MESA 2023

November 2-5, 2023 Palais des congrès in Montréal, Québec, Canada

We are so excited to hold MESA’s 57th Annual Meeting in Montréal where residents move gracefully between English and French, with unique bilingual greetings unlike any other city. Montréal is the Paris of North America—rich in history, architecture, cuisine, nightlife, and more. The meeting itself will be held at the Palais des congrès de Montréal (the Montréal Convention Center).

MESA has special group rates at three nearby hotels: Doubletree by Hilton, Le Westin, and the InterContinental Montréal. Attendees who choose to stay at the Doubletree can use the Underground City (tunnels lined with eateries and shops), which connects the hotel to the Palais, or take a short walk at street level. Le Westin and the Intercontinental offer different styles of accommodations, and are the closest to the Palais.

The MESA Annual Meeting is the largest gathering of our community centered on Middle East and North Africa studies. As in Denver 2022, we will hold a MESA-sponsored reception following the Presidential Address and Awards Ceremony, a Dance Party, and complementary coffee breaks in the Book Exhibit. The FilmFest will continue to be virtual, which gives registrants a chance to view films before, during, and just after the conference.

Please be reminded that MESA 2024 will be held virtually. For more information on MESA’s ongoing experiments with the Annual Meeting format, see the FAQ on pages 5-7.

HIGHLIGHTS

A robust program of more than 350 sessions over four days, including several special sessions, over 200 panels, and numerous roundtables.

A packed Book Exhibit where you find the latest in Middle East studies, and meet the editors from presses as well as other organizations and programs.

Special events include a MESA Reception following the Presidential Address and Awards Ceremony, scheduled coffee breaks in the Book Exhibit for networking, and the Dance Party.

For details on registering and booking a hotel, see pages 8-10 or visit mesana.org

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The Middle East Studies Association (MESA) is a private, non-profit, learned society that brings together scholars, educators and those interested in the study of the region from all over the world. From its inception in 1966 with 51 founding members, MESA has increased its membership to over 2,800 and now serves as an umbrella organization for approximately forty institutional members and forty affiliated organizations. The association is a constituent society of the American Council of Learned Societies, the National Council of Area Studies Associations, and a member of the National Humanities Alliance.

As part of its goal to advance learning, facilitate communication and promote cooperation, MESA sponsors an annual meeting that is a leading international forum for scholarship, intellectual exchange and pedagogical innovation. It is responsible for the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, the premiere journal on the region, the *MESA Review of Middle East Studies* and *Issues in Middle East Studies*, a biannual newsletter. An awards program recognizes scholarly achievement, service to the profession, undergraduate education, and exemplary student mentoring. MESA is governed by a nine-member Board of Directors elected by the membership.

**Officers:**
President Eve M. Troutt Powell, University of Pennsylvania
President-Elect Aslı Bâli, Yale Law School
Executive Director Jeffrey D. Reger

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Jens Hanssen, University of Toronto
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Arzoo Osanloo, University of Washington
Mariam Taher, Northwestern University (Student Member)

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MESA membership is available to individuals and institutions who are interested in the study of the Middle East. To learn more about membership, visit mesana.org or email secretariat@mesana.org

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**Advertising in IMES**

Please visit [https://mesana.org/publications/advertising](https://mesana.org/publications/advertising) for the advertising insertion order form and for any updates or changes in prices.

**Current Prices and Specifications**

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**Upcoming Deadlines:**
October 1, 2023 for November 2023 issue
March 15, 2024 for Spring 2024 issue
A Message from the MESA President to our Colleagues in Sudan

We are closely and sorrowfully watching the situation in Sudan as two warlords have besieged Sudan and its capitol, Khartoum, with their violent competition to seize power, and without any consideration of the country’s civilians over whom they seek to rule. The humanitarian catastrophe for Khartoum’s citizens goes well beyond issues of academic freedom. Supplies of food, gas, medicine and water grow scarcer by the day for Khartoum’s citizens, stuck in their homes in temperatures well above 100 degrees Fahrenheit. We bear witness to the tragedy of hospitals purposely bombed, of universities attacked with students caught in the crossfire, of families caring for their injured in homes with no electricity, water or gas, and of the robbing and beating of those trying to reach safety. This is a human disaster on an enormous scale and its consequences will echo throughout the Middle East and North Africa for years to come.

As information comes in, we will post sites where our members can donate to help alleviate the suffering of our friends and family in Khartoum and elsewhere in Sudan. Let us remember that these are communities who rose up in peaceful protest in 2019 to call for a civilian-led democracy, only to have their hopes – and now their homes – violently repressed.

MESA Board Initiates Search for Next IJMES Editor

The MESA Board of Directors invites applications and nominations for the next editor of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (*IJMES*) for a five-year term beginning July 1, 2024. Candidates should be internationally recognized Middle East scholars in either the humanities or the social sciences and be affiliated with an academic institution prepared to contribute space and support to an editorial office. Applications should include proposals for this institutional contribution, endorsed by the institution involved.

The editor is responsible for ensuring the quality of *IJMES* as the leading English-language journal in the field. Editorial duties include establishing editorial policy in consultation with the MESA Board of Directors; working directly and primarily with Cambridge University Press (CUP), which publishes *IJMES*; managing the ScholarOne online system now used by the journal; administering the peer-review selection process; compiling the book review section in conjunction with book review editors; suggesting revisions for manuscripts; nominating book review editors and members of the editorial board for review and approval by MESA’s Board of Directors and CUP; and overseeing the editing and production of the four issues that make up an *IJMES* volume. Support from the institution with which the editor is affiliated could consist of office space and equipment for the editor and managing editor, support for a graduate student assistant (or financial support that will cover salary for an administrative assistant), postage and incidental expenses, and/or release time from teaching for the editor. CUP also provides some financial support for the editorial office including a modest salary for the managing editor. The editor and CUP will determine the way in which CUP’s contribution is to be allocated. The editor receives an annual stipend from CUP.

In addition, MESA provides for the editor’s travel and two nights’ lodging at the annual meeting. The editor prepares a written report which is presented at the fall board meeting and at the MESA Members Meeting both held in conjunction with the annual meeting. They also serve as a member of MESA’s Publications Committee.

Inquiries should be addressed to Jeff Reger at 520-333-2577 x106 or jeff@mesana.org. Applications with letter(s) of institutional commitment should be sent to secretariat@mesana.org. Application review will begin August 1, 2023, and continue until a new editor is identified.
Why do we meet?

MESA 2022 in Denver was, overall, such a successful reconvening of our field. Although slightly smaller than our East Coast meetings (mainly due to cost and distance for the majority of our members), the feeling of being together again in person after three years is something I genuinely wish we could bottle. I think it would keep us going throughout the year, especially while grading...

Behind the scenes, there is an immense amount of invisible labor, starting with the Secretariat staff, which spends most of the year preparing and organizing. We are sometimes asked by newer members, and occasionally by members from other countries where higher education is better subsidized, how we set our fees. And the truth is that we seek to charge the least amount possible, while still sustaining ourselves organizationally.

There is no doubt that we all increasingly feel the pressure to justify a conference annually.

There is the tangible calculus, of dues for journals and other “privileges.” There is also the less concrete calculation of time invested in preparing and traveling, often away from our loved ones. (And, of course, exposure risk.)

MESA’s mission is to serve, sustain, and promote the best in Middle East studies. And I can’t think of a better community than ours of scholars who are so often both professionally and personally committed to making the world, the region we study, and the country where we live and work, hopefully, each a better place.

The intangibles of meeting are truly priceless. However, not all of us have the same access to resources, and not all of us have the same ability to travel.

So by necessity, due to the precarity of many — and the hierarchies within academia globally — some of our members must view the relationship to MESA (both the association and the annual meeting) transactionally.

We see all of our members, and we want to support and serve all of you. We are also open to change.

Some things are just best in person. (Coffee, and catching up.)

Some things are just more efficient online. (It’s staggering how much it costs to travel, both financially and — perhaps more importantly for our future — ecologically.)

We have learned a lot over the past few years, and we will continue to learn and grow with our members. Thank you! We genuinely look forward to evolving with you.
During the 2022 Members Meeting in Denver, Colorado, MESA Executive Director Jeffrey Reger reported that the Board of Directors and MESA Secretariat have decided to hold the 2023 Annual Meeting in-person as planned in Montréal, Canada; the 2024 Annual Meeting mostly online; and the 2025 Annual Meeting in-person at a yet-to-be-determined East Coast location.

The following FAQ is intended to highlight what has led to this decision, and what the decision both means and does not mean for future annual meetings.

**Q: Will MESA 2023 be in person?**

A: Yes, MESA 2023 will be an in-person annual meeting held in Montréal, Canada, in accordance with our signed contractual obligations and the wishes of the Board, Secretariat, and much of the membership to meet again in person.

**Q: Will MESA 2024 be virtual?**

A: Yes, MESA will be purposefully planning and holding our 2024 Annual Meeting largely online, as a forward-looking experiment, building upon the successful experiences of the 2020 and 2021 meetings. We do plan to hold some special (plenary) events in person, as well as social networking and other less formal gatherings, in a centralized location, and possibly at satellite events in a hub-and-spoke meeting model. Nearly all program sessions (panels and roundtables) will be online.

**Q: What are the benefits of meeting virtually in 2024?**

A: These can be summed up in five areas: financial cost to attendees; broader accessibility; climate impact; persistent health concerns; organizational costs. These five are not in order of importance; they are of equal emphasis.

*Financial Accessibility:* Separate from recent inflationary trends and the spike in oil prices, the cost of attending academic conferences has increased annually for over a decade. Airline fares and hotel prices have significantly increased. At the same time, many colleges and universities have decreased or eliminated faculty (and graduate student) conference travel budgets. When combined with rising employment precarity in academia, in-person annual meetings are increasingly financially burdensome to attendees, and thus fewer and fewer members are able to attend. This is even more so the case for members that are based in institutions in the Global South in general, and the SWANA/MENA region in particular. Meeting virtually in 2024 overcomes these obstacles to participation. Travel costs are by far the largest burden to members.

*Broader Accessibility:* While we are the Middle East Studies Association of North America, both in name and in geographic location (the vast majority of MESA members reside in the Eastern United States), we are a global organization with members nearly everywhere. We seek equity in terms of both access to the meeting and of knowledge production. Beyond the obstacle of travel costs for members based outside of the United States (which is multiple times more expensive than traveling domestically), we are keenly aware of the historic challenges to securing US visas and entering the United States, as well as the fact that finding visa application appointments, successfully securing a visa, and successfully entering the United States have all recently become much more difficult due both to bureaucratic factors and political decisions. This is to say nothing of various official and unofficial bans that the US government has put in place for citizens or residents of certain countries, especially those in the SWANA/MENA region.

