

Where We've Been

MEC Newsletter
Spring and Summer 2016
Issue II

Spring Lecture Series

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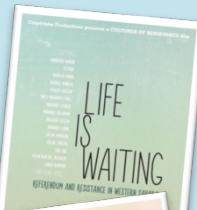
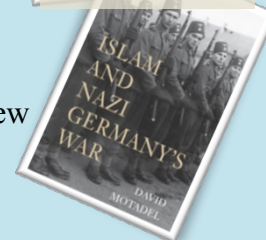
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This semester the Middle East Center organized more than a dozen academic events. Dr. Ranin Kazemi, of San Diego State University, began our spring lecture season with his talk on, "The Environmental Causes of the Tobacco Protest In Nineteenth-Century Iran," on February 15. We brought Dr. David Motadel, from the London School of Economics, for his talk, "Muslims Under Nazi Rule From 1941-1945," on April 13. We were honored to host the distinguished Ambassador Robert P. Finn, who presented an overview of Turkish novels from the nineteenth century up to present at Kelly Writers House on April 19.



David Motadel



We ended the spring semester with a mini documentary film festival in April. We screened, "Frame by Frame," a documentary that explored the rebuilding of the free press in Afghanistan after Taliban rule. Atiqullah Faizi, Penn's visiting Fulbright Fellow from Afghanistan led a post screening discussion. This was followed by, "Life Is Waiting: Referendum and Resistance in Western Sahara," which explored the international legal status of Western Sahara. Dr. Jacob Mundy, from Colgate University, opened the discussion with a short lecture on the history of the contested territory and led a vigorous debate following the screening.

We hosted Emily Feldman, a journalist from the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting (PCCR), to discuss her news pieces on mental health and healing among Yazidis facing trauma after attempted ISIS genocide against the Yazidi communities in Iraq. Priya Ramchandra and Farzana Shah, who won our International Student Reporting Competition in 2015, were also present at



Emily Feldman

Spring Lecture Series

the event. Farzana and Priya shared their reporting experiences and project results. At the same event, we announced the recipients for this year's International Student Reporting Fellowship, Natalie Au and Rachel Townzen.



Dr. Beshara Doumani

Dr. Beshara Doumani, professor of History and Director of the Middle East Studies at Brown University, delivered an invigorating talk on the impact of displacement in global history with an emphasis on the Middle East refugee crisis entitled, "Displacement in the Making and Unmaking of the Modern Middle East," on

March 30. Penn's very own Dr. Huda J. Fakhreddine gave a talk on her newly released book *Metapoesis in the Arabic Tradition* on February 18 and the prominent Turkish instructor, Dr. Erika Gilson, from American Association of Teachers of Turkic Languages, gave a linguistic talk called, "The Quest for a Common Alphabet for Turkic Languages," on March 16.

The Middle East Center organized an extremely successful Global Distinguished Lecture featuring New York Times journalist Anemona Hartocollis with a talk entitled, "Lessons from the Great Syrian Migration" on March 21. This event, hosted in the beautifully renovated Widener Lecture Room in the Penn Museum, saw more than a hundred participants. Our "International Women's Day 2016: Global Perspectives on Women, Food Security and Agriculture," program was another great success with more than 80 participants and an engaging discussion by our panel of community activists and scholars at the International House on March 15.



Dr. Huda Fakhreddine



Global Distinguished Lecture

We had two talks at the Middle East Center Graduate Student Colloquium. Kelsey Rice, a Ph.D. candidate at the Department of History, presented her paper, "From Beys to the Bourgeoisie:

Literary Assemblies, Enlightenment Societies, and Shifting Cultural Geographies in the South Caucasus," on April 13 and Nimrod Ben Zeev, another doctoral student from the same department, presented his paper, "Wall of Sound: Devotional Sound and the Genesis of Conflict in Mandatory Palestine," on March 1.



Nimrod Ben Zeev

Community College Partnerships

This year the Middle East Center had expansive programs with community colleges and historically black colleges and universities in the greater Philadelphia area.

In collaboration with the Center for Civic Leadership and Responsibility (CCLR) at Camden County College, the Middle East Center organized a six-part lecture series from in March and April. The goal of the series was to address the continuing political crisis in the Middle East by explaining its historical origins and examining regional attitudes of the United States. Lecturers included the Middle East Center Director, Dr. Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet, who gave a talk called, “A Contradiction in Terms? Women, Politics, and Revolution in Iran.” Penn faculty Dr. Brian Spooner, Dr. Mahyar Entazari, and Dr. Ian Lustick also gave talks in their areas of expertise. Dr. Spooner presented on, “Iran’s Place in the Modern World,” and Dr. Entezari talked about, “Ancient Persian Modern Iran: Nationalism, Nation-Building, and National Identity.” Dr. Lustick’s lecture was entitled, “How Much of the Middle East is a Terrorist Problem?” Harleen Gambhir, from the Institute for Study of War presented on, “ISIS’s Global Strategy and Operations,” and Richard Wike, from PEW Research Center presented a talk called, “What They Think of Us.”

