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# ISSUES IN MIDDLE EAST STUDIES

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**MESA  
2024**

**November 16  
Events**

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## ABOUT MESA

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 into the thousands and now serves as an umbrella organization for dozens of institutional members and 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.



**Aslı Bâli**  
Yale Law School

I could not be prouder of the principled positions MESA has taken ... We have often been alone amongst our peer scholarly associations, but the positions we have taken ... enjoy the support and solidarity of our membership.

## Preparing Together for the Coming Storm

My first presidential letter addressed the ways that MESA responded to the twin crises of the [intensifying genocidal violence](#) being inflicted on Gaza and the [unprecedented degree of repression](#) of pro-Palestine advocacy across the country as North American campuses became focal points for protest. I could not be prouder of the principled positions MESA has taken in addressing both crises. We have often been alone amongst our peer scholarly associations, but the positions we have taken through [Board statements](#) and the [advocacy work](#) of the Association enjoy the support and solidarity of our membership. And throughout this past year it has been clear that a failure to take a stand against current attacks would portend a willingness to capitulate in advance as threats worsen.

In the run up to this fall's annual meeting, I returned to the memory of MESA's last annual meeting in Boston, which took place in the shadow of the results of the 2016 presidential election. At that time, a group of members suggested a brainstorming session for all those alarmed by the new administration's threat to enact a ban on travel to the United States from Muslim-majority countries. Out of that session, MESA created an "emergency task force," which later was renamed the [Task Force on Civil and Human Rights](#). During the first Trump administration, MESA joined a lawsuit challenging the so-called "Muslim ban" and undertook many other forms of advocacy. The Task Force produced research memos on a range of issues from [travel restrictions](#) to [OFAC compliance](#) to [pretextual public records act requests](#) and more. While the Task Force went into abeyance with the onset of the pandemic, we began to reconceive its role in the summer of 2023 as a range of state-level legislative initiatives — everything from efforts to [limit transgender rights](#) to [anti-BDS laws](#) to the [targeting of diversity programs](#) in higher education — raised new concerns about discrimination and rights violations that might affect our membership. The initial move to revive the Task Force was quickly overtaken by the wave of repression at colleges and universities across the country that began in the fall of 2023 and continues unabated.

In 2016, we rolled up our sleeves and joined the resistance to policies based on explicit forms of discrimination. Eight years later, we now know that the Supreme Court is willing to countenance anti-Muslim animus under the pretext of national security prerogatives. And in a post-October 7<sup>th</sup> context, it is increasingly clear that a range of state and federal elected officials are content to impose content-based restrictions on freedom of speech and association in the case of pro-Palestine advocacy. Moreover, the incoming administration has touted its plans to [go after the Department of Education](#) and [higher education funding](#) more generally, in part to punish colleges and universities for not going

far enough in repressing student activism. The Heritage Foundation — a conservative think tank — has produced several well-publicized blueprints for how the incoming administration can achieve its goals, including [Project 2025](#) and [Project Esther](#). Higher education, and Middle East studies in particular, is in the crosshairs of a culture war designed to shut down forms of knowledge production that do not align with rightwing policy preferences. What seemed once to be an aberration in 2016 now looks like a durable trend in the national politics of the United States. What should we expect this time and what can we do?

First, in terms of what we can expect, it is important to remember that many of the current threats to academic freedom, particularly as it relates to Middle East studies, preceded the election, and MESA has been working tirelessly through the [Committee on Academic Freedom](#) (CAF) to intervene on behalf students and faculty caught up in the accelerating repression on campuses across the country. We have already seen investigations by the Department of Education on [anti-discrimination grounds become weaponized](#) to repress protest and political expression on campuses. Second, Republican control of the House has already resulted in the [public show trials](#) convened by the Committee on Education and the Workforce compelling testimony from [university presidents](#) that began last December and [continued through the spring](#). These committee hearings also resulted in [congressional subpoenas](#)

being issued against universities for the first time in more than 150 years, requiring them to turn over private communications, which were then [released publicly in a House report](#) to embarrass university officials. Moreover, a bill designed to stifle pro-Palestine protest by giving a presidentially-appointed treasury secretary unilateral discretion to strip nonprofits of their tax exempt status — by [conflating protest with “material support” to terrorism](#) — has [already passed in the House](#) and might gain support in a Republican-led Senate next year. Third, we can identify trends at the state-level that are likely to have federal correlates in the coming years ranging from [anti-BDS laws](#), to attempts to [politicize accreditation](#) processes for institutions of higher education, to government mandates to impose [punitive viewpoint-specific repression](#), to the appointment of [new boards of trustees](#) to public universities, to [curricular interventions](#) by elected officials. Finally, it is worth noting that not all threats emanate from government action, as was made clear when [megadonors to private universities](#) sought to use their influence to remove university leadership and shift campus policies. In short, 2024 was a year that witnessed an unprecedented array of threats to academic freedom and to scholarship and teaching on the Middle East well before the election.

As we turn to consider what to expect in 2025, the landscape we face is admittedly bleak. Apart from threats to campuses from outside — whether emanating from government officials or private donors — there are also the [myriad repressive policy changes](#) that universities and colleges have willingly adopted this fall to stifle their students and appease their antagonists. [Faculty governance norms](#) have also come under attack as long-standing consultative practices have given way to top-down policy changes led by presidents, administrators and boards without the input of faculty. University and college leaders across the country

have adopted [institutional neutrality](#) pledges retreating from the public arena and from taking positions on political and social issues, even when those issues directly impact their campuses. As a result, fewer and fewer leaders in higher education have been willing to offer a robust defense of the pedagogical mission of the university, non-neutral commitments to knowledge production and critical inquiry, and the role of universities in civic engagement in a democracy. Laying down arms in advance, they have been almost uniformly silent about the meaning and consequences of the 2024 election for their campuses and for higher education.

By contrast, MESA has spent the last year fortifying its capacities to intervene in defense of academic freedom and to enhance our preparedness to defend our students, our colleagues and our field of study. We successfully applied for [a grant from the Mellon Foundation](#) that will support a new Academic Freedom Initiative to undertake data collection and analysis, as well as dissemination of our findings. We plan to build a public database recording the full scope and scale of policy changes across North American campuses impacting student, staff and faculty speech and associational

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activities. We also plan to provide analyses of these changes and track state and federal policies affecting academic speech, with a view to informing advocacy strategies in defense of academic freedom.

We are also deeply grateful for the support from our membership that made it possible for us to expand the MESA Global Academy to support ten additional fellows, including colleagues from Gaza and the Sudan, some of whom remain in Gaza and others of whom are now in Egypt or elsewhere in the region. This doubling of the cohort of Global Academy fellows was only possible thanks to the response from MESA members to our emergency fundraising appeal over the summer which met and exceeded our goal. We equally owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Mimi Kirk, program manager of the MESA Global Academy since 2020 who graciously agreed to double her workload for much of this year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mimi for her incredible work over the last four years. She will be transitioning from her role as program manager to a new position at Georgetown, but fortunately she has agreed to stay on as a volunteer with the Global Academy and I am delighted that we will all continue to have the privilege of working side by side with her.

Over the last year, MESA served a coordinating role in bringing together the many organizations that have worked on academic freedom issues in the post-October 7th context. We shared notes, compared strategies, and sought to avoid redundancies in our data collection and advocacy strategies. We are now expanding these efforts to encompass partnerships with AAUP and other scholarly, legal and policy organizations that we hope will be willing to join us and coordinate efforts in defense of academic freedom. We hope that these activities will prove useful to all of our individual and institutional members as we seek to define new approaches to defending our field of study and to preserving speech and associational rights on campuses.

The mission of higher education is to teach and conduct research but also to model the civic foundations of a democratic public sphere that preserves the values of openness, accessibility, and freedom of speech and association to enable lively debate and the vigorous exchange of ideas. As the Board made clear in its first letter following October 7th:

We reaffirm that there can be no compromise of the right and ability of students, faculty and staff at universities across North America (and elsewhere) to express their viewpoints free of harassment, intimidation and threats to their livelihoods and safety. We also believe that there is no military solution, and we remain steadfast in our view that the only path forward on the ground is one premised on the equal rights of Palestinians and Israelis to living in dignity and safety.

Whatever may come in 2025, MESA will continue to stand with our membership through the work of the Board, the Secretariat, CAF and the Task Force, as well as our new Academic Freedom Initiative, in defense of our shared commitment to higher education, to critical inquiry and knowledge production in the field of Middle East studies and our ethical commitments as scholars and teachers to preserve the space for informed debate and dissent.

While this year's annual meeting was virtual, we were able to have one day of hybrid events that included an in-person component at our new headquarters at Georgetown University. I had the great pleasure of attending the hybrid day on Saturday, November 16th and connecting with the many students and colleagues from the Washington, DC area who came for the awards ceremony, the presidential panel and our annual reception. The engagement with our membership during the hybrid business meeting and the in-person conversations between events and at the reception in DC reaffirmed my sense of our scholarly community as one marked by a sense of deep solidarity with communities in the Middle East — beginning with those in Palestine, Lebanon and Sudan, who have been most grievously harmed in this past year — and a deep sense of shared purpose in confronting the coming challenges. It remains an honor and a privilege for me to serve as the President of MESA. As we face 2025 together, I am eager to work closely with the MESA Secretariat and the many volunteers from our membership whose year-round work sustains the Association as a home for our intellectual and scholarly community.

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**Jeffrey D. Reger**

## MESA in 2024 and Beyond

Thank you once again to our members for your support throughout yet another more than eventful year, and thank you to MESA's volunteers and employees for all of your hard work throughout 2024.

In addition to continuing our programmatic work of the Annual Meeting as well as supporting all of the efforts of our Board and its dozens of committees, MESA under the leadership of President Asli Bâli and myself initiated two major projects this year.

The first was to raise funds for scholars affected by the wars in the region. I am honored to report that thanks to the generosity of our donors—in particular our previous presidents and board members, as well as our members, and due in particular to the efforts of our esteemed Development Committee—MESA raised \$153,000 to support our colleagues in Gaza and Sudan in their time of utmost need. I remain in awe of our colleagues for their generosity, and I am so proud that MESA was able to do this on an emergency basis for this year. I must thank our colleagues at the Global Academy for their assistance in effecting the transfers.

The second is the recent \$312,000 two-year grant received by MESA from the Mellon Foundation. Again, thanks to the energetic and responsive leadership of President Asli Bâli, we worked together with Marc Lynch, the chair of the MESA Task Force on Civil and Human Rights, to develop and refine our proposal throughout the summer, and we thank the Mellon Foundation for their support. This grant will result in the creation of two new MESA staff positions: a full-time dedicated researcher and a half-time support person. The hiring process is ongoing, and we should have additional public resources addressing the crises on campuses regarding the climate of academic freedom up on a new website sometime in the new year, with more data and reports to come over the next two years in response to the changing conditions at North American college and universities.

### ANNUAL MEETING UPDATES

This year's meeting was larger than our Denver 2022 meeting, which met the association's goal of substituting a virtual meeting for our western meeting every three years, as had been decided during the peak of the pandemic in 2021/2022 in response to member requests to remain virtual and retain accessibility. I would like to thank the Program Committee chaired by Laura Bier for her and her committee's impressive work.

I am pleased to note as well that we have booked our next two meeting locations. Next year in 2025, the MESA Annual Meeting will be back in DC and in person at the Westin Washington, DC Downtown. We will again meet there in 2028, and we hope to have found our new DC home, and at great terms. (Our hotel rate next year is \$209, which is lower than our contracted rates for DC in 2017 and lower than what we were contracted to pay in 2020 and 2023 at the Marriott Wardman Park prior to its bankruptcy.)

In 2026, we will be meeting in Boston for our 60th anniversary at the Hilton Boston Park Plaza, which should be an ideal location for our celebration and another very large meeting.

For 2027, we have not yet decided on the format. We have requested the feedback of our membership, past and present, which has been overwhelmingly in favor of meeting in person. We will continue to evaluate our meeting format and pattern to meet the needs of our membership, which is currently expressing a strong preference to a return to mainly in-person meetings.

I particularly enjoyed the in-person special events on November 16 at Georgetown, and was so glad to see many of our members both online and at our new institutional home. Please see the cover for images from the day.

## JOURNAL AND STAFF UPDATES

Some other major items to note: MESA has selected new editors for the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, and for the *Review of Middle East Studies*. We announce **the names and new locations of the journals** in this very issue. The transitions in staff will occur in the summer of 2025 simultaneously. Thank you to the Publications Outreach Committee and in particular its chair, Senem Aslan, for all of their work over the past year.

I wish that I had the space to elaborate upon and thank our many committees for the immense amount of volunteer work required to keep the organization running, but I will keep it short by singling out my fellow officers President Ash Bâli and previous president Eve Troutt Powell for their exceptional efforts in these trying times.

I also would like to note some of the behind-the-scenes labor that keeps our association running. Calliandra Hermanson has more than had her hands full with the increased Committee on Academic Freedom-North America workload since last fall, and she did a wonderful job in working together as team with the entire staff on our Awards Committees and Ceremony, Film Festival, Advertisers, Exhibitors, Sponsors, and outreach for our institutional membership.

