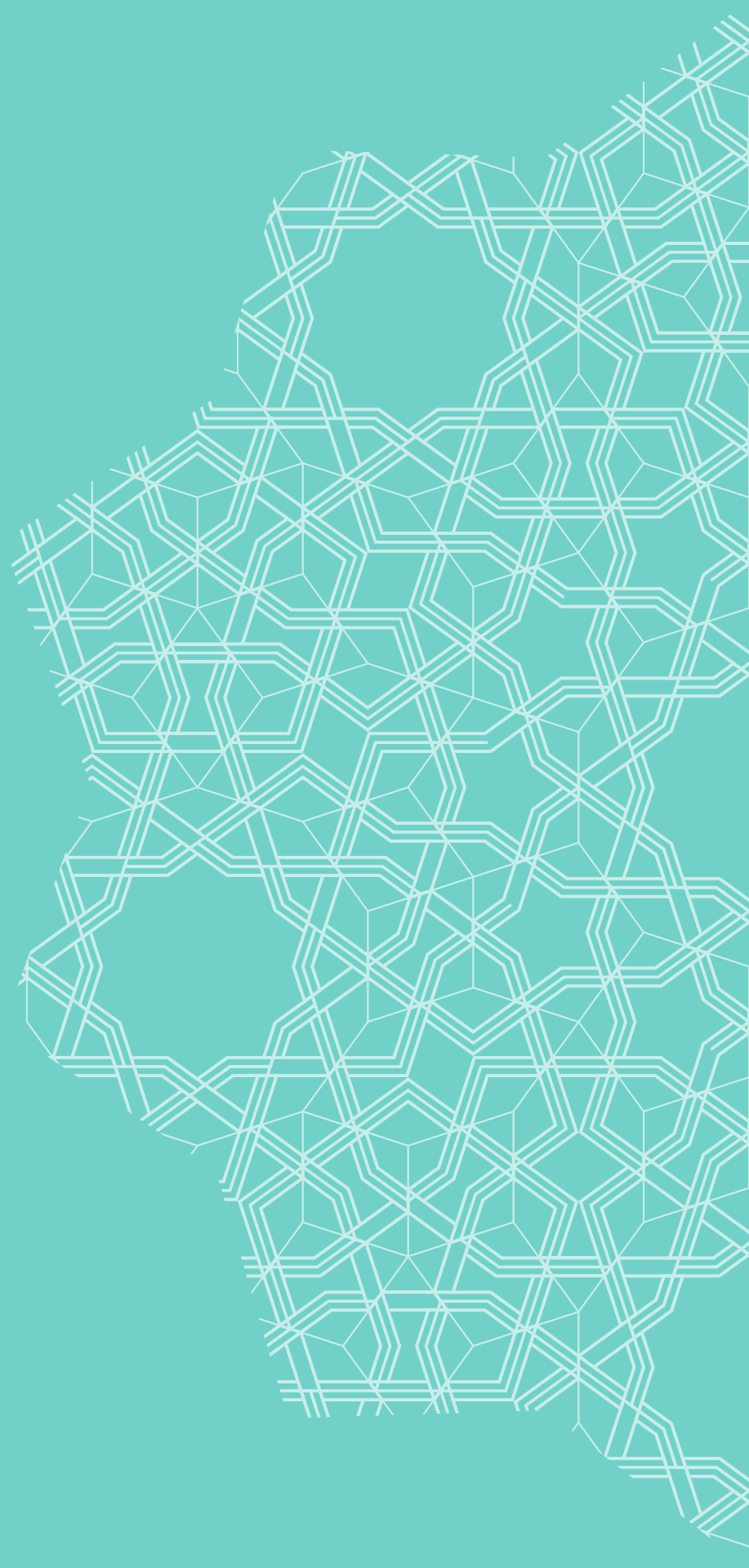


MIDDLE  
EAST  
STUDIES

ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2014-2015

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# LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

## DEAR COLLEAGUES AND FRIENDS,

Since 2012, Middle East Studies has been growing at a robust pace as it transitions from an undergraduate concentration into an endowed center with a reputation for innovative research, engaged programming, and rigorous learning. I am happy to report that the 2014–2015 academic year was pivotal for institutionalizing Middle East Studies at Brown on all three fronts. President Paxson has recognized this growth through a commitment to financially secure this program over the next five years.

Middle East Studies is a thriving academic field, and peer universities have been busy strengthening their departments and centers. In this competitive environment, it is significant that Middle East Studies at Brown is seen as a rising star. In large measure, this is due to our unique profile of thematically structured research and public engagement. Building on the passions of the faculty and the interests of the students, Middle East Studies organizes its activities around four themes that bridge the humanities and social sciences: Displacement and Partition, Islamic Humanities, Arts and Social Change, and Political Economy of Development. Highlights this year include the Iranian Underground Music Festival, which filled the RISD auditorium, and our Critical Conversations on Palestine-Israel, which featured Hanan Ashrawi and Stephen Robert. Our growing reputation is also due to our pioneering annual symposia, such as New Directions in Palestinian Studies, Digital Islamic Humanities, and Engaged Scholarship, through which we explore new lines of academic inquiry, intervene in important public debates, and promote understanding.

We have doubled our core faculty since 2012, and are well on the way to achieving our most important priority: a critical mass of faculty working across disciplines and a regular rotation of visiting professors and postdoctoral fellows. This year, a joint Watson-History search successfully recruited Sreemati Mitter, a Harvard-educated economic historian. In a separate search, the Department of History hired Jennifer Johnson, an African historian who works on colonial Algeria.

Middle East Studies faculty are popular on campus and we take special care in pursuing our educational mission. The number of concentrators has tripled since 2012, making Middle East Studies larger than all other area studies combined. Our expanding curriculum attracted more than 1,000 undergraduates, and our Departmental Undergraduate Group continues to be one of the most active at Brown. The number of graduate students has also grown quickly, and this year saw the establishment of our Graduate Student Association.

All this would not have been possible without the enthusiastic participation of our faculty and students and the dedication of our small but superlative staff. We are committed to making Middle East Studies part of the DNA of intellectual life at Brown and a national and international model for area studies in the Twenty-First Century. We thank you for your support.

