



The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Carolina Center for the Study of the Middle East and Muslim Civilizations

TO: Arne Kalleberg, Senior Associate Dean for Social Sciences and International Studies, College of Arts and Sciences; CCSMEMC Advisory Board and members; UNC area studies centers

FROM: Carl Ernst, Director, Carolina Center for the Study of the Middle East and Muslim Civilizations

RE: Annual Report for 2006-7

DATE: 6/26/2007

Administration:

The past year brought major changes to the administrative structure of CCSMEMC, including the appointment of Dr. Cangüzel Zülfiakar as Associate Director (October 2006). A specialist in civil society and charitable institutions in the Ottoman Empire (Ph.D. History, Hacettepe University, Turkey), Cangüzel ("Janzi") brings a much-needed expertise to our center (she has taught courses in history and religious studies at Duke and UNC) along with administrative abilities. Her responsibilities include program activities, coordination with other area studies units at UNC and in the Triangle, grant development, and support of curriculum and outreach activities.

In another significant move, the Advisory Board was expanded to include six faculty members specializing in Middle East studies (Banu Gökariksel, Charles Kurzman, Omid Safi, Sarah Shields, and Nadia Yaqub), who also, along with Sahar Amer, constitute the Faculty Program Committee dealing with planning and implementation of ongoing program events.

With the completion of the FedEx Global Education Center, in March 2007 Center staff for the first time were able to move into actual physical offices in rooms 3018 (Carl) and 3023 (Cangüzel), alongside of administrative manager Peter Landstrom in room 3025.

Carl Ernst has been reappointed to a five-year term as director as of July 2007. The dean has charged him to convene the advisory board regularly, oversee development of plans for development of the center and its programs, develop estimates of resource needs, and to seek additional funding for the center.

Updated contact information for Center staff and other details are available on our website at <http://global.unc.edu/mideast>.

Grants and Development:

Internal grants received by CCSMEMC include a Carolina Asia Center grant of \$5000 to support videoconferencing between classes on Islamic studies at UNC, Duke, and NIU-Jakarta, Indonesia. This was a very successful program, according to Omid Safi, who hopes to repeat the experiment in the future. The Center also received a grant from Global Initiatives (\$6,000) to support our Global Middle East workshop; this support, drawn from GI's Title VI grant, will be available for the next three years as well. The Carolina Seminars program also made available an

extra \$1000 to support the Global Middle East workshop; this is in addition to their normal annual support of \$1500 for programs of the Carolina Seminar on Comparative Islamic Studies.

An external application was submitted in February for a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Seminar for College Teachers in 2008, on the topic "The Qur'an for Our Time" (to be led by co-directors Carl Ernst and Bruce Lawrence and supported by a research assistant). Notification on the outcome of this application is expected in summer 2007, and if successful the program will take place over 5 weeks in June-July 2008, with 20 participating college teachers in residence.

Development contacts continue to be pursued in consultation with curricular units and development officers. A major focus for development next year will be to seek support for Persian language instruction.

Institutional Memberships:

The profile of our center is enhanced by its membership in national research organizations devoted to Middle Eastern studies. We have taken over from the North Carolina Center for South Asia Studies our consortium membership, shared with Duke, in the American Institute of Iranian Studies (AIrS). We also continue to be an institutional member of the Center for Arabic Study Abroad (CASA). Our application for institutional membership in the Middle East Studies Association (MESA) was approved in April 2007.

Programs supported:

CCSMEMC was the chief sponsor or cosponsor of the following events this year:

September 1-2, 2006: Muslim Networks Consortium

September 27, 2006: A Celebration of Naguib Mahfouz

November 30, 2006: Global Music Program: Music from the Axis of Evil (Iraq and Iran), WXYC radio

January 29, 2007: Nasrollah Pourjavady, professor of philosophy, University of Tehran, "The Language of Spiritual Experience (zaban-e hal) in Persian Sufism"

February 19-21, 2007: Dunya Mikhail lectures and poetry readings

March 2-3, 2007: Global Middle East workshop

March 29, 2007: Salim Tamari, professor of sociology, Birzeit University, "War and Modernity: The Centrality of WWI in the Re-Making of Levantine Culture."

