



C E N T E R F O R

ARMENIAN STUDIES

F A L L 2 0 2 6 N E W S L E T T E R



DEAR FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES,



Welcome to a new academic year at the University of Michigan's Center for Armenian Studies! I hope you had a restorative summer and are ready for a year of inspiring conversations.

It is with a heavy heart that I announce the passing of Richard Manoogian (1936-2026). A prominent Armenian American President and CEO of Masco Corporation, philanthropist, and civic leader, Richard Manoogian was a generous patron of our CAS community, the origins of which lie in the vision of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Alex and Marie Manoogian, who endowed the Alex Manoogian Chair in Modern Armenian History (1981) and the Marie Manoogian Chair in Armenian Language and Literature (1987).

On behalf of CAS, we extend our deepest condolences to Jane Manoogian, Christine Simone and the Manoogian family. Richard Manoogian's commitment to CAS will continue to be recognized and felt for generations of students.

In Richard Manoogian's spirit of support and generosity, I would like to welcome four new members to our CAS community. This year we have two new Manoogian Postdoctoral Fellows, Jennifer Manoukian (MES) and Daniel Ohanian (History). Manoukian is a language historian who has worked on the crafting of Western Armenian by Armenians living in the late Ottoman Empire. Ohanian is an early modern historian who focuses on confessionalism, literacy and print culture to study religious fissures within the Ottoman Armenian community. Both will be presenting their research and organizing workshops during the Fall and Winter semesters.

We are delighted that Aram Mrjoian (English) will join our center's executive committee. Mrjoian is the author of the novel, *Waterline* and teaches creative writing at U-M. We are thrilled to have Paula Keshderian (Comparative Literature) as a new member of our graduate student cohort. Keshderian is interested in postcolonial and global anglophone studies and plans to work in Armenian, Arabic, and American literatures. We are grateful that Keshderian has accepted to co-direct our graduate-student-run Multidisciplinary Workshop for Armenian Studies along with Nazelie Doghramadjian (School of Information) and Arakel Minassian (Comparative Literature).

Our invited speakers, Peter Balakian (Colgate), Lori Khatchadourian (Cornell), Polina Ivanova (Austrian Academy of Sciences) and Tigran Amriyan (Cultural & Social Narratives Laboratory, Yerevan) will consider different media for transforming and preserving the Armenian past. From the act of writing to the deployment of heritage forensics, our speakers will reflect on the ways poetry, memory books, surveillance technologies, rivers and lakes carry memories that can reformat past erasures and preserve them for the future.

I hope that I have piqued your curiosity and that you will join us to hear more and participate in the vibrant environment of learning we have created with your support.

Yours,

Kathryn Babayan

MEET THE INCOMING MANOOGIAN POSTDOCS



JENNIFER MANOUKIAN
2026–27 Manoogian Postdoctoral Fellow
in Armenian Studies

Jennifer Manoukian is a historian of language. Her work explores the language practices and ideologies of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and post-genocide diaspora. She earned her PhD in Near Eastern Languages and Cultures from the University of California, Los Angeles; her MA in Middle Eastern, South Asian and African Studies from Columbia University; and her BA in French and Middle Eastern Studies from Rutgers University. She is the author of *Purist Pursuits: Language, Global Ideas, and the Creation of Western Armenian in the Ottoman Empire* and two book-length literary translations from Western Armenian: *The Gardens of Silihdar* by Zabel Yessayan and *The Candidate* by Zareh Vorpouni. She is also the author of a number of articles and the co-founder of *Gesaria Armenian Research and Academic Services*.



DANIEL OHANIAN
2026–27 Manoogian Postdoctoral Fellow
in Armenian History

Daniel Ohanian is a historian of Armenians in the early modern Ottoman Empire. He is currently working on a cultural history of Catholic-Armenian contact in the c. 1700 Mediterranean and on the eighteenth-century travelogue of a merchant-turned-priest named Hovhannes Tovmajanian. Daniel's research has been supported by grants from the Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, among others, and has been published in *Turcica: revue d'études turques*, the *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association*, and *Genocide Studies International*. He was director of research at the *Sara Corning Centre for Genocide Education* and co-founder of *Gesaria Armenian Research and Academic Services*. He received his PhD from the University of California, Los Angeles, and holds a BA and MAs from York University in Canada and Istanbul Bilgi University in Turkey.



REFLECTIONS FROM
OUTGOING MANOOGIAN
POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW
HAZAL ÖZDEMİR

My time as a postdoctoral fellow with the Center for Armenian Studies was not only productive in terms of writing, lecturing and teaching but it deeply transformed me as a historian. Over the past two years, I had the opportunity to teach my own global history classes on refugees and citizenship. In the Fall of 2024, I taught an introductory course, “Between Borders: Global History of Displacement, Exile and Refuge,” which challenged the common assumption that the concept of the modern refugee emerged only after World War II. In the Winter of 2026, I taught a new advanced undergraduate seminar that I designed on global histories of citizenship. The seminar explored racialized, gendered, colonial and imperial subjecthood in the Middle East, Europe, and the U.S.A. Apart from teaching, I had a chance to work on my book project, tentatively titled *Framing the Transit: Armenian Migrants and Imperial Regimes of Subjecthood*. It is a history of nineteenth-century migration that focuses on citizenship and visual documentation.

PHOTOGRAPHIC GENRES, IN AND BEYOND ARCHIVES

Hazal Özdemir

On February 5, 2026, together with Kathryn Babayan, Director of the Center for Armenian Studies, we organized the workshop “Photographic Genres, in and Beyond Archives.” The workshop explored the multiple deployments of photography in the early twentieth-century global Middle East and was scheduled in tandem with the opening of the photography exhibit, *Making Armenian Americans*.

