarship program.

Interested in the Middle East and North Africa?
Want to travel, study abroad, and learn Arabic?
Contact the King Fahd Center for more information
on majoring or minoring in Middle East Studies!

Viktoría Lawler (PLSC) presented 'Getting Freedom Back in Cadillacs: Women, Religion, and the State in Saudi Arabia' at the 2nd Annual King Fahd Center Symposium in Islamic Studies in April 2015.

Christian McCall (IREL; MEST minor) presented 'To Sin or Not to Sin: Mankind's Intentions and Inclinations' at the 2nd Annual King Fahd Center Symposium in Islamic Studies in April 2015.

Morgan Michel's (IREL/MEST; ARAB minor) paper 'But God Said She is Free: A Critique of the Methods Used in Islam to Restrict Women's Rights and Movement' was accepted for presentation at the Pacific NW Region AAR/ASOR 2015 annual meeting as well as the 2015 Annual Meeting of the Southwest Commission on Religious Studies.

Marcus Montgomery (CMJS, PSYC) will spend Fall 2015 in Jordan with a CIEE study abroad program.

Jamie Nix (IREL; MEST minor) will spend the Fall 2015 semester studying abroad in Morocco.

Richard Tiffany (JOUR/MEST) visited Tunisia for nine weeks during Summer 2015 to work on a documentary film about Tunisia, the Arab Spring and the transition to democracy. Although the film will be primarily about Tunisia, it will be set in the context of the global movement where more than 35 countries have made the transition to democracy from a nonviolent uprising since WWII. Tunisia is the most recent country to make this transition and the only country from the Arab Spring to successfully turn their uprising into a democracy, so far. Notes and photos from some of the interviews are on Facebook at PeaceWorks Productions, with more to come.

Sydney Ross's (JOUR/GBUS) paper 'Religion: What is the Point?' was accepted for presentation at the Pacific NW Region AAR/ASOR 2015 annual meeting held in Portland, OR in March 2015.

MEST Program Undergraduate Student Support

The King Fahd Center offers scholarships for advanced undergraduate MEST majors who have demonstrated a serious commitment to Middle East Studies and excellent performance in the classroom.

Scholarships have been awarded to the following students for Academic Year 2014-2015:

Meghan Austin (IREL/MEST)
Christopher Cowan (IREL/MEST)
Shelli Daniel (IREL/MEST)
Mary Goodwin (IREL/MEST)
Abram Greenbaum (PLSC/MEST)
Elizabeth Heckmann (IREL/MEST)
Macyn Hunn (COMM/MEST)
Joseph Largent (GEOG/MEST)
David Sommi (IREL/MEST)
Madeline Upson (IREL/MEST)

Scholarship applicants must have a minimum 3.25 in overall GPA, attain junior status and declare a MEST major. Contact the King Fahd Center for more information on the application process and upcoming deadlines.

Madeline Upson (IREL/MEST; ARAB minor) spent the 2014-2015 academic year abroad, attending an ISA Study Abroad program in Meknes, Morocco partially supported by a King Fahd Center undergraduate scholarship.

Amanda Want (IREL/MEST) attended an SIT study abroad program in Jordan during Summer 2015.

Hilary Zedlitz (PLSC/MEST) was named a finalist for the 2015 Harry S. Truman Scholarship, and received the Minna Rosenbaum Divers Scholarship from the U of A Department of Political Science.

ALUMNI NEWS

Our Alumni continue to make us proud in academia, NGO and government sectors, the media, and beyond.

Khalid Ahmadzai (IREL/MEST BA 2015) was accepted to the Clinton School of Public Service in Little Rock, Arkansas and began an MA program in Public Service in Fall 2015.

Ahmet Akturk (PhD HIST 2012) published 'Female Cousins and Wounded Masculinity: Kurdish Nationalist Discourse in the Post-Ottoman Middle East' in *Middle Eastern Studies* (September 2015).