April 6-7, 2007: 4th Annual Duke-UNC Graduate Islamic Studies Conference, "Islam and the Challenge of Pluralism: Muslim Encounters with the Other."

April 10, 2007: Fazal Sheikh, American photographer (Exhibit)

April 11, 2007: Robert Crews, professor of history, Stanford University, "Muslim Networks and State Power in Eurasia."

April 16, 2007: American film premiere of *Belonging* (Palestine-Jordan-U.S., 2006, 71 minutes), directed by Tariq Nasir.

April 21, 2007: International Educational Festival for K-12 students

The Center listed these and more than 200 other Triangle-area events related to the Middle East and Muslim Civilizations on its clearinghouse webpage, available at <http://global.unc.edu/mideast> (click on "Local Events").

Delegations:

UNC is regularly invited to receive and give briefings to delegations under the International Visitors Council/World Affairs Council program sponsored by the US State Department. Director Carl Ernst offered presentations on "Changing Perspectives on Islamic Studies in American

Universities" to four separate delegations from Afghanistan, Algeria, Jordan, and France-Germany during the fall semester. He also met with a visiting class from the American University in Cairo in January 2007; this visit is a step in building a complete student exchange program between UNC and AUC.

Visiting scholar:

Dr. Meenakshi Khanna of Delhi University, India, was a visiting Fulbright scholar in the Department of Religious Studies in fall 2006. She taught a class on "Islam in South Asia" and pursued her research on Sufism in consultation with Carl Ernst.

Outreach:

While CCSMEMC does not have the same obligation that Title VI centers have to perform outreach to K-12 school teachers, outreach is nevertheless a significant part of our activity. Our activities for school teachers and community colleges include the following:

- UNC faculty members have forged a relationship with two national groups of secondary school teachers of religious studies, Religious Studies in Secondary Schools and the Council for Spiritual and Ethical Education. In this connection, Carl Ernst prepared a two-day workshop on "Muhammad and the Hadith" for the Summer Institute on World Religions held at Washington National Cathedral in July, and together with Religious Studies professor Thomas Tweed organized a one-day invitation-only Experienced Teachers Workshop on "Religion, the Body, and Experience: Critical Reflections on Zen Buddhism and Sufism," held at UNC in February 2007.
- Carl Ernst also offered a presentation on "Teaching about Islam in the Community College Setting" for the North Carolina Community College System Conference in Greensboro in October 2006.
- Charles Kurzman gave a presentation on "Challenges of Radical Islam," Durham Academy, Durham, NC, February 27, 2007
- Sarah Shields (History) gave a presentation on "Middle East State System" at Durham Academy in September 2006.
- Nadia Yaqub offered a presentation on "Arabs in America" to seventh grade students at Durham School of the Arts in December, 2006.
- Cangüzel Zülfikar made a major presentation at a Teacher Workshop on "Turkey: A Bridge between Two Worlds," at Exploris Museum in Raleigh in April 2007.

Center faculty members gave numerous other talks to public audiences as well.

CCSMEMC faculty members regularly respond to media inquiries about events relating to the Middle East and Islam. Omid Safi and Carl Ernst were named among the "Top 10 U.S. scholars of Islam" by the Religion Newswriters Association (http://www.religionlink.org/tip_060807.php).

International academic connections and NGO linkages:

One of the goals of CCSMEMC is to form academic and cultural linkages with institutions around the world, particularly where this approach favors our research interests in the trans-regional study of Muslim cultures. These efforts have included videoconferencing between classes at UNC and the American University in Cairo (July 2006) and with the National Islamic University in Jakarta (fall 2006). Other organizations with which we have formal relationships and significant contacts include:

- Centre for Civilisational Dialogue, University of Malaya

- Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyya Museum, Kuwait
- *Journal of Islamic Research*, Theology Faculty, Istanbul University, Advisory Board
- Jubilo Project for Interfaith Dialogue, Spanda Foundation (The Hague)
- Ministries of Endowments and Religious Affairs, Oman and Kuwait
- Turkish Women's Cultural Association (Istanbul), Editorial Advisory Board
- Web Journal on Cultural Patrimony (Università degli Studi di Napoli "L'Orientale")

Curriculum:

An important curricular development this year was the approval of the major concentration in Arab cultures, offered by the Department of Asian Studies. This new major complements the minors in Arabic and Hebrew languages in the same department.

