

MIDDLE
EAST
STUDIES

ANNUAL
REPORT
2018-2019

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

First of all, the good news: Brown's Academic Priorities Committee has approved that, starting on July 1, 2019, the Program in Middle East Studies will become a Center within the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs. With the change, we will still house a thriving undergraduate concentration, now with an expanded mandate to facilitate research and to continue programming of events pertaining to the Middle East. The upgrade has resulted from the Program's spectacular success over the past seven years. It affirms Brown's commitment to Middle East Studies as a permanent feature of the University's intellectual landscape.

This report provides a sense of our work during the 2018-19 academic year. Our students continued their inspiring work both in and outside of classrooms. We welcomed new faculty, expanding the array of fields and topics available for students to pursue. The work of research initiatives resulted in conferences, smaller events, and publications. We organized special events to reflect on situations in Syria, Yemen, and the Kurdish region that need urgent analytical and humanitarian attention. Initiatives on Iran and Turkey involved visits from distinguished and emerging scholars and events spearheaded by graduate students on campus. In the arts, we cosponsored music concerts and exhibitions. Behind the scenes, our faculty and staff were busy with faculty searches and other planning endeavors whose fruits will become visible in coming months. It was a busy year as usual, our efforts ensuring that the Middle East remained at the forefront of Brown's coverage of international affairs.

As I reflect on continuing in my role as the director, I am committed to increasing the extraordinary success of Middle East Studies at Brown under the umbrella of the new Center. This means thorough ongoing support for areas such as Palestinian Studies, for which Brown has become an international hub. I also wish for us to expand our topical horizons by covering more of the region and creating new projects that will further solidify Brown's reputation as a model for the future of Middle East Studies. Our success to date is a source of great satisfaction, but it must spur us to do even more as we continue the important work of providing academic coverage of a region crucial to global affairs.

My sincerest thanks to our financial supporters and all Brown students, staff, faculty, and administration whose commitment makes the work of Middle East Studies possible. The community we form is our foremost asset; it deserves acknowledgment and celebration as we aspire to brighter futures.

Shahzad Bashir

*Aga Khan Professor of Islamic Humanities
Director, Middle East Studies*



ABOUT US

MISSION

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

ABOUT

Housed in the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs and supported by the Dean of the Faculty, Middle East Studies (MES) has since 2012 grown from an undergraduate concentration into one of the top programs in the country. Eschewing the hothouse legacy structures of the conventional Oriental and area studies models, MES is driven by thematic research initiatives that tap into Brown's tradition of interdisciplinary, critical, and engaged scholarship. Through collaborative partnerships around these themes, MES integrates Middle East studies into the larger streams of intellectual life at Brown University by building a cutting-edge research community, producing innovative programming, and offering an exciting array of courses and opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students.



ABOUT US

RESEARCH INITIATIVES

Middle East Studies is organized around niche research initiatives that seek to shape fields of knowledge through annual workshops, publications, pedagogy, and public outreach.



ARTS AND SOCIAL CHANGE



DIGITAL ISLAMIC HUMANITIES



DISPLACEMENT AND THE MAKING OF THE MODERN WORLD



ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP



ISLAM AND THE HUMANITIES



NEW DIRECTIONS IN PALESTINIAN STUDIES

PEOPLE



SHAHZAD BASHIR

DIRECTOR
AGA KHAN PROFESSOR OF ISLAMIC HUMANITIES

ALEX WINDER

VISITING ASSISTANT PROFESSOR IN MIDDLE EAST STUDIES
MIDDLE EAST STUDIES DIRECTOR OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES



BARBARA OBERKOETTER

MANAGER

SARAYA MCPHERSON

ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR



PEOPLE



PHIL LAI '13

PHD STUDENT, HARVARD UNIVERSITY
SENIOR GRAPHIC DESIGNER AND BRAND CONSULTANT



HANNAH CHOW '20

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

MIRANDA MO '22

GRAPHIC DESIGNER



**PAULA
PACHECO-SOTO '20**

STUDENT ASSISTANT

**ZENAB
YOUSSEF '20**

STUDENT ASSISTANT



HOUDA BARROUG '20

WEBSITE ASSISTANT

**SOPHIE
ZACHARAKIS '19.5**

STUDENT ASSISTANT



FACULTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



SHAHZAD BASHIR

CHAIR; AGA KHAN PROFESSOR OF ISLAMIC HUMANITIES; PROFESSOR OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Islamic studies with interests in the intellectual and social histories of the societies of Iran and Central and South Asia circa fourteenth century CE to the present, as well as temporality and historiography, corporeality, the study of Sufism and Shi'ism, and messianic movements originating in Islamic contexts.

FAIZ AHMED

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF HISTORY

Legal and constitutional history of the Middle East and Islamic world, including student and scholarly networks, constitutional movements and state building, and international law and diplomacy from the Ottoman Empire to the British Raj, and from the eastern Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean.



LINA FRUZZETTI

PROFESSOR OF ANTHROPOLOGY

Social anthropology in India and North East Africa with a focus on the relationship between kinship, marriage, and rituals; the meaning of the construction of gender in India; caste and the life cycle rites of Hindus; and recent structural changes to the institution of marriage and what constitutes the person.

YANNIS HAMILAKIS

JOUKOWSKY FAMILY PROFESSOR OF ARCHAEOLOGY

Socio-politics of the past, the body and bodily senses, the archaeology of eating and drinking, the ontology and materiality of photography, archaeology and nationalism, archaeological ethnography, and critical pedagogy in archaeology.



FACULTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

ELIAS MUHANNA

MANNING ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

Classical Arabic literature and Islamic intellectual history in addition to 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.



ADI OPHIR

MELLON VISITING PROFESSOR OF HUMANITIES AND MIDDLE EAST STUDIES

Contemporary continental philosophy, political theory, political theology, and in particular, the socially structured existential and political nature of evil.



HOLLY SHAFFER

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF HISTORY OF ART AND ARCHITECTURE

Eighteenth and nineteenth century art and architecture in South Asia and Britain, interpretations of eclectic arts from the Indian city of Pune, studies of ephemeral arts, such as light, cuisine, architectural models, and scent in the Indian region of Awadh, and nineteenth-century European representations of India that went viral.



RESEARCH INITIATIVES

NEW DIRECTIONS IN PALESTINIAN STUDIES



New Directions in Palestinian Studies (NDPS) brings together emerging and established scholars to shape knowledge production on Palestine and the Palestinians. Since it was established by Beshara Doumani in 2013, NDPS has built an international community of scholars through an annual workshop that takes stock of research trends, identifies promising new questions and sources, and encourages networking across institutions. NDPS also supports the careers of young scholars through an endowed postdoctoral fellowship and a book series with the University of California Press.

