

NEWSLETTER FALL 2022

# CMENAS





## ABOUT THE CENTER

The study of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region began at the University of Michigan (U-M) in 1889. Since the inception of the Center for Middle Eastern & North African Studies (CMENAS) in 1961, U-M has been committed to area studies and language training. In 1993, the center became a member of the university's International Institute, which seeks to stimulate research and teaching on critical areas of the world and foster cooperation among the university's departments, schools, and colleges.

### Ryan Szpiech

*CMENAS Director and Associate Professor, Romance Languages and Literatures, Middle East Studies, and Judaic Studies*

### Muzammil Hussain

*CMENAS Associate Director and Assistant Professor of Communication & Media*

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*Associate Professor, Middle East Studies*

## DEAR STUDENTS, FACULTY AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS,

The 2022–23 academic year is in full swing as students and faculty gather again for in-person learning and community. CMENAS is excited to begin a new year of projects and activities, working to fulfill its mission of bringing a multicultural understanding of the Middle East and its cultures to Michigan. We begin this fall by extending our best wishes to everyone for their continued safety, health, and well-being. We wish to express our gratitude to all staff whose commitment, service, and sacrifices are keeping the university thriving in these challenging and uncertain times.

We are delighted to report that CMENAS was once again awarded a four-year Title VI grant, receiving 2.6 million dollars from the US Department of Education for the 2022–2026 programming cycle. This funding cycle was especially competitive, and the number of funded National Resource Centers dedicated to the MENA region declined by 20%. CMENAS is proud to serve as one of the three National Resource Centers at the University of Michigan (together with the Centers for Latin American and Caribbean Studies and East Asian Studies) as well as the granting body for all Foreign Language Area Studies Fellowships (FLAS) for the study of all MENA languages. With our renewed Title VI funding, we will continue to support a vibrant calendar of programming and events, fund graduate and undergraduate education in MENA languages and cultures, help maintain and expand library holdings in MENA-related materials, and prioritize outreach

and support for K–14 education. We are committed to working with schools and teachers both locally and nationally to disseminate resources and support instruction about the MENA region.

In other recent news and updates:

CMENAS is very pleased to welcome four new graduate students in the Masters in Regional Studies (MIRS) program specializing in the MENA region: **Shakeelah Hicks**, **Zhanyang Liu**, **Rosa Razmi**, and **Ahmad Taylor**.

As part of the 2022 K–14 outreach efforts, CMENAS Outreach Coordinator **Rima Hassouneh** and Program Coordinator **Kristin Waterbury** led a group of nine educators from across the US (including Iowa, Michigan, California, Colorado, and New Jersey) on a two-week educational tour of Morocco. They visited nine locations from Tangier in the north to Ait Benhaddou, near the Sahara desert, in the south, providing first-hand experience and cultural encounters to support social studies curriculum development relating to the MENA region.

We are excited to announce the 2022 CMENAS colloquium theme: **Higher Education and Reformation across the MENA: A Geopolitical Exploration**. A full list of presentation titles, dates, speakers and a registration link for weekly talks will be forthcoming. All are invited to tune in and participate!

Look out for info sessions this fall about the new FLAS application cycle and remember that both undergraduate and graduate students of Arabic, Hebrew,



Turkish, Persian, Armenian, and other MENA languages are eligible for funding (**Application deadline: February 1, 2023**).

The Center for Armenian Studies has appointed a new Interim Director, Professor **Gottfried Hagen**, for the 2022–23 academic year. We continue to partner with Armenian studies at UM and support Armenian language instruction.

As CMENAS celebrates its new cycle of funding and activities, it also turns with a heavy heart to say goodbye to two cherished professors who passed away in 2022: **Ernest McCarus** and **Trevor Le Gassick**.

CMENAS at U-M is on the cutting edge of Middle Eastern/North African studies education with world-class degree programs, faculty research, and outreach to teachers and the general public. If you would like to invest in our work with moral and material support, please reach out to us. And Go Blue!