UNC currently has Study Abroad programs at universities in Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, and Turkey. Two newly approved programs are at the University of Florida Arabic language study in Morocco (Fes), and the University of Virginia program at Yarmuk, Jordan. Other projects are under consideration by the Study Abroad office:

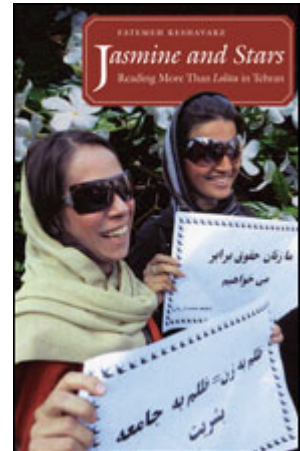
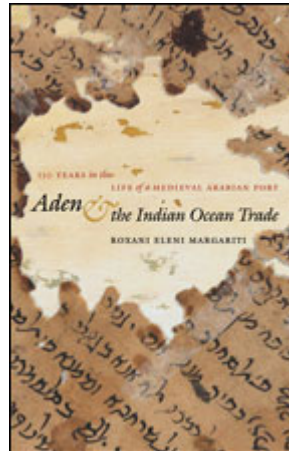
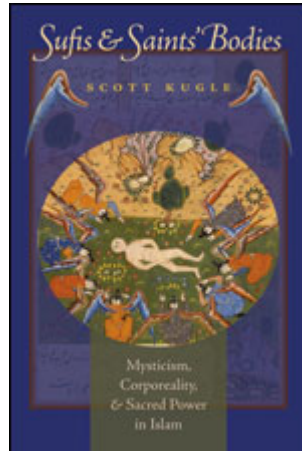
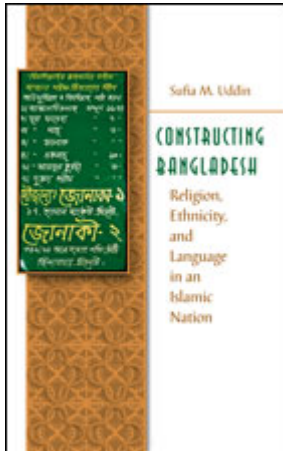
- Nadia Yaqub is in the process of creating a study abroad program to be housed at the University of Jordan in Amman and codirected with Rula Quawas, the director of the Women's Studies Center at UJ. In conjunction with this program she has designed a new service learning study abroad course, ARAB 350, "Women and Leadership in the Arab World."
- Omid Safi has been developing a proposal for a summer study abroad program in Turkey, focusing on premodern religion and culture, to be offered in the early summer. Carl Ernst and Omid Safi held talks with faculty at Istanbul University in May to explore possible study abroad program connections.

In addition, Sarah Shields has received approval from the Burch Field Research Seminars program for a summer course based in Turkey that would focus on modern politics and nationalism.

Research:

Publication Series. The UNC Press series on "Islamic Civilization and Muslim Networks," co-edited by Carl Ernst and Bruce Lawrence (Duke), this year has published four new volumes in the series, for a total of eight:

- *Constructing Bangladesh: Religion, Ethnicity, and Language in an Islamic Nation*, by Sufia M. Uddin
- *Sufis and Saints' Bodies: Mysticism, Corporeality, and Sacred Power in Islam*, by Scott Kugle
- *Aden and the Indian Ocean Trade: 150 Years in the Life of a Medieval Arabian Port*, by Roxani Margariti
- *Jasmine and Stars: Reading More Than Lolita in Tebran*, by Fatemeh Keshavarz



We feel that this interdisciplinary series, which is attracting numerous submissions from authors, is already making an impact in the fields of Islamic and Middle Eastern studies.

