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ANNUAL HIGHLIGHTS

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DIRECTOR'S NOTE

It is with mixed feelings that I compose my final Director's message for the CMEIS newsletter, in light of my impending retirement July 1, 2022. On one hand, it is inspiring to contemplate the remarkable growth of our programs since the center was formally established in March 2003. On the other hand, I will greatly miss the camaraderie and sense of community that have been part of all our activities. I still plan to be around, so let's dwell on the positive side. There is much to be grateful for.

When Charles Kurzman and I began to push forward the idea of a Middle East Center at UNC twenty years ago, we started from scratch. Equipped with nothing but a meagre website that we created, we confidently stepped forth into the forbidding field of program building. With little sense of previous commitment to Middle East studies, administrators were cautious about this effort. But eventually they worked with us on formulating a concept of the center, rightly stressing that it needed to be strongly connected to the university's curriculum, which is after all the instrument by which the faculty defines what is important.

We began with the principle that it is best to start with good ideas. Charles drafted the first summary of our aims in February of 2002, conceiving the center as a hybrid between area studies and a thematic emphasis on trans-regional Muslim cultures as well as minorities in the Middle East. This list of goals was elaborated in a series of successive strategic plans (all available on our website), which included curriculum, infrastructure, programs, resources, and faculty positions. Gradually, over time we have succeeded in reaching nearly all of those objectives. Consultative processes with faculty yielded important insights into the importance of integrating the arts into our programs, while making sure that the disciplinary concerns of academic departments were addressed. Undergraduate minors relating to Middle East Studies were created in Global Studies, Religious Studies, and Asian and Middle East Studies, along with an interdisciplinary graduate certificate. Incrementally, staff positions came into existence. A major milestone was reached in 2010, when our grant proposal for a Title VI National Resource Center for Middle East Studies (jointly with Duke) was funded by the U.S. Department of

Continued on the next page.

Education. With the superb team of Shai Tamari as Associate Director, and Emma Harver in charge of outreach, we never looked back. The host of Middle East-related events, programs, library resources, and engaged faculty that can now be found across the university are a testament to the importance of this initiative as a crucial part of UNC's commitment to international studies.

The center is in good hands. Charles Kurzman as Director of the Consortium will continue to manage the Title VI grant with the meticulous oversight that has been so effective, and we hope that a renewal of the grant will permit him to implement a major new plan for our Center to engage with Middle East programs and faculty across the state of the North Carolina. Shai Tamari likewise remains as a key figure in the vision and the operation of the center. We will all miss Emma Harver, who has moved to a new position in Colorado, where we wish her all success. But let me take this opportunity to welcome our newly appointed Business & Research Coordinator, Courtney Phillipie. And I would also like to extend my congratulations to the new Director of the Center, Claudia Yaghoobi - Roshan Institute Associate Professor in Persian Studies, who I am confident will use her considerable talents to sustain and enhance the important role of Middle East studies at UNC. It has been a privilege for me to play a part in establishing Middle East and Islamic studies as an area of strength at UNC. Thank you to everyone who has assisted in this effort.

-- Carl Ernst



Images: A retirement party held in honor of Carl Ernst, April 2022



Water Scarcity and Desalination in the Gulf: Webinar Addresses Water Supply in the Gulf

On October 18, 2021, the CMEIS and the Water Institute hosted a virtual discussion on water desalination in the Arab Gulf titled “The Well and the Water Machine: The History of Desalination and Fossil-Fueled Water in the Long Shadow of Arabia’s Climate-Altered Future.” The webinar featured Michael Christopher Low, Assistant Professor of History at Iowa State University. Professor Low specializes in Late Ottoman, Modern Middle Eastern, Indian Ocean, and Environmental History. In 2020-2021, he served as a Senior Humanities Research Fellow for the Study of the Arab World at NYU Abu Dhabi. While in residence in the UAE, he continued work on several new projects exploring the entangled enviro-technical histories of desalination technology, water production, infrastructure, energy, and climate change in the Arabian Peninsula, the wider Middle East, and more globally.