Warm regards,

**Ryan Szpiech**  
CMENAS Director

*Associate Professor, Romance Languages, Middle East Studies, and Judaic Studies*

# WEBINAR SERIES PUTS THE CONTEMPORARY MIDDLE EAST IN CONTEXT FOR EDUCATORS

By Emma Harver and Rima Hassouneh

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.

Dr. Dana Moss, assistant 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

"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."**

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 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.*

## CMENAS CONGRATULATES 2022 GRADUATES

**Katherine Downs**  
*Master of Arts in International and Regional Studies, Middle Eastern and North African Studies Specialization*

**Marshall Mapes**  
*Bachelor of Arts, Middle Eastern and North African Studies*

**Cathryn Wolak with Honors**  
*Bachelor of Arts, Middle Eastern and North African Studies*

**Jenna Berry**  
*Bachelor of Science, Middle Eastern and North African Studies*

**Duaa Aljirafi**  
*Minor, Modern Middle Eastern and North African Studies*



ABOVE: Professor Ryan Szpiech shakes hands with MIRS graduate, Katherine Downs. TOP: Students, faculty, staff, and friends gather to congratulate the 2022 graduating class.



# MOROCCO!

By Rima Hassouneh

PHOTOS COURTESY OF RIMA HASSOUNEH AND KRISTIN WATERBURY



Kasbah of Tangier, built after the city was evacuated by the English in 1684 and reclaimed by Morocco. Our guide recounted the story of the New Yorker debutante and socialite Barbara Hutton. To forget about her divorce from her third husband, Cary Grant, this “poor little rich girl” during the 1940s bought and lived in a magnificent palace right in the middle of the Kasbah.

In July 2022, CMENAS partnered with Global Exploration for Educators Organization (GEEO) on a whirlwind trip to Morocco! Eight school teachers from five U.S. states embarked on the grand tour. The Center’s program specialist Kristin Waterbury and outreach coordinator (me) participated too, accompanied by significant others husband and twin sister, respectively. In two dizzying weeks, the group visited Tangier, Chefchaouen, Fès, the Sahara Desert, the Todra Gorge, Essaouira, and Marrakech, and many more remarkable destinations.

On the second day we made it to the Blue City, Chefchaouen. The city’s name means “two horns”—a reference to the twin peaks that tower over this small hillside town in the northern Rif Mountains. The distinctive blue color was added by the city’s Jewish population who lived there as refugees in the 1930s. Adventurous members of our group took a four-hour hike up in the lush mountains, snacking on fig trees along the upward trail and standing still in the current of goats rushing down to graze in the lowlands (the confused kids will follow you up!). On the summit we were rewarded with a homemade lunch of goat cheese, bread, chicken tagine, zucchini soup, and yoghurt honey pudding.

The imperial city of Fès was founded in the ninth century A.D. Many families whose ancestors fled Granada, Spain, in 1492, when Islamic rule was ended finally in the Iberian Peninsula, continue to live in Fès’ medina. Above the house entrance of one such family a sign stated “Dar el-Gharnati” (“the house of the Granadan.”) On the door step too was the ubiquitous slumbering cat. By 8 p.m. the shops in the medina are shuttered up. Our guide Lhoucine cautioned us



Colorful Kasbah of Tangier



View of Chefchaouen



House in Chefchaouen



“Couscous Test” Alley, Fès. Beware gorging on couscous, Morocco’s semolina staple! Too much of it and you will get stuck in many of the medina’s alleys!

about surely getting lost in the medina’s labyrinths of over 9,400 alleys. Fes’ alleys are populated also with donkeys laden with goods. If you hear, “Baalak, baalak!” get out of the way and fast, as nothing will obstruct the stolid equine march onward.

