



BROWN UNIVERSITY
CENTER FOR
MIDDLE EAST
STUDIES

ANNUAL
REPORT
2020-2021

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

This past year—for all of us—was clearly a year like no other before, yet the responses to the challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic proved heartening. I have taken up my new role as director of CMES in a context in which we were forced to improvise, rethink, and reimagine our community. MES faculty and concentrators alike adapted to remote- or hybrid-learning formats, as well as Brown's three-semester schedule. Faculty reconfigured existing courses and made a number of new course offerings available. MES concentrators, meanwhile, worked with faculty to overcome frustrated plans to study language or conduct research abroad, making the most of online tools and resources to produce revised or new research projects.

I see my role as building on the excellent work and achievements of my two predecessors, Beshara Doumani and Shahzad Bashir. In addition to enabling colleagues and students to pursue their intellectual passions, I am also intending to point the Center in new directions and expand our horizons.

One of the main initiatives that I started this year revolves around women and gender as a wider lens to understanding the Middle East and its diasporas. I aim to make CMES a focal point for exploring and discussing the politics of gender not only within the Middle East and its diasporas, but also comparatively with colleagues working in and on **Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean**, as well as **South Asia**, within our institutional home, the **Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs** at Brown, and beyond.

In another new strand, I started to develop links to examine intersectional struggles around racism in the Middle East. We hosted a couple of interesting and well-attended events in which we explored both historical constructions of blackness and race as well as more contemporary forms of anti-Black racism in the Middle East.

Amongst the 36 events we have hosted, we had one on labor and employment in the context of COVID-19, as well as another on climate change in the Middle East in conjunction with the **Climate Solutions Lab**. The silver lining of our mainly online existence has been our ability to easily gather speakers from around the world. Our audience members, ranging from several hundred to 26,000 during one event in which we teamed up with the online platform **Jadaliyya**, are based not only throughout the US, but also in the Middle East and Europe. We provided simultaneous translation into Arabic (and are planning Turkish and Persian in the future) to make our events more widely accessible.

This year, we had two major items of news linked to our New Directions in Palestinian Studies initiative. In August, Beshara Doumani was **appointed the Mahmoud Darwish Professor in Palestinian Studies**, the first endowed professorship in Palestinian studies at any American research university. More recently, it was announced that Professor Doumani will become the new president of Birzeit University in Ramallah, Palestine, with his return to Brown in the fall of 2023. He will be continuing his outstanding work and contributions as the Mahmoud Darwish Chair in Palestinian Studies.

I extend my best wishes for a safe and healthy future, and that we will be able to reconnect in person with our students, colleagues, and members of our CMES community soon.

Nadje Al-Ali

Director, Center for Middle East Studies

Robert Family Professor of International Studies

Professor of Anthropology and Middle East Studies



ABOUT

MISSION

The Center for Middle East Studies is part of the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs at Brown. It promotes research, teaching, and public engagement on key issues of the Middle East in a historically and culturally grounded manner. Its coverage includes all time periods—from antiquity to contemporary geopolitics—and an expansive geographical imagination in which the Middle East is both a region with changing boundaries and a conceptual entity part of global discourses. As the hub for Middle East studies at Brown, the Center supports research and programming generated by a world-renowned faculty. It houses a thriving undergraduate concentration connected to an extensive interdisciplinary curriculum. The Center also acts as a second intellectual and social home for a large group of graduate students spread across Brown's departments that grant advanced degrees. Through collaboration with other units on campus, the Center furthers Brown's work as a global university especially dedicated to seeking a just and prosperous future for all. With an extensive footprint in research, teaching, and advocacy, the Center is a major academic node in the international network of institutions dedicated to discussing a region crucial to global affairs.

RESEARCH INITIATIVES

ISLAM AND THE HUMANITIES

NEW DIRECTIONS IN PALESTINIAN STUDIES

RESEARCH PROJECTS

ARTS AND SOCIAL CHANGE

DIGITAL ISLAMIC HUMANITIES

DISPLACEMENT

ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP

GENDER STUDIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND BEYOND

ISRAEL-PALESTINE: LANDS AND PEOPLES

KURDISH STUDIES

RACIALIZATION AND RACISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND ITS DIASPORAS

