



ANNUAL
REPORT
2015-2016

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

DEAR COLLEAGUES AND FRIENDS,

Launched in 2012, the Middle East Studies (MES) initiative continues its rapid transition from an undergraduate concentration into one of the top 10 MES centers in the United States. Innovative research projects, engaged programming, rigorous teaching, and thematically driven partnerships have integrated MES into the intellectual life at Brown University and established its reputation as a new model for area studies. I am happy to report that the 2015-2016 academic year was yet another milestone in this exciting journey.



Two successful searches completed this year, the Aga Khan Chair in Islamic Humanities and the assistant professorship in Modern Arabic Literature, deepen our strength in the humanities. Two additional assistant professors -- Sreemati Mitter, who works on economic history, and Jennifer Johnson, who works on North African history—will start teaching next fall. The Stephen Robert Chair for a senior social scientist of the Middle East, once filled, will significantly expand the footprint of the MES program at Brown.

A critical mass of faculty is needed to provide our growing concentration with the right mix and quantity of courses. The number of concentrators currently stands at 26. MES and crosslisted course enrollments were at around 1,200 students. MES has one of the most active DUGs (Department Undergraduate Group) on campus, and the MES Graduate Student Association, established last year, is now a thriving community.

Postdocs and visiting professors enrich our intellectual life and course offerings. MES was fortunate to receive funds to endow this country's first postdoctoral fellowship in Palestinian Studies. We also received a Mellon Sawyer Seminar award that funds a postdoctoral fellow and two graduate students who work on the theme of "displacement." This coming academic year, Hanan Toukan will be the Adrienne Minassian Visiting Professor in Islamic Art.

Over the past year, the focus of MES efforts has shifted steadily toward research initiatives that explore new lines of academic inquiry. Five major conferences generated intense interest at Brown and beyond: "The Politics of Human Shielding," "Sectarianism in Islam," the third annual Digital Islamic Humanities Project, on "Distant Reading and the Islamic Archive," the third annual conference of New Directions in Palestinian Studies, on "Approaches to Research on Palestine and the Palestinians," and the fourth annual conference on Engaged Scholarship, titled "Brains in Crisis: Stress and Resilience in Syrian Refugee Children."

Our programming, which engages important public debates from an informed and critical perspective, is as strong and collaborative as ever. Highlights include a teach-in on Syria with over 250 attendees, a joint lecture series with the Brazil Studies Initiative, a talk given by Afghanistan's first female mayor, Azra Jafari, a panel discussion on "The U.S. and the Future of Syria," as well as a Critical Conversations panel which featured a keynote by a member of the Israeli Knesset, Haneen Zoabi. This is in addition to the Peter Green Lectures, the Luncheon Seminar, the film series and other events generated by members of the MES family.

All this is made possible by our small but superb staff, by our faculty and students, and by Brown University and the MES Advisory Council, which held its first meeting in London in October 2015. We are committed to making MES at Brown one of the best centers for the study of this vitally important region, and 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, Islam, and Muslim societies through research, teaching, and public engagement.

ABOUT

Housed in the Watson Institute and supported by the Dean of the Faculty, Middle East Studies is in a transition period of rapid growth from an undergraduate concentration into a top-10 center. This initiative, launched by Beshara Doumani when he joined the Brown faculty in 2012, seeks to integrate Middle East and Islamic Studies 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 and graduate students. Eschewing the hothouse legacy structures of the conventional 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 the Making of the Modern World
- Political Economy of Development and Social Movements
- Islamic Humanities
- Arts, Public Culture, and Social Change

SIGNATURE RESEARCH INITIATIVES

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



STAFF, SPECIAL MENTION, STUDENTS

SARAH TOBIN, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR



Sarah Tobin 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 at the intersections with gender, Islamic authority and normative Islam, public ethics, and Islamic authenticity. Ethnographically, her work focuses on Islamic piety in the economy, especially Islamic banking and finance, Ramadan, and in contested fields of consumption such as the hijab, and the Arab Spring.

Her book, *Everyday Piety: Islam and Economy in Jordan*, was recently published by Cornell University Press. Her work has also been published in the *Middle East Research and Information Project*, *Middle East Policy*, *Digest of Middle East Studies*, and *Research in Economic Anthropology*.

BARBARA OBERKOETTER, ACADEMIC PROGRAM MANAGER

Barbara Oberkoetter manages the operations, events, and communications of the Middle East Studies program.

A former hotel owner and executive, she has lived and worked in Chile, East Africa, Europe, St. Kitts-Nevis, Canada, and the US.



SPECIAL MENTION: QUSSAY AL-ATTABI, PHD STUDENT



For academic year 2015-2016, **Qussay Al-Attabi** served as MES academic specialist. Qussay is finishing his PhD in comparative literature at Brown. He specializes in modern Arabic literature, and his dissertation, "Commitment as Traveling Theory: The Politics of Modern Arabic Literature," studies the dialectical relationship between aesthetics and politics in the Arabic literary discourse during the second half of the 20th century. Qussay is moving to Kenyon College, where he has accepted a tenure-track appointment as an assistant professor of Arabic.



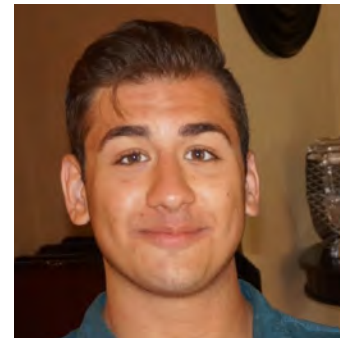
JOANNA CHATHAM '17

Joanna Chatham is a junior from Rhode Island concentrating in Middle East studies and computer science. In addition to working on the MES communications team, she is a member of the varsity women's rugby team and is an EMT.