Cole Bockenfeld (BA IREL/MEST/PLSC 2008) is Advocacy Director for the Project on Middle East Democracy (POMED). He co-authored reports, with POMED Executive Director Stephen McInerney, '**The Federal Budget and Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2016: Democracy, Governance, and Human Rights in the Middle East and North Africa**' (May 2015) and '**State, Foreign Operations, & Related Programs: Appropriations Bills, FY16**' (September 2015).

Clayton Clark (MFA CRWR 2015) defended his thesis 'Why Did the River Stop Talking?' in April 2015.

Travis Curtice (MA PLSC 2012) completed the first year of a PhD program in Political Science at Emory University.

Gretchen Dabbs (PhD ANTH 2009) was awarded a grant from the National Endowment for Humanities to fund ongoing archaeological excavations in Amarna, Egypt. She co-authored, with **Jerome Rose** (ANTH) and fellow alumna **Melissa Zabecki** (PhD ANTH 2009), 'The Bioarchaeology of Akhetaten: Unexpected Results from a Capital City' in S. Ikram, J. Kaiser and R. Walker (eds.), *Egyptian Bioarchaeology: Humans, Animals, the Environment* (Sidestone Press 2015) and, with Melissa Zabecki, 'Abandoned Memories: A Cemetery of Forgotten Souls' in Benjamin Porter and Alexis Boutin (eds.), *Remembering and Commemorating the Dead: Recent Contributions in Bioarchaeology and Mortuary Analysis from the Ancient Near East* (University of Colorado Press 2015).

Congratulations

to our Spring and Summer 2015 Graduates!

Dhia Ben Ali (MA PLSC)
Sean Bryant (BA HIST, IREL/MEST)
Clayton Clark (MFA CRWR)
Bailey Cox (BA IREL/MEST)
Charles Davidson (MA ANTH)
Daniel Ince (BA MEST minor)
Mary-Catherine Gerling (BA PLSC, IREL/MEST)
Chelsea Del Grande (BA GEOG, IREL/MEST)
Anne Marie Grisham (BA IREL/MEST)
Sara Kouchehbagh (BA IREL/MEST)
Rebecca Payton (BA MEST minor)
Robert Peiser (BA IREL/MEST)
Erin Wright (BA ANTH/MEST)



Clayton Clark with Drs. Adnan and Paula Haydar at the U of A Program in Creative Writing and Translation's graduate reading; photo courtesy of Nani Verzon

Charles Davidson (MA ANTH) defended his thesis 'The Temporary Permanence of Syrian Refugees in Jordan' in May 2015 and began a PhD program at the George Mason University School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution with full funding and yearly stipend in Fall 2015.

Rasha el-Endari (MA ANTH 2012) is in her third year of study in the PhD program in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at the University of Toronto. She is an active member of the Computational Research on the Ancient Near East (CRANE) project, in which she has helped facilitate the integration of the Tell Tayinat Archaeological Project's GIS data into the OCHRE database.

Clea Hupp (PhD HIST 2004) was appointed Chair of the Department of History at the University of Arkansas, Little Rock.

Amy Karoll (MA ANTH 2012) is in her third year of study in a PhD program in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at UCLA.

Suncem Kocer's (MA ANTH 2005) article 'Social business in online financing: Crowdfunding narratives of independent documentary producers in Turkey' was published in *New Media & Society* (2015). She will chair the panel 'Culture and Politics in the Aftermath of the Arab Spring' at the 2015 Annual Meeting of the Middle East Studies Association.

James Redman (MA ANTH 2003) defended his Anthropology dissertation, 'The Diwaniyya: Guestroom Sociability and Bureaucratic Brokerage in Kuwait,' at the University of Utah.

Sanaa Riaz (PhD ANTH 2011) presented 'Technology and Second Language Learning in Pakistani Public Schools' at the Institute for South Asia Studies, University of California-Berkeley conference on 'Fixing Pakistan's Education' in February 2015. She joined the Board of Directors of the South Asian Muslims Studies Association (SAMSA) and began a tenure-track position in Anthropology at Metropolitan State University of Denver in August 2015.

