



Newsletter

Volume two 2017-2018

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a word from the director

Spotlight on Middle Eastern Studies



I am pleased to welcome you to the Middle East Studies and Center's second Biennial edition of our Years-In-Review at Florida State University. Our mission is to promote research, teaching and awareness about this important and fascinating region of the world at a crucial time in our history.

Our Center played a high-profile role on campus in 2016-2018. With growing enrollment in our classes, especially in our language classes, the number of Middle East Studies majors continues to grow. We graduated 8 students with MES majors in Spring 2018. Most of them were accepted to prestigious graduate programs. Our Outreach program flourished with more than 16 student volunteers sharing their knowledge of the Middle East with elementary- and middle-school students at several public and private schools in the community. Our Middle East

Film Festival drew more than 1200 viewers and our endowed Jeannette Chapman lecture was standing room only when Professor Steve Heydemann delivered his timely lecture on "Strange Bedfellows: Obama's Legacy and Trump Policy in the Middle East" in Spring 2017 and Professor Nathan Brown discussed whether "the Dreams of the Arab Uprisings of 2011" had died? in Spring 2018.

The Center also hosted the renowned calligrapher Stewart Thomas in January 2017 and again in January 2018. He gave workshops to students on Arabic calligraphy and helped them perfect this ancient and elegant art form.

We expanded our offerings to include new courses on the history, religion, pop culture and language of the area. With the support of our distinguished faculty, including the recent addition of Prof. Nilay Ozok-Gundogan (History), and our significant library holdings, the Center continues to be a resource for students, scholars, local businesses and the media on issues pertaining to the Middle East. Please help me welcome Professor Ozok-Gundogan and our new Fulbright Teaching Assistant for 2018-19,

Amal Shamia.

In November 2018, we will be celebrating the 10th Anniversary of our Middle East Film Festival. The festival has become an annual feature on campus and the community. Stay tuned for several planned activities to celebrate this milestone.

Another milestone was achieved this year: Our Middle East Center was recognized as an Institutional Member of the Middle East Studies Association. Our program was featured in the Spring issue of IMES.

Our students continue to excel in their studies. Several of them received national and international scholarships to study in the region. Read on to discover more about their travels and accomplishments!

If you are wondering how to become more informed and involved in the area, please take a look at the various activities planned for 2018-19 on our web page (www.mec.fsu.edu) and consider becoming a friend of the MEC.

We look forward to seeing you at one of our future events.

Sincerely yours,
Zeina Schlenoff, Ph.D.

A Short History of the Middle East Center and Middle Eastern Studies Major at FSU

By Peter Garretson and Zeina Schlenoff



The Middle East Center (MEC) at Florida State was founded by Prof. Monte Palmer (now Emeritus Professor of Political Science) in the early 1970s within the College of Social Sciences. On Prof. Palmer's retirement in the mid 1990s the Center entered a dormant period until 2003 when it was shifted,

under the leadership of Prof. Peter Garretson, from the College of Social Sciences to the College of Arts and Sciences. Housed within the Department of History, the Center won a Title VI A grant from the U.S. Department of Education (Garretson, PI; Schlenoff, co-PI). At the same time, coordinated by Dr. Zeina Schlenoff, a core of about a dozen faculty helped create a BA degree program at FSU. This was approved in January 2004 by the FSU Board of Trustees. This BA in Middle Eastern Studies remains the only one of its kind in the State of Florida and one of the few in the Southeast of the U.S. The core of the Middle Eastern Studies majors was built on the departments of Modern

Languages (Arabic Division), Religion and History. Many other departments within the university became increasingly and actively involved. The number of majors grew from about a dozen in 2004 to over 125 within a decade. With continuing support of the administration, the number of participating and affiliated faculty also grew rapidly from about a dozen in 2004 to ca. 30 in 2017. Outreach activities, such as the annual film festival and K-8 after-school education, have also flourished more recently, helping the public appreciate the principles of tolerance and civility on which the MEC was founded.

about the program

The Middle Eastern Studies program at Florida State University is an interdisciplinary program administered by the Middle East Center, with courses offered from participating departments. These departments include Anthropology, Classics, Criminology, English, History, International Relations, Modern Languages, Political Science, Religion, and Urban and Regional Planning.

The Bachelor of Arts in Middle Eastern Studies responds directly to a national as well as regional demand for resources and information to educate students, professionals, and the surrounding community about this important region of the world. The BA is designed for liberal arts students who wish to learn more about the Middle East, students who wish to pursue graduate work in this field, and students who seek employment in or relating to the Middle East.

The Middle East Center strives to provide an academic environment for students from a multitude of disciplines to develop a deeper understanding of the Middle East. In addition to the B.A. in Middle Eastern Studies, the Center also administers minors in Middle Eastern Studies, Arabic, and Hebrew.

The Center has a very active outreach program fostering an interest in the Modern Middle East at the K-8 and Community College levels. Furthermore, its yearly film festival and lecture series provide educational opportunities for students and community members who are interested in the Middle East. The Middle East Center at Florida State University is deeply committed to tolerance and civility.

MES Welcomes Dr. Nilay Ozok-Gundogan to the Department of History



Assistant Professor Nilay Ozok-Gundogan joined the Department of History and the Middle Eastern Studies Program at FSU in Fall 2017. Here's a short introduction about her.