Edhem Eldem gave the keynote on multiple methodologies for studying photographs. He suggested we move away from “interpretive reading, cherry picking, wishful thinking, and overreading” to focus on “consistency, agency, representativity, diffusion, perception, and reception.” Erin Hyde Nolan and Hazal Özdemir then traced unconventional photographic ventures. Hyde Nolan unearthed a never-before-published copy of the *Elbise-i Osmaniyye*, or *Les Costumes Populaires de la Turquie*, which was a costume book commissioned for the 1873 Vienna

World’s Fair. Özdemir spoke about officers who were the empire’s photographers and showed how the late Ottoman empire invested in the training of police as an austerity measure, an alternative to professional photography studios, to take photos of convicts, criminals, and Armenian migrants.

In the afternoon panel, İdil Çetin and Mira Xenia Schwerda reflected on the afterlives of mass atrocities. While discussing execution photographs in Qajar Iran at the turn of the twentieth century, Schwerda problematized studying photographs of atrocity and violence. Çetin concentrated on the collections of Nubar Library and revealed how Armenian archives after the Genocide of 1915 were shaped by institutional priorities, asymmetrical attention and care, and often mere accidents. The workshop concluded with a roundtable led by Arto Vaun, Executive Director of Project Save where the discussion turned to private and formal archives, family images as well as the ethics of showing and teaching photographs of atrocities.



E X H I B I T

MAKING ARMENIAN-AMERICANS

Kathryn Babayan & Michael Pifer

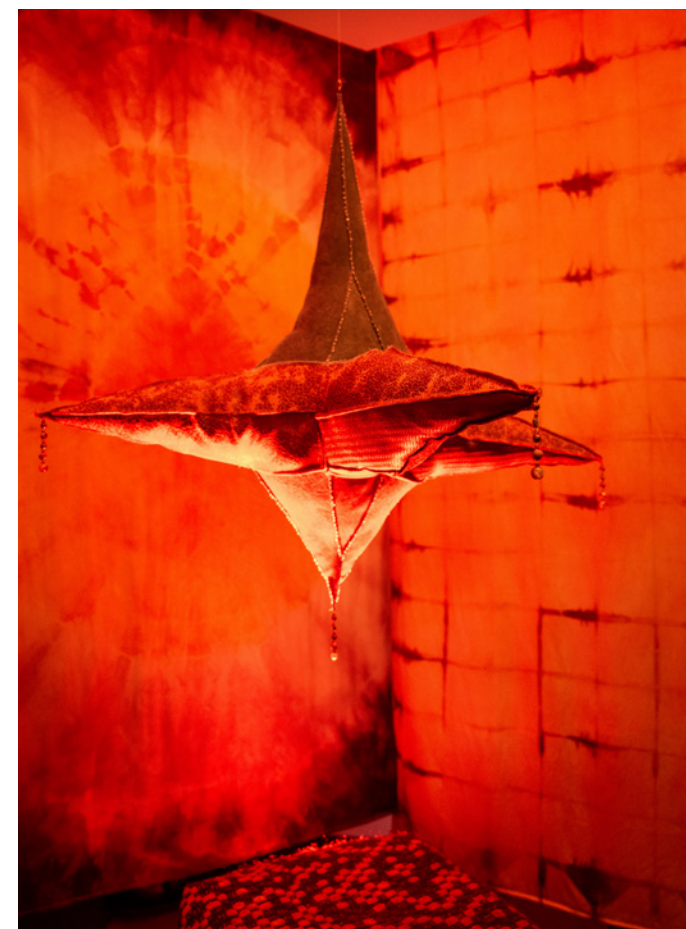
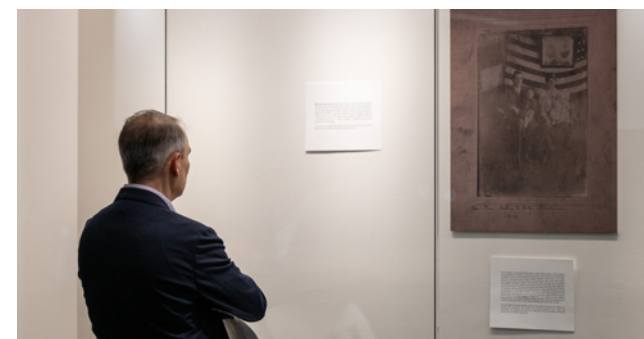
During the 2026 Winter Semester, the Center for Armenian Studies curated a photographic exhibit, in partnership with the Project Save Photograph Archive, titled *Making Armenian Americans*. This exhibit invited viewers into a moment of possibility, in the early 20th century, when Armenians fleeing violence at the end of the Ottoman Empire came to reinvent themselves in the promise of America.

Drawn from the vast collection at the Project Save Photograph Archive, *Making Armenian Americans* captured different valences of American life, as experienced, performed, and imagined by Armenian immigrants. From naturalization classes to festivals of nations, from breaking new ground for churches to mundane tableaux of Thanksgiving and Christmas, this range of photographs offered a glimpse of a community in the making, one that sought to preserve a memory of its Ottoman past even while anticipating an American future.

The center piece of *Making Armenian Americans* was the photograph of the Boyajian family, taken in Lowell, Massachusetts, in 1916, which captures three generations in the making of Armenian Americans. It was donated to the Project Save Photograph Archive by Betty (Elizabeth Boyajian Arakelian), seated on her mother Mary's lap. Her brother Andrew is adjacent to her, held by her father, Sarkis. Most notably, the photograph captures

two figures who are absent: Betty's grandparents, the patriarch and matriarch of the family, whose portrait hangs over the American flag in the background, connecting this family of new Americans to their recent past in the Ottoman city of Kharpert. The Boyajian family photograph was probably taken in a studio where the flag served as the background for many such immigrants who memorialized their passage across the Atlantic Ocean, seemingly with the blessing of those who were unable to make the journey, yet who were never entirely forgotten or disappeared. The transition of names within a single generation, from Sarkis and Mary to Andrew and Betty, against this backdrop of an American present and Ottoman past, marks this family's journey into their new life.

In broad strokes, the exhibit presented many kinds of transitions from Ottoman to American life, through three recurring themes—Civics, Labor and Technology, and Sociability and Place—that collectively narrated the making of Armenian Americans from multiple perspectives.