The 2019 workshop, titled “Palestinian Homes and Houses: Subjectivities and Materialities,” explored the relationship between physical structures of habitation (houses) and sites of belonging (homes) for Palestinians—a relationship rendered particularly complex and fraught by Palestinians’ historic and ongoing experiences of displacement, dispossession, and destruction. Participants examined the social, economic, emotional, health, and political dimensions of Palestinian homes and houses across different spaces and times, addressing subjects ranging from the construction (and historical reconstruction) of Palestinian households in the late Ottoman period to the impacts of virtual reality technology and the “sharing economy” platform Airbnb.





ISLAM AND THE HUMANITIES

MIDDLE EAST STUDIES | BROWN

ISLAM AND THE HUMANITIES

Islam and the Humanities is a research initiative led by Shahzad Bashir, Aga Khan Professor of Islamic Humanities. It connects the study of Islam and Muslims to topics engaged by scholars in the humanities in general. The initiative's website is a hub for those interested in the subject at Brown, also signaling the University's commitment to the field for the outside world. During 2018-19, the initiative sponsored lectures and a poetry reading, and a group of faculty and students worked together to create a call for proposals, followed by democratic adjudication, that will result in a conference titled "The Primacy of Form" to be held in October 2019. With support from the Carnegie Corporation, Islam and the Humanities sponsors an Open Access book series titled *Islamic Humanities*, published by the University of California Press. The first book in the series — *Forging the Ideal Educated Girl: The Production of Desirable Subjects in Muslim South Asia* by Shenila Khoja-Moolji (a Brown alumna) — was recently awarded two prizes: the *Jackie Kirk Outstanding Book Award* from the Comparative and International Education Society, and the *Michael Harrington Award* from the Society for the Study of Social Problems.

SHENILA KHOJA-MOOLJI

('05 A.B.)

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND WOMEN'S STUDIES,
BOWDOIN COLLEGE

"Forging the Ideal Educated Girl:

*The Production of Desirable Subjects
in Muslim South Asia"*

MONDAY, OCTOBER 15

12:00-1:45 P.M.

JOUKOWSKY FORUM, WATSON INSTITUTE



SADIA ABBAS ('02 PHD)

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH,
RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

Why Write (Fiction)?

THURSDAY, APRIL 25

4:00 – 6:00 P.M.

MCKINNEY CONFERENCE ROOM

WATSON INSTITUTE

111 THAYER ST.

REGISTRATION REQUIRED



RESEARCH INITIATIVES

ARTS AND SOCIAL CHANGE



ARTS AND SOCIAL CHANGE

MIDDLE EAST STUDIES | BROWN

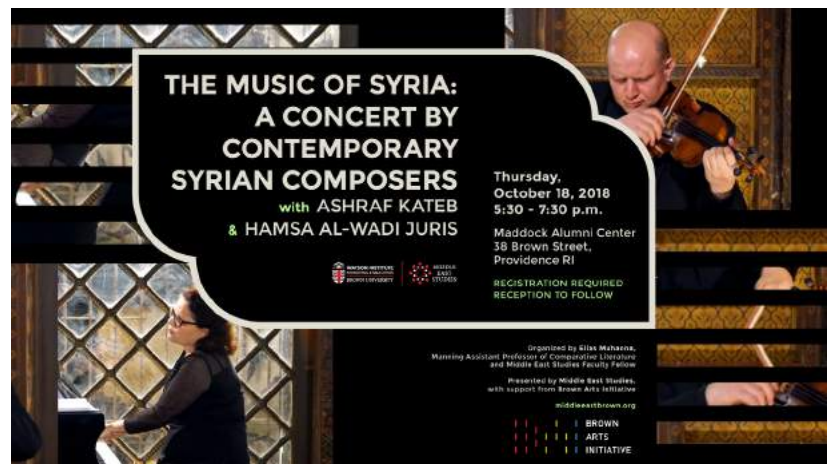
The arts have played a pivotal role in shaping and transforming Middle Eastern and Muslim societies, both past and present. This research initiative cultivates a network of scholars passionate about the relationship between the arts and social agency. The aim is to support, innovate, and shape research agendas in the fields of Islamic art and architecture, Middle Eastern cinema and photography, fine arts and visual culture, and music and dance.

The Music of Syria:

Contemporary Syrian Composers

Ashraf Kateb and Hamsa Al-Wadi Juris

On October 18, Middle East Studies hosted a concert by Syrian-German violinist and composer, Ashraf Kateb, and Syrian-Finnish pianist, Hamsa Al-Wadi Juris, at the Maddock Alumni Center. This concert – part of a five-campus collaboration with Boston University, Brown University, Tufts University, Yale University, and Connecticut College – focused on illuminating Syria's rich prewar classical music scene. The concert was supported by the Brown Arts Initiative.



WARZONES AS DISPLACEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST



DISPLACEMENT
MIDDLE EAST STUDIES | BROWN



The workshop titled “Warzones as Displacement in the Middle East: the Kurdish Case,” which took place on November 9, 2018, studied the particularities of Kurdish warzones and its ripples throughout the Middle East and beyond. The event considered the warzone along Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran as “borders” and zones of Kurdistan. It examined the causes and consequences of Kurdish displacement, and the ways displacement transforms the socioeconomic and political landscapes of migration destinations. It culminated with a roundtable discussion on scholarly engagement with the issue of displacement in such warzones, and the risks to scholars who do such research.



Middle East Studies collaborated with **Art at Watson** on ***The Displaced Language of Mesopotamia*** exhibit, which was organized to coincide with MES’s workshop “Warzones as Displacement in the Middle East: the Kurdish Case.”

The works by Selahattin Şep, a Kurdish visual artist from the Kurdish city of Diyarbakir, in Turkey, depict the mysterious stories of Mesopotamian women. This secret and symbolic language traces back to Eastern mythology’s influence on the ways women relate through their diaries with symbols found in nature. This aesthetic symbolism is manifested on carpets, with body tattoos, and carved on stone to chronicle these women’s place in society, their personal stories and deepest emotions.

PROGRAMMING

CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS

Critical Conversations is MES's public discussion on issues of particular political urgency and historical significance. These events bring together academics, practitioners, and audience members for informal, invigorated discussions.