TALA DOUMANI '17

Tala Doumani is a double concentrator in international relations and social analysis and research. In addition to being an MES student assistant, she is a research assistant for Professor Michael White in the Department of Sociology and a Presidential Host. Her interests lie in legal and data analysis, international law, political economy, and statistics.



PETER MAKHLOUF '16

Peter Makhlof is a senior from Boston, MA, concentrating in classics. In addition to working on the MES staff, he is the director of the Political Theory Project's Janus Fellows and an Undergraduate Fellow at the Pembroke Center.



PHIL LAI '13

Phil Lai is Middle East Studies' designer-at-large. He was a dual concentrator in international relations and human biology, and stayed on for a 5th-year ScM. He still creates designs for MES when not busy working toward a PhD in biomechanics at Harvard University.

KUTAY ONAYLI '17



Kutay Onayli is a junior from Istanbul concentrating in Middle East studies and comparative literature. His main interest is intersections of Turkish literature, politics, and culture in the long 20th century. He worked as an assistant in the creation of this Annual Report and will be one of the inaugural MES Undergraduate Fellows in 2016-17.

SOPHIE KASAKOVE '17



Sophie Kasakove is a junior from Brooklyn, NY, concentrating in Middle East studies and urban studies. Additionally, Sophie is an editor at the *College Hill Independent* and works as a Writing Fellow at Brown.

KATE TALERICO '17



Kate Talerico is a sophomore from Minneapolis, Minnesota. In addition to working for the Middle East Studies' graphic design team, she also owns a photography business, covers campus activism at the *Brown Daily Herald*, and is a peer mentor for students with disabilities.

TUBA TARIQ (MA STUDENT)



Tuba Tariq is a second-year master's student in public policy from Waukesha, Wisconsin. She completed her undergraduate degree in economics at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 2012 and continued to work there until coming to Brown, where she focuses on the impacts of local political and community-based interventions on alleviating race and inequality gaps.

FACULTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



BESHARA DOUMANI

joukowsky professor of modern middle east history; director, middle east studies; chair, middle east studies faculty executive committee

Beshara Doumani works on people, places, and time periods marginalized by dominant frames of knowledge production. His forthcoming book, *Between House and Orchard: A Social History of Family Life in Ottoman Syria, 1660-1860*, challenges narratives about the Arab fam-

ily by showing that regimes of kinship, gender and property relations differed dramatically within the same cultural zone. His first book, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700-1900*, tells an intimate story about the capitalist transformation of Palestinian society during the Ottoman period. Doumani led a team that produced a strategic plan for the establishment of the Palestinian Museum and has received a Mellon Sawyer Seminar Award for the project "Displacement and the Making of the Modern World."



ARIELLA AZOULAY

professor of modern culture and media and comparative literature

Ariella Azoulay studies modern imperial political formations with a special focus on sovereignties, revolutions, and human rights. She investigates how historical knowledge is portrayed through visual media. The ruination of Palestine and the formation of the Israeli political regime has been a primary focus of her work. Some of her recent books are *From Palestine to Israel: A Photographic Record of Destruction and State Formation, 1947-*

1950 (Pluto Press), *Civil Imagination: The Political Ontology of Photography* (Verso), and *The One State Condition: Occupation and Democracy between the Sea and the River* (Stanford University Press).

She is also an independent curator and documentary filmmaker. Her photographic archive "Act of State 1967-2007" is displayed at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, and her latest documentary, *Civil Alliances, Palestine, 47-48*, is accessible on YouTube.

FAIZ AHMED

assistant professor of history

Faiz Ahmed is assistant professor of history at Brown University and a specialist in the legal and constitutional history of the modern Middle East. Trained as a lawyer and social historian, his primary research explores student and scholarly networks, constitutional movements, and rule of law discourse from the Ottoman Empire to Afghanistan during the long 19th century. His work on Islamic "sociological" history has been published in several scholarly journals. His current book project presents the first transnational study of Afghanistan's early constitutional history, exploring the intersection of Afghan, Ottoman, and Indian Muslim jurists in modern Kabul. He is a recipient of fellowships from the Fulbright Program, Social Science Research Council, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and American Research Institute in Turkey/NEH for his research on Afghanistan, Turkey, Egypt, Britain, and India.



PALMIRA BRUMMETT

visiting professor in history

Palmira Brummett is a historian of the Ottoman empire and the Mediterranean world, whose work focuses on the rhetorics, genres (and genders) of cross-cultural encounter. Her latest book, *Mapping the Ottomans: Sovereignty, Territory, and Identity* (Cambridge University Press), explores the Ottomans through maps, unpacking the relationship between the Ottomans and the Christian kingdoms of Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries through exploring the land and sea spaces of the Empire.

Other work, including *Image and Imperialism in the Ottoman Revolutionary Press, 1908-1911* from S.U.N.Y. Press and *The 'Book' of Travels: Genre, Ethnology and Pilgrimage* from Brill, has explored image and imperialism in the Ottoman revolutionary press in the early 20th century and early modern travel writing. Her work also emphasizes themes of gender and how women in particular fit into these cross cultural rhetorics.



MIRENA CHRISTOFF

senior lecturer in language studies

Mirena Christoff teaches beginning through advanced content courses in Arabic language and culture, and coordinates instruction in the Arabic Language Program. Before joining Brown's faculty in 2002, she taught undergraduate and graduate courses in Arabic and translation as an assistant professor at Sofia University, including seminars in simultaneous and consecutive translation at universities in Europe and the Middle East. In this country, she has taught Arabic at UCLA, Beverly Hills Lingular Institute, and in intensive summer programs at Middlebury College Arabic School and UC Santa Barbara. Cristoff is a member of MLA, ACTFL, MESA, and AATA. She serves on the Governing Board of CASA, as a Routledge peer reviewer, and as a consultant to the Arabic Program at Wheaton College. Her research reflects her professional involvement with foreign language pedagogy, translation studies, and Arab cultural history.

