The past year has been especially eventful for the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures (NELC). Most obvious is the change in leadership, as I was elected to follow our previous chair, Professor Asma Afsaruddin. Although I am new at this position, I have served as interim chair in the past and intend to draw on the wisdom, advice and experience of my predecessors in this position to promote the welfare and success of NELC, its faculty and our students.

Even before the end of her term, Professor Afsaruddin was instrumental in NELC’s hiring of a new member of the faculty. Professor Daniel Caner, of the University of Connecticut, will be joining us in the fall of 2016. A respected specialist on the Byzantine period, Professor Caner will teach courses and prepare students interested in the history, religions and cultures of the Near East in the first centuries of the Common Era. Through his participation, we anticipate drawing new lines with other specialists in his discipline, as well as medievalists from a host of departments on campus to configure new and imaginative areas upon which our students can focus.

As you can see from our new address, NELC has relocated to our shiny, brand-new quarters in the Global and International Studies Building (GISB) on what was part of the parking lot of the Wells Library. NELC is also one of four departments under the auspices of the School of Global and International Studies (SGIS). We, as well as a number of programs and centers, are directly linked to a new dean and associate deans responsible for administering and promoting this new development at Indiana University. Should you be on campus, we wish to welcome you for a visit, so do drop in and meet our talented and able staff, Connie May, our Program Specialist, Graduate/Academic Secretary Delgar Woodruff, and Rachael Daum and Haley Fulk, our Graduate Assistants, all of whom occupy spaces on the third floor of the East Wing of GISB.

Last fall, on October 15th, we commemorated the legacy and leadership of our first chair, Professor Wadie Jwaideh. With assistance of the Jwaideh family, we enjoyed the lecture by Professor Dina Khoury of George Washington University, who spoke on “Reflections on Nationality and Sect in Iraqi History.” In the coming April, we will be remembering the contribution of our late colleague, Professor Victor Danner, whose role as teacher, mentor, and chair is remembered by many of us and his admiring students. With cooperative gestures from others units, primarily the College Arts and Humanities Institute and the Center for the Study of the Middle East (with a number of others), we will be hosting Professor Charles Butterworth of the University of Maryland. He will deliver the Victor Danner Memorial Lecture, “Between Practice and Theory: Alfarabi’s Political Teaching.” The above units, together with others, will enable us to continue to enrich our teaching mission by inviting a host of lecturers, local and from outside, to speak on topics that highlight the broad diversity that makes up the Middle East.

NELC continues to host a large number of undergraduate students whose interest in the study of the Near East, its peoples and cultures makes us a valuable addition for SGIS and Indiana University. We continue to look for new ways to draw students by offering small and large scholarships and fellowships to facilitate their career aspirations in career fields that involve knowledge of the Middle East. In addition to graduating many undergraduate majors and minors, we are host to a large body of graduate students hailing from many states in the USA and countries from the Near East. We look forward to continue to attract students and grow to become a national leader in educating the coming generation about the Near East, its peoples, languages, history and culture.

Stephen Katz
Chair and Professor
NELC
Professor Asma Afsaruddin published *Contemporary Issues in Islam* (Edinburgh University Press, 2015) which was recently reviewed in the Los Angeles Review of Books. Her book chapter “Competing Visions of Jihad in Early Musannaf Works” was published in the volume *Twenty-First Century Jihad: Law, Society, and Military Action*, edited by Elisabeth Kendall and Ewan Stein (I.B. Tauris, 2015). Throughout 2015, she gave invited lectures on various aspects of Islamic thought at various venues in the USA, Holland, and New Zealand. Professor Afsaruddin was also an invited panelist at various colloquia: in La Jolla, California organized by the Liberty Fund, March 12-15, 2015; at Georgetown University in Doha, Qatar, May 3-6, 2015; and the Rethink Institute in Washington DC (December 5, 2015). She gave several media interviews in 2015, including with NPR’s *Here and Now* and Sirius FM’s *the Briefing*, and wrote popular essays that were published in Newsweek, the Huffington Post, Religion Dispatches, and others. She continues to serve as a member of the Board of Directors of the American Academy of Religion and is in the process of completing her Mellon-funded Humanities without Walls Consortium grant project (with graduate student assistant Yasser Sultan) on the Global Midwest.

