In partnership with the Portland State University Library and with funding from the United States Institute for Peace, the Middle East Studies Center presented public programing to promote, complement and contextualize the *Bridging Cultures: Muslim Journeys*. This collection of books, films and other resources was selected by the National Endowment for the Humanities to help public audiences in the United States become more familiar with the people, places, history, faith and cultures of Muslims around the world.

Muslim Journeys Project Scholar Kambiz GhaneaBassiri opened the series in January with a talk on the development of the Bookshelf at an event entitled ‘Celebrating Muslim Journeys at Portland State University’. In February, the Center hosted talks by two Emeritus professors from the Ohio State University: Dick Davis spoke at a Middle East Studies Center Lunch & Learn brownbag series event on ‘Women Writers of Iran: Past & Present’; and Stephen Dale gave an illustrated talk entitled ‘”Hasht Bihisht”: the Garden of the Eight Paradises — the place of the garden in early Mughal culture’.

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Director’s Message

Each year, this message provides an opportunity for me to reflect on the Middle East Studies Center’s work. It’s always a privilege to remind myself of our students’ growth and impact, the Center’s staff’s hard work, and my colleagues’ profound contributions to the field. This year, despite increasingly strained resources, it seems we’ve been especially productive.

I’m pleased to report that the Center hosted, organized, co-sponsored, or participated in over 60 outreach events that promoted the understanding of the people, cultures, languages, and religions of the Middle East. We’ve continued to support scholarship about the region through academic conferences, institutional memberships to professional organizations, and funding for faculty travel. Student engagement has grown through internships, fellowship and scholarship awards, and the establishment of a Student Leadership Committee. And the Center’s development efforts have yielded gifts and grants that will continue to support even more new programming going forward. Our ongoing support for teaching and learning about the Middle East in K-12 classrooms has included several daylong workshops and a three-day Summer Institute, and Middle East Studies Center staff have made presentations in elementary, middle, and high schools.

In order to maximize the impact of the Center’s work, we’ve continued to develop a suite of online resources that are informed by our programs and have been disseminated nationally. These include Middle East Teaching Tools, a collection of the best tools and resources to support education about the Middle East at the K-12 level, a new website for content-based instruction of Middle Eastern languages to be launched this fall, and more. This approach has allowed the Center to serve an ever-wider audience, throughout Oregon and far beyond, and positions our work at the forefront of current trends in integrated web-based education.

I’m especially proud of the Center’s collaborations with on- and off-campus partners. Thanks to everyone who has contributed to the Middle East Studies Center’s work and successes this year!

James P Grehan, Director

PHOTO BY ADAM WICKHAM

Middle East Studies Center
Contact the Middle East Studies Center and subscribe to our calendar of events to receive information about the Center’s events as well as other Middle East-related events taking place throughout the region:

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Thanks to the Middle East Studies Center’s programming partners at Portland State: the Departments of History and World Languages & Literatures, the Harold Schnitzer Family Program in Judaic Studies, the Mark O. Hatfield School of Government, the Portland Center for Public Humanities, the School of Theatre & Film in the College of the Arts, Students United for Nonviolence, Students United for Palestinian Equal Rights, and the University Library; and beyond: the Al-Andalus Ensemble, the Oregon chapter of the American Research Center in Egypt, Americans United for Palestinian Human Rights, the Friends of Sabeel North America, Portland chapters of Jewish Voice for Peace and the National Lawyers Guild, Lutherans for Justice in the Holy Land, Mercy Corps, Multnomah County Public Library, nwFilmCenter, the Oregon Council of the Social Studies, Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility, the Portland Art Museum, and its Asian Arts Council, Reed College, and the World Affairs Council of Oregon.

The Middle East Studies Center gratefully acknowledges support from the U.S. Department of Education Title VI program, the U.S. Institute of Peace Public Education for Peacebuilding Support Initiative, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Portland State University Internationalization Minigrant program and Speakers Board, and Saudi Aramco.
Middle East Teaching Tools

On November 12, 2012, in honor of International Education Week, the Middle East Studies Center launched Middle East Teaching Tools (middleeastpdx.org/resources), an online resource for educators featuring over 600 articles, videos, fact sheets, bibliographies, maps, and lesson plans about the Middle East for K-20 teachers. Resources on the site are organized by country and theme and categorized into three sections, background information, news & media, and teaching materials. Themes include school subjects such as history, geography, and math & science as well as topics essential to understanding the Middle East like gender, religion and US foreign policy.

Summer Institute: The Arab Uprisings

Beginning in December 2010, a wave of demonstrations, protests, and revolutions spread throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Over two years later, the world is still trying to understand what led to this moment, why these events occurred, and how they have and will continue to impact the region.

K-12 educators are in a unique position to teach their students about these monumental events and help them unpack and understand their continued effects on the course of world history and US foreign policy. Educators, therefore, need strong background knowledge about the Arab Uprisings and a framework through which to teach them.

In July 2013, the Middle East Studies Center held its annual Summer Institute, this year focusing on the Arab Uprisings. The Institute opened with a keynote address by UCLA Historian James Gelvin, author of The Arab Uprisings: What Everyone Needs to Know. In this talk, Dr. Gelvin gave participants the tools to understand and analyze the events of the Uprisings.