I was born to a Kurdish-Turkish family from Van, a city known for its huge lake and odd-eyed cats in eastern Turkey. I grew up in Izmir by the Aegean coast and studied at Bogazici University in Istanbul before receiving my Ph.D. from Binghamton University in New York.

I am a historian of the Ottoman Empire and the Modern Middle East. As an historian of this gigantic empire which ruled over three continents for six centuries I am fascinated by the diversity, complexity, and dynamism of imperial structures.

My research revolves around the questions of modern state-making, property regimes, and intercommunal conflict and coexistence in the borderlands of modern empires.

My current manuscript, tentatively titled, *Venerable Friends, Formidable Enemies: Kurdish Nobles and the Ottoman State in the Long Nineteenth Century* provides a multi-actor socio-historical analysis of the transformation and eventual dissolution of the Kurdish principalities in the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey. The imperial Ottoman policy towards Kurdistan involved confiscating the lands of the Kurdish nobility and establishing a

small, tax-paying peasantry on these lands. My book demonstrates that the destruction of the autonomous Kurdish principalities in this way led to the dissolution of deep-rooted local power configurations and the region gradually descended into a spiral of violence by the end of the nineteenth century.

My work stands at the junction of interconnected Ottoman, Kurdish, and Armenian histories, and as opposed to dominant nationalist renderings of this period, I approach the conflict between the Ottoman (and later the Turkish) state and the Kurdish nobility not solely as an ethnic dispute but as a struggle for sovereignty over the autonomous economic and political realms of the Kurdish rulers.

So far, I taught *The United States and the Middle East*, *Twentieth Century Middle East*, *Ethno-religious Conflict and Violence in the Modern Middle East*, and *Social Movements and Political Mobilization in the Modern Middle East* at the undergraduate level. I also taught *The Kurds and the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*, *Eurasian Borderlands*, and *Comparative Empires* at the graduate level.

Welcome to Tallahassee, Dr. Ozok-Gundogan!

Q & A with Rebecca Falcasantos Postdoctoral Associate in the Department of Religion



Q: What is your educational background? How did you find yourself wanting to study the intersection of religious practices?

A: My parents were both in the military, so as I moved around a bit as a child. I attended public schools wherever we were, eventually graduating from a high school in northwest Florida. I then attended Creighton University (a small Catholic university), majoring in Theology and Greek, before pursuing a Masters of Arts in Early Christian Studies at the University of Notre Dame and a PhD in Religious Studies at Brown University.

Moving—even from the Midwest to the South, or between states in the South—always meant adjusting to a new local culture, including significant changes in the religious cultures around me. This was often frustrating, but also intriguing. In a way, the moves forced me into a position of an anthropologist, as I would have to figure out the unspoken rules and norms around me.

Q: What is your favorite aspect of teaching about topics related to the Middle East at the college level?

A: How relevant the questions raised by the material are to our own world: the mechanisms of imperialism; distinguishing between historiography and

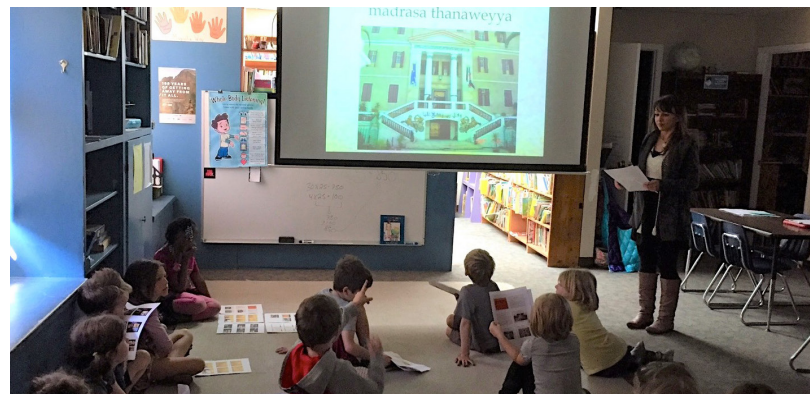
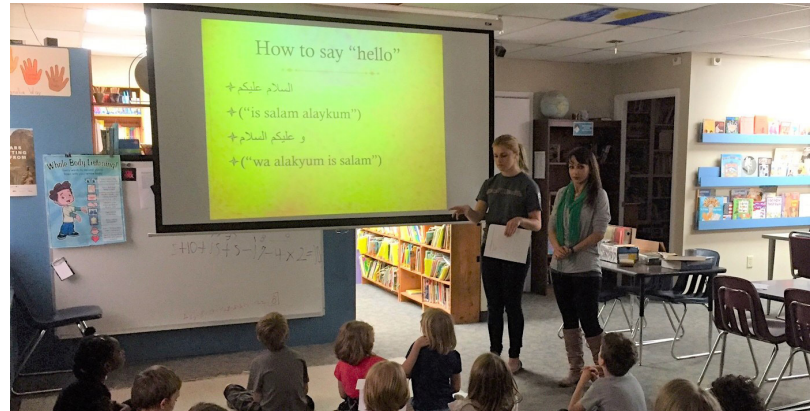
propaganda; cultural practices that shape or enforce notions of gender and class; the ownership of religion; debates about the meaning of monuments; etc. I enjoy the process of discussing and exploring these questions with students who bring their own perspective and insights to the table.