Professor Asaad Al-Saleh published his book, *Voices of the Arab Spring: Personal Stories of the Arab Revolutions*, with Columbia University Press in 2015. He also published the following two scholarly articles, “The Ministry of Culture in Syria: History, Production and Restrictions” in the *Journal for Cultural Research*, in 2016; and “The ‘Statement of Purpose’ in Pre-Modern Arabic Books” in the *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* in 2015. Currently, he is a residential fellow at the the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), Herndon, VA. He was also invited to give a lecture on “Literature and Freedom of Expression in Syria” at Utah Valley University in September 2015. He gave a radio interview on *Voices of the Arab Spring* for Stony Brook University’s WUSB 90.1 FM (New York) on May 12, 2015.

Professor Emeritus Salih Altoma translated Fawzi Karim’s article “The Ordeal of a City,” which was featured in *Al-Jidad* in 2015. He also wrote an article entitled “A Note on Secularism at the Beginning of the 20th Century: A Different Lebanese Christian Perspective” which was published in Arabic on the website www.alnaked-aliraqi.net. These are part of two ongoing projects dealing with “Iraqi Poets in Western Exile” (in English) and the place of “secularism” in Arabic writings since the beginning of the 20th Century (in Arabic).


Professor Jane Goodman organized a number of panels, including “The Labor of Rehearsal” for the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association in Denver, CO, on November 19, 2015; and “Raymond Williams Revisited: The Emergent and The Pre-Emergent in Ethnographic Worlds” for the annual meeting of the American Ethnological Society in San Diego, CA, on March 14, 2015. She also published a number of articles, including “Body Building: Discipline and Spontaneity in Algerian Theatrical Rehearsals.” Annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Denver, CO, November 19, 2015; and “Before the Ruins: Waiting for the Bulldozer in Algeria.” Annual meeting of the American Ethnological Society, San Diego, CA, March 14, 2015.

Professor Kaya Sahin has been appointed as the Academic Director of the IU Eurasia Gateway, which will soon open in Istanbul.

Assistant Professor Kevin W. Martin published his book in Fall 2015 with Indiana University Press, *Syria’s Democratic Years: Citizens, Experts, and Media in the 1950s*. He also published “‘Behind Cinerama’s Aluminum Curtain’: Cold War Spectacle and Propaganda at the First Damascus International Exposition” in the *Journal of Cold War Studies* (17, no. 4), and reviewed Robert S. G. Fletcher’s *British Imperialism and the Tribal Question: Desert Administration and Nomadic Societies in the Middle East, 1919-1936* (Oxford University Press, 2015) for the American Historical Review (forthcoming, 2016). He attended the Conference on Theorizing Current Transforma-
In 2015, Professor Abdulkader Sinno continued his AY2014-15 fellowship at the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars in Washington, DC. He published an article in the American Historical Review, the leading journal in its discipline and a chapter in an edited volume. He gave invited talks at George Washington University and presented a paper at the International Conference of Europeanists in Paris.

In March to present a paper on the night journey in al-Maʿarri’s poetry on the panel she organized for ACLA: The Arabic Qasida: Toward an Aesthetics for the 21st Century.