For two days, 45 educators participated in lectures on varying subjects including the role of hip hop in the Uprisings, graffiti and political cartoons, and the use of digital media during the Uprisings. The Institute also included two panel discussions: the first discussion featured Portland State University students and faculty from the Middle East discussing how the Uprisings have impacted their lives and the second highlighted resources to support education about the Arab Uprisings.

On the final day of the Institute, educators worked in small groups to develop lesson plans using the materials from the workshop. The final product was a full teaching unit of six lessons, an introduction to the region followed by lessons correlating to five of the lectures given during the Institute, which is available on Middle East Teaching Tools middleeastpdx.edu/resources.

SELECT TEXT CONTRIBUTED BY ELISHEVA COHEN
Welcome to new faculty

The Middle East Studies Center is pleased to welcome two new scholars to the Middle East Studies faculty at Portland State. These additions bring the total number of Middle East Studies Center faculty affiliates on campus to 35, with an additional 33 in Oregon and Southwest Washington!

Nina Spiegel is Rabbi Joshua Stampfer Professor of Israel Studies in the Harold Schnitzer Family Program in Judaic Studies. Dr Spiegel says the ‘pioneering position with a vibrant and young department’ is what initially attracted her to Portland State. Currently the only tenure-track professorship in Israel Studies in the Pacific Northwest, the position will also provide capacity for a new major course of study in Judaic Studies.

Dr Spiegel’s new book Embodying Hebrew Culture: Aesthetics, Athletics, and Dance in the Jewish Community of Mandate Palestine was published this summer and focuses on the development of Hebrew aesthetics and the cultivation of Jewish bodies in Mandate Palestine, including the development of dance. In addition to her research on modern Israeli society, Spiegel serves on the board of the Congress on Research in Dance and, together with the Middle East Studies Center, brought contemporary Israeli choreographer, Idan Cohen, to Portland last April. Spiegel says the Middle East Studies Center is ‘first of all, a great hub for student internships and opportunities like the Undergrad Student Conference, as well as collaboration between departments’ and adds that, for newer, smaller departments like Judaic Studies, collaboration is especially important.

Dr Spiegel’s newest research focuses on comparing memorial practices of Israeli and American Jews.

Lina Gomaa is Senior Instructor of Arabic in the Department of World Languages & Literatures.

Before moving to Portland, Gomaa obtained degrees from Beloit College in Wisconsin and from the University of Salford in the United Kingdom. Living in a liberal and environmentally-aware city were both reasons Gomaa chose to work at Portland State; she says she is ‘enjoying… the tolerance and openness’. The appreciation has been mutual: in 2012, Gomaa became the first Portland State Arabic teacher to receive a John Eliot Allen Outstanding Teaching Award.

‘I enjoy sharing my culture and my identity as an Arab Muslim woman with all its complexity with the audience of [the Middle East Studies Center]’, says Gomaa. She appreciates the Center’s work to provide public audiences with an ‘international experience at home’. Most recently Gomaa spoke about her family’s and her own experience in Egypt during the January 25th protests and the elections the following year on a panel for the Center’s Summer Institute on the Arab Uprisings. She has not been able to visit her home in Cairo for a year but hopes to return ‘as soon as the opportunity comes, Insha’Allah, God willing, as we say in Arabic!’

The Middle East Studies Center invites anyone with an interest in Middle East Studies to support our program. Contributions will allow the Center to develop new courses, provide scholarships for students, increase research opportunities, strengthen library holdings, sponsor university and public programs, expand the offerings of our publications and outreach programs, and more.

Donations are tax deductible and can support the development of an endowment. All gifts and pledges are payable over 3-5 years.

We welcome the opportunity to meet with potential donors to discuss mutual interests.

For more information, please visit pdx.edu/middle-east-studies/giving-to-the-middle-east-studies-center
Minorities of the Modern Middle East

In April, the Middle East Studies Center hosted a three-day international academic workshop that investigated the issues surrounding religious, ethnic, and linguistic minorities in the modern Middle East—a topic of immense and immediate political salience in light of contemporary developments across the region. Including a keynote address by public intellectual and University of Michigan Richard P. Mitchell Collegiate Professor of History, Juan Cole, the event brought together scholars, students, and the broader public to gain a deeper understanding and awareness of the historical roots of minority political identifications in the region and the ways in which those identifications have changed throughout the modern era.

The workshop was organized by Assistant Professor of Arabic Language & Literature, Yasmeen Hanoosh, and Assistant Professor of History, Laura Robson. The event was co-sponsored by the Portland State University Departments of History and World Languages & Literatures and the Portland Center for Public Humanities, and presented with funding from the Portland State University Speakers Board and the Internationalization Minigrant Program.

The organizers plan to publish selected essays arising out of the workshop as an edited volume or special journal issue.

PHOTO BY KAYLA NGUYEN

Muslim Journeys

Author and memoirist, Aria Minu-Sepehr spoke on ‘Iran: Modern & Medieval’ at the Middle East Studies Center’s April Lunch & Learn event. Finally, in May, Portland State University Assistant Professor of English Bishupal Limbu led a discussion of the Muslim Journeys book, *In an Antique Land* at an event co-sponsored and hosted by the Multnomah County Library.