Q: What projects are you working on or will work on in the future?

A: At the moment, I am finishing a book on the Christianization of Constantinople in the fourth and fifth centuries C.E. Beyond that, I have a few ongoing projects, including a short introduction to John Chrysostom's methods of biblical interpretation and a piece on intra-Christian persecution during late antiquity. My next book project will be on the practice of writing "ecclesiastical histories" in antiquity as a performance of violence. In that project, I'm interested in two aspects of those texts: first, how their authors use incidents of inter-religious conflict and moments of divine wrath to encourage antagonism towards religious outsiders; and, second, how later people interacted with these texts (through copying, epitomizing, and excerpting) to perpetuate stereotypes of religious outsiders as violent agents.

Middle East Outreach Program

Our Middle East Outreach program allows Middle Eastern Studies majors to practice what they are learning outside the classroom and to share their knowledge with local Elementary and Middle School students in Tallahassee and the surrounding area. We have built a strong partnership with Magnolia School, where our students volunteer once a week teaching Arabic and sharing information about the Middle East. We use our own, unique material of Powerpoints, games and handouts to make the class engaging and enjoyable. The majority of the students we taught in Spring 2018 had already participated in the program the year before and even remembered some of the vocabulary! We were able to introduce the Middle East region and the Arabic language in more depth. Throughout the semester, we taught them phrases and basic expressions in Arabic and discussed many aspects of the culture of the Middle East with them. Topics ranged from food to clothing, festivals and holidays, geography and history, currency and trade, education and family life... The students were engaged and interested in discovering a new culture. They asked a lot of smart questions that showed that they were thinking about using the language in context and comparing and contrasting the ME culture to theirs. We are looking forward to keeping the Outreach Program going strong and hopefully to expanding it to more schools.



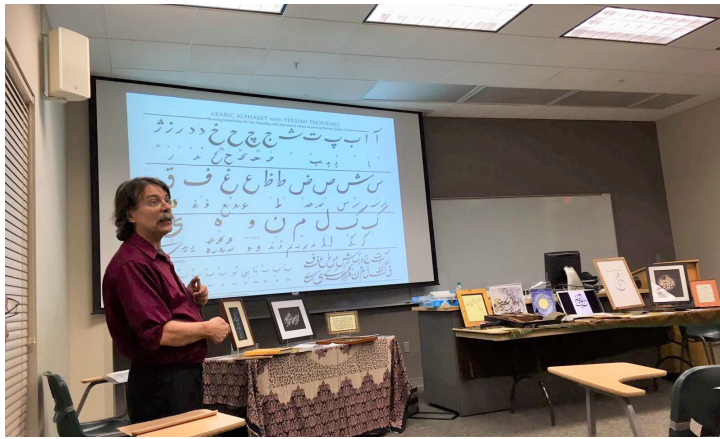
ABOVE: Arabic and ME studies students **Courtney Bullock** and **Morgan Flake** at Magnolia school teaching students as part of their volunteering to work with the ME outreach program.



TOP: Group pictures of the ME outreach program volunteers during the 2017 International Coffee Hour event. ABOVE: ME studies majors **Molly Conrad**, **Kelley Baker**, **Courtney Reed**, and **Alyssa McCarthy** during a panel discussion on studying and living abroad.



Two Years in Pictures



ABOVE: As part of the **Janet B. Chapman** lecture series, **Dr. Steven Heydemann** addressed the changes in U.S. policies in the Middle East between the previous and current administrations in March 2017. BELOW: As part of the **Janet B. Chapman** lecture series, **Dr. Nathan Brown** addressed the dreams of the Arab uprisings in 2011 in April 2018.



TOP: Arabic calligrapher, **Mr. Stewart Thomas**, gives a workshop on Arabic calligraphy and teaches in Fall 2017. ABOVE: International poet, **Amal Kassir**, (fourth from right) gives a talk titled "The Muslim on the Airplane" in Spring 2018. BELOW: **Mr. Gilman Gunn** gives an FSU Alumni Lecture Series Talk on language and entrepreneurship.



BELOW: Pictures taken during the opening night of the 2017 Middle East Film Festival. The audience enjoyed the food and the entertainment program.



FSU Arabic Students Abroad

In Summer 2018, five FSU MES students studied Arabic in Jordan. During their 6 week study, they had the opportunity to get immersed in the culture and further expand their language proficiency. We asked them questions about their trip and they were thrilled to share their experiences with us. Here's some of what they shared with us about life in this Middle Eastern kingdom.



Gemma Sunnergren, MES, is the 2018 recipient of the Winthrop-King scholarship. In this picture, she could be seen in front of the famous treasury in the ancient rock-cut city of Petra.

Courtney Reed, MES, in Wadi Rum, a desert valley cut in granite and sandstones in southern Jordan. The valley is known for its Martian-like landscape.



Gianna Donati, MES, in front of the pyramids of Giza in Egypt during a quick trip while in Jordan.

William Crawford, MES and recipient of the Critical Language Scholarship, enjoying a swim in the Dead Sea. As the lowest point on dry land, its hypersaline water allows you to float effortlessly, and its mineral-rich black mud is used for therapeutic and cosmetic treatments.



Kelly Baker (left), MES, is the recipient of the David L. Boren Scholarship. She stands in front of the Siq, which is a narrow passage carved in rocks and extends for about 0.75 miles. It serves as the main entrance to the ancient city of Petra. Petra was lost for five centuries until its rediscovery in 1812.

