

YEAR IN
REVIEW

2018
2019

مجلس الدراسات
العربية والإسلامية

ASU Council for Arabic
& Islamic Studies

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

A unit of the ASU College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Arizona State University
Council for Arabic and Islamic Studies
2018-2019 Year in Review

A unit of the [ASU College of Liberal Arts and Sciences](#)
with administrative support from the
[School for International Letters and Cultures](#)

Message from

Dr. Souad T. Ali, Founding Chair



We are very proud to present our fourth Year in Review highlighting the Council's achievements for the academic year 2018-2019. CAIS's Mission and Vision focus on advancing quality research and teaching which promote multiculturalism, cross-cultural understanding, diversity, interfaith dialogue and the expansion of human civilization and cultures through Arabic and Islamic Studies

The 2018-2019 academic year witnessed great events reflecting on the Council's vision and mission. We resumed our Lecture Series introducing prominent scholars, including Dr. John O. Voll, Dr. Pamela DeLargy, Dr. Suliman Baldo, and Dr. Nina Berman.

The Council's lectures explored timely and significant topics surrounding Arabic and Islamic Studies, including: "Categories of "Exclusion and Inclusion in the Islamic Middle Ages"; "Muslim Modernities, Pop Culture, and Politics: Religion and Politics in the Post-Secular Age"; "Ana Sudani (*I am Sudanese*): Will the Sudanese Youth be Able to Resolve the Sudan's Age Old Afro-Arab Identity Issues and Create a New Nation?"; and "The Economic Underpinnings of Sudan's Militia State". Within the context of outreach and social embeddedness, the lectures generated important scholarly discussions that engaged speakers with the audience of faculty, students and the greater Phoenix community.

The creative resumption of our sixth season of the Arabic Film and Poetry Series continued successfully, featuring Classical and Contemporary/Modern Arabic Poetry; as well as four award-winning films including, "Son of Babylon", "The Insult", "Paradise Now" and the documentary "The Arab Americans: Heritage and Civilization." The Series continued introducing the ASU and Arizona communities to cultural aspects of Arab and Middle Eastern society and culture through films, rarely seen in the West, and a rich variety of classical, contemporary, and modern Arabic poetry followed by faculty-led scholarly discussions engaging ASU students and faculty.

The Council's future activities include an annual conference, colloquium, panel series, workshops, faculty and student exchange programs, student teaching assistantship and internship opportunities, as well as seed-grants to enrich faculty research on the Council's mission, pending university and fundraising initiatives. Several international grant proposals have already been submitted, as well we received a gift from our Partner, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah Kuwait, as well as from ASU's CLAS, SILC and local donors. The Council was also honored by a visit from the Cultural Attaché of the State of Qatar as part of our collaboration with donors to further promote the Council's mission. As well, Sheikha Hussah Sabah al-Salem al-alsabah, Director of Kuwait's Dal al-Athar al-Islamiyya visited ASU invited by the Council.

I am truly honored to be Founding Chair of the Council at such an important transitional period in Arab and Muslim - U.S. and West relations. It is my distinct pleasure to extend my thanks and appreciation to our sponsors, affiliates and Council friends, and to invite faculty, staff and students to continue engaging in our programs and events. Additionally, supporting the Council's fundraising program provides the opportunity to invest in its vision and mission.

Vision

Reflecting on the rich diversity of both Arabic Studies and Islamic Studies, the interdisciplinary program of the Council integrates the study of and research in Arabic and Islamic studies in diverse regions such as the Middle East, including the Arab World, Turkey and Iran, as well as Islamic Studies in regions beyond the Middle East and North Africa in countries such as Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and other Muslim majority countries. The program promotes the teaching of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish as well as other languages taught in ASU's School of International Letters and Cultures including Indonesian and Hindi-Urdu, in collaboration with the study of sociology, history, politics, anthropology, and religion.