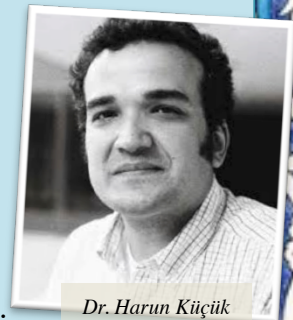


Dr. Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet

The Middle East Center successfully initiated a relationship with Montgomery County Community College (MCCC) this semester. Dr. Harun Küçük delivered the Dean's Lecture at MCCC and his talk on April 12 was entitled, “Fleeing the Inquisition: European Refugees in Istanbul in 18th Century.”

The event was well attended by more than fifty people.

After discussing the plight of refugees who fled Europe for religious persecution and settled in the Ottoman Empire, Dr. Küçük also answered questions about the Syrian refugee crisis in Turkey and Europe.



Dr. Harun Küçük

Dr. Abeer Aloush delivered the first MEC sponsored talk at Lincoln University entitled, “Historical Forces in Quranic Recitation under Pan-nationalism and Free Market Capitalism: Contemporary Egypt and the Ideological Struggle to Define Islam.”

Community College Partnerships

This spring semester, Middle East worked with the Community College of Philadelphia's (CCP) to enhance the colleges ability to internationalize the curriculum with Middle East-related content. To this end, we jointly developed a series of academic programs that focused on themes including Arabic language, Islam, and various countries of the Middle East such as Syria, Iraq, and Turkey. Our programming with CCP also included trans-regional connections between the Middle East and other world regions including Africa and South Asia. Special lectures included a talk entitled, "Islamic Economy and Social Mobility: Considering Culture and Religion," by Hasan Shahpari, Adjunct Professor of Sociology at CCP, on March 2; a performance and talk by Penn graduate student Juan Carlos Castrillón on Sufi traditions and music on April 2; and discussion by Dr. Soad Shindy, from CCP's Foreign Languages Department, on *The Corpse Washer*, a 2014 novel by Iraqi-American author Dr. Sinan Antoon on April 19. Our spring series concluded with another lecture by Dr. Shindy entitled, "Comparing the Yusef Sura from the Quran with the Joseph story from the Hebrew Bible," on May 24.



Community College of Philadelphia Campus



Juan Carlos Castrillón



The Middle East Center provided curriculum development grants to faculty at Camden County Community College. Dr. Patrick Hughes and Dr. Christopher Gennari received grants from our center to integrate perspectives from Middle East studies in their courses at CCC.

World Heritage and Global Education: Building Global Education Ties Across Philadelphia

In celebration of Philadelphia's selection as a World Heritage City last year the Middle East Center collaborated with Global Philadelphia Association, Penn's South Asia Center and Penn Museum to organize a World Heritage Week to Andrew Jackson School in South Philadelphia.

On April 26 the Middle East Center and South Asia Center participated in A. Jackson School Professional Development Day by leading a workshop on how to use world heritage education as a tool for teaching global education. Teachers at Jackson were trained on how to utilize the Philadelphia World Heritage Tool Kit that was created by local educators through our 2015 Global Education Summer Institute.

After the professional development day, students at Jackson were engaged in a week of in class and out of class activities to embrace Philadelphia's global assets and explore different world regions. Through these interactive activities the entire school community celebrated their diversity.

World Heritage Week engaged more than 200 Jackson students, providing them with world class global education programs, international guest speakers and renowned performers. Students visited the Penn Museum's mummy collection, the Franklin Institute's Lost Egypt exhibition and the Philadelphia Art Museum's ancient South Asia galleries. The program culminated in an incredible closing ceremony featuring several intercultural performances and insight from local government liaisons such as City Representative, Sheila Hess, and First District councilmen, Mark Squilla, as well as reflections from students and staff dressed in their own unique cultural garb.

In partnership with Global Philadelphia Association, the Commerce Department, the School District of Philadelphia, Penn's South Asia Center and the Penn Museum, the Middle East Center at Penn organized a curriculum development initiative with ten educators from diverse backgrounds July 11 through 22. Educators came together to design lesson plans that teach Philadelphia's heritage and its rich relationship to the world heritage. Participants developed more than ninety unique lesson plans and received training from Dr. Carolyn Brunelle on how to responsibly develop Middle East/North African curriculum by using strong resources and avoiding bias.