RESEARCH INITIATIVES

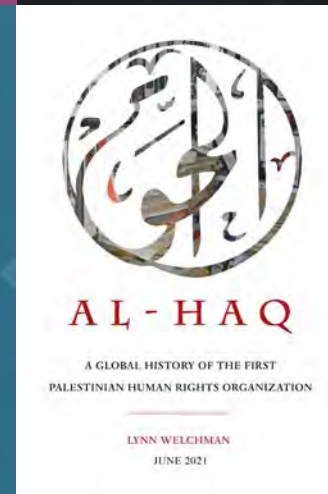
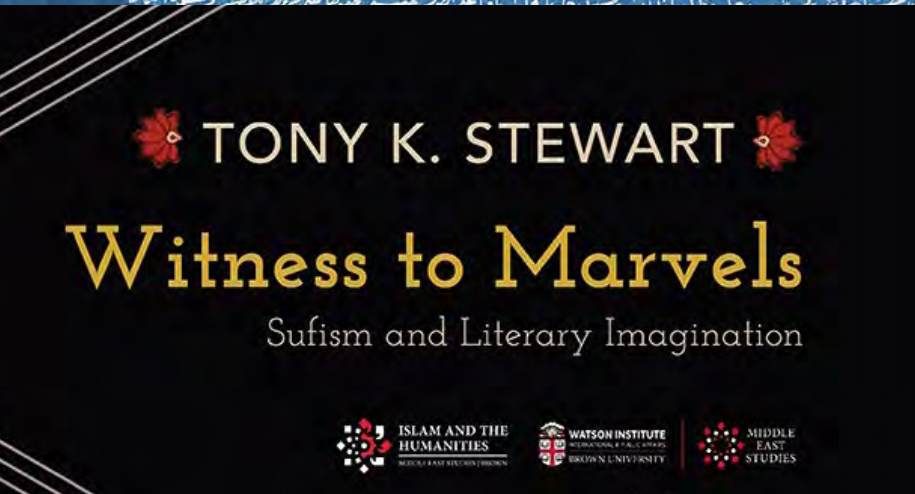
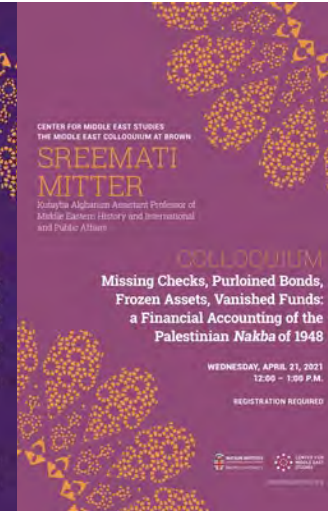
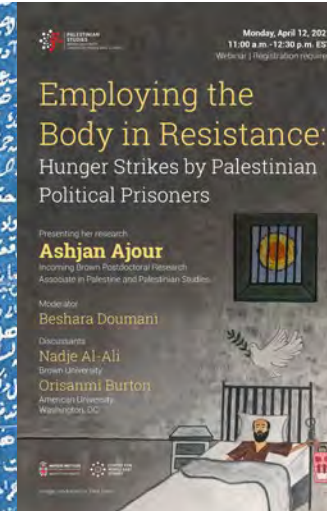
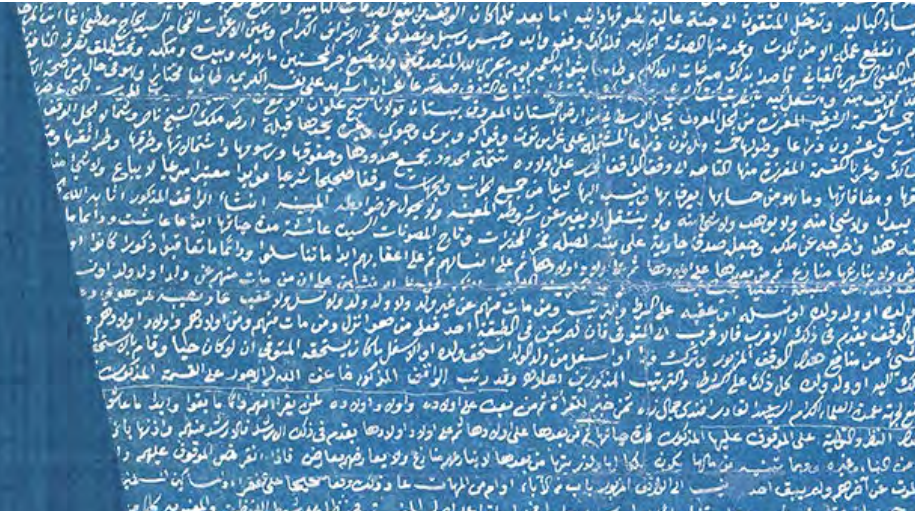
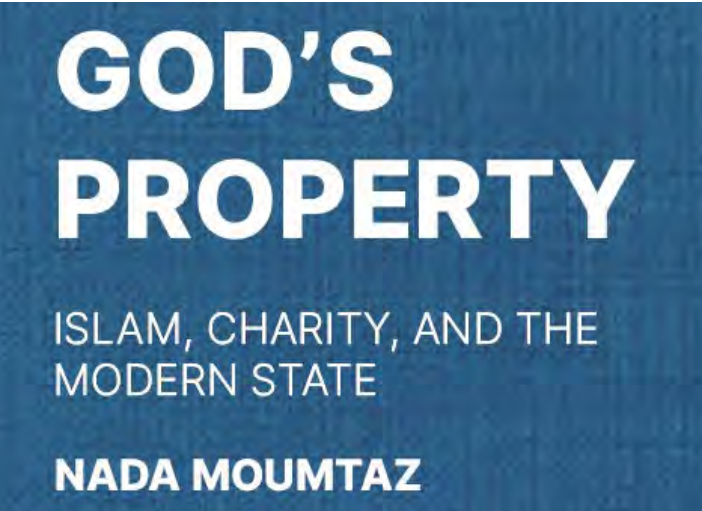