**Beshara Doumani**

*Joukowsky Family Professor of Modern Middle East History  
Director, Middle East Studies*



# ABOUT US

## MISSION

Middle East Studies at Brown University promotes knowledge, understanding, and informed discussion about the Middle East and Muslim societies through research, teaching, and public engagement.

## ABOUT

Housed in the Watson Institute and supported by the Dean of Faculty, Middle East Studies is in a transition period of rapid growth led by Beshara Doumani, who launched the Middle East Studies Initiative when he joined the Brown faculty in 2012. The Initiative seeks to integrate the Middle East into the larger streams of intellectual life by building a cutting-edge research community, producing innovative programming, and offering an exciting array of courses and opportunities for undergraduate concentrators and graduate students. Eschewing the hothouse legacy structures of Oriental and Area Studies models, Middle East Studies at Brown University is organized around key themes and driven by signature initiatives that tap into Brown's tradition of interdisciplinary, critical, and engaged scholarship.





## KEY THEMES

- Displacement and Partition
- Islamic Humanities
- Arts and Social Change
- Political Economy of Development

## SIGNATURE INITIATIVES

- Digital Islamic Humanities
- New Directions in Palestinian Studies
- Aga Khan Islamic Humanities Workshop
- Engaged Scholarship in Zones of Conflict

# STAFF



## SARAH TOBIN, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

**Sarah Tobin** joined Middle East Studies at Brown in December 2014 as the new associate director. She is an anthropologist with expertise in Islam, economic anthropology, and gender in the Middle East. Her work explores transformations in religious and economic life, identity construction, and personal piety. Ethnographically, her work focuses on Islamic piety in the economy, especially Islamic banking and finance, Ramadan, and contested fields of consumption such as the *hijab* and the Arab Spring.

Sarah's work also engages in new concerns, including Syrian refugees, gender, and neoliberalism. She has been published in the *Middle East Research and Information Project*, *Middle East Policy*, *Digest of Middle East Studies*, and *Research in Economic Anthropology*. Her first book is forthcoming from Cornell University Press.

## BARBARA OBERKOETTER, ACADEMIC PROGRAM MANAGER

**Barbara Oberkoetter** oversees the administrative, financial, and human resources functions for Middle East Studies, and manages the program's event logistics and communications. A former hotel industry executive, she has lived and worked in Chile, East Africa, Europe, the West Indies, and North America.





# SPECIAL MENTION

## LARA SAVENIJE '15

**Student Assistant and Departmental Undergraduate Group Leader**

**Lara Savenije** is a fourth-year Middle East Studies concentrator from the Netherlands. Her studies focus on the eastern Mediterranean and public history. Lara has been an active member of Middle East Studies since coming to Brown. In the future, she hopes to work on collective memory initiatives in and around Turkey.



## RAFAEL CONTRERAS '15

**Student Assistant and Departmental Undergraduate Group Leader**

**Rafael Contreras** is a fourth-year student from Venezuela, concentrating in Middle East Studies and Political Science. He has been involved in the activities of Middle East Studies since his freshman year. After graduating, Rafael aspires to work in international migration, specifically in the area of refugee assistance and integration.



## NIKHITA MENDIS '17

**Student Assistant**

**Nikhita Mendis** is a second-year Middle East Studies and History concentrator from the United Kingdom and Sri Lanka. In addition to working for the Middle East Studies department, she is a columnist and the associate culture section manager for the *Brown Political Review* and an assistant editor for the *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, and founder of *Qalam*, a new Middle Eastern culture magazine on campus.



## KATE TALERICO '17

**Graphic Designer/Web Assistant**

**Kate Talerico** is a first-year student from Minneapolis, Minnesota. In addition to working for the Middle East Studies' graphic design team, she owns a photography business, writes for the *Brown Daily Herald*, and is a peer mentor for students with disabilities.



## PHIL LAI '13

**Phil Lai** is Middle East Studies' graphic designer, the creative mind who developed our brand.



## ROBIN MCGILL

**Robin McGill** was Middle East Studies' administrative assistant in the fall and spring semesters.



# FACULTY ADVISORY COMMITTEE



## FAIZ AHMED, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF HISTORY

**Faiz Ahmed** is a specialist in the legal and constitutional history of the modern Middle East. Trained as a lawyer and social historian, his primary research explores the intersection of student and scholarly networks, constitutional movements, and “rule of law” discourse from the Ottoman Empire to Afghanistan during the long 19th century.

His work has been published in a number of books and scholarly journals. His current book project presents the first transnational study of Afghanistan’s early constitutional history. He is a recipient of fellowships from the Fulbright Program, Social Science Research Council, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and American Research Institute in Turkey for his research in Afghanistan, Turkey, Egypt, Britain, and India.

## SHERINE HAMDY, KUTAYBA ALGHANIM ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF SOCIAL SCIENCE AND ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ANTHROPOLOGY

**Sherine Hamdy** is an anthropologist with long-standing interests in cross-cultural approaches to medicine, health, and the body. She received her PhD from New York University in 2006. Her book, *Our Bodies Belong to God: Organ Transplants, Islam, and the Struggle for Human Dignity in Egypt*, is based on two years of fieldwork in the Egyptian cities of Tanta, Mansoura, and Cairo, and received Honorable Mention from the 2013 Clifford Geertz Prize.

She teaches courses in medical anthropology, science and society, Middle East ethnography, and social theory in cultural anthropology. Her current research critically engages with physicians’ roles in the recent political upheavals in the Arab world. She was awarded tenure in Spring 2015.





# FACULTY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## NANCY KHALEK, WILLIAM A. DYER JR. ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF THE HUMANITIES

**Nancy Khalek** specializes in Late Antiquity and early Islam. She received her PhD in history from Princeton University in 2006. Her first book is *Damascus after the Muslim Conquest: Text and Image in Early Islam*, and she has published articles and essays in a number of scholarly journals and venues, including the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, *Der Islam*, *Arabica*, and *Dumbarton Oaks*. She has conducted archaeological fieldwork in Syria, Turkey and, most recently, in Jordan. Her current book project explores hagiography, biography, and material culture related to the Companions of Muhammad in the context of claims to orthodoxy and authority in medieval Islam. She was awarded tenure in Spring 2015.



