



# CENTER FOR ARMENIAN STUDIES

## Culture, community, and connections

The University of Michigan's Center for Armenian Studies (CAS), together with the endowed chairs in Armenian studies in the departments of History and Middle East studies, makes Michigan one of the most vibrant and dynamic centers for Armenian studies in the U.S. Remarkably, this success story is almost entirely community funded, a tradition we seek to continue.

Constituted as a center within the International Institute, CAS supports and complements the teaching and research of Armenian Studies faculty by offering diverse programming—including public lectures, workshops, and conferences—that highlights the best scholarly work in the field. By promoting the study of the history, language, and culture of Armenia and Armenians generally, CAS helps to create a better understanding among students and the wider community at the University of Michigan. CAS works with the two endowed chairs in Armenian studies, the Alex Manoogian Chair in Modern Armenian History and the Marie Manoogian Chair in Armenian Language and Literature, as well as affiliated Michigan faculty whose work is focused on Armenian history, language, literature, and politics to offer a comprehensive, vibrant curriculum. The University of Michigan offers an undergraduate major and minor, as well as graduate degrees in Armenian studies through the university's departments and centers for regional studies, with whom our faculty is affiliated. In addition, CAS supports graduate and undergraduate students with fellowships as well as research and travel grants.

CAS plays a pivotal role nationwide in preparing a new generation of scholars in the field. Through its work in the United States and abroad, CAS aims to advance the scholarly analysis and understanding of the challenges the Armenian people have faced historically as well as in their current contexts in Armenia and in the Diaspora. We are proud that our graduates and our former postdoctoral fellows are teaching at prestigious institutions and are at the cutting edge of Armenian Studies nationally and internationally. The mentorship of new talent is an important commitment of our faculty, and we strive to include our students and postdoctoral fellows in all aspects of our intellectual community. Together with the faculty, graduate students, visiting scholars, and postdoctoral fellows, the center pushes scholarship in Armenian Studies in new directions.

## ENDOWED ARMENIAN LANGUAGE LECTURESHIP

An endowed lectureship of \$1M will ensure continuity for instruction in Armenian language at the university. Establishing an endowed lectureship will guarantee ongoing Armenian language instruction at the university, leveraging our unique distinction of offering both Eastern and Western Armenian. U-M is among the very few institutions in the country that provide instruction in Armenian at the elementary, intermediate, and advanced levels. With our ability to teach both dialects and the ongoing expansion of Armenian studies courses, in addition to increased interest among graduate students, maintaining language instruction continuity is imperative. Due to deep cuts from the Department of Education, private support is essential to uphold Michigan's place as a leading institution for Armenian history, literature, and culture studies.

## CAS STRATEGIC FUND

Giving to the CAS Strategic Fund is the easiest and most flexible way to show your support of the myriad ways in which CAS works to advance the study and teaching of Armenian culture, language, and history in all its historical depth and in any place around the globe. Gifts of all sizes provide funding for unique opportunities as they arise and allows the center to pursue priorities that fall outside of the annual budget.

**"Enriching questions, discussions, and debates on the history of Armenia, with a world-renowned professor gave me the experience I was looking for at a university like Michigan. Having learned to read and speak Armenian and study Armenian History at U-M, I feel equipped to make a difference and carry what I have learned to friends, colleagues, and future generations."**

—ARMEN VARTANIAN, BSE '24



Time and again, CAS faculty are called on to trace the origins of conflicts and wars and to explain the political dynamics leading up to them—and offer reminders of the human experience by seeing through the political rhetoric that is used to justify violence.

"A nation's unwillingness to confront its brutal past—be it genocide, slavery, or the like—causes these historical wounds to fester. No nation can effectively extricate itself from the shackles of past wrongs if it is unwilling to confront those wrongs thoughtfully, critically, and honestly."

Amy Perkins, who is a CAS teaching fellow with the World History and Literature Initiative, traveled to Armenia as part of a delegation of 15 teachers for a comparative study of genocide. Each morning, they engaged in academic discussions of historical evidence and theories associated with the Armenian Genocide.

She added, "The perpetrators of genocide are not madmen. Rather, they are ordinary citizens who, through the process of cultural and social indoctrination, rationalization, and dehumanization of the 'other,' devolve into mass murderers. This disturbing reality underscores the importance of examining the contexts in which genocides occur. If we can identify clear patterns, we are better positioned to prevent future genocides through education."

## NAMED ENDOWED CENTER

Unlike many academic programs, Armenian Studies at the University of Michigan is almost entirely and exclusively community funded. This unique distinction underscores the special privilege it is to have a center wholly dedicated to the exploration and advancement of Armenian education. Through a range of initiatives, from enriching courses to engaging events, student funding, and pioneering projects, our community's generosity has been the cornerstone of our achievements.

Establishing an endowment is crucial to ensuring the long-term sustainability and autonomy of Armenian Studies at Michigan. An endowed gift of \$7M would not only ensure our programs' stability but also foster growth and innovation, allowing us to remain leaders in the study of Armenian history, language, culture, art, and politics. Smaller gifts to support individual initiatives are also welcome. We hope to add a second post-doctoral fellowship funded through CAS (\$1.5M), as well as an opportunity for visiting researchers from Armenia to spend time for networking and research at U-M. Performances by domestic and international artists have regularly been highlights of our programs. An endowed residence program could allow us to bring them for longer periods of time to share their art and insights with students and the community (\$450,000). We also seek to work more closely with Armenian communities in Michigan and beyond to create new opportunities and experiences (\$250,000). Last not least, a CAS endowment that supports a staff position will go a long way to insulate the center from budgetary pressure and shifting priorities at the university and state level.

## WAYS TO FUND YOUR GIFT

Your partnership connects the college's rich past to a boundless and bright future. You can change lives with gifts of cash, pledges, or appreciated securities, and create a meaningful legacy through your bequest, trusts, gift annuities, and other planned gifts. Your generosity makes an impact on what's next, for a better tomorrow.

*for what's next ▶*

**Look to Michigan**

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