Mission

The Council for Arabic and Islamic Studies was established at Arizona State University to acknowledge the significant contributions of Arabic Studies and Islamic civilization and cultures to the world at large both historically and in the modern age. The Council's research and teaching programs seek to promote multiculturalism, diversity, inter-faith dialogue, cross-cultural understanding, and the expansion of human civilization and cultures through Arabic as well as other Middle-Eastern languages including Persian and Turkish. The Council seeks to develop constructive academic and cultural interaction and partnerships between ASU and similar groups in the Arab and Muslim worlds.

About Arabic

Arabic is a primary language in 24 different countries in North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, and much of the Middle East. It is spoken natively by over 300 million people worldwide. Additionally, as the liturgical language of Islam, Arabic is also the second language of millions of Muslims around the world. It is one of the six most commonly spoken languages worldwide, one of the six official languages of the United Nations, the official language of the Arab League, one of the three languages of the African Union, and is spoken worldwide as the official language by at least 22 of the United Nations countries, taking a major role in global communications and international affairs.

In addition to its role as a tool for communication, language is an ambassador of culture and a link between societies toward cross-cultural understanding. Arabic has been one of the largest stores of human cultures, science, religious studies and arts. The Arabic language has a rich artistic, intellectual, and religious history that dates back thousands of years in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as other locations worldwide. It is one of the most wide-spread languages spoken by millions of people, scientists, and scholars who mostly live in the Middle East, Asia, North and east Africa, and other parts of the world.

About Islam

Islam is the world's second largest and fastest growing religion. There are approximately 1.6 billion Muslims worldwide, making up 23% of the world's population. Muslims are the majority in 50 countries. It is estimated that by 2050, the number of Muslims will nearly equal the number of Christians around the world.

“Literature is often conceived as a cultural tool towards greater human understanding. The more we study other’s literary arts, cultures, and civilizations, the better enabled we become to achieve understanding and to work toward world peace.”

**- Dr. Souad T. Ali,
Council Founding Chair**

Select Stories in the News

[ASU Professor explores feminism, Islam and politics in new book](#)

August 13, 2019,
ASU Now News

[ASU Hosts 38th conference on Sudan Studies Association of North America](#)

June 17, 2019,
ASU Now News

[Grad combined chemical engineering with Arabic Studies](#)

May 7, 2019,
ASU Now News

Global Engagement:

asunow.asu.edu/20180219-global-engagement-asu-silc-grow-arabic-program

Initiatives

The Council holds a variety of initiatives throughout the academic year including the annual Lecture Series, Arabic Film and Poetry Series, symposia, workshops, and events throughout the ASU and greater Phoenix metropolitan area.

The collage features several event posters:

- ARABIC film&poetry series** (Fall 2018): Engaging night of art, culture, & faculty-led scholarly discussion. Includes films like 'The Arab World, Heritage and Civilization' and 'The Insult'.
- Comparative Empire Studies: Categories of Exclusion and Inclusion in the Islamic Middle Ages**: Panel on Islamic Empire Building by Dr. Nina Bernan, Director of the School of International Letters and Cultures.
- The Economic Underpinnings of Sudan's Militia State**: 55th Keynote Lecture by Dr. Suliman Baldo, Senior Policy Advisor for the Enough Project.
- Ana Sudan! (I am Sudanese)**: Will the Sudanese Youth be able to Revive the Sudan's Age Old Afro-Arab Identity Issues and Create a New Nation? Keynote by Dr. Pamela DeLary.
- Muslim Modernities, Pop Culture, and Religion and Politics in the Post-Secular World**: Panel on Islamic Empire Building by Dr. John O. Voll, Professor Emeritus of Islamic History at Georgetown University.
- Paradise Now**: Film and poetry series event.
- Son of Babylon**: Film and poetry series event.
- Revolutionary Men of Sudan**: Hosted by the Sudanese American Association, featuring guest speaker Dr. Souad T. Ali on Wednesday, April 17th at 6pm-7pm in MU246.

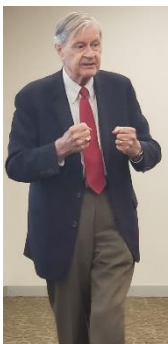
Lecture Series

The annual Lecture Series brings leading world scholars to the ASU community to explore timely, critical, and related topics surrounding Arabic and Islamic Studies.