I must as always thank Sara Palmer for her continued steadfastness amidst everything, with gratitude in particular for her exceptional efforts in supporting the MESA Development Committee and our campaign to create the MESA Global Academy-Emergency Fund. As those who work with us know, Sara is very much the heart of MESA.

Last but not least, I would like to offer a fond farewell to MESA Global Academy Program Manager Mimi Kirk for her incredible work over the past year, and in the three years prior. We are so glad that she is remaining in our very office suite, as she starts a new role in January 2025 as Associate Director of Georgetown University's Center for Contemporary Arab Studies.



**Donia Khraishi**

Donia Khraishi joined the staff full time in August as MESA's Programs Assistant. Donia holds a master's in Arab Studies from the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies and a bachelor's from Macalester College, and she previously worked at IREX and interned at the Wilson Center, Human Rights Watch, and UNDP. She has already proven to be an asset to our operations by jumping into the Annual Meeting planning cycle at its most busy and critical time, helping in particular with checking and correcting the schedule and the program, as well as handling much of our social media, and facilitating connections with our new host institution at Georgetown.

# 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.

## JOINT LETTER WITH CAF Condemning the decimation of the education sector in Gaza

12 September 2024

Dear President Biden, Vice-President Harris, Secretary of State Blinken, and Secretary of Defense Austin,

We write to you on behalf of the Committee on Academic Freedom (CAF) and the Board of Directors of the Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA) to vehemently condemn the government of Israel's brutal and cruel military campaign against the Palestinian people of Gaza and beseech you to urgently insist upon its immediate cessation. According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health - Gaza, the death toll of Gazan Palestinians from Israeli attacks from 7 October 2023 until 9 September 2024 reached a shocking 40,972, with at least 94,761 wounded and untold numbers of dead who remain beneath the rubble. In this letter, as in our last two letters to Israeli government officials (25 January 2024; 21 November 2023), we focus on the decimation of the education sector in the Gaza Strip through the military's killing of students, faculty, and staff and its targeted destruction of schools, university buildings, and related facilities. We are especially concerned to underscore the magnitude of the decimation by identifying by name and affiliation as many of the murdered Gazan scholars as is possible at this time.

MESA was founded in 1966 to promote scholarship and teaching on the Middle East and North Africa. The preeminent organization in the field, MESA publishes the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* and has nearly 2800 members worldwide. MESA is committed to ensuring academic freedom and freedom of expression, both within the region and in connection with the study of the region in North America and elsewhere.

Over the past 11 months, the unprecedented extent of death and destruction wrought by

Israel's war on Gaza has devastated the educational sector. According to the United Nations (UN) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), more than 625,000 students—90,000 of whom are university students—and close to 23,000 teachers have been impacted by attacks on educational facilities and school closures. All remain without access to formal education or even a safe place to shelter.

According to the UN in conjunction with the Ministry of Health, as of 8 September 2024, more than 10,000 students and 411 educational staff have been killed, while more than 15,394 students and 2,411 teachers have been injured since 7 October (OCHA, Humanitarian Situation Update #215, Gaza Strip, 9 September 2024). Moreover, 90 percent of school buildings have been damaged, and 85 percent of educational facilities are "out of service due to direct and deliberate targeting" (OCHA, Gaza Humanitarian Response Update, 22 July–4 August 2024). Within the first 100 days of the onslaught, all major universities were destroyed [see our letter 25 January 2024]. To date, numerous colleges and technical institutes have been severely damaged, if not destroyed. The physical infrastructure necessary for higher education—including laboratories, libraries, classrooms, the latest technologies, etc.—no longer exists. Furthermore, in the absence of (reliable) electricity, internet connectivity and even phone reception, even remote instruction is extremely challenging, if not practically impossible.

As for primary and secondary education, 191 schools, including those run by UNRWA, have been bombed or vandalized. UNRWA, for one, has reported that no official schooling is available at any of its 200 schools. While 119 government schools have been heavily damaged, more than 62 have been completely destroyed. Many schools that have served to shelter internally displaced Palestinians, either because of the destruction of their homes or because of (repeated) evacuation orders, are among those facilities that have been destroyed, if not severely damaged, leading to the deaths of many

of those taking shelter. Recent examples include: incidents on 6 and 7 September, when a tent housing internally displaced persons in Halima Al Sadia School in Jabalya Camp and a prayer hall inside Amr Ibn Al Aas school in Gaza city were hit; the targeting of a school in Deir el-Balah on 20 August, a school in Gaza City on 10 August (OCHA Humanitarian Situation Update #203, 12 Aug 2024) and two on 8 August (OCHA Humanitarian Situation Update #202, 9 August 2024), causing tremendous loss of life. Just the week before, four schools serving as shelters were attacked. Indeed, according to an assessment conducted by UNICEF, OCHA and Save the Children, 53% of schools used as shelters — amounting to some 190 — have been directly and deliberately hit by Israel's military in the last 11 months.

In addition to the massive destruction of Gaza's physical educational infrastructure — the rebuilding of which will require many years and billions of dollars — the systematic killing of our Palestinian colleagues in Gaza needs to be highlighted. Scholars from across the humanities, social sciences, and STEM fields, widely respected by their peers and students, have been targeted and murdered. These academics represented the intellectual leadership of the Palestinian community in Gaza and were the foundation for the accumulation and dissemination of knowledge.

Various organizations have been documenting the Israeli military's killing of Palestinian scholars and university professors. As a precise accounting is obstructed by the ongoing attacks and insecurity, we provide below only a partial list of the names and, where possible, academic affiliations of those scholars who have been killed. These individuals represent a very small percentage of those who have been integral to higher education and intellectual life in the Gaza Strip and have been catastrophically affected by death and suffering: the hundreds of faculty and staff and thousands of students and their families who have been killed in military assaults, bombings, or through prolonged exposure to starvation and disease since 7 October 2023.



### University Presidents:

Professor Sufyan Tayeh, Islamic University of Gaza  
Professor Said Al-Zibda, University College of Applied Sciences  
Professor Muhammad Eid Shabir, former President, Islamic University of Gaza

### Deans:

Dean Ibrahim al-Astal, Islamic University of Gaza  
Dean Khitam Al-Wasifi, Islamic University of Gaza  
Dean Mahmoud Abu Daf, Islamic University of Gaza  
Dean Omar Farwanah, Faculty of Medicine, Islamic University of Gaza  
Dean Taysir Ibrahim, Faculty of Shari'a and Law, Islamic University of Gaza  
Dean Nasser Abu Al-Nour, Faculty of Nursing, Islamic University of Gaza  
Dean Ahmed Abu Absa, University of Palestine  
Dean Ahmed Al-Dalu, University of Palestine  
Dean Naim Baroud, Faculty of Arts, Islamic University of Gaza

### Professors and academic staff (listed in groups by institutional affiliation):

Professor Adham Hassouna, Al-Aqsa University  
Professor Ahmad Mahmoud al-Qara, Al-Aqsa University  
Professor Nesma Abu Shaqra, Al-Aqsa University  
Professor Abdel-Nasir Al-Saqqa, Al-Aqsa University  
Professor Nidal Qaddura, Al-Aqsa University  
Professor Wiesam Essa, Al-Aqsa University  
Professor Fadel Abu Hain, Al-Aqsa University  
Dr. Mohamad Hammad, lecturer in Business, Al-Aqsa University  
Yahya Ghabban, lecturer, Faculty of Arts, Al-Aqsa University  
  
Professor Jihad Al-Masri, Al-Quds Open University  
Professor Hassan Kafarmeh, Al-Quds Open University  
Professor Muhammed Atef Awad, Al-Quds Open University  
Professor Muhammad Al-Nabahin, Al-Quds Open University  
  
Professor Ibrahim Barhoum Abu Salah, Islamic University of Gaza  
Professor Prof Mohammad Bakheit, Islamic University of Gaza  
Islam Suleiman Haboush, Islamic University of Gaza  
Professor Midhat Saidem, Islamic University of Gaza  
Professor Nahed Al-Rafati, Islamic University of Gaza  
Professor Refaat AlAreer, Islamic University of Gaza  
Professor Mohammed Awad, Islamic University of Gaza

Professor Rizq Arruq, Islamic University of Gaza  
Professor Azzu Affanah, Deputy Dean, Faculty of Education, Islamic University of Gaza  
Professor Muhammad Bakhit, Islamic University of Gaza  
Professor Salem Abu-Mukhdah, Islamic University of Gaza  
Professor Muhammad Dabbour Assad, Islamic University of Gaza  
Professor Nasir Al-Yafawi, Islamic University of Gaza  
Professor Sharif Al-Assali, Islamic University of Gaza  
Professor Youssef al-Kahlout, Arabic Language & Literature, Islamic University of Gaza  
Rahaf Hanideq, lecturer, Islamic University of Gaza  
Professor Mohamad Abu Al-Saeed, Islamic University of Gaza  
Dr. Hossam Hamada, Faculty of Medicine, Islamic University of Gaza  
Amin Dabbour, Professor of Political Science, Islamic University of Gaza  
Dr. Mohammad Dabbour, cancer pathologist and head of the preclinical department, College of Medicine, Islamic University of Gaza  
Dr. Adnan Ahmad Al-Barsh, Professor, Faculty of Medicine, Islamic University of Gaza  
Mohamad Al-Bakhiet, Islamic University of Gaza  
  
Professor Amin Al-Bahtiti, Al-Azhar University of Gaza  
Bassam Shahin, Deputy Dean, Faculty of Intermediate Studies, Al Azhar University  
  
Professor Ali Al-Qirinawi, University of Palestine  
Professor Ibrahim Saidam, University of Palestine  
Professor Mustafa Al-Laqta, University of Palestine  
Professor Mustafa Al-Naqib, University of Palestine  
Anas Al-Bursh, lecturer, Faculty of Law, University of Palestine  
  
Director Tareq Thabet, University College of Applied Sciences  
Professor Shaher Yaghi, University College of Applied Sciences  
Professor Wael Al-Zard, University College of Applied Sciences  
  
Professor Mohamad Abd Al-Ghuffur, Islamic Da'wah College  
  
Marwan Tarazi, Director, Center for Continuing Education at Birzeit University, Gaza office  
  
Do'a Al-Masri, librarian and researcher, Edward Said Library

### Faculty, academic staff and researchers (institutional affiliation incomplete):

Dr. Ziad Tatri, researcher in Neonatology and lecturer  
Dr. Mohamad Adwan, professor of Medicine  
Shahidah Al-Bahbani, poet and writer  
Abd Al-Karim Hashash, historian, researcher, writer  
Rola Fadl Abd Al-Jawad, professor of Multimedia  
Muhamad Fayez al-Najjar, professor of Engineering  
Hassan Al-Rafid, researcher, writer, lecturer in Economics  
  
Dr. Rafet Lobad  
Professor Khalil Abu Yahya  
Dr. Maisara Al-Rayyes  
Professor Sereen Al-Attar  
Professor Usama Al-Muzayni  
Professor Ismail Abu Sa'adah  
Professor Khaled Al-Ramlawi  
Professor Said Al-Dahshan  
Professor Raed Qaddura  
Professor Muhammad Abu-Zur  
Professor Yusuf Juma'a Salameh  
Professor Nida Affanah  
Professor Mu'min Shuwaydah  
Professor Siddiq Nassar  
Professor Ahmad Abu Saadah  
Professor Jamilah Al-Shanti  
Professor Muhamamd Jamil Za'anin  
Professor Ismail Al-Ghamri  
Professor Walid Al-Amudi  
Professor Abdullah Al-Amudi  
Professor Hassan Al-Radi  
Professor Muhammad Abu Amara  
Professor Mahmud Al-Loh  
Professor Khalid Al-Najjar  
Professor Muhammad Al-Najjar  
Professor Muhammad Hassounah  
Professor Yasir Radwan  
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Professor Hazem Al-Jamali  
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Professor Essam Al-Lulu

In our letters to Israeli government officials regarding the current war on Gaza [25 January 2024; 21 Nov 2023], we insisted that as the occupying authority, Israel's targeting of the Palestinian educational sector buildings through bombings and other forms of aggression constituted a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, relating to the protection of civilians in time of war. The government and military's resultant obstruction of education has also been a clear violation of the right to education enshrined in Article 26 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 13 of the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. The right to education is binding under all circumstances and to be protected in all situations, including during crises and emergencies resulting from civil strife and war. Israel is a party to the UDHR and a signatory to the ICESCR and is therefore obligated to uphold them. We remind

you that as a party to the Geneva Conventions and as a leading supporter of international human rights law, the United States also bears a substantial responsibility to ensure that countries like Israel that receive substantial financial and military support from the United States observe their obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law.

The massive assaults against educational infrastructure, educators and students at all levels and throughout Gaza since 7 October are part and parcel of a larger, deliberate campaign of ethnic cleansing intended to destroy the very foundations and bases of continued Palestinian life in Gaza, in violation of all of Israel's legal obligations and, indeed, in violation of basic precepts of humanity. See summaries and statements of the International Court of Justice 19 July 2024, 24 May 2024; MESA letter 11 March 2024.