On the first afternoon in Fès the group toured a cooperative in Ain Nokbi, where we learnt why Fès ceramicware and pottery are so special. The clay in the city environs is volcanic ash, making it remarkably suitable for the pliable and smooth stoneware clay that ends up in the famous durable Moroccan tagines, mosaic zellij tiles, and ceramics. Nowadays, the clay gets fired near the city’s southern ramparts due to the smoke from the kilns. But first, the clay must be soaked in water for a week, then stomped on by foot, kneaded by hand to release air bubbles, and picked through to remove all small stones; otherwise the fired product will crack and break. Only traditional methods are used to throw the pottery. We watched one man spin the wheel while working a wood pedal

with his right foot, mold the wet clay, and use a thin wire to cut the shape of the pot. Cooperatives continue the tradition of training generations of apprentices and artists who make and fire the clay, cut the zellij into jigsaw parts, paint the ceramics, etc.

Located in the oldest medina quarter—Fes el Bali—Chouara is the largest tannery and one of the oldest. Fes’ tanning industry has been continually operating near natural water sources and in the same fashion as it did in the early centuries. Chouara Tannery still uses traditional and natural methods to dye (poppy for red, indigo for blue, safflower for yellow) and to soften the leather (pigeon poop!). Quick quiz: which animal hide is most prized? Lamb, goat, camel, or cow? Morocco is deservedly famous for its leather goods, which it exports around the world. (Answer: Goat!)

The walls and interior of this earthen-built fortress and UNESCO World Heritage Site are the most intact of all the remaining kasbahs in Morocco. Apart from cooking lessons, Aït Ben Haddou has been the setting for many film and television productions like *Gladiator*, *Babel*, and *Game of Thrones*.



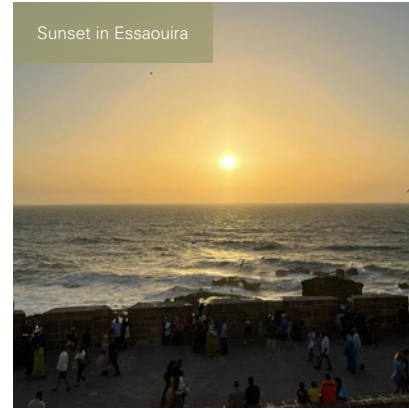
Like children in a candy shop, we were bowled over by the showroom's selection of ceramics, earthenware, and zellij-tiled fountains!



Vats filled with liquid dyes or softeners at Chouara Tannery, Fes.



Boats at Essaouira Port



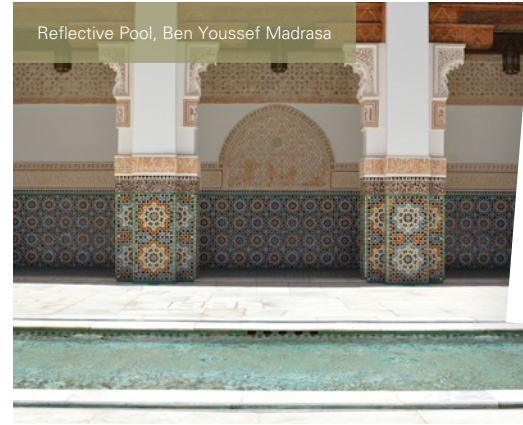
Sunset in Essaouira



Program Participants at the Ben Youssef Madrasa, Marrakech



Khattara (qanat)



Reflective Pool, Ben Youssef Madrasa



ABOVE: Kristin Waterbury and Rima Hassouneh at the Ben Youssef Madrasa



Sand Dunes of the Sahara Desert



Caravan style, we rode camels to the top of a sand dune and marvelled at the magnificent sunset in the Sahara Desert. We stayed at an hotel run and owned by a local Amazigh family near Merzouga.