Faculty Conference Presentations and Invited Lectures. The Center continues to gain prominence nationwide for its distinctive approach to Middle East studies. We sponsored a "thematic conversation" on "Constructing and Deconstructing a Region: Cross-Regional Approaches to the Middle East," organized by Charles Kurzman, and joined by Carl Ernst, in the second year of a three years' sequence of annual meetings of the Middle East Studies Association. Other faculty presentations include the following:

Sahar Amer

- "Muslim Women in Contemporary France," Marketing Muslim Women workshop (UNC/Duke)
- "Border Crossings," Smith College
- "Love between Women in Medieval French and Arabic Literatures," University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Glaire Anderson

- "Roman Landscape, Abbasid Manners: Negotiating Suburban Estate Culture in Umayyad Cordoba," First Colloquium on the Cultures of Christian and Islamic Iberia, University of Exeter, UK, September 2006
- "Suburban Villas and Luxury Consumption in 10th c. Cordoba," Medieval Academy of America Annual Meeting, Boston, 2006

Carl Ernst

- "Reconfiguring the relation between religion and world: Sufism and reformist Islam in South Asia since the 18th century," Conference on "Religion and Civil Society – Germany, Great Britain and India in the 19th century," Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung, Berlin, Germany, May 10-13, 2006
- "On Islamic Ritual and Practice: A Religious Studies Perspective," Seminar on "Trends in Contemporary Muslim Thought," Institute for Ismaili Studies, Ismaili Centre, Lisbon, Portugal, June 23, 2006
- "Islamic Mysticism and Globalization," Goodspeed Lecture, Denison College, Granville OH, September 27, 2006; also Berz Lecture, George Washington University, Washington, DC, April 12, 2007
- "Universalism and Pluralism in Islamic Religious Thought," Spanda Foundation, Jubilo Project Launch Presentation, Peace Palace, The Hague, The Netherlands, October 13, 2006
- "Islamic Studies and Religious Studies: How are they related?" US Naval Academy, Annapolis, MD, November 2, 2006
- "Muslim Interpreters of Yoga," South Asia Seminar, University of Chicago, January 4, 2007
- "Islam and the Modern European Concept of Religion" (in Arabic), Ministry of Religious Affairs and Endowments, Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque Lecture Hall, Muscat, Oman, January 14-16, 2007
- "Islamic Ethics, from the Premodern to the Postcolonial," al-Ghazali Lecture, Elmhurst College, Chicago IL, Feb. 15, 2007
- "Davani's Interpretation of Hafiz," Conference on "Hafiz and the School of Love in Persian Poetry," University of Exeter, U.K., Mar. 30-Apr. 1, 2007
- "'A Little Indicates Much': Structure and Meaning in the Prefaces to Rumi's *Masnavi*," Conference on Jalal al-Din Rumi and Religion, University of Shiraz, Shiraz, Iran, April 20-21, 2007
- "Universalism in Islamic Thought," Keynote address for International Symposium on Religion and World Peace, Faculty of Divinity of Istanbul University, Istanbul, Turkey April 26-28, 2007

Banu Gökarıksel

- "Beyond the mosque: Muslim women's spatial experiences of new Islamic fashion," Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, May 2-3, 2007.
- "Space, identity and veiling: Muslim women's experiences of new Islamic fashion in Istanbul," Marketing Muslim Women, at UNC-CH-Duke U., April 27-28, 2007.
- "Neoliberalism and Islam: the constitution of the neoliberal Muslim subject and veiling fashions in Istanbul," Association of American Geographers Meeting, San Francisco, April 17-21, 2007.

Charles Kurzman

- "Social Science and the Iranian Revolution," Biennial Conference of the International Society for Iranian Studies, London, UK, August 4, 2006.
- "Mashrutiyat, Mesrutiyet, and Beyond: Parallels and Intersections in the Constitutional Revolutions of 1905-1912," Centenary Conference of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution, Oxford, UK, August 1, 2006.