Q: How was your overall experience in Jordan?

Gemma: "In two months of studying in Amman, Jordan, my Arabic language skills have improved more than I could have imagined, and my experiences have been overwhelmingly positive. My classes were rigorous, but they challenged me to expand my vocabulary and speak on complex topics and situations. Within a couple of weeks, I could feel myself growing more comfortable speaking in Arabic to complete strangers, such as taxi drivers, tour guides, and store owners, and everyone I met was patient and eager to help me practice what I was learning."

Brett: "My overall experience was absolutely incredible. I stayed with a host family of Palestinian descent, and they essentially adopted me as a grandson. I can't overstate their generosity. They fed me the most incredible foods, from Mansaf to Maqlouba to Mulukheya. They also took us out all over the city, including to a concert of a Lebanese singer held in the Roman theatre in downtown Amman. I am sad my time here is coming to an end-it leaves me wanting more."

Courtney: "My time in Jordan was an experience I will never forget. I made many new friends and was able to live in a foreign country for the first time. I was able to see the Middle East for myself and actively dispel many common misconceptions about the region held by Americans."

Sharing Words of Experience



Panoramic view of Mt. Nebo where Moses was granted a view of the Promised Land. The Dead Sea is located on the left (west) and the city of Jericho and Jerusalem could be seen on a clear day. (photo by: **Gianna Donati**)

Q: How were you treated by the people in Jordan?

Gianna: Jordanian people are overall very sweet and welcoming. I met a Jordanian family and they invited me to their home to share the traditional Jordanian dish, Mansaf. It was incredibly overwhelming (in a good way) to experience the warm, openhearted Jordanian culture."

Brett: "Everyone was incredibly kind and patient with me. The people were more than willing to speak to me exclusively in Arabic, and when I didn't know how to say something, they helped me along and allowed me to practice with them."

Courtney: "The Jordanians I made acquaintance with were very welcoming and friendly. Everyone wanted to know where I'm from and about my life back in the US. I was invited to social events by many people after just meeting them. I even made a group of friends I met with regularly during my stay! Often times, we would bond over food somewhere in the city."

Q: What did you like the most about your trip?

Gemma: "By far, my favorite experience was taking a public minibus to Madaba, a Roman town south of Amman, and Mt. Nebo with some of my classmates. The people in Madaba were some of the friendliest I have ever met, exemplified by a store owner's extreme patience as we struggled to decide on mosaics (for which the town is famous) for over an hour. Despite being a last-minute addition to our plans and taking less than an hour to visit, Mt. Nebo was possibly the most memorable place I saw on my trip. As a holy site, where Moses first saw the Promised Land, the peak has a peaceful silence as you look out over the same view."

Brett: "My favorite experience of my trip by a longshot

was my host family. They took me in and made me feel like family. My host mother was an incredible cook, and my favorite memories were the cooking lessons she gave me at home. Every time I make one of these dishes for myself or my friends at home, it will remind me of them."

Courtney: "The best part about being in Jordan was the opportunity to use Arabic in real life settings and engage in conversation with native speakers throughout the day. However, I loved my visit to Wadi Rum. The dramatic scenery was unlike anything I have seen before! I was also there for the lunar eclipse and slept under the stars. The Bedouin camp that hosted my group was very welcoming. We had delicious traditional food and tea and listened to music featuring one of my favorite instruments, the oud!"

Kelly: "This was a truly unforgettable year, as I was able to experience so much of Jordan in the nine months that I lived there. I attended concerts, art exhibitions, film screenings, lectures on a variety of topics, and travelled extensively throughout the country. I was even able to travel to Jerusalem for a few days in March of 2018. Towards the end of my stay in Jordan, my mom and sister came to visit for a week and we rented a car to drive throughout the country. We drove to Wadi Rum, Petra, and the Dead Sea, and I was able to share with them everything I had learned and experienced during my time in Jordan."

Q: How did your Arabic/ Middle Eastern studies at FSU prepare you for this trip?

Gemma: "FSU's Arabic program, especially the focus on speaking, gave me an advantage both in class and my day-to-day life in the city, as I was comfortable communicating in everyday situations, such as explain-

ning issues with my apartment to the building's Haaris. The conversation course at FSU also provided me with enough dialect vocabulary to easily make myself understood while filling in any gaps with MSA. I felt that this was the perfect time to go, as I had acquired enough skills at FSU to function in most standard situations and could understand enough to appreciate the cultural experiences and historical sites in Arabic."

Gianna: "My background in Middle Eastern studies at FSU prepared me to be open minded during my trip. Knowing the background of the Middle East prepared me mentally for what I would experience every day in the role of a "normal Jordanian." Also my background in the language has helped me order food at restaurants, tell the taxi where I would like to go, and interact with the locals."

Brett: "I feel that FSU provided a very solid foundation in the dialect, and allowed me to more quickly pick up on and understand people on the streets than some of my peers with training in MSA only. Even though a large number of Jordanians speak English, I was able to engage with them in Arabic I feel people opened up to me more, and it provided a much more intimate experience. I even became friends with some people at the cafe I frequented. I firmly believe that my training from FSU opened some doors that would not have existed otherwise."