EXPERIENCES OF INCARCERATION IN THE UNITED STATES AND SYRIA

A collaboration between Brown Students Organize for Syria and Middle East Studies, this January 19 event was centered on personal experiences of incarceration in the United States and Syria, exploring the impact of imprisonment on individuals, families, and communities. Omar Alshogre, a Syrian citizen now living in Sweden, who was held prisoner by the Syrian Intelligence Agency for three years, and José Díaz, a US citizen incarcerated for 11 years in upstate New York, reflected on their respective experiences of imprisonment, opening up conversations on the personal and communal impact of mass incarceration; the physical, mental, and emotional effects of incarceration; visibility and invisibility; and personal and social transformation. They also reflected on life after imprisonment and the residual impact of incarceration.

Critical Conversations:
Experiences of Incarceration
in the United States
and Syria



Speakers:
Omar Alshogre
José Díaz

Facilitator:
Alex Winder,
visiting assistant professor and
director of undergraduate studies,
Middle East Studies

Tuesday, January 29, 2019
5:00 – 6:45 p.m.
Room 101
Stephen Robert '62 Hall
280 Brook Street
Providence, RI 02912

A collaboration between Brown
Students Organize for Syria







LECTURES

MIDDLE EAST STUDIES
FALL 2019 LECTURE

ALIA AL-SENUSSI
(10 A.M. - 11A)
Visiting Scholar, Middle East Studies

LECTURE
**The New Saudi Arabia:
A Kingdom Embraces
Soft Power**

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 23
4:30 - 6:00 P.M.
Joukowsky Forum, Watson Institute,
Princeton NJ

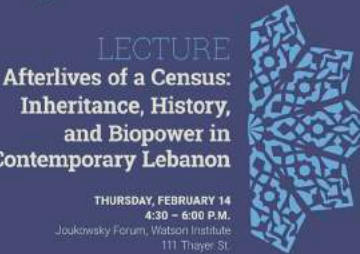
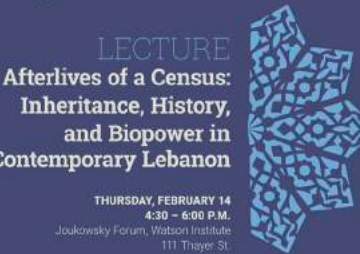


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MIDDLE EAST STUDIES
SPRING 2019 LECTURE

MAYA MIKDASHI
assistant professor,
womens and gender studies,
Rutgers University

LECTURE
**Afterlives of a Census:
Inheritance, History,
and Biopower in
Contemporary Lebanon**

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14
4:30 - 6:00 P.M.
Joukowsky Forum, Watson Institute
111 Thayer St.





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MIDDLE EAST STUDIES
SPRING 2019 LECTURE

ROSIE BSHEER
Assistant Professor of
History, Harvard
University

LECTURE
**Yemen's
Forgotten
Wars**

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 26
5:00 - 6:30 P.M.
Room 101,
Stephen Robert '62 Hall
280 Brook St.





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MIDDLE EAST STUDIES
SPRING 2019 LECTURE

RAEF ZREIK
associate professor of law, Ohio
Academy College
co-director, Minerva Center for the
Humanities, Tel Aviv University

LECTURE
**Palestine as
a Question**

MONDAY, APRIL 29
3:00 - 5:00 P.M.
Joukowsky Forum,
Watson Institute
111 Thayer St.

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IRAN TODAY

Part of a year-long series of sophisticated discussions on contemporary Iranian society and culture intended to address the general lack of knowledge and sensational coverage circulated in US media.

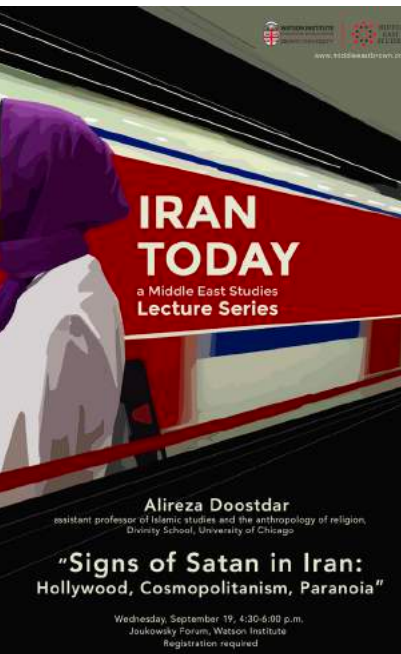
MIDDLE EAST STUDIES
www.middleeastbrown.org

IRAN TODAY
a Middle East Studies
Lecture Series

Alireza Doostdar
assistant professor of Islamic studies and the anthropology of religion,
Divinity School, University of Chicago

**"Signs of Satan in Iran:
Hollywood, Cosmopolitanism, Paranoia"**

Wednesday, September 19, 4:30-6:00 p.m.
Joukowsky Forum, Watson Institute
Registration required



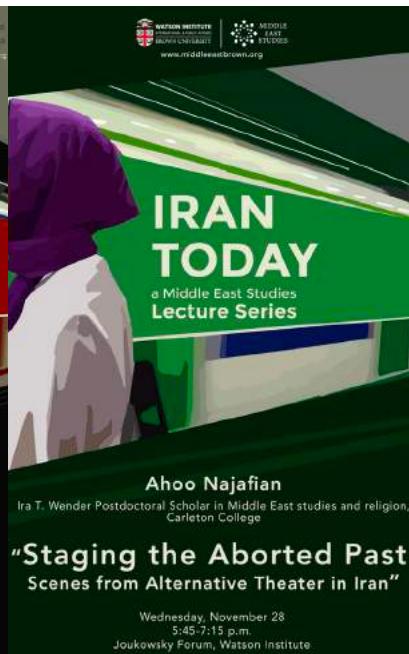
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IRAN TODAY
a Middle East Studies
Lecture Series

Ahoor Najafian
Ira T. Wender Postdoctoral Scholar in Middle East studies and religion,
Carleton College

**"Staging the Aborted Past:
Scenes from Alternative Theater in Iran"**

Wednesday, November 28
5:45-7:15 p.m.
Joukowsky Forum, Watson Institute



PETER GREEN LECTURE
ON THE MODERN MIDDLE EAST
www.middleeastbrown.org

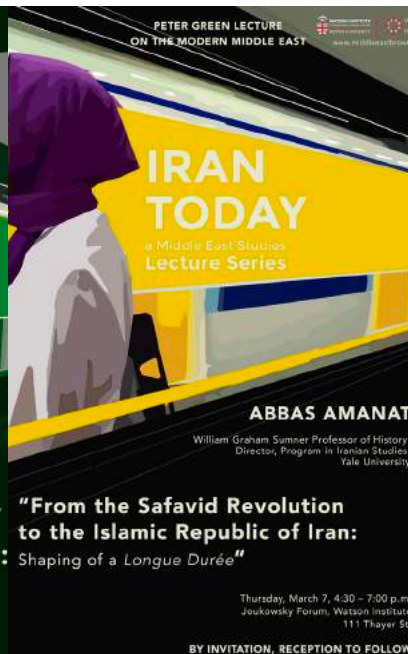
IRAN TODAY
a Middle East Studies
Lecture Series

ABBAS AMANAT
William Graham Sumner Professor of History,
Director, Program in Iranian Studies,
Yale University

**"From the Safavid Revolution
to the Islamic Republic of Iran:
Shaping of a Longue Durée"**

Thursday, March 7, 4:30 - 7:00 p.m.
Joukowsky Forum, Watson Institute
111 Thayer St.