The webinar provided an overview of the history of water desalination in the Gulf, an energy-intensive process of removing mineral components from seawater to produce water suitable for human consumption. Professor Low traced the history of desalination in the Gulf back to the late 19th century when repeated drought and cholera outbreaks in places such as Saudi Arabia initiated the quest for fresh water. However, it was not until the 20th century that water desalination took its next significance step in the region with the arrival of fossil-fueled desalination technologies. Low highlighted how the emergence of modern desalination was linked to American technical programs that aimed to address a potential problem of water shortages in certain parts of the country.

While desalination efforts never came into fruition in the United States, desalination technologies were repackaged and imported to the then oil-producing Saudi Arabia, where it became widely used in the 1970s. In drawing parallels and connections between histories of water desalination in the United States and the Middle East, Low emphasized how the emergence of desalination as a defining material reality in the Gulf is also linked to the emergence of fossil fuels as another energy source. The webinar also addressed local practices of freshwater provision prior to the arrival of modern desalination, the challenges associated with such practices, and their gendered nature. Low concluded his discussion with a note on the problem of water scarcity facing the Arab Gulf today, particularly as desalination infrastructures with their dependence on fossil fuel have generated a problematic imaginary of water as infinite.

In a lively discussion, attendees posted questions that further probed different aspects of desalination in the Gulf. Questions ranged from the future of water desalination and its ecological burden to the economy of desalination infrastructures. Low further engaged with questions that addressed in greater details the history of water supply before desalination became the primary mode of water provision across the Gulf.

-- Marwa Koheji, doctoral student in cultural anthropology





Events on Iranian Literary Diasporas Explore Identity and Belonging

Throughout the 2021-2022 academic year, the Persian Studies program at UNC hosted a robust virtual lecture series on “Iranian Literary Diasporas.” Convened by Dr. Claudia Yaghoobi, Roshan Associate Professor in the Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, Inaugural Director of UNC Persian Studies, and incoming CMEIS Director, the series was dedicated to exploring how Iranian diaspora authors reflect on the community’s attempts at carving out forms of belonging to a host nation.

Yaghoobi teaches a course on Literary Diasporas of the Middle East, and the subject of the Iranian Armenian diaspora is the subject of her third monograph. “If you look at Persian literature, beginning from the ninth century, you will be able to find examples of exile (diaspora) as a leitmotiv,” Yaghoobi explained. “A well-known example is Rumi’s *Mathnavī-yi mā’navī* where Rumi depicts how the reed is torn from its reed-bed to form a flute, complaining of the pain of separation. After the 1979 Revolution and the Iran Iraq war (1980-88), many Iranians including writers, poets and intellectuals fled the country. Consequently, in exile, these writers began writing about their feelings of separation from “home” and how they find solace by writing.”

Themes that emerged out of the fall and spring series include hybrid existence; ways in which the Iranian diaspora community reconciles various parts of their identity; challenges caused by the intersectionality of race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation; and transnationalism as a way to challenge nationalism. Additional events were held in the spring.

“There are many reasons why I convened this lectures series,” said Yaghoobi. “Most importantly, I noticed that diaspora authors who write in their mother tongue (Persian), are being marginalized in the West in various forms; including a recent decision by Amazon to refuse the inclusion of Farsi as one of its languages. As a scholar who has always worked towards giving voice to the marginalized and invisible populations, my main goal was to feature some of these authors who deal with questions of belonging and homesickness.”

A highlight of the series was an October event featuring author Omid Fallahazad. Yaghoobi and Fallahazad pointed out the ways that Armenians of Iran have been exposed to discrimination both in Iran and in the United States, and outlined the ways that Armenians, along with other Middle Easterners, have been subjected to racism and Islamophobia in the U.S. post-9/11. As Christians, Armenians are considered a white ethnic minoritized group, but are lumped together with Muslim Middle Easterners and subjected to America’s Islamophobia.