## ELIAS MUHANNA, MANNING ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

**Elias Muhanna** is a scholar of classical Arabic literature and Islamic intellectual history. His research focuses on encyclopedic texts in the Islamic world and Europe, the cultural production of the Mamluk Empire, and the problem of the vernacular in different literary traditions. He earned his PhD in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations from Harvard University.

His work has been published in a number of scholarly books, working paper series, and journals, including *Muqamas* and *Translation*. His article, "Iraq and Syria's Poetic Borders," was published in *The New Yorker* online. He is a 2015 American Council of Learned Societies Fellow, examining "Big Data in the Medieval Islamic World: Classical Arabic Encyclopedias in Their Golden Age."

# RESEARCH INITIATIVES

Middle East Studies promotes rigorous, interdisciplinary, and engaged scholarship via specific research initiatives that make a unique contribution to intellectual life at Brown and beyond.

## DIGITAL ISLAMIC HUMANITIES PROJECT

The **Digital Islamic Humanities Project** is a research initiative devoted to supporting data-driven scholarship on the history, literature, and cultures of the Islamic world. Over the past few decades, humanistic inquiry has been problematized and invigorated by technological advances and the emergence of what is referred to as the digital humanities. Across multiple disciplines, from history to literature, religious studies to philosophy, archaeology to music, scholars are tapping the extraordinary power of digital technologies to preserve, curate, analyze, visualize, and reconstruct their research objects. Through the sponsorship of annual gatherings, workshops, symposia, and other kinds of research projects, this initiative aims to support the state of the art in digital scholarship pertaining to Islamic & Middle East Studies.

Our annual **Digital Islamic Humanities** workshops draw an international audience. Its organizer, Elias Muhanna, Manning Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature and Middle East Studies Brown—with the support of the Brown Humanities Initiative—pioneered the first conference in 2013 that explored the state of the art in digital scholarship pertaining to Islamic & Middle East Studies.



The 2014 workshop, **“Textual Corpora and the Digital Islamic Humanities,”** introduced Islamic scholars to the valuable research that is possible through the use of digital tools and methodologies. The workshop attracted many more applications that we could accommodate.

We have begun planning next year’s event, which will focus on **“Distant Reading and the Islamic Archive.”**



## Textual Corpora and the Digital Islamic Humanities

The Middle East Studies Initiative at Brown University is pleased to announce a two-day workshop on October 17-18, 2014, which will be devoted to digital textual corpora.

Online libraries and digital repositories, which contain thousands of texts and hundreds of millions of words, are transforming the study of Islamic literatures, cultures, and history. This workshop will comprise a series of introductory sessions on various digital tools and methodologies (e.g., geo-referencing, text encoding and processing, graph visualization, and other topics) aimed to provide scholars of the Islamic world with an orientation to the valuable research possibilities afforded by these resources.

For a copy of the program and for information about viewing the workshop via webcast, please visit the Digital Islamic Humanities Project website at [islamichumanities.org](http://islamichumanities.org)

**Location:** The Digital Scholarship Lab, Rockefeller Library  
Brown University | Providence, RI

**Dates:** October 17-18, 2014

**Curator:** Elias Muhanna  
Manning Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature  
Brown University

**Session leaders:** Maxim Romanov  
Postdoctoral Associate, Perseus Project  
Tufts University

Ellie Myloras  
Senior Digital Humanities Librarian  
Brown University

**Sponsored by:** Brown University Humanities Initiative

[ISLAMICHUMANITIES.ORG](http://ISLAMICHUMANITIES.ORG)





# RESEARCH INITIATIVES

## NEW DIRECTIONS IN PALESTINIAN STUDIES

In cooperation with other institutions, Middle East Studies supports symposia that provide spaces for systematic reflection on the fast-paced academic knowledge production on Palestine and the Palestinians. These annual symposia bring together established and emerging scholars in a low-pressure workshop environment to take stock of research trends, identify new questions and sources, and exchange experiences and insights. Driving this effort are two questions: What does it mean to be Palestinian? And what forms of political mobilization are implicated in and made possible by knowledge production on Palestine and the Palestinians?

The 2014 symposium, **“Political Economy and Economy of the Political,”** drew scholars from 16 different institutions in seven different countries, and overflowed crowds.

The 2015 symposium, **“Palestine: Political Cultures and the Cultures of Politics,”** drew scholars from a similar number of institutions and countries, who explored the political experiences of ordinary Palestinians and how they are mediated, reproduced, and transformed by cultural practices.