Suzanne Stetkevych, Ruth N. Halls Professor Emerita of NELC, continues to teach Arabic literature as Sultan Qaboos Professor of Arabic & Islamic Studies at Georgetown University, Washington D.C. Among her recent activities are a great number of papers presented, including a Keynote Lecture for a conference at Sultan Qaboos University, Masqat, Oman, on 15-18 March, 2015; “Poetry and the Future: The Formation of Arab Identity in the Global Age,” at a conference on Societal Growth and Industrial Development in the Arab Gulf at Kuwait University, on 16-18 Nov., 2015. While at Dār al-ʿUlûm College at Minya University, Egypt, she was presented an award for contributions to the field of Arabic literature. Among her recent publication are: “Min al-Muṭṭamaʾ ilā al-Muʾjam: wajhay al-Insāniyyah fi šīr Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarri.” Majallah al-ʿArabiyyah lil-ʿUlûm al-Insāniyyah. “Arabic Literature,” for The Oxford Handbook of Literatures of the Roman Empire. Eds. Daniel L. Seldon and Phiroze Vasunia. Oxford Handbooks Online; and “Al-Akhtal at the Court of ‘Abd al-Malik: The Qasida and the Construction of Umayyad Authority,” in Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians in the Umayyad State (660-750 CE), Eds. Fred Donner and Antoine Borrut, inaugural issue of Late Antique and Medieval Islamic Near East 1 (2015) Oriental Institute, The University of Chicago. For Spring 2016 she is on sabbatical, doing research on the diwans of the blind Syrian litterateur, Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarri. She spent two months in Cairo as a Research Affiliate of the American Research Center in Egypt and returned to the U.S.

In January 2016, the Institute of International Education, an initiative of the National Security Education Program (NSEP) at the U.S. Department of Defense, awarded the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at IU its first Arabic-language flagship program. "It’s a great honor for NELC and IU to get the Arabic flagship," states Professor Salman Al-Ani, one of the writers of the flagship proposal. "It was a team effort: really everybody at NELC, all the faculty and the staff (especially Connie [the Departmental Coordinator]) played a definite role in developing the proposal.” Development of the proposal took several months of working closely with the dean’s office, especially with Dean Hilary Kahn. “She was especially great to work with: she had lots of ideas, and her experience with other flagships and other departments was of tremendous help in developing specifics,” said Professor Al-Ani. “It felt that every day we were working together to rewrite or rework something to make it better. She met with us at every step of developing the proposal.”

Professor Nader Morkus, one of the other professors who worked to develop the proposal, is the pedagogy specialist for the program. Professor Al-Ani primarily focused on the linguistic aspects of the development of the proposal.

“It was a great moment when I opened my email and saw the letter from the Institute of International Education, saying that NELC and IU had been granted the flagship fellowship,” he said.

The goal of the flagship is to ideally increase the number of students from diverse majors and to develop students who are in the flagship to reach professional proficiency in Arabic by the time they complete their Bachelor’s degrees.

One very important aspect of the program is that the students are to spend time in Morocco, in Meknes, so that they study both MSA and the Moroccan dialect. “These ‘languages’ really complement each other, which is why it is a requirement,” stated Dr. Al-Ani.

The program starts in May.

We asked Professor Al-Ani:

What’s your favorite part of the flagship program?

One rewarding accomplishment we will require of students is the capstone project. The students who take part in the flagship program will work with both me as the flagship director and Professor Morkus as the academic director to complete a capstone project, in which students will showcase the skills and knowledge they have gained over the course of their studies.
NEW FACULTY

IMAN ALRAMADAN

What got you interested in learning Arabic linguistics and teaching the Arabic language?

I decided to study linguistics for two reasons: First, I wanted to have a complete understanding of the Arabic language system, phonetics, morphology, syntax and semantics. Second, I was influenced by my professor at Aleppo University, Dr. Salah Kazzara, who gave me a solid foundation in linguistics.

Arabic is my language and I love to teach it. I have taught Arabic at the Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacology in Syria. Being able to communicate with students from different scientific fields and motivate them to write poetry and novels is an important achievement for me. Living in France, then in USA, has been another motivator for teaching Arabic. Meeting people who are interested in the language and curious about the culture and making friends create the feeling of being an ambassador. I enjoy when people ask me to teach them a few expressions. I enjoy telling them about Arab history and culture and teaching them the Arabic language.

You state in your research interests that you’re invested in using social media as a tool for second language acquisition. How do you approach that?