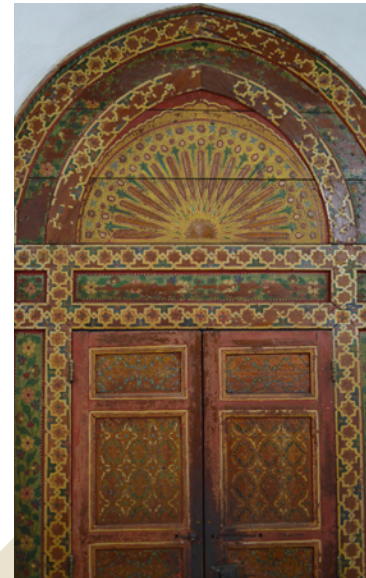


Local village farmlands, on the way to the cliffs and canyons of the mighty Todra Gorge.

RIGHT: The group members in the Todra Gorge. The series of limestone river canyons, or wadi, is in the eastern part of the High Atlas Mountains. FAR RIGHT: Tagine Cooking Lesson in Ait Ben Haddou



Ben Youssef Madrasa



On the edge of the Sahara Desert lies the Tafilalt oasis, a historically important caravan crossroads and trading center. A 300 km network of khattarat—subsurface irrigation channels—was excavated in the Tafilalt basin beginning in the late 14th century. Surface water for these canals is supplied by runoff from the Atlas Mountains. Khettara continued to function for much of the northern oasis until the early 1970s.

Called Mogador until the 1960s and lying on the western Atlantic coast, Essaouira is one of the best anchorages of the Moroccan coast. The city's name is the diminutive of the Arabic noun *ṣūr*, which means "wall" or "rampart." The Carthaginian navigator Hanno visited and established the trading post of Arambys in the 5th century B.C. During the 16th century the port city was a haven for the export of sugar and molasses, and an anchorage for pirates!

LEFT: Painted Cedar Door. Did you know that Morocco's three architectural features are: zellij mosaics, honeycomb plaster, and cedar woodwork? (Africa's largest cedar forests are in Morocco!)

Gateway to the Sahara Desert, Marrakech is surrounded by vast palm groves. The medina is called the "red city" because of its 12th-century walls and ramparts of beaten clay. During our stay, daytime temperatures reached 105°F. After sundown, the medina awoke from slumber. The Jamaa el-Fna Square teemed with snake charmers, jugglers, acrobats, magicians, henna painters—and families too.

The building of the Ben Youssef Madrasa in Marrakesh was commissioned by the second Saadian sultan of Morocco, Abdallah al-Ghalib, who reigned 1557–74. This madrasa was also one of the largest theological colleges in North Africa, serving as a center for learning, worship, and community interaction, and accommodating about 800 students.



# IN MEMORIAM

## Ernest McCarus

The University of Michigan Department of Middle East Studies, the American-Arab community, and the American Association of Teaching Arabic (AATA) lost a legend of Arabic and Kurdish languages and Linguistics with the passing of Professor Ernest McCarus on April 5, 2022, at 99 years old. He was born in Charleston, West Virginia on September 10, 1922 and came to the University of Michigan in 1940, receiving his B.A. (with distinction) in Japanese in 1945. Following his active duty service in the U.S. Army, he obtained his M.A. in Spanish in 1949 and joined the U-M Department of Near Eastern Studies in 1952 as an instructor of Arabic. After obtaining his Ph.D. in 1956, he became an assistant professor. He was promoted to associate professor in 1960, rising to full professor in 1967.

Professor McCarus played a vital role in the development of U-M's Arabic program in the Department of Near Eastern Studies from its modest beginning into one of the best programs in the nation. He was one of the teams who established the

Center for Arabic Study Abroad and he was also instrumental in the nationwide changes in the methodology of teaching Arabic from the traditional grammar-translation approach to a method focused on communicative proficiency. At U-M, he served as Chairman of the Department of Near Eastern Studies from 1969 to 1977, the Center for Arabic Study Abroad from 1974 to 1983, director of the Center for Middle Eastern and North African

Studies from 1983 to 1992, and Director of the Program for International Cooperation in Area Studies from 1988 until the time of his official retirement in 1994. Throughout his distinguished teaching career, he wrote several monograph studies, Arabic textbooks, and articles in the field of Arabic and Kurdish languages and linguistics. Among Professor McCarus's many awards, AATA recognized him for his contributions and commitment to the Arabic teaching profession with the "Lifetime Achievement Award."