ISLAM AND THE HUMANITIES

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 both a hub for those interested in the subject at Brown, as well as a signal for the outside world of the University's commitment to the field. During 2020-21, the initiative's programming activities were on hold because of pandemic restrictions and the fact that Professor Bashir was on sabbatical. Aided by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation, the initiative's open-access book series, *Islamic Humanities* (University of California Press), published its third title, *God's Property: Islam, Charity, and the Modern State* by Nada Moumtaz (April 2021). Additionally, Tony Stewart's *Witness to Marvels: Sufism and Literary Imagination*, which was published in the series in 2019, was awarded the Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy Book Prize in South Asian Studies by the Association for Asian Studies.

NEW DIRECTIONS IN PALESTINIAN STUDIES

(NDPS) brings together an international community of researchers and practitioners to promote and shape knowledge production on Palestine and the Palestinians. Founded in 2013 by Beshara Doumani, NDPS invests in emerging scholars through an annual thematic workshop, an endowed postdoctoral fellowship, and a book series with the University of California Press. NDPS has also succeeded in raising an endowment for the establishment, in 2020, of the Mahmoud Darwish Chair in Palestinian Studies, the first of its kind. Beshara Doumani became the inaugural chair.



RESEARCH PROJECTS IN 2020-21

GENDER STUDIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND BEYOND

The new research project is led by CMES Director **Nadje Al-Ali**, Robert Family Professor of International Studies and professor of anthropology and Middle East studies. The project is based on the recognition that a gendered intersectional lens is central, not marginal, to a deeper analysis and understanding of political mobilizations, social developments, and cultural expressions in the Middle East. A gendered lens also allows for a comparative perspective and collaboration with other regional centers and initiatives at Brown University. The project involves panel discussions, lectures, and book talks, as well as relevant research.

Zahra Ali
Assistant Professor of Sociology, Rutgers University - Newark

Women and Gender in Iraq

Tuesday, September 15, 2020 | 5:30 – 6:30 p.m.

Sherine Hafez
University of California, Riverside

A collaboration with AMEWS. Cosponsored by the Ten Years On: Protests and Uprisings in the Arab World joint project.

Women of the Midan

Friday, March 5, 2021 | 12:00-1:00 p.m. EST
Webinar | Registration Required

Book Launch with
Nicola Pratt
University of Warwick

Embodying Geopolitics:

Generations of Women's Activism in Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon

Co-hosted by
Nadje Al-Ali
Director CMES
Banu Ozkazanc-Pan
Co-Editor "Gender, Work & Organization"

VIRTUAL BOOK TALK

GENDER, PROTESTS AND POLITICAL CHANGE IN AFRICA

Tuesday, October 20, 2020 | 12-1:30PM ET

Awino Okach, Sara Soumaya Abad, Felogene Anom, Sarah Nugdalla

TUNE IN TO THE TALK LIVE AT watson.brown.edu/live

A collaboration between CMES and CLACS. Cosponsors: Arabi Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship, American University of Beirut, and the Latin American-Caribbean Center, University of the West Indies.

Feminist Mobilizations at the time of COVID-19:

Experiences from the Middle East, Latin America, and the Caribbean

CMES GUESTS:
Lina Abou Habib
American University of Beirut
Mozn Hassan
Nazra for Feminist Studies

CLASS GUESTS:
Betilde Muñoz-Pogossian
Organization of American States
Gabrielle Hosein
University of the West Indies

CO-HOSTED BY
Nadje Al-Ali
Director CMES
Banu Ozkazanc-Pan
Co-Editor "Gender, Work & Organization"

Impact of Covid-19 on Women's Labor and Employment in the Middle East

Friday, Feb. 19, 2021 | 12:00-1:30 p.m. EST
Webinar | Registration Required

SPEAKERS:
Hania Sholkamy
American University of Cairo (on Egypt)
Afaf Jabiri
University of East London (on Jordan and Palestine)
Charlotte Karam
American University of Beirut (on Lebanon)

HOSTED BY
Nadje Al-Ali
Director CMES
Banu Ozkazanc-Pan
Brown University

Queer Studies: Activism in the Middle East

Thursday, March 18, 2021
12:00-1:30 p.m. EST
Webinar | Registration Required

SPEAKERS:
Ghiwa Sayegh
Kohi Journal
Sabiha Allouche
Leiter University
Ghassan Moussawi
University of Illinois-Champaign

A collaboration between the Center for Middle East Studies, the Brazil Initiative, the department of Portuguese and Brazilian Studies, and the Program in Gender and Sexuality Studies

Writing Queer / Queer Writing:

Diasporic Dialogues between the Middle East and Brazil

Friday, November 13, 2020
12:00pm – 1:30pm
Virtual Event
Registration required

EDITORS:
FROM THE MIDDLE EAST:
Nadje Al-Ali
Director for Middle East Studies
FROM THE BRAZILIAN PERSPECTIVE:
Natalia Borges Polesso Cidinha da Silva
Raphael Khouri Saleem Haddad