BY INVITATION, RECEPTION TO FOLLOW



MIDDLE EAST STUDIES
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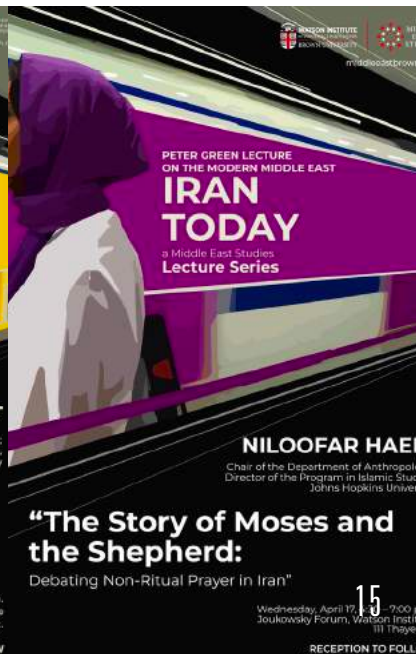
IRAN TODAY
a Middle East Studies
Lecture Series

NILOOFAR HAEI
Chair of the Department of Anthropology,
Director of the Program in Islamic Studies,
Johns Hopkins University

**"The Story of Moses and
the Shepherd:
Debating Non-Ritual Prayer in Iran"**

Wednesday, April 10, 4:30-7:00 p.m.
Joukowsky Forum, Watson Institute
111 Thayer St.

RECEPTION TO FOLLOW



PROGRAMMING

LUNCHEON SEMINARS

middle east studies
luncheon seminar series

Nadje Al-Ali

robert family professor of
middle east studies

"Feminist Dilemmas: How to Talk
about Gender-Based Violence in the
Middle East?"

12:00-1:00 p.m.
wednesday, january 30
mckinney conference room, watson institute

middle east studies
luncheon seminar series

Rawan Arar

postdoctoral fellow in international
and public affairs

"Leveraging Sovereignty:
Syrian Refugees and the
Jordanian State"

12:00-1:00 p.m.
wednesday, april 24

middle east studies
luncheon seminar series

Asli Zengin

louise lamphere visiting assistant
professor of anthropology and
gender studies

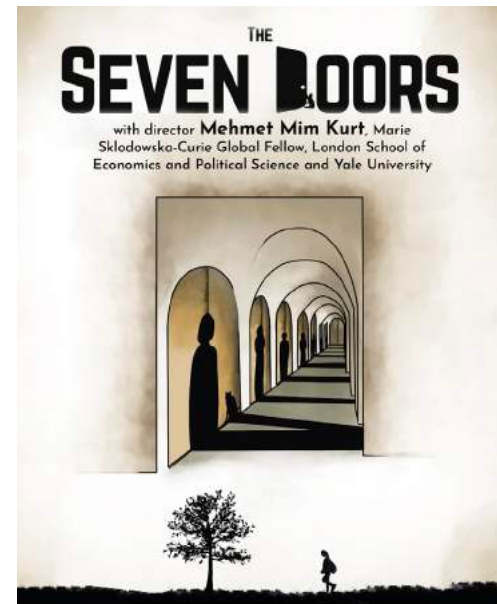
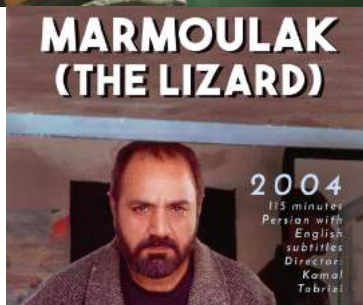
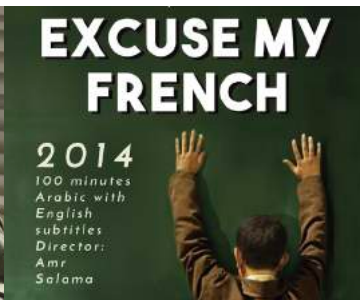
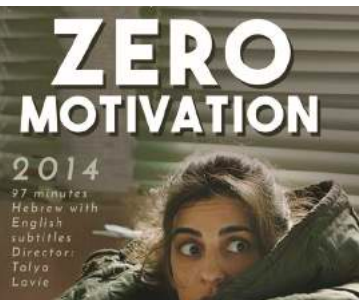
"Caring for the Dead: Intimacy,
Abandonment and Transgender
Funerals in Turkey"

12:00-1:00 p.m.
wednesday, march 13

FILM SCREENINGS

(left): Comedy Film Series

(right): Kurdish Studies Initiative



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INTERNATIONAL & PUBLIC AFFAIRS
BROWN UNIVERSITY

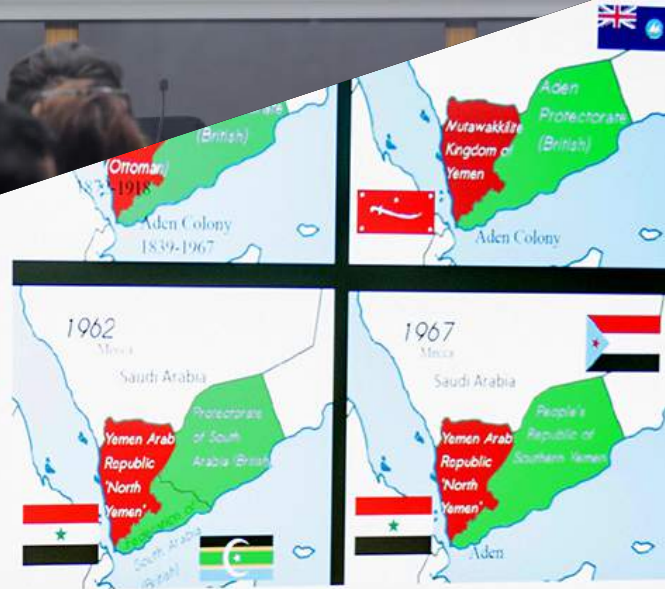
Signs of Satan in Iran: Hollywood, Cosmopolitanism, Paranoia