THREADING THE TAPESTRY FOR A FUTURE ARMENIA

Marie-Aude Baronian

For the Dr. Berj J. Haidostian Annual Distinguished Lecture, Detroit-based artist Levon Kafafian was in conversation with the visual culture scholar Marie-Aude Baronian. Together they discussed Kafafian's weaving practice and artistic vision. The discussion began with the place of textile in contemporary art and the various possibilities of world-building through such media. More than a means to communicate, textile enables a (re)examination of Armenianness by questioning specific Armenian material culture traditions and iconographies. Commenting on a few selected works that Kafafian produced in the last decade, the discussion revolved around the possibility of making an Armenian future through creative and queering practices and narratives.

Kafafian's work can best be described in relation to the notion of ritual. The artist explains why they like to call most of their performances "ceremonial" as they involve multiple elements coming from spiritual, magic or meditative practices. There, textile occupies a central place. Textile is at once the tangible material (by the way, all woven and hand-made by the artist) that constitutes the works and it is also used metaphorically as a way to address mourning, healing, resilience and memory. In a way, textile — such as the act of weaving and unravelling — is a dynamic and tactile form and gesture of celebration and connection. What is more, textile is both about (technological) futures and traditions. Rather than making a clear-cut distinction between the digital and the analog, or the optical and the haptic, Kafafian's artistic approach embraces similarly the idea of textile as heritage, and textile as opening up new forms and codes for disrupting all kinds of boundaries. Ultimately, Kafafian's textile art aims to create an Armenian imaginary and speculative world.

On April 10 and 11, 2026, CAS hosted the 15th International Graduate Student Workshop titled “Armenians Apart: Connections, Disconnections, and Tensions in Premodern and Modern Diasporas,” organized by CAS PhD student Armen Abkarian (History) and Assistant Professor of Armenian Language and Literature Michael Pifer (Middle East Studies). The workshop brought together emerging scholars whose research explores questions of diaspora, migration, and community formation across Asia, Europe, and the Americas, from the time of the Crusades to the present day. In doing so, it provided the impetus for stimulating conversations on the ways that individuals and communities have negotiated and continue to negotiate identity, power, and belonging, following their dispersion from their homeland.

Over the course of the workshop’s two days, a number of discussions emerged that encouraged participants to build new intellectual connections, in addition to pointing toward a variety of new directions for expanding their respective projects. These developments were due, in no small part, to the wide range of the participants’ topics and disciplinary backgrounds. Although the participants all dealt with Armenian communities outside the boundaries

of historic Armenia, the considerable variation in the presentations’ geographic and temporal scope highlighted the many forms that Armenian communal life has taken across different times and places. Moreover, the interdisciplinary character of the panels, which spanned the humanities and social sciences, illustrated the diverse approaches through which diaspora can be studied, including questions of artistic and literary production, labor migration, settlement, and political organization.

We were fortunate to have two keynote speakers this year, each speaking on separate days. Dr. Devi Mays, Assistant Professor of Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan, gave the keynote address on the first day. Over the course of her talk, she shared her recent research and introduced the fascinating case of migration among Sephardic Jews from the Ottoman Empire to North America, and in particular Mexico, in the aftermath of World War I. Her talk demonstrated the myriad complexities involved with their migration, such as navigating the vague and often-stigmatized national, ethnic, and religious demographic categories associated with securing visas and passports, as well as the preservation of social and professional contacts in the newly forged Republic of Turkey. In doing so, Dr.



Mays illuminated the ways that diasporic communities are often shaped by arbitrary immigration regulations on the state level, while also transcending those constraints and establishing communication networks on a global scale. Dr. Khachig Tölölyan, Professor Emeritus of English and Letters at Wesleyan University, provided some final reflections to end the second day of the workshop. As one of the founders of the field of Diaspora Studies, Dr. Tölölyan’s insights were particularly valuable. He provided a retrospective of the field, discussing the academic challenges and rewards he encountered as Diaspora Studies began to take shape as a field of study and gain momentum. The conversational tenor of his remarks invited the participants to share their own views, placing their works within a broader perspective.

The workshop itself was thematically organized around four panels, with each panel addressing a distinct aspect of diaspora formation and development. The first panel, “Misaligned Diasporas & Uneven Categories of Belonging” (Arakel Minassian, Lusine Tanajyan, Haley Zovickian) opened the conversation by highlighting the often overlooked nuances of particular diaspora communities. Accordingly, their presentations interrogated the tendency for these complexities to be flattened by the weight of broader national expectations. Following this discussion, the workshop transitioned to its next panel “Boundaries of Rule, Script and Desire: Reimagining the Premodern Armenian Diaspora” (Armen Abkarian, Greta Gasparyan, Nicholas Crummey). While much of the analytical framework of Diaspora Studies has focused on modern communities and transnational networks, the panel invited a reevaluation of this approach through parallel cases from the premodern world. With topics encompassing political, artistic, and sexual expression, the panel demonstrated the scholarly promise of researching both the permeability and reinforcement of communal

boundaries among medieval and early modern diasporas.

The second day began with a discussion of diaspora in relation to the emerging national consciousness at the turn of the century. The panel, titled “From Columns to Newspapers, Moneylenders, and Migrant Labor, 19th–20th Centuries” (Kristine Baghdasaryan, Alina Zaripova, Başak Yaşınur Karaca) illustrated the centrality of the Armenian diaspora to studies of empire by integrating them within a broader urban and imperial setting, in addition to emphasizing the role of social class and the press in shaping diasporic perceptions. The final panel of the workshop, “Negotiating Displacement and Digital Memory: On Community Archives and Activism” (Gegham Mughnetsyan, Jonathan Hollis, Lance Levenson) discussed the violent ruptures that both created and dissolved Armenian diasporas over the course of the twentieth century, as well as the contemporary struggle of the Jerusalem Armenian diaspora to survive and resist erasure. Drawing on diverse archival material, ranging from letters to audio recordings and social media posts, the panel demonstrated how these communities memorialize their past and fight for their future.