NANCY KHALEK

associate professor of religious studies

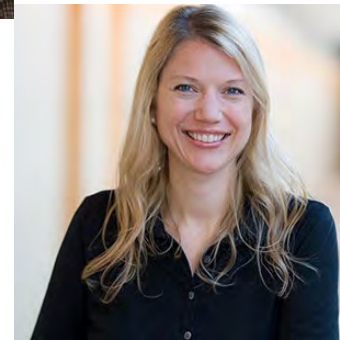
Nancy Khalek specializes in Late Antiquity and Islam. She received her PhD in history from Princeton University in 2006. Her first book, *Damascus after the Muslim Conquest: Text and Image in Early Islam*, was published by Oxford University Press. She has published articles and essays in a number of scholarly journals and venues, including the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, *Der Islam*, *Arabica*, and *Dumbarton Oaks*, among others. She is currently working on a second book on hagiography, biography, and material culture related to the Companions of Muhammad in the context of claims to orthodoxy and authority in medieval Islam. She teaches courses in a range of topics spanning the medieval and contemporary Islamic world.

SARAH TOBIN

associate director, middle east studies, ex officio

Sarah Tobin 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 at the intersections with gender, Islamic authority and normative Islam, public ethics, and Islamic authenticity. Ethnographically, her work focuses on Islamic piety in the economy, especially Islamic banking and finance, Ramadan, and in contested fields of consumption such as the hijab, and the Arab Spring.

Her book, *Everyday Piety: Islam and Economy in Jordan*, was recently published by Cornell University Press. Her work has also been published in the *Middle East Research and Information Project*, *Middle East Policy*, *Digest of Middle East Studies*, and *Research in Economic Anthropology*.



SHERINE HAMDY

associate 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's Department of Anthropology 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 new research critically engages with physicians' roles in the recent political upheavals in the Arab world.



ELIAS MUHANNA

manning associate professor of comparative literature

Elias Muhanna is a scholar of classical Arabic literature and Islamic intellectual history. His research focuses primarily 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.

In 2015-16, he is a Fellow of the American Council of Learned Societies, and is currently completing a book on classical and early modern encyclopedic literature in the Islamic world, as well as an abridged translation of Shihab al-Din al-Nuwayri's 14th-century Arabic compendium, *The Ultimate Ambition in the Arts of Erudition*, forthcoming from Penguin Random House. His essays and criticism appear regularly in *The New Yorker's* online edition, *The New York Times*, *The Nation*, and other publications.

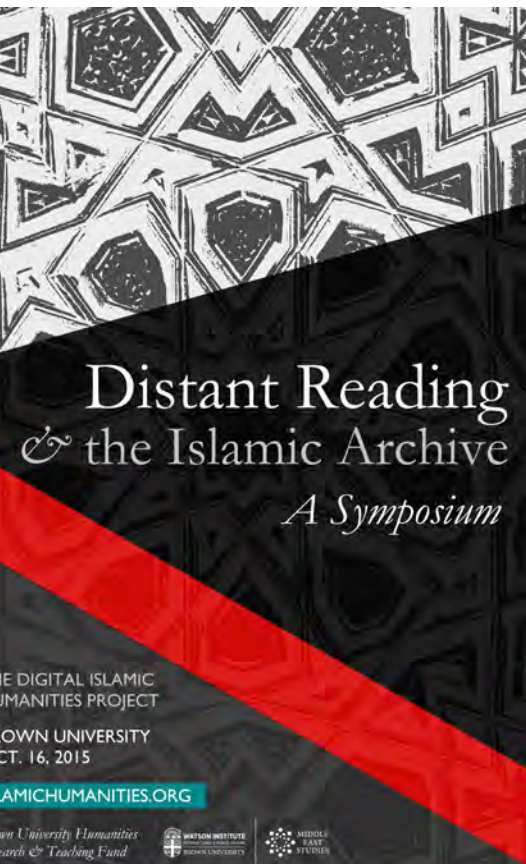


RESEARCH INITIATIVES

DIGITAL ISLAMIC HUMANITIES PROJECT

Each year, the number of digitized books, inscriptions, images, documents, and other artifacts from the Islamic world continues to grow. As this archive expands, so too does the repertoire of digital tools for navigating and interpreting its diffuse and varied contents. Drawing upon such tools as topic modeling, context-based search, social network maps, and text reuse algorithms, the study of large-scale archives and textual corpora is undergoing significant and exciting developments. Led by Professor Elias Muhanna, Middle East Studies' **Digital Islamic Humanities Project** organizes conferences, workshops, and symposia to explore the intellectual possibilities and the challenges created by these developments, and to create a community of scholars passionate about the emerging field of Digital Islamic Humanities.

This year, the Digital Islamic Humanities Project held its third annual scholarly gathering, a symposium focused on the theme "Distant Reading and the Islamic Archive." The symposium, attended by a number of leading scholars in the field, facilitated presentations of innovative papers and projects as diverse as "Modeling Mannerism in Classical Arabic Poetry," "Which Muhammad? Computer-Based Tools for the Identification of Moving Elites in the Early Islamic Empire," and "Mobile Ethics: Travel and Cosmopolitanism in the Islamic Archive."



RESEARCH INITIATIVES

NEW DIRECTIONS IN PALESTINIAN STUDIES

New Directions in Palestinian Studies brings together established and emerging scholars to take stock of research trends, identify promising new questions and sources, exchange experiences and insights, and encourage networking across disciplinary and field boundaries. 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 first two symposia, titled "Political Economy and the Economy of Politics" and "Political Culture and the Culture of Politics," explored these questions through an interdisciplinary and collaborative approach.

This year's theme, "Approaches to Research on Palestine and the Palestinians," focused on evaluating existing research agendas and identifying themes for future meetings of *New Directions in Palestinian Studies*. Position papers circulated prior to the workshop addressed issues such as the promise and limitations of the settler colonial paradigm; zones of visibility and invisibility in historical narratives; the question of archives; the relationship between scholarship and activism; and connections between Palestinian and Israeli studies.