Professor McCarus was held with esteem and affection and was highly respected by his former students, colleagues, and all his acquaintances for his commitment to teaching and his deep concern for the welfare of students. His optimism, enthusiasm, and dedication to teaching and service will continue to live in our hearts and memories.



## Trevor Le Gassick

With great sorrow, CMENAS announces the death of Trevor Le Gassick, Professor of Arabic Literature in Middle East Studies. Professor Le Gassick attended the University of London School of Oriental and African Studies where he earned a Ph.D. in Arabic Studies in 1960. He taught Arabic literature in Wisconsin and Indiana before joining the faculty at the University of Michigan as Assistant Professor in 1966, and was promoted through the ranks to professor in 1979. His research and publications focused on the prose literature of the modern Arab world, both fiction and non-fiction. His articles and translations were the first outside the Middle East to draw attention to Naguib Mahfouz, winner of the Nobel Prize for literature in 1988. He published an anthology of excerpts from works representing the views on societal and political issues expressed by leading 19th and 20th-century Arab intellectuals, an autograph Arabic manuscript by the Egyptian nationalist leader Ahmad 'Urabi, and an edited critical work on Naguib Mahfouz. He also translated works by Yusuf Idris, Yahya Haqqi, Ihsan Abd al-Quddus, and other prominent Arab writers, as well as a four-volume translation of Ibn Kathir's *Life of the Prophet Muhammad*. Most recently, he co-published a translation of a twelfth-century work on the *Fundamentals of Religion* by Tibghurin al-Malshuti.

The courses that Trevor taught for the department included Introduction to Arabic Literature in Translation, History of Arabic Literature in English, Modern Arabic Fiction, Modern Arabic Non-fiction, and Introduction to the Qur'an. He is fondly remembered by his students for his lively stories of his encounters with the great twentieth century authors of Arabic literature. After fifty-two years of teaching at the University of Michigan, he retired on May 31, 2022 and passed away less than a month later on June 21, 2022. He is survived and deeply mourned by his children. His colleagues cherish his memory and honor his many contributions to the curriculum and the field, and all will miss his presence in the halls of Thayer, where he was an integral part of the community for so long.



## LIBRARY UPDATE FROM MENAS LIBRARIAN EVYN KROPP

Another year of transitions! Hoping everyone is still finding ways of care and working as our approaches to research, teaching, and coursework continue to shift and flex. As ever, you can rely on your partners in the University Library. We've been relieved to fill crucial positions for collections processing and to acclimate to our new integrated library system and related workflows. We have **renovations for enhanced study and work spaces in the Shapiro Library** underway and **remain committed** to enhancing our physical collection storage and access.

We continue to enhance digital collection access with a myriad of ebooks, online journals, digital archives, and online reference works that are relevant for the study of the peoples, languages, and cultures of the Middle East (Southwest Asia), North Africa and diasporas accessible through our **Library Search platform**. Recently we were able to acquire for the collections expanded access to all 118 titles within **Cambridge Archive Editions Online : Near and Middle East**, the **online edition of Sezgin's Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums (GAS)**, and the **Almandumah databases** of full-text content of Arabic scientific conferences, dissertations and academic journals—alongside several important collections from academic publishers.

For contemporary publications from SWANA, print remains incredibly important with most new releases in physical format. Our bookseller partners in the region continue to gather books, journals and magazines in Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Hebrew to send to our library. This year with grant support from CMENAS we have also expanded our holdings in Moroccan Tamazight with publications from the Royal Institute of Amazigh Culture in Rabat. We have also added valuable gifts of Persian and Arabic books from legacies in the university and wider community. Our expert cataloguers continue to work diligently to ensure that these materials are received and processed for access.