We heed the call of our esteemed Palestinian colleagues in Gaza (Open letter 29 May 2024) to support them as they resist the brutal military onslaught and strive to continue to teach their students and rebuild their education sector. We urge the United States' Government to demand an immediate and permanent ceasefire and the total withdrawal of Israeli military forces from the Gaza Strip – indeed, the termination of the genocidal violence against the Palestinian people.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,  
Ash Ü. Bâli  
MESA President  
Professor, Yale Law School

Laurie Brand  
Chair, Committee on Academic Freedom  
Professor Emerita, University of Southern California

cc:

Linda Thomas-Greenfield, US Ambassador to the UN  
Samantha Power, Administrator of the US Agency for International Development  
Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister, Government of Canada  
Mélanie Joly, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Government of Canada  
Josep Borrell-Fontelles, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy  
Viktor Almquist, Press Officer – Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) and Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI), European Parliament  
Kati Piri, Member, Committee on Foreign Affairs, European Parliament  
Maria Arena, Chair of the European Parliament Subcommittee on Human Rights  
Dunja Mijatovic, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights

Francesca Albanese, UN Special Rapporteur on the occupied Palestinian territories  
Michael Lynk, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories  
James Heenan, UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ramallah  
The Honorable Veronica Michelle Bachelet Jeria, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights  
UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, MENA section  
Irene Khan, UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression  
The Honorable Mary Lawlor, UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders  
Farida Shaheed, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education  
Cheikh Niang, Chair of UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People  
Ajith Sunghay, Head of Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory  
Noha Bawazir, Head of Office and UNESCO Representative, UNESCO Liaison Office, Ramallah, Palestinian delegation to UNESCO



## Summaries of Endorsements and Other Joint Statements

### JOINT LETTER TO IRANIAN AUTHORITIES FROM BRISMES, SESAMO AND MESA

**10 September 2024**

The Committees on Academic Freedom of the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES), the Italian Society for Middle East Studies (SeSaMO), and the Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA) have written a statement to express concern about the persistent violations of academic freedom, including freedom of research and teaching, and freedom of expression in Iran over the past two years.

### ENDORSEMENT OF SEMOMM STATEMENT REGARDING FRANÇOIS BURGAT

**29 July 2024**

MESA's endorsement of the statement issued by our sister association, La Société des études sur le Moyen-Orient et les Mondes musulmans (SEMOMM), regarding the recent arrest and interrogation of the world-renowned scholar François Burgat for alleged "advocacy of terrorism".

# Upcoming membership referendum on bylaws amendments

The Board proposed a number of technical updates to MESA's bylaws, which will be sent to the membership for a vote by referendum. All 2025 full MESA members will be asked to cast their vote along with the 2025 Nominating Committee ballot, which will be sent in February 2025. Bylaws amendments require a supermajority of two-thirds in favor to be approved.

## BYLAWS AMENDMENTS (PROPOSALS)

### **Bylaws Amendment #1.**

**Add Personnel Committee to Article VI as new Section 5, move current Section 5. Other Committees to become Section 6.**

Proposed new committee text:

Section 5. Personnel Committee. The Personnel Committee shall consist of three persons: The MESA President as chair, and two senior Fellow Members from the Board of Directors—one of whom may be the Past President (if available)—appointed by the President in consultation with the Executive Director. The Committee shall conduct the annual review of the Executive Director, address any personnel issues that arise, and assess the staffing needs of the Association in collaboration with the Executive Director. The Committee shall submit its report and recommendations annually to the Board of Directors for approval.

### **Bylaws Amendment #2.**

**Update petition signature threshold:**

Update number of members required for petitions in five places. Current number is 25, changing to 75.

Article III. Section 4. b. 1) seventy-five

Article IV. Section 7: seventy-five members (Fellows); seventy-five Student Members

Article V. Section 2: seventy-five fellows

Article VIII. seventy-five voting members

### **Bylaws Amendment #3.**

**Increase notice period for receipt of resolutions by an additional week.**

Update resolutions to be received three weeks in advance, currently two weeks before the Annual Meeting.

Article III. Section 4. b. 1) three weeks

### **Bylaws Amendment #4.**

**Add a miscellaneous provision.**

Add a new section in ARTICLE VII. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Section 9. Virtual Meetings and Participation by Certain Electronic Means

Subject to the provisions of applicable statutes and these Bylaws, any meetings of the Members and meetings of the Directors, including Annual Meetings, may be held virtually or in a hybrid format approved by the Board of Directors through the use of any means of communication by which all Members and Directors participating may simultaneously hear each other during the meeting and have a reasonable opportunity to participate in the meeting. A Member or Director participating in a meeting by this means is deemed to be present in person at the meeting.

# Recent Activity from MESA's Committee on Academic Freedom



CAF comprises two sub-committees: MENA (Middle East and North Africa) and NA (North America). The mission of CAF is to address violations by protesting them at the highest government and diplomatic levels of the country where the violation occurs. If you learn of human rights or academic freedom violations please email the committee at [caf@mesana.org](mailto:caf@mesana.org).

*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](http://mesana.org)).*

### 21 May 2024 (US)

Letter to the administration of the University of Texas at Dallas regarding the arrest and suspension of peacefully protesting faculty and students

### 3 June 2024 (US)

Letter to the administration of San José State University regarding the suspension of Professor Sang Hea Kil

### 3 June 2024 (US)

Letter to the President of New York University and the Interim Vice Chancellor of NYU Abu Dhabi regarding the deportation of two NYUAD community members and other repressive acts by the UAE authorities

### 18 June 2024 (US)

Letter to the University of Minnesota regarding its decision to rescind a job offer to Dr. Raz Segal

### 27 June 2024 (US)

Letter protesting a bill proposed by the National Union of Israeli Students that stipulates that academic institutions in Israel are obliged to terminate faculty, lecturers and researchers who express criticism of Israel government policies and prac-

tices. The letter condemns, as well, a billboard smear campaign conducted to promote the proposed bill.

### 15 July 2024 (Turkey)

Letter responding to response from rector of Bogazici University

### 16 August 2024 (US)

Letter to the Chancellor of the Florida State University System regarding the policing and censorship of course materials relating to Israel/Palestine

### 19 August 2024 (US)

Letter to Members of California's Senate opposing SB 1287 which threatens freedom of speech and assembly at the state's public universities and colleges

### 26 August 2024 (US)

Letter to the University of Pennsylvania denouncing its collaboration with the House Committee on Education and the Workforce's investigation of faculty members

### 30 August 2024 (US)

Letter to New York University expressing concern about its new "Guidance and Expectations for Student Conduct"

### 26 September 2024 (US)

Letter to Muhlenberg College about the threatened termination of tenured Professor Maura Finkelstein

### 30 September 2024 (US)

Letter to Cornell University protesting the suspension and threatened deportation of graduate student Momodou Taal

### 30 September 2024 (US)

Letter to Wake Forest University concerning the cancellation of a lecture by Professor Rabab Abdelhadi

### 8 October 2024 (US)

Letter to Michigan State University expressing concern about the university's censorship of an exhibition at the Broad Art Museum

### 4 November 2024 (US)

Letter to the leaders of the Claremont colleges regarding their repression of academic freedom and freedom of speech and assembly

### 4 November 2024 (US)

Letter to Harvard University regarding the suspension of library access for students and faculty for exercising their right to free speech

### 5 November 2024 (US)

Letter to the University of Minnesota protesting the barring of students from campus without due process

### 6 November 2024 (US)

Letter to Swarthmore College expressing concern about its flawed disciplinary process

### 7 November 2024 (Tunisia)

Letter to Tunisian government demanding the release from detention of French doctoral student

### 16 November 2024 (US)

Letter expressing concern about the disciplinary action by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) against one of its doctoral students, Prahlad Iyengar.

### 20 November 2024 (UAE)

Letter protesting the latest trial of Dr. Nasser bin Ghaith, who has already spent 11 years in prison and his sentencing to life in prison on dubious charges of “establishing and managing a clandestine terrorist organization,” as well as decrying his mistreatment in prison.

### 26 November 2024 (US)

Letter to the Interim President of Cornell University regarding his criticism of an approved course proposal.

## Profiles of Dismissed Iranian Academics (2021-2023)

CAF has composed a list of nearly 100 Iranian academics' profiles who have been dismissed from their university positions since the beginning of the presidency of Ebrahim Raisi in 2021 through the *Woman, Life, Freedom* nationwide movement in 2022-2023 when Iranian universities emerged as centers of activism. See the full report and dataset [here](#).

## Academic Freedom and Campus Climate: Resources and Reporting

Consult the [Campus Climate resource page](#), which was created for MESA members in response to academic freedom-related developments on campuses across North America and beyond. It has been updated regularly as we identify or create additional resources.

MESA has also created a campus questionnaire, which can be found [here](#).

In addition, MESA has established the email address [campusclimate@mesana.org](mailto:campusclimate@mesana.org) for members to send statements by university presidents, faculty, student groups, news reports about events or developments on campus, as well as anonymized summaries of individual experiences. These materials will help MESA and its Committee on Academic Freedom better respond to the ongoing threats to free speech and academic freedom as well as serve as an archive of this terribly difficult time.

### Committee on Academic Freedom

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## The MESA Global Academy Supporting Scholars in Crisis



*The MESA Global Academy supports displaced scholars from MENA. It harnesses the strengths of MESA's institutional and individual members to bolster the careers of researchers whose academic trajectory has been adversely affected by developments in their home countries.*

This year, the Global Academy, with help from the MESA Development Committee, conducted extensive outreach to secure emergency funds for scholars from and in Gaza and Sudan. Thanks to the generosity of past MESA presidents and members, we have to date raised more than \$150,000. These funds are supporting nine scholars from Gaza and four scholars from Sudan, including the financing of four visiting professorships at the American University in Cairo for professors displaced from Gaza.

This academic year we are also supporting 17 other new scholars and 16 continuing scholars from Afghanistan, Iran, Syria, Turkey, and Yemen. In previous years we have supported scholars from Egypt, Iraq, and Lebanon. Close to half of the scholars have been women.

In October 2024 Global Academy Scholar Dr. Bashir Mobasher, president of the Afghanistan Law and Political Science Association, spearheaded the association's first annual conference in exile, held at American University. Current and alumni Global Academy scholars Drs. Shamshad Pasarlay of the University of Chicago, Haroun Rahimi of the American University of Afghanistan, and Omar Sadr of the University of Pittsburgh also served on the Organizing Committee and presented their research, along with Drs. Tariq Basir, Mirwais Parsa, and Fawad Poya of the University of Pittsburgh, Dr. Mahir Hazem of the University of Washington, and Dr. Mustafa Saqib of Rutgers University.

Later that month, several Global Academy Scholars and Program Manager Mimi Kirk attended the Scholars at Risk United States General Assembly at Carnegie Mellon University, and Ms. Kirk then traveled to Istanbul to present on a panel at the Arab Council for the Social Sciences' conference, "Safeguarding Knowledge in the Arab Region."

The Global Academy hosted two workshops at the MESA Annual Meeting in November: one on "Conflict, Power, and Knowledge: Studies from the Middle East and Diaspora," and one on "Framing Gender, Feminism, and Terrorism." Five Global Academy scholars, both current and alumni, participated in each workshop, which were chaired by Dr. Jessica Winegar of Northwestern University and Dr. Sherene Razack of UCLA, respectively. The program also held two special sessions with Global Academy scholars from Gaza and Sudan, one on rebuilding higher education in Gaza, chaired by Dr. Mezna Qato of Cambridge University and Dr. Judith Tucker of Georgetown University, and the other on the crisis in Sudan, chaired by Dr. Marie Grace Brown of the University of Kansas and Dr. Eve Troutt Powell of the University of Pennsylvania. Spring 2025 events will include online panels on law and justice in Afghanistan at the University of Washington, on development and peacebuilding in Sudan and Yemen at McGill University, and on narrative, power, and language at the University of Chicago.

The Global Academy's partnership with the Arab Studies Institute has resulted in a successful *ʔadaliyya* series titled "Scholars in Context," in which our scholars describe their research and the paths they took to arrive at it, providing a platform for readers to gain an in-depth look at the latest research in a given field. To date, *ʔadaliyya* has published 26 of these Q&As, with four more of our current scholars publishing their contribution this fall. *ʔadaliyya* will also publish a special Q&A series with our Gaza scholars this year. In addition, two roundtables penned by Global Academy scholars, one on constitutions and the rule of law and the other on gender and violence, are in the draft stage and will be published by the *Review of Middle East Studies*.

We are also pleased to offer Global Academy scholars professional development workshops each year on a range of topics. This fall, Global Academy Committee members presented on pedagogy in North America; the academic job application process; non-traditional academic career paths; conference presentations; and teaching strategies.

A Global Academy goal is to help displaced scholars transition to more permanent employment. We are pleased to report that around a quarter of Global Academy scholars (a proportion comparable to the native North American academic population in the social sciences and humanities) has gone on to secure impressive positions in North America and Europe, including seven tenure track positions, four long-term research and teaching professorships, and four permanent academic or academic adjacent administrator positions. We are also aware that scholars from Gaza and Sudan, as well as potentially from other locations, may wish to return and rebuild their academic lives post-conflict; the Global Academy is dedicated to support this process.