As we all know, social media create opportunities for peer learning and information sharing. It can help students to learn essential communication and critical thinking skills. By using social networking in teaching, I am able to engage students through the technologies that they are most familiar with, thus bridging the gap between their home, social and learning environments. For example, during my tenure at the University of Florida, I developed a Facebook group page to help students interact with the Arab culture via the Internet. With less reliance on me as the teacher and more emphasis on group participation and collaboration, this page allowed the students to come up with their own comments, read current newspaper articles, watch videos about the culture and listen to popular music. The page is still active and the students still post so many things related to Arabic.

ASAAD AL-SALEH

Originally hailing from Syria, Dr. Asaad Al-Saleh earned his undergraduate degree at the University of Damascus, his MA in English at Emporia State University in Kansas and his PhD in Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies from the University of Arkansas.

Dr. Al-Saleh has appeared as a radio and T.V. commentator, and he also boasts publications in the Journal of International Women's Studies and the British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, among other academic journals. Dr. Al-Saleh’s research interests include literary theory, comparative literature and cultural studies, and modern Arabic literature and culture, making him right at home in NELC.

A specific topic that Dr. Al-Saleh focuses his research is on issues related to autobiography and displacement in Arabic literature and political culture in the Arab world. His recently published book, Voices of the Arab Spring: Personal Stories of the Arab Revolutions (2015) touches on his interest on this topic. The book includes the personal accounts of those who witnessed or were involved in the uprisings in the Arab nations beginning in 2011. Dr. Al-Saleh’s book has been greeted favorably and David Burr Gerrard, a contributor to Biographile, a website devoted to biographies and memories, describes the piece as, “—full of moments of great triumph.”

An excerpt of Voices of the Arab Spring: Personal Stories of the Arab Revolutions can be found on Amazon.

Following this “great triumph,” we are excited for Dr. Al-Saleh to share his knowledge with our students here at Indiana University. He taught a course on Modern Arabic Poetry in Fall 2015 for both undergraduate and graduate students. He also stepped in as interim Arabic Language Coordinator in Fall 2015, organizing the very successful Arabic Dinner and Arabic Poetry Night.

In Spring 2016, Dr. Al-Saleh was working in Herdon, VA at the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT). We look forward to welcoming him back in September 2016!
Uncovering Ancient Egyptian Mysteries: Spotlight on Hilo Sugita

Would you be able to describe your Master’s project with the Art Museum? What does it focus on, and what do you hope to show and accomplish with it?

For my MA thesis, I have been doing research on an ancient Egyptian coffin, which is displayed at the IU Art Museum. Unfortunately we only have a lid. It has never been adequately studied, and we know little about it. So my goal is to reveal the identity of the coffin owner as much as possible. I translated the inscriptions and studied the exterior design of the coffin to determine where and which time period the coffin comes from. I also looked at the quality of the coffin by comparing it to other similar coffins from the same time period to determine the socio-economic status of the coffin owner. As part of my thesis project, I have made a 3D model of the coffin. It will be published online, so everyone can see it.

Finding Your Voice: Spotlight on Sophia Saliby

Aside from American Student Radio, you also work as a reporter for our local NPR station. What led you to radio?

For the most part, I’m what you would call a back-seat baby. I listened to NPR a lot on road trips as a kid, but my senior year of high school, I went to a live show for a podcast I had been listening to. That event really showed me how powerful a voice can be and how it could bring so many people together; that’s the strength of radio and audio story-telling. That’s when I knew it was something I wanted to do. When I came to Indiana University, I volunteered during my freshman year at WFHB, Bloomington’s community radio station. Last spring, I was introduced to both American Student Radio and Bloomington’s NPR member station, WFIU. I started interning at WFIU in June, and I was recently hired this past January.

How does your work at the radio complement your work at NELC?

There’s so much misinformation and ignorance out there about the Middle East. If I go on to do reporting about the Middle East, I’d want to be able to actually converse and get the context of what’s happening. Not just take sound bites, but really understand, both through showcasing their own voices, in Arabic, and through talking myself fluently with people so there is no breach in communication. Through my preparation and work with NELC, I think this is a really great way to prepare for my future.