Categories of Exclusion and Inclusion in the Islamic Middle Ages October 11, 2018

Professor Berman's talk explores the dynamics between cultural textual archives (such as travel writings, folk talks, and geographical and anthropological texts) and data about social, economic and political practices (such as marriage, conversion, war, trade, and taxes). She discusses mechanisms of exclusions and inclusion operative in textual representations from the medieval Islamic period, and uses observations gained from this analysis to shed light on comparative cases of imperial discourses. She argues that only careful contextualization and comparative inquiry facilitate an understanding of the political role played by literary/cultural discourses.



Muslim Modernities, Pop Culture, and Politics: Religion and Politics in the Post-Secular Age, October 17, 2018

The popularity of heavy metal music and hip hop in the contemporary Muslim world does not reflect a decline of religion in Muslim life. Contrary to many expectations, secular modernity did not displace religion. Contemporary Muslim culture does, however, reflect continuing transformations and relationships between religion and politics, and between tradition and modernity. Although analysts sometimes use "religion-politics", "tradition-modernity", and "religion-secular" as labels for describing separate, contrasting, and competing elements in society, most parts of contemporary Muslim communities are not either religious or secular (or traditional or modern), they are both. One can be both modern and religious.



Ana Sudani (*I am Sudanese*): Will the Sudanese Youth be Able to Resolve the Sudan's Age Old Afro-Arab Identity Issues and Create a New Nation? June 8, 2019

The global media coverage of the massive street protests in Sudan has included heavy emphasis on the roles of women and youth. The photographic images of smiling young people, the stories of romances developed between protestors, and visuals of so many young women enjoying new freedoms of dress and expression have created the image of a cheerful, collaborative revolution, with solidarity and safe spaces for all. The use of a wide variety arts and music by multi-ethnic demonstrators, the spontaneous poetry sessions, the pop-up kindergartens, and even the well publicized visits of diplomats and their families have made the Khartoum sit-in seem almost like a folk festival, even as very serious negotiations go on between the military and civilians on what transitional governance arrangements should be adopted. Whatever the conclusion of those negotiations, it is important to look more deeply into how solid the civilian solidarity actually runs among youth and at also the opportunity the revolution offers for a fundamental rethinking of the Sudanese identity. Will young people be able to resolve the Sudan's age old Afro-Arab identity issues and create a new nation?



The Economic Underpinnings of Sudan's Militia State June 9, 2019

We are all concerned that the deeply entrenched pillars of support of the Bashir regime [and the current Transnational Military Council], in the Sudan are already engaged in a fight to undermine the Sudanese People's Revolution. A key motivation driving their resistance to a civilian government and the transitioning of Sudan to a genuinely democratic governance are the monetary interests of the defense and security sector, most prominent of which is the financial empire of the Lt. General Hemetti is in control. Regional powers contributed to building that wealth and are now sustaining it to advance their own strategic interests in the East and Horn of Africa region and in order to maintain the presence of Sudanese soldiers, on behalf of their countries, in the deadly battlefield of Yemen

Arabic Film & Poetry Series

The Arabic Film and Poetry Series, held each semester, offers the larger ASU community the opportunity to explore the Arab and Islamic worlds during an engaging series including art, culture, and faculty-led scholarly discussions through classical and contemporary Arabic poetry and award-winning international films.

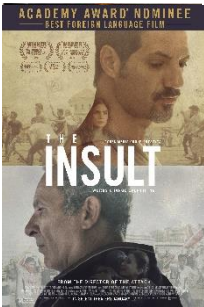


Classical Arabic Poetry, September 6, 2018 & February 11, 2019

The contemporary and modern Arabic poetry session covered several poets from different Arab countries. In addition to poetry viewing and scholarly discussion, students were invited to recite various pieces of their favorite modern poetry and to recite their own original works.

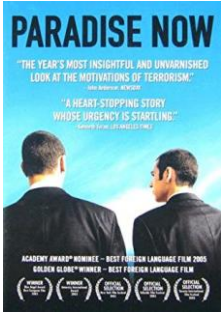
The Arab World, Heritage and Civilization October 4, 2018

The Arab World, Heritage and Civilization is a documentary produced in the framework of UNESCO's Arabic Plan, that provides an overview of the history of the rich Arab civilization.