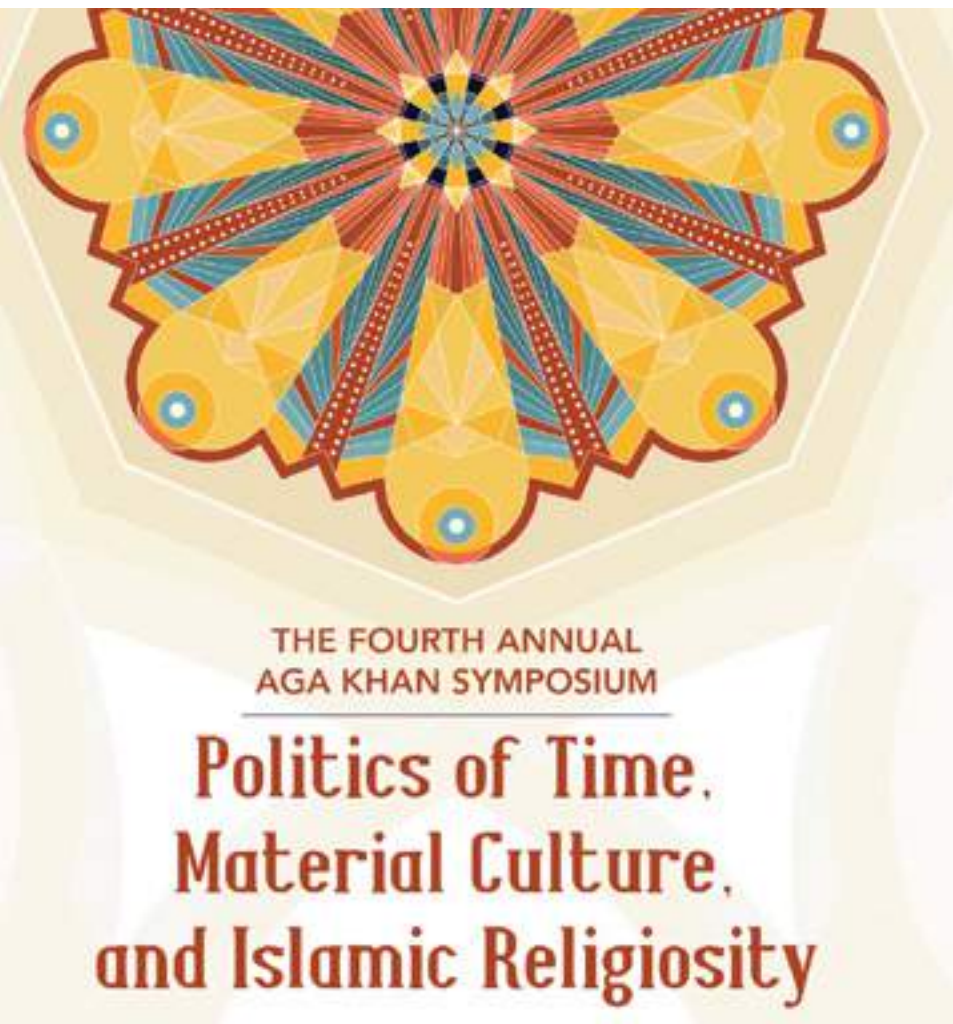
# RESEARCH INITIATIVES

## AGA KHAN CONFERENCE IN ISLAMIC HUMANITIES

Middle East Studies brings leading thinkers to Brown's campus from a wide range of humanities disciplines for research, programming, and teaching related to the Middle East.

In 2014, historian Boğaç Ergene brought in leading scholars for a conference on **"Sharia, Government and Development."**

2015 Aga Khan Visiting Assistant Professor in Islamic Humanities Amal Sachedina organized a two-day workshop in April entitled **"Politics of Time, Material Culture and Islamic Religiosity."** It brought together scholars working on different regions of the historic and contemporary Middle East and Islamicate world to explore how history-making as a modern intervention has transformed the everyday lives of people through refiguring religious and political realities.





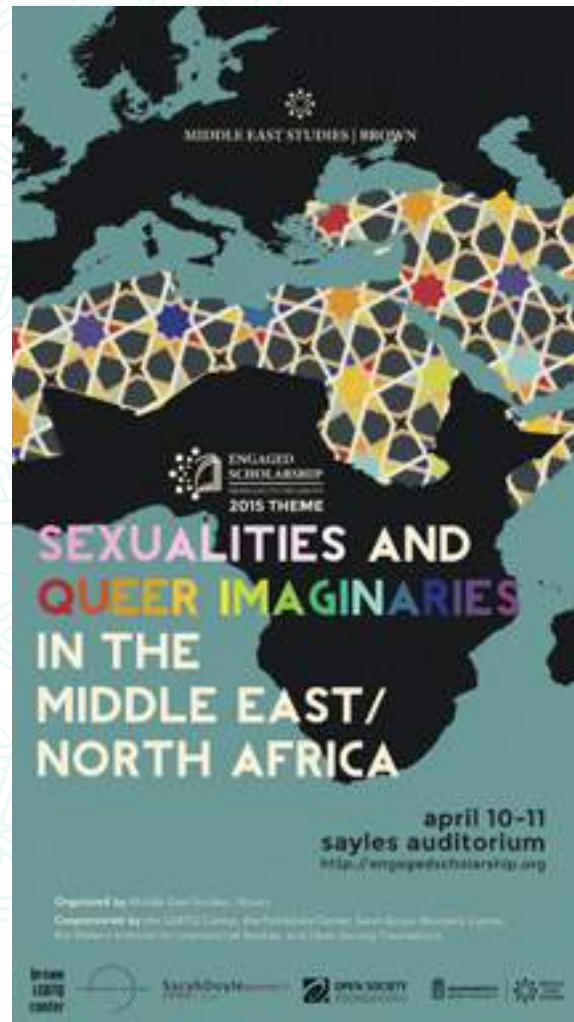
# RESEARCH INITIATIVES

## ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP IN ZONES OF CONFLICT

This initiative explores the question of what it means to put intellectual work in the service of “engaged scholarship,” broadly defined. Each event is explicitly geared towards offering an open platform of critical discussion on the intersection of academic fieldwork, ethics, social movements, and activism.

Mayssun Succarie, Linda Quiquix and Beshara Doumani organized the first workshop in 2013, **“Knowledge Production, Ethics, Solidarity: Stories from the field,”** which explored the tensions between academic practices and emancipatory politics, and how moral and ethical issues are negotiated during fieldwork. In 2014, the second workshop, **“Embedded! Archaeologists and Anthropologists in Modern Landscapes of Conflict”** organized by Ömür Harmansah, discussed the contemporary archaeological and anthropological field practices in contexts of war and social conflict and their ethical implications.

The 2015 conference, **“Sexualities and Queer Imaginaries in the Middle East/North Africa,”** was organized by Sa’ed Atshan. It brought together a diverse group of experts, who have contributed to the representations and/or development of lesbian / gay / bisexual / transgender / queer (LGBTQ) movements in the Middle East/North Africa (MENA) region.



# PROGRAMMING

Middle East Studies offers a wide variety of opportunities to engage in dialogue and learn about the region. Our offerings are infused into the daily life of Brown through conferences, lectures, book signings, luncheon seminars, film screenings, teach-ins, musical concerts, art exhibits, and our bi-annual Critical Conversations on Palestine / Israel series.

High quality programming and packed audiences (actual and online) have made Middle East Studies one of the most vibrant units at Brown.



## CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS ON PALESTINE/ISRAEL

This year's Critical Conversations on Palestine / Israel series culminated in a panel on **"What Is to Be Done?"** featuring Hanan Ashrawi, Stephen Robert '62, Hani Masri, and Beshara Doumani. Ashrawi, a Palestinian legislator, activist, and scholar, who has been instrumental in Palestine / Israel negotiations, told the packed auditorium that in Palestine, "We are always being asked to think creatively, to think outside of the box, to find ways out of an impasse, and to try to find strategic options." Critical Conversations on Palestine / Israel deepen the dialogue around important issues for Middle East scholars by sharing diverse and critical perspectives.

Our **teach-ins** do similar work by encouraging critical discussion and learning about the Middle East region in the wider community.



## ARAB COMICS: 90 YEARS OF POPULAR VISUAL CULTURE

As part of its key theme **Arts and Social Change**, Middle East Studies organized an art exhibition through **Art at Watson**, and hosted a half-day symposium on **"Arab Comics: 90 Years of Popular Visual Culture,"** which was co-curated by Mona and Nadim Damluji in February 2015. The symposium brought together Lebanese and American comics scholars and artists to discuss how the different dimensions of Arab identity have been defined through this medium.



# PROGRAMMING

## UNDERGROUND IRAN MUSIC FESTIVAL

“Underground Iran Music Festival” featured two Iranian bands, **Kiosk** and **Mohsen Namjoo**, who played to a packed auditorium here in Providence. Livestreams have received thousands of views in cities across the world, from Tehran, Iran, to Sydney, Australia.





# PROGRAMMING

lecture series

**Jenny White**  
 professor of anthropology,  
 boston university

**"Turkey at the Tipping Point"**

co-sponsorship with  
 Watson Institute's Security Seminar Series  
 5:00-6:30 p.m.  
 thursday, september 18  
 watson joukowsky forum

lecture

**Dwight F. Reynolds**  
 professor of arabic language & literature  
 department of religious studies  
 university of toronto

**THE QIYAN**  
 ("KINGED SLAVE GIRLS")  
 OF MEDIEVAL MUSLIM SPAIN

5:30 p.m.  
 wednesday, september 24  
 smith tuananna 106

middle east studies  
 lecture series

**Rema Hammami**  
 assoc. professor of anthropology,  
 institute of women's studies,  
 birzeit university

**"Global Governmentality  
 and Earned Sovereignty  
 in Israeli Occupied  
 Palestine"**

co-sponsorship with  
 Watson Institute's Security Seminar Series  
 5:30-7:00 p.m.  
 thursday, october 16  
 watson joukowsky forum

middle east studies  
 guest lecture

**Toward  
 a Comparative History  
 of the Modern Mediterranean**  
 Edmund "Terry" Burke III  
 research professor of history  
 university of california, santa cruz

5:00 p.m.  
 tuesday, november 18  
 joukowsky forum, watson institute

## LECTURE SERIES

Renowned scholars from universities around the world are invited to present their latest research or book at Brown.

lecture series

**Levon Hovhannesian**  
 assoc. professor and  
 chair of modern armenian  
 history, UCLA

**Port Cities  
 & Printers:  
 Reflections on Early Global  
 Armenian Print Culture, 1512-1800**

5:00-6:30 p.m.  
 thursday, december 4  
 watson joukowsky forum

middle east studies  
 spring 2015 lecture

**The Hidden  
 Light of Objects:  
 Fiction and the  
 Quotidian in Kuwait**  
**Mai Al-Nakib**  
 college of arts, kuwait university

**FOLLOWED BY BOOK SIGNING**  
 12:00-1:30 p.m.  
 wednesday, february 11  
 joukowsky forum, watson institute

middle east studies  
 spring 2015 lecture

in collaboration with the  
 watson institute security  
 seminar series

**Karam Dana**  
 university of washington burnell

**CONFRONTING  
 INJUSTICE**  
 Palestinian Identity, and the  
 Non-Violent Forms of Resisting  
 Israeli Occupation

5:00 - 6:30 p.m.  
 thursday, february 19  
 joukowsky forum, watson institute

middle east studies  
 spring 2015 lecture

**Ellen Amster**  
 mcmaster university

**"Healing the Body,  
 Healing the Islamic Umma:  
 Medicine and Sufi Saints in  
 Morocco"**

5:00 - 6:30 p.m.  
 thursday, april 2  
 joukowsky forum  
 watson institute  
 followed by book signing



# PROGRAMMING



## LUNCHEON SEMINARS

Every month, Middle East Studies faculty, graduates and postdocs present their latest research to peers, students and community members over lunch. These informal seminars build our Middle East Studies community and forge new connections across campus.

## IRAN IN THE 21ST CENTURY LUNCHEON LECTURE SERIES

The series, a collaboration between Sue Eckert, Jo-Anne Hart, Stephen Kinzer, and Middle East Studies, was made possible through funding by a Watson Institute Collaborative Grant.





# PROGRAMMING

## FILM SERIES: "1948: ONCE UPON A PALESTINE"

Curated by **Ariella Azoulay**, Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature and Modern Culture and Media. Organized by the Middle East Studies program. Cosponsored by Modern Culture and Media department.

1948 became a mythological year in the process of the ruination of Palestine and the creation of Israel that lasted several years. This films series, directed by filmmakers from different origins (Palestinian, Syrian, French, British or Israeli), invited the public to join an open and ongoing conversation about the impact of the events of that year on Palestinians and Jews. The series is part of an ongoing research project to revisit the history of Palestine-Israel outside the framework imposed by the paradigm of an unending "national conflict," and to study the catastrophe of 1948 as not merely an internal Palestinian affair.



## FILM SERIES: "DREAMING OF TOMORROW: YOUTH CULTURE IN THE MIDDLE EAST"

Curated by **Sa'ed Adel Atshan**, Postdoctoral Fellow in International Studies at the Watson Institute.