Courtney: "The FSU Middle Eastern studies program helped me prepare for this trip a great deal! The Arabic Conversation Course was extremely helpful in the day to day tasks that I had, such as getting a taxi and giving directions, or ordering a meal at a restaurant. On the other hand, the Arabic Media course was useful to me during my internship, as I frequently used vocabulary when assisting with projects discussing Jordanian politics. In addition, learning about Jordan's history during the 19th and 20th century in the "Modern Middle East" course enhanced my understanding of the regional political climate and the factors that have shaped how Jordan is today."

Q: How has your experience so far enhanced your overall language and cultural proficiency?

Courtney: " My experience in Jordan has allowed me to practice Arabic every day in several different settings. I have used the dialect daily to interact with locals, as well

as in my evening class. My knowledge of certain cultural phrases has impressed Jordanians and allowed me to foster better relationships with Jordanian youth and coworkers. My formal Arabic has also improved, especially my knowledge of vocabulary relating to politics and government. This is a result of assisting with translations of government reports daily at my internship."

Kelly: "This fully immersive experience helped me to develop my Arabic language skills at a remarkably fast pace and make lifelong friends with both Jordanians and students from all over the world. The past nine months have essentially been a fifth year of University and I enjoyed every moment immensely."

Brett: "I can't overstate how beneficial this experience has been for my proficiency. Here, Arabic and the culture aren't simply objects of study, they are the everyday reality. I was able to take what I learned in class directly onto the streets. To a certain extent, speaking in Arabic became second nature."

Q: What advice would you give to students who want to study abroad in Jordan in the future?

Brett: " Read up on Jordan-its history, culture, society, politics etc. It provides a context for the things you will see and hear. In addition, study the local dialect as much as possible. While MSA will get you around, the vast majority of conversations outside of the classroom will take place in dialect. The more comfortable you are with this, the more natural the conversations will be."

Courtney: "Take your experience in Jordan one day at a time. Prepare and learn common sayings (if you don't already know them) before your arrival. Be open-minded and observe and embrace the new culture. Most importantly, use your Arabic! The Jordanians will be happy to engage in conversation with you. Messing up is a part of the learning experience. You can't learn if you don't try!"

Amman Citadel. Pictured (left to right) MES students: **Gianna Donati, Gemma Sunnergren, and Courtney Reed.**



Outstanding Students!

MES student **Lillie Sullivan** wins FSU's 2018 Global Citizen Award. Lillie has engaged the FSU and Tallahassee community in relief efforts for Syrian refugees both within our community and abroad. As an executive board member for Students Organize for Syria, or SOS, Sullivan organized a clothing drive on campus that distributed nearly 10,000 clothing items to refugee camps in the Middle East and led a campaign to provide college scholarships for displaced Syrians.



RIGHT: MES student **William (Brett) Crawford** wins 2017 Winthrop-King scholarship to study Arabic. Brett studied Arabic in Morocco.

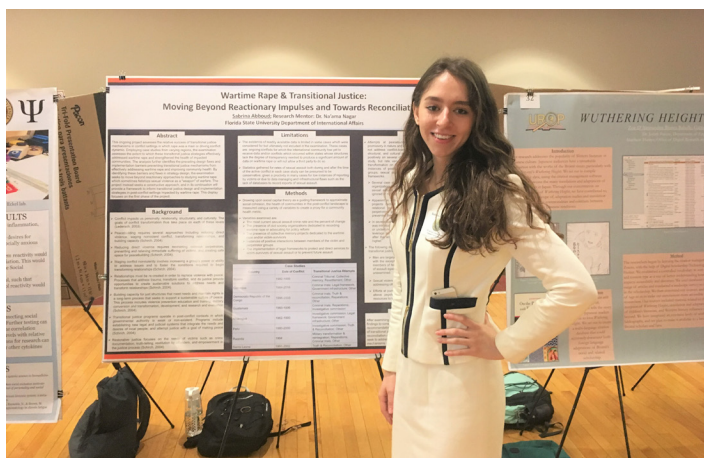


ABOVE: MES student **Kelly Baker** (center in black) wins 2017 Sultan Qaboos summer scholarship to study Arabic in Oman.



ABOVE: In April 2017, The Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics awards four outstanding Arabic students with certificates honoring their overall language achievements throughout the academic year. From left to right, **Carolina Feliciano, Anna Griffith, Matthew Henderson, Justin Biro and Dr. Zafer Lababidi.**

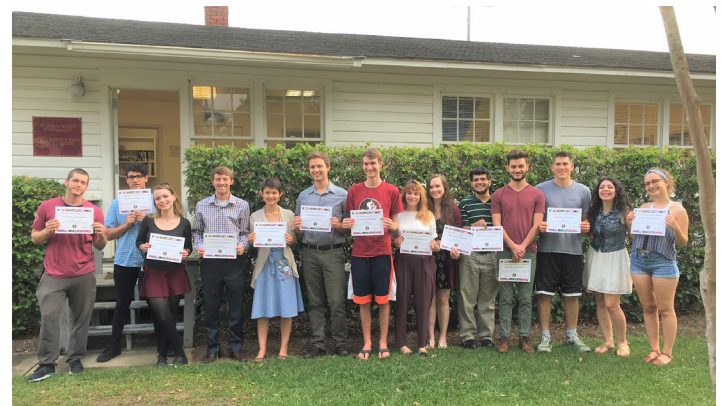
BELOW: **Dr. Zeina Schlenoff** (center) with Arabic students during the 2017 Arabic Awards Night ceremony.