BROWN UNIVERSITY HOSTS:
Nadje Al-Ali
Director for Middle East Studies
Jeremy Lehnen
Host (Moderator)

Nadje Al-Ali
Robert Family Professor of International Studies
Director, Center for Middle East Studies

Salih Can Aciksoz
Assistant Professor of Anthropology
University of Wisconsin-La Crosse

Mehmet Kurt
Senior Lecturer in the School of Arts
University of East Anglia

Sacrificial Limbs:

Masculinity, Disability, and Political Violence in Turkey

Wednesday, October 28, 2020
5:30 – 6:45 p.m.

FUNDED BY THE KURDISH STUDIES PROJECT
Design Attribution: Janet Dogan, "Warriorship", 1988, Modern Times series

RACIALIZATION AND RACISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND ITS DIASPORAS

This research project is co-organized and led by Professors **Nadje Al-Ali** and **Beshara Doumani**, and is supported by Africana Studies. Within Middle East Studies, we are intimately familiar with grinding generational struggles for dignity and freedom of colonized, occupied, disenfranchised, and oppressed people in the Middle East. Yet the history of slavery and racism within the region has remained understudied and insufficiently engaged with. The principals are committed to initiating internal conversations and dialogue within Brown and Middle East Studies more broadly and to organizing activities that engage with the global issues of structural racism and exploitation.

Friday, October 30, 2020
1:30 – 3:00 p.m.
Virtual Event
Registration required

Peter Green Lecture on the Modern Middle East

Racialization and Racism in the Middle East: Historical Perspectives

GUEST SPEAKERS:
Razan Idris,
PhD student in History,
University of Pennsylvania
Eve M. Troutt Powell,
Christopher H. Browne Distinguished Professor
of History and African Studies,
University of Pennsylvania
Bam Willoughby,
Ph.D. Student in African Studies,
Cornell University

MODERATOR:
Sherene Seikaly,
Associate Professor of History,
University of California, Santa Barbara

HOSTS:
Nadje Al-Ali,
Brown University
Beshara Doumani,
Brown University

FEMINIST ANTI-RACIST ACTIVISM
Intersections of feminist and anti-racist activism
in the Middle East and North Africa

PANELISTS
Mai Panaga
Menna Agha
Nabila Moussaoui
Khawla Ksiksi

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7, 2021
12:00-1:30 p.m. EST
Webinar
Registration Required

KURDISH STUDIES

Kurdish studies have historically been sidelined within Middle East studies or reduced to the study of Kurdish nationalism. While there has been a proliferation of Kurdish studies across the US and Europe in recent years, there has been only limited engagement with Kurdish society in its complexity. The aim of this project led by Professor Nadje Al-Ali is to support and contribute to critical and original Kurdish studies that combine theoretically cutting-edge and empirically grounded work while highlighting creative approaches (films, art, literature) to the study of Kurds and Kurdish societies.

PROGRAMMING

WORKSHOPS,
PANELS,
BOOK TALKS,
LECTURES,
FILMS

CONFERENCE
**DECOLONIZATION,
DEVELOPMENT
AND STATE BUILDING
IN NORTH AFRICA**

September 25, 2020

CONVENED BY JENNIFER JOHNSON, HISTORY

CO-SPONSORS:
WATSON INSTITUTE
BROWN UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

**Anthropology,
Economy, and
Anti-Colonialism**

June 23-24, 2021
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. EST

Amiel Rize
University of Bayreuth/
Carnegie University

Cameron Hu
Konrad Lorenz Institute

Paul Kohlbry
Brown University

Megan Morris
University of Cincinnati

Shozab Raza
University of Toronto

China Sajadian
CUNY

In conversation with the translator,
Emily Drumsta
assistant professor of comparative literature

Peter Green Lecture on the Modern Middle East
**Nazik al-Mala'ika's
Revolt Against
the Sun**

Wednesday, February 3, 2021
12:00-1:00 p.m.
Webinar
Registration Required

Wael Al-Delaimy
University of California San Diego

Chair, Director, Board, Society for Assessment of Science and Technology in the Arab World
Chair, Eastern Mediterranean Chapter, International Society for Environmental Epidemiology

**Climate Change and
Global Warming
related to the Middle East**

Friday, April 9, 2021 | 12:00-1:00 p.m. EST
Webinar | Registration Required

**THIS LITTLE
FATHER
OBSESSION**

A conversation with film director
Sélim Mourad

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2021
5:30 - 6:30 P.M.
Virtual Event
Registration required

Friday, May 21, 2021 | 12:00-1:30 p.m. EST
Webinar | Registration Required

Alien Property

Panelists:
Kim Benzel
Curator in Charge, Department of
Ancient Near Eastern Art,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Clare Davies
Assistant Curator of Modern and
Contemporary Art, Middle East,
North Africa and Turkey,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Rayyane Tabet
Artist

10 Que Teng '22 project exploring decolonizing museums and unlearning imperialistic narratives inside museums

CENTER FOR MIDDLE EAST STUDIES
THE MIDDLE EAST COLLOQUIUM AT BROWN

**EMILY
DRUMSTA**
Assistant Professor of
Comparative Literature

COLLOQUIUM
**Ways of Seeking:
The Arabic Novel and the
Poetics of Investigation**

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2020
12:00 - 1:00 P.M.

REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Sara Pursley
New York University

A CMES collaboration with the Association for
Middle East Women's Studies

**Familiar Futures:
Time, Selfhood, and
Sovereignty in Iraq**

Thursday, April 15, 2021 | 12:00-1:00 p.m. EST
Webinar | Registration Required

**Representation
Matters:
Hulu's "Ramy"**

Tuesday, February 18, 2021
6:00 - 7:30 p.m. EST

**THE DAY I
LOST MY
SHADOW**

A conversation with film director
Soudade Kaadan

Panel:
Soudade Kaadan, film director
Nadje Al-Ali, director CMES
Rita Slaoui 23.5

FRIDAY, APRIL 16, 2021
1:00-2:00 P.M.
Virtual Event
Registration required

IRANIAN STUDIES

Thursday, 19 November, 2020
12:00-1:00 p.m.
Webinar | Registration Required

Nazanin Shahrokni
Professor, Professor of Gender Studies,
The London School of Economics

**Women in Place:
The Politics of Gender
Segregation in Iran**

Sussan Babaie
The Courant Institute of Art, University of London

**Performative
Public Space:
Maidan/Midan**

Friday, February 26, 2021 | 1:45-2:45 p.m. EST
Webinar | Registration Required

ACADEMICS

SAMPLING OF COURSES

Brown University's Center for Middle East Studies has earned a reputation as 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 with key themes such as gender and sexuality, displacement and refugees, law and society, and the politics of heritage. A growing number of college applicants and transfer students seek entrance to Brown with the express intention of pursuing Middle East studies, drawn by the opportunities and support for Middle Eastern language learning and research. Students at Brown often study more than one Middle Eastern language and conduct primary research (including, when conditions permit it, in the region itself) with the support of Brown faculty and librarians and research and travel funding from CMES. Inside the classroom and beyond it, through a diversity of academic, cultural, and artistic events, Middle East Studies forges a tight-knit community of scholars—students and faculty—who bring their wide-ranging interests and perspectives together in the service of greater understanding.

ANTH 2253

Transnational Feminist Politics and Knowledge Production

NADJE AL-ALI

This interdisciplinary graduate seminar aims to decenter and decolonize discussions about feminism(s) by focusing on transnational feminist politics and knowledge production. Course readings and discussions engage theoretical and methodological tools associated with transnational feminist politics and decolonizing knowledge. At the same time, the course provides concrete empirical examples of struggles, strategies and forms of feminist resistances emanating from the Middle East, Latin America, Africa, and South Asia. The course encourages students to ask questions about transnational feminist solidarities and knowledge productions, as well as power imbalances, tensions, and conflicts within and between feminist groups and initiatives.

COLT 1431B

Modern Arabic Poetry

EMILY DRUMSTA

An advanced course with readings in modernist Arabic poetry, beginning with the so-called neoclassical poets and proceeding through Romanticism and Modernism, from Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine, Iraq, and beyond. This course examines such recurring themes as love, loss, and longing; war, exile, and homeland; cultural heritage (*turath*) and creative innovation (*ibda'*); gender and genre. All readings in Arabic.

EGYPT 1030

Collapse! Ancient Egypt after the Pyramid Age

CHRISTELLE ALVAREZ

How does a civilization or kingdom collapse after building some of the most enduring monuments from the ancient world? What happens in Egypt after the Pyramid Age? This course uses texts, objects, and monuments to delve into the history and archaeology of the Late Old Kingdom up to the beginning of the Middle Kingdom in Egypt (c. 2160–2055 BCE), often described as a Dark Age characterized by chaos, decline, and natural disasters. This course discusses how ancient history is written, with a particular focus on the narrative of collapse in ancient cultures.

HIAA 0041

The Architectures of Islam

SHEILA BONDE

Through selected case study examples, the course examines the varied manifestations of Islamic architecture. The course spans fourteen centuries and three continents and examines religious as well as secular buildings. It traces the sources and “invention” of Islamic architecture in the Umayyad dynasty of the seventh and eighth centuries, and explores its varied manifestations up to the contemporary period. By examining cross-cultural and transregional interactions, students also investigate the relationship between Islamic and non-Islamic architectural traditions.

HIST 1456

Bankrupt: An Economic and Financial History of the Middle East in the 19th and 20th Centuries

SREEMATI MITTER

This course critically examines the economic—and particularly the financial—history of the modern Middle East in the 19th and 20th centuries. It is structured chronologically and thematically. It starts in the mid-19th century by examining the role of European states, as well as private European investment firms and oil companies, in facilitating the colonization of the region via loans, capitulations, and extractive concession agreements. It then shifts to the postcolonial period, studying how Western oil companies, banks, investment firms, and multinational organizations shaped the trajectories of the newly independent states in the Middle East.