# PROGRAMMING

MIDDLE EAST STUDIES  
UNDERGRADUATE PAPER SERIES

**"Politics of Presentation:  
The Development of Modern Arab  
Poetry and the Kabul Museum"**  
Abby Linn '15 & David Elitzer '17

6:30-8 p.m. tuesday, september 23rd  
mckinney conference room  
watson institute

MIDDLE EAST STUDIES  
UNDERGRADUATE PAPER SERIES

**INSIDE  
LNO**

THE POWER OF PERCEPTION  
Layla Heston '15 & Hassan Hamada '15

6:30-8 p.m. tuesday, october 7th  
mckinney conference room  
watson institute

**Orient and Occident  
with Their Best Have  
Crowned Thee:  
Turbulent Times Across  
Ottoman Turkey**

Kutay Onaylı '17 and Lara Savarise '15

6:30-8 p.m. tuesday, december 2nd  
mckinney conference room  
watson institute

**Cultural Innovation  
New Avenues of Activism**

Sophia Sepulveda '15  
and Phoebe Gallo '16.5

6:30-8 p.m. tuesday, february 2

## DEPARTMENTAL UNDERGRADUATE GROUP EVENTS

MIDDLE EAST STUDIES  
UNDERGRADUATE  
PAPER SERIES

**Transgressing  
Textual Borders:  
Taha Husayn's Intellectual  
Trajectory & The Death  
Penalty in Shari'a**  
Yusef Hilmy '15 and  
Michael Chernin '15

6:30-8 p.m.  
tuesday, march 10  
mckinney conference room  
watson institute

MIDDLE EAST STUDIES  
UNDERGRADUATE PAPER SERIES

Nikita Mehta '17 & Alexander Ganaha '18

**WHO OWNS  
BEIRUT?  
NAVIGATING SPACE  
AND CLASS IN  
CONTEMPORARY  
LEBANON**

MIDDLE EAST STUDIES

**STUDY  
ABROAD  
IN THE  
MIDDLE EAST  
& NORTH AFRICA**

WHAT TO EXPECT

6:30-8 p.m.  
tuesday, october 14  
petteruti lounge

**THESIS OR  
CAPSTONE**  
WHAT IS BEST FOR ME?

february 18  
6:30 - 7:30 p.m.  
j. walter wilson 303  
OPEN TO ALL  
STUDENTS



# FACULTY

**FAIZ AHMED**, History  
**SUSAN ALCOCK**, Archaeology, Classics  
**IRAJ ANVAR**, Center for Language Studies  
**ARIELLA AZOULAY**, Modern Culture and Media, Comparative Literature  
**OMER BARTOV**, History, German Studies  
**RUTH ADLER BEN YEHUDA**, Judaic Studies  
**REDA BENSMAIA**, French Studies, Comparative Literature  
**HISHAM BIZRI**, Literary Arts Program  
**SHEILA BONDE**, History of Art and Architecture  
**PALMIRA BRUMMETT**, History  
**VANGELIS CALOTYCHOS**, Comparative Literature  
**MIRENA CHRISTOFF**, Center for Language Studies  
**JONATHAN CONANT**, History  
**LEO DEPUYDT**, Egyptology, Assyriology  
**LISA DICARLO**, Sociology  
**BESHARA DOUMANI**, Middle East Studies, History  
**MILED FAIZA**, Center for Language Studies  
**LINA FRUZZETTI**, Anthropology  
**KATHARINA GALOR**, Judaic Studies  
**SHERINE HAMDY**, Anthropology  
**JO-ANNE HART**, Watson Institute for International Studies  
**SUSAN HARVEY**, Religious Studies, Medieval Studies  
**ALLA HASSAN**, Center for Language Studies  
**DENNIS HOGAN**, Sociology

**DAVID JACOBSON**, Judaic Studies  
**MARTHA JOUKOWSKY**, Archaeology  
**PELIN KADERCAN**, History  
**NANCY KHALEK**, Religious Studies  
**STEPHEN KINZER**, Watson Institute for International Studies  
**MAUD MANDEL**, Judaic Studies  
**ELIAS MUHANNA**, Comparative Literature  
**SAUL OLYAN**, Judaic Studies, Religious Studies  
**NIKOLAOS PANOU**, Comparative Literature  
**STRATIS PAPAIOANNOU**, Classics, Medieval Studies  
**AMY REMENSNYDER**, History, Medieval Studies  
**RACHEL ROJANSKI**, Judaic Studies  
**MATTHEW RUTZ**, Egyptology, Assyriology  
**JOHN STEELE**, Egyptology, Assyriology  
**IAN STRAUGHN**, Middle East Studies, Anthropology  
**NINA TANNENWALD**, Political Science  
**SARAH TOBIN**, Middle East Studies  
**MEDIHA TORAMAN**, Center for Language Studies  
**ANTHONY WATSON**, History  
**VAZIRA F-Y ZAMINDAR**, History

# VISITING FACULTY & POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWS



**SA'ED ADEL ATSHAN**

**Watson Postdoctoral Fellow in  
International Studies, 2013-2015**



**NICOLA PERUGINI**

**Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in  
Italian Studies and Middle East Studies**



**MAYSSUN SUCCARIE**

**Postdoctoral Fellow in  
International Humanities, 2013-2015**



**ADI OPHIR**

**Mellon Visiting Professor of  
Humanities and Middle East Studies**



**AMAL SACHEDINA**

**Aga Khan Visiting Professor in  
Islamic Humanities, 2014-2015**



# COURSES

Middle East Studies concentrators have tripled since 2012, making this concentration larger than all other area studies combined. The concentration offers personalized interactions with faculty, various study-abroad experiences, and resources that empower students to conduct their own research. Undergraduate and graduate student associations enrich learning among students with diverse backgrounds.

## APPROACHES TO THE MIDDLE EAST

**Taught by Beshara Doumani, Director, Middle East Studies**

This seminar introduces students to the interdisciplinary field of Middle East Studies. Why and when did the Middle East become an area of study? What are the approaches and topics that have shaped the development of this field? And what are the political implications of contending visions for its future? The readings sample canonical and alternative works and classes feature visits by leading scholars, who research and write on this region.