RESEARCH INITIATIVES

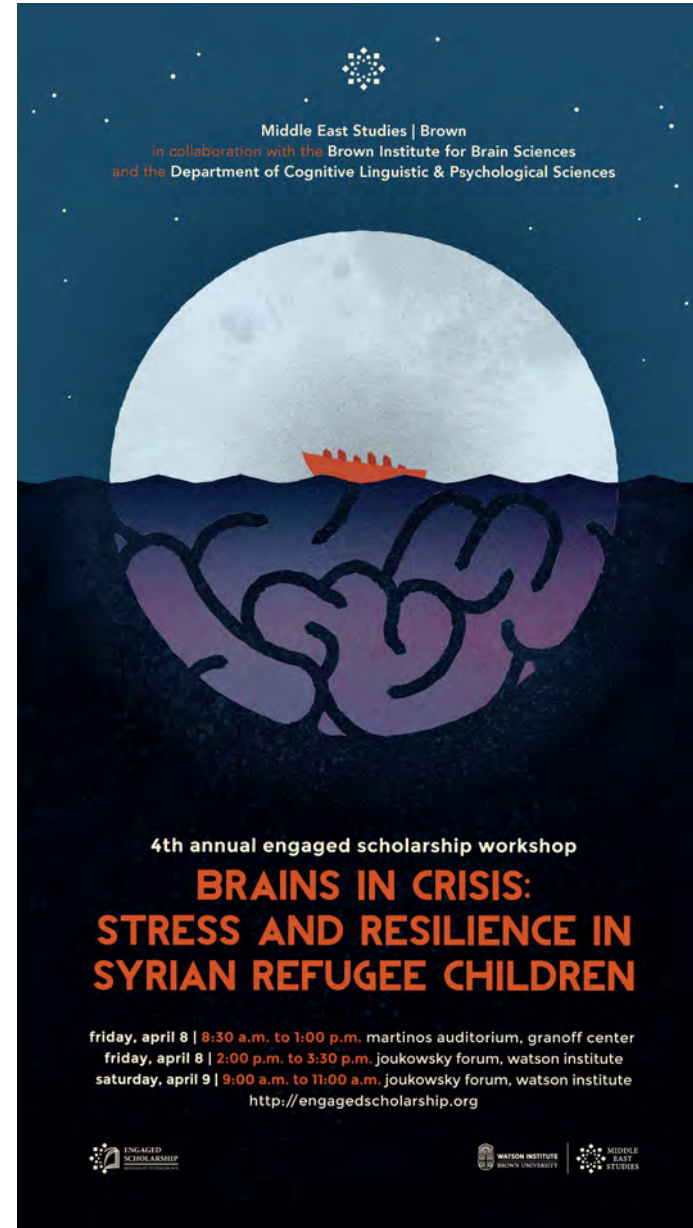


ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP IN ZONES OF CONFLICT

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

The first *Engaged Scholarship in Zones of Conflict* workshop, titled “Knowledge Production, Ethics, Solidarity: Stories from the field,” explored the tensions between academic practices and emancipatory politics and the negotiation of moral and ethical issues during fieldwork. The second meeting, “Embedded! Archaeologists and Anthropologists in Modern Landscapes of Conflict,” 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,” revolved around the development and representations of LGBTQ+ movements in the Middle East and North Africa.

Cosponsored by the department of Cognitive, Linguistic, and Psychological Sciences and the Brown Institute for Brain Sciences, the 2016 conference, “Brains in Crisis: Stress and Resilience in Syrian Refugee Children,” focused on the current Syrian refugee crisis, and in particular its impact on brain development and mental health outcomes in young children.



RESEARCH INITIATIVES

The conference team of interdisciplinary scholars connected scientists with anthropologists, historians with practitioners and aid experts, and emphasized that understanding the historical and cultural context of the Middle East is paramount to any intervention’s success. This Brown-based team conducted field visits to Jordan and the Za’atari refugee camp to learn about current interventions being conducted by NGOs and aid providers on the stressors faced by refugee families and children in Jordan. One of the conference’s main aims was to connect the service providers directly with the science of stress, and how best to buffer its negative effects.

In addition to Brown project team members, Beshara Doumani, Dima Amso, Carl Saab, Sarah Tobin, and Tala Doumani, and Brown faculty Kevin Bath and Audrey Tyrka, speakers were Brown President Christina Paxson, distinguished scientists Bruce McEwen (Rockefeller University) and Megan Gunnar (University of Minnesota), as well as Marcia Brophy (Save the Children), Frank Roni (Unicef), Curt Rhodes (Questscope), and Kate Washington (UNHCR-MENA).





CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS

THE US AND THE FUTURE OF SYRIA

Middle East Studies' fifth Critical Conversations, on October 29, 2015, discussed the historical forces shaping the conflict in Syria, the internationalization of the conflict, and US policy and actions to date. Yasser Munif, Institute for Liberal Arts and Interdisciplinary Studies, Emerson College, detailed developments on the ground since 2011. Richard Boucher, Stephen Kinzer, and Beshara Doumani presented on US, global, and regional dimensions.

SUFFOCATING EMBRACE? THE FUTURES OF PALESTINIANS IN ISRAEL

Middle East Studies' sixth Critical Conversations, on March 3, 2016, addressed the social, legal, and political situation of Palestinian citizens of Israel. The keynote speaker was Haneen Zoabi, a member of the Israeli Knesset, Tajamoe/Joint Arab List. The panel, chaired by Brian Meeks, chair of Africana Studies at Brown, was made up of Shira Robinson, George Washington University, Areej Sabbagh-Khoury, Columbia University, Gershon Shafir, University of California, San Diego, and MES Director Beshara Doumani.