The Insult November 6, 2018

A minor incident between a Lebanese Christian and a Palestinian refugee turns into an explosive trial that ends up dividing the two communities. Besides winning multiple awards this film was also nominated for Academy Award for "Best Foreign Language Film".



Contemporary & Modern Poetry, November 19, 2018 & April 2, 2019

The contemporary and modern Arabic poetry session covered several poets from different Arab countries. In addition to poetry viewing and scholarly discussion, students were invited to recite various pieces of their favorite modern poetry and to recite their own original works.

Paradise Now, February 28, 2019

A story of Palestinian childhood friends Said and Khaled who live in Nablus and. A film that raises awareness and presents a different side of reality towards peace, Paradise Now won “Best Foreign Language Film” for the 63rd Golden Globe Awards. It was also the first Palestinian film to be nominated for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film.



Son of Babylon, March 20, 2019

The film is set initially in Northern Iraq, 2003, two weeks after the fall of Saddam Hussein. Ahmed, a 12-year-old boy begrudgingly follows in the shadow of his grandmother. On hearing news that prisoners of war have been found alive, she is determined to discover the fate of her missing son. Won Amnesty Film Award & Peace Prize in 60th Berlin International Film Festival in 2010.

Supporting the Community

The Council also supports various ASU and community events which expand the community's understanding of Arabic and Islamic Studies. Some activities have included co-sponsoring the annual ASU Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures Open House, participating in School of International Letters and Cultures activities, and supporting events and initiatives with various ASU units, community organizations, and student organizations.

ASU Homecoming Block Party, November 17, 2018

Homecoming brings together students, parents and alumni to celebrate their Sun Devil spirit. At the highlighted event, the Homecoming Block Party, thousands of people visited the School of International Letters and Cultures site which included cultural activities and entertainment in more than 20 languages, including Arabic and Hebrew calligraphy, henna tattoos, and more.

ASU Night of the Open Door, February 23, 2019

The annual Night of the Open Door brings thousands of local community members to experience ASU through a variety of hands-on activities, presentations, and visits to campus museums, classrooms, and laboratories. Mini Arabic language classes, cultural lessons and Arabic calligraphy were provided by CAIS and the Arabic Studies Program in the School of International Letters and Cultures.

ASU School of International Letters and Cultures Language Fair, February 26, 2019

CAIS, along with the ASU Arabic language section, showcased the Arabic language and culture at the annual Language Fair sponsored by the School of International Letters and Cultures. The annual fair engages local high school students in expanding their global appreciation and knowledge by showcasing various cultures, foods, dances, and traditions.

Academic Opportunities

ASU students of all levels, interests, and majors can enhance their ASU experience and career opportunities through a major concentration, minor or certificate in Arabic studies. Courses are offered through the ASU Arabic Studies program within the School of International Letters and Cultures.

Arabic Studies Concentration – B.A. in International Letters and Cultures

The B.A. program in international letters and cultures with a concentration in Arabic studies provides critical and cultural diversity in advanced Arabic language and literature that enriches ASU students' undergraduate experience; helps them gain a broad knowledge and understanding of the culture, literature and traditions of the vast Arabic-speaking world; and prepares them for the job market. The Arabic studies concentration benefits students interested in academic research and careers in public and diplomatic service as well as in national security. This concentration complements existing degree programs in the School of International Letters of Culture and enhances studies in social science disciplines such as political science and global studies, and in humanities fields including anthropology, history, philosophy and religious studies.

Arabic Studies Minor

The minor in Arabic studies provides students with instruction in Modern Standard Arabic as well as Arabic culture and literature. Students who successfully complete the prescribed coursework will be able to effectively communicate in Arabic and interact with native speakers of Arabic. Literature courses expand students' knowledge in Arabic, Middle East, and Islamic culture and civilization. Students of all academic disciplines doing research or seeking employment in areas related to the Middle East or parts of the Arab world will find the minor in Arabic highly beneficial.