In just the span of two days, the workshop managed to bring together a promising group of scholars from around the world to share their views on the perpetually evolving field of Diaspora Studies. The diversity of topics covered, in addition to the academic backgrounds of the participants, allowed the presenters to receive unique feedback and visualize their work within a larger body of developing scholarship. Conversations over breakfast, dinner, and the moments in between contributed to an atmosphere of curiosity and collegiality among the workshop’s participants. It is our hope that this spirit will continue well after the workshop’s conclusion and inspire new opportunities for collaboration in the future.

15TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE STUDENT WORKSHOP

Armen Abkarian & Michael Pifer



MWAS

MULTIDISCIPLINARY WORKSHOP FOR ARMENIAN STUDIES

Nazeli Doghramadjian, PhD Candidate, School of Information
Arakel Minassian, PhD Candidate, Comparative Literature, LSA

For the 2025–2026 academic year, the Multidisciplinary Workshop in Armenian Studies (MWAS) held 10 events, including 8 paper workshops from graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, and visiting scholars. Each workshop generated lively discussion and debate, and critical feedback and suggestions for future directions for research. Our workshops spanned a variety of topics in and tangential to Armenian Studies, including: leftist feminism and online communities in Armenia; gendered archival sciences in the Gulbenkian Archive in Portugal; archival materiality and re-materiality in Armenian Studies; diaspora mobilization in the 1990s Abkhaz War; colloquial language practices and vowel sounds in contemporary

throughout history, and how this topic itself can make for a subject of study for historians. Since we were directed to read parts of this manuscript in conjunction with our own work, we discussed varying methodologies for going about this historical endeavor, and the strength of marriage as the throughline for this manuscript.

In our next session, visiting scholar Tamar Shirinian workshoped a book chapter on the concept of *yakhq*, an Armenian exclamation among Armenian feminists expressing disgust in the face of neoliberalism. This chapter opened up avenues for us to discuss how feminism and socialism have been divorced from each other though its roots are very much married in history, and how Facebook and other online gathering spaces act as both organizing and dividing platforms for women in Armenia.

Visiting scholars Houri Berberian and Talinn Grigor presented their archival research and upcoming work on Nevarte Gulbenkian, the wife of the far better known Calouste Gulbenkian. Though Nevarte benefited from the privileges of high class society, she was still relegated to the role of “hostess,” the production of her knowledge lost to history and in the shadow of her husband. However, Berberian and Grigor offered us advanced glimpses of their archival evidence, showing how pivotal Nevarte’s role was in cementing the Gulbenkian name in history.

Our winter semester started off strong with visiting scholars Marie-Aude Baronian and Dzovinar Derderian, discussing a thematic journal volume on materiality, a direct product of a Center for Armenian Studies workshop hosted at U-M in 2019. This particular workshop garnered a large audience fully engaged in debate about materiality and re-materiality in Armenian studies. How do tangible and intangible objects “speak” to us? Whose materials are relegated to the margins? Which formats of evidence are privileged in historical narratives?

communities in Armenia; crisis in art and archaeology in the Byzantine Empire, and denaturalization and subjecthood in the Ottoman Empire. Faculty, graduate and masters students discussed works-in-progress, dissertation chapters, and published articles by visiting scholars, postdoctoral scholars, and our graduate students in these workshops.

Our academic year was kicked off by visiting scholar Alison Vacca, who presented her book manuscript titled *Unstable Relations: Fragmentary Tales of Marriage and Matriliney*. Instead of workshoping the entire book at once, each audience member chose a section of the book to read, in a choose-your-own-adventure style. We discussed how marriage is largely seen as power

Seeing our visiting scholars’ and graduate students’ work progress into publishable, thesis- and dissertation-ready work is a privilege for Armenian studies and its wide-reaching audience.



Next, our CREES masters student Sama Totah workshoped her thesis on diaspora mobilization to Jordan during the Abkhaz War in the early 1990s. Why and how did this particular Circassian diaspora so effectively mobilize its members from around the world to return to Abkhazia and fight during this war? As a continuation of previous CAS workshops and conference presentations, PhD student Emma Portugal workshoped a dissertation chapter on the differences on vowel sounds in the Gavar and Yerevan dialects of Armenian. She presented her findings on her fieldwork in Armenia, motivated by the “quasi-standard colloquial language” spreading throughout the country. The audience discussed questions around the uniqueness of the Armenian language and its many dialects, as well as Soviet influences on speech in Gavar and Armenia as a whole. Graduate student Allison Grenda presented her dissertation work remotely from her fieldwork trip in Greece on crisis and urban planning during the Byzantine Empire, and its relevance to Armenian *khachkars*, or cross stones. Our CAS postdoctoral scholar Hazal Ozdemir wrapped up our academic year by workshoping a dissertation chapter in preparation for a book. She presented her work on Ottoman strategies of denaturalizing its minoritized citizens and stripping them of their subjecthood.

Seeing our visiting scholars’ and graduate students’ work progress into publishable, thesis- and dissertation-ready work is a privilege for Armenian studies and its wide-reaching audience. This year, we were especially lucky to have been visited by scholars around the country, many of whom were involved in CAS and the formulation of MWAS in some way in the past. These workshops, their audience, and continued participation show the value of this space and its community members.

LOOKING AHEAD

We look forward to our next year of MWAS, engaging more community members, students, and faculty, and hope to increase the visibility of our events to other departments and community groups in the metro-Detroit area. With the anticipation of new graduate students, existing students’ upcoming doctoral milestones, and masters theses, we anticipate another exciting year of scholarship at the Center for Armenian Studies.

YEAR IN REVIEW



4TH ANNUAL SHARED MEMORIES THE ARMENIAN EXPERIENCE THROUGH OBJECTS AND STORIES

Vicken Mouradian

This year’s 4th Annual Shared Memories event continued to grow as a space for community members to share objects that told their personal Armenian histories.