Global Academy scholars often express their appreciation for the support they receive through the program. In our latest anonymous survey, comments such as the following were voiced:

- “[The Global Academy] helped me to develop my knowledge and network, which was a big challenge for me as an exiled scholar.”
- “Thank you so much for this opportunity. I am now a strong supporter.”
- “It has been an amazing experience for me.”

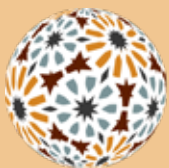
Thanks to all our donors and partners for your continued support for this critical initiative!

Masoud Noori (NYU) sharing experiences as a displaced scholar at the Scholars at Risk US General Assembly at Carnegie Mellon University



Omar Sadr (University of Pittsburgh) speaking in a breakout session at the SAR US General Assembly

Mirwais Parsa (University of Pittsburgh) posing a question at the Afghanistan Law and Political Science Association first annual conference in exile, held at American University



**MESA  
Global Academy**

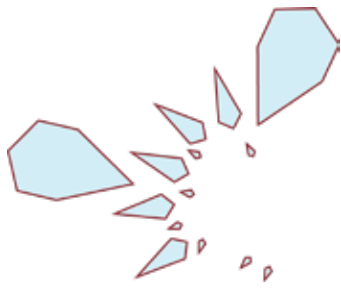
**MESA Global Academy Committee**

- Beth Baron (Chair)** CUNY
- Aslı Bali** Yale Law School
- Aslı İğsız** New York University
- Arzoo Osanloo** University of Washington
- Judith Tucker** Georgetown University
- Jeffrey Reger** (ex-officio) MESA Executive Director
- Mimi Kirk** (Program Manager) [mimi@mesana.org](mailto:mimi@mesana.org)

[mesaglobalacademy.org](http://mesaglobalacademy.org)



Mimi Kirk (far right) presenting at the Arab Council for the Social Sciences' conference, "Safeguarding Knowledge in the Arab Region"



# Committee on Undergraduate Middle East Studies (CUMES)

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.

## 2024 Workshop & Poster Session

Since 2014, the Committee for Undergraduate Middle East Studies (CUMES) Undergraduate Workshop has featured 147 students from a broad range of continents and institutions. This year's Undergraduate Research Workshop included 10 students. Their virtual presentations combined disciplines from religion, history, and international relations, and linguistics. Their topics represented some truly cutting-edge topics from gender and sexuality, disputing established political and history narratives, textual/semantic reinterpretations, and climate change. The student participants were chosen through a competitive application process. The students participated in a workshop that included a small-group panel and a public poster session. Posters were also displayed on MESA's website and in a gallery on the MESA Conference hub.

### 2024's Participants

**Rachel Beth Acker** (UNC Chapel Hill)

*Cowboys in Persia: The Role of Racialized and Gendered Narratives in the 1953 Coup in Iran*

**Isabel Bartosh** (Seattle Pacific University)

*Genderqueer Expressions in Arab-Islamic Societies*

**Charlie Ehrman** (Queens College, CUNY)

*Ali Al Warda City vs. Sadr City: Contrasting Futures in Post-Conflict Iraq*

**Elias Henderson** (Davidson College)

*From Mules to Metros: Urban Transportation Infrastructure in Arab Metropolises*

**Jasper Hunsinger** (Georgetown University)

*"Re-Amazighization" or a New Berber Dahir? IRCAM and the Moroccan State's Approach to Amazigh Cultural and Linguistic Representation*

**Katherine LaFond** (Dean College)

*Smashing the Borders of the Tawaghit: Islamic State (IS) Utilization of Apocalyptic Narratives to Subvert the Modern Nation-State*

**Billie McClosky** (St. Lawrence University)

*Cultural Identity Development in the Context of Geographic Displacement*

**Brock Quant** (Seattle Pacific University)

*The Islamic Maryam: Claims of Female Prophethood in Islamic Scholarship*

**Adam Ross** (University of California Santa Cruz)

*Environmental Activism in Tunisia and Lebanon: Manish Msab and You Stink's Elevation of Contention*

**Kaleb Schlatter** (University of Iowa)

*"A Vital Stake in the Holy Land: "Midwestern American Relationality with Zionist Colonization of Palestine, 1940-1960*

We are looking forward to connecting with more students in 2025! If you want to get involved with CUMES, the Undergraduate Workshop, or to learn more about either, please email us at [CUMES@mesana.org](mailto:CUMES@mesana.org).

### Committee on Undergraduate Middle East Studies

Victoria Hightower, Chair, University of North Georgia  
Kristi Barnwell, University of Illinois Springfield  
Matteo Legrenzi, Ca' Foscari, University of Venice  
Youness Mountaki, Wofford College  
Jane Murphy, Colorado College

Sahar Rizavi, California State U., Sacramento  
Marcus Smith, Lindenwood U.  
Pheroze Unwalla, U. British Columbia  
Carole Woodall, U. of Colorado, Colorado Springs



## Publications Committee announces new IJMES & RoMES Editors



**Lara Deeb**



**Heather Ferguson**



**Hoda Yousef**

The MESA Publications Committee is pleased to announce Lara Deeb and Heather Ferguson as the new co-editors of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies (IJMES)* and Hoda Yousef as the new editor of the *Review of Middle East Studies (RoMES)*. The committee was impressed by the exceptional quality of applications for these two editorial positions and would like to thank all applicants. Chaired by Senem Aslan (Bates College), the search committee was composed of Ashl Bâli (Yale), Fida Adely (Georgetown), Alden Young (Yale), Beth Baron (CUNY) and Gregory Starrett (UNC at Charlotte).

Lara Deeb is professor of anthropology and Middle East and North Africa studies at Scripps College. She is the author of several books, including her most recent, *Love Across Difference: Mixed Marriage in Lebanon*, published by Stanford University Press in 2024. Heather Ferguson is associate professor of history at Claremont McKenna College and the author of *The Proper Order of Things: Language, Power, and Law in Ottoman Administrative Discourses* published by Stanford University Press in 2018. Dr. Ferguson is also the outgoing editor of *RoMES*. The committee is excited by the interdisciplinary expertise and innovative vision that they are bringing to *IJMES*.

The upcoming *RoMES* editor, Hoda Yousef, is associate professor of history at Denison University. She is the author of *Composing Egypt: Reading, Writing, and the Emergence of a Modern Nation, 1870-1930* published by Stanford University in 2016. Dr. Yousef envisions expanding the role of *RoMES* as a key platform for critical review and interdisciplinary dialogue, featuring topical special issues and discussions on pedagogy.

# International Journal of Middle East Studies

## From Editor Joel Gordon

As we enter our final year I will offer some preliminary reflections and provide some of the statistics that I include in our annual report to the MESA Board.

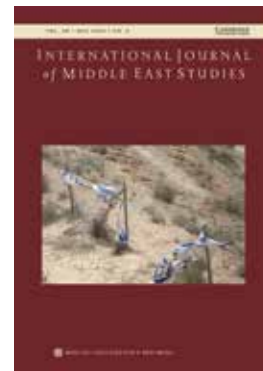
First the number of submissions has been steadily climbing back to where it was prior to the pandemic. This year between October 1, 2023, and October 31, 2024, we received 307 submissions from scholars based in 50 countries. About 20% of these (57) came from US-based scholars. The other major manuscript producers, based on country of residence and with a slight adjustment for the small number of co-authored submissions were Turkey (28), Iran (28), UK (26), Israel (19), and Saudi Arabia (12).

Of the submissions, 86 (28%) were from ABD scholars, 221 (72%) from postdoctoral scholars at various levels, primarily from those with an early career status (postdoc, lecturer, assistant professor). We publish 5-6 articles per issue. Our standards are rigid: this constitutes an approximately 8-10% acceptance rate.

For articles, *IJMES* is essentially a self-generating operation. Special review essays and roundtables reflect both editors' solicitation, but also the acceptance of proposals put forth by colleagues in our ever-widening field.

As a reader of journals, I often wondered about inordinate delays in publication, sometimes resulting in double issues. Now I can speak to this first-hand. You may have noticed that we are nearly two issues behind for the current volume. This has been the result of a cybersecurity attack on Cambridge University Press in June that threw the entire operation into a shutdown—all CUP journals and book publication has been impacted. We continued to receive manuscript submissions (articles, review essays, book reviews) and proceeded to evaluate them and seek readers for peer-reviewed articles. The slowdown came at the point of acceptance; copyediting and other aspects of production shut down. We do have a nice lineup in the queue. For those of you awaiting proofs and wondering if we or CUP has forgotten about you, rest assured. Things are back up, if not yet running.

That said, we anticipate a new potential slowdown at the levels of research and review for the coming year. The past year, directly following the outbreak of war in Gaza, the ensuing genocide and spread to Lebanon impacted people's willingness and ability to dedicate time to research and evaluation, as many of us became more involved in our communities and on campus. The forthcoming transition to a new US administration that will be hostile to many of our endeavors, to say the least, is bound to impact travel, research, and general morale. *IJMES* remains a place where our voices can still be heard as those best placed to interrogate our world from our various interdisciplinary perspectives, and to give voice to the lived and living experience of the peoples whom we study.



### ***International Journal of Middle East Studies***

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# Review of Middle East Studies

## From Editor Heather Ferguson



**Review of Middle East Studies**  
Heather Ferguson, Editor  
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Over the past six and a half years, the *Review of Middle East Studies* has been my most constant companion through momentous national and global events. I hope it has also been yours, because you produced its content. You helped our membership think through the authoritarian turn in Turkey, the U.S. embassy move from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, the status of refugees in the Middle East, the possible techniques for countering prejudice in the classroom, the meaning of “modernity” in artistic productions, the importance of linguistic indigeneity via Tamazigh literary studies, and, one of my favorites, the powerful presence of MERIP (“Middle East Research and Information Project: Critical Coverage of the Middle East Since 1971”) in our approach to public-facing analyses. This is only an abbreviated list, of course, as you led us through many other significant disciplinary dynamics, and, of utmost importance, you also reviewed books and films, reflected on research in progress, published updates on key MESA committees, and provided summaries of undergraduate research projects. Always, in each issue, you reminded the world of why we need to pause, reflect, and write before opining.

It is even more urgent that you invest in MESA publications now. We are in a global moment that seems, somehow (please do not laugh), to have ignored the decades of content released in the pages of *RoMES* (and *IʿMES*). Every day, in your classrooms, your committee and faculty meetings, and in your casual hallway chats, you work to center the voices, histories, and social and economic systems of the “Middle East” and its globalized diasporas. Moreover, you do this work within contexts that often undermine, sabotage, attack, and recriminate your efforts to reframe narratives that isolate and exceptionalize. *RoMES* is your companion in these moments, its pages have been, and can be, the means to reclaim space and insert new techniques for withstanding the onslaught.

In the next two issues of *RoMES*, your MESA Global Academy fellows will guide you through analyses of the meaning of constitutionalism and law in disparate geographies. Others will, in short reflective essays and Pedagogical Perspectives columns, assess what it means to teach and write in a post-October 7, 2023 landscape. Many will provide summaries of recently published books, written during moments of crisis, and so, all are exemplary in their effort to remind us of the power of scholarship. Each submission represents a shared goal condensed in three steps: pause, reflect, write. *RoMES* only exists because of the last step. Your writing, shared with your fellow MESA members, has not only kept me sane, but it also stands as a testament to why publications like this one matter even when it seems the world is not listening. But the world is listening, at least in microcosms: publishing your work and your thoughts in the pages of *RoMES* has ensured that I can send links to my family on every possible topic they may need some “correction” on. Actually, I compiled a list (you can ask me for it) that I will take with me to Virginia for the upcoming holiday.

Thank you for being *RoMES*!

## New Board Members



**President-Elect Ussama Makdisi** University of California, Berkeley

**Board Member Maya Mikdashi** Rutgers University

**Board Member Jessica Winegar** Northwestern University

## MESA Elections

MESA election participation is on par with or better than comparable scholarly societies, yet our level of turnout means that an individual's vote has substantial importance. Your vote in our elections very much matters! Thank you for helping set the direction of your association by casting your vote.

### Board of Directors Election Statistics, 2016-2024\*

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Membership at Election	2802	2634	2230	2675	2621	2611	2324	2703	1689
Eligible Members (F & S)	2735	2584	2172	2604	2550	2538	2256	2609	1648
Valid ballots	795	427	565	504	550	513	698	574	487
% of voting membership	29.07	16.52	26.00	19.35	21.57	20.21	30.94	22.0	29.55

\* President-Elect is elected in even-numbered years. Students are elected for two-year terms in odd-numbered years.



## MESA 2025

Westin Washington DC Downtown

Washington, DC

November 22-25, 2025

Call for Papers deadline is February 13, 2025.



## MESA 2026

Hilton Boston Park Plaza

Boston, Massachusetts

November 21-24, 2026

MESA's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Meeting

# Contributions

For the period May 20 - December 1, 2024, a total of **\$46,006.44** in contributions from individuals was received for MESA funds. We gratefully thank the following donors.

## MESA GENERAL FUND

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## ACADEMIC FREEDOM FUND

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## FATEMA MERNISSI BOOK AWARD FUND

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• at least \$100  
■ at least \$250  
◆ at least \$500  
★ at least \$1000  
✱ at least \$5000



## MESA Announces new Academic Freedom Initiative

*MESA's Academic Freedom Initiative will support data collection and analysis as well as dissemination of findings regarding academic freedom in the context of scholarship and teaching in Middle East studies.*

The Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA), the leading professional membership association for scholars and students of the Middle East and North Africa, proudly announces a two-year \$312,000 grant from the Mellon Foundation to support the comprehensive study of changes in the campus climate in North America since October 7, 2023.