Alireza Doostdar



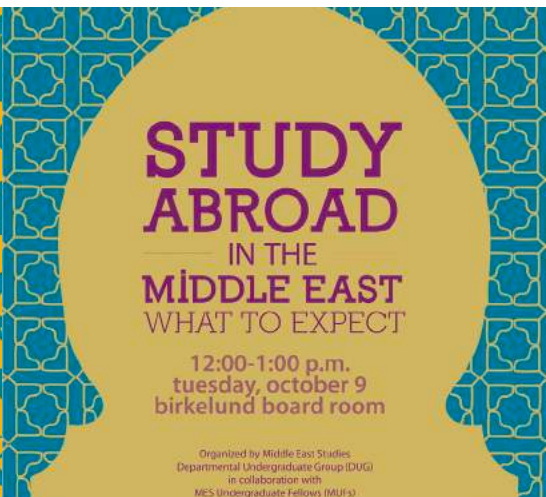
Rosie Bshceer



PROGRAMMING

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT EVENTS

Continuing the traditions set by past Departmental Undergraduate Group (DUG) leaders, this year's cohort organized the Undergraduate Paper Series, an opportunity for students to share their independent research work and explore the Middle East with feedback from faculty and peers. DUG leaders focused on fostering community and fellowship through bi-annual socials, while also challenging their peers to think critically about the unique challenges and benefits of studying abroad in the Middle East and North Africa via their panel event "Studying Abroad in the Middle East: What to Expect?" These efforts were complemented by the Middle East Studies Undergraduate Fellows' outreach efforts to welcome potential concentrators into the MES community while providing perspective and guidance on navigating their time at Brown.



middle east studies undergraduate paper series

The Socio-Visual Network:
Persians, British Imperialists, and Intercultural Exchange in Nineteenth Century Tehran and London
Reha Stark '18.5

Of Wood, Clay, and Stone:
How Linguistic Complexities Affect Identity Formation in the Late Bronze Age Hittite Empire
Kelley Tackett '20

Wednesday, December 5
5:00-7:00 p.m.

Middle East Studies undergraduate paper series

"Such a Method of Doing Business": Local Shipping Agents, the Hajj, and the Divide between Corporate and Colonial Priorities in 1870s Jeddah
Margaret Follett '19

Contesting the Legacy of Oil in Saudi Arabia
Matthias Matsui '21

Zionism: Between a Religion and Nationalism
Dani Satlow '19

Weather Omen Schematics: A Preliminary Investigation
Parker Zane '21

Tuesday, March 12
5:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Birkelund Board Room, Watson Institute

MIDDLE EAST STUDIES

Senior Paper Presentation Day

CAPSTONE HONORS
Rakan Aboneaj, Jessica Murphy, Alexander Samaha
Margaret Follett, Anna Murphy

Monday, May 6, 2019
10:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Kim Koo Library
Watson Institute
111 Thayer St.

COMMENCEMENT 2019

Middle East Studies Diploma Ceremony
Sunday, May 26, 2:00 p.m.
Joukowsky Forum
Watson Institute
www.middleeastbrown.org

Rakan Aboneaj
Margaret Follett
Anna Murphy
Jessica Murphy
Alexander Samaha
Reha Stark

SAMPLING OF SPONSORED PARTNER EVENTS

AFTERLIFE OF GENDER: SOVEREIGNTY, INTIMACY, AND TRANSGENDER FUNERALS IN TURKEY

Asli Zengin | Department of Anthropology

THE ALLURE OF THE ANCIENT: EARLY MODERN RECEPTIONS OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

Department of Egyptology and Assyriology

A BOAT TO LESBOS-- A POETRY READING BY THE SYRIAN POET NOURI AL-JARRAH

Center for Language Studies

CAN MUSLIMS BE LIBERAL? INSIGHTS FROM COLONIAL INDIA

Ayesha Jalal | Center for Contemporary South Asia

EXPANDING THE FIELD, DISRUPTING CANONS: IRANIAN CERAMICS, TRADE, AND COLLECTING PRACTICES

Martina Rugiadi | Minassian Collection of Ceramics at John Hay Library

JIHAD MADE IN GERMANY

Reinhard Bernbeck | Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology

VOICES FROM SYRIA: MUSICWORKS COLLECTIVE WITH KINAN AZMEH

Brown Arts Initiative; Community Music Works

NOROZ (PERSIAN NEW YEAR)-- PARTY LIKE IT'S 1398!

Brown Iranian Students Association

THE NUNS, PRIESTS AND THE BOMBS

Brown War Watch

ORDER IN TURMOIL: MAKING SENSE OF KALEIDOSCOPIC CHANGE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Chas Freeman | Watson Institute

PERSIAN MUSIC NIGHT: LECTURE AND PERFORMANCE OF CLASSICAL PERSIAN MUSIC BY AFSHIN GOODARZI

Center for Language Studies

SENSESCAPES OF THE TOPKAPI PALACE IN OTTOMAN ISTANBUL

Department of the History of Art and Architecture

SYRIAN EYES OF THE WORLD | EXHIBITION

Sherena Razek, Graduate Student at the Department of Modern Culture and Media; Art at Watson

TURKISH STUDIES READING GROUP

Series Organized by Graduate Students

WINE AND PRAYER - AN EVENING WITH HAFEZ OF SHIRAZ

Center for Language Studies

WOMEN'S HISTORY SERIES 2019: CULTIVATING RADICAL COALITION

Sarah Doyle Center for Women and Gender

WORKING ACROSS BOUNDARIES: APPROACHES TO STUDYING THE INDIAN OCEAN WORLD THROUGH SPACE AND TIME

Undergraduate study communities of Middle East Studies, South Asian Studies, and Southeast Asian Studies