HIST 1968V

America and the Middle East: Histories of Connection and Exchange

FAIZ AHMED

This seminar explores connections and exchanges between the diverse peoples of two constructed regions: the Middle East and North America. The course proceeds chronologically from the global context surrounding Columbus's 1492 voyage, eventually focusing on US relations with the “Mideast.” Students read closely for underlying socioeconomic, diplomatic, and cultural processes, including trade; migration; education; and evolving conceptions of race, religion, and citizenship—themes often ignored by conventional histories that dwell on watershed events, personalities, or conflict. The course's goal is to recognize how American-Mideast ties are far more complex, rich, and deep-rooted than is generally assumed.

MES 1120

Art, Culture, and Society in Tehran

SAMINE TABATABAEI

This course explores the city as a physical and metaphorical space and as an aggregator of possibilities. It focuses on Tehran—in its historical, geographical, artistic and virtual specificity—and artists who have lived there, including: Kamal-ol-Molk (and his followers) in the early twentieth century; artists associated with Saqqakhaneh (a modern school of art) in the mid-twentieth century, artists of the Revolution and the Iran-Iraq War in the 1980s and 1990s, and contemporary urban and transnational artists. By examining urban participation, aesthetics, and politics in Tehran across more than a century, the course provokes critical reflection on experience and representations of urban space, citizenry, and creativity.

MES 1299

Rural Palestine: Natives, Peasants, and Revolutionaries

PAUL KOHLBRY

This course looks at how the inhabitants of rural Palestine were seen (and saw themselves) as natives, peasants, and revolutionaries. Over the 19th and 20th centuries, rural Palestine was understood as both isolated and globalized; timeless and transforming; unchangeable and critically vulnerable to forces of modernity. The native, the peasant, and the revolutionary emerged as different actors—European missionaries and Palestinian activists, international NGOs and local cooperatives, village cultivators and urban CEOs, seed banks and financial banks—drew on rural practices, knowledges, and histories. How, then, does the rural past become the basis for claims on, and struggles for, Palestine's future?

RELS 0600E

Islamic Modernities: Religion, Culture, and Power

NANCY KHALEK

This course explores the culture and practice of contemporary Islam in a variety of geographical contexts. From the United States to South Asia, from Europe to the Middle East, the class looks at how Islam is practiced, discursively shaped, and represented across a variety of media. The course also introduces students to major phenomena, including Orientalism, colonialism, modernity, and the postmodern: What do these terms mean and why are they relevant to understanding the Islamic world?

TKSH 0720A

Understanding Modern Turkey Through Film and Literature

ESRA OZDEMIR

This course introduces students to modern Turkey and offers a wide range of perspectives on the society and its culture. Each week, the class focuses on a single theme such as: family and gender; social classes and their interaction with each other; Istanbul and its neighborhoods; Turkey's role within Europe; ethnic identities and their recognition by Turkish society; Turkish media and entertainment; modernism and political Islam; important events in the very recent history of Turkey, including the Hrant Dink assassination, terror attacks and the 2016 coup d'état attempt; education and academic freedom; modern literature; specific cultural practices and rituals; foreigners' perspectives on Turkish society; and modern Turkish sensory experiences, including music and cuisine.



ACADEMICS STUDENTS

DEPARTMENTAL UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT GROUP (DUG)

The DUG is run by students concentrating in Middle East studies who wish to build community both inside and outside of the concentration. The DUG aims to highlight those aspects of the Center that are related to undergraduate activities. This year's DUG leader was **Anchita Dasgupta '21**. She organized an Undergraduate Paper Series and other outreach events.

MES UNDERGRADUATE FELLOWS (MUF)

Eligible to rising seniors writing an honors thesis and concentrating in Middle East studies, Middle East Studies Undergraduate Fellows play an active role in CMES life and assist with outreach efforts to underclassmen interested in becoming concentrators. This year's fellow was **Anchita Dasgupta**.



MIDDLE EAST STUDIES GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION (MESGSA)

Supported by the Center for Middle East Studies, MESGSA 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. This year, MESGSA organized two graduate student research presentations. Led by **Robert Kashow**, PhD student, Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean, in 2020, and **Ayşe Şanlı**, PhD student, Anthropology, in 2021.



(from left): Anchita Dasgupta '21, Robert Kashow, Ayşe Şanlı

“Criticality in thought and a justice-oriented consciousness are the two greatest lessons that the Middle East Studies community has bestowed upon me in the last four years.

The staff, faculty, alumni, and current and prospective concentrators—all integral constituents of the vibrant community nurtured by the department—have molded who I have become at Brown.

If I had to hand-select my favorite experiences of college life, I would find that each memory is inevitably associated, in one way or another, with a course, idea, or person affiliated with MES.”