MESA is a non-profit learned society that seeks to foster the study of the Middle East, promote high standards in scholarship and teaching in the field, and encourage public understanding of the region through programs, publications and education. In addition to enhancing education, furthering intellectual exchange, and recognizing professional distinction, MESA seeks to defend academic freedom.

MESA President Asli U. Bâli notes "We are proud to announce this new project, which seeks to advance inclusivity, equity, and broader academic freedom on university and college campuses—at a time when the increasingly polarized political climate could inflict permanent damage to these values and commitments." Dr. Bâli continued: "There is currently no comprehensive picture of developments on North American campuses to make clear the full scope and scale of the resulting policies and policy changes that have been implemented in response to student, staff, and faculty speech and associational activity over the past year. MESA is therefore gratified to receive this grant, which seeks to provide much-needed data and analysis."

The Academic Freedom Initiative aims to create a public database recording the range of experiences of faculty, staff, and students since October 7, 2023, and to provide analytical frameworks to assess the implications of recent trends. The project also plans to track other changes affecting academic speech at the state and federal levels. Finally, it intends to document the more subtle effects on research, scholarship, and teaching on the Middle East of the changing context for speech and associational life on campuses—including the ways that faculty, researchers, and students may have shifted their research and teaching choices where they might be addressing subjects deemed controversial or divisive.

The grant will support the creation of two new staff positions for the next two years, supporting two key committees: MESA's Task Force on Civil and Human Rights, as well as its Committee on Academic Freedom's North America Wing.

A **full-time position** will assist MESA by taking the lead in data collection, organization, and analysis regarding campus climate and academic freedom issues since October 7, 2023. A second, **part-time position** will support advocacy and public dissemination of the findings by building out the digital infrastructure and creating public resources.

MESA Executive Director Jeffrey D. Reger notes, "This project is an ideal implementation of MESA's mission, which is twofold: to promote excellence in research and teaching, and to defend the core tenets of academic freedom, without which our members could not do their work of research and teaching in the first place." Dr. Reger added: "MESA has therefore long been committed to the defense of academic freedom in our field and beyond, through the advocacy of MESA's Board of Directors, our Committee on Academic Freedom, and our Task Force on Civil and Human Rights, all of which are supported by the MESA staff. This grant significantly expands the support for our work, and comes at a crucial time for our field as a bellwether for higher education more broadly."

# MESA Employment Opportunities

## **MELLON ACADEMIC FREEDOM INITIATIVE COORDINATOR, MESA**

MESA is seeking a full-time Washington-DC-based employee reporting to the executive director of the Middle East Studies Association, which is headquartered at Georgetown University.

This position primarily supports the MESA Task Force on Civil and Human Rights, specifically the Academic Freedom Initiative, which is supported by a two-year grant from the Mellon Foundation.

This professional, full-time position offers competitive compensation with benefits. The expected duration of this position is for the duration of the grant.

The Mellon Academic Freedom Initiative Coordinator will take the lead in data collection, organization, and analysis regarding campus climate and academic freedom issues since October 7. There is no comprehensive picture of developments on North American campuses to make clear the full scope and scale of the resulting policies and policy changes that have been implemented in response to student, staff, and faculty speech and associational activity. The lack of data and data collection has made it difficult for organizations to adequately support students and educators studying, teaching, or writing on Israel-Palestine. Our aim is to rectify this shortfall by creating a public database recording the full range of experiences of faculty, staff, and students who work on issues related to Israel-Palestine since October 7, and to provide analytical frameworks to assess the implications of these trends. We also plan to track legislative and policy changes affecting academic speech on these issues at the state and federal levels. Finally, we intend to document the more subtle effects on research, scholarship, and teaching on the Middle East of the changing context for speech and associational life on campuses, including the ways that faculty, researchers, and students may have shifted their research and teaching choices where they might be addressing subjects deemed controversial.

The ideal candidate should be a well-qualified, experienced recent graduate with appropriate background in data collection and social science methods to work full-time on data collection and analysis.

For further details, read the [full job description on MESA's website](#).



## **MELLON ACADEMIC FREEDOM INITIATIVE PUBLIC AFFAIRS ASSOCIATE, MESA**

MESA is seeking a part-time Washington-DC-based contractor — with the title Public Affairs Associate (the “Associate”) — reporting to the executive director of the Middle East Studies Association, which is headquartered at Georgetown University.

This position primarily supports the MESA Task Force on Civil and Human Rights (the “MESA Task Force”), specifically the Academic Freedom Initiative (the “Initiative”), which is supported by a two-year grant from the Mellon Foundation. The Associate will be expected to support and collaborate intensively with the Research Coordinator for the Initiative (the “Coordinator”). This is an hourly (up to 20 hours per week) contractor position. The expected duration of this position is for the duration of the grant.

The MESA-Mellon Academic Freedom Initiative seeks data collection, organization, and analysis regarding campus climate and academic freedom issues since October 7, 2023.

For further details, go MESA's website for the [full job description](#).



# MESA MEMBERSHIP & REGISTRATION

fax 520-207-3166

email [meeting@mesana.org](mailto:meeting@mesana.org)

post 3700 O St. NW, ICC Suite 241, Washington DC 20057 (USA)

Please register through myMESA to pay by credit card or PayPal.

Or complete and return this form by **October 24, 2025**.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Email (req) \_\_\_\_\_

## Membership Dues

Individuals should complete a profile in their myMESA account

Student member

Retired member

Fellow or Associate member

### Amounts shown are in US\$

- \$ 65
- \$ 85
- \$ 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)

## Pre-registration

Deadline is October 24, 2025, for non-panelists.

Student/retired MESA member  \$ 85

Full/associate MESA member\*  \$185  \$135  \$235

Student, non-MESA member  \$150

All other non-MESA members  \$310

*\*MESA is offering an optional discounted pre-registration rate of \$135 for our members in lower-income membership tiers. For our members in the higher-income tiers, MESA is asking if they can pay a higher rate of \$235 to help offset this new discounted option.*

## Payment Information

Visa /MasterCard /Discover/AMEX

Check (payable to MESA, in US\$ and drawn on US bank)

Send to MESA, 3700 O St. NW, ICC Suite 241, Washington DC 20057

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Exp Date \_\_\_\_\_ CVV\* (3 or 4 digit code) \_\_\_\_\_

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# A Reminder when renewing your 2025 Membership

## PROVIDE KEY DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FOR STATISTICAL AND PLANNING PURPOSES

### Who is MESA?

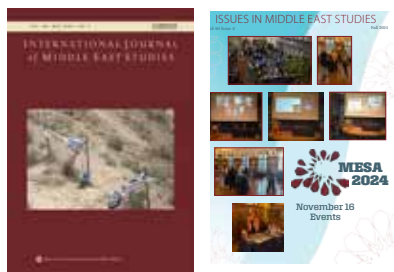
To understand and best serve our membership, MESA's Board of Directors and relevant board-constituted committees would like to have the most up-to-date demographic data. We have options for professional positions and titles, nonbinary gender options, as well as self-identification by ethnicity.

You may always of course opt out of having your name or profile appear publicly, but your member record provides important data for statistical and planning purposes. Any demographic data shared with MESA committees is anonymized and confidential.

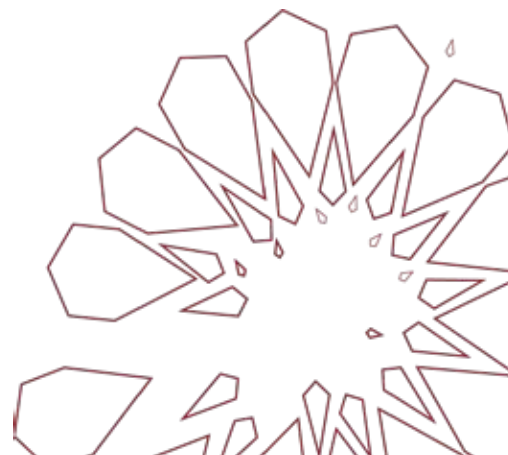
If you have a public profile, it is also important to maintain your membership profile so that you can be found as an expert in your field through the Find-A-Member search function.

Thank you for allowing us to capture a current picture of the state of the field (membership by discipline, area of focus, and so forth), which requires up-to-date data in myMESA. Simply provide any changes to your contact information, research interests, and other details when logged into myMESA.

## SELECT THE DELIVERY OPTIONS FOR IJMES AND IMES



Please be reminded to select the delivery method — digital only or digital and print — for both the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* and *Issues in Middle East Studies*. The default selection is digital. If you have already renewed, you can view your delivery method in myMESA under “My Membership” (in the Membership tab).



## 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 East 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 Beirut, Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs  
Arab Center Washington DC (ACW)  
Arab Council for the Social Sciences  
Boston College  
Brown University, Center for Middle East Studies  
Columbia University, Middle East Institute  
Cornell University, Department of Near Eastern Studies  
Dartmouth College  
George Washington University, Institute for Middle East Studies  
Georgetown University, Center for Contemporary Arab Studies  
Georgetown University, Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies  
Georgetown University, Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding  
Harvard University, Center for Middle Eastern Studies  
ILEX Foundation  
McGill University, Institute of Islamic Studies  
Middle East Institute at the National University of Singapore  
New York University, Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies  
North Carolina Consortium for Middle East Studies  
Northwestern University, Program of Middle East and North African Studies  
Ohio State University, Department of Near Eastern and South Asian Languages and Cultures  
Ohio State University, Middle East Studies Center  
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, Los Angeles, Center for Near Eastern Studies  
University of California, Santa Barbara, Center for Middle East Studies  
University of Chicago, Center for Middle Eastern Studies  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Center for South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies  
University of Maryland, Roshan Institute for Persian Studies  
University of Massachusetts 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 Utah, Middle East Center  
University of Virginia, Department of Middle Eastern & South Asian Languages & Cultures  
University of Washington, Middle East Center  
University of Wisconsin, Madison, Middle East Studies Program  
Vanderbilt University



# The 2024 MESA Awards Ceremony

## Honoring excellence in Middle East studies

MESA held its first hybrid Awards Ceremony on November 16, 2024, at Georgetown University and via Zoom. Fida Adely, Director of the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies at Georgetown, served as emcee and delivered certificates to the recipients who were in person to receive their award. Most presenters and many of the recipients were in attendance virtually. The pictures below were taken from the audience at Georgetown, while the screen shows what Zoom attendees were seeing.

We congratulate all of the 2024 recipients and honorees!



Awards Winners with MESA President Ashl Bâli at the MESA Reception held afterwards

### MESA thanks the following review committees

#### 2024 MESA Book Awards Committee

Farha Ghannam, Chair (Swarthmore College)  
Lindsay Benstead (Portland State University,  
Mona Hassan (Duke University)  
Nilay Özok-Gündoğan (Florida State University)  
Stephen Sheehi (College of William and Mary)  
Farzin Vejdani (Toronto Metropolitan University)

#### 2024 Malcolm H. Kerr Dissertation Award Committee in the Humanities

Yasmine Khayyat, Chair (Rutgers University)  
Sara Abdel-Latif (McGill University)  
Ece Algan (California State University San Bernardino)  
Faisal Hussain (Penn State University)

#### 2024 Malcolm H. Kerr Dissertation Award Committee in the Social Sciences

Choon Hwee Koh, Chair (UCLA)  
Kira Jumet (Hamilton College)  
Brian L. McLaren (University of Washington, Seattle)  
Tamar Shirinian (University of Tennessee, Knoxville)

#### 2024 Graduate Student Paper Prize Committee

Seçil Yılmaz, Chair (University of Pennsylvania)  
Kristin Hickman (University of Mississippi)  
Elias G. Saba (Grinnell College)

## 2024 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. The following is the text of the presentation made by CAF Chair Laurie Brand.

### The Palestine-based initiatives **Technical Education Support for Higher Education Students (TESI)** at An-Najah National University and **Rebuilding Hope** at Birzeit University

This past year has seen untold examples of courage and heroism in the defense of academic freedom.

Here in North America and in many of parts of Europe, the harassment, threats, repression and in some cases violence of the past year against university students, faculty and staff have been unprecedented, as have been the many forms of steadfastness and resistance engaged in by those professionally committed to education and morally compelled to protest.

In the MENA region, I want to call attention to the continuing struggles in Iran, and recognize the resilience of scholars and academics who have protested against authoritarian politics there in the face of the severe crack-down on academic freedom that was initiated following the eruption of the 2022 ‘woman, life, freedom’ protests.

I also want to direct our attention to Sudan, which, unfortunately, has received far less attention, but where higher education has been threatened or upended in more than 100 universities as they have been caught in the dreadful violence of the ongoing civil war.

Looming largest is the ongoing genocide in Gaza. This year our committee has selected for its academic freedom award the Palestinian scholars, academics, staff and administrators who have been confronting scholasticide, in its various forms.

We are humbled by their sacrifices and inspired by their heroism.