*"I want to take this opportunity to thank Professor Doumani for a truly inspiring course ... I now feel very much drawn to the region. In fact, I am strongly considering a concentration in MES. The course gave me (and I think I can speak for everyone else in the class) an unprecedented exposure to a variety of ways of viewing the Middle East. It has been the most challenging yet (by far) the favorite course I took this semester." —Asya Igmen '17*



## THE 1,001 NIGHTS

**Taught by Elias Muhanna, Manning Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature**

This course explores the origins, performance, reception, adaptation, and translation of *The 1,001 Nights*, one of the most beloved and influential story collections in world literature. The course spends the semester in the company of genies, princes, liars, slaves, mass murderers, orientalist, and Walt Disney, and considers the Nights in the context of its various literary, artistic, and cinematic afterlives.

*"The 1001 Nights was one of the most entertaining classes I have taken at Brown. We were able to engage a classic text in a way that made its relevancy in contemporary society all the more apparent. I enjoyed the way we examined feminist tendencies within the stories of the Nights, as well as the way we traced the development of historical engagements with the text. This course was a refreshing take on a long-established classic."* —**Sophia Sepulveda '15**



## JIHAD, PAST AND PRESENT: A COURSE ON RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE

**Taught by Nancy Khalek, William A. Dyer Jr. Assistant Professor of the Humanities**

This course examines the concepts of martyrdom and jihad, past and present. Beginning with a comparison of Jewish, Christian, and secular "martyrdom, but focusing extensively on the concept and evolution of jihad and jihad ideology in Islam," asking: How are war and martyrdom presented in the sacred texts of religious traditions? Historically, how have religious people idealized and problematized the martyr in different ways? In what ways have modern religious revivalism, geopolitical conflict and nationalism changed how people appropriate martyrdom and jihad today?

*"Professor Khalek's class consisted of a wonderfully in-depth look at martyrdom and Islamic violence and extremism in the world today. It taught me to take a more nuanced approach when studying topics that are complex and sometimes hard to digest, and presented a safe space for students to share their ideas."* —**Abby Linn '15**



# COURSES

## INNOVATORS, ENTREPRENEURS AND OTHER DISRUPTORS: THE CASE OF MODERN TURKEY

**Taught by Lisa DiCarlo, Lecturer, Sociology**

This course explores life in contemporary Turkey with a focus on change agents. The founders of modern Turkey severed ties from the fading Ottoman Empire through a series of intense and disorienting social reforms. This set a precedent for sudden, sweeping social engineering of a top-down nature. Contemporary Turkish innovators, entrepreneurs and other disruptors are navigating issues of politics, culture and economy in new ways that serve as models for the citizen-centered design of Turkey's future.

*"This class has opened my eyes about the myriad ways in which people try to enact social change in Turkey, whether as visual artists, social entrepreneurs, or educators. What was most exciting about this seminar, however, was the professor's deep commitment to putting us in touch with people who are working on the ground and are using innovative means to promote a more just, equitable and tolerant society in Turkey." —Lara Savenije '15*

## ISLAMIC ECONOMICS

**Taught by Sarah Tobin, Associate Director, Middle East Studies**

Despite the fact that the scriptural and early historical legacy of Islam is widely considered to be market-friendly, debates about the relationships between Islam and capitalism abound. This course moves beyond simplistic concerns of compatibility or conflict, and delves into the diverse ways by which Muslims from around the globe have devised a range of social, cultural, religious, legal and fiscal strategies that enable them to both remain true to their faith and live in today's swiftly-evolving economic context.

*"Dr. Tobin's Islamic Economics class explores the nuances of moralized economic activity within complex political, social, and religious contexts. Emphasizing critical student engagement, Tobin consistently drives students to go beyond the readings in their analysis as well as apply class concepts to real world examples by visiting local Islamic centers." —Ross Hegtvedt '15*

# STUDENTS

## THE "DUG"

The **Departmental Undergraduate Group** is run by Middle East Studies concentrators to build community inside and outside of the concentration. This year's DUG leaders, Lara Savenije '15 and Rafael Contreras '15, organized the Undergraduate Paper Series and other events. This series gives junior scholars opportunities to share their research, learn from peers, and develop presentation skills they will need to share their research with the broader community of Middle East scholarship. DUG leaders also help their peers prepare for Middle East Studies' capstone projects and study abroad programs.



## THE GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

**Middle East Graduate Student Association**, led by **Julia Gettle** and **Malay Firoz**, is an interdisciplinary group united by a shared scholarly interest in the Middle East and North Africa. The association combines diverse humanities and social sciences backgrounds with common regional expertise to foster conversations that are both wide-ranging and focused. The association offers a running series of paper workshops and reading groups. Other events, such as a roundtable on research logistics and ethics, bring association members and leading faculty together to critically discuss the practice of studying the Middle East.





# STUDENTS

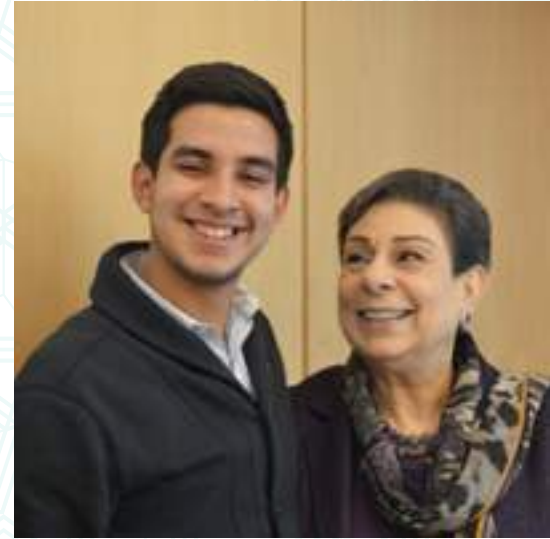


*"I work as an analyst for Humanitarian Research Services in Amman, Jordan, providing real-time humanitarian needs assessments and IDP [internally displaced persons] tracking services to humanitarian aid providers working in Syria. My MES degree provided a strong foundational education upon which I am building every day."*