FACULTY

FACULTY IN 2018-19

RUTH ADLER BEN YEHUDA, Judaic Studies

FAIZ AHMED, History

NADJE AL-ALI, Anthropology, Watson Institute for Int'l and Public Affairs

IRAJ ANVAR, Center for Language Studies

RAWAN ARAR, Watson Institute, Postdoctoral Research Associate

ARIELLA AZOULAY, Modern Culture and Media, Comparative Literature

ERCAN BALCI, Center for Language Studies

OMER BARTOV, History, German Studies

SHAHZAD BASHIR, Middle East Studies, Religious Studies

LAUREL BESTOCK, Archaeology, Egyptology and Assyriology, HIAA

SHEILA BONDE, History of Art and Architecture (HIAA), Archaeology

VANGELIS CALOTYCHOS, Comparative Literature

MIRENA CHRISTOFF, Center for Language Studies

JONATHAN CONANT, History, Classics

JOAN COPJEC, Modern Culture and Media

LEO DEPUYDT, Egyptology and Assyriology

LISA DICARLO, Sociology

BESHARA DOUMANI, History

EMILY DRUMSTA, Comparative Literature

MILED FAIZA, Center for Language Studies

LINA FRUZZETTI, Anthropology

GREGORY HALABY, Comparative Literature

YANNIS HAMILAKIS, Archaeology, Classics

JAE HEE HAN, Religious Studies

JO-ANNE HART, Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs

SUSAN HARVEY, Religious Studies, Medieval Studies

ALLA HASSAN, Center for Language Studies

DENNIS HOGAN, Sociology

DAVID JACOBSON, Judaic Studies

JENNIFER JOHNSON, History

MARTHA JOUKOWSKY, Archaeology

NANCY KHALEK, Religious Studies

STEPHEN KINZER, Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs

VIRGINIA KRAUSE, French Studies

SREEMATI MITTER, History, International and Public Affairs

OURIDA MOSTEFAI, Comparative Literature, French Studies

ELIAS MUHANNA, Comparative Literature

PAUL NAHME, Judaic Studies, Religious Studies

SAUL OLYAN, Judaic Studies, Religious Studies

ADI OPHIR, Cogut Center for the Humanities, Middle East Studies

EFSTRATIOS PAPAIOANNOU, Classics, Medieval Studies

AMY REMENSNYDER, History

RACHEL ROJANSKI, Judaic Studies

FELIPE ROJAS SILVA, Archaeology, Egyptology and Assyriology

MATTHEW RUTZ, Egyptology and Assyriology

KENNETH SACKS, History

MICHAEL SATLOW, Judaic Studies, Religious Studies

HOLLY SHAFFER, History of Art and Architecture

JOHN STEELE, Egyptology and Assyriology

NINA TANNENWALD, International Relations, Political Science

ADAM TELLER, History, Judaic Studies

MELTEM TOKSOZ, History and Middle East Studies

ALEX WINDER, Middle East Studies

VAZIRA F-Y ZAMINDAR, History

ASLI ZENGİN, Anthropology

VISITING FACULTY AT MIDDLE EAST STUDIES IN 2018-19

ALEX WINDER, visiting assistant professor in Middle East Studies and director of undergraduate studies

ADI OPHIR, visiting professor affiliated with the Cogut Center for the Humanities and Middle East Studies

MELTEM TOKSOZ, visiting associate professor in Middle East Studies and the Department of History

FACULTY ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEW FACULTY ARRIVING ACADEMIC YEAR 2019-20



SAMINE TABATABAEI

VISITING ASSISTANT PROFESSOR IN IRANIAN STUDIES

is an art historian who studies modernisms and contemporary art of the Middle East and its diasporas at the intersection of media theory, the social life of art and contemporary technologies. At Brown, she will be teaching thematic courses on the history of media, contemporary technologies and creative life in Tehran.



PAUL KOHLBRY

POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATE IN PALESTINIAN STUDIES

is an anthropologist who works at the intersection of law, economy, and settler colonial studies. More broadly, his writing brings Palestine into conversation with a wider range of indigenous experiences through the lens of political economy. At Brown, he will be teaching about land and environmental politics.

SAMPLING OF MES COURSES

Brown University's Middle East Studies program has earned a reputation for being an international interdisciplinary gateway to the study of the Middle East, broadly defined. Affiliated faculty reflect the growing diversity of Middle East Studies, pushing the geographic and temporal boundaries of the field, while engaging in key themes such as gender and sexuality, displacement and refugees, policing and imprisonment, and the politics of heritage.

The program's reputation is reflected in the growing number of college applicants and transfer students who seek entrance to Brown with the express intention of pursuing Middle East studies. Many are drawn by the opportunities and support for Middle Eastern language learning and research: students often study more than one Middle Eastern language at Brown, and research and travel funding through the program allows students to conduct primary research in the region.

Whether inside the classroom, via academic lectures and panel discussions, or through artistic and cultural events, Middle East Studies forges a tight-knit community of scholars—students and faculty—who bring wide-ranging interests and perspectives in the service of greater understanding.



COLT 0510K The 1001 Nights

ELIAS MUHANNA

This course explores the origins, performance, reception, adaptation, and translation of the 1001 Nights, one of the most beloved and influential story collections in world literature. The semester is spent in the company of genies, princes, liars, slaves, mass murderers, orientalist, and Walt Disney, and looking at the Nights in the context of its various literary, artistic, and cinematic afterlives.

FREN 1410R Images d'une guerre sans nom: The Algerian War in Literature and Film

OURIDA MOSTEFAI

Not officially acknowledged as a war by France until recently, the Algerian War of Independence remains, more than a half-century later, a contested battleground in the French national consciousness. Focusing on depictions of the Algerian War in literature and film, the course investigates the many taboos that still endure, most notably around the question of violence and torture, and attempts to reassess the relative "invisibility" of this conflict. Readings include films by Gillo Pontecorvo, Jean-Luc Godard, Alain Resnais, Agnès Varda, and works by Frantz Fanon, Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Benjamin Stora, Claire Etcherelli, Assia Djebar, and Leïla Sebbar.

HMAN 1973N Islam in America: A Global History

FAIZ AHMED

This course explores the history of Muslims in the United States—and American discourses about Islam—from colonial times to the present. Organized chronologically and thematically, the class follows major questions and debates in American relations with the so-called "Muslim world"—from Columbus's fateful 1492 voyage to Morocco's recognition of the United States in 1777; and from Muslim slaves and migrants in the Antebellum South to President Obama's historic Cairo speech. As a broadly conceived transregional history, the seminar explores the diverse social, political, and economic processes connecting Africa, the Mideast, South Asia, and North America from the fifteenth to twenty-first centuries.

INTL 1803T Refugees, States, and the International System of Refugee Management

RAWAN ARAR

This course explores the historical, legal, and political constructions of refugees, the ways that refugees define themselves and experience displacement, and the institutions, states, and international organizations that shape refugees' lives. It is organized by the movement trajectory of a "composite" refugee. This class looks at flight from the conflict country, refugee hosting in the Global South, refugee resettlement in the Global North, asylum-seeking, and repatriation or local integration. Students learn how refugees are embedded in a world system of control and humanitarian protection in which policymaking in one context is strongly shaped by actors elsewhere.

MCM 1505Z Kiarostami: Questions of Cinema + Reality

JOAN COPJEC

In the history of cinema, a small number of directors have been treated as if their work stood for cinema itself. Abbas Kiarostami is one of these. Yet while his films foreground the act of cinema, they also address questions of reality to which the "neorealist" label cannot respond. To existing attempts to analyze his films in this light, this course adds a principia domestica. The question is this: how is it that the mystical, Islamic background from which Kiarostami invents is able to respond to current debates about reality in compelling, modern terms?