What has it meant to you to be able to study Egyptology at IU?

Studying Egyptology at IU has meant a lot to me. I knew it was a necessary and very important step in order to continue into a PhD program. I was able to have great training in ancient Egyptian language, and I have learned tremendously from my advisor, Professor Steve Vinson. He has been very supportive, and given me unlimited advice outside my classes, too. I am really lucky to be his student, and I am thankful for him. I also found a new academic interest at IU. I took Prof. Bernie Frischer’s Virtual Heritage course in which I learned how to make 3D models of artifacts as well as archaeological sites. I absolutely loved the class, and I plan to continue learning how to apply the technologies to the field of Egyptology.

What are your future plans?

I am graduating in May, and moving to Boston to start my doctoral studies at Harvard University in the fall. I have visited the campus to learn about their Egyptology program, and I am very excited about it.

Arabic Dinner

On December 3, 2015, NELC was thrilled to host the annual Arabic Dinner under the direction of interim Arabic Language Coordinator, Asaad Al-Saleh. Over 60 people attended the event, bringing their favorite Arabic dishes. Good times, good food, and good company
**Workshops by Dr. Mustafa Binmayaba**

Throughout Spring 2016, Dr. Mustafa Binmayaba offered workshops for interested students on the classical Arabic odes. The workshops focused on helping students develop the skills to analyze the language, syntax, and grammar of the classical Arabic ode, in addition to appreciating the art of translation. They studied the works of poets such as:

Al-Akhtal
'Abdul-Malik b. Marwān
Al-Mutanabbi
Kāfūr
Abū Tammām
Al-Mu'tasim

**Model Arab League**

This year, four NELC students represented Oman at the annual meeting of the Model Arab League at Miami University in Oxford, OH. Undergraduate Lydia Lahey was appointed Chair of Arab Social Affairs Ministers; undergraduate Andrew Davis, MAL veteran, was Chair of Political Affairs; and M.A. students Jermaine Butler and Philip Raad were awarded as Outstanding Delegates. This is what they had to say about the experience!

**Lydia Lahey**

“I was really nervous because I had never been a Chair before, but I learned everything really quickly. I’m pretty neutral on most things, so getting to see different things from different sides and all different countries and nations was really exciting for me. I also got a gavel, which is really cool.”

**Jermaine Butler**

“It felt great when Philip and I got the award; I couldn’t have done that by myself. Mostly it had a lot to do with participation, and really talking with the other delegations, trying to ac-

**Arabic Film Series**

This year the Arabic Film Series has continued under the direction of the Arabic Language Coordinator, Professor Nader Morkus. Check out the flicks below!

**Fall 2015:**
Wadjda, Salt of This Sea, Hello America, The Kite, Rachida, Caramel, Divine Intervention

**Spring 2016:**
Bab El Oued City
Excuse My French
Stray Bullet
Cairo 678
Mascarades
Destiny
When Monaliza Smiled

**Philip Raad**

“I first got interested in Model Arab League last year when I was working at a high school in Lebanon, so I taught myself the rules to be able to help the students. So I got involved here this year because I knew about it. I also have some friends from Oman, which is an interesting coincidence.”

**Andrew Davis**

“I think the most important aspect is the ability to engage with other students our own age, which can really show how progress can happen in real life, not just inside but also outside of council and in the real world.”

**Student Spotlights**
Research on the Palestinian Conflict: Spotlight on Richard Solomon

Richard Solomon (2018) is an undergraduate student at Indiana University. In the summer of 2015 he participated in the Applied Research Institute—Jerusalem and conducted research in Israeli-Palestinian relations: his first study investigates Israeli occupation practices documented within the past year or so; the second is a case study on Beit El, an Israeli settlement just north of Ramallah. Solomon is also a Wells Scholar.

What first brought your attention to the areas you have been doing research in?