**—Emily Goldman '14.5**

*"One of the highlights of my time at Brown was the first conference on New Directions in Palestinian Studies, [s]eeing and interacting with those people who had come from ... Palestine, from New York, or even from the other side of the country and from Canada ... I had admired them on paper, and seeing them there and being able to talk with them was a real privilege."*

**—Rafael Contreras '15**



*"Honestly, the Middle East is so fascinating. I don't understand why everyone isn't studying it."*

**—Abby Linn '15, double concentrator in Economics and Middle East Studies**

*"Middle East Studies department is not solely politics and history focused. There is a lot of emphasis on art and culture ... I think that a really important part in understanding the region is looking at the people—what I like to call the human factor."*

**—Layla Heidari '15**



# GRADUATING SENIOR PROJECTS

## RAFAEL CONTRERAS

"Redefining the "Moderate" and the "Radical": A Comparative Study of Islamist Groups in Arab League Countries"

## SIMON DE JESUS RODRIGUES

"On Travel & Authenticity: A Brief Study Abroad in Jordan"

## ZAKARIA ENZMINGER

"Pseudo-Prophets and Sacred Sanctuaries: The Changing Landscape of Religion and Belief in Pre-Islamic Arabia"

## EMILY GOLDMAN

"What Rhymes with Distraction Diplomacy? A Strategic Understanding of Egyptian Revolutionary Rap"

## LAYLA HEIDARI

"Framing Iran: How "Politics of Perception" Inform Our View of Iranian Contemporary Art"

## ABBY LINN

"When Religious Symbolism Meets Social Protest: Fatima and Motherhood Through the Lens of Ayatollah Khomeini and Ali Shariati"

## LARA SAVENIJE

"Anne and/or Aktivist: The Role of Motherhood in Protesting Enforced Disappearances in Turkey"

## SOPHIA SEPULVEDA

"Arab Women, Red Lines: The Anti-Sexual Harassment Movement in Egypt"

## TALIA XEFOS

"Musings on Arab Hybridity"



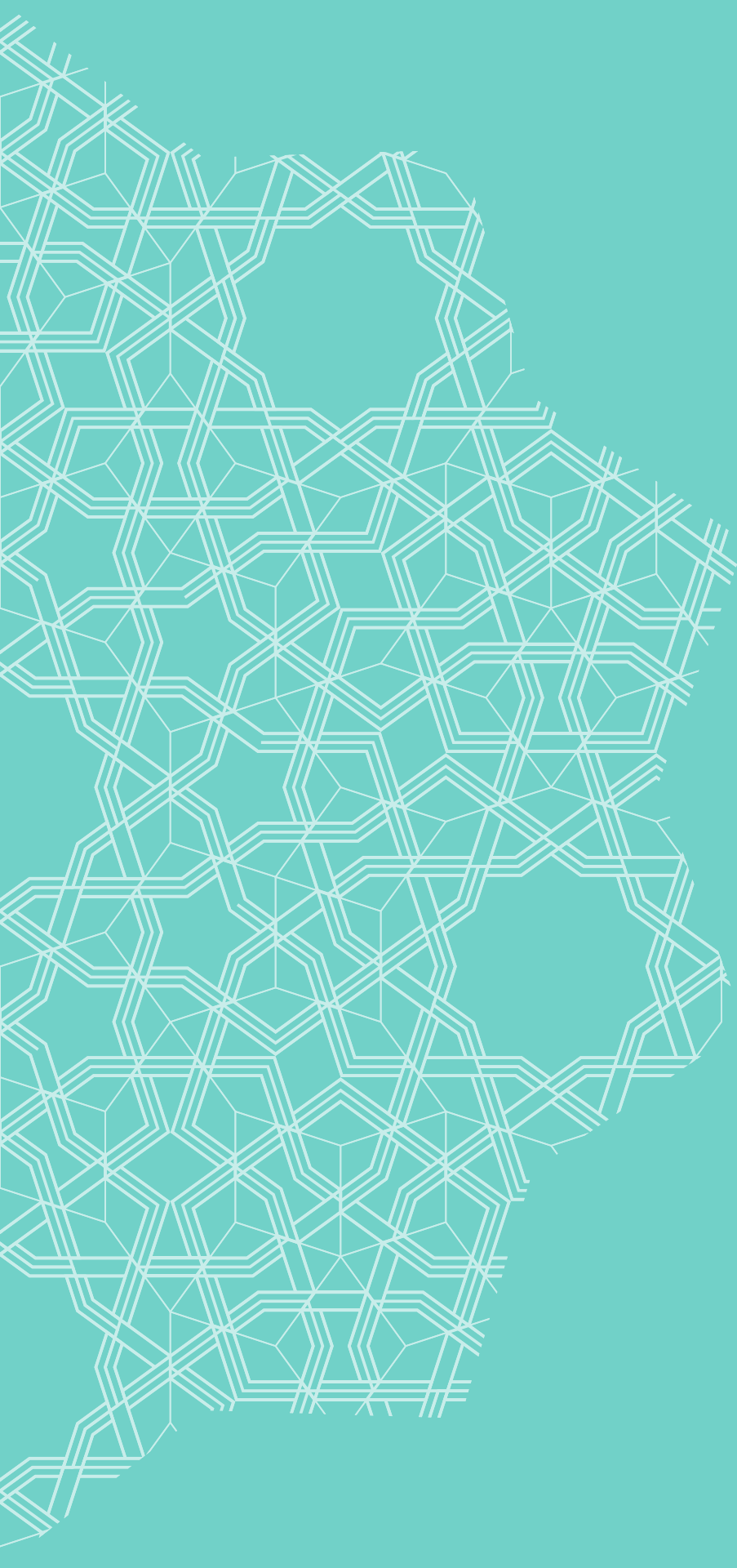


# STUDENT RESEARCH TRAVEL AWARDS

Middle East Studies offers travel awards to help undergraduates and graduates defray the cost of transportation as they pursue their research passions. Recent awards have supported research into local governance reform in Tunisia, refugees in Jordan's social geography, and gender studies in Morocco.

**More than one-third** of Middle East Studies concentrators received a travel award in 2014-2015. Recipients conducted research across the region.





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