- "Radical Sheik and the Missing Martyrs: Why Are There So Few Islamic Terrorists?" Center for Middle East Studies, University of Arizona, February 12, 2007; also at Comparative Politics Workshop, University of Chicago, October 9, 2006.
- "Liberal Islam Versus Radical Islam," York University, Toronto, Canada, April 2, 2007.

Omid Safi

- "Let Justice Roll Down Like Water: A Muslim Dialogue with Martin." William and Mary University, March 2007.
- "The politics of Islam in modern Iran," Allegheny College, February 2007
- Theologian-in-residence, Wooster College, Middle of February 2007 (five talks)
- "Like Water Towards the Low Ground: Islam, Justice, and Compassion," Northwestern University, January 2007
- "Islam, Beauty, and Justice," Grand Rapids Valley State, January 2007
- "Muslims and the Mantle of Martin," Hamline University, November 14th, 2006.
- "Islam from Reformation to Transformation," "Islamic Reform in the Axis of Evil," Carleton College, October 27th, 2006.
- "Ethics of Care in Islam," Augustana College, October 26th, 2006

Sarah Shields

- "Beyond Identity Politics: Kirkuk and the League of Nation Commission: Second World Congress for Middle Eastern Studies, Amman, Jordan, June 2006.
- "The US and the Sancak Question: Navigating a New Relationship in a Rapidly-Changing Context," Conference on the History of American-Turkish Relations: 1833-1989, Istanbul, Turkey, June 2006.

Nadia Yaqub

- "Hany Abu Assad and the Palestinian Road Movie," Middle East Studies Association, Boston, November 2006.
- "The Palestinian Cinematic Wedding," Second World Congress of Middle Eastern Studies, Amman, Jordan, June 2006.

Honors and Grants. Center faculty members were awarded a number of prestigious fellowships and awards:

- Glaire Anderson, African Studies Course Development Grant; Center for Global Initiatives Curriculum Development Grant
- Carl Ernst, award from the Iranian Research Institute in Philosophy (Tehran) and Shiraz University, for his book *Following Muhammad*.
- Banu Gökariksel, Institute for the Arts and Humanities Faculty Fellowship (spring 2008), and a UNC Junior Faculty Development Award (2007)
- Omid Safi, Carnegie Endowment Fellowship in Islamic Studies (2007-8)
- Sarah Shields, fellowships from the National Humanities Center (2006-7), and the National Endowment for the Humanities (2007); Curriculum Development Grant, Center for Global Initiatives; Teaching development grant, African Studies Center; Small Grants program, University Research Council
- Nadia Yaqub, UNC University Center for International Studies Course Development Grant, 2006; UNC Curriculum in Peace, War, and Defense Course