One object that stood out was a cross-handkerchief խաչի թաշկինակ (*khachi tashkinak*) that Diana Afyan, a Weiser Professional Development Fellow, brought with her from Armenia. Handmade by the Armenian artisan Anahit Karapetyan, this traditional cloth is used to hold up the cross in Armenian Church services. Diana was delivering the *khachi tashkinak* to St John’s Armenian Church in Southfield. She spoke about the cross-handkerchief’s journey from Armenia to Michigan and the connections it created between Armenia and the diaspora. Through craftsmanship, faith, and memory, this singular object represents a tangible example of the ties that continue to link Armenians across geographies and temporalities.

The program opened with CAS Director Kathryn Babayan reflecting on the solemnity of commemorating the 111th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. Held alongside our *Making Armenian Americans* photo exhibit, Shared Memories invited attendees to experience multiple stories of migration through photographs and objects.

STUDENT PROFILES & REFLECTIONS

O U T G O I N G & I N C O M I N G G R A D U A T E S T U D E N T S



ARMEN ABKARIAN

Completing my PhD in History at the University of Michigan has been deeply rewarding, if somewhat surreal. I began graduate school almost ten years ago and am amazed by how much my research interests have evolved and how much I have evolved.

I am incredibly grateful to the Center for Armenian Studies for its unwavering advocacy throughout this journey. CAS's support has been essential to my archival research, while its graduate and international workshops provided an intellectual community in which I developed ideas pivotal to my dissertation. I was especially fortunate to have CAS's Kathryn Babayan, Michael Pifer, and Gottfried Hagen on my dissertation committee, alongside the guidance and encouragement of Ron Suny and Kevork Bardakjian. It was also through my time at CAS that I developed some truly remarkable friendships with equally remarkable colleagues, such as Arakel, Vicken, Nazelie, Emma S., and Emma A.



EMMA PORTUGAL

I'm so grateful for the intellectual community and support that CAS has provided over these past five years. While I'm a bit sad to be moving on from U-M, I'm excited to start applying the skills and knowledge that I have gained during my PhD at my new job at the Language Committee (Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of the Republic of Armenia), where I will be working as part of the "iGorts" program starting in September.



PAULA KESHDERIAN

I am excited to join the PhD program in Comparative Literature. My research lies in colonial and postcolonial literature, with a particular focus on the Levant. Through the exploration of the marginalized, I observe how language, voice, and representation are negotiated, as well as how historic erasure operates in literature. Within Arabic and Anglophone literatures, I am interested in the intersections of silence, subalternity, narrative ethics, and resistance. Moreover, I explore identity formation through oral storytelling in relation to stories from the 1915 Armenian Genocide.

Currently, I am expanding my previous research on storytelling, narrative form, translation, and experimental aesthetics in Adania Shibli's *Minor Detail*. Drawing on the works of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Saidiya Hartman, Edward Said, and Frantz Fanon, I introduce the concepts of pseudo-silence, plastic noise, and literary sumud to theorize alternative forms of expression that challenge dominant Western literary expectations.

CAS FUNDING RECIPIENTS

AIDAN GALLER

I am a first-year MA Student in International Relations and Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies. I received my B.A. in Linguistics from the University of Michigan and completed coursework in translation and history as well. My research interests include language policy, language revitalization, minority and endangered languages, and the relationship between language and identity in the South Caucasus and post-Soviet space. I am particularly interested in Armenian language and culture, multilingualism, and the role of language in diplomacy and international affairs and am currently studying Western Armenian alongside several other regional languages.

Travel/Research Fellowship

NAZELIE DOGHRAMADJIAN

I received the rolling travel grant from the Center for Armenian Studies and was able to travel to Los Angeles, CA to conduct both archival research for my dissertation, and attend a conference on Armenian language

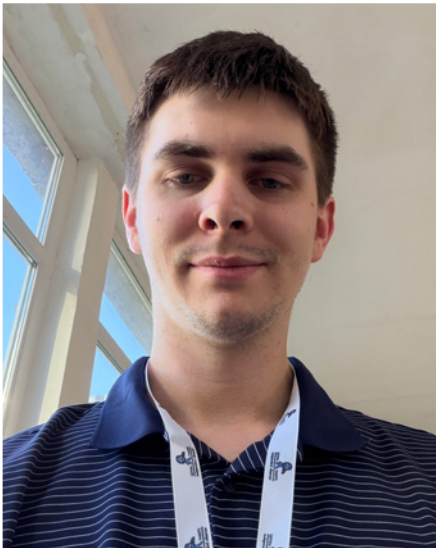


and diaspora. This generous scholarship allowed me to view the Caro Minassian manuscript collection and the California Ephemera Collection at UCLA, the Institute of Armenian Studies' archival collections at USC, and attend the "It Takes a Diaspora to Raise a Language" conference at USC, all over the course of several days. As the final year of my doctoral degree is nearing, research trips such as these make the findings of my chapter stronger, and my arguments more well rounded. This grant—and previous ones—from the Center for Armenian Studies have continuously supported my doctoral work these past several years.

Travel/Research Fellowship

MAXIMILIAN HAUFFE

I am an MA Student in International and Regional Studies (REEES) and Public Policy, interning with the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly in Yerevan, Armenia. I hope to gain a deeper understanding of democratic development in the post-Soviet space. In this role, as an international observer during the June 7th National Assembly election, I helped ensure the integrity and fairness of the voting process. I also researched foreign influence in Armenian political development, focusing on the roles played by the Russian state and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation in shaping diaspora opinion. Currently, my study looks at how Armenian politics is portrayed in the international media to help this organization better understand the international perception of political development in Armenia. After the conclusion of my studies, I intend to use the experiences gained from my time in Armenia to pursue a career in the



Department of State's Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, where I hope to assist in the crafting of effective foreign policy that promotes democracy, human rights, and civil society in the region.

Graduate Fellowship

ARMEN ABKARIAN

I dedicated the majority of the summer and fall of 2025 to completing my doctoral dissertation, which explored the development of kingship in medieval Armenian Cilicia. I also traveled to Tashkent, Uzbekistan in August of 2025 to participate in the tenth biennial convention of the Association for the Study of Persianate Societies. There, I presented on the Mongol Empire's impact on the layered expressions of royal authority in contemporary Armenian sources. The insights gained from my travels and the academic feedback culminated in the successful defense of my dissertation in December of 2025. My journey at Michigan continued well after this milestone however, as I co-organized the 15th Annual International Graduate Workshop for Armenian Studies, alongside my advisor Dr. Michael Pifer, which took place in April of 2026. Following these achievements, I joined the University of Southern California as a Visiting Scholar, and am currently developing my work for publication.