Accessibility also of course applies to our many disabled members. Some disabilities are visible, but many are not. Travel is hard on everyone, but exceptionally difficult, often to the point of impossibility for the disabled. Meeting virtually in 2024 also overcomes these barriers to participation.

*Climate:* Climate change is an existential crisis for us all. Not only as academics and professionals, but as human beings. We have an obligation to do what we can. Change is difficult. But we must recognize that we can change our behaviors to benefit the planet and to reduce carbon emissions. Reducing optional air travel, as one of the most significant contributors of carbon per person, would make a major impact. This is not to diminish the impact of other changes that we need to make as a society, such as the way we grow and obtain our food (as well as what we eat), in addition to transforming industry, power generation, and other forms of transportation. But it is a necessary step, and one that an increasing number of members are calling for. Furthermore, it is likely in the not-too-distant future that many of our institutions will discourage conference travel as the externalities and environmental cost of travel become more and more apparent. Soon, academic institutions may reduce or eliminate travel funding for in-person meetings accordingly. We understand this need,
and we want to do everything we can for both the present and the future.

Health Concerns: Many MESA members continue to express deep concerns about the continuously evolving dynamics of COVID-19. Some do not want to risk infection as a precautionary measure. Others are immunocompromised themselves or caretakers for elderly, infants/children, and others at greater risk of infection as well as its potential debilitating or life-threatening effects. The pandemic, which is still with us, has not only laid bare the health vulnerabilities of all of us—some of whom remain vulnerable—but also introduced new vulnerabilities. Returning to “normal” is not an option for everyone. We take these concerns seriously, and want to ensure that they are not a barrier to participating in the annual meeting.

Cost to MESA: An in-person annual meeting typically costs on average about $400,000 to mount, which is just under half of MESA’s total annual budget. A good Annual Meeting for MESA has historically meant breaking even. We expect costs to continuously rise. Furthermore, MESA risks being subjected to various financial penalties under hotel conference contracts due to the trend of declining in-person attendance coupled with the declining rate of in-person attendees staying at the conference hotel. MESA must commit to booking a certain number of room nights at the hotel as part of a contract in exchange for meeting space. Conference hotels are the best fit for our size and offer the best value for our cost structure. Beginning in 2017, MESA has faced the possibility of attrition penalties: if our members and attendees do not use at least 80 percent of our contractually obligated room block, we have to pay 75 percent of the cost per night of every unused room (though thankfully without taxes). In 2019, we triggered attrition when we failed to meet that threshold in New Orleans. A virtual meeting is significantly cheaper for us to mount logistically, allowing us to continue to offer registration discounts. It is also worth noting that a periodic virtual meeting would make it more financially feasible for MESA to subsidize attendance when we do meet in person, thanks to the cost savings of virtual meetings. For example, this year in 2022, MESA offered additional and expanded travel grants. We were also able to bring back both a MESA-sponsored reception and coffee breaks, as well as the MESA Dance Party, because of the surplus accumulated from the prior virtual meetings in 2020 and 2021.

Q: What is lost by meeting virtually in 2024?

A: Socializing and networking, the many intangibles and joys of meeting in person. We loved seeing everyone again in 2022 who could join us. It was truly missed, and many of us left feeling energized. We are therefore committed to keeping our 2023 meeting in-person and planning our 2025 meeting in person as well. While the 2024 meeting will be virtual in terms of the panels and roundtables on the program, we are planning for some select in-person special events in a centralized location, and we will encourage and facilitate satellite in-person gatherings in hubs across the country.

Q: Why can’t we just be hybrid?

A: Hybrid events, especially conferences with many concurrent sessions, are extremely costly, onerous, and difficult to execute. The technology available for broadcasting concurrent live events simultaneously for both in-person and online attendance remains expensive in terms of both staffing and technology. In short, it would cost MESA way too much money to pull off a hybrid meeting than we can afford on the basis of our cost and revenue structure. The true cost of a hybrid session is many times more than what we ask our members to pay in terms of registration rates, because it also means additional technology costs and additional staff time. This is on top of the financial losses incurred due to the loss of room nights (toward the hotel room block) and food and beverage purchases (toward the minimum commitment) that in-person attendees contribute (which subsidize most of the cost of the space needed for an in-person Annual Meeting program). Beyond the labor power needed to mount a hybrid conference (by multiple parties: the MESA Secretariat staff, the conference hotel staff, and both in-person and online technology and audiovisual contractors), it would also split attendance in such a way that the in-person meeting loses its most critical attribute: our scale.

We have evaluated the idea of two separate, smaller conferences in the same year—one in person and the other virtual. But the timeline would be impossibly short for both our committees and the coordinating staff of the Secretariat.

To sum it up, “hybrid” would effectively commit the organization to operating the in-person conference at a
significant financial loss, which as fiduciaries—officers and directors are legally required to decide and operate in the financial best interest of the association and its membership—we cannot do.

**Q: Wouldn’t meeting outside of the United States be better than meeting virtually?**

**A:** Not by most metrics. It would not make the meeting more accessible for many members, and it would not necessarily be cheaper — and so it would not address most of the reasons that we plan to meet virtually in 2024.

Holding an in-person meeting outside of the United States might lower certain attendance costs (e.g., hotel room rates or food and beverage) relative to what they would be if held in the United States. Yet other costs (e.g., airfare) would remain the same, if not increase (depending on where individuals were traveling from).

Meeting outside the United States would do nothing to address the question of carbon emissions.

Traveling farther distances would likely exacerbate the challenges of accessibility for our disabled members and for our members with health concerns.

Meeting outside of the United States also potentially raises new barriers in terms of visas: first, for many of our US-based MESA members whose citizenship/residency(visa) status makes it difficult or impossible to travel outside the United States; and second, for our MESA members who come from countries that may have similar or greater difficulties securing visas to another country.

Lastly, on the organizational side, the MESA Secretariat and Board are based in the United States—as is the vast majority of our membership—so it significantly increases the complexity, difficulty, and financial risk when we mount a meeting in another country. (This is even true when we meet on occasion in Canada, as we will in 2023 due to contractual obligations signed in 2017, well before longer-term trends became clear.)

**Q: What will happen after 2024?**

**A:** The 2025 Annual Meeting will be held in person and the MESA Secretariat is currently working to secure a location on the East Coast. The Board and Secretariat remain committed to in-person meetings remaining a regular occurrence. We will seek to take into account both the structural and contingent factors affecting the experiences of the Annual Meetings over the next two to three years (2022-2024) to assess what makes the most sense in terms of the financial viability of the organization, accessibility of the annual meeting to our entire membership, and the ethical and existential concerns shared by all of us. This might mean alternating between virtual and in-person meetings on an annual basis. Alternatively, it might mean meeting virtually every third year. We are not certain. What we do know is we need to be proactive and forward-looking as an organization given the prevailing structural trends affecting membership and meeting attendance—many of which precede the COVID-19 pandemic—and to experiment a little bit while we can, so as to make as informed a decision as possible, and to ensure the MESA community continues to thrive.

**Q: How can I be part of the conversation?**

**A:** The Board and Secretariat are actively considering ways to facilitate feedback and input from the membership these discussions and decisions. We will consider hosting a virtual discussion, as well as an in-person discussion about these issues at the 2023 Annual Meeting in Montréal, in addition to membership surveys. We also encourage the membership to share their views with us via email (secretariat@mesana.org) and to attend the Members Meeting at the Annual Meeting.

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**Future Annual Meetings**

**MESA 2024 (Virtual)**

November (exact dates TBD)

**MESA 2025 (In-person)**

East Coast USA

Dates and Location TBD
Conference Registration
Pre-register by September 29

Register by September 29 to receive the discounted rate; onsite registration is required after that date, which will begin in person on Thursday, November 2. To register, use the form located on page 11 or go to mesana.org/annual-meeting/registration.

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**Prices shown in US$**

Travel Considerations

MESA is pleased to be meeting in Canada for the first time since 2007. Please be aware of the travel guidelines and requirements to/from Canada.

Your source for information on the documentation required to visit Canada is a canada.ca. Foreign citizens should consult the Canadian Embassy in their country for further guidance.

All attendees should have a copy of the letter from the Canada Border Services Agency posted on MESA’s website which shows that the MESA meeting has been officially recognized by the Canadian government. Additionally, program participants should have their letter of acceptance, available in myMESA. To request a letter of invitation from MESA for visa purposes, please complete the form at the bottom of this page: mesana.org/annual-meeting/travel.
Hotel Reservations
Cut-off date: October 9

The MESA Annual Meeting will be held at the Palais des congrès in Montréal, Québec, Canada. MESA has contracted discounted room nights at three hotels near the convention center. For reservation links and information: mesana.org/annual-meeting/hotel.

DOUBLETREE BY HILTON MONTRÉAL
1255 JEANNE MANCE STREET
Room reservations can also be made by calling 1-800-361-8234; mention MESA Annual Meeting 2023.

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Volunteer Panel Chairs

Volunteers are invited to chair non-preorganized panels at the MESA 2023 annual meeting. A listing of available panels will be posted by July 1. MESA only assigns chairs to put-together panels. There are many such panels on the program. If, after consulting the website, you find a panel of interest, please contact the MESA staff at meeting@mesana.org. Please note that MESA membership and annual meeting pre-registration are required of all meeting participants on the program, including volunteer panel chairs.

MESA 2023 Travel Grants

Applications will open July 1 and close September 1

Graduate Students
MESA’s Board of Directors has established a fund to subsidize travel expenses for graduate students who are presenting on the program at the MESA annual meeting.

Contingent Faculty & Un/Underemployed
MESA’s Board of Directors has established a fund to subsidize travel expenses for contingent faculty as well as un/underemployed members with doctorates who are presenting on the program at the MESA annual meeting.

For 2023, we will issue approximately 90 US$500 grants in both categories. We can offer more if our members’ contributions to the travel funds exceed our expectations.

Donations to this fund are sought and can be contributed through myMESA, or via the Donate button on MESA’s website.

Child Care Subsidy Available

Registered MESA attendees who hire a local service to care for children during the Annual Meeting may be reimbursed up to US$200. We support working parents, and we thank our members for their generous contributions to the MESA Annual Meeting Child Care fund, which permits us to subsidize the cost of childcare for attendees. For further information, see mesana.org/annual-meeting/childcare.