The series contributed to conversations about identity and belonging, national affiliation, and the concept of homeland. “Nations are dynamic constructs and national identity is constantly in flux from generation to generation. In today’s global world, hybridity becomes significant as we no longer have the capacity to draw the line between us and them, the different and the same, here and there,” Yaghoobi reflected.

Fall Kitab Talk Series Highlights Innovative Scholarship

A collaboration between the Center and the UNC Libraries, the 'Kitab Talk' series (*kitab* meaning 'book' in Arabic) connects students, faculty, and staff with the latest developments in the library world.

"The diverse array of topics featured in this year's fall series included a digital library of public domain Arabic language content from the 19th and 20th centuries, a crowdsourced community-based oral history archive documenting the 1947 Partition of India and Pakistan, and an digital archive of vinyl records produced by the Jewish communities of North Africa.," shared Rustin Zarkar, UNC's Middle East and Islamic Studies Librarian. Attendees included faculty, independent researchers, university staff, graduate students, undergraduate students, and engaged community members from around the world.

"The Arabic Collections Online Project"

Guy Burak, Librarian for Middle Eastern & Islamic Studies and David Millman, Associate Dean for Technology and Chief Information Officer, NYU Libraries
September 14, 2021

"Transcending Communal Divisions to Build the 1947 Partition Archive"

Guneeta Singh Bhalla, Founder, 1947 Partition Archive
October 19, 2021

"Grooves and Waves: Phonograph Records as Historical Sources in the Digital Age"

Christopher Silver, Segal Family Assistant Professor in Jewish History and Culture, McGill University

NOTABLE SPRING 2022 EVENTS

CMEIS hosts and co-sponsors dozens of events annually that present diverse perspectives, generate debate on issues in the Middle East and North Africa, and highlight cultural studies of the region. Key events from the spring semester include:

"Reporting from Jerusalem: Behind the Headlines"

Daniel Estrin, NPR International Correspondent
February 15, 2022

"Panel Discussion: Women in Business Around the World: A Series of Lightning Talks "

-Yara Al Sayed, based in Dubai, Regional Marketing Manager for Fragrance & Fashion Accessories at Parfums Christian Dior Orient
-Alia Ibrahim, based in Beirut, co-founder and CEO of Daraj.com
March 1, 2022

"Conference: Space and Place: Religion, Politics, and Power in the Middle East"

19th Annual Duke-UNC Middle East and Islamic Studies Graduate Student Conference
Keynote: Waleed Ziad, Assistant Professor and Dr. Ali Jarrahi Fellow in Persian Studies, UNC
March 5, 2022

Film Screening: "The Mother of Two Springs: Mosul" and Discussion with Film Producer Noor Ghazi

-Noor Ghazi, Professor of the Practice, Curriculum in Peace, War, and Defense, UNC
April 18, 2022



Image from UNC Global Photo Competition

Undergraduate Student Spotlight: Jasper Schutt

Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, Undergraduate Student, Class of 2023

What sparked your interest in the Middle East and North Africa?

I became interested in the MENA region in high school when I had the opportunity to take a class on modern Middle Eastern history. That class opened my eyes to the legacy of colonialism and the consequences of U.S. foreign policy in the region. That first experience inspired me to learn Arabic; I felt it a small duty to educate myself and my immediate circle of family and friends.

“ I felt it a small duty to educate myself and my immediate circle of family and friends. ”

What has been your experience with this region thus far?

In terms of my experience in the region, I spent my gap year living in Amman, Jordan and studying Arabic at Qasid Institute. Since coming to UNC, a few of my extracurriculars have also been MENA-related. I serve as one of the editors of Jasur Magazine, UNC and Duke’s student-run publication for critical scholarship on the MENA region. My other favorite extracurricular is getting to serve as the captain of UNC’s Arabic-language debate team this year, winning the first-place Arabic as a foreign language team prize at the U.S. Universities Arabic Debate championship alongside Noor El-Baradie ’23 and Kobe Spells ’22.



What was the topic of the project you presented at the 2021 Middle East Studies Association (MESA) conference?