TEACH-IN

THE REFUGEE CRISES: RESHAPING EUROPE AND THE MIDDLE EAST

MES teach-ins are popular on campus. This teach-in aimed to create a space for the larger Brown community to learn about and discuss the roots, processes, and implications of multiple refugee crises across the Middle East and Europe. The teach-in featured presentations and discussion by Brown faculty Beshara Doumani, J. Nicholas Ziegler, Keith Brown, Nicola Perugini, and Sarah Tobin, and by alumna Reva Dhingra '15, with intimate knowledge of these crises.

THE POLITICS OF HUMAN SHIELDING

Organized by Nicola Perugini, Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in Italian Studies and Middle East Studies, Neve Gordon, Department of Politics and Government, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, and by the Middle East Studies program, this two-day workshop discussed the role of human shielding in warfare and analyzed the way international humanitarian law (IHL) treats this increasingly significant phenomenon.

The workshop brought together human rights experts from academia and NGOs, legal scholars, political scientists, historians, and anthropologists. Issues explored included the legal history of human shielding and its development as a legal concept. The workshop also examined the uses of and responses to human shields in conflicts in Iraq, the former Yugoslavia, Israel, and Palestine.



PROGRAMMING

PETER GREEN LECTURES ON THE MODERN MIDDLE EAST

MES/BRAZIL COLLABORATION FALL LECTURE SERIES

LUNCHEON SEMINARS

LECTURE SERIES

FILM SCREENINGS

PROGRAMMING

DEPARTMENTAL UNDERGRADUATE GROUP (DUG) EVENTS



UNDERGRADUATE PAPER SERIES

The popular Undergraduate Paper Series gives junior scholars opportunities to present their research and receive feedback from peers and professors. The series also creates an opportunity for students to develop the presentation skills they will need to share their research with the broader community of Middle East scholars. Research papers are presented throughout the academic year and represent the wide range of disciplinary, geographical and chronological interests of the Middle East Studies undergraduate community.



FACULTY

- FAIZ AHMED**, History
- SUSAN ALCOCK**, Archaeology, Classics
- IRAJ ANVAR**, Center for Language Studies
- ARIELLA AZOULAY**, Modern Culture & Media, Comparative Literature
- OMER BARTOV**, History, German Studies
- RUTH ADLER BEN YEHUDA**, Judaic Studies
- REDA BENSMAIA**, French Studies, Comparative Literature
- SHEILA BONDE**, History of Art & Architecture
- PALMIRA BRUMMETT**, History
- VANGELIS CALOTYCHOS**, Comparative Literature
- MIRENA CHRISTOFF**, Center for Language Studies
- JONATHAN CONANT**, History
- ANILA DAULATZAI**, Anthropology & Gender Studies
- 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 & Public Affairs
- 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 & Public Affairs
- MAUD MANDEL**, Judaic Studies
- OURIDA MOSTEFAI**, French Studies, Comparative Literature
- ELIAS MUHANNA**, Comparative Literature
- SAUL OLYAN**, Judaic Studies, Religious Studies
- 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
- VAZIRA F-Y ZAMINDAR**, History

VISITING MES FACULTY

- PETER CHOMOWICZ**, Adjunct Professor in Middle East Studies
- ADI OPHIR**, Mellon Visiting Professor of Humanities and MES
- FARAH SALEH**, Department of Theatre Arts & Performance Studies; Middle East Studies; Visiting Scholar at the Pembroke Center

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWS

- NICOLA PERUGINI**, Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in Italian Studies and Middle East Studies
- ELIZABETH WILLIAMS**, Postdoctoral Fellow in International Studies, Watson Institute

INCOMING FACULTY



EMILY DRUMSTA

assistant professor of modern arabic literature and comparative literature

Emily Drumsta received her AB from Brown University in comparative literature and her PhD from UC Berkeley in comparative literature (Arabic, French, English). She also holds a certificate from the Center for Arabic Studies Abroad in Cairo (2011). Her research and teaching interests include modern Arabic literature and culture, Maghrebi literature and culture, translation studies, and critical theory. She is co-founder and co-managing editor of Tahrir Documents, a searchable, online archive of pamphlets, broadsides, and newspapers collected in Cairo's Tahrir Square during the 2011 uprisings and published alongside English translations.



JENNIFER JOHNSON

assistant professor of history

Jennifer Johnson received her PhD from Princeton University and previously taught at Lehman College and the City College of New York. Her main research interests are 20th century Africa, specifically the Maghrib, nationalism, decolonization, and public health. She is the author of *The Battle for Algeria: Sovereignty, Health Care, and Humanitarianism* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016). Her work has also been published in the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* and *Contemporary European History*. With the support of a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship, she is currently working on a second book project which examines medicine and public health in postcolonial North Africa between 1956 and 1975.

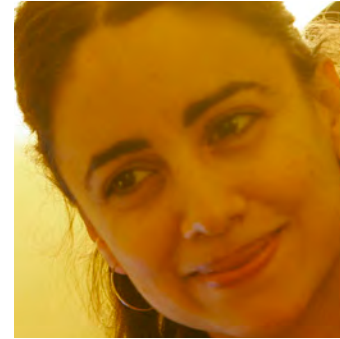


SREEMATI MITTER

assistant professor of history and international and public affairs

Sreemati Mitter is a postdoctoral research fellow in history at the Institute for Advanced Study in Toulouse (IAST), housed at the Toulouse School of Economics in Toulouse, France. She received her PhD in history from Harvard University in 2014 and an AM in history in 2008. She earned a master's in public policy from the Harvard Kennedy School in 2005, and a BA in economics from Middlebury College in 1999. She previously worked for the Palestine Investment Fund in Ramallah, Palestinian Territories, and at Credit Suisse in New York, for the Energy and Project Finance Group of its Investment Banking Division.