EDWARD HAGOP NOROIAN SCHOLARSHIPS

Kira Findikyan is a sophomore at the University of Michigan from Pelham, New York. She is studying Microbiology on the pre-med track and is working toward a minor in Armenian Studies. She has previously worked as a science research assistant at The Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City. At Michigan, she can be found in Armenian language classes, on the board of the Armenian Students' Cultural Association, and as a performer and Business Manager of Gimble A Cappella. She grew up attending Sunday School at St. Gregory in White Plains, NY and AGBU Camp Nubar. In 2026, she traveled with Med-Aid Armenia to conduct wellness screenings for several hundred families throughout Armenia who do not have access to healthcare. After college she hopes to attend medical school to become an OBGYN.

How have your academic pursuits aligned with and demonstrated engagement in Armenian Studies? How do you plan to continue engaging in Armenian issues?

Growing up outside of NYC, I was used to hearing Armenian only in church and with a few key words around the house handed down from my grandparents. But I never learned enough that I could understand conversations, let alone speak in full sentences. When I was researching U-M and learned about the opportunities it offers in Armenian Studies, I knew I had to come to U-M! I immediately



registered for Western Armenian language with Professor Mishoyan my first semester, and subsequently enrolled in the second level of that course. Little did I know one year ago that this class would become the best part of my day, and that my interest in the language and culture would deepen so significantly throughout the year.

After two semesters of study at U-M, I am so proud that I can now do both of those things and more. It has filled me with joy that Armenian class (as well as the Armenian Students' Cultural Association) has been such an influential part of my college experience, and that I've been able to connect with more Armenians on campus and in the greater Detroit area and feel more connected to my family because of it.

I will continue working with Med-Aid Armenia in future summers, furthering the mission of preventative healthcare in Armenia. Through training in the United States and working in Armenia, I hope to use my skills to improve healthcare in each country. I am determined to advocate for Armenians in Armenia as well as Armenian Americans, and enrich the work and bond we have between Armenia and the Diaspora.

Viggo Zeitlian is a junior at the University of Michigan pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Politics, Philosophy, and Economics with a minor in Global Media Studies. A James B. Angell Scholar and University Honors student, he maintains a 3.95 GPA while exploring the intersection of storytelling, media, culture, and public life. Originally from Los Angeles, Viggo is deeply



engaged in both Armenian studies and the entertainment industry. At Michigan, he has studied Armenian language and culture through coursework in Armenian film and language, strengthening his connection to his heritage and expanding his understanding of the Armenian experience. His commitment to Armenian community engagement began in high school, where he helped create his school's first Armenian Student Association during the humanitarian crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Professionally, Viggo has gained experience in film and television development through internships with Gulfstream Pictures and John Fogel Entertainment Group, where he has contributed script coverage, market research, and creative development analysis. He is also a producer, sound engineer, DJ, and radio host, performing at events in both Los Angeles and Ann Arbor while producing music for emerging artists. Through his event collective, 1st Gen, he helps organize house music events that foster community and creative expression.

How have your academic pursuits aligned with and demonstrated engagement in Armenian Studies? How do you plan to continue engaging in Armenian issues?

My engagement with Armenian Studies has been both academic and deeply personal. As a student at the University of Michigan pursuing a degree in Politics, Philosophy, and Economics with a minor in Global Media Studies, I have intentionally sought opportunities to better understand Armenian history, culture, language, and identity. Through Armenian language coursework and classes such as How to Survive Dark Times: A Century of Armenian Film, I have strengthened my connection to my heritage while gaining a deeper understanding of the historical and cultural experiences that have shaped Armenian communities around the world. These courses have not only expanded my academic

interests but have also allowed me to engage more meaningfully with my family and community through language, history, and shared cultural memory.

My commitment to Armenian issues extends beyond the classroom. During my senior year of high school, I helped organize discussions surrounding the ethnic cleansing of Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh and worked with fellow students to establish my school's first Armenian Student Association. Those experiences demonstrated the importance of education, advocacy, and community-building in preserving Armenian identity and raising awareness about contemporary Armenian issues.

Looking forward, I plan to continue engaging with Armenian Studies by further developing my Armenian language skills, exploring Armenian cinema and diasporic storytelling, and remaining active in Armenian cultural and community organizations. My long-term goal is to build a career in the film and entertainment industry, where I can help elevate Armenian voices and stories that have historically been underrepresented in mainstream media. Whether through film development, production, or talent representation, I hope to create opportunities for Armenian writers, directors, and artists while bringing Armenian narratives into broader cultural conversations. By combining my academic training with my passion for storytelling, I aim to contribute to the preservation and growth of Armenian culture for future generations.

ASHOD AND CLARA MAKARIAN SCHOLARSHIP

ALISA FICICIYAN

Yan. The three most important letters of my last name are more than just a signature of my Armenian heritage—they symbolize the Armenian community that will always be a part of me. Armenian has shaped my identity since childhood, when I first learned the language in my Armenian elementary school. But after leaving that environment, my reading and writing skills faded, even as my



commitment to my culture remained strong. That commitment guided me to co-found Helping Hands for Haiastan, an organization supporting education for children in Armenia. Through a chess tournament and crowdfunding, we successfully raised the funds to sponsor students in Armenia, providing them with an adequate education in the upcoming school year. During a visit to Armenia last

summer, I met the mother of Alen Margaryan, a young soldier and gifted student whose life was lost in the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Our organization donated to the foundation established in his memory, which supports Armenian students pursuing an education. While speaking with Alen's mother, I realized that I could not fully express my thoughts in Armenian. That moment solidified my desire to regain the fluency I once had—not only to communicate thoroughly, but to more meaningfully give back to the Armenian community that

Since enrolling in Armenian 101 at Michigan, my reading, writing, and speaking skills have returned to the level I had as a child, making it one of the most rewarding experiences since coming to college.... For me, studying Armenian is not only about learning a language; it's about strengthening the bridge between my identity and the community I hope to continue uplifting.

has shaped who I am. Since enrolling in Armenian 101 at Michigan, my reading, writing, and speaking skills have returned to the level I had as a child, making it one of the most rewarding experiences since coming to college. I plan to continue studying Armenian for a total of four semesters. For me, studying Armenian is not only about learning a language; it's about strengthening the bridge between my identity and the community I hope to continue uplifting.

