



THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

Middle East Center



OUR PROGRAM

MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES

from the Director...

The Middle Eastern Studies undergraduate program at Florida State University offers transformative opportunities for students to succeed in a variety of subfields. It is a pleasure to share stories from a few of our recent graduates. They have gone to top-tier graduate schools, won prestigious national and international scholarships, and have already started making meaningful contributions to the field. We are proud of their success so far and expect to hear of many more notable accomplishments. Many of our students join the Honors in the major program



Dr. Zeina Schlenoff

and we feature here two of them who are conducting advanced research for their Honors theses. We have a full program of outreach activities planned for this academic year. Have a look at our calendar, follow us on Instagram @middleeastcenterfsu for updates and join us for our educational and fun programs.

4 OUR CURRENT STUDENTS



SELINA NEVIN

An out-of-state student from Virginia Beach, I have devoted much of my time to research at FSU. As a UROP student, I worked in the Department of Religion, researching the radicalization of Muslims in the West and I am now completing my second year as a UROP instructor. When I am not studying Arabic, I serve as Chair for the Student Conduct Board. My interest in policy implementation is demonstrated through internships I've held at a local government affairs firm as a Legislative Assistant as well as at the United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS in Panama City, Panama. In my senior year, I serve as the Assistant to the Middle East Center.

In Spring 2020, I will defend my Honors in the Major Thesis where I investigate the gender disparity of women in executive cabinet and parliamentary positions in the Jordanian and Lebanese governments. After that I will graduate with a Dual Degree in International Affairs and Political Science and a Major in Middle Eastern Studies.



JULIANNE KELLY



Currently a fourth year at Florida State University, I am completing a dual degree program in Political Science and International Affairs, and in Middle Eastern Studies with a minor in Arabic Language. I lived in Turkey as an exchange student for a year in high school and have completed an intensive language program in Beirut, Lebanon since I have been at Florida State University! I am very passionate about Middle Eastern Studies and I hope to work in the public service field, with a focus on the region.

My Honors in the Major project is primarily based around the growing aggression of Turkey against the Kurdish people in relation to Turkish Politics and International attention garnered by the Kurds. The research explores how the treatment of the Kurdish people has changed from the beginning of the Arab Spring to the present.

OUR ALUMNI



GEMMA SUNNBERGREN

In Spring 2019, I graduated summa cum laude from FSU with majors in Middle Eastern Studies, Political Science, and International Affairs. During my time at FSU, I interned at a London-based think tank and studied Arabic abroad at the Qasid Institute in Amman, Jordan with the Winthrop-King language scholarship. In my first year, I completed the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP), assisting Dr. Defne Bilir on her research and

presenting it at the IAMCR conference in Leicester, UK. I also worked as a UROP leader for two years and conducted my own research on the King-Crane Commission, culminating in an Honors in the Major Thesis. I was awarded the Superior Senior Scholar Award in the fall, graduating with dual honors. I am currently attending New York University to pursue a Master's degree in Near Eastern Studies with a concentration in International Relations as a fully-funded MacCracken Fellow.

KELLY BAKER



After graduating from FSU with a dual degree in Middle Eastern Studies and International Affairs, I spent a summer in Manah, Oman studying Arabic on a SALAM scholarship. Following that I received the David L. Boren Scholarship and lived in Amman, Jordan for a year studying at Qasid Arabic Institute. After this program ended, I returned to the US and began applying for jobs and internships in DC. I received an internship at the Middle East Institute where I worked as a Research Assistant to the Director, Dr. Paul Salem. Once that ended, I did a brief fellowship at a Public Health Lobbying Firm on the Hill; and now I am working at Busboys and Poets, a popular restaurant and bookstore in the DC area while I apply for other jobs.



STEVEN FIRMIN

After graduating from FSU with my bachelors in Middle Eastern Studies, I spent 6 months in Egypt teaching English and learning more Arabic before starting my Masters in Christian Ethics in 2015 at the University of Oxford. I graduated with distinction in 2017, and began working on my Doctorate in the Fall. I am now entering my third and (hopefully) final year of research, and my project focuses on critically

6 comparing the concept of political secularism in Augustinian Christianity and Sunni Islam. I also help coordinate the Faculty of Theology and Religion's annual seminar series in the Abrahamic Religions. In my spare time, I volunteer as a leader at a local church, and perform Improvised comedy around the world with the Oxford Imps. I hope to teach in the Middle East when I am finished with my doctorate.

COURTNEY REED



I graduated in spring of 2019, summa cum laude with a double major in Middle East studies and International Affairs. Throughout my career at FSU, I have integrated my coursework into various activities outside of the classroom. I have interned and served in leadership roles for advocacy organizations such as the Children's Campaign and Amnesty International. My junior year, I was recognized as a Social Science Scholar and used my program funding to complete an internship in Amman, Jordan while taking a Levantine dialect course and collecting interviews for my honors in the major thesis. I studied the ways in which policy in Jordan creates operational barriers for NGOs and civil society groups. In Summer 2019, I worked in a civil rights law office assisting in litigation that defends the constitutional rights of incarcerated persons. In Fall 2019, I started my Masters degree at

London School of Economics in International Social and Public Policy Development.