MES 1235 Policing and Imprisonment in the Modern Middle East

ALEX WINDER

This course uses policing and imprisonment as lenses through which to view state-society relations, state and non-state violence, and recent uprisings and ongoing conflicts in the Middle East from the late Ottoman period to the present. Major topics around which the course centers are the role of Islam in the development of law and criminal justice in the modern Middle East; the imposition of European colonial rule and the repression of anti-colonial revolts; the rise of police states in the post-colonial Middle East; the production and maintenance of a gendered social order; non-state and informal mechanisms of maintaining "law and order"; and the role of law and security in the Arab uprisings of this decade and its aftermath.

MES 1240 Middle East as Global History: Comparing and Connecting Theories and Approaches

MELTEM TOKSOZ

This seminar explores a global-history perspective of the Middle East and a Middle Eastern perspective of global history from the late eighteenth century to the twentieth century and beyond. This is a time in which shifting global orderings and ties between regions of the world become reconfigured around newly visible, large-scale processes and shifting flows of power: statesmen, thinkers, revolutions, war and migration render themselves to new forms of global imagination beyond imperialism and colonialism. The seminar intends to provide a rich exposé on new trends in history-writing focused on global history and transnational perspectives.

MES 1243 Understanding Palestine-Israel: Ideologies and Practices

ADI OPHIR

"Palestine-Israel" is a name designating a territory between the east shores of the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River. In addition to the two national movements that fight over this territory, the Jewish (Zionist) and the Palestinian, this land is a matter of ongoing engagement, investment, and entanglement for foreign powers, religious orders, and international organizations. This course introduces the main aspects of this ongoing struggle, its history, and its recurring patterns. Each of these perspectives is part of what needs to be narrated and explained, not imposed as a framework for the narrative and the explanation at stake.

RELS 0575 On Human Longing: Persian and Urdu Poetry

SHAHZAD BASHIR

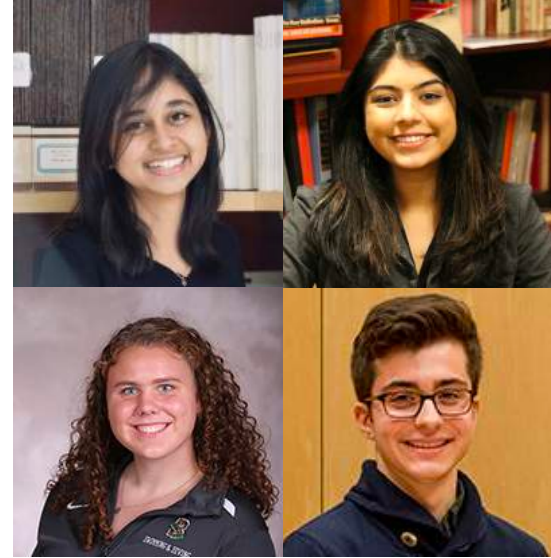
The poet Rumi begins his Masnavi by describing the reed flute's sound as its longing for the reed bed from which it was cut. Unappeasable desire, which consumes one's self and must be expressed endlessly, permeates Persian and Urdu poetry. The object of longing is equally (and simultaneously) God and the human being, creating a poetic dialect replete with metaphysics as well as sensual experience. Students work with translations of poetry produced in various periods in Iran and Central and South Asia to discuss love, desire, beauty, faith, and betrayal.

STUDENTS

THE DUG

The **Departmental Undergraduate Group**, or DUG, is run by students in the Middle East Studies program who wish to build community both inside and outside of the concentration. The DUG aims to highlight the undergraduate-oriented nature of the program. This year's DUG leaders were Zahra Asghar '20, Anchita Dasgupta '21, Kelley Tackett '20, and Ryan Saadeh '20. They organized a number of events, including the Undergraduate Paper Series and film screenings, in addition to spearheading outreach efforts through office hour information sessions on the concentration.

*(clockwise from top left):
Anchita Dasgupta, Zahra Asghar,
Ryan Saadeh, Kelley Tackett*



THE MUF

Eligible to rising seniors writing an honors thesis and concentrating in Middle East Studies, the **Middle East Studies Undergraduate Fellows** play an active role in MES life and assist with outreach efforts to underclassmen interested in becoming concentrators. This year's fellows were Margaret Follett '19 and Anna Murphy '19.

(from left): Margaret Follett, Anna Murphy



MESGSA

Led by Robert Kashow and supported by Middle East Studies, the **Middle East Studies Graduate Student Association** is an interdisciplinary group united by a shared scholarly interest in the Middle East and North Africa. Combining diverse humanities and social sciences backgrounds with regional expertise, the association aims to foster conversations that are theoretically diverse and regionally focused.

(left): Robert Kashow

STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Bulbul is a new publication of art and literature produced by graduate students affiliated with MES who are interested in art that critically reflects upon the societies, culture, histories, and stories relevant to the expanded Middle East.

Brown Undergraduate Journal of Middle East Studies, recently started by undergraduates, is a journal featuring work from Brown- and RISD-affiliated individuals and covering a wide array of disciplines, from arts and literature to politics and culture. The journal aims to expand understanding of the Middle East and raise awareness of contemporary topics and discourse in and about the region.

GRADUATING SENIORS: HONORS THESES



MARGARET FOLLETT '19

is a triple concentrator in Middle East studies, history, and computer science from Massachusetts. Her honors thesis in MES focuses on the Indian Ocean during the late 1870s, looking at interactions between local Hajj networks, shipping companies, and colonial interests in Jeddah. As a 2018-19 **MES Undergraduate Fellow**, Margaret has acted as a liaison to pre-concentrators in the freshman and sophomore classes. After graduation, she will move to Maryland to work for the government.

Senior Project: *"Such a Method of Doing Business": Local Shipping Agents, the Hajj, and the Divide between Corporate and Colonial Priorities in late 1870s Jeddah*

ANNA MURPHY '19

is a concentrator in Middle East studies. She is originally from the United Kingdom, but now lives in Charlottesville, Virginia. Her senior honors thesis focuses on identifying patterns of Islamophobia in the British tabloid press, specifically analyzing press coverage of British Muslim celebrities. Her interests include media and identity politics in the Middle East, a subject she plans to pursue as a career. This year, she served as one of two **MES Undergraduate Fellows**.