I find Israel and the Middle East have an overwhelming geopolitical and social complexity. There is such a richness of heritage and history and a variety of world-views; the Levant remains a deeply significant part of the world, and I find it ideal fertile grounds for research and academic exploration. I am also fascinated with understanding the fundamental structuring of power, thus the political thread in my summer research. Finally, the Palestinian and Israeli people remain dear to my heart, and I hope better to understand my role in the pursuit of peace and justice.

I hope my research reveals the narratives of oppression often times skimmed, but rarely read in depth. I hope our documentation pushes people to understand that political struggle adopts a variety of manifestations. Further, that a healthy hesitancy to allocate blame and responsibility is necessary for navigating the grey dimensions of political conflict. In the long-term, I hope my research adds to a growing body of documentation for Israeli practices in the West Bank the past years, and that it catalyzes people to become more socially conscious and knowledgeable. One goal of social science and area studies is to convey a sympathy and connection with the people and conditions one studies. Suffering and strife is a universal human experience. Palestine and Israel are no exception.

NELC Travel Awards: Spotlight on Yasser Sultan

Yasser Sultan, Seyed Asghari, and Hilo Sugita were all selected to receive travel awards for their attendance of conferences in Fall 2015! Graduate student Yasser Sultan speaks about his research.

In my research, I focus mainly on the issues of divorce in Hanafiī fiqh. I approach these issues from a faith-based perspective. Therefore, I am interested not only in analyzing how Islamic jurisprudence and law interacted, but I also propose certain reforms based on my analysis of how the legal rulings were deduced and also on the ramifications of their application on the people, especially women. Overall, my research could be placed under the general umbrella of reforming Muslim thought.

I presenting a paper entitled “What If She Were the Exegete? A Feminist Critique of the Classical Tafsirs on the Issue of Interfaith Marriage” at MESA Annual Meeting in Denver, CO on November 24. Writing this paper was prompted by a question that was directed to me by a NELC graduate student, who wanted to know whether Muslim women are allowed to marry non-Muslim men. The mainstream view on this issue is that this kind of marriage is not permitted. In my paper, I question the claim that the Quran prohibits the marriage between Muslim women and men from the People of the Book (Ahl al-Kitāb). I argue that the assumed prohibition is a result of patriarchal readings of the Qur’ān by male Muslim exegetes. I also suggest that perpetuation of these unequal rulings between men and women comes from the works of exegesis and jurisprudence, and not from the Qur’ān itself.
14th Annual Wadie Jwaideh Memorial Lecture
Guest lecturer: Dina Khoury

On October 15, 2015, NELC was thrilled to host Dr. Dina Khoury, Professor of History and International Affairs from George Washington University for the 14th Annual Wadie Jwaideh Memorial Lecture. Her lecture was entitled “Reflections on Nationality and Sect in Iraqi History.”

Dr. Khoury’s lecture was exceptionally well attended by members of the department, students, faculty, and friends, including the family of Wadie Jwaideh. The President’s Room, in the Indiana Memorial Union where the lecture was held, even ran out of seats! After her engaging lecture, there was a lively question and answer session.

13th Annual Victor Danner Memorial Lecture
Guest Lecturer: Yahya Michot

On Wednesday, April 15, 2015, Dr. Yahya Michot, Professor of Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations at the Hartford Seminary and editor of the journal The Muslim World, gave his lecture entitled “Mamluks, Qalandars, and Rafidis, and the ‘Other’ Ibn Tamiyya.”

Before Dr. Michot’s lecture, students were given certificates and awards for outstanding performance throughout the academic year, and enjoyed a delicious dinner in excellent company.

Dr. Michot’s lecture spurred an engaging discussion after he finished speaking, and guests, including faculty, students, and members of the Danner family, stayed well into the evening.