VISITING FACULTY



HANAN TOUKAN

adrienne minassian visiting professor in honor of marilyn jenkins-madina 1962

Hanan Toukan has lectured at SOAS, University of London and the Free University of Berlin in media and film studies as well as in politics and international studies. She also guest lectured at Goldsmiths, University of London in the Art History and Visual Cultures departments. She was a 2012-2013 EUME postdoctoral Fellow in Berlin and a 2014-2016 postdoctoral fellow at the Free University of Berlin. Toukan completed her PhD at SOAS in 2012. Her dissertation received the 2012 MESA Malcolm H Kerr Dissertation Award for the Social Sciences. She is currently working on her book manuscript, "Intimate Encounters: Art and Aid in Postwar Lebanon."

POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATES



AREEJ SABBAGH-KHOURY

new endowed position:
palestinian studies postdoctoral research associate

Areej Sabbagh-Khoury is the inaugural 2016-17 Palestinian Studies Postdoctoral Research Associate at Brown University.

Areej Sabbagh-Khoury is currently the Meyers Postdoctoral Fellow at the Taub Center for Israel Studies at New York University. She is also an associate researcher at Mada al-Carmel – The Arab Center

for Applied Social Research. Her current book project examines relations between members of leftist Zionists kibbutzim and Palestinian villagers in Northern Palestine within a settler colonial framework. Sabbagh-Khoury completed her PhD in the department of Sociology and Anthropology at Tel Aviv University. She contributed to several book chapters and articles on citizenship, memory, gender, and settler colonialism, among them "Palestinian Predicaments: Jewish Immigration and Refugees Repatriation." She also co-edited two volumes of *The Palestinians in Israel: A Guide to History, Politics, and Society*: the first volume was published in 2011 and the second in December 2015 (both volumes were published in English, Hebrew and Arabic). She has received several awards and grants for her research, among them the PARC fellowship; the 2015-2016 Fulbright Postdoctoral Scholar Award; the 2015 Ibrahim Abu-Lughod Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Columbia University Center for Palestine Studies; and the Inaugural Postdoctoral Fellowship in Palestine and Palestinian Studies at Brown University 2016-2017.

VIKRAMADITYA THAKUR

mellon sawyer postdoctoral research associate

Vikramaditya Thakur completed his PhD in sociocultural anthropology from Yale University in 2014. His doctoral dissertation studied the forced relocation of Bhils, a hill community in rural western India, to resettlement colonies in the plains by the state due to one of the largest dams in the world. The dissertation analyzed both forced displacement and the subsequent resettlement not as a one-off event but as an intergenerational phenomenon mediated by democratic processes and social movements and divergent aspirations across generations in families. His subsequent fieldwork studied the integration and transformation of the resettled Bhils as they became embedded in an economy marked by cash-crop agriculture from an earlier one based on subsistence farming. His research interests include development studies, political anthropology, agrarian studies, and environmental and social history.



SAMPLING OF MES COURSES

The number of Middle East Studies concentrators continues to grow and has now reached 26, which is an all-time high for our program. The concentration is a distinctive campus offering with a wide variety of disciplinary perspectives and topics that contribute to our students' overall knowledge and training in the field. Students have access to permanent and visiting faculty, and they benefit tremendously from the array of campus programming that supplements their courses, jump-starts new research ideas and projects, and connects them to the greater world of scholars in the field.



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.

CIVILIZATION, EMPIRE, NATION: COMPETING HISTORIES OF THE MIDDLE EAST

taught by faiz ahmed, assistant professor of history

The "Middle East" is a recent invention. One hundred years ago, virtually none of the states currently populating the region's map existed. This course considers how historians (and others) have used the concepts of civilization, empire, and nation to construct competing narratives about this pivotal region's past, from the rise of Islam to the present, asking: What is privileged and what is hidden in these narratives? And what would the history of this region look like if we could see it through the eyes of the peoples who have long lived there?



REFUGEES: A 20TH-CENTURY HISTORY

taught by vazira zamindar, associate professor of history

Refugees are arguably the most important social, political, and legal category of the 20th century. This course locates the emergence of the figure of the refugee in histories of border-making, nation-state formation, and political conflicts across the 20th century. In doing so, it seeks to understand how displacement and humanitarianism came to be organized as international responses to forms of exclusion, war, disaster, and inequality.

ETHNOGRAPHIES OF THE MUSLIM MIDDLE EAST

taught by ian straughn, adjunct assistant professor of anthropology

This course explores the ethnographic study of the Middle East through the various communities and concerns of the region. Throughout the seminar we examine the ways in which anthropologists seek to represent the peoples of the Middle East, primarily through book-length ethnographies, but also through film and other media. How do these scholars provide context for exploring issues of human dignity and diversity as well as the political and cultural transformations facing the peoples and places of the Middle East? How can such methods of research and the narratives they support provide readers access into the cultural and even emotional lives of others? Can such encounters enable us to hear the voices of the often oppressed and marginalized, those whom anthropologists have historically sought to champion?

ISRAEL/PALESTINE: HOLY LAND — PROFANE SPACES

taught by adi ophir, mellon visiting professor of humanities and middle east studies

The role of seizing land in Israel/Palestine, colonizing it, imagining and shaping its territorial boundaries, and reconstructing it as a governed space has been a major one in the struggles between Jews and Palestinians. Space has been a medium of domination and resistance, a scene of dispossession, construction, and destruction. Its governmentalization has become a powerful state apparatus. This course examines and contrasts the mental geographies, theoretical uses, and actual government of land and space(s) in Israel/Palestine.

ISLAMIC SEXUALITIES

taught by nancy khalek, associate professor of religious studies

This course examines gender and sexuality in Muslim cultures, as well larger issues that shape the ways in which Islam is imagined in relationship to gender and sexuality. How do particular constructions of gender and sexuality affect the constitution and representation of Islam and Muslims in the US and abroad? How can we engage with and complicate key terms and themes including "masculinity," "cultural difference," "women's and LGBT rights," and "modernity/civilization" – terms that are widely, and often uncritically, deployed in current political and moral debates on Islamic culture?