- ANCHITA DASGUPTA '21

ACADEMICS CLASS OF 2021

HONORS THESIS



ANCHITA DASGUPTA is a Middle East studies and history concentrator from Kolkata, India. Her research in the department, revolving around the self-determination movements in Kashmir and Palestine, meshes activism with the law. Her thesis in MES examines two instances of military violence in Indian-held Kashmir and Israeli-occupied West Bank against which resisters sought justice through the law. Upon graduating from Brown, Anchita will be pursuing an MPhil in Law at the University of Oxford, where she will continue her research on how the statist trappings of legal justice shape international human rights law and how legal resistance offers grassroots activists an avenue to challenge the former. As an aspiring human rights lawyer, Anchita hopes to carry her critical theoretical training in MES into the practice of the law as she continues to elevate subaltern discourses on the law in the academy. Anchita was awarded the 2021 CCSA Undergraduate Thesis Prize for her thesis.

Senior Project:

Beit Sourik and Kunan Poshpora: Reimagining Agency in Legal Resistance Movements

CAPSTONES

MATHILDE BARLAND is a double concentrator in Middle East studies and international relations from France. Throughout her undergraduate studies, she has had various on-campus jobs, an international internship in Colombia, and most recently a research internship with CAIR-Chicago. During the Spring 2021 semester, she worked as the International Students Program intern, participated in Professor Patsy Lewis's project "Addressing Systemic Racism" as a research assistant, and volunteered as an ESL tutor and Spanish interpreter with Inspiring Minds. For her capstone, she researched how the ways in which the harkis transmitted their story affected their children's understanding of their Franco-Algerian identity in French society. In the future, Mathilde hopes to enter law school and specialize in immigration law after gaining professional experience, while also pursuing her learning of Arabic. Mathilde was awarded the Davis UWC Scholarship during her four years at Brown.

Senior Project:

The Transgenerational Silence of the Harkis and Its Effects on Navigating a Franco-Algerian Identity in an Alienating Society



MARLEY CARROLL is a concentrator in Middle East studies from New Jersey. Throughout her time at Brown, she has been a student assistant for the Center for Middle East Studies and a teaching assistant for the course Cybersecurity and International Affairs. Academically, she has studied social movements and political violence; more broadly, her research interests include violent extremism, online radicalization, deradicalization and disengagement, and disinformation. Her MES capstone project studied the intersection of religion and conspiracy theories in the development of religious extremism.

Senior Project:

Conspiracy Theory and Religious Extremism: A Quest for Significance in Secular Societies

JULIUS GINGLES is a concentrator in Middle East studies from Baltimore, Maryland. In his final semester, Julius worked on an Arabic-to-English literary translation of a poem titled *The Processions* by Gibran Khalil Gibran, a well-known Lebanese writer and artist from the 20th century. This project has afforded him the opportunity to further his three-and-a-half-year study of the Arabic language at Brown and to explore various literary translation techniques. He hopes to continue his advanced study of Arabic through a study-abroad program in the near future. In addition to being a Middle East studies concentrator, Julius is a premedical student and plans to attend medical school in the coming years.

Senior Project:

The Processions by Gibran Khalil Gibran



CLAIRE DAVIDSON MILLER is a double concentrator in Middle East studies and Judaic studies from Washington, DC. At Brown, she primarily focuses on the study of Israel-Palestine, particularly the ways in which pedagogy and politics interact in the socialization of Israeli youth and have contributed to the current situation. Her capstone, taking the form of a series of letters to her Poland-born, Mandate-Palestine- and Israel-raised grandmother, represents a multifaceted, interdisciplinary effort to grapple with this complex family history. After graduation, Claire will move back to DC, where she will be working in communications and development for Americans for Peace Now, the American branch of an Israeli nonprofit striving to curb settlement development and increase Palestinian autonomy in the West Bank. Claire was awarded the Celia and Carl Michaelson Prize for Excellence in Judaic Studies, the Award for Excellence in the Study of Hebrew from the Judaic Studies program, and the Levi Adams Citation from the Office of the Chaplains and Religious Life.

Senior Project:

(Re)Constructing My Grandmother: An Exploration of Family and Identity through the Lenses of Zionism, National Identity, Religion, Queerness, Body, and Class



ADAM STEIN is a double concentrator in Middle East studies and international relations from Chappaqua, New York. His Middle East studies capstone project discusses the status of Iran's Jewish community following the Islamic Revolution. This project reflects some of his broader academic interests in legal history, Middle Eastern ethnic and religious minorities, and Israel-Iran relations. He also recently completed an international relations capstone project about the ways in which the Biden administration can implement a more effective humanitarian response to the Yemeni Civil War. On campus, Adam is a managing editor of the *Brown Journal of World Affairs*. Beginning this fall, he will continue his education at the University of Pennsylvania, where in addition to pursuing a JD from Penn Law as a Dean's Scholar, he will be working toward an MA in international studies at the Lauder Institute. Adam was awarded the Award for Excellence in the Study of Hebrew from the Judaic Studies program.