CANADIAN DOLLARS

Most of the monetary transactions you will make while in Canada will be in Canadian dollars. While most Canadian businesses accept US dollars, it is advisable to visit a Canadian ATM machine for Canadian currency. Such machines are found in the passageways from the Doubletree to the Palais, as well as in the Palais itself.
Submissions: Process and Statistics

The annual meeting program chair, selected by MESA’s Board of Directors, recommends and invites people to serve on the committee in order to cover the broadest swath of topics relevant to MESA. To the extent possible, reviewers are matched by discipline and geographic focus, as well as research themes. Each proposal is read “blind” and rated by two committee members according to how, in a maximum of 400 words, the paper or panel will contribute to scholarship or to the field. The purpose of the program committee is to read and evaluate submissions, place high-rated ones on the program, and to assemble papers into cohesive panels.

Acceptance/Rejection Rates, Recent Meetings

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<td>Roundtables</td>
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<td>49 (94%)</td>
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*Does not include MESA 2021 deferred submissions of 25 panels, 5 roundtables, 1 special session, 61 individual papers

MESA 2023 Sessions Accepted or Assembled
- 199 preorganized panels
- 114 assembled panels (from 616 abstracts)
- 61 roundtables
- 3 special sessions

MESA 2023 Abstracts Accepted
Total = 1557
- 645 individual abstracts
- 912 abstracts on preorganized panels

MESA 2023 Disciplinary Breakdown of Accepted Abstracts
When submitting an abstract, an author may select multiple disciplines (this is a new feature of the updated myMESA). Below are numbers indicating the self-selected discipline of an abstract, inclusive of individual paper abstracts and those in pre-organized sessions. The first column indicates the total for abstracts that selected only one discipline. The combinations of two or more disciplines are difficult to reflect concisely, but columns two and three provide an overall picture. Please note that 98 papers did not easily fit into one of the two types of listing.

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MESA MEMBERSHIP & REGISTRATION

Complete and return form to the MESA Secretariat by no later than September 29, 2023* for pre-registration rates or register through myMESA and pay on-line.

* Session participants registration is due May 15, 2023

Name ________________________________________________________________

Affiliation __________________________________________________________

Email (req) __________________________________________________________

Membership Dues

Individuals should complete a profile in their myMESA account

Student member $65
Retired member $85
Fellow or Associate member
- $75 (income less than $30,000)
- $100 (income $30,001 - $40,000)
- $125 (income $40,001 - $50,000)
- $150 (income $50,001 - $60,000)
- $175 (income $60,001 - $70,000)
- $200 (income $70,001 - $80,000)
- $225 (income $80,001 - $90,000)
- $250 (income $90,001 - $100,000)
- $275 (income $100,001 - $125,000)
- $300 (income $125,001 - $150,000)
- $350 (income greater than $150,001)

Amounts shown are in US$

Registration Category

Student/retired MESA member $85
Full/associate MESA member $175
Student, non-MESA member $150
All other non-MESA members $300

Payment Information

Visa /MasterCard /Discover/AMEX
Check (payable to MESA, in US$ and drawn on US bank)
Send to MESA, 3542 N. Geronimo Ave., Tucson AZ 85705

Card Number _____________________________________________________________________

Exp Date ___________________________ CVV* (3 or 4 digit code) ______________________

Cardholder Name __________________________________________________________________

Billing Address ____________________________________________________________________

Signature _________________________________________________________________________

Email receipt to ___________________________________________________________________

Refund Policy

Participants: Requests for refunds must be received by August 1, 2023.
All others: Requests for refunds must be received by September 29, 2023.
Complete the form located at the bottom of this page https://mesana.org/annual-meeting/registration

https://mesana.org/annual-meeting/registration
Recent Statements and Letters from MESA’s Board of Directors

The MESA Board has released several statements and co-signed others in recent months. Members are sent email announcements when a statement or letter is released. We provide the full text of each statement here.

**MESA BOARD STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF PROTESTS IN IRAN**

**December 9, 2023**—The Board of Directors of the Middle East Studies Association of North America condemns the ongoing and intensified Iranian government repression of civilians practicing their constitutionally-guaranteed right to protest.

This latest wave of protests in Iran began on September 16, 2022 in response to the state killing of a young Kurdish-Iranian woman, Mahsa Jhina Amini. On September 13, Ms. Amini was arrested by Iran’s Gasht-e Ershad (Guidance Patrol) which is known to engage at times in the arbitrary surveillance and criminalization of Iranians, especially young women. Since the images of Ms. Amini’s unconscious body, bloodied and bruised, were published by the whistleblower journalist, Niloufar Hamedeh (herself then arrested and detained on charges of plotting against the state), there have been numerous international expressions of outrage at the level of violence and impunity of Iran’s state officials in reaction to the justified and largely peaceful demonstrations. Far from accepting accountability and the initiation of reform, Iranian officials have presided over a massive storm of repression against civilian protestors.

In fact, Iranian forces, including the Basij, a paramilitary branch of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), have used live bullets and lethal violence against protestors, young and old, in major cities of the interior (e.g., Tehran, Mashhad, Shiraz, Esfahan, and Yazd) as well as in outlying provinces (e.g., Khuzestan, Baluchistan, Kurdistan, and Ardebil).

University campuses across Iran have been major sites for the protests, engaging faculty and students, alike. At the same time, these campuses have been targeted by the state’s security apparatuses. Starting on December 5, universities nation-wide held a three-day strike. The strikes, which coincided with Iran’s national student day, December 7, were met with extreme repression by state forces, sometimes by plainclothes officers. Peaceful student protestors have been attacked, arrested, and disappeared, while professors have been dismissed from teaching, arrested, and detained. Female students are at the forefront of the campus protests and they have been subjected to severe repression. Even more disturbing, detained students have been tortured, including through the use of sexual violence, and denied basic medical treatment while in prison. Meanwhile in a number of universities, including in Kharazmi and Arak, some 1,200 students reported being poisoned the night before the three-day strikes were to commence.

To date, nearly 500 protestors have been killed – among them, numerous children – and over 18,000 have been detained, including some 600 students. To our dismay, Iran’s parliament voted overwhelmingly, 277 out of 290, in favor of seeking death sentences for protestors, for vaguely defined offenses of moharebeh – the crime of waging war against God – and mofsed fel-arz – spreading corruption on earth. According to Amnesty International, to date, at least 21 individuals are at risk of execution.

The Board is deeply troubled by the extreme violence meted out by the state against its citizens. As MESA’s Committee on Academic Freedom noted in its letter on October 6, such measures constitute, among other things, “clear violations of academic freedom and the right to education by the state security forces, as they transform educational institutions into battlegrounds to violently suppress peaceful protests.”

Pursuant to our commitment to promoting high standards of scholarship and teaching as well as defending academic freedom and the right to education, the Board declares its support of Iranian students, teachers, and scholars who have been risking (and giving) their lives to peacefully protest their government’s policies and engage their colleagues and the broader public on the many issues that confront them. We express our solidarity with our Iranian colleagues in Iran and the world over.

The following ACLS member organizations have cosigned this statement:

- American Anthropological Association
- College Art Association
- Dance Studies Association
- German Studies Association
- Medieval Academy of America Advocacy Committee
- World History Association

**ACLS STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND NEW COLLEGE OF FLORIDA**

**February 10, 2023**—In recent years, we have seen politicians intensify their effort to rebrand institutions of higher education – specifically, the humanities and social sciences – as nothouses of liberal indoctrination. Their attacks threaten public understanding of our nation’s history and culture, and they undermine key principles of academic freedom and faculty governance.

The governor of Florida has now moved past rhetoric to direct action with its current “overhaul” of New College of Florida. The state administration uses the word “indoctrination” often and freely. By ousting Dr. Patricia Okker, the president of New College of Florida, and by taking over the college’s Board of Trustees, they reveal themselves as would-be indoctrinators of views that undermine the purpose of higher education in a democracy. Other states are already pursuing similar efforts of intimidation and censorship.

ACLS stands up in support of ex-President Okker, the New College community, and faculty and students at institutions of higher education around the country who are experiencing similar political interventions. We believe that higher education is based on critical thinking and informed debate. We recognize that differences of opinion are vital to academic inquiry, and we support the rights of all students and faculty to freely engage in scholarly conversation and civil debate. This is precisely what is threatened in this moment.

We ask every member of the ACLS community to inform themselves about these dangerous developments and to draw on the resources of ACLS, its member societies, and other groups that are mobilizing to protect faculty governance and advocate for the free circulation of humanistic knowledge.

We thank those of you already joining the fight in your societies and on your campuses. ACLS invites our community of member societies, member institutions, fellows and grantees, and supporters to sign this statement to affirm their support for sustaining academic freedom in higher education.
Historically, autocratic regimes have set their sights on cultural centers, the arts, and colleges and universities, because they see these places as threats to their power and control. The events unfolding in Florida are state-sponsored efforts to silence ideas, silence debate, and limit the autonomy of educational institutions whose faculty, staff, students, or administrators may disagree with the party in power. Faculty, advocates of academic freedom and anyone interested in preserving our democracy must fight these draconian measures with everything we have—in Florida and in every other state where they appear.

Irene Mulvey, American Association of University Professors
Randi Weingarten, American Federation of Teachers
Chris Finan, National Coalition Against Censorship

Organizational Endorsers
AAUP Oregon State Conference
AAUP Connecticut State Conference
AAUP Ohio State Conference
AAUP North Carolina State Conference

American Academy of Religion
American Association for Italian Studies
Middle East Studies Association of North America
Organization of American Historians
National Women's Studies Association
Rhetoric Society of America
Society for Cinema and Media Studies
Society for Music Theory
Society of Biblical Literature
Society for Ethnomusicology
World History Association

AAUP STATEMENT REGARDING FLORIDA BILL THAT WOULD DESTROY HIGHER EDUCATION AS WE KNOW IT

March 6, 2023—The AAUP, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC) issued the following statement condemning the introduction of Florida HB 999.

With the introduction of HB 999, the Florida legislature—at Governor DeSantis’s urging—has doubled down on its attacks on academic freedom with a bill that would effectively silence faculty and students across the ideological spectrum and purge whole fields of study from public universities. This bill substitutes the ideological beliefs of those in power for the freedom that is necessary for colleges and universities to serve the common good and function as intellectual centers where young people succeed and where the ideas that drive our country’s economy and democracy are ignited.

Florida’s HB 999 would destroy academic freedom, tenure, shared governance, and university independence in the state’s public higher education system. The bill would place control of core curricula and institutional mission statements entirely in the hands of political appointees. It would limit or ban students’ ability to pursue certain majors or areas of study. Simply put, it would make Florida’s colleges and universities into an arm of the DeSantis political operation.

The new bill proposed in the Florida legislature (HB 999) is a frontal attack on these principles. If it passes, it ends academic freedom in the state’s public colleges and universities, with dire consequences for their teaching, research, and financial well-being.