JESSE MARKS



This Fall, I joined the cohort of Schwarzman Scholars and hope to be able to bridge and understand cultural and political differences between the US and China after earning a master's degree in global affairs from Tsinghua University in Beijing. I earned a bachelor's degree in Middle East Studies from Florida State in August 2016 and won a Boren Scholarship to study Arabic in Jordan. Upon my return to the US,

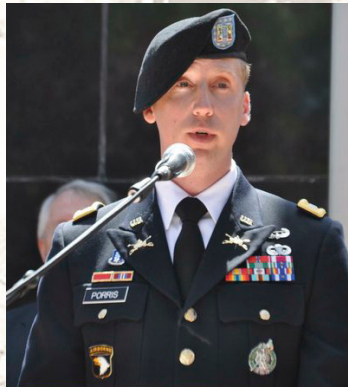
I won the Herbert Scoville Jr. Peace Fellowship, which afforded me the opportunity to work with senior-level policy experts at the Stimson Center in Washington, D.C. In Spring 2019, I received my MPhil in International Relations and Politics from the University of Cambridge. These opportunities would not have been possible without Florida State. I am grateful for the continued support, encouragement and engagement I receive from institutions at FSU.

CASSANDRA BARRAGAN



I graduated from FSU in 2016 with a dual degree in International Affairs and History. I studied Arabic at FSU for 3 semesters, and though the Social Science Scholars program, I studied for one summer semester in Amman, Jordan. After graduating, I worked at the International Rescue Committee in Atlanta for one year. Then I taught English at an international school in Nablus, Palestine. There is no better way to learn a language than to be immersed in it. I found that Palestinians are incredibly friendly, hospitable, and generous which made adjusting a lot easier. I am incredibly grateful for the welcoming culture and made lifelong friends over the course of my time there. Within the West Bank there is such a rich

history and culture to experience, I was never bored! Putting yourself outside of your comfort zone and opening yourself up to new experiences and ideas is always a good idea!



DANIEL PORRIS

I graduated from the Middle East Studies program in 2009 and commissioned as an Armor Officer in the US Army. Since graduation I served the US Army in multiple capacities. Most recently I was selected to

serve as a Foreign Area Officer in the Middle East and North 7 Africa (MENA) Region where I will be an advisor to senior military and civilian leaders, and will engage with foreign military leaders and governments to help build partnership capacity in the MENA Region. I am currently continuing my Arabic language training at the US Department of State's Foreign Service Institute and my first assignment will be to Amman, Jordan.

“The education and experiences I gained while in the FSU MES program were the springboard for my selection to the Foreign Area Officer program. The MES program provided me with the academic background and understanding needed to tackle issues of national security and stability in the MENA region.”



The MEC assistants of this year Selina Nevin and Gabriella Morris

8 Sep 23 Pizza Night

Students came together over free pizza and drinks to talk about their Arabic learning experience.

Sep 26 Lecture by Dr. Victoria High- tower at the Globe

Oct 11 International Coffee Hour at the Globe. Arabian Sweets and coffee were served.



Dr. Schlenoff and TA Lana
Kamand at Int. Coffee Hour



Arabic Instructor Jessika Malo
and her daughter at the MEFF

Oct 12- Nov4 2019 Middle East Film Festival

Last year marked the 11th anniversary of the festival. We had a wide range of award-winning movies spanning across different parts of the Middle East in order to celebrate the region's cultures, diversity, and strengths. A reception took place on the opening night with free food, live music, and dance performances from different local groups and student organizations. This event was free and open to the public.



Students chatting and enjoying their time during Pizza
Night held at MEC



Opening Night of the Middle East Film Festival



FSU Belly Dancers Perform at the Opening of the Middle East Film Festival

Jan 24 Global Cafe at the Center of Global Engagement (in cooperation with the Lebanese Social Club) A food reception was held where delicious Lebanese food was served. Over a hundred people enjoyed the good food and vibes.



Round table discussion after "A Thousand Girls Like Me"



Food served at the Global Cafe



Feb 4 Lecture at from 2 to 3:30 pm at the Globe Auditorium

Dr. Asbed Kotchikian

Unraveling the Middle East: An inside view of a
perpetually troubled region



Feb 11 Lecutre at 5 pm in Diffenbaugh 009 (co- sponsored with the Department of Modern Lan- guages and Linguistics)

Dr. Lotfi Sayahi

Spanish in contact with Arabic: Which Arabic?

Feb 15 International Bazar from 2 to 5 pm at Florida State University Union Ballroom



UPCOMING EVENTS: SPRING 2020

March 6th, Performance and Talk about
Arab music and the Oud at 2 pm.

The Middle East Center presents



*A Lecture on Arabic Music and Oud
Performance by Dr. David Marcus
Accompanied by Aziza*

March 2nd, 2020

2-4pm

Dodd Hall
Auditorium
DHA103

This event is free
and open to the
public.




Chapman Endowed Lecture on the Middle East

Time and Place TBA

For more information visit
[www.mec.fsu.edu/article/
2019-middle-east-film-festival](http://www.mec.fsu.edu/article/2019-middle-east-film-festival)

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