MES student **Sabrina Abboud** participates in FSU's 18th annual Undergraduate Research Symposium. Her topic was "Wartime Rape & Transitional Justice: Moving Beyond Reactionary Impulses and Towards Reconciliation."



RIGHT: In April 2017, the Arabic program awarded outstanding students across all language levels certificates and gifts for excelling in their Arabic coursework. Students put exceptional effort while studying the language and exceeded the language proficiency goals set for them at the beginning of the academic year.



Global Success

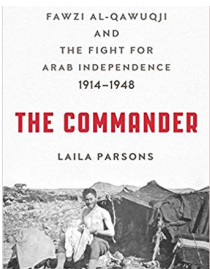
Dana Leger, a senior double majoring in Editing, Writing, & Media and International affairs, studied abroad in Rabat, Morocco as an FSU Global Scholar and Gilman Scholarship recipient during the summer of 2018. The U.S. Department of State’s Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship is a grant program that allows students of limited financial means to study or intern abroad, awarding up to \$5,000. Leger was first interested in studying Arabic after visiting Morocco during her First Year Abroad program where she studied for eight months in Florence, Italy and three months in Valencia, Spain as a freshman in college. During her ten-day summer break, she chose to volunteer independently from FSU in the southern, conservative town of Taroudant, Morocco as an English teacher during the peak of Ramadan. Upon her return to Tallahassee, she began studying Arabic with FSU as a sophomore and continues to do so today.



After being accepted into the year-long FSU Global Scholars program, which combines internship, service, and research, Leger chose to return to Morocco for her field position the summer before her senior year. Leger spent her summer in Rabat living with a host family, taking private Arabic lessons with the Moroccan Center for Arabic Studies, interning with Morocco World News, and researching women’s education. She will spend the fall of 2018 completing her research capstone and will present her findings with her Global Scholars Cohort on December 7th, 2018.

recommended by the faculty...

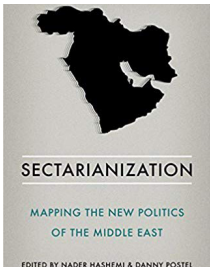
will hanley, history



book: Laila Parsons, The Commander: Fawzi al-Qawuqji and the Fight for Arab Independence

website digitizing a turn-of-the-century Egyptian newspaper: dig-eg-gaz.github.io

adam gaiser, religion



book: Sectarianization: Mapping the New Politics of the Middle East

zafer lababidi, modern languages



book: Arabic as One Language: Integrating Dialect in the Arabic Language Curriculum

MES Faculty Strive for Excellence in the Field

recent publications & accomplishments

Zeina Schlenoff | **Modern Languages**

Advisor of the Year Award 2017.

Zafer Lababidi | **Modern Languages**

"Perceptual mapping between Arabic and English consonants." Perspectives on Arabic Linguistics XXIX: Papers from the Annual Symposium on Arabic Linguistics, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 2015. Vol. 5. John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2017.

Daniel Pullen | **Classics**

"Reciprocity and Exchange Relationships: Exploring the Dynamics of Bronze Age Social Structures through Feasting and Hospitality." In Social Change in Aegean Prehistory, edited by Corien Wiersma and Sofia Voutsaki, 49–68. Oxford: Oxbow Books.

Wasan Tawfeeq | **Modern Languages**

Wasan successfully defended her doctoral dissertation on the role of directed motivational currents in developing second language learning by Arab heritage learners and Arab ESL learner.

Adam Gaiser | **Religion**

New Book: Shurāt Legends, Ibādī Identities: Martyrdom, Asceticism, and the Making of an Early Islamic Community (University of South Carolina Press, 2016).

Will Hanley | **History**

New Book: Identifying with Nationality: Europeans, Ottomans, and Egyptians in Alexandria (Columbia University Press, 2017).

"What Ottoman nationality was and was not," Journal of Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association 3.2 (2016): 277-98.

Jessika Malo | **Modern Languages**

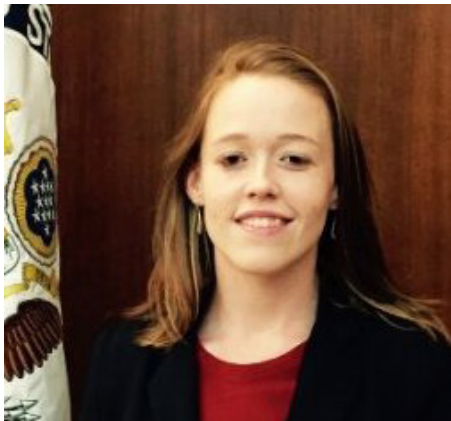
The anthology of Arabic poetry "If the Disk of the Sun Walked With Me", is a compendium of fifty nine poems produced over a bit more than ten years. The poems are distributed into four chapters: labor; expatriation; joy and balance and weight. The first three chapters are written in Standard Arabic, and the final chapter in Shami dialect.