The American Council of Learned Societies and the signatories below protest this proposed legislation and call on citizens to recognize the danger it poses to higher education in this country.

The promise of academic freedom has played a key role in the growth and strength of higher education in the United States. Thanks to the protection of the free discovery and exchange of knowledge and of faculty decision-making, American colleges and universities have long been the envy of the world. These institutions are valued for the basic and applied research that they conduct; for their role as anchors of industry and of local communities; for providing equitable access to opportunity, increasing over time, for those who have not had such access, including women, people of color, and first-generation college students; and for their capacity to prepare students to be thinking and feeling people in a world larger than their hometowns and states.

The bill also threatens to take higher education in Florida several steps backward in terms of access and quality. In a country where nearly half of all undergraduates receive federal financial aid, Florida’s loss of accreditation and of federal dollars would risk preventing thousands of students from going to college. The bill states that “banned” coursework and activities advancing diversity and equity cannot be offered even with independent funding; this bodes ill for fellowships and grants for faculty and graduate students.

Academic freedom means freedom of thought, not the state-mandated production of histories edited to suit one party’s agenda in the current culture wars.

Events in the US and around the world lead us to expect that threats to academic freedom will increase in frequency. While ACLS cannot respond to every development on this front, we stand firm on the principles expressed here, and we commit to continue working in collaboration with others on constructive advocacy for academic freedom and faculty governance.

*Regarding the “hiring” of faculty in the above description of academic freedom, ACLS recognizes the role of faculty in making recommendations for hiring, while the hiring contract is between the institution and the individual.

American Academy of Religion
American Anthropological Association
American Association for Italian Studies
American Folklore Society
American Historical Association
American Musico logical Society
American Philosophical Association

Issues in Middle East Studies | May 2023 13
The inclusion of a MENA checkbox is imperative because Americans of MENA descent have faced discrimination and marginalization within the US, and simultaneously continue to be not only a minoritized population but also denied the rights and benefits of Census classification and representation. MENA Americans currently do not see themselves and their experiences accurately reflected in the United States Census, which shapes both federal and local classifications, and resultant funding, opportunity, and anti-discrimination efforts. Moreover, we believe the inclusion of checkboxes that reflect the largest MENA American communities by population size in terms of both national origin and transnational belonging categories would make data collected by the Census that much more accurate and inclusive.

MENA American communities have long faced legal, educational, workplace and linguistic marginalization in part because these communities have gone unrecognized in demographic surveys of the United States. A critical benefit of proper classification would be data collection that supports the provision of greater funding for MENA and MENA American studies. To our knowledge, only one Middle Eastern American Center for research exists in the United States, at the City University of New York (MEMEAC, Middle East and Middle Eastern American Center). From across the US, MESA routinely convenes about 100 Middle East centers, programs, and related departments, many of which could readily use their expertise to expand into Middle Eastern studies, should more funding for research and teaching be made available.

MENA consistently advocates for greater higher education funding through the Department of Education’s Title VI authorized under the Higher Education Act, which supports many of our constituent institutional member and partner institutions as National Resource Centers or Foreign Language and Area Studies grantees. MENA Americans currently do not receive federal, state, and local resources because they are not correctly classified on the US Census. We believe that more readily counting MENA Americans would more precisely illustrate the need for continuing and expanding such funding.

Additionally, because of Directive 15, neither the National Endowment for the Arts or the National Endowment for the Humanities included MENA Americans in their Equity Action Plans, though they were mandated by Congress to ensure equal access to the arts and humanities for people of all backgrounds. It is critical for MENA studies that our community has access to NEA and NEH funding on this basis.

To summarize:

- MENA Americans are a sizable and important community that currently is not counted by the United States.
- Counting MENA Americans would illustrate the need for continuing and expanding financial support for MENA and MENA American studies.
- Armenian Americans, Arab Americans, and Iranian Americans are the top 3 largest MENA communities in terms of population size. These groups should ideally be reflected in additional checkboxes that reflect classifications within the MENA category.
- Armenians, Kurds, and Assyrians are large transnational groups in the MENA region that are present in the United States and like other populations must be counted as transnational groups.
- MENA Americans, who are strongly represented within the MESA membership, overwhelmingly support Census classification that includes their community.

We join other elected officials, community leaders, and prominent MENA individuals and organizations in calling for a MENA checkbox and emphasize the need for community input and classification within this category.

We thank the Biden administration for addressing the needs of MENA communities and we appreciate this urgent and imperative action by the OMB. We urge the United States government to hear the calls of citizens advocating for the inclusion of MENA Americans. This is a vital move in forwarding the civil rights of all Americans, regardless of ancestry.
New Members
MESA welcomes 573 new members (230 full, 295 students, 48 associates) for 2023.

MESA’s Institutional Members
We recognize the following organizations as institutional members of MESA. Our institutional members share with MESA a commitment to recognizing excellence in the field, encouraging the growth and vibrancy of all the different disciplines within Middle Eastern studies, and defending the rights of scholars and academics around the world.

Aga Khan University, Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations
American University in Cairo
American University of Kuwait
Arab Center Washington DC (ACW)
Arab Council for the Social Sciences, Lebanon
Boston College
Bridgewater State University
Brown University, Center for Middle East Studies
California State University, Sacramento, Iranian and Middle Eastern Studies Center
Cornell University, Department of Near Eastern Studies
Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC)
Dartmouth College
George Washington University, Institute for Middle East Studies
Georgetown University, Center for Contemporary Arab Studies
Georgetown University, Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding
ILEX Foundation
McGill University, Institute of Islamic Studies
Northwestern University
Ohio State University, Middle East Studies Center
Penn State University, Department of History
Portland State University, Middle East Studies Center
Princeton University, Department of Near Eastern Studies
Simon Fraser University
Stanford University, Sohaib and Sara Abbasi Program in Islamic Studies
Syracuse University, Middle Eastern Studies Program
University of Arizona, Center for Middle Eastern Studies
University of California, Berkeley, Center for Middle Eastern Studies
University of California, Santa Barbara, Center for Middle East Studies
University of Houston, Arab-American Educational Foundation Center for Arab Studies
University of Maryland, Roshan Institute for Persian Studies
University of Massachusetts at Amherst
University of Michigan, Center for Middle Eastern & North African Studies
University of Southern California, Department of Middle East Studies
University of Texas at Austin, Center for Middle Eastern Studies
University of Toronto, Department of Near & Middle Eastern Civilizations
University of Washington, Middle East Center
University of Wisconsin-Madison, Middle East Studies Program
Vanderbilt University
Washington University in St. Louis
Yale University, Council on Middle East Studies

To apply for institutional membership, an institution should submit to the Secretariat a letter of interest, a list of directors, and descriptive information about the institution and its programs (e.g. brochures, sample publications). Submit materials to secretariat@mesana.org. Institutional membership annual dues are $1100.
Starting July 1, 2023, the MESA Secretariat by request of the Publications Committee will begin collecting data on new publications in Middle East studies. We invite publishers and authors to complete an on-line form that will be located at mesana.org/publications.

In its early years, the MESA Newsletter provided a listing of books received at the MESA Bulletin office. This included original scholarly works as well as edited volumes, translations, and other publications. In 2013 when MESA moved to the new newsletter format, the Books Received column was dropped with the thinking that such information was now available on the internet. While this is true, it is cumbersome to compile that information. As such, and in response to members’ requests, MESA will soon begin collecting publications data through an online form. By collecting this information, we will also have data for yearly comparisons and to monitor trends in the field.

Once the form is available we will notify publishers and members and will request them to complete it.

### MESA Elections

The 2023 MESA Board election will take place later this summer via MESA’s website. All voting-eligible members will receive an email from the Secretariat, as well as subsequent reminder messages, when the election is live. The Nominating Committee is given the task of choosing the candidates for the 2023 incoming Board Members. We thank the **2023 Nominating Committee** for their service.

- Rosie Bsheer, Harvard University
- Nihal Kayali, UCLA (Student)
- Nada Moumtaz, University of Toronto
- Laleh Khalili, University of Essex
- Mostafa Minawi, Cornell University
- Wendy Pearlman, Northwestern University

#### Nominating Committee Election Statistics, 2016-2023

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Contributions
For the period October 19, 2022 - May 16, 2023, a total of $18,430 in contributions was received for MESA funds. We acknowledge with great thanks the following:

Earthquake Solidarity Fund
As an organization and a community constituted by its members, the Middle East Studies Association continues to seek to do what we can to support all of our colleagues affected by the earthquakes.

We responded when asked by some members in Turkey and Syria if we would organize a call for donations to cover the cost of membership for scholars from Turkey and Syria—many of whom have donated their savings and thus cannot afford to pay membership.

For 36 applicants affected by the earthquake, we were able to provide both membership and registration thanks to the generous donations of MESA members to the Earthquake Solidarity Fund and with matching funds by MESA.

We would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for their combined contributions of $4,535.

Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University
Lois A. Aroian#
Asli Bali*
Lucia Carminati
Ella Fratantuono
Kimberly B. Katz
Suha Kudsieh
Charles Kurzman*
Margaret Litvin
Francisco Javier Martinez
Intisar Rabb*
Danielle Van Dobben Schoon
Marcus Smith
Emma Snowden
Andrea L. Stanton
Nefertiti Takla*
Eve Troutt Powell#
William C. Young
Gizem Zencirci

MESA General
Asli Bali*
Linda Brown
Matthew S. Gordon*
Dina Rizk Khoury ▶
Robert D. Lee#
Alan Mikhail*
Kenneth Perkins ▶
Wilfrid J. Rollman
Joseph R. Tamer
Sherry Vatter

Fatema Mernissi Book Award
Nancy E. Gallagher ▷

Malcolm H. Kerr Dissertation Award
Joseph E. Lowry*

Mentoring Award
Nancy E. Gallagher ▶

Jere L Bacharach Service Award
Charles E. Butterworth
Earl L. Sullivan*

Academic Freedom
Linda Brown
Charles Butterworth
Thomas Ricks

Solidarity Fund
Asli Bali*

Global Academy
Asli Bali*
Nancy E. Gallagher ▶
Amy Singer#

ACSS-MESA Collaboration Fund
Anonymous ▶

Travel Grant Fund
Suad Joseph ►

Child Care Contribution
Sherry Vatter

* at least $100
# at least $250
▷ at least $500
► at least $1000
Invitation to Honor Jere Bacharach
Contribute to MESA’s Jere L. Bacharach Service Award Fund

MESA and its members lost a devoted colleague when Jere Bacharach, Professor Emeritus of History and Stanley D. Golub Professor Emeritus of International Studies at the University of Washington, passed away in April. We invite MESA members to honor him and those who engage in outstanding service to MESA and the field of Middle East studies by contributing to the Jere L. Bacharach Service Award fund.