I presented my paper “Hashemite Discourse and National Identity in Jordanian Independent Film” on two panels at MESA; one film-themed panel with scholars from other universities and one during MESA’s Committee on Undergraduate Middle Eastern Studies workshop. This iteration of the paper was a continuation of my final paper for Dr. Nadia Yaqub’s class ARAB 453: Film, Nation, and Identity in the Arab World. In the essay, I look at how two groups of independent filmmakers based in Amman engage with Jordan’s changing cultural, political, and socio-economic conditions. I couldn’t have done it without Dr. Yaqub, who advised me throughout the research and writing process, well after the semester ended.

What did you learn/gain from presenting at the MESA conference?

I had two big takeaways from MESA. The first was the sense of community I felt with the other undergraduates I met, who were all doing really interesting work and were effusive and fun to talk to even over Zoom. The second takeaway I had was how much I still have to do in order to get the project to where I want it to be. Trying to distill my project into a ten minute presentation allowed me to see where I was still confused about my own argument, and where I still needed to tighten the paper/conduct further research.



Graduate Student Spotlight: Caroline Williams

Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, Master's Student

Caroline was awarded a Center for Middle East and Islamic Studies Graduate Outreach Fellowship to learn about public scholarship and develop materials for K-12 classrooms in Middle East Studies.

Please describe your motivation for applying to the DAMES Master's Degree- what sparked your interest in Middle East Studies?

I studied History and International Affairs as an undergrad, and there was a lot of overlap in the MENA region in my classes. I found myself most engaged by our discussions about the Middle East, because it's a hot topic, and with that comes a lot of underrepresented aspects of politics and culture, as well as misperceptions. Middle East Studies was a way for me personally to overcome these issues and to hopefully help others know more about the region in the future.

What project did you develop as a CMEIS outreach fellow?

I created a high school resource about the Arab Spring! It's a Google Map with 50 locations of significant events for students to go through and learn what the Arab Spring looked like on the ground. Each point has an explanation of the site and a photo or external link to follow.

What did you learn through your work as a CMEIS outreach fellow?

I wasn't very familiar with the idea of public scholarship before the fellowship, so I learned a lot about the process of making information accessible and engaging to students and communities. I really valued this opportunity and benefitted from it so much - it completely opened my eyes to an entirely new field.

What is next for you in the field of Middle East Studies? How will you continue your public scholarship work?

I'll continue my second and final year in the DAMES MA program this fall and definitely plan on staying connected with CMEIS. This summer, I'm going to Scotland to present a paper at the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES Conference) at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland, as well as taking Arabic through UNC. I'm really grateful for my experience with CMEIS and can't wait for what's next!



“ I wasn't very familiar with the idea of public scholarship before the fellowship, so I learned a lot about the process of making information accessible and engaging to students and communities. ”

Grants Awarded to UNC and Duke Faculty for Research in Middle East Studies

With support from a Title VI grant from the U.S. Department of Education, the Center was pleased to offer small grants to faculty at UNC-Chapel Hill and Duke University through its membership in the Duke-UNC Consortium for Middle East Studies. Congratulations to the following faculty for receiving grants for their projects:

Research Travel:

- Yaron Shemer (Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, UNC), to travel to Israel for research on a comparative study of the iconic cartoon characters of the Israeli Srulik and Palestinian Handhala to shed light on the broader dilemmas and anxieties involving in the formation of the respective national identities.

Language Pedagogy Training:

- Caroline Robinson (Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, UNC), to attend the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages 2021 conference.

AY 2021-2022 IN NUMBERS

45 Graduate students across campus engaged in Middle East and Islamic Studies

5 Middle Eastern languages taught

67 Courses offered in Middle East and Islamic Studies



Endangered Archives Project: Sufi Shrines of the Afghan-Pakistan Frontier

Dr. Waleed Ziad, Assistant Professor in the Department of Religious Studies and Dr. Ali Jarrahi Fellow in Persian Studies, and Rustin Zarkar, UNC Middle East and Islamic Studies Librarian, were awarded a Modern Endangered Archive Program (MEAP) grant by the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Library to catalogue and digitize Sufi archives from shrines along the Afghan-Pakistan border. Read reflections on their project and progress below.