The events received enthusiastic responses; comments included: ‘I learned more about Muslim culture and got to listen to different thoughts and views’; ‘I got a multiplicity of perspectives’; and ‘it help[ed] me to think and re-evaluate my views’.

Muslim Journeys materials are available at the Portland State University Library, the Middle East Studies Center’s Resource Library, and 12 other Oregon libraries. Middle East Studies Center programming will continue through Fall 2013.

For more information, visit library.pdx.edu/muslimjourneys
Undergraduate Student Conference

In March, the Middle East Studies Center hosted its second annual Undergraduate Student Conference. The event offered a unique opportunity for students with an interest in the Middle East to meet and learn more about the region from their peers. Much of the program was devoted to student presentations. Attendees were invited to lead a session or to listen and participate in discussion.

This year’s conference featured presentations by eleven students from five different schools. Patricia Goldsworthy-Bishop, Assistant Professor of Transnational European and Middle East/North African History at Western Oregon University served as a discussant for a panel on Contemporary Politics and Economics; Oren Kosansky, Associate Professor of Sociology and Anthropology and Department Chair at Lewis & Clark College chaired a panel on Women and Gender in North Africa; and Paul Silverstein, Associate Professor of Anthropology at Reed College led a panel on Transnational Identity and Migration.

Organizations, including Americans United for Palestinian Human Rights, the Arabic Heritage Center, and Better Life-USA, also participated, showcasing opportunities and services related to the Middle East for students.

Thanks to our student presenters and faculty discussants for an exciting and informative conference, attended by over sixty students!
Student Fellows & Scholars

The Middle East Studies Center and the Department of World Languages & Literatures awarded federal Foreign Language & Area Studies (FLAS) fellowships for Summer intensive language study and Academic Year language and area studies.

FLAS fellowships are available to students in any department who are pursuing a course of study which requires advanced foreign language and area studies training and who plan to use the training and language skills for graduate study or a career in an international field. Fellows must be enrolled full-time at Portland State University as degree-seeking undergraduate or graduate students. Priority is given to students who have strong academic records in their major and their language area of study. Fellowships provide support for tuition and a stipend for living expenses.

Summer 2013 recipients:
- Cody French (Arabic)
- Touraj Houshmand-Shafii (Turkish)
- Karen Lickteig (Arabic)
- Jonathan Vance (Persian)
- Ahmed Zuhairy (Arabic)

Academic year 2013-14 recipients:
- Cody French (Arabic)
- Karen Lickteig (Arabic)
- Nathan Jons (Persian)
- Laila Taraghi (Arabic)
- Seth Thomas (Arabic)
- Ahmed Zuhairy (Arabic)

The Patricia & Gary Leiser Scholarship for Middle East Languages supports the study of Middle Eastern languages. Applicants must demonstrate a serious interest in the Middle East by taking courses related to the region, although not necessarily a Middle East studies degree program.

2013 recipient: Nickolas Smith (Arabic)

The Elizabeth Ducey Scholarship is open to students intending to pursue a Middle East studies degree program. Students must be enrolled in and making satisfactory progress in a Middle Eastern language.

2013 recipient: Touraj Houshmand-Shafii (Turkish)

Congratulations to all of the Center’s scholarship and fellowship recipients!

SPECIAL EVENT

In January, Syrian-American hip hop artist Omar Offendum, Portland State University student Dana Ghazi, and Portland State instructor in Conflict Resolution Tom Hastings came together to address methods of nonviolent resistance in Syria. The focal point of the event was the screening of documentary *The Suffering Grasses*, directed by Iara Lee. The screening was followed by a panel discussion and a Q&A session with the audience. Offendum concluded the event with an a cappella performance of a number of tracks from his recent album, *Syrianamerica* (2011).

Portland State University student Dana Ghazi, a Syrian from Damascus, was the driving force behind an event that brought together an array of participants and co-sponsors. The organizers’ efforts were rewarded with a packed house drawing broadly from both the student body and the wider Portland community.

Iara Lee’s documentary film *The Suffering Grasses* aims to give voice to those most affected by recent violence in Syria and explore methods of nonviolent resistance through the humanity of those civilians who have been killed, abused, and displaced. A post-film panel discussion gave more detail and highlighted the complexities of the situation in Syria.

The Middle East Studies Center joined Portland State University Students United for Nonviolence, the Portland State University Arab Persian Student Organization, Americans United for Palestinian Human Rights, and Mercy Corps to sponsor this free event.

SELECT TEXT & PHOTO BY SARA SWETZOFF
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Save the Date!

BOOK CLUB

A Day in the Life: Memoirs from the Middle East

SEPTEMBER 2013 - MAY 2014

Presented by the Multnomah County Library and the Portland State University Department of English and Centers for Public Humanities and Middle East Studies and made possible in part by a grant from Oregon Humanities, a statewide nonprofit organization and an independent affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

For more information, visit middleeastpdx.org/memoir