Jere Bacharach embodied service to MESA. He was editor of the MESA Bulletin for fourteen and half years, twice served on the MESA Board of Directors, and was MESA President in 1999-2000. He valued his colleagues’ service. Jere Bacharach assured recognition of their accomplishments when he proposed, and with Jon Anderson and Farhad Kazemi, provided initial contributions to create MESA’s Service Award in 1996. An inspiring teacher and mentor, he received the MESA Mentoring Award in 2015. Jere Bacharach’s joy in learning and sharing what he knew was combined with a gift for administration. His savvy approach to budgeting assured that all went well with the institutions fortunate to benefit from his talents, generosity of spirit, and keen eye. It’s no wonder that he was drawn to numismatics. Fittingly, the Service Award was named for him in 2004, the year that he received the award in recognition of his extraordinary service to MESA, commitment to scholarship on the region, and tireless service to other professional Middle East studies organizations, among them the American Research Center in Egypt, the American Research Institute in Syria, the International Society for Iranian Studies, the Historians of Islamic Art and the Middle East Medievalists.

Thank you for following his lead and helping to build the Jere L. Bacharach Service Award fund so it can continue to recognize outstanding service to the profession of Middle East studies.

Donations can be made through myMESA or from mesana.org/donate.

2023 MESA Awards Call for Nominations

See our full list of awards and procedures on our website: https://mesana.org/awards

**Jere L. Bacharach Service Award June 1, 2023**
This award honors extraordinary service to MESA or the field. The winner receives $1000.

**MESA Mentoring Award June 1, 2023**
This award honors contributions of a retired individual as mentor/teacher.

**Malcolm H. Kerr Dissertation Awards July 1, 2023**
For students completing their dissertations between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023, nominations should be from the author’s sponsor or advisor. Winners in each category - Humanities and Social Sciences - receive $1000.

**Undergraduate Education Award August 1, 2023**
This award recognizes outstanding scholarship on teaching or other material contributions to undergraduate education in Middle East studies. The recipient receives $250.

**Graduate Student Paper Prize August 15, 2023**
For graduate students whose research papers consider any aspect of post 600 CE Middle East studies. The author of the winning paper receives $250 and the paper will be submitted for publication to RoMES.
2022 Awards Ceremony

Some of the best in Middle East studies were honored at the 2022 Awards Ceremony held December 2, 2022. MESA’s awards program began in 1982 by honoring the best dissertations in the field. Since then it has grown into a diverse program that includes:

- MESA Academic Freedom Award
- MESA Mentoring Award
- Jere L. Bacharach Service Award
- Albert Hourani Book Award
- Nikki Keddie Book Award
- Fatema Mernissi Book Award
- Malcolm H. Kerr Dissertation Award in the Humanities
- Malcolm H. Kerr Dissertation Award in the Social Sciences
- MESA Graduate Student Paper Prize

MESA thanks the following review committees

**2022 MESA Book Awards Committee**
Ilana Feldman (George Washington University)
Laura Bier (Georgia Tech)
Huda J. Fakhreddine (University of Pennsylvania)
Maziyar Ghiabi (University of Exeter)
Joshua M. White (University of Virginia)

**2022 Malcolm H. Kerr Dissertation Award Committee in the Social Sciences**
David Patel (Brandeis University)
Lior Sternfeld (Penn State)
Ceyda Karamursel (SOAS, U of London)

**2022 Malcolm H. Kerr Dissertation Award Committee in the Humanities**
Matthew Melvin-Koushki (U of South Carolina)
Kifah Hanna (Trinity College)
Nebil Husayn (University of Miami)
Nada Shabout (University of North Texas)

**2022 Graduate Student Paper Prize Committee**
Hoda Yousef (Denison University)
Nell Gabiam (Iowa State University)
Mohammad Tabaar (Texas A&M)

*The chair of each committee is listed first.*
2022 Academic Freedom Award
The MESA Academic Freedom Award was established in 2001. It is presented on appropriate occasions in recognition of sustained contributions in support of academic freedom in the Middle East and North Africa, and/or in North America.

Palestinian NGOs

The Middle East Studies Association (MESA) is pleased to announce the six recipients of the 2022 Academic Freedom Award: Addameer, Al-Haq, Bisan Center for Research and Development, Defense for Children International - Palestine, Union of Palestinian Women's Committees, and the Union of Agricultural Work Committees. MESA presented the Award to the organizations virtually during its 56th annual meeting in Denver, Colorado.

The six Palestinian research and human rights organizations work across a range of issues that include advocating for children killed or imprisoned by Israeli authorities, economic and agricultural sovereignty, direct support to poor and marginalized communities in Palestine, and legal aid.

The criminalization and closure of the six Palestinian organizations not only violates numerous statutes of international law and globally recognized standards of academic freedom, but it also uses intimidation and violence to control how Palestinian students, scholars, researchers, and institutions do their work, and their ability to collaborate with international organizations, universities, and colleges.

Addameer
Founded in 1991, Addameer (Arabic for “conscience”) Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association is a Palestinian non-governmental, civil institution that works to support Palestinian political prisoners held in Israeli and Palestinian prisons.

Al-Haq
An independent Palestinian non-governmental human rights organization, Al-Haq is based in Ramallah, West Bank. Established in 1979 to protect and promote human rights and the rule of law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), the organization has special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

Bisan Center for Research and Development
Established in 1989, Bisan Center for Research and Development is a non-governmental, nonprofit, democratic and progressive Palestinian civil society organization that works to support poor and marginalized Palestinians in their struggle to advance their socioeconomic rights in the context of national liberation, through the production and application of critical development knowledge, and the building of partnerships with progressive bodies and entities.

Defense for Children International - Palestine (DCIP)
An independent, local Palestinian child rights organization dedicated to defending and promoting the rights of children living in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.

Union of Palestinian Women’s Committees
A progressive feminist community organization founded in 1980, the Union works to improve the status and empowerment of Palestinian women to ensure true equality between men and women and social justice for all groups of society.

Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC)
Established in 1986 by a group of agronomists, the UAWC is one of the largest agricultural development institutions in Palestine. A progressive civil society organization, UAWC contributes to the agricultural sector’s development by empowering Palestinian farmers.
2022 MESA Mentoring Award

The MESA Mentoring Award was established in 1995 and first given at MESA's 1996 annual meeting. The award recognizes exceptional contributions retired faculty have made to the education and training of others.

Kristen Brustad, University of Texas at Austin

This year’s mentoring award is given to Kristen Brustad in recognition of her extraordinary contributions to the training and development of others in Middle East studies. It is difficult to sum up the 35 exceptional letters of support from students and mentees who come from and work all over the globe, representing mentoring from all stages of her career, because training others was a core part of her career from beginning to end. Her exceptional contributions to the education and mentoring of others can be grouped into four general categories:

1. **Arabic language training:** Dr. Brustad taught basic and advanced Arabic language skills to undergraduates and graduate students, ranging from new learners to native speakers. Her instruction empowered students with the skills and confidence to continue learning and using Arabic throughout their own careers, both in and out of academia.

2. **Teacher training:** While Dr. Brustad continually modeled effective pedagogy in all her courses, she also provided direct training in Arabic language instruction to the next generation of Arabic teachers and professors. Many former students have gone on to found and lead Arabic programs of their own throughout the United States and the Arab world.

3. **Arabic language pedagogy:** Along with her two co-authors, Dr. Brustad revolutionized the teaching of Arabic as a foreign language. The Al-Kitaab series of books and DVDs introduced a communicative, proficiency-based model that has enabled generations of students to speak (read and write) Arabic – including colloquial dialects – as a living language. Not only have these materials become the new standard for Arabic language learning, but also the model developed by Dr. Brustad and her co-authors has inspired new models in the teaching of other languages.

4. **Honors and Graduate Mentoring, Supervision, and Professional Development:** The single strongest theme throughout the letters is Dr. Brustad's ability to inspire and empower her mentees to realize their full potential. She made students believe that their ideas were worth pursuing and helped them to acquire the tools and direction to turn those ideas into theses and dissertations. Many former students marvel at the amount of time Dr. Brustad spent reading drafts, asking pointed questions, and writing letters of recommendation or language evaluations. Time spent, though, is not in itself sufficient to produce the transformative impact that Dr. Brustad has had on her mentees; her interventions were effective because they were brilliant, caring, insightful, rigorous, and above all tailored to the needs of each student. Former mentees also note the formative impact of Dr. Brustad's own scholarship, including her groundbreaking monograph the Syntax of Spoken Arabic, which laid the foundation for new research focused on Arabic dialects. The impressive depth and breadth of knowledge she brought to her graduate seminars further inspired her own students and helped model the type of teacher-scholars many of them aspired to become. Finally, former students note that Dr. Brustad fostered connections between students that turned them into a mutually supportive community, something that proved invaluable as they navigated graduate school and began to apply for jobs.

Dr. Brustad's former students also give her ample credit for their professional successes, noting that she coached them through their first conference presentations, tirelessly critiqued application letters and job talks, staged mock interviews, wrote letter after letter on their behalf, and ultimately helped them weigh their options when the job offers arrived. Many of the students are incredulous (in the most positive way) at the time, effort, and care Dr. Brustad put into every step of this process, for every student.

It is an honor to recognize Kristen Brustad — an outstanding scholar, teacher, and mentor — who has constantly encouraged the finest of Middle East studies scholarship by training multiple generations of academics at every stage of her career.
2022 Jere L. Bacharach Service Award
The MESA Service Award was established in 1996 and was first awarded at MESA’s 1997 annual meeting. In 2004 the award was named for Jere L. Bacharach in honor of his extraordinary service to MESA, many of her sister societies, and the field overall. The award recognizes the contributions of individuals through their outstanding service to MESA or the profession.

Co-Cr-Winner
Rabab Abdulhadi, San Francisco State University
Rabab Abdulhadi is honored and recognized for her service to the field of Middle East studies. Dr. Abdulhadi is a public intellectual and a scholar-activist who has applied her scholarship, and dedicated her life, to developing and broadening Middle East studies.

Dr. Abdulhadi was the first director of the Center for Arab American Studies at the University of Michigan, Dearborn (2004-2006). Subsequently, she became the founding director and Senior Scholar of the Arab & Muslim Ethnicities & Diasporas Studies (AMED) at the College of Ethnic Studies at San Francisco State University (SFSU), as well as Associate Professor of Ethnic Studies and Affiliated Faculty in Sexuality Studies and Queer Ethnic Studies. She also played a leading role from 2007 to the present in the “Islamophobia in Systems of Knowledge Project,” which included the establishment of the Islamophobia Research & Documentation Project (IRDP) at the Center for Race & Gender, University of California, Berkeley and the founding of the International Islamophobia Research Association (IISRA), which publishes the digital Islamophobia Studies Journal and organizes an annual international Islamophobia Conference.