"The 2-year project kicked off in mid-February. We were warmly welcomed by religious leaders, Sufis, and their disciples across the tribal areas, and in the historic walled city of Peshawar. Our core team consisted of myself, Rustin, and Nazia Akram, a professor of photography and filmmaker from Islamabad. Ms. Akram has also been collecting footage for future documentaries on our project.

Our first destination was the mountain region of Malakand, the birthplace of Padmasambhava, who spread Buddhism to Tibet and China 1300 years ago. Malakand was occupied in 2010 by the Taliban but is now in relative peace. Our Sufi partners there had already spent several months gathering and centralizing a

valuable collection of manuscripts belonging to the last great Sufi saint of the border region of Waziristan, which Obama had called “the most dangerous place in the world.” This is a treasure trove ranging from works of poetry, meditative practices, magic and charms, and border politics, to anti-Taliban posters and pamphlets in four languages, which has potential to change the highly racialized and war-centric narratives of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border regions, which portray the region as a place of extremism and backwardness.

We assembled a team of Sufis and photography assistants, whom we trained in digitization. We were deeply fortunate to also travel to Buddhist and Muslim sacred sites across the mountains, which we documented. We were regularly visited by local historians and mystics whom we interviewed, and who have offered to expand our reach to other rare manuscript collections in the region.

Our next destination was Peshawar, which has suffered intensely in the last decades of war. We stayed in a Sufi khanaqah in the old city, which houses a collection of 500 manuscripts and about 10,000 books, with many rare materials on Afghanistan and northwest Pakistan. We set up a team of 10 technicians and librarians, who are currently digitizing portions of the collection. Among the highlights was a trip to a madrasa and Sufi center in the old city led by three generations of female scholar-saints, where we collected oral histories and examined material for archiving.



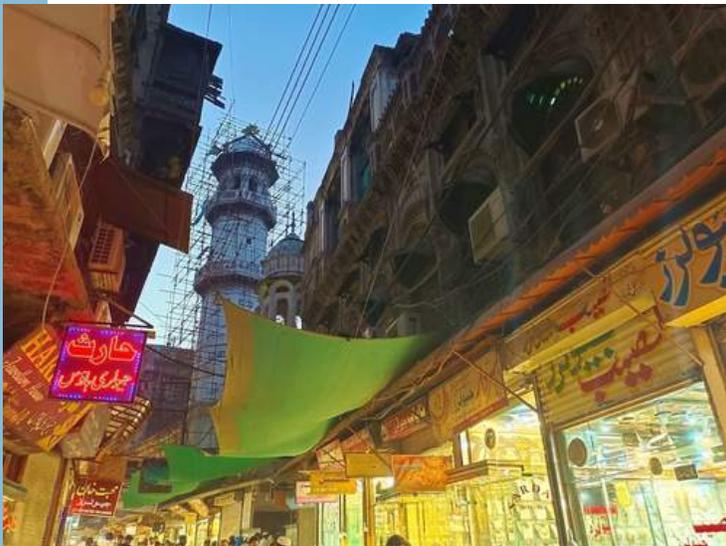
Just within the first month and a half, we were able to digitize over 10,000 pages from the library collections, in addition to documenting shrines and gravestone art, posters, and paraphernalia (like numerological amulets and anti-extremist polemics). More importantly, our project is spurring the growth of a community of historians, archivists, and Sufis across the border regions who are becoming deeply invested in our project, collecting material for archiving, and offering us access to further shrines and monasteries.

Our archival project was also accompanied by an acquisition trip on behalf of the UNC Libraries. Over the course of March, we met with representatives from major publishers, language academies, and vendors in Peshawar, and were able to acquire over 300 books in Pashto, Dari, Urdu, Hindko, and Potohari, about various subjects such as literature, history, ethnography, culture, and spiritual traditions printed in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Most of these items are not available in the United States, and we hope this will help develop a unique collection of Pashtun/Afghan literature not just supplementing the archival project, but also providing new and rare resources for the national collection.