As ever, for collection requests and specific guidance related to your ongoing projects, coursework or teaching—as well as accessing other collections, reimaging your research trips, and working with manuscripts and archival material—please feel free to be in touch with me. We can still video chat or even discuss over tea/coffee. In the meantime, take care!



## FLAS AWARDEES

### Academic Year Graduate

**Reem Aburukba**  
Arabic

**Yunus Alsomairi**  
Arabic

**Ibrahim Diallo**  
Arabic

**Heidi Hilliker**  
Arabic

**Alex Jreisat**  
Turkish

**Nour Kazbour**  
Arabic

**Leah Michalove**  
Arabic

**Margarethe Steinhaus**  
Turkish

**Ahmad Taylor**  
Arabic

### Academic Year Undergraduate

**Hanna Lupovitch**  
Hebrew

**Josephine Ness**  
Arabic

**Amira Rabbah**  
Arabic

**Dana Steiner**  
Hebrew

**Elizabeth Tower**  
Arabic

**Jonah Weingart**  
Arabic

### Summer FLAS

**Derek Lief**  
Arabic

**Katherine Tapia**  
Arabic

**Anna Tuohey**  
Arabic

**Donovan Orow**  
Arabic

**Ani Kalousdian**  
Persian

**Razieh Araghi**  
Turkish

CMENAS  
AT



After two years of MESA's annual conference being held virtually, we are excited to see and hear about everyone's research in person. Congratulations to all CMENAS affiliates presenting in and chairing panels at the 2022 MESA Annual Conference taking place December 1-4, 2022!

**Gottfried Hagen**  
Professor, Middle East Studies

*Food, Animals, Poetry, and Marriage: New Approaches for Studying Individuals and Communities at the Margins of Early Modern Ottoman Social History (Chair)*

*Ottoman Geographic Knowledge and the Early Modern Information Order in the Light of Sayyid 'Ali Akbar's Khataynameh (Roundtable Participant)*

**Mostafa Hussein**  
Assistant Professor, Judaic Studies

*The Place of Hebrew in Nahda Movement in Egypt*

**Renee Ragin Randall**  
LSA Collegiate Fellow

*Ghada al-Samman's Crucible: The Supernatural, The (Im)Moral, and the Mad in her Lebanese Civil War Trilogy*

**Devi Mays**  
Assistant Professor, Judaic Studies

*Beyond 'The Club': New Directions in the Study of Turkish Jewish Lives (Roundtable Participant)*

**Lisa Reber**  
Research Fellow, National Center for Institutional Diversity

*Research Methods, Fieldwork and publishing under State Scrutiny (Roundtable Participant)*

**Juan Cole**  
Richard P. Mitchell Collegiate Professor, History

*Crescent of Instability: From Russia-Ukraine to the Middle East*

*Ahmadou Bamba's Nonviolent Critique of French Imperialism in Senegal*

**Elizabeth Tower**  
Undergraduate Student, International Studies

*Palestinian Hip-Hop Culture: Intermediality, Access Points, and a Movement Towards the Mainstream*

**Charlotte Karem Albrecht**  
Assistant Professor, American Culture

*Women Wanderers: The Syrian American Elite and Sexual Normativity*

**Kamal Gasimov**  
PhD Candidate, Middle East Studies

*Adam's Gall as An Origin of Social Order: 'Abd al-Wahab al-Sha'rani on Genealogy of Islamic Law, Human Deficiency, and Salvation*

**Amal Hassan Fadalla**  
Associate Professor, Anthropology

*Sudan's Unfinished Revolution*

**Samer Ali**  
Associate Professor, Middle East Studies

*Present Everywhere Visible Nowhere: Linguistic Revolution in Early Arabo-Islamic Culture and the Question of Ontology*

*Race and White Supremacy in Middle East Studies (Roundtable Participant)*

**Kelly Hannavi**  
PhD Candidate, History

*Labor and Land: Syriac Orthodox Women's Spiritual Practices in the 19th c. Ottoman East*