In her work as the founding director of AMED (Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diasporas Studies) at San Francisco State University, Dr. Abdulhadi maintains a rigorous academic program through which students, staff and members of the community can collectively engage in the struggle for international justice. She has worked to develop critical intellectual and scholarly thinking while creating spaces for advocacy for justice, dignity, and peace. As AMED Director, she negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding between SFSU and An-Najah National University in Palestine.

Her work since the onset of the pandemic in spring 2020 exemplifies her commitment to the theory and praxis of critical and accountable public education. Her webinar, Teaching Palestine, provided accessible and free educational programming streamed live in an interactive format that engaged both student and community audiences. Topics included discussions on Black Liberation and its interconnection to Palestine, gender, and sexual justice. What makes her service to our profession and our field stand out in this regard is her deep commitment to Palestinian studies, in relation to not only gender, sexuality, feminist, and queer studies, but also others. She has cultivated and grows connections with Black, Latinx, and Indigenous communities, scholars, and studies.

Dr. Abdulhadi has been repeatedly targeted by the Israel lobby in a campaign designed to silence her, dismantle the AMED Studies program, and muzzle campus activism at SFSU. Despite lawsuits and threats, she has continued her advocacy and scholarship and is a leader at SFSU and the wider community.

Dr. Abdulhadi is also a founder, board member, or advisor of an array of scholarly and activist organizations as well as professional unions that are too numerous to name here. The common linkage is that through all of her initiatives, Dr. Abdulhadi has substantially expanded the institutional spaces and structures for interdisciplinary scholarship in Middle East studies.
Dr. Saleh received her Ph.D. in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations from the University of Chicago with a dissertation on relations of the Coptic Christian community of Egypt with the Fatimid government, which was awarded Honorable Mention for MESA’s Malcolm Kerr Dissertation Award in 1995. She was then hired by the University of Chicago’s Middle East Collection at Regenstein Library, where for many years she worked as the main assistant to the Middle East Bibliographer, Bruce Craig. Upon his retirement, and after an extensive and open search, Dr. Saleh was appointed Chicago’s Middle East Bibliographer, and has been throughout her career in the library an active and supportive presence who has assisted students, faculty, and scholars from all over the world with their research and has continued to build Chicago’s massive Middle East library collection. She regularly notifies faculty and students of new resources that might be helpful to their research, and she is unfailingly willing to try securing microfilms of manuscripts or other things needed by the library’s patrons. She coordinates the library’s Middle East Documentation Center (MEDOC), which embraces several separate initiatives, including compiling a large and constantly growing collection of microform copies of manuscripts in various Middle Eastern languages from repositories all over the world.

Dr. Saleh also has been an active member of the Middle East Librarians Association (MELA) for many years, serving for fifteen years (and counting) as editor of its journal, MELA Notes. In this way, she provides invaluable support to all students of the Middle East, and in particular to the Middle East librarians who make the scholarly and pedagogical work of the rest of us possible.

Of particular note has been Dr. Saleh’s long and steady support for the field of Mamluk studies. She has been a stalwart in the organization of the School of Mamluk Studies based at the University of Chicago, serving on its organizing committee, which sponsors regular conferences on Mamluk studies. She also maintains the Mamluk Bibliography Online, a fundamental research resource, which contains thousands of references to primary sources and secondary scholarship dealing with the Mamluks.

The same applies to Dr. Saleh’s service as editor of Mamluk Studies Review, one of the most important scholarly publications on medieval Islamic history. Dr. Saleh negotiated a difficult transition from print to a digital format, readily assists non-native-English-speaking scholars from the Arab world in polishing and publishing their research in English, and has throughout maintained its high standards of peer review for pre-modern Islamic history.

Dr. Saleh is always ready to offer her advice and help to scholars and students and is a tireless and avid collaborator in all of the academic projects related to Mamluk studies. Her dedication to her institution, to her position as a librarian, to librarianship in general, and last but not least to scholarship, are models of service to the field and to the profession.

This award is therefore also given to Dr. Saleh in recognition of her long and devoted service as bibliographer and her enthusiastic support of Mamluk studies.
2022 Albert Hourani Book Award
The Albert Hourani Book Award was established in 1991 to recognize outstanding publishing in Middle East studies. The award was named for Albert Hourani to recognize his long and distinguished career as teacher and mentor. The Albert Hourani Book Award recognizes a work that exemplifies scholarly excellence as well as clarity of presentation, in the tradition of Albert Hourani.

Winner

Hidden Caliphate: Sufi Saints beyond the Oxus and Indus
Harvard University Press

Waleed Ziad, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

*The Hidden Caliphate* is a frontier-breaking investigation of the spiritual and political network of the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi order across Transoxiana, Khorasan, and Northern India from the 18th up to the 20th century. This is a superb contribution to the historical understanding of the religious, social, political, and intellectual topographies of a cultural environment so far at the periphery of Middle Eastern studies. Through a multi-dimensional and grounded methodology, Waleed Ziad’s book shows the centrality of the Persianate cosmopolis in challenging the emerging legalistic orthodoxies of the 19th century. Equally attentive to narratives as to local, transcultural semantics, the book brings to light a counter-history of political renewal and spiritual syncretism based on so far untapped sources collected through courageous explorative research. A scholarly gift for those keen to expand the frontiers of Middle Eastern studies towards new intellectual and geographical horizons.

Honorable Mention

Empire of Salons: Conquest and Community in Early Modern Ottoman Lands
Princeton University Press

Helen Pfeifer, University of Cambridge

Helen Pfeifer’s *Empire of Salons: Conquest and Community in Early Modern Ottoman Lands* is a bold and innovative account of the salon, the majlis, as a crucial site for building and sustaining Empire. Pfeifer carefully crafts a trans-national account of elite encounters across languages and literary visions and reveals the role of informal gatherings and conversation in the making of culture, society, politics. The salon, as Pfeifer masterfully shows us, is a particular site of cultural, social, and ethnic encounter, with its own conventions and rules. The relationships and connections formed in the salon had direct consequences on the status, cultural prestige, influence of its participants as politicians and men of power. This beautifully written and engaging work is a significant contribution to the study of early Ottoman history, cosmopolitanism, urbanism, and the interplay between imperial centers and their peripheries.
2022 Nikki Keddie Book Award

The Nikki Keddie Book Award was established in 2017 to recognize outstanding scholarly work in the area of religion, revolution, and/or society. The annual award was named for Nikki Keddie to recognize her long and distinguished career as a scholar and teacher.

Co-Winner

The Unsettled Plain: An Environmental History of the Late Ottoman Frontier

Chris Gratien, University of Virginia

The Unsettled Plain: An Environmental History of the Late Ottoman Frontier is a groundbreaking study of the southern Anatolian region of Cilicia and its inhabitants from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries. Combining elements of microhistory with the concerns of environmental history and contributing as well to histories of capitalism, nationalism, migration and displacement, Chris Gratien presents not just a history of a particular place in the late Ottoman Empire, but a vivid history of the late Ottoman Empire from the vantage point of this “internal frontier.” Based on a dizzying array of sources—from archival documents to folksong lyrics, written in (Ottoman) Turkish, Armenian, Arabic, French, and English—the book matches virtuosic, highly original research with narrative flair and deep empathy, highlighting the often tragic experiences of Cilicia’s historically and historiographically marginalized peoples during a period of dramatic change.

Co-Winner

An Elusive Common: Land, Politics, and Agrarian Rurality in a Moroccan Oasis

Karen E. Rignall, University of Kentucky

An Elusive Common is a rich, rigorous ethnographic account of land use and ownership in the Mgoun valley of southeastern Morocco, placing this seemingly peripheral area at the center of fundamental questions about global capitalism, environmentalism, development and political agency. Situating the politics of land and land ownership in Morocco within both its historic and contemporary context, Rignall’s nuanced study highlights the creativity of the Mgoun’s people as they grapple with the forces of government disinvestment, climate change, political marginalization and the legacies of French colonial land policies, while also attending to the ways in which such grassroots solutions may generate new forms of inequality. In a moment where many people around the world see “the commons” as a possible way forward to more just political futures, Rignall provides a grounded, nuanced account of the complex politics of the commons, inviting us to rethink the role of commoning in politics and governance.
2022 Nikki Keddie Book Award

Honorable Mention

*Bread and Freedom: Egypt’s Revolutionary Situation*

Stanford University Press

**Mona El-Ghobashy, New York University**

Mona El-Ghobashy’s *Bread and Freedom* is a masterfully written account of the heady days of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution and the turbulent two years which followed it. Arguing against conventional narratives of the revolution as one of hope followed by failure, she instead foregrounds uncertainty, contingency, and unpredictability to give us an original and gripping analysis of the forces which converged to create Egypt’s revolutionary situation. El-Ghobashy brings a vast array of sources together, including party manifestos, military communiques, protest slogans, parliamentary debates and court decisions in order to construct a fine grained, almost moment by moment account of political transition in Egypt, even as she places that very specific transition in the context of its antecedents in the Global South and within processes of democratization more generally. *Bread and Freedom* offers valuable insights to those who care about the fate of Egypt and its people and all who seek to understand how efforts at dramatic political change can be defeated.

MESA 2022 marked the first in-person annual meeting since 2019 and the excitement to finally meet up with colleagues and old friends was palpable. Two sponsored coffee breaks in the book exhibit were a great opportunity for a free cup of coffee and a chance to see friends while getting a glance at the latest in publishing. It was a big hit, and we will again be offering sponsored coffee breaks at MESA 2023 in Montréal.
2022 Fatema Mernissi Book Award

The Fatema Mernissi Book Award was established in 2017 to recognize outstanding scholarship in studies of gender, sexuality, and women’s lived experience. The annual award was named for Fatema Mernissi to recognize her long and distinguished career as a scholar and as a public intellectual.