As part of the public facing outputs of this project, we are working with the filmmaker Nazia Akram, to create short documentaries on the Sufi monasteries and the archival project. Ms. Akram is currently working with us to narrativize a first 15 minute short on the saint of Waziristan, with his remarkable life story told through his private letters which we have been digitizing. We would value your advice on this documentary project, and we hope it could bring public attention and future support for this initiative. We would be grateful if you could point us to any sources of funding or other support within UNC for this documentary project.

In an effort to circulate the deliverables of our project, we look forward to working with CMEIS to organize a lecture and public book showcase during the 2022-23 academic year.

-- Rustin Zarkar and Dr. Waleed Ziad



Photos courtesy of Rustin Zarkar and Dr. Waleed Ziad

Webinar Series puts the Contemporary Middle East in Context for Educators

Between February and April 2022, K-14 educators in the U.S. and around the world attended a three-part webinar series exploring certain current issues in the Middle East with a focus on historical context. Presented by the Duke-UNC Consortium for Middle East Studies and the Center for Middle Eastern & North African Studies at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, each 90-minute session featured a different issue demonstrating how understanding the past is essential for comprehending today's Middle East.

On February 8th, the series began with Dr. David Katz, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies at University of Haifa and visiting faculty at Duke University, to address "Land and Water in the Holy Land: the Role of Natural Resources in Arab-Israeli Relations." Katz spoke about the resources, especially water, and events that have shaped the borders of the Middle East, and how countries with varying interests have managed, or attempted to manage, these resources. Katz made valuable points regarding the potential cooperation between nations competing for natural resources and how this cooperation could play a pivotal role in peace in the region.



SERIES WEBINARS

Land and Water in the Holy Land: The Role of Natural Resources in Arab-Israeli Relations

Dr. David Katz, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, University of Haifa and visiting faculty, Duke University
February 8, 2022

Yemen's Humanitarian Crisis and War in Context

Dr. Dana Moss, Associate Professor of Sociology, Notre Dame University
March 15, 2022

The Unwinnable War: The U.S. in Afghanistan

Rozina Ali, journalist
April 5, 2022

Dr. Dana Moss, Associate Professor of Sociology at Notre Dame University, delivered "Yemen's Humanitarian Crisis and War in Context" on March 15th. Framing the conversation around Yemen prior to and after the Arab Spring, Moss discussed how the uprising in Yemen shaped the country's future and has contributed to one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. Moss also addressed the challenges caused by COVID-19 and a crumbling healthcare system. After the presentation, an engaging discussion with attending educators included questions regarding the history and potential future of Yemen.

Lastly, journalist Rozina Ali presented on April 5th "The Unwinnable War: The U.S. in Afghanistan." Currently a fellow at Type Media Center, Ali laid out the intricacies of U.S. involvement in Afghanistan from first encounters between the nations to the present moment. Ali noted that what

makes the war in Afghanistan truly “unwinnable” is that the U.S. still continues to wage its “War on Terror.” This endless war has led to economic warfare and sanctions against ordinary civilians, and a renewed spike in anti-American sentiment. Ali ended by encouraging the audience to urge elected representatives in Congress to lift the sanctions off 23 million civilians, and to seek local Afghan news sources to understand the situation and dynamics on the ground from the Afghan perspective.

Over 170 educators from around the country registered for the series and gained a deeper understanding of the region’s history and current events. “I always walk away wanting to learn more,” shared one high school teacher in Indiana. “These sessions really provide the spark to find new ways to bring the world into the classroom in new ways.”

"Contemporary Middle East in Context" is a collaboration between the two National Resource Centers (NRCs) of the Consortium for Middle East Studies at Duke University-The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and of the Center for Middle Eastern & North African Studies at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor. It has been funded by Title VI grants awarded by the U.S. Department of Education to these NRCs.



CMEIS Leads Trip for K-14 Educators to Jordan

In April 2022, CMEIS collaborated with GEEQ (Global Exploration for Educators Organization - a non-profit organization that helps and encourage teachers to travel abroad) to lead an educational study tour across Jordan. Caroline Robinson, Teaching Assistant Professor in Arabic, facilitated the learning experience. Ustaaza Robinson shares her experience below (*ustaaza* meaning 'professor' in Arabic) .