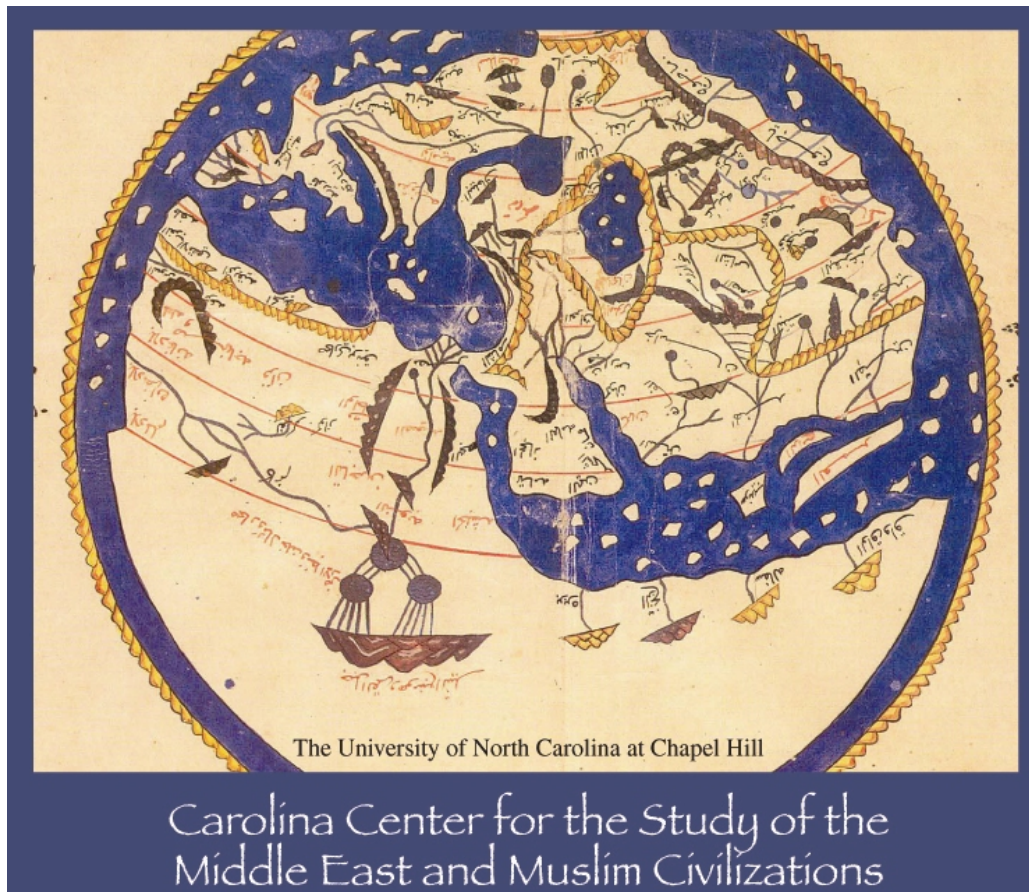
Development Grant, 2006; UNC African Studies Center conference grant, 2007; Humanities and Fine Arts Award, Summer 2007.

Faculty books. Without listing the numerous faculty articles published, we single out books: Omid Safi, ed., *Voices of Diversity and Change*, volume 5 of *Voices of Islam* series edited by Vincent Cornell (Praeger, 2006).

Nadia Yaqub, *Pens, Swords, and the Springs of Art: The Oral Poetry Dueling of Palestinian Weddings in the Galilee* (Brill Academic Publishers, 2006).

Collaborations. The Center continues to collaborate actively with the other area studies centers on subjects that cross regional boundaries. We are especially proud of the fourth annual national graduate student conference on Islamic studies held this April, organized by graduate students from Duke and UNC, highlighting our growing strength in this field. Our collaboration with Duke includes the service of Charles Kurzman on the search committee for the professorship in Islamic studies in the social sciences this year, as well as the co-sponsorship of numerous other activities, such as the Marketing Muslim Women Workshop. Our Global Middle East workshop is supported by Global Initiatives at UNC and collaborates with the Middle East Studies Program at NCSU.

In conclusion, CCSMEMC has had an extremely successful year, and we would like to express our thanks to the College for its ongoing support of this important area of international studies.



Highlights in pictures:



CCSMEMC breakfast on the Bosphorus, Istanbul, May 2007 – Cangüzel Zülfikar, Omid Safi, a friend, and Carl Ernst



Judith and Carl Ernst with Iranian scholars Ali Asghar Saifi and Ghasem Kakaie in Shiraz, April 2007



Carl Ernst giving keynote address at Istanbul University conference on “Religion and World Peace”



Cemalnur Sargut, Carl Ernst, Omid Safi, and Cangüzel Zülfikar at Maltepe, Istanbul, conversations on the study of Sufism



Dr. Aavani of Iranian Research Institute in Philosophy (Tehran) presenting award to Carl Ernst at Shiraz University



Carl Ernst with officials from Kuwait Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs, and Prof. Seham Alfreih, Kuwait University (3rd from right)



Reading by Fatemeh Keshavarz, Washington University-St. Louis, at Bull's Head Bookstore (left), and presentation by Alec Hargreave, Florida State University (right), at Global Middle East workshop, March 2007