Winner

*Pious Peripheries: Runaway Women in Post-Taliban Afghanistan*

Stanford University Press

**Sonia Ahsan-Tirmizi, Columbia University**

*Pious Peripheries: Runaway Women in Post-Taliban Afghanistan* is a timely and intimate account of the lives of Afghan women standing up to patriarchy and community authority. Through remarkable ethnographic fieldwork in a shelter for women who have escaped their households—some running away from violence and abuse in their homes, others seeking divorce or a marriage that their families do not consent to—and careful textual analysis of religious, literary, and historical sources, Sonia Ahsan-Tirmizi showcases agency and impossibility, everyday struggles and courageous acts. *Pious Peripheries* traces networks of support and solidarity that arise from brave women’s efforts to stand up to legal, social and familial injustice. It deftly sketches the various regimes of power—political, legal, familial—that Afghan women negotiate as they seek to fashion futures which challenge hegemonic prescriptions of womanhood, honor, and piety.

Honorable Mention

*The City as Anthology: Eroticism and Urbanity in Early Modern Isfahan*

Stanford University Press

**Kathryn Babayan, University Michigan**

*The City as Anthology: Eroticism and Urbanity in Early Modern Isfahan* is an evocative exploration of sociability, sensuality, and urban life in seventeenth-century Isfahan, as seen through the lens of the household anthologies (*majmu’a*) of eight city residents. Kathryn Babayan’s careful and creative reading of these rich, underutilized sources alongside the city’s monuments melds scholarship on urban space with historiographies of the book and illuminates the social and cultural history of Safavid Isfahan, surmounting the challenges posed by the lack of surviving city or state archives. Examining the wide variety of texts and images these anthologies contained, the architecture and events that inspired them, and the curatorial choices that informed their compilation, the book paints a vivid picture of Isfahan as both an imagined utopian city and a space of everyday sociability—a relational space of readers and writers, of friendship, family, and desire.
2022 Malcolm H. Kerr Dissertation Awards

The MESA Dissertation Awards were established in 1982 to recognize exceptional achievement in research and writing for/of dissertations in Middle East studies. In 1984 the award was named for Malcolm H. Kerr to honor his significant contributions to Middle East studies. Awards are given in two categories: Social Sciences and Humanities.

Humanities Co-Winner


**Tiffany Floyd, Columbia University, Art History and Archaeology**
Supervised by Zainab Bahrani & Alexander Alberro

Masterfully demonstrating how the ancient past shaped artistic and intellectual production in modern Iraq, Tiffany Floyd’s meticulous dissertation is an important and exciting contribution not only to her fields of art history and Middle East studies, but also to the study of Modernism more generally, a relatively untapped field of inquiry beyond Euro-American contexts. Her work thus simultaneously fills a significant gap in the literature and helps to decolonize the Eurocentric art-historical canon as such. It is likewise pioneering in its interdisciplinary approach, synthesizing history, anthropology and literary and cultural studies. In particular, Floyd draws on Jewad Selim’s notion of _istilhām al-turāth_ in her analysis of the work of three prominent Iraqi artists of successive generations: Mohammed Ghani Hikmat (1929-2011), Dia al-Azzawi (b. 1939), and Faisel Laibi Sahi (b. 1947). In her detailed, critical and innovative reading of these artists’ work, Floyd’s original notion of “temporal topography” comes alive as she traces how the past was integrated into the present and the symbolic power of turāth in modern Iraqi nationalism.

Humanities Co-Winner

_Lost in a Sea of Letters: Sa’d al-Din Hamuya (d. 1252) and the Plurality of Sufi Knowledge_

**Cyril Uy II, Brown University, Department of Religious Studies**
Supervised by Shazad Bashir

Combining philological rigor, theoretical sophistication and limpid prose to a rare degree, Cyril Uy’s landmark study is not simply the first to retrieve a major but unstudied medieval Muslim occultist for the historiography of premodern Sufism, but uses him as prism for the comparative study of medieval and early modern Islamic intellectual, social and political history writ large—with implications for the (de) construction of Western modernity too. Uy’s choice to focus on Sa’d al-Din Ḥamūya is a daring one, given the exceptional difficulty and ever-shifting complexity of his writings, many of which remain in manuscript. Given his enduring influence as a Sufi lettrist author of equal caliber to Ibn al-ʿArabī himself, however, and one even more committed to embodying epistemology through boundless deconstructive play and radical experiential openness, Ḥamūya provides an unusually strategic window onto the relationship between knowledge and sociopolitical existence in a vast array of Islamic and Persianate societies over the last eight centuries. Uy, ideal jazz interpreter, reveals his jazz philosopher to be integral to any history and theory of religion, philosophy, science and language itself.
Humanities Honorable Mention

Anxieties over the Loss of the Classics: Tracing Islamic Intellectual History through the Manuscripts of ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī’s Dalāʾil and Asrār

Shuaib Ally, University of Toronto, Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations
Supervised by Walid Saleh

The first major monograph to build an intellectual history from Islamic manuscript paratexts, Shuaib Ally’s systematic investigation of Quran commentary (tafsīr) and Arabic rhetoric (balāgha) on the basis of two medieval classics is groundbreaking in method and sweeping in scope. He tackles extremely paleographically and technically challenging material traces with precision and aplomb, and rewrites the history of these two disciplines from the eleventh century to the seventeenth. Both are projects difficult enough in their own right; yet Ally’s laserlike focus on “mere” marginalia and supercommentaries allows for a total revision of “postclassical” Islamic intellectual history more broadly. Showing innovative, creative and subversive redeployments of the classics to be the engine of Islamic early modernity to at least the same degree it was of Christian, this is a signal contribution to intellectual history, literary history, book history and manuscript studies, as well as the comparative study of early modernities.

Social Sciences Co-Winner

Taming the Iron Horse: Austerity, Subversion, and Revolution in Colonial Egyptian Railways, 1876-1924

Xiaoyue Li, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Department of History
Supervised by Juan Cole

Xiaoyue Li’s dissertation uses the colonial Egyptian railway as a lens for examining social, cultural, and economic change in Egypt under Britain’s veiled protectorate. This is a study of both material and social infrastructures, analyzing how railway policies affected the daily and civic lives of everyday Egyptians. He deftly uses archival data on passenger volumes, administration, and crime networks to draw insights on the construction of colonial order and on how various groups engaged the railway infrastructure in ways that challenged that order. The analysis goes far beyond traditional studies of railways and breaks new ground at the intersection of technological and labor histories.

Social Sciences Co-Winner

Scarecrows of the State: An Ethnography of Security Checkpoints in Contemporary Baghdad

Omar Sirri, University of Toronto, Department of Political Science
Supervised by Anver Emon & Courtney Jung

Omar Sirri’s beautifully written dissertation shows how routine and mundane interactions at checkpoints between security personnel and residents of Baghdad serve to construct and maintain state authority in post-invasion Iraq. He draws on a wide variety of social scientific theories and approaches to inform his ethnography of how police and soldiers, officials, and residents understand what they are doing. The analysis opens doors for future studies on urban security and on how state power manifests itself and is constructed through social interactions and affective attachments.
2022 Graduate Student Paper Prize
The MESA Graduate Student Paper Prize was established in 2004 and first given in 2005. The purpose of the award is to recognize the work of young scholars. The award is given to the paper that shows the best control of the subject matter and adept methodology, good use of sources and evidence, coherence and elegance of argument and good writing.

Co-Winner
Sudanized Folklore: The Roxanne Connick Carlisle Collection and Music of Sudan in the 1960s

Benjamin Jones, Georgetown University, Center for Contemporary Arab Studies

We are proud to announce “Sudanized Folklore: The Roxanne Connick Carlisle Collection and Music of Sudan in the 1960s” by Benjamin Jones as a co-winner of the 2022 MESA Graduate Student Paper Award. This paper takes a critical look at the work of a Canadian anthropologist who sought to catalog “tribal”/folk music of the era. Weaving together ideas about the construction of “national music” and the field of anthropology itself, this paper provides a thoughtful case-study of how academics, governments, and local men and women sought to create and promote music that could serve their notions of nation, tradition, and modernity in pre-modern times.

Co-Winner
Cracks & Leaks of Water Infrastructure in Lebanon: The ‘Making & Unmaking’ of Hydrogeologies, Historical Subjectivities & Political Imaginaries

Mona Khneisser, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Department of Sociology

We are proud to announce “Cracks & Leaks of Water Infrastructure in Lebanon: The ‘Making & Unmaking’ of Hydrogeologies, Historical Subjectivities & Political Imaginaries” by Mona Khneisser as a co-winner of the 2022 MESA Graduate Student Paper Award. This paper frames the continued “failures” of dam development projects in Lebanon as part of a larger, historical cycle of capitalistic and post-colonial appropriation of hydrogeologies. The result is a sophisticated, and devastating, portrait of what these projects fail to achieve, whom they serve, and what (and who) they leave behind.
Below are summaries of letters sent to heads of state, other high-ranking officials, or educational officials in response to an issue of academic freedom. The country listed represents the country receiving the letter. To view the full content of the letter, please see MESA’s website (mesana.org).

15 November 2022 (US)—Letter urging the President of Case Western Reserve University to reconsider its recent statement which equates criticism of the State of Israel with anti-Semitism.

10 January 2023 (US)—Letter urging Cornell University to protect the academic freedom and personal safety of Professor Samia Henni.

10 January 2023 (US)—Letter to the president of Harvard University protesting the denial of a fellowship to Kenneth Roth.

10 January 2023 (US)—Letter to the president of Hamline University protesting the termination of a faculty member on grounds of alleged Islamophobia.

11 January 2023 (Iran)—Letter protesting the unjust imprisonment of scholar and researcher, Professor Saeed Madani.

25 January 2023 (Turkey)—Letter addressing ongoing government interventions in Bogazici University autonomy, staffing and internal operations.

31 January 2023 (US)—Letter to the president of GWU protesting the unwarranted investigation of Professor Lara Sheehi.

8 February 2023 (US)—Letter to the president of NYU expressing concern about the university’s recent investigation of graduate student Naye Idriss.

23 February 2023 (Turkey)—Letter regarding documentary filmmaker and Communication Professor Sibel Tekin’s pre-trial detention and indictment for her filming activities.

1 March 2023 (Turkey)—Letter regarding closure of all Turkish universities to in-person instruction following earthquakes.

9 March 2023 (Saudi Arabia)—Letter protesting the ongoing incarceration of Professor Awad al-Qarni.

20 March 2023 (Iran)—Letter regarding poisonings at girls’ schools and women’s dormitories.

13 April 2023 (US)—Letter to the president of San Francisco State University protesting the investigation of Professor Maziar Behrooz.

17 May 2023 (Morocco)—Letter to King of Morocco and governing authorities protesting the ongoing harassment of and punitive measures against the prominent historian and human rights activist, Dr. Maati Monjib. Most recently, on 1 March 2023, he was suspended, without pay, from his position of Professor of History at the Mohammed V University in Rabat. This is our fourth letter decrying the mistreatment of this scholar and activist.
MESA Global Academy: Wrapping Up a Productive Year

The MESA Global Academy is pleased to be concluding an eventful year in which it supported 18 displaced scholars from Afghanistan, Egypt, Iran, Syria, and Turkey.