There are many initiatives and programs, both in and outside the region, that have been begun to address the scholasticide. We make our award today specifically to two Palestine-based initiatives that are emblematic of resilience and continuing Palestinian commitment to education in defiance of the on-going genocide.

The first is that of An-Najah National University, in partnership with the Union of Mediterranean Universities (UNIMED) and the Palestinian Student Scholarship Fund: [Technical Education Support for Higher Education Students](#) (TESI). TESI serves as a strategic response to the severe educational challenges faced by university students. It involves the use of online learning and virtual classrooms for Gazan students. Universities from Palestine and around the world participating in TESI will offer courses, learning resources, and other support to meet the specific needs of these students. By leveraging digital technologies and global collaboration, it aims to create innovative virtual learning solutions that enable students to continue their education and contribute to the long-term rebuilding of educational systems and infrastructure.

The second, entitled [Rebuilding Hope](#), is a Birzeit University initiative. It prioritizes supporting universities and higher education institutions through institutional synergy, university education, and the production of transformative knowledge that is locally grounded and linked to the material and social reconstruction needs of Gaza. The experimental online distance-learning component began its first cycle in May 2024, with 3800 students registering for 155 modules taught by 140 volunteer instructors from Birzeit University as well as scholars from Gaza universities. The scholars who participated in the first phase of teaching were all located outside of Gaza due to the genocide, but with their participation BZU is building a network of Gazan scholars to lead the subsequent phases. Birzeit University has also opened opportunities for Gazan MA and PhD students to benefit from funding for research through partnerships with BZU academics, providing financial and scholarly support for these projects.

We are therefore honored, in the context of the on-going Israeli occupation, regional war and genocide in Gaza, to make this award to Al-Najah University’s TESI initiative and Birzeit University’s Rebuilding Hope initiative as representative of the efforts of all Palestinian students, faculty and staff to fight scholasticide and establish authentic Palestinian educational responses aimed at supporting and rebuilding the educational sector in Gaza.

## 2024 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.

### **Valentine M. Moghadam, Northeastern University**



This year's MESA Jere L. Bacharach service award is given to Valentine Moghadam, in recognition of her exceptional service to the field of Middle East studies, particularly the study of women and gender in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

Dr. Moghadam is professor of sociology and international affairs at Northeastern University. Dr. Moghadam was previously the Director of Middle and Mediterranean Studies, the Director of the International Affairs Program, and a fellow in the Program on Women's Rights in the Middle East, Baker Institute for Public Policy at Rice University. Prior to her position at Northeastern University, Professor Moghadam brought her expertise to policy-oriented research, advocacy, networking, and institution-building for women's participation and rights in her capacity as the Chief of the Section on Gender Equality and Development, Human Rights Division of UNESCO. One of her projects aided in the establishment of a Palestinian Women's Research and Documentation Center in Ramallah, in addition to cultivating a UNESCO network on Global Women's Studies/Gender Research.

For MESA, Dr. Moghadam has served as program committee chair for the annual meeting; on the editorial board of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*; the Malcom H. Kerr dissertation award, and the Albert Hourani book award.

For the Association of Middle East Women's Studies (AMEWS), she was one of the founding members in 1985; was a member of editorial board of its *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*; and has served extensively on the human rights committee. She later served as president of AMEWS as well, and in that capacity continues as a honorary member of the AMEWS board.

Her service extends beyond to other journals, research advisory groups, international organizations, and other academic associations, to including editing a book series, and conducting dozens of manuscript and external faculty reviews.

Most recently, Dr. Moghadam is a co-founder and co-organizer of the Feminist Political Economy of MENA (FEMME) Network in 2020, which is committed to the study of political economy of women and gender in the MENA region, as well as the Global Women's Studies/Gender Research Network.

In addition, throughout her career, Professor Moghadam's exceptional, groundbreaking scholarship has opened innovative ways of thinking about the region. She also stands out for her unwavering support for her students. Professor Moghadam has been known to co-author articles with junior faculty and graduate students to help with their careers, as well as reading and offering thorough feedback. She somehow finds time in her schedule to hold Zoom guest lectures or write letters of recommendations. She joins workshops, and organizes panels or chairs them. Her generosity with her time and wisdom offer an antidote to a ruthless vision of academia, instead illustrating, by example, of how to serve others through collaboration.

This award is therefore given to Dr. Moghadam in recognition of her outstanding and multifaceted service to the field of Middle East studies.

## 2024 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

#### *Elastic Empire: Refashioning War through Aid in Palestine*

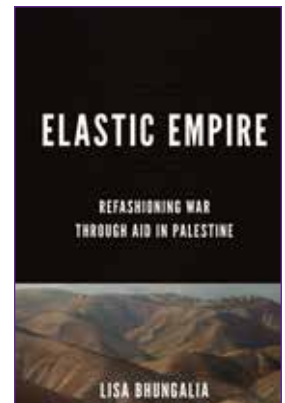
Stanford University Press

**Lisa Bhungalia, University of Wisconsin-Madison**



Brilliantly written, theoretically sophisticated, and meticulously researched, *Elastic Empire: Refashioning War through Aid in Palestine* invites us to rethink the breadth and scope of American imperial sovereignty along with the centrality of Palestine to the post-2001 US security state. Carefully tracking the historical development and expansion of counterterrorism laws and discourses, Lisa Bhungalia demonstrates how new post-9/11 architecture of the security state becomes built around Palestine, where Apartheid Israel functioned as a crucial interlocutor in articulating these new discourses and

legal practices. *Elastic Empire* is a powerful and highly original contribution that allows us to understand the legal structures and mechanisms that extend and normalize US imperial sovereignty far beyond its apparent reach into the everyday Palestinians struggling for liberation under Israeli occupation and Zionist settler colonialism. The tremendous relevance of this analysis cannot be overstated, especially in understanding the tragic genocide that is taking place in Gaza as we speak.



## 2024 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

#### *Virgin Crossing Borders: Feminist Resistance and Solidarity in Translation*

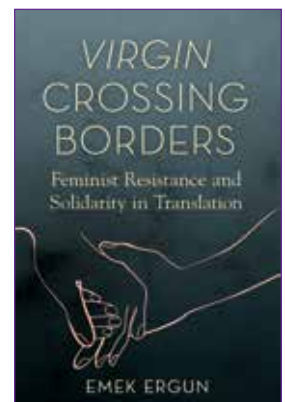
University of Illinois Press

**Emek Ergun, University of North Carolina at Charlotte**



*Virgin Crossing Borders: Feminist Resistance and Solidarity in Translation* offers a groundbreaking exploration of the translation of Hanne Blank's *Virgin: The Untouched History* from English into Turkish. Drawing from her own journey as a politically engaged feminist translator and scholar, Emek Ergun traces the textual and material production of the Turkish translation, *Bekâret*. Through collaboration with a group of feminist readers in Turkey, Ergun vividly recounts how this Western feminist text was mobilized to challenge Turkey's heteropatriarchal virginity codes and its deeply entrenched,

medicalized virginity regime. She shifts translation from the periphery to the core of contemporary transnational feminist discourse, depicting it as an ethical and politically creative practice, pivotal in fostering feminist struggles across linguistic, cultural, and geopolitical boundaries. This remarkable book not only contributes to feminist, translation, and Middle Eastern studies but also offers a vision of feminist resistance and solidarity that transcends geopolitical divides and cultural essentialisms.



## 2024 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

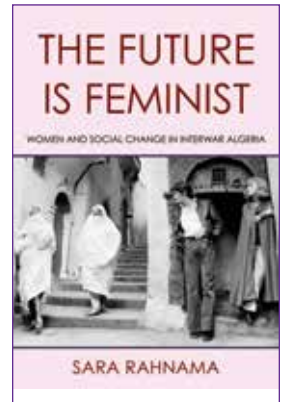
#### *The Future is Feminist: Women and Social Change in Interwar Algeria*

Cornell University Press

**Sara Rahnama, Morgan State University**



Conceptually rich and skillfully written, *The Future is Feminist: Women and Social Change in Interwar Algeria* explores the feminist possibilities that Muslims envisioned in Algeria in the context of French settler colonialism between the two World Wars. Bringing a crucial gendered dimension to understanding interwar Algeria's intellectual landscape, Sara Rahnama deftly weaves together historical analysis and feminist theory to understand how discussions of women's labor, education, and dress (as well as men's headgear) countered the colonial claim of Islam's inherent misogyny and sought a new future for Algerian Muslim belonging in the modern world. Rahnama's extensive analysis of prior interwar discussions resists a teleological focus on the War of Independence to reveal a fluid and broad range of feminist aspirations informed by Islam that contended with multiple social divisions while under the constraints of colonialism. An outstanding contribution to the study of gender and the history of the Middle East.



### Co-Winner

#### *Sufi Civilities: Religious Authority and Political Change in Afghanistan*

Stanford University Press

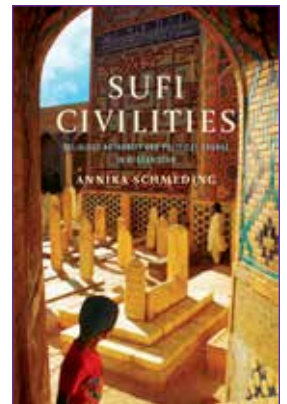
**Annika Schmeding, The Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences**

Photo credit: Jodi Hillton



Annika Schmeding's *Sufi Civilities: Religious Authority and Political Change in Afghanistan* is a perceptive and supple analysis of how contemporary Afghan Sufi communities have dynamically contributed to and shaped their country's civil sphere amid changing and challenging circumstances. An engaging and well-written ethnography, *Sufi Civilities* examines how Sufis from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, regions, and spiritual paths have adapted and evolved through internal and external periods of transition and succession. The book beautifully clarifies how Sufi orders and leaders have

adopted varying strategies in relation to the state, including alignment, resistance, and strategic distance, to navigate shifting environments. It carefully shows how religious authority is formed and how women constitute religious actors and leaders in mosques and Sufi orders. *Sufi Civilities* is essential reading across anthropology, gender studies, history, politics, and religious studies for all those interested in gaining a nuanced understanding of these dynamics in the contemporary Middle East.



## 2024 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 the field. Awards are given in two categories: Social Sciences and Humanities.

### Humanities Winner

#### *Languages of Power and People: Multilingualism, Politics, and Resistance in Modern Egypt and the Mediterranean*

**Olga Verlato, New York University,  
Departments of History and Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies**  
Supervised by Zachary Lockman



Olga Verlato's dissertation offers a new perspective on the history of modern Egypt by focusing on the complex relationship between multilingualism and the rise of linguistic nationalism. Verlato's study of the Egyptian press, for example, demonstrates how, since its very inception in the early 19th century, Arabic-language newspapers strategically resorted to European languages and scripts to promote their message and attract readers and advertisers. Her investigation of the role of the Arabic language in the 1919 nationalist revolution, moreover, shows how the Arabic language was explicitly connected to the revolution through the metaphor of the "voice" (al-sawt), a symbol of unity and national protest. By tracing the intricate interactions between state policies, intellectual debates, and popular practices, Verlato challenges

the prevailing notion of linguistic nationalism as a linear and teleological process. Instead, she argues that it was a contested and contingent process shaped by competing visions of national identity and language. Verlato's nuanced analysis and innovative approach make a significant contribution to the field of Middle East studies and offer valuable insights into the global history of nationalism and language.

### Humanities Honorable Mention

#### *Small Wars of Scarcity: North African Corsairing in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*

**Lama Elsharif, Purdue University, Department of History**  
Supervised by Stacy E. Holden



Lama Elsharif's dissertation entitled "Small Wars of Scarcity: North African Corsairing in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century" challenges long-accepted narratives that explain the upsurge in North African sea-raiding activities by the Ottoman North African regencies of Tripoli, Tunis, and Algiers. Contrary to previous research that attributes this increase in sea-raiding activities to major European geopolitical events, Lama Elsharif's work demonstrates how corsairing played a critical role in mitigating the economic crises brought about by local environmental challenges, such as droughts, famines, and epidemic outbreaks. Her argument is original, innovative, and impactful, not only for North African history but

also for European, Ottoman, and environmental history. Her dissertation draws upon a diverse collection of archival sources—such as royal decrees, memoirs, travelogues, and diplomatic correspondence in multiple languages, including Arabic, English, French, Ottoman Turkish, and translated Italian.



## Humanities Honorable Mention

### *Blasphemy (Sab al-Rasul) as a Legal Category in Early and Medieval Islamic History (1st/7th-13th/19th Centuries)*

**Sarah Islam, Princeton University, Department of Near Eastern Studies**

Supervised by Michael Allan Cook



Sarah Islam's dissertation, "Blasphemy (sabb al-rasūl) as a legal category in early and medieval Islamic history," is a historically rich and comprehensive analysis of shifts in legal approaches to the act of reviling the Prophet. Her diachronic analysis complicates ahistorical notions of law and dismantles narratives of juridical consensus (ijma') through investigating deliberate uses of Sunni law to navigate contextually-specific sociohistorical circumstances. The dissertation makes use of an array of legal texts, judicial opinions, and historical chronicles across thirteen centuries and all four dominant Sunni schools of law to highlight the performative role of ijma' and the extent of sociopolitical influence on seemingly static legal categories. The dissertation thus inspires re-examination of long-held assumptions

regarding the function and application of Islamic jurisprudence amidst the intricate historical circumstances of pre-modern Islamicate societies.