Arabic Studies Certificate

The certificate in Arabic studies provides undergraduate and graduate students with skills that will enable and qualify them to communicate effectively in Arabic. Simultaneously, students gain a broad knowledge and understanding of the culture, literature and traditions of the vast Arabic-speaking world. The certificate provides critically needed educational and cultural diversity that will enrich students' experience and prepare them for life as employees and employers with an added advantage the program gives them in the job market, given the demonstrably high need for graduates with Arabic knowledge.

Other Languages

The ASU School for International Letters and Cultures also offers additional languages, such as Hebrew, Hindi-Urdu, and Indonesian that are significant to Arab, Islamic, and Middle Eastern communities.

- **Farsi**, also known as Persian, is the most widely spoken member of the Iranian branch of the Indo-Iranian languages, a subfamily of the Indo-European languages. It is the language of Iran (formerly Persia) and is also widely spoken in Afghanistan, in an archaic form, in Tajikistan and the Pamir Mountain region. Persian is spoken today primarily in Iran and Afghanistan, but was historically a more widely understood language in an area ranging from the Middle East to India. Significant populations of speakers in other Persian Gulf countries include Bahrain, Iraq, Oman, Yemen, and the United Arab Emirates, as well as large communities in the United States.
- **Turkish** is the official language of the Republic of Turkey and is the most widely spoken language in the Turkic language family with over 70 million native speakers. Outside of Turkey, Turkish is also spoken in Bulgaria, Macedonia, Northern Cyprus, Greece, and other European countries, like Germany, where many Turkish workers and their families live. Turkey is a democratic and secular country with a rich and diverse cultural heritage. Turkey, considered the gateway between the East and the West, is bordered by eight countries in Europe, Eurasia and the Middle East, making it geo-strategically important.
- **Modern Hebrew** is one of two official languages of Israel (the other being Arabic), which is home to a diverse representation of Jews, Muslims, Christians, and others, including a 20% Muslim population. Modern and pre-modern Hebrew are studied by Jews and students of Judaism, Israel, theology, and the Middle East.
- **Hindi** is the official language of India, home to ancient civilizations, historic trade routes, and vast empires, including a significant Muslim population and Islamic history.
- **Urdu** is the official language to Pakistan and is similar to Hindi other than that it is written in the Arabic script.
- **Indonesian** is the national language of Indonesia, the world's fourth most populous country with over 238 million people and the largest Muslim population in the world.

Learn more at
<https://silc.asu.edu/content/academic-areas>

September



Classical Arabic Poetry, Arabic Film & Poetry Series, featuring live poetry & discussion



The Arab World, Heritage and Civilization Film Viewing, Arabic Film & Poetry Series

October



Categories of Exclusion and Inclusion in the Islamic Middle Ages, CAIS Annual Lecture



Muslim Modernities, Pop Culture, and Politics: Religions and Politics in the Post-Secular Age, CAIS Annual Lecture

November



Contemporary & Modern Arabic Poetry, Arabic Film & Poetry Series, featuring live poetry & discussion



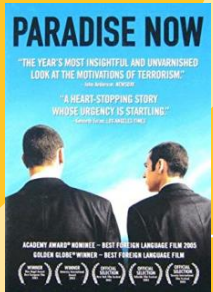
The Insult Film Viewing, Arabic Film & Poetry Series

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February



Classical Arabic Poetry, Arabic Film & Poetry Series, featuring live poetry & discussion



Paradise Now Film Viewing, Arabic Film & Poetry Series

March



Night of The Open Door, with the ASU Arabic Studies Faculty



ASU Language Fair, with the ASU Arabic Studies Program



Son of Babylon Film Viewing, Arabic Film & Poetry Series



Revolutionary Women of Sudan ASU Sudanese American Association lecture

April



Contemporary & Modern Arabic Poetry, Arabic Film & Poetry Series, featuring live poetry & discussion