Asaad al-Saleh (PhD CLCS 2010) began a tenure-track position in Arabic Literature at Indiana University in August 2015. His book, *Voices from the Arab Spring* (Columbia University Press) was published in March 2015.

Farid al-Salim (PhD HIST 2008) published *Palestine and the Decline of the Ottoman Empire: Modernisation and the Path to Palestinian Statehood* (IB Taurus 2015).


Laila Taraghi (MA PLSC 2012) has been accepted with funding into the Master of Global Policy Studies at the LBJ School of Public Service, University of Texas-Austin, and began studies in Fall 2015.

Anna Weiser (MA ANTH 2012) is in her third year of the Anthropology PhD program at Kansas University.

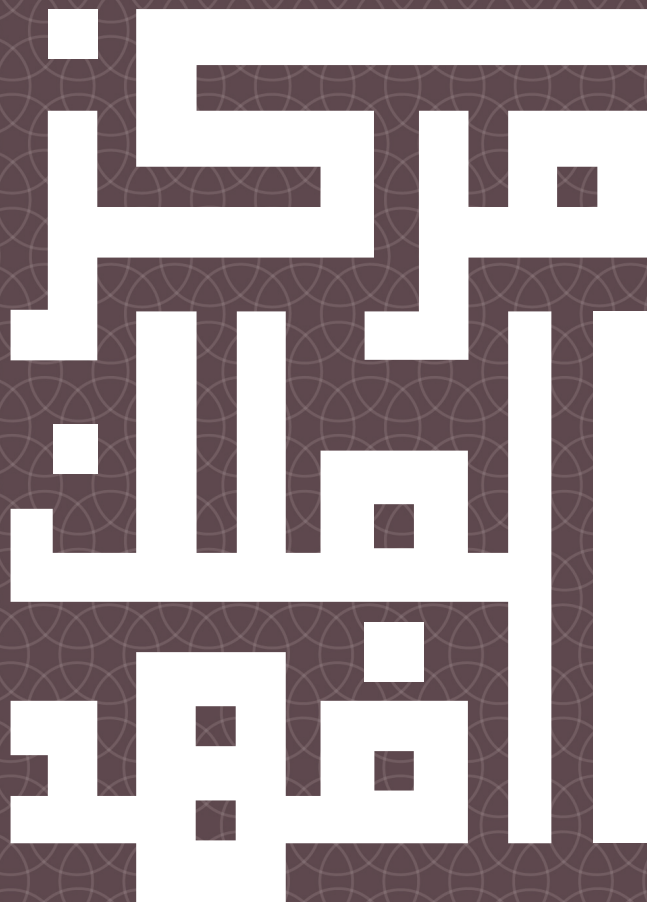
James Wesolowski (MA ANTH 2012) is in his third year in the PhD program in ENDY at U of A.

Melissa Zabecki (PhD ANTH 2009) co-authored, with **Jerome Rose** (ANTH) and fellow UA alumna **Gretchen Dabbs** (PhD ANTH 2009), 'The Bioarchaeology of Akhetaten: Unexpected Results from a Capital City' in S. Ikram, J. Kaiser and R. Walker (eds.), *Egyptian Bioarchaeology: Humans, Animals, the Environment* (Sidestone Press 2015). She also co-authored (with Gretchen Dabbs) 'Abandoned Memories: A Cemetery of Forgotten Souls' in Benjamin Porter and Alexis Boutin (eds.), *Remembering and Commemorating the Dead: Recent Contributions in Bioarchaeology and Mortuary Analysis from the Ancient Near East* (University of Colorado Press 2015). She will publish 'Suffering in the City: Skeletal evidence for possible ritualized punishment at Tell el-Amarna' in *International Journal of Paleopathology*, co-authored with Gretchen Dabbs.

Never miss an event! Connect with us on social media or email us at MEST@uark.edu and ask to be added to our mailing list.

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

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King Fahd Center for Middle East Studies

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