## Social Sciences Winner

### *Uncertain Practices: Healthcare Provision and Access for Syrian Refugees in Turkey*

**Nihal Kayali, UCLA, Department of Sociology**

Supervised by Gail Kligman



Photo credit: Shiva Rouhani

We are delighted to present Dr. Nihal Kayali with the MESA Malcolm H. Kerr Dissertation Award in the Social Sciences for "Uncertain Practices: Healthcare Provision and Access for Syrian Refugees in Turkey," an astute examination of the impact of a state of "permanent temporariness" of Syrians in Turkey following their forced migration from the Revolution of 2011. With exceptional analytical clarity, "Uncertain Practices" plunges from the outset into the bureaucratic rabbit holes that constitute the healthcare provided for, and by, Syrians as they leveraged their precarity to pivot from humanitarian aid to private healthcare services. The committee was struck by the ease with which the dissertation moved between several

registers: from narrating individual migrant experiences and sharing her first-person observations (while working as a translator for Syrians seeking healthcare), to contextualizing these particular experiences in the broader organizational and institutional environment. Impressively, the literature review sections consistently connected the ethnographic scenes with the scholarly stakes, and they were written in a way that made sophisticated debates accessible and even exciting to readers far beyond the field of sociology. Beyond its academic implications—found in its introducing ideas of "cosmopolitan embeddedness" to describe the challenging situation of long-term refugees—this dissertation has significant relevance beyond the Turkish case that will inform real-world forced migration policies.

## Social Sciences Honorable Mention

### *Made to Move: Placemaking and Accumulated Attachments among Palestinian Refugees from Syria*

**Matthew DeMaio, George Washington University, Department of Anthropology**  
Supervised by Ilana Feldman



Photo credit: Adam Atkinson

Matthew DeMaio offers an empirically and theoretically rich ethnography of Yarmouk, a Palestinian refugee camp in Syria. Yarmouk was constructed in 1953 out of seemingly permanent materials. DeMaio shows how this imagined permanency was rejected by the Palestinians who found residence there but who were still determined to return home. In this way, it was a place to which Palestinians connected while simultaneously insisting on returning to Palestine. While Yarmouk was a refugee camp, it also thrived as a critical city within the geography of Syria, a major market town not only for Palestinians but for others in Syria as well as in neighboring countries, and a place of making life for Palestinians that took on a symbolic-political meaning as a place in itself. This palimpsestic quality of life in Yarmouk meant

that when Palestinian residents were displaced again during the 2011 Syrian civil war, they took a sense of being from various sites of displaced inhabitation (i.e., Palestine and Yarmouk) with them elsewhere, where DeMaio encountered his ethnographic interlocutors. Contributing to critical geographies of displacement, DeMaio offers the concept of “place of significance,” places that continue to carry meaning for people who once inhabited them and which create historical and political relation across geographies.

## Social Sciences Honorable Mention

### *Convictions and Persuasions: Transfusion Technology and the Blood Donor in Modern Iran*

**Samin Rashidbeigi, Princeton University, Department of Near Eastern Studies**  
Supervised by Behrooz Ghamari-Tabrizi



Photo credit: Gustavo Raskosky

How did the act of blood donation transform from a “suspicious transaction” to become a “civic virtue” in post-WWII Iran? Drawing on a range of sources, including oral interviews and archives located in Iran, Samin Rashidbeigi has produced a rigorous study that traces how Iranians became convinced to donate blood to the state for the benefit of strangers. “Convictions and Persuasions” first relates the shift in the conceptualization of blood in the early twentieth century and reconstructs the history of the bureaucratization of blood transfusion. Rashidbeigi proceeds to explore how, in the sixties and seventies, blood donorship culture developed, leading to the emergence of the troubling figure of the professional, paid

blood donor. It turns out that these professional donors and their commercialized blood also shared an unexpected history with the Iranian National Blood Transfusion Service (INBTS), which Rashidbeigi skillfully uncovers (and respectfully relates) by examining the INBTS archive and corroborating its contents with oral interviews. This journey from aversion to embrace of blood donation was a joy to read; it is also founded on solidly executed research.

## 2024 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.

### Winner

#### *Contaminating Humanitarianism: Cholera, Nationalism, and the (Un)Regulated Life of Syrians in Lebanon*

**Peter Habib, Emory University, Department of Anthropology**



The award committee is pleased to announce “Contaminating Humanitarianism: Cholera, Nationalism, and the (Un)Regulated Life of Syrians in Lebanon” as the winner of the 2024 award. “Contaminating Humanitarianism” presents a theoretically rich and ethnographically nuanced discussion of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, nationalist politics, and the omnipresent threat of contaminations. The author does an impressive job of bridging conversations between environmental anthropology and the anthropology of migration and humanitarianism; as well as creatively reworking and expanding older anthropological theory for new purposes. The paper uses contaminated water as a lens for thinking about the perceived danger posed by (un)regulated Syrians. Through a contemplation of purity, impurity, and contamination, this paper analyzes why it is that some in Lebanon are wary of the presence of Syrian refugees, how the narratives about these refugees take hold, and offers a contemplation of the rituals that may offer a hope towards resolving these anxieties. It offers an original perspective on growing tendencies (not just in Lebanon) towards nationalism and xenophobia directed towards immigrants, refugees, and displaced persons more broadly.

### Honorable Mention

#### *‘Terrorist’ Red Spiders: Securitization of Farms and Farmers on Turkey’s Digital Frontiers*

**Ziya Kaya, University of Arizona, Department of Anthropology**



The award committee’s honorable mention goes to “‘Terrorist’ Red Spiders: Securitization of Farms and Farmers on Turkey’s Digital Frontiers.” This is an impressive paper that analyzes the intersection of state securitization, technology, and agriculture in contemporary Turkey. The author deftly weaves together technical analysis, history, and ethnographic study to explain how the agrarian sector came under the management of the national security sector and farmer’s adaptation to the new “agrosecurityscape.” The new agricultural reality presents new forms of agency for these farmers and reshapes their understanding of farmlands, farming, and their relationships with each other and with the state.

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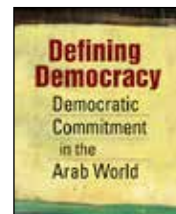
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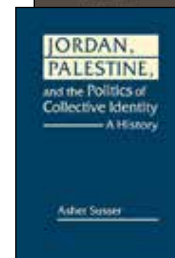
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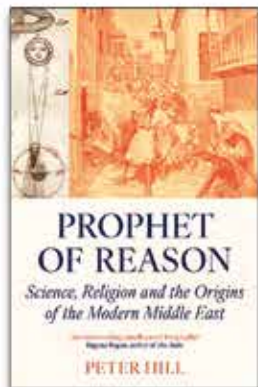
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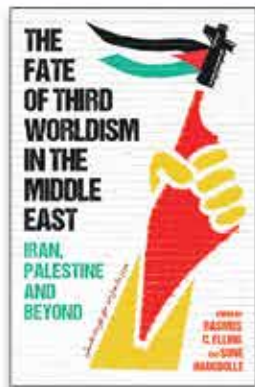
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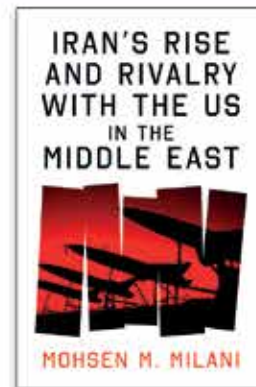
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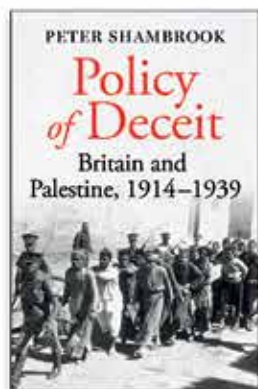
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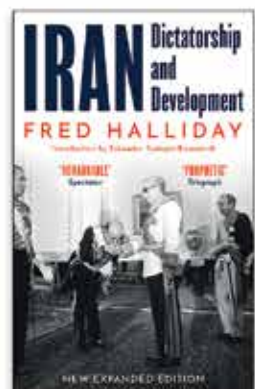
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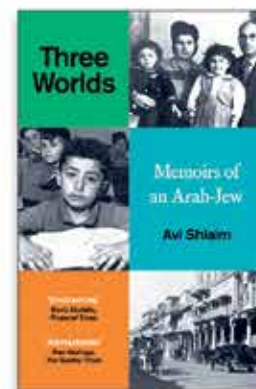
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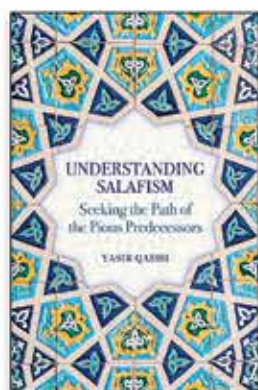
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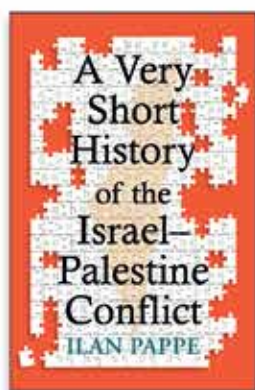
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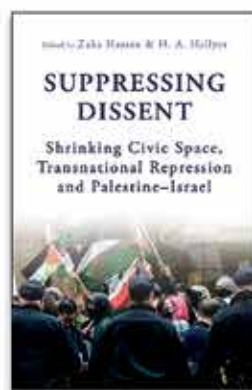
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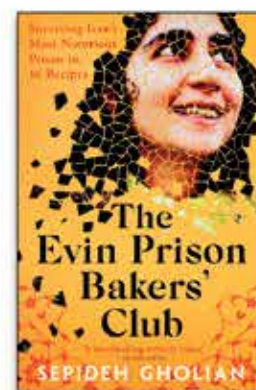
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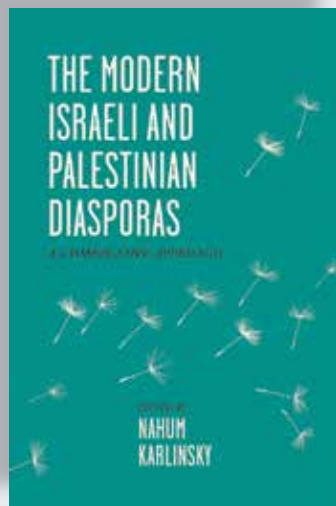
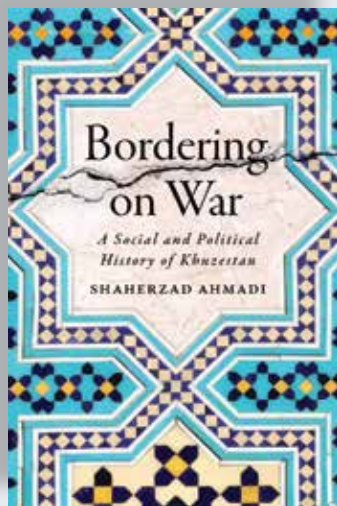
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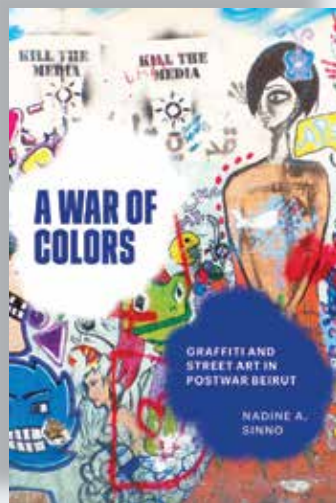
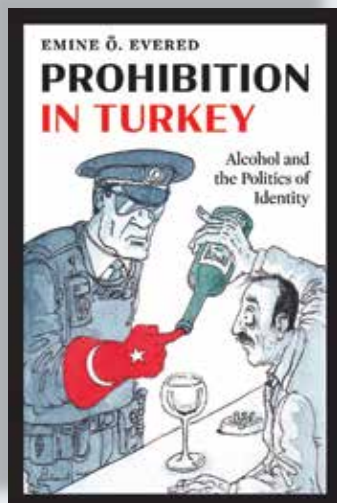


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## MESA 2025 Call for Papers

**The 59th Annual Meeting of the Middle East Studies Association will be held in person in Washington, DC, on November 22-25, 2025.**

MESA members are invited to propose papers and sessions for the 59th Annual Meeting of the Middle East Studies Association on November 22-25, 2025, related to MESA's mission of scholarship and advocacy. MESA is primarily concerned with the area encompassing Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan, Israel, Pakistan, and the countries of the Arab World (and their diasporas) from the seventh century to modern times. Other regions, including Spain, Southeastern Europe, China and the former Soviet Union, also are included for the periods in which their territories were parts of the Middle Eastern empires or were under the influence of Middle Eastern civilization.

Questions about the call for papers and the proposal submission process are always welcome.  
Please email [meeting@mesana.org](mailto:meeting@mesana.org).