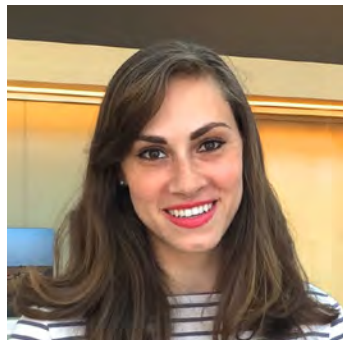


THE DUG

The Departmental Undergraduate Group is run by students in the Middle East Studies program who wish to build community inside and outside of the concentration. This year's DUG leaders were Ruba Aleryani '16, Nikhita Mendis '17, Alexander Samaha '18, and Nathan Vanelli '18. In addition to helping fellow students prepare for capstone projects and study abroad programs, they organized a number of events, including information sessions geared toward concentrators and others interested in MES, a departmental book swap, and the Undergraduate Paper Series.

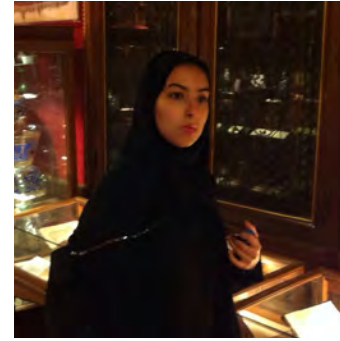
MESGSA

The Middle East 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 common regional expertise, the association aims to foster conversations that are both wide-ranging and focused. Led this year by Julia Gettle and Sara Hefny, the association offers a series of paper workshops, reading groups and other events such as a roundtable on research logistics and ethics. These gatherings serve to create a shared space for graduate students and faculty to critically discuss the practice of studying the Middle East.



GRADUATING SENIORS

Noura Al-Zaid is double concentrating in international relations and Middle East studies. A native of Saudi Arabia, Noura's thesis deals with the ways in which a modern legal education has the dual effect of bolstering and challenging the reproduction of society's so-called "moral fabric." Noura plans to attend law school after graduation.



Ahmed Elsayed is a 4th-year pre-med student concentrating in Middle East Studies. Born and raised in Brooklyn, Ahmed was drawn to Middle East studies because of a desire to understand his identity and culture as a Sudanese Muslim of immigrant parents. For his capstone, Ahmed is making a documentary that explores Islam and Islamophobia. During his time at Brown Ahmed competed on the Brown wrestling team, acted in student films, and is a founder of Beta Omega Chi, a fraternity for men of color.



Kiara Butrosoglu is double concentrating in Middle East studies and economics. She is a native of Turkey, with Syrian and Lebanese heritage. She was drawn to the program by her love for Middle Eastern culture and her interest in understanding Turkey's place in the region. For her capstone, Kiara is researching Islamic banking in Turkey.



Rebecca Harris is a dual-concentrator in economics and Middle East studies from Newton, MA. She focuses on the politics of refugees and spent a semester studying abroad in Jordan at the School for International Training's Modernization and Social Change Program. As part of her work there, she prepared an independent study project on perceptions of Syrian refugee employment among Jordanian students and members of the private sector.

SENIOR PROJECTS

Julian Jiggetts is a dual-concentrator in Middle East studies and public policy. Originally from New Jersey, his thesis focuses on effects of post-9/11 racism on Middle Easterners living in the States, extensively drawing on US Census data. In particular, Jiggetts examines changes in racial wage disparities in the New York Metro Area from 2000 to 2010. Jiggetts studied Arabic in Morocco on a Critical Language Scholarship and also at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Having been in the city during the 2014 Gaza-Israel War, Jiggetts says he's now interested in pursuing a career in law.



REBECCA HARRIS

Turning Refugees into "Illegal Immigrants": Neoliberalism, Domestic Politics, and Syrian Refugee Employment in Jordan

JULIAN JIGGETTS

New York City and the Post-9/11 Era: Labor Market Outcomes for Arabs and Muslims

NOURA AL-ZAID

Reclaiming Jurisdiction Over the Law: Society and Shifting Power Dynamics within Women's Huquq (Law) Schools in Jeddah

SANA PARVAIZ

Siddiq International Entanglements with Migrant Workers' Rights in the UAE

MAEN OWDA

Translation: Resistance Literature in Occupied Palestine

KIARA BUTROSOGLU

Islamic Economics

ANDREW TERRY

The Ulama in Contemporary Islamic Government

KATHERINE POLLOCK

From Camp David to Seeds of Peace: Reconciliation Efforts as Heterotopia

AHMED ELSAYED

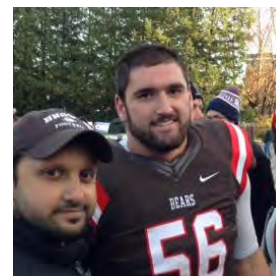
Islam & Politics

Maen Owda is a double concentrator in Middle East studies and international relations. He grew up in the Deheisheh Refugee Camp, south of Bethlehem, where he worked for the UN Refugee Works Association every summer in high school, focusing on programs for children. He's thinking about returning home once he graduates, to work again for UNRWA or its local partners, and to continue giving back to the organizations that gave him so much. He's completing his capstone on Palestinian and Israeli film. Owda played for the Palestinian National U18 team and co-captained the men's club soccer team at Brown.

Katherine Pollock hails from Chicago, IL. She has worked at Seeds of Peace, a summer camp that brings high-school-age students from zones of ethnic and political conflict, including Israel-Palestine, and some Americans and Musicians Without Borders, a Palestinian NGO advocating music as a form of resistance. Pollock served as editor-in-chief of the *Brown Journal of World Affairs*.