FSU professor **Adam Gaiser**'s first book (Muslims, Scholars, Soldiers: The Origin and Elaboration of the Ibādī Imamate Traditions, Oxford, 2010) explores the issue of leadership among Ibādī Muslims, while his second (Shurāt Legends, Ibādī Identities: Martyrdom, Asceticism and the Making of an Early Islamic Community, University of South Carolina Press, 2016) investigates early Ibādī identifications with an early sectarian group (the Khārijites) through the medium of martyrdom and asceticism literature. The Ibādīyya are a distinctive Muslim communal group, being neither Sunnī nor Shī'ī, who emerged in Basra in the first half of the second/eighth century. Today they can be found in Oman, and in North and East Africa. He is currently working on an introduction to Muslim sectarianism (The Umma Divided: Muslim Sects and Schools, Cambridge, contracted).

FSU professor **Will Hanley** spent the fall 2017 semester as Elizabeth and J. Richardson Dilworth Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton University. While there, he continued work on several digital projects aiming to organize information about names and places in the Middle Eastern past. He published a short essay on this topic: "Unlocking Islamic Names," Studying the Near and Middle East at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, 1935-2018, ed. Sabine Schmidtke (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2018), 276-83. He also published a pedagogical essay about his ongoing Digital Egyptian Gazette project: "Text Encoding Innocents meet the Egyptian Gazette," Review of Middle East Studies 53.1 (2018): 153-9. He is on sabbatical during the 2018-19 academic year, working on a book about the Ottoman-Egyptian roots of international law.

Where Are They Now? Alumni Profiles

MES alumna, **Jessica Eldosoky**, is a Foreign Affairs Officer at the Department of State where she focuses on the development of public diplomacy products and programming aimed at audiences in the Middle East and North Africa. She graduated with a dual BA in Political Science and Middle Eastern Studies from Florida State University in 2009 and an MA in Middle East Studies from the George Washington University in 2013. She received a Boren Fellowship in 2012 to study Arabic in Cairo, Egypt and has lived and worked in Jordan, Lebanon, and Tunisia. She also interned and worked for NGOs in the Washington, DC area focused on building bridges between the U.S. and the Middle East.



Since graduating from MES in December 2014, **Steven Firmin** (top right) spent 6 months in Egypt learning more Arabic and teaching English, before heading to Oxford University in the Fall of 2015 to start a Master's degree in Christian Ethics. He graduated in the Fall of 2017 with distinction, and has been awarded a Clarendon Scholarship to continue at Oxford with his doctoral studies. The focus of his research right now concerns a theological re-imagining of Christian-Muslim cooperation in the MENA region, especially with the help of St. Augustine and Abu Hamid al-Ghazali. Afterwards, he hopes to continue with post-doctoral research and eventually teach at a university in the Middle East.



The MES program launched **Hazel Unger**, 2012 alumna, into a career of international cultural exchange focusing on the ME. Her time at FSU's MEC was filled with close ties with faculty, exposure to global perspectives, and was paramount to establishing a strong foundation in Arabic. From FSU, she went on to graduate school at the University of Michigan focusing on Arabic and MENA studies, won a Fulbright award to teach at Hassan II University in Casablanca, Morocco, and then traveled back to Washington D.C. to work at the Palestinian American Research Center helping manage research grant fellowships. She currently works at AMIDEAST, a non-profit organization dedicated to international education in the ME. At AMIDEAST she works on marketing and program management of educational programs in Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia, and Egypt. She hopes to continue to grow at AMIDEAST in the field of international education.



Where Are They Now? Alumni Profiles

Jesse Marks, 2016 alumnus, is currently completing his Fulbright fellowship in Amman, Jordan, at the Center for Strategic Studies where he is co-developing a national voluntary repatriation strategy for Syrian refugees in Jordan. Jesse completed a seven month term as a Herbert Scoville Jr. Peace Fellow with the Stimson Center in DC. Over the last year, he worked closely with a variety of humanitarian and development actors in Jordan and in Syria, consulted with Refugees International, regularly briefed governments on developments in Syria, and consulted on reconstruction and repatriation policies. This fall, Jesse will attend the University of Cambridge for the MPhil in International Relations and Politics where he will be studying the impact of Chinese development on displaced populations in countries emerging from violent conflict. Upon graduation, Jesse intends to move to Beijing for a second graduate degree studying the implications of China's Belt and Road Initiative on displaced populations in the Middle East.



Madison Marks (top right) is currently Dubai-based working as a Program Manager with Womana to support gender diversity and inclusion in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) entrepreneurship ecosystem - especially in tech. In this role, she works with female tech entrepreneurs from Morocco to the GCC to provide connections, support, and exposure of female leadership in business and technology. Prior to joining Womana, Madison worked at the nexus of tech and innovation, education, and cultural diplomacy. She previously coordinated a USAID-funded project focusing on innovation for civil society across MENA; worked for 4 years managing youth engagement programs for Qatar Foundation International; directed CLS and NSLI-Y Arabic programs in Jordan; among other internships. Madison continues to pursue her passion facilitating connections between the US and Arab world as an active board member of the Middle East and North Africa Regional Fellowship (MENAR). Madison graduated with her MA in Arab Studies from Georgetown University in 2017 and completed her BA in Middle East Studies in 2013 from FSU. Madison plans to continue working in the GCC and across MENA supporting startups for the next few years and remains active in supporting entrepreneurship efforts for refugee and migrant populations through volunteerism and mentorship.