**Sena Duran**  
PhD Candidate, American Culture

*"Aroused at the signs of Empire": Fantasies of the Middle East in Stag Film*

**Roxana-Maria Aras**  
PhD Candidate, Anthropology

*In Search for Futures Lost: Waqf, Parish, and Locality among Rum Orthodox in Beirut*

**Armen Abkarian**  
PhD Candidate, History

*The Crown of Togarmah: Mediating Discourses of Sovereignty in Cilician Armenia*

**Berkay Uluc**  
PhD Candidate, Comparative Literature

*Rethinking Arabic-Turkish Literary Contact: 19th-century Robinson Crusoe Translations*

**Marina Mayorski**  
PhD Candidate, Comparative Literature

*Translated Modernity: Ladino Adaptations of French Fiction in the Late Ottoman Empire*

INCOMING  
CMENAS STUDENTS



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT

### Shakeelah Hicks

Shakeelah is pursuing a Masters in International and Regional Studies with a specialization in the Middle East and North African studies. After completing her undergraduate degree, Shakeelah spent a year working with Yemeni and Syrian immigrant high school students in Michigan and developed an interest in studying the role of the youth, especially young women, in the Yemeni and Syrian wars.

### Zhanyang Liu

Zhanyang focuses on the Middle East region. She worked with think tanks and published an article concerning Israel's cultural traditions. She spent a year in Israel learning Hebrew and Israeli culture.