Sana Parvaiz Siddiq is a dual-concentrator in physics and Middle East studies. Her interest in Middle East studies began during high school in the United Arab Emirates. She has written her thesis on international activism surrounding labor rights in the UAE, a subject fraught with sensitive politics. She has been active on campus, organizing Ramadan iftars, coordinating interfaith suppers, participating in Muslim life conferences, and volunteering in social justice community organizing.

Andrew Terry, an offensive lineman, came to Brown from Simi Valley, CA. Terry was initially interested in security and conflict studies with an eventual goal of pursuing a career in the military. After taking a number of courses in the program, he declared Middle East studies as his concentration. He is interested in pursuing a career that touches on the process of American policymaking, rather than policy implementation, with regard to the Middle East. He's considering careers in government or NGOs/think-tanks.



Middle East Studies Senior Paper Presentation Day

Honors
Noura Al Zaid
Rebecca Harris
Julian Jiggetts
Sana Parvaiz
Siddiq

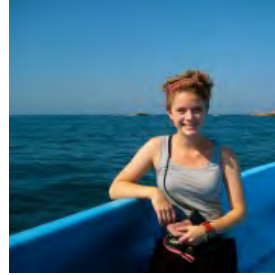
may 3, 2016

Capstone
Kiara Butrosoglu
Katherine Pollock
Andrew Terry
Maen Owda
Ahmed Elsayed

STUDENTS

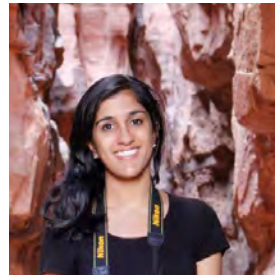
ALUMNI FEATURES

Since graduation, **Abby Linn '15** has focused on developing skills that will enable her to provide economic opportunities for women in developing countries. Her dual concentration in economics and Middle East studies led to her fascination with women's roles in developing countries and missed opportunities for economic growth. Before diving into microfinance or non-profit work, she chose to focus her first year out of college on education. The idea that at the base of economic opportunity is the availability of a solid educational foundation led her to take a position as a math tutoring fellow at Match Charter Middle School in Boston for one year.



Katherine Long '15.5 has been awarded a Fulbright grant to conduct journalistic research in Tajikistan in 2016-17. Long has worked and studied for over a year in the post-Soviet Central Asian nation. She is currently employed by a USAID-funded literacy project based in Dushanbe.

Reva Dhingra '14 is currently the program assistant for the Syria Regional Response Unit at the International Rescue Committee in New York. She was a 2014-2015 Fulbright Fellow based in Amman, Jordan, where she researched the education sector's response to the Syrian refugee crisis while also working at the education NGO Questscope. She was a double concentrator in Middle East studies and international relations; her research focused on the impact of refugees on Jordan's governance structure, economy, and society.



After graduating, **Meghan Koushik '13** spent a year in Turkey as a Fulbright scholar, where her research focused on the lack of legal protections for LGBT-identified asylum seekers. Meghan is currently a research associate at the New York-based Brennan Center for Justice, where she works on a range of national security issues, including mass surveillance, the impact of post-9/11 counter-terrorism policies on minority communities, and racial and religious profiling in policing. She is currently co-authoring a report studying the civil liberties concerns raised by counter-radicalization programs in the United States.



AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

INAUGURAL FACULTY FELLOW

FAIZ AHMED

UNDERGRADUATE FELLOWS 2016-17

**SABIYA AHAMED
KUTAY ONAYLI**

RESEARCH TRAVEL AWARDS

undergraduate: OSCAR DUPUY D'ANGEAC, AHMED ELSAYED, SOPHIE KASAKOVE

graduate: PARSA BASTANI, KAREEM ESTEFAN, MICHAEL PAYNE, SERTAC SEN, SAMEE SULAIMAN

faculty: ALLA HASSAN

Middle East Studies Alumni Panel and Reception

Commencement Saturday

May 28, 2016 at 5:30 p.m

Koo Library, Watson Institute

MES ADVISORY COUNCIL

The University held the inaugural meeting of the Middle East Studies Advisory Council in London on October 11. The Council will support the mission of Middle East Studies by promoting knowledge, understanding, and informed discussion of the Middle East through research, teaching, and public engagement.

HONORARY MEMBER

MR. TEYMOUR ALIREZA P'98, P'00

MEMBERS

MS. ALIA AL-SENUSSI '03 AM'04

MR. SALEH AL-TURKI P'03, P'05 AND MS. FAWZIA ALGOSAIBI P'03, P'05

MR. HASSAN ALAGHBAND P'15 AND MS. FARAH ASEMI P'15

MR. NOAH H. ALIREZA '04 AND MRS. LEMA ALIREZA '04

MR. AMMAR A. ALKHUAIRY P'17 AND MRS. RAGHAD F. ALKHUAIRY P'17

MR. FARUK R. ECZACIBASI P'14 GS' AND MRS. FÜSUN ECZACIBASI P'14 GS'

MRS. NATHALIE F. FARMAN-FARMA '90

MS. GLORIA INEZ GALLAGHER '91

MR. KAMAL G. JABRE '90

MR. ARTEMIS A. W. JOUKOWSKY '55 LLD'85 HON., P'87, GP'13, GP'14, GP'16, GP'17

MS. LAYA KHADJAVI '84

MR. PATRICK MALEY '67 AND MS. NANCY B. TURCK '68 AM'68

MS. CYNTHIA J. OAKES P'15

MR. STEPHEN ROBERT '62 LHD'04 HON., P'91 AND MRS. PILAR CRESPI ROBERT P'91

MR. KAREEM SAKKA P'18 AND MRS. DANIA SAKKA P'18

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

MR. MUSTAFA N. ZAIDI '90

WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR
NUMEROUS PARTNERS, COSPONSORS,
AND COLLEAGUES

JOHN MAZZA

SARAH BALDWIN-BENEICH

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PETER GOLDBERG, BESHARA DOUMANI,
TALA DOUMANI, AND BARBARA OBERKOETTER



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