### Categories of proposals for the 2025 MESA Annual Conference:

Three categories of proposals may be submitted to the Program Committee for review through myMESA:

- 1. Pre-organized panels:** Four to six papers on a common subject. Paper presentations are typically 15-20 minutes long, and based on a written paper with a title shared with fellow participants in advance. An overall panel description must be submitted by the organizer(s).
- 2. Pre-organized roundtables:** Five to eight presentations on a common subject. Roundtable interventions are shorter, typically 5-10 minutes, and intended to start a discussion with greater audience participation and conversation among the roundtable participants. No pre-written paper is expected to be shared in advance. An overall roundtable description must be submitted by the organizer(s).
- 3. Individual paper abstracts:** One abstract to be placed on a panel by the Program Committee if accepted. Selected individual abstracts will be combined with other similar proposals to create put-together panels.

In addition, two limited categories of proposals may be submitted directly to the MESA Secretariat for initial review:

- 4. Special sessions** on urgent issues of relevance to numerous MESA members (this category is very limited)
- 5. Professional development workshops** (limited)

## Criteria for acceptance of panel, roundtable, and paper proposals:

The Program Committee will accept proposals based on the following three criteria:

1. **Contribution to the field.**

Does the proposal indicate clearly the contribution that the author(s) aim to make in their discipline(s)? This contribution may involve a novel approach, original source material, an intriguing argument or finding, or (in the case of pre-organized panels and roundtables) a gathering of experts to examine an important subject.

2. **Source material.**

Does the proposal indicate clearly the source material that the author(s) draw on? This may take the form of archival collections, published or unpublished texts, datasets, interviews, ethnographic observations, pedagogical interventions, experiments, or other forms of evidence.

3. **Findings.**

Does the proposal indicate clearly the original conclusions that the author(s) have drawn? Because space in the proposal is limited, conclusions might include general insights combined with one or two specific instances that illustrate the texture of the presentation being proposed for the MESA conference.

## Procedures for panel, roundtable, and individual abstract proposals:

1. **Portal:** All submissions must be made through the myMESA portal
2. **Deadline:** Proposals must be submitted by 11:59 AM (Noon), Eastern Standard Time, on Thursday, February 13, 2025.
3. **Word limit:** Proposals are limited to a maximum of 400 words. For pre-organized panels and roundtables, the overall panel and roundtable description should be between 300-400 words. The individual paper descriptions, proposed either independently or as part of the pre-organized panel, are also limited to 400 words each. Roundtable presentations do not have titles, since they are not papers, and may be shorter (200-300 words).
4. **Anonymity:** Proposals should be written anonymously so that they can be reviewed “blind.” Proposals will be automatically disqualified if they include the name of the author(s) or – in the case of pre-organized panels and roundtables – the name of any participant associated with the proposal. Other identifying information, such as references to the submitter’s publications, should not be included, and may be removed by the MESA Secretariat.
5. **MESA membership:** Membership for calendar year 2025 is required of all proposal author(s). MESA offers a one-time temporary exemption to this requirement for scholars based outside of North America who have never been a member of MESA previously; who are outside of the disciplines associated with Middle East studies; or who have not attended a MESA meeting before. For further details, see the Membership Exemption Form. Please note that membership dues are non-refundable, whether a proposal is accepted or not.
6. **Co-authors:** Since the proposal is reviewed without identifying names, co-authors should be added later, after the session is accepted. Please note that to be listed in the program as a co-presenter, the co-author must also be a member registered for the meeting.
7. **Discipline, region, and time period:** The myMESA proposal submission portal will offer checkbox lists for the primary discipline(s) associated with each proposal and the region(s) within the Middle East and time period(s) that the proposal addresses. Please provide this information in order to assist the Program Committee in assigning reviewers.
8. **Sponsorship and funding:** Only MESA Affiliates may sponsor sessions. (MESA institutional members and any other organization will be listed instead as “organized under the auspices of.”) The myMESA proposal submission portal requests funding sources for proposals, if any, in keeping with scholarly standards of transparency.



9. **Participation limits:** Each MESA member may propose only one paper per year and may participate in no more than two separate sessions. (Multiple roles on the same session – such as being both organizer and a paper presenter – only count as a single session.) As examples, we encourage our members to consider volunteering to serve as a chair on a put-together panel, or as a roundtable presenter, in addition to presenting a paper.
10. **Proposals** for individual papers are submitted by a single MESA member; proposals for pre-organized panels and roundtables are submitted jointly by the panel organizer and the authors of the panel's papers (see below for special procedures for pre-organized panel proposals). The organizer invites the other participants to submit their components through myMESA via email.
11. **Notification:** The Program Committee plans to send out decision letters by email on or before April 30, 2025.
12. **Pre-registration deadline:** Participants whose proposals are accepted by the Program Committee must pre-register for the Annual Meeting by May 15, 2025, in order to be placed on the program. The registration fee is refundable if requested by the withdrawal deadline of August 1, 2025.

### Additional procedures for pre-organized panel and roundtable proposals:

1. Panel and roundtable organizers seeking paper presenters and roundtable presenters may place an open call for self-nominations. For more information, please visit MESA's Call for Participation webpage.
2. Panel and roundtable proposals are submitted jointly by the panel organizer and the authors of the panel's papers.
3. The session organizer logs in to myMESA to initiate the proposal, identifies the participants, and creates the proposal. The myMESA system then generates an email notification to the other panel participants with instructions for submitting their own proposals. The organizer cannot submit proposals on behalf of paper presenters.
4. The panel organizer should track the progress of the panel to ensure that the participants have all completed their parts of the proposal by the submission deadline.
5. Chairs and discussants may be identified at the time a panel proposal is submitted, or after the proposal has been accepted. (Chairs and discussants, because proposals are reviewed blind, are not seen by the program committee reviewers.)
6. Paper presenters should ideally not serve as chairs or discussants.
7. Multi-session panels are discouraged due to conference space limitations and scheduling constraints.
8. The Program Committee will review the session as a whole, and the proposal will be accepted or rejected in its entirety.
9. The Program Committee reserves the right to add additional papers to pre-organized panel, as relevant, from the pool of individually submitted proposals.

### Distinguishing between panels and roundtables

- Panels consist of longer, formal presentations, followed by comments on and questions about the presented research papers. Time remaining after the presentations may be used for a short question-and-answer period.
- Roundtables consist of shorter, and less formal, initial presentations by the participants, followed by extensive back-and-forth conversation and discussion among the roundtable participants and the audience. Most of the time will be taken up by questions and answers.
- Roundtable rooms are typically smaller and **do not** have screens for slideshows or other accompanying visual presentations.
- All panel rooms **have screens** to present slideshows. Most paper presenters have accompanying visuals.
- Roundtable presentations do not have titles.
- Papers on panels do have titles.
- Pre-organized panels have the highest chance of acceptance. Roundtables have the second-highest chance of acceptance. Individual abstracts have the lowest acceptance rate.
- The MESA Secretariat in consultation with the Program Committee may change the type of session in clear cases of confusion.

## Special procedures for proposals for special sessions:

1. **Scope:** Special sessions are meant to supplement the Annual Meeting program through presentations that are of urgent interest to attendees in all disciplines. These may include sessions based on current events. Only a very limited number of sessions will be granted special status on the program. Organizers should not submit proposals for special session status that could more appropriately be designated as a regular panel. Organizers submitting a regular panel should not also submit a request as a special session. Finally, but most importantly, organizers should not look at the special session option as a way to circumvent the deadline and policies that apply to panel proposals.
2. **Email submission:** Special session proposals should be submitted directly to the MESA Secretariat at [meeting@mesana.org](mailto:meeting@mesana.org), rather than through the myMESA portal.
3. **Deadline:** Proposals for special sessions must be submitted by April 1, 2025, except for sessions on late-breaking current events, which may be submitted as matters arise.
4. **Topic:** Proposals should summarize the theme of the session, and why it deserves special session status, in fewer than 400 words.
5. **Sponsorship and funding:** Only MESA affiliates may “sponsor” a session. Proposals should indicate the special session’s funding sources, if any, in keeping with scholarly standards of transparency.
6. **Participants:** Proposals should list the names of the participants in the special session, along with information on their expertise and proposed presentation topics, if possible. (Unlike regular proposals for panels, roundtables, and papers, special sessions are not reviewed “blind.”)
7. **Criteria for review:** Proposals for special sessions will be evaluated on the basis of the urgency of the session topic and the quality of the proposal.
8. **Review:** Proposals will be reviewed by MESA’s President, Executive Director, and the Program Committee Chair, along with others whom they invite to assist in deliberations.
9. **Additional information:** The Secretariat may ask applicants for additional information prior to making a decision.
10. **Notification:** The Secretariat will notify applicants of its decision as quickly as it is able, typically by June 30, 2025.

## Special procedures for proposals for professional development workshops:

1. **Email submission:** MESA members are invited to submit proposals for professional development workshops directly to the MESA Secretariat at [meeting@mesana.org](mailto:meeting@mesana.org), rather than through the myMESA portal.
2. **Deadline:** Proposals for professional development workshops must be submitted by May 1, 2025. They are subject to space constraints after the Program Committee’s decisions have been made.
3. **Topic:** Proposals should summarize the theme of the workshop and its relevance to MESA members’ professional careers in fewer than 400 words.
4. **Facilitator:** Proposals should list the facilitator or facilitators along with their qualifications and information on their specialty or expertise. Facilitators must be MESA members and register for the meeting to be on the program. (Unlike proposals for panels, roundtables, and papers, professional development workshops are not reviewed “blind.”)
5. **Audience:** Proposals should indicate the intended audience for the workshop, such as graduate students and/or early career scholars. Please note, however, that workshops must be open to all registered attendees.
6. **Sponsorship and funding:** Proposals should indicate the workshop’s sponsorship by a MESA affiliate as well as funding sources, if any, in keeping with scholarly standards of transparency.
7. **Criteria for review:** Proposals for professional development workshops will be evaluated on the basis of the importance of the workshop to MESA’s mission and membership and the quality of the proposed facilitators.
8. **Review:** Proposals will be reviewed by MESA’s President, Executive Director, and the Program Committee Chair, along with others whom they invite to assist in deliberations.
9. **Additional information:** The Secretariat may ask applicants for additional information before making a decision.
10. **Notification:** The Secretariat will notify applicants of the decision on the proposal as quickly as it is able, typically by June 30, 2025.

## Further information:

1. **Additional opportunities to participate in the MESA Annual Meeting:** After the Program Committee has made its decisions and the program has been scheduled sometime in June 2025, the MESA Secretariat will put out a call for volunteers to serve as chairs for put-together panels. Chairs, like all participants on the program, will need to be MESA members for calendar year 2025 and registered for the Annual Meeting.
2. **Final papers:** In order to facilitate high-quality panels, all presenters are asked to share their full papers with their panel chair and/or discussant one month before the Annual Meeting. Papers do not need to be complete with footnotes and bibliography; only a working paper is required to allow chairs and discussants to do their job adequately. Roundtable participants do not prepare papers and therefore are not subject to this requirement. Papers uploaded to myMESA are available only to co-panelists; MESA does not publish shared papers or make them available to the broader public in any way.
3. **Presentation guidelines:** Panel presenters should not read their papers, but rather should present them in summary only, with an emphasis on the most notable of the paper's findings. Generally, 15-20 minutes will be allowed for each presentation (depending on the number of papers on the panel). The chair is responsible for strict adherence to this rule. The remainder of the time should be devoted to discussion among the panelists and audience.
4. **No-show policy:** Program participants must notify the MESA Secretariat and the chair of their session in advance of their scheduled presentation if they are not able to attend the meeting. Individuals who do not attend a session without giving prior notice will be deemed a "no-show" and will not be eligible to participate on the following year's meeting program.



## MESA 2025 Calls for Participation

MESA provides an opportunity for session organizers to find others to join them in preorganizing a session through an open call for participation.

Visit <https://mesana.org/annual-meeting/call-for-participation>

- For the form to have your call listed
- To view the open calls for participation

The session organizer and session participants must then submit their proposals in myMESA following the directions to MESA's Call for Papers.



## Middle East Studies Association

3700 O St. NW, ICC Suite 241  
Washington, DC 20057 (USA)

# 2025 Awards Competitions and Call for Nominations

Please see details on each award and the procedures for submissions and nominations on MESA's [website](#).

### **MESA Book Awards April 1, 2025**

Nominations for all three awards (Albert Hourani Book Award, Nikki Keddie Book Award, Fatema Mernissi Book Award) are made simultaneously, and can be made by either the publisher or the author. Each winner receives \$1000.

### **Roger Owen Book Award April 1, 2025**

This award honors the scholarship of Roger Owen, and subject matter must deal with with economics, economic history or the political economy of the Middle East and North Africa. The winner receives \$2000.

### **Jere L. Bacharach Service Award June 1, 2025**

This award honors extraordinary service to MESA or the field. The winner receives \$1000.

### **MESA Mentoring Award June 1, 2025**

This award honors contributions of a retired individual as mentor/teacher.

### **Malcolm H. Kerr Dissertation Awards July 1, 2025**

For students completing their dissertations between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024, 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, 2025**

To recognize outstanding scholarship on teaching or other material contributions to undergraduate education in Middle East studies. Winner receives \$250

### **Graduate Student Paper Prize August 15, 2025**

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*.