World Heritage Week



Jackson Elementary



World Heritage PD with Dr. Brunelle

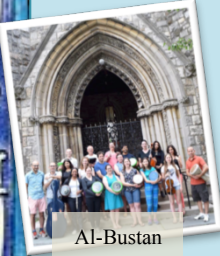


World Heritage Week

Summer at the Middle East Center

Summer at the Middle East Center was filled with rich teacher training programming. On June 20, Dr. Abeer Aloush led an Arabic workshop called, “Intertextuality

Interpretation as Collaborative Activity,” where she exposed innovative methods of teaching Arabic. In July the Middle East Center co-sponsored an Al-Bustan



Al-Bustan

teacher training workshop entitled, “Arab

Arts and Culture Course for Educators.” At this week

long teacher training educators learned how to integrate elements of Arab culture into their global education curriculum.



Dr. Abeer Aloush

The Middle East Center organized a teacher training workshop entitled, “Gendered Perspectives:

Integrating Gender into K-12 Global Education Curriculum”

at Camden County College on July 13. New Jersey based educators learned about pedagogical tools and histories of gender in the Caribbean and Latin America from Dr.

Grace Sanders Johnson, best practices and new strategies for teaching gender topics related to Africa from Anastasia Shown and curriculum development related to women in the Middle East by Dr. Carine Allaf.



Dr. Carine Allaf



Dr. Grace Sanders Johnson

This year the five day Global Summer Institute focused on, “Using the Arts to Teach Global History, Happenings and Heritage.” On the first day of the institute we had a talk on teaching with art by Dr. Jamal J. Elias, a presentation on ancient Indian theories of how we experience life in literature and drama by Dr. Deven Patel and an engaging presentation on how to recognize artistry in the fabric art of rug making by fabric arts specialist Craig Wallen from 12 Gates Gallery in Old City.

Day two of the Summer Institute included a presentation on electronic resources available for utilizing the arts for global education by Dr. Pushkar Sohoni. The group also enjoyed the material presented in the Philadelphia Museum of Art’s Creative Africa exhibits.



Summer Inst. Participants

Summer at the Middle East Center

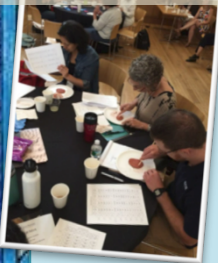
On day three of the Summer Institute our group learned how to use Bollywood movies to teach South Asian religion in a presentation by Dr. Amardeep Singh, Associate Professor of English Lehigh University. After, the group discovered the resources offered to K-12 teachers by the Penn Museum. The group ended with a presentation on how to use global films in the classroom by Maori Karmael Holmes, Director of Public Engagement Institute of Contemporary Art and Producing Artistic Director of Black Star Film Fest.



Travel to the PMA



Penn Museum Presentation



Day four of the Summer Institute started with a talk on ethnomusicology by Dr. Carol Muller and a short session on using online mapping tools as an aid for teaching global education by Juan Carlos Castrillón Vallejo. A dynamic workshop by Theater of the Oppressed facilitators Paloma N. Irizarry and Hariprasad S. Kowtha followed. After a delicious Cambodian lunch, Hye-Jung Park, Associate Director and Program Manager at Scribe Video Center led a session on K-Pop and how it can be used to teach Korean culture and it's global influence. The day concluded with a session by Al-Bustan's music director, Hanna Khoury, on Arab arts and culture.

The fifth and final day of the Summer Institute featured breakout sessions by peer educators and concluded with a session on Indian Raga singing by Parthasarathi Mukhopadhyay and a performance by Juan Carlos Castrillón Vallejo on Turkish Sufi music traditions.



Creative Africa Exhibit



Presentations at the Perry World House



Summer at the Middle East Center

On August 18, the Center had a special teacher training workshop called, “Islamophobia: Confronting Bias in the Classroom and Beyond,” led by Penn professors Dr. Ameena Ghaffar-Kucher, from Penn Graduate School of Education, and Dr. Jamal Elias, from the Department of Religious Studies. In this interactive workshop educators learned to integrate an anti-Islamophobia framework into their classrooms and global education curriculum.



On August 23, the center collaborated with Penn Museum to create the hands on teacher training, “Middle East Cultures: Preserving the Past.” At the half day event, Dr. Salam Al Kuntar presented the work of Penn Museum’s Cultural Heritage Center on Safeguarding the Heritage of Syria and Iraq Project (SHOSI), an internationally recognized project which protects Syrian and Iraqi cultural heritage by empowering Syrians and Iraqis to preserve their own cultural artifacts and sites.

After the talk, teachers participated in a guided gallery exploration using object-based learning strategies to explore and study real Turkish cultural treasures in the Museum’s *The Golden Age of King Midas* exhibition.



For the final event of our summer programs, we organized a pedagogy workshop for instructors of Turkish in American universities on August 26. Dr. Erika Gilson from the American Association for the Teachers of Turkic languages led this workshop. Turkish instructors from the University of Pennsylvania, Princeton University and George Mason University attended the workshop to discuss best practices and teaching strategies for teaching Turkish at college level.