"This April, I had the pleasure of spending 8 days with a group of K-14 educators, exploring and experiencing nearly every corner of Jordan. As the representative from CMEIS, I connected with each teacher on conversations about their classrooms and what, if any, they knew or taught about the Middle East. Our adventures inspired ideas for their perspective classrooms: Water scarcity and deteriorating Dead Sea levels, mineral striation in Petra’s red sandstone, Bedouin tribe divisions after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, Ramadan inspired dishes and community practices during the holy month, the Palestinian and Syrian refugee crises, the list goes on.

Our journey took us to see a myriad of ancient, Roman sites, from the Red to the Dead Sea, under the Wadi Rum desert stars and to downtown Amman after the breaking of fast for evening celebrations. We arrived hungry for more context and perspective on Jordanian history, geography, politics, customs, culture and of course, kunaafeh (the local sweet). We left overflowing with a deeper understanding and appreciation for all these things, inspiration to share the new knowledge with our students and of course, with the goal of finding comparable kunaafeh stateside (a challenge, indeed)."

North Carolina Arabic Teacher Council is Formed to Support Arabic Language Programs across the State

The North Carolina Arabic Teacher Council (NCATC) was established in fall 2021 to serve the needs of Arabic language educators across the state. As educators of a less-commonly taught language, Arabic teachers face unique challenges and benefit from specialized professional networks. Supported by CMEIS and the North Carolina Consortium for Middle East Studies, the NCATC aims to support the flourishing of Arabic language programs across the state. "A primary goal of the NCATC is to unite educators and streamline efforts to build strong, consistent, and aligned Arabic programs from the elementary to the university classroom," said Caroline Robinson, UNC Assistant Teaching Professor of Arabic and founder of the initiative.



The NCATC's activities include professional development workshops, conferences, and cultural events organized by and for educators, administrators, and other representatives from K-16 institutions engaged in Arabic language education.

The NCATC serves the over 40 Arabic language educators in North Carolina, including public and private school teachers at the K-12, community college, and university levels, as well as educators teaching in the military and in community-based programs.

According to 2018 – 2019 statewide enrollment data from the NC Department of Public Instruction, over 200 students enroll in Arabic language classes annually at NC public schools. Dozens more students learn Arabic in private schools and in community-based programs, and eleven universities offer Arabic language courses.

In its inaugural year, the NCATC conducted the following activities:

- Hosted a two-day, in-person, conference November 13-14, 2021 entitled "Come Together: The Future of Arabic Language in North Carolina." The conference featured content sessions, networking, and preliminary meetings to organize the NCATC.
- Developed an active listerv featuring opportunities, job postings, and innovative Arabic language resources to support teachers.
- Organized a webinar entitled "Exploring Playaling: Using Digital Resources in Your Arabic Classroom" in April, 2022. Featuring Lena Krause, teacher expert in the Darija (Moroccan) dialect, the program addressed the relevance of culturally authentic and level appropriate digital resources, and lead teachers through envisioning how they might easily and effectively employ Playaling in their classrooms.
- Engaged in conversations at Eugene Ashley High School (New Hanover County Schools), the North Carolina School of Science and Math, Fayetteville State University, and Fayetteville Technical Community College to encourage and support new Arabic language programs.

Support the Center for Middle East and Islamic Studies

Thank you for your engagement with all that we do at the Center for Middle East and Islamic Studies. We are grateful for the financial support of our alumni and friends. Private gifts help sustain our programs. Please consider making a tax-deductible contribution to help further understanding of the Middle East throughout the university and community. Your gift to the center will directly support the many events we host and sponsor, our K-12 outreach initiatives, and help support student fellowships.

For more information about giving opportunities, please visit mideast.unc.edu/support or contact Shai Tamari, Associate Director at tamari@unc.edu or (919) 962-2034.

Your gift is greatly appreciated.

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