June



Sudans Studies Association of North America Conference at ASU

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Photo Gallery

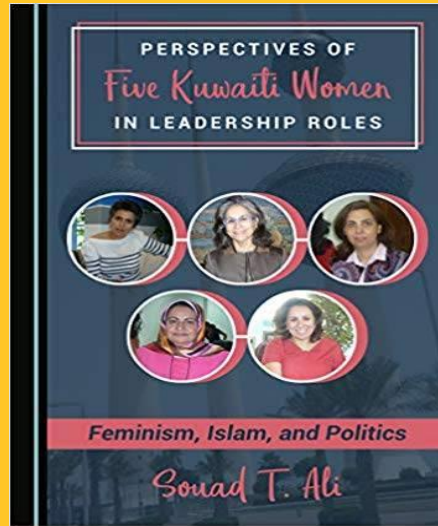








Women's Empowerment in the Arab World



As Muslim feminists' critique creates new arenas in Islamic theology and stridently conservative forms of Islamism become increasingly visible in the public space, the material effects of the advances in women's issues in Kuwait have received little academic attention until now. A book that both complicates and contributes to understandings of women, Islam, and social change, this important work will be of great interest to scholars in religious studies, women's and gender studies, and Middle Eastern studies, as well as reformers throughout the region who continue to find inspiration in Kuwait's "Blue Revolution".

Review:

"Souad T. Ali's excellent chronicle of the lives and words of five Kuwait women is a timely intervention in diverse fields of inquiry pertaining to gender, the state and religion in this Muslim Gulf society. Ali's work is a powerful exposition of the mechanisms and the tools deployed by these Kuwait leaders in bringing about gender justice. This book is a must-read for anyone with interest in Gulf studies, Islamic feminist discourses, and gender studies. With her focus on voice, the author amplifies vital perspectives and lessons for grasping the fine-grained nuances of social movements aspiring to transform lives for the better." Dr Rogaia Mustafa Abusharaf, Professor of Anthropology, Georgetown University, USA

CAIS congratulates Founding Chair Dr. Souad T. Ali, Recipient of the ASU
2019 Outstanding Faculty Advisor of the Year

Pitchfork Award



Student Success Stories

The Council for Arabic and Islamic Studies would like to congratulate many ASU students, scholars, and alumni for their great achievements in Arabic and Islamic Studies! Here are a few examples of outstanding student success stories through the years.

Raneem Tohaibeche

Raneem graduated from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences with her Bachelors in Biochemistry along with a Certificate in Arabic Studies. Her Arabic study courses led her to start an honors thesis project under the supervision of Dr. Souad Ali about the evolution of Muslim female physicians in medicine. Raneem's interest in medicine and the health field has been uprising since, and is currently pursuing her Master in the Science of Health Care Delivery.



Selma Ismail

Selma Ismail graduated from ASU in May 2018 with degrees in Global Studies; and Business (Public Service/Public Policy) from the WP Carey School of Business. She also completed an Arabic Studies Certificate in SILC, as well as a Certificate in Islamic Studies in Religious Studies. Selma has received a prestigious Fulbright Scholarship to teach English in Malaysia as a Fulbright Scholar. With interest in international relations and human right issues, Selma completed her Honors Thesis "Female Circumcision in Sudan: Exploring the Human Rights Abuse Through a Culturally Competent Lens", directed by Dr. Souad Ali.

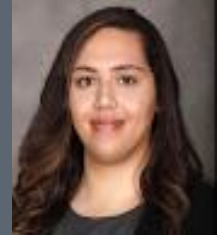


Joseph Conant

Joseph graduated with a B.A. in French with a minor in Arabic Studies and an Arabic Studies Certificate in the School of International Letters and Cultures. He received two prestigious scholarships: the Boren Scholarship (NSEP and a scholarship from Qatar University to study advanced Arabic). He is very interested in doing further Arabic studies. Joseph also assumed the position of President of the Arabic Language and Culture Club for one year.

Mary-Victoria Hickcox

Mary-Victoria Hickcox graduated with a B.A. degree in Global Health and a minor in Sustainability from Barrett, the Honors College. Her thesis, "Addressing Misconceptions of Women in Islam through the Exegesis of Female Islamic Scholars", directed by Dr. Souad Ali, examined the various interpretations and readings of the Qur'an pertaining to women (and men). She is teaching middle school science in Phoenix through Teach For with a long-term goal of entering into education policy.