ADAM MILOIAN

While growing up my family was shaped by American culture; the Armenian heritage on my father's side was always present. We had baklava on holidays, and my father would speak to us in what little Armenian he knew. As I learned more about my family's history, cultural traditions, and their stories of resilience, I became increasingly intrigued. I wanted to understand not only my family, but the Armenian nation as a whole. When I was choosing a four-year university to attend, I knew I wanted my education to be meaningful not only for my career, but also for my personal identity. I hoped to study Armenian culture and language in a serious academic setting. I searched every university in the state, as well as several out-of-state, yet the University of Michigan was the only institution that offered Armenian Studies; U-M became the place for me to pursue both my



goals. Studying Armenian culture and language is not just a course to take for credit. It is a way to preserve and reconnect with my identity. Continuing traditions that were lost across generations is challenging, but I believe it is important not to let them fade. I hope to travel to Armenia and experience the culture firsthand. Although my major is demanding, I plan to take at least two Armenian language classes (ARM 101/102), and also take "A Century in Armenian Film" (FTVM 322 / MIDEAST 223). These classes will be critical for me to understand where I come from. It will be a way of honoring my family's roots and contributing to the preservation of Armenian culture.



FACULTY NEWS AND UPDATES

KATHRYN BABAYAN

Kathryn Babayan is currently the Director of the Center for Armenian Studies. She continues to collaborate with a team from the University of Isfahan and the University of Michigan on the *Isfahan Archive Project*, a digital archive of family anthologies produced in the city of Isfahan that will be hosted on a Digital Collections Platform at the University of Michigan Library. Her collaboration with Golriz Farshi on the digital *Persian Anthology* will go live in the Fall 2026. The *Persian Anthology* will showcase the richness of family anthologies as archives for the writing of early modern social and cultural history. She was recently appointed field editor for the early modern Persianate world at the *Encyclopædia Iranica*.

GOTTFRIED HAGEN

Gottfried Hagen stepped down from the directorship of CAS in 2025 to serve as interim chair of the department of Middle East Studies. He is looking forward to a year of research and writing about Ottoman culture, science, and religion. His most recent publications include "State, Map, and the Question of Patronage," *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 24 (1&2), 2025, and "Mystique and Myth: The Career of the Piri Re'is World Map of 1513 in Modern Scholarship and Beyond," *Archivum Ottomanicum* 42 (2026): 59–88.

SOSY MISHOYAN

Sosy Mishoyan developed and taught a new topical course titled, "Armenian through Social Media and Literature," which explores contemporary Western Armenian across newspapers, podcasts, social media, and

literary texts. Students engaged with authentic media sources through reading, listening, discussion, and writing activities to strengthen their comprehension, vocabulary, and expressive skills, while also examining the role of media in language preservation and evolution. The course included student production of original content and was complemented by experiential learning activities, including visits to exhibitions and museums that connected language study with Armenian history, culture, and the arts.

MICHAEL PIFER

Michael Pifer recently taught an intensive course, "Reading Armenian Manuscripts," on paleography, manuscript, and print culture as part of the Summer Skills program with the Mediterranean Seminar. His research on sociolinguistics in the medieval period appeared in two venues in 2026: an article

titled “Reading the Trilingual Gravestone of Yeghegis: On Multilingualism in Medieval Armenia,” which appeared in an issue of *Convivium Supplementum*, and an entry on the same subject in the exhibit “Cultural Entanglements across Medieval Armenia,” organized by the collaborative group Armenia Entangled, based in Florence. Both are available through open access online. He was promoted to Associate Professor in July, and he looks forward to another season of teaching and working with students this Fall.

MELANIE SCHULZE Tanielian

Melanie Schulze Tanielian is currently the Director of the Program for International and Comparative Studies and an elected member of the Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs (SACUA), as well as a member of the executive committee of the Society for Armenian Studies (SAS). Her recent volume co-edited with Michael Atzmon, Gary Krenz, and John Cheney-Lippold titled, *In the Spirit of H. Chandler Davis: Activism and the Struggle for Academic Freedom* came out in January. Her new work published by Edinburg University Press titled *Survivor Archives of the Armenian Genocide: Remnants, Affects*

and *Embodiments*, co-edited with Erdağ Göknar, and Hülya Adak will come out in December 2026. The book investigates how human bodies, material artifacts, artistic expressions, and emotional remnants serve as vital, living testaments to survival, trauma, and endurance.

ANOUSH TAMAR SUNI

Anoush Tamar Suni has several recent publications: a book review of *A House in the Homeland: Armenian Pilgrimages to Places of Ancestral Memory* in the journal *Études arméniennes contemporaines*; an article “‘Sketches of Van’: Archives, Music, Memory” published in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, exploring the echoes between her research and the life and work of her great-grandfather, Grikor Mirzaian Suni. She presented a Garj Talk in October entitled “Ruins of an Armenian Past in Van” to the community of St. John’s Armenian Church in Detroit and served as a panelist for the Samantha Woll Dialogue, “Why Do Monuments Matter?” at the University of Michigan. In May, in collaboration with CAS and the UCLA Armenian Music Program, Dr. Suni organized a performance of the VEM Armenian Music ensemble at the University of Michigan. Following the performance, she presented a lecture entitled “Seda Suny:

Armenian American Dance Pioneer.” Later that month, she presented this research at UCLA in the Third Workshop of the Feminist Armenian Research Collective (FemARC). In Fall 2026, Dr. Suni will be teaching an Anthropology and History undergraduate seminar titled “Monuments and Memory.”