Highlights of the spring 2023 semester include paper and research workshops, panels, and talks hosted by George Mason University’s Middle East and Islamic Studies Program and the Schar School of Policy and Government; George Washington University’s Institute for Middle East Studies and the Department of Political Science; Georgetown University’s Center for Contemporary Arab Studies and the Humanities Initiative; Harvard Law School’s Program in Islamic Law; Northwestern University’s Keyman Modern Turkish Studies Program; the Project on Middle East Political Science (POMEPS); UCLA’s Center for Near Eastern Studies; the University of Chicago’s Center for Middle Eastern Studies; and the University of Washington’s Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, South Asia Center, Middle East Center, Center for Global Studies, and Center for Human Rights.

A number of these events were in-person, bringing Global Academy scholars, university partners, and colleagues physically together. Among these, UCLA held the panel, “Cultural Production and Studies in Post-Conflict Settings,” while Georgetown hosted a talk on “The Military and the Egyptian State.” At the University of Chicago, three scholars spoke on “Law, Political Regimes, and Order in the Middle East.” The incomparable experience of being in-person to join faculty and graduate students in research presentations and workshops has been something Global Academy scholars regretfully missed out on during the height of the pandemic and return to travel and visiting new campuses has been a particular highlight of the spring.

Another exciting opportunity to come together in-person was a February 2023 conference on displacement at the University of California, Irvine, titled “Refuge at Risk: Concepts, Infrastructures, Futures.” UC Irvine’s Humanities Research Institute brought eight Global Academy scholars and alumni as well as Program Manager Mimi Kirk to campus, where they spent two days attending sessions highlighting both individual stories of displacement and academic research on refuge and refugees.

This year, Global Academy scholars published five pieces with Jadaliyya’s “Scholars in Context” series, in which scholars discuss the significance of their work, identify the audiences they seek to reach, and outline their future research trajectories, giving readers an in-depth look at the latest research in a given field. A Global Academy roundtable on Afghanistan is also forthcoming from Jadaliyya, as well as a roundtable on
displacement featuring six Global Academy scholars being published in the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, helmed by Professor Ilana Feldman of George Washington University’s Department of Anthropology.

The Global Academy organized several professional development workshops this spring, with a particular emphasis on publishing. Professor Marc Lynch of George Washington University’s Department of Political Science presented a workshop on book and journal publishing in that discipline, and editors Jim Burr of the University of Texas Press, Caelyn Cobb of Columbia University Press, and Niels Hooper from the University of California Press offered sessions for Global Academy scholars, sharing insights on the process of submitting a book proposal and shepherding a manuscript through to publication at some of the leading university presses in the field of Middle East studies.

We are pleased to now feature a number of scholar bios on our website and are also at work on an expanded mentoring network for Global Academy scholars and alumni to continue developing their connections with other scholars in their disciplines. Applications for 2023-2024 scholarships will soon be under review, and the Global Academy Committee looks forward to welcoming the program’s new cohort this summer. As always, we thank our donors, supporters, and friends, who make the continuation of the MESA Global Academy possible.

To join our email list to be kept informed of events, publications, and other news, contact Program Manager Mimi Kirk at mimi@mesana.org.

The MESA annual meeting is an opportunity to connect with old friends and to meet new ones. It was wonderful to see the many conversations taking place throughout the hotel. Our photographer captured but a mere sampling of these reunions. Here are just a few to share.
Committee News

Committee on Undergraduate Middle East Studies

CUMES is a forum within MESA for sharing best practices in teaching and learning. CUMES sponsors panels at the MESA annual meeting on pedagogy, curriculum development, technology in the classroom, international study and other aspects of teaching and learning.

Roundtable on Pedagogy Held at MESA 2022

The Compassionate Classroom: Teaching Middle East Studies in the Covid Era

Since Spring 2020, the pedagogical landscape has shifted under our feet. Many of us learned new skills and programs, embarking on paths unimagined a few months earlier. This shift coincided with equally significant changes to how many academics viewed themselves and their roles, as the public debate about education became increasingly acrimonious. Yet many of us incorporated new and different pedagogies, changed our courses significantly or took on new research that informed our classes despite the added pressures or perhaps because of them. This roundtable brought together voices from research and teaching universities in the United States and Canada to discuss new techniques and strategies that emerged as we negotiated the challenges posed to our pedagogies in the Covid and post-Covid era.

Many panelists talked about enacting empathy while challenging students to confront their basic assumptions.

Heather J. Sharkey (University of Pennsylvania) discussed creating assignments based on experiential and embodied learning. She noted: “Aware of the online culture that was increasingly gluing students their seats, immobilizing them on computers and phones and compounding social isolation, I tried to engage students in activities that would let them move while triggering multiple senses and developing team spirit.” In her seminar on food history in the Islamic Middle East, she required students to go to the university’s library, find a recipe in a Middle East cookbook, make it, and then share their observations in a “virtual buffet” due to Covid prohibitions on campus. She also organized library scavenger hunts and a “show and tell” which resulted in her reformulating her baseline assumptions about students’ research skills. She had to quickly adjust her expectations and assignment to accommodate this, but in the end, she taught them how to search for, find, and check out physical copies of books. These practices helped her make learning a more collaborative, purposeful, and fun event. Students reported that these exercises helped them to bond with their classmates as well. Learning about the Middle East became a more joyful, memorable, and confidence-building experience.

Victoria Penziner Hightower (University of North Georgia) discussed bringing mindfulness techniques into the classroom in ways that were portable across levels. Teaching students to take deep breaths, making them recognize how to trick their brain into focusing through timed tasks, and developing goals that were specific and measurable, helped them take control of their learning. Incorporating discussions of intentionality not only into skills-based learning, but also into descriptions of various topics, helped her increase understanding without exoticizing the Middle East. Creating space for compassion for the students to learn helped to create space for compassion of the subjects they were learning in a place that has few people of Middle East descent and whose students bring into the classroom many stereotypes.

In his presentation, Pheroze Unwalla (University of British Columbia) discussed a series of experimental classroom emotionality, critical hope, and Students as Partners (SaP) interventions he designed and employed in UBC’s MES300 core course. Unwalla demonstrated how the interventions unsettle classroom conventions and
hierarchies as well as norms around objectivity and neutrality. Furthermore, these pedagogical approaches and interventions are framed as integral to challenging the Middle East as a construct and Middle East studies as an academic field, and the class is challenged to work collaboratively to help reimagine the future of MES. Finally, Unwalla noted how the practices work to lay bare the affective dimensions of studying, teaching, and working in our field, providing critical space for students to explore the roles of positionality, emotionality, empathy, and higher purpose in MES classrooms and their scholarship. He concluded with some results from his Scholarship of Teaching & Learning (SoTL) study on these interventions and their impacts on students’ engagement, emotional wellbeing, and more. The effects were palpable, dramatically shifting many students’ understanding of MES, academia, and knowledge production. More than that, through collaborative engagements with emotionality and critical hope interventions and the inculcation of a SaP ethos, the class largely succeeded in creating a different ethic and community of care that positioned empathy and compassion as reciprocal endeavors and essential to our work.

Kristi Barnwell (University of Illinois Springfield) highlighted two examples of vulnerability, connection, and engagement from two classroom experiences to reflect on where students (and educators) are at in connecting their MENA classroom lessons to lived experiences, even as we struggle to rebound in a late-pandemic learning environment. Following readings and discussion of the 1930 centenary memorialization of French occupation in Algeria, Barnwell used the “Ash Wednesday” episode of the 9/12 podcast to consider national narratives around memorials in the United States, followed by a discussion with students about what defining moments of their generations’ they believed would be memorialized: the pandemic; racial violence; school shootings; among other topics. This allowed students an opportunity to express frustration, anger, and grief in a productive and structured manner that also achieved important learning goals. In a second example, Barnwell described a difficult experience based in a lower-division, on-ground class where varied efforts to adjust schedules, readings, failed to be sufficient to get engaged students to complete coursework and readings. Her self-defined “failure” to bring students along after employing previously-effective tools resulted in an extremely vulnerable moment in the classroom. A broader discussion with panelists and audience members allowed for important discussions about how, when and if faculty feel they can be vulnerable in the classroom.

Carole Woodall (University of Colorado, Colorado Springs) approached the fostering of compassion in the Middle East Studies classroom by centering intellectual curiosity on the first day, which provides an avenue to craft unessay projects. A central component to thinking about and designing an unessay project is to initiate a discussion with students about the place of intellectual curiosity with the intention of thinking about what it feels like to be curious in the classroom. In conversation, the students had voiced frustration with being “objectified” and “feeling silenced” in a lecture-style environment. Having the space to be intellectually curious is a luxury, which many of my students, who are first-generation, military-affiliated, faith-based, working more than one job and have multiple family obligations, do not have time. My emphasis on holding space for vulnerability as a transformative act in the classroom is to acknowledge the overwhelming feeling of being unfamiliar with the region, although their daily sonic worlds engage with the region at large. On the first day, I focus on two exercises. We talk about how vulnerability is being able to openly discuss what is working and what is not, what has worked in other classroom settings and what has not. The first exercise is for students to record their comments on a Remote Learning and In Person Class Padlet. There are other educational technological platforms which can be used. I prefer Padlet. The next exercise is for students to start thinking about intellectual curiosity through a process of reflection and feeling. I asked the students to fill in the blanks to the following sentence, written by Turkish author Orhan Pamuk from his essay “On Reading: Words and Images.” Pamuk expresses his engagement with words with the following sentence: “to carry a book in your pocket in times of ______, is to be in possession of another world that can bring you _______.” Pamuk uses the words sadness and happiness. I asked the students how they would fill in the blanks and received the following responses: strife/escape; anxiety/strength; reflection/silence; and confusion/euphoria. The profundity of emotions expressed by the students on the first day of class set a tone of openness and collective support, which became essential to cultivate unessay work in the MES classroom.

The roundtable resulted in a deep engagement with the ways that our teaching practices and expectations have adjusted in the post-Covid restrictions era. The discussion gave all a lot to consider and we left the room energized, discussing the craft of teaching from an interdisciplinary perspective.
Manifold Destiny
Arabs at an American Crossroads of Exceptional Rule
JOHN TOFIK KARAM

“A superb reading of Arab Latin America.... John Karam insightfully examines this dynamic geopolitical landscape, constructing a palpable narrative of Arab diasporic history within and beyond the Americas.”
—ELLA SHOHAT, author of Taboo Memories, Diasporic Voices

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