Ayla Perez

Ayla Perez graduated with a Master's degree in Women and Gender Studies from the School of Social Transformation. Her Masters Applied Project for Women and Gender Studies, chaired by Dr. Souad Ali, examined honor crimes within imperialism, colonialism and regime change. As a case manager for substance abuse and mental health, she works now to obtain grants to develop a program in the U.S. to recognize honor crimes against women and create support systems for survivors of honor crimes.

Lourdes Saez

Lourdes E. Saez completed her Ph.D. in Religious Studies with concentration in Islam in Global context in August 2017 in ASU under the mentorship of Dr. Souad Ali, Dr. Abdullahi Gallab and Dr. Moses Moore. She also holds a Certificate in Arabic Studies. Her Dissertation, *Hay Moros en la Costa: the Imprint and Legacy of Islam in Puerto Rico and the Fiestas de Santiago Apostol*, examined the legacy of Islam through Iberian and African Muslims in Puerto Rico. Lourdes received a Master of Arts in Cultural Studies from the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM. She also holds a Master of Arts in Spanish, from the University of South Florida, Tampa, FL. She currently teaches at a college in Albuquerque and volunteers for a local Homeless shelter.



Yusef Sabri

Yusef Sabri recently graduated with a Minor and a Certificate in Arabic Studies and a Bachelor's Degree in Chemical Engineering. Yusef said, "his knowledge of Arabic has "opened up several doors" and indicated that he already began receiving several job offers. Recommended by his mentor Dr. Souad T. Ali, Yusef completed an Internship with "A Foreign Language Service", which is a Mesa-based company in Arizona. He did significant Arabic-English translation and interpreting work for the company as an Intern. Sabri mentioned that, "interpreting offers him a practical way to use the language skills her worked hard to master in his courses".



Shabnam Rezai

With an undergraduate degree in Psychology, Shabnam Rezai worked on her Master's thesis, co-chaired by Dr. Souad Ali that presented a more positive view of Afghani women, told from their own perspective and experiences. Shabnam works to dispel the oppressed and passive image of Afghani women portrayed by the press and even in some scholarly studies. Shabnam works as an academic advisor in the ASU Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering with mechanical engineering and aerospace students. She graduated in May 2017 with a Master's degree in Religious Studies focusing on Islam in global contexts. Her ultimate goal is to teach as a professor.



Brieanna Griffin

Brieanna graduated from Barrett, the Honors College at ASU in 2016 with double Majors in Global Studies and Anthropology, as well as a minor in Arabic studies and certificates in Islamic studies and TESOL. After graduating, she traveled to Tanzania to study Swahili intensively and work at a local NGO as a Boren scholar through the U.S. government. She noted that the combination of Arabic and the Swahili language skills helped better prepare her to pursue graduate studies in Islamic studies and work within American public diplomacy (with an emphasis in public diplomacy throughout the Muslim world).



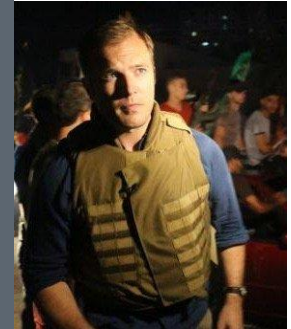


Amirah Ismail

Amirah is a Foreign Service Officer within the U.S. Department of State. She served a two-year term in Latvia, an assignment in Algeria and is currently covering the Afghanistan Desk. Additionally, she served various roles both as a student and in the U.S. Department of State in Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, and Washington D.C. As a U.S. diplomat, Amirah noted that her mission is to promote peace and prosperity around the world, protect American citizens, and advance U.S. foreign policy goals. Amirah earned a Master degree in Middle East Studies from George Washington University, and graduated from ASU in 2009 with double majors in global studies and justice studies, and certificates in Arabic and Islamic Studies.