looking forward: upcoming events

september 2018

open house: MEC new location.
Kellogg building Rooms 315-16-17

october 2018

my summer abroad: Featuring several of our students who will talk about their experience in the ME. **International Coffee Hour** at the Globe Oct 19 5-6:30

november 2018

Middle East Film Festival: this year marks the 10th anniversary of hosting the MEFF at FSU

january 2019

arabic calligraphy workshop and exhibition: calligrapher stewart thomas will visit fsu and indulge students in this ancient art form

february 2019

exhibition on medieval ottoman cities (tentative)

march 2019

janet chapman lecture series: speaker and topic will be announced later on our website

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• dates for all events are subject to change. please visit **mec.fsu.edu** for updated
• dates and times and for more information about middle east center events.
• follow us at **@fsumec** for the latest info and pictures from our events!
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We are moving! We will no longer be in Building 264 Hull Street, our home of many years. We will be centrally located in **Kellogg Building KRB (pictured below) rooms 315-316 and 317**. In September 2018, we plan an Open House to introduce our students and colleagues to our new location. We are thankful to many faculty and students for providing our Center with wonderful decorative pieces from all over the Middle East. Come visit (Sharfouna) and say "Marhaba" Ahlan Wa Sahlan!

Florida State University Middle Eastern Studies

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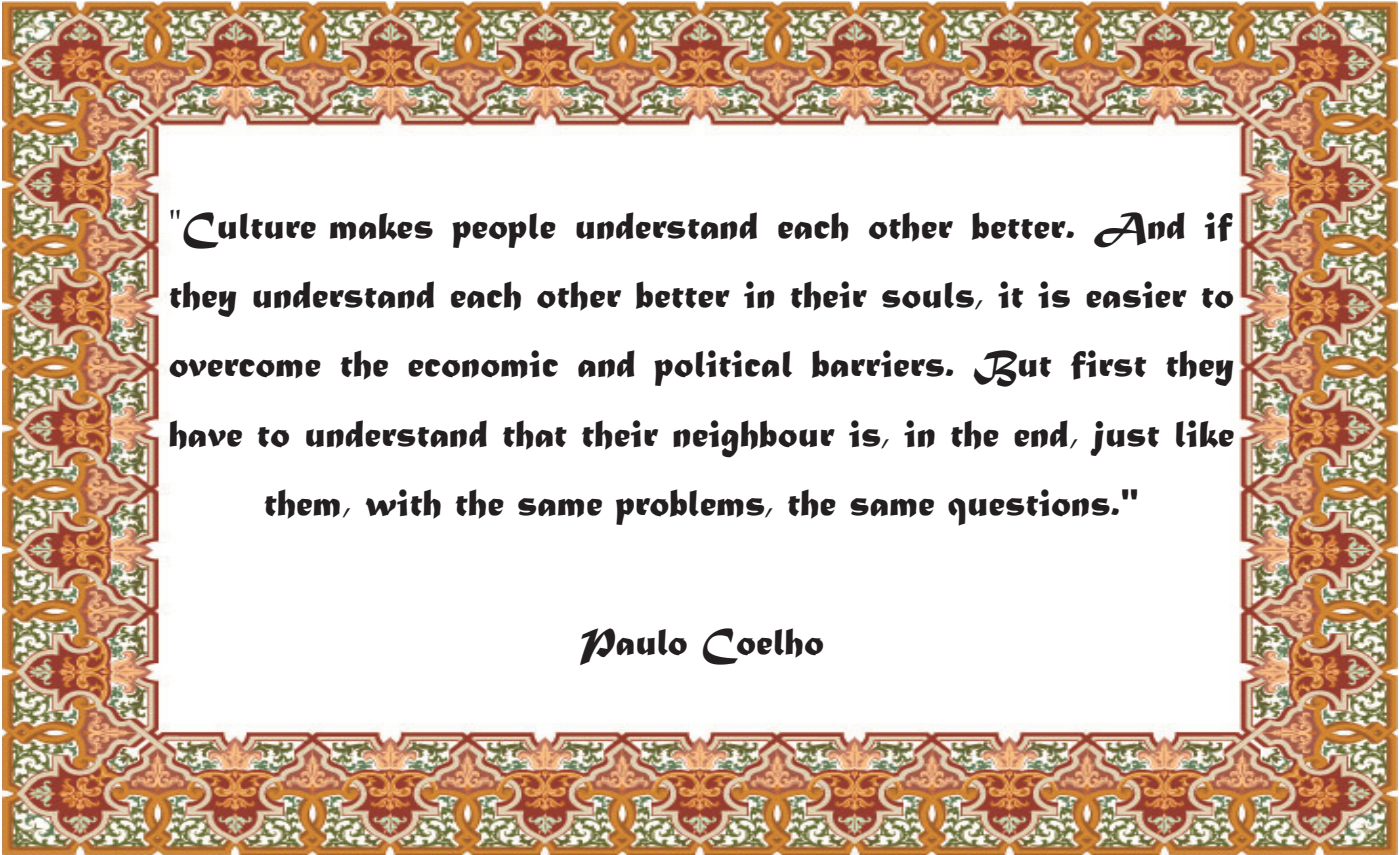
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Image by FSU Campus via Flickr



"Culture makes people understand each other better. And if they understand each other better in their souls, it is easier to overcome the economic and political barriers. But first they have to understand that their neighbour is, in the end, just like them, with the same problems, the same questions."

Paulo Coelho