RON SUNY

Ron Suny taught for the fourth year in the Monterey Summer Symposium on Russia in Georgia and Armenia. This program brings about a dozen graduate and post-graduate fellows for a three-week program of lectures and seminars that feature experts in Russian history, politics, and security issues. It has centered attention on the relationship of the South Caucasian states with Moscow and deals with questions such as the Karabakh (Artsakh) ethnic cleansing, the war with Iran, the Armenian Genocide, and internal political conflicts in Armenia and Georgia. Professor Suny spoke on the legacies of the Soviet experience in the South Caucasus and the Genocide of 1915. Back in Ann Arbor, he is revising his next book manuscript, *Forging the Nation: The Making and Faking of Nationalisms*, about which he will be speaking at Princeton University at the end of summer.

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EVENT CALENDAR

F A L L 2 0 2 6

Wednesday, September 16, 2026
6:00–8:00 PM
UMMA Helmut Stern Auditorium
2026 DR. BERJ H. HAIDOSTIAN ANNUAL DISTINGUISHED LECTURE
Poetry, Traumatic History, Memory: Thinking about the Armenian Genocide
Peter Balakian, Colgate University

Wednesday, October 7, 2026
4:30–6:00 PM
Weiser Hall 555
MANOOGIAN POSTDOCTORAL LECTURE
Purist Pursuits: Language, Global Ideas, and the Creation of Western Armenian in the Ottoman Empire
Jennifer Manoukian, U-M

Wednesday, November 11, 2026
4:30–6:00 PM
Weiser Hall 555
GUEST LECTURE
Heritage Forensics: Culture on the Front Lines of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict
Lori Khatchadourian, Cornell University

Wednesday, December 2, 2026
4:00–5:30 PM
Weiser Hall 555
MANOOGIAN POSTDOCTORAL LECTURE
Faith, Print, and Power in Early Modern Ottoman-Armenian History
Daniel Ohanian, U-M

W I N T E R 2 0 2 7

Friday, January 15, 2027, All Day
Weiser Hall 555
MANOOGIAN POSTDOCTORAL WORKSHOP
Confessionalism at the Intersection of Early Modern Manuscript and Print Cultures
Daniel Ohanian & Kathryn Babayan, U-M

Wednesday, February 17, 2027
4:00–5:30 PM
Weiser Hall 555
GUEST LECTURE
Writing Absent Armenian Heritage into Ottoman City Histories: The Case of Early Ottoman Amasya
Polina Ivanova, Austrian Academy of Sciences

Wednesday, March 10, 2027
4:00–5:30 PM
Weiser Hall 555
GUEST LECTURE
Blue Yerevan: Reading the City through Hydronarratives and Water Memory
Tigran Amriyan, Cultural & Social Narratives Laboratory

Friday & Saturday, April 16–17, 2027, All Day
Weiser Hall 1010
16TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE STUDENT WORKSHOP
Peopling the Past and Present: Social Turns in Armenian Studies
Jennifer Manoukian, U-M

Friday, April 23, 2027
4:00–6:00 PM
Weiser Hall 1010
COMMUNITY EVENT
5th Annual Shared Memories: The Armenian Experience Through Objects and Stories

All our events are free and open to the public. When possible, recordings will be posted on the CAS YouTube page youtube.com/aspmichigan after the event. Please visit ii.umich.edu/armenian for more information on upcoming events and sign up for our mailing list to receive updates and announcements.

A YEAR OF SUPPORT

CAS is funded by the generous donations of the Alex and Marie Manoogian Foundation and the Manoogian Simone Foundation in concert with the large and still vibrant Armenian community of Metro Detroit. We seek to increase the depth and breadth of resources devoted to Armenian studies at U-M through an endowed fund that provides permanent support for the center. This year, CAS solicited funds to support our three publicly-sourced funds:

Armenian Endowment \$3,815.00

The Center for Armenian Studies promotes the study of the history, language, and culture of Armenia and Armenians and helps prepare a new generation of scholars. We seek to expand our programming devoted to Armenian studies.

Armenian Studies Graduate Student Fellowship Fund \$750.00

Gifts to this fund support graduate student tuition, benefits, and summer research funding to maintain CAS’s bold vision for the field of Armenian Studies worldwide, which includes the crucial preparation of the next generation of students and scholars.

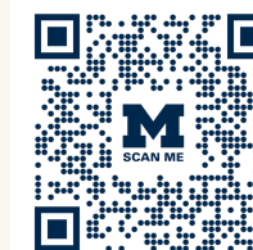
Center for Armenian Studies Strategic Fund \$5,585.00

Gifts to this fund support annual international workshops or conferences, academic and cultural programming, and community outreach.

We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to all our community members who donated to the Center this year.

In accordance with guidance from the Office of University Development, we are no longer including donor honor rolls in our publications. Your important donations support the critical work of CAS and directly support our public programming and student and scholarly research.

To make a donation online please visit ii.umich.edu/armenian/donate



M I S S I O N S T A T E M E N T

The University of Michigan's Center for Armenian Studies serves the university and the community by:

- Preparing the next generation of scholars in the field of Armenian Studies.
- Offering a comprehensive university-level education in Armenian studies, teaching language, culture, literature, history, anthropology, international relations, and political science.
- Offering graduate student, postdoctoral, and visiting scholar fellowships; graduate and undergraduate student research support.
- Reaching out to the larger community with an intensive program of public lectures, workshops, international conferences, and film screenings.
- Answering student and researcher questions on Armenian history and culture from the US and throughout the world.

Together with our faculty, graduate students, visiting and postdoctoral fellows, we have combined our efforts to push scholarship in Armenian Studies in new directions. Our interventions in the study of Armenian history, literature, translation studies, and the visual arts can be gauged by a carefully curated set of initiatives we have undertaken that will have a long-term impact on the field.

The Center for Armenian Studies has existed since 1981 and we hope to continue to propel the study of Armenia to a higher level by providing resources to generate new historical knowledge and change the way Armenian history and culture is taught and preserved for future generations.