Ian Lee

Ian continues his vigorous journalism activities as a CNN reporter in the Middle East, covering the most critical developments in the region, including the 2011 Arab Spring, Ukraine Crisis, Sochi Winter Olympics, June 30 Revolution in Egypt, 2014 Gaza War, 2016 Turkish coup d'état attempt, and 2017 North Korea crisis, among other things. He has received many awards for his important work, including the Emmy Award "CNN/CNNi Breaking News Simulcast" (2012) and the Peabody Award "CNN's coverage of the uprising in Libya and Egypt" (2011). Ian graduated from ASU in 2007 majoring in journalism with specialization in Arabic and Islamic studies, including a study abroad experience at the University of Jordan, followed by work in Egypt as a Fulbright Grantee.



Lena Arkawi

Lena played a critical role for the United Nations World Humanitarian Summit (May 2016 in Istanbul, Turkey) that hosted 53 world leaders and 9,000 participants during this first-ever convening in the UN's 70-year history due to the highest levels of human suffering witnessed since World War II. She is currently pursuing a Master's degree program in Advocacy in a Global Environment at George Washington University. Lena graduated from ASU in 2009 majoring in interdisciplinary studies with concentrations in business and communication, and a certificate in Arabic Studies.

**View more Student
Success Stories at
[https://cais.asu.edu
/content/student-
success-stories](https://cais.asu.edu/content/student-success-stories)**

Faculty & Staff



Dr. Souad T. Ali
Founding Chair



Edurne Beltran de Heredia
Graduate Intern



Raisa Khatun
Graduate Assistant

About Dr. Souad T. Ali, Founding Chair

Dr. Souad T. Ali is Founding Chair of the ASU Council for Arabic and Islamic Studies; Head of Classics and Middle Eastern Studies, Coordinator of Arabic Studies; Associate Professor of Arabic Literature and Middle East/Islamic Studies in the School of International Letters and Cultures (SILC). She is simultaneously an Affiliate Faculty in the Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict, Women and Gender Studies, African and African-American Studies, the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Center for the Study of Race and Democracy, Institute for Humanities Research, among others.

A Fulbright Scholar, Professor Ali is the author of *A Religion, Not A State: Ali 'Abd al-Raziq's Islamic Justification of Political Secularism* (University of Utah Press 2009) that reached the top of Amazon's List for "Bestselling New and Future Releases in Turkey" when it was released. Her second book, *The Road to Two Sudans*, an edited volume of which she is the lead editor, has been published internationally by Cambridge Scholars Publishing (2014) and reached the top of Amazon's List for "Bestselling New and Future Releases" in Sudan History and North African History. Dr. Ali's third book, *Kuwaiti Women in Leadership Roles* has recently been published internationally by Cambridge Scholars (2019). Her fourth forthcoming book is, *Subjugated Voiced* (with Emily Silverman). Dr. Ali published over 25 scholarly articles. Additional international publications include several of her scholarly articles which have been translated into different languages. She has contributed over 100 scholarly presentations nationally and internationally.

Professor Ali's research interests cover a wide area including Arabic Literature, women and gender in Islam, Classical Islamic Texts, Islam and Secularism, Islamic Law; Sufism, Islam and Democracy, Islam and modernity, Quranic and Hadith Studies, feminist movements in Islam and the Middle East, Arab and Arab-American women, the emergent scholarship of Muslim-American women scholars, Sudanese women, and Sudanese politics.

President of the Sudan Studies Association of North America, Dr. Ali is a Board Member and Arizona Representative, as well as the past- President, of the American Academy of Religion/Western Region (AAR/WR). She represented ASU on the Governing Board of the Center for Arabic Studies Abroad (CASA) in the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University. In addition, she serves as Executive Committee Member of the International Association of Intercultural Studies (IAIS), Cairo, Egypt and Bremen, Germany. She is also a Board Member of the Sudan Studies Association of North America.

Professor Ali received a B.A. with distinction from the University of Khartoum and the Polytechnic of North London, a Masters with distinction from Brigham Young University, and a Ph.D. with honors from the University of Utah (2004) where she studied under Dr. Bernard G. Weiss.

Affiliate Faculty

Stephen Batalden, Professor, Founding Director

Melikian Center for Russian, Eurasian, and East European Studies, History Faculty, School of Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies,
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Nina Berman, Professor, Director

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