Senior Project:

Esther and the Ayatollah: Iranian Jewry after the Islamic Revolution



TARA MARSHI is a double concentrator in Middle East studies and visual art from New York, New York. Tara is originally of Lebanese descent; her broader academic interests include using art—namely photography, collage, and drawing—as a tool to embody the coexisting layers of her identity in regards to the subject of modernity and the Middle East. This past summer, Tara was in her family home in Ashrafieh in Beirut when the Beirut explosion took place on August 4, 2020. After seeing her country in ruins and with the sound of the explosion still ringing in her ears, Tara volunteered with Beit El Baraka, a nonprofit NGO, to help clean the streets and homes of Beirut directly affected by the explosion. Recently, Tara has created a photography project and a collage piece illustrating her reactions to the explosion and she hopes to continue raising awareness of the psychological and physical pain inflicted by the explosion through her art.

Senior Project:

Lebanon's Post-War Rehabilitation: Reconstructing Beirut Architecturally and Destroying Lebanese Identity



JACK JOHNSON is a double concentrator in Middle East studies and history from Boise, Idaho. He will return to the research he began in the summer of 2020 concerning early childhood literacy for children with learning disabilities in the MENA region. In conjunction with the Lee Pesky Learning Center and a team of professors at the University of Qatar and the American University of Cairo, Jack helped to develop a better Arabic literacy program for 1st and 2nd graders in both the United States and the MENA region.

Senior Project:

Yacine Kateb's "*Nedjma*": "*La femme Patrie*" and Pre-Revolutionary Algerian Identity



"My encounter with the Middle East Studies department at Brown over the past four years has been humbling and inspiring.

The endless support, encouragement, and advice that I have received from faculty members, staff members, and students have shaped my academic and personal journeys with lessons about patience, integrity, and purposefulness.

Without a doubt, the MES community has given me the drive to hold myself accountable as a lifelong learner who wishes to bridge the gap of understanding between different communities and for that, I am grateful to call MES my second-home."

- HUMA RAMAZAN ALI '21.5



NADJE AL-ALI

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PROFESSOR OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND MIDDLE EAST STUDIES



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VISITING ASSISTANT PROFESSOR IN MIDDLE EAST STUDIES
DIRECTOR OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES



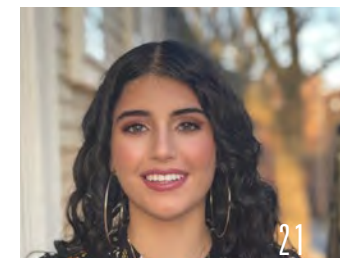
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PALESTINIAN STUDIES STUDENT ASSISTANT

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PROFESSOR OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND MIDDLE EAST STUDIES

Feminist activism and gendered mobilizations in the Middle East (Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Turkey, and the Kurdish regions), as well as the gendered dimensions of transnational migration and diaspora mobilization (with reference to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq, and the Kurdish political movement).



EMILY DRUMSTA

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

Modern Arabic literature with a focus on the politics of literary form in both poetry and fiction, from Egypt to the Levant and Iraq, as well as translation studies. Her book, *Ways of Seeking: the Arabic Novel and the Poetics of Investigation*, is forthcoming with the University of California Press.

OMER BARTOV

JOHN P. BIRKELUND DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR OF EUROPEAN HISTORY

Nazi indoctrination and the crimes of the Wehrmacht; links between total war and genocide; the role of stereotypes in representations of violence; interethnic relations, communal massacres, and the politics of memory in Eastern Europe; coexistence and strife in Israel-Palestine.



NANCY KHALEK

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

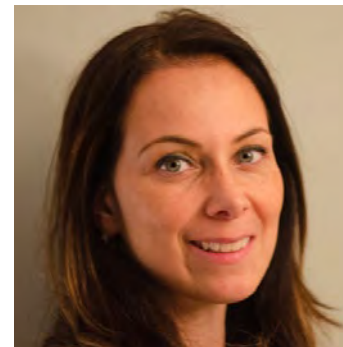
Specializes in Late Antiquity and Islam; hagiography, biography, and material culture related to the Companions of Muhammad; medieval material culture; currently researching the history of emotions and medieval (Arabic) Islamic pietistic literature.



BESHARA DOUMANI

MAHMOUD DARWISH PROFESSOR OF PALESTINIAN STUDIES

Social history of groups, places, and time periods marginalized by mainstream scholarship on the early modern and modern Middle East, as well as displacement, academic freedom, the ethics and politics of knowledge production, and the Palestinian condition.



BANU OZKAZANC-PAN

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF THE PRACTICE OF ENGINEERING

Postcolonial and transnational feminist perspectives on organizations, migration, and entrepreneurship. Secular and Islamic feminist entrepreneurship in the context of neoliberal development agendas and authoritarian regimes in Turkey.

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VAZIRA ZAMINDAR, History

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named Mahmoud Darwish Professor of Palestinian Studies

FAIZ AHMED

named Joukowsky Family Distinguished
Associate Professor of Modern Middle Eastern History

ARRIVING IN 2021-22

ASHJAN AJOUR, Postdoctoral Research Associate in Palestinian Studies

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