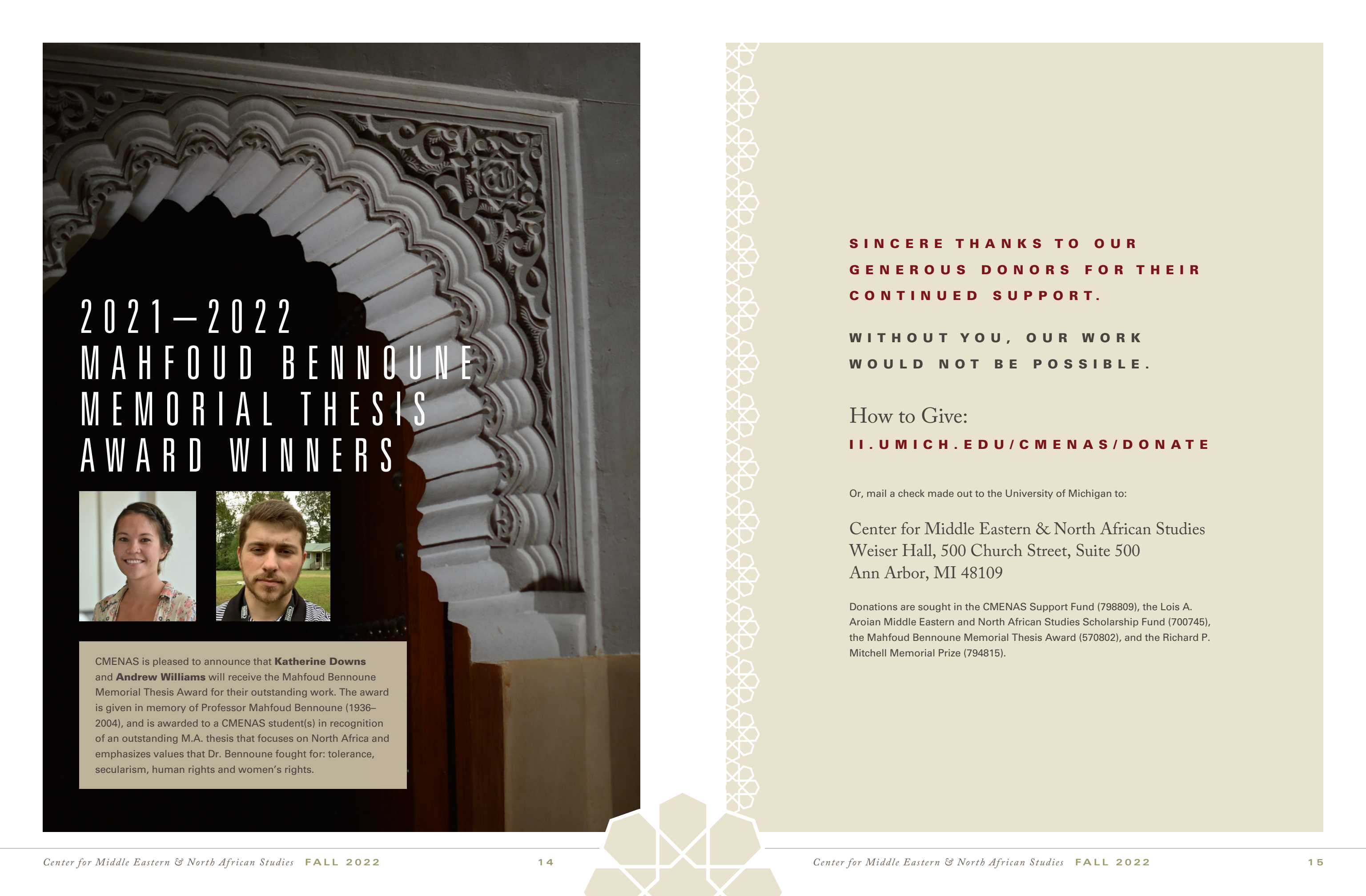
### Rosa Razmi

Rosa Razmi is a recent graduate from Michigan State University with a B.A. in comparative cultures and politics, receiving minors in Muslim studies and women & gender studies. She is now a Masters in International and Regional Studies (MIRS) candidate, with a concentration in Middle Eastern and North African studies. Her research primarily focuses on contemporary Iranian studies. This includes studying citizenship, women's rights, public health, and social activism within Iran. Her senior honor's thesis at Michigan State analyzed how women in Iran following the Iranian Revolution utilized the public health sphere as a form of social activism to exercise greater claims on their citizenship. Her other research interests focus on migration, statelessness, and refugee crises in the Middle East.

### Ahmad Taylor

Ahmad is a first-year master's student specializing in the Middle East and North African studies. His research interest includes looking at the comparative politics of the MENA region, focusing on relationships and conflicts between MENA countries, and also relationships with the United States. Ahmad hopes to help foster better relations in the MENA region and the United States.





# 2021–2022 MAHFOUD BENNOUNE MEMORIAL THESIS AWARD WINNERS



CMENAS is pleased to announce that **Katherine Downs** and **Andrew Williams** will receive the Mahfoud Bennoune Memorial Thesis Award for their outstanding work. The award is given in memory of Professor Mahfoud Bennoune (1936–2004), and is awarded to a CMENAS student(s) in recognition of an outstanding M.A. thesis that focuses on North Africa and emphasizes values that Dr. Bennoune fought for: tolerance, secularism, human rights and women’s rights.

**SINCERE THANKS TO OUR  
GENEROUS DONORS FOR THEIR  
CONTINUED SUPPORT.**

**WITHOUT YOU, OUR WORK  
WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE.**

How to Give:

**[II.UMICH.EDU/CMENAS/DONATE](https://umich.edu/cmenas/donate)**

Or, mail a check made out to the University of Michigan to:

Center for Middle Eastern & North African Studies  
Weiser Hall, 500 Church Street, Suite 500  
Ann Arbor, MI 48109

Donations are sought in the CMENAS Support Fund (798809), the Lois A. Aroian Middle Eastern and North African Studies Scholarship Fund (700745), the Mahfoud Bennoune Memorial Thesis Award (570802), and the Richard P. Mitchell Memorial Prize (794815).



Weiser Hall, 500 Church Street, Suite 500  
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We hope to engage you all through our website and social media accounts.

Be sure to stay connected and follow CMENAS:

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