Senior Project: *The Tyranny of the Tabloids: Identifying Methods of Exclusion in Press Coverage of British Muslims*



RAKAN ABONEEJAJ '19

is a double concentrator in Middle East studies and economics from Gwinnett County, GA. In March of 2020, **with a Fulbright scholarship**, he will travel to São Paulo, Brazil, to study the identities of Arabs in Brazil, looking specifically at Syrian refugees and their relationship to the older Arab-Brazilian immigrant community. This project will afford him the opportunity to combine his work in Middle East studies with his prior experience studying at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro as part of Brown-in-Brazil. Through his research, he hopes to contribute to the field of knowledge production specifically regarding identity production during displacement and diaspora, a topic important to his own identity as a second-generation Palestinian.

Senior Project: *Social Statelessness in the Palestinian Diaspora: Application and Implications of a New Conceptualization of Statelessness*

GRADUATING SENIORS: CAPSTONE

JESSICA BRAM MURPHY '19

is a double concentrator in Middle East studies and development studies from New York City. Her MES capstone project explores solidarity in response to the "travel ban" [Executive Order 13769], while her honors thesis in development studies discusses the experiences of African asylum seekers in Israel and implications for global refugee protection. Her interests include forced migration, international politics, grassroots advocacy, and journalism.

Senior Project: *Displacement and Emplacement: Demonstrations of Solidarity in Response to the "Travel Ban"*



ALEXANDER SAMAHA '19

is a double concentrator in Middle East studies and history, who graduated magna cum laude. His academic work has focused on sectarianism, the rights of marginalized communities in the Middle East, contemporary Levantine politics, and issues surrounding refugees and forced migration. He has served as MES DUG leader, research assistant, class president, editor-in-chief of the *Brown Political Review*, and coordinator for BRYTE, a tutoring and mentorship program for resettled refugee youth in Providence. He worked at the Vasilika refugee camp in Greece and at the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies in Beirut.

Senior Project: *Sex, Power, and the State: Assessing the Policing of Queerness in the Contemporary Middle East*

RHEA STARK '18.5

is a double concentrator in Middle East studies and archaeology and the ancient world. Her research aims to put Islamic art in conversation with colonial histories, contemporary events, and popular perceptions of the Middle East in order to foster a more complex understanding of the Islamic world. As part of her senior thesis, Rhea curated *Transcultural by Design: Iranian Ceramics from the Minassian Collection*, an exhibition at the John Hay Library exploring the intercultural origins of Persianate ceramics. She was awarded a **Rhodes Scholarship** to undertake an MPhil in Islamic art and archaeology at the University of Oxford in fall 2019.

Senior Project: *The Socio-Visual Network: Persians, British Imperialists, and Intercultural Exchange in Nineteenth Century Tehran and London*



ALUMNI FEATURES

Since graduating, **Asya Igmen '17** has worked at the intersection of the private and public sectors, primarily focusing on health and gender issues. She has worked in both the Washington, DC, and London offices of the Advisory Board Company, a best-practices health care organization. As a senior international research analyst, she helps hospitals in the UK and EMEA improve their care management based on rigorous comparative research. Asya recently attended, along with other thought leaders, the World Economic Forum 2019 Annual Meeting in Davos as an analyst at Kite Insights, a social-impact consulting firm that works with the *New York Times*.



Katherine Long '15.5 recently graduated from Columbia School of Journalism with an M.S. in investigative reporting. While at Columbia, she worked on projects related to terrorism in Tajikistan, the kleptocracy underpinning the construction of the tallest dam in the world, and the U.S. military's anti-sex trafficking policies. She is now at the Seattle Times on an investigative reporting fellowship.

Simon de Jesus Rodriguez '15 left his consulting role with Bain & Company in Boston last June and relocated to London with his fiancée (and fellow Brown alumna). After a brief stay in the UK, he trekked 1,100 km along St. James' Way (the Camino de Santiago), beginning in Lisbon and finishing at the famed cathedral in Santiago de Compostela. He has since been employed at Nested, a Series C property technology startup in London, where he works on the business operations team to help solve pressing strategic challenges and scale the team.



Kathryn Thornton '14 spent the last two years living in Turkey and is now back in New York using her MENA knowledge to help develop marketing and communications for NaTakallam, a startup hiring refugees as language tutors.

Reva Dhingra '14 is a PhD student in government at Harvard University, where she researches forced migration and the political economy of humanitarian aid in the Middle East. She previously worked at the International Rescue Committee on the humanitarian response to the conflicts in Syria and Iraq. She was a 2014-2015 Fulbright Fellow in Jordan. During Commencement 2019, she was alumni representative for the MES diploma awarding ceremony.



For the past four years, **Micah Greenberg '14** has been working for an international development firm, Chemonics International, on public service delivery and education in non-regime-held areas of Syria. Currently, she is working in Berlin as the operations and program manager for an education quality and access program working in formerly ISIL-held areas in northeastern Syria. This fall, she will leave Chemonics to pursue a master of business administration at the Stanford Graduate School of Business. She plans to use her degree to transition from international to local development, focusing on equitable and fair economy building at the municipal level.

Christina Kata '14 works at Regional Plan Association, a nonprofit planning organization that seeks to improve the quality of life of the New York-New Jersey-Connecticut metropolitan region. Through economic and demographic research, RPA develops regional strategies and community development projects that improve the region's long-term prosperity and social equity. As executive assistant and development coordinator, Christina works closely with RPA's executive team to expand the organization's network of supporters and partners.





AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

FACULTY FELLOW 2018-20

ELIAS MUHANNA, Manning Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature

MIDDLE EAST STUDIES UNDERGRADUATE FELLOWS 2018-19

MARGARET FOLLETT '19

ANNA MURPHY '19

INCOMING MIDDLE EAST STUDIES UNDERGRADUATE FELLOWS 2019-20

ZAHRA ASGHAR '20

RYAN SAADEH '20

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH TRAVEL AWARDS

HUMA RAMAZAN ALI (Middle East Studies; South Asian Studies)

WILLIAM (LIAM) WALK (Middle East Studies)

GRADUATE RESEARCH TRAVEL AWARDS

KAREEM ESTEFAN (Modern Culture and Media)

LAUREL DARCY HACKLEY (Archaeology and the Ancient World)

MAARIYAH LATEEF (History)

DANIEL PLEKHOV (Archaeology and the Ancient World)

SHERENA RAZEK (Modern Culture and Media)

AYŞE ŞANLI (Anthropology)

CYRIL J. UY (Religious Studies)

KEENAN WILDER (Sociology)

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RIYAD K. DAUD '89

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BASEM I. SALFITI '93

E. PAUL SORENSEN '71 SCM'75 PHD'77, P'06, P'06

MUSTAFA N. ZAIDI '90

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YOUNG ALUMNI MEMBER

KAWTHER ALKHUDAIRY '17



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