New Year, New Chair

Stephen Katz is Professor of Modern Hebrew Language and Literature at Indiana University, Bloomington. He is a member of the Borns Jewish Studies Program as well as Professor and current chair of the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures. His scholarly interests include the fiction of S.Y. Agnon and American Hebrew literature. Among his publications are two book-length studies of S. Y. Agnon and articles about Hebrew and Israeli writers including Ben-Avigdor, Moshe Shamir, E. E. Lisitzky, Hillel Bavli. His recent publications are: “After the Shooting: On Yoram Kaniuk’s Perpatetic Palmahnik.” Shofar, vol. 34 no. 1 (fall 2015): pp. 27-56; and he translated Samuel L. Blank’s, “The Tale of a Black Man.” Jewish Fiction.net, issue 16 (fall 2015; September 2, 2015).

As chair of NELC, Professor Katz coordinated and contributed to the Arabic Flagship application, which resulted in the granting of Flagship status to IU’s Arabic language program.

Our New Home!
The Brand New Global and International Studies Building

Our new home, the Global and International Studies Building, is now complete. It is the first time that these two departments have been housed together, providing a unique opportunity for collaboration and innovation in the fields of global and international studies.
Can you talk a little bit about the aims of your dissertation?
My dissertation is intended to develop a better understanding of the concept of divine creation. Motivated by some contemporary debates on naturalism and creationism, I sought for a more reliable and consistent way of putting tenets of theistic understanding of creation in question. In this context, what I realized was that creation was commonly used out of its metaphysical context and rendered nonsense against the scientific notion of causation. To exemplify its wide range of usages, I engage in discussions with well-known Muslim theologian al-Ghazali, the Muslim Aristotelian Averroes, and the initiator of modern philosophy Descartes.

What do you hope to bring to the field of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, and how will this fellowship enable you to do this?
I am hoping to show that classical philosophical literature of the Near East is closely linked to the deep discussions of Medieval and Early Modern Europe. The value of this connection is not only cultural but intellectual. In our era when ideas are discussed on a global scale, we have no option but developing discourses in which we appreciate the diversity of origins and literary traditions. By recognizing that, we will be able to pass beyond endless discussions of superiority and inferiority among cultures and put to good use what is harvested from them all. In the end, my discussion suggests our understanding of how theistic religions and scientific methods interact will be revealed more clearly. With the Louise McNutt Dissertation Fellowship, I will be able to explore more points of contact between ideas of these three important figures and hopefully discover new ways of thinking about divine creation. It will enable me to spend more time crafting my arguments and reach more resources to widen the scope of discussions.

Louise McNutt Memorial Fellowship Awarded to NELC Ph.D. Student, Yasin Ramazan!

Congratulations on your reception of the Louise McNutt Dissertation Fellowship! What does it mean for you to have been selected to receive this award?
Thank you very much! This scholarship shows me something: all those years of learning have been recognized by the academic community. When you start your Ph.D. in one of the humanities fields, you can hardly escape from an accelerating pressure that you have to both find a unique topic of discussion to contribute to the field and still stay relevant. In my case, as a philosophy of religion student, I needed to seek common themes and discussions among medieval Muslim, Jewish, Christian philosophers as well as early modern ones to connect them to contemporary problems of philosophy of religion. When I was notified of the award, I realized that my efforts for seeking an original contribution to the field have come to fruition.

Graduate and Undergraduate Student Updates

Basem Al-Raba’a has a forthcoming article, “Language Attitudes towards the Rural and Urban Varieties in North Jordan,” which will appear in the journal Al-’Arabiyya. He also presented “An OT Analysis of Emphasis Spread in Rural Jordanian and Palestinian Arabic” at the 30th Annual Symposium on Arabic Linguistics (ASAL30), at Stony Brook University from March 31 - April 2, 2016.

Seyed Ashgari received a NELC travel award in Fall 2015. His abstract was accepted to present at the Shi’i Studies: Past and Present conference to be held in London, England, on May 7 - 8, 2016. He also received the Graduate and Professional Student Government Fall Travel Award. Seyed also had his abstract accepted to present at the 23rd Annual ACES Conference that will be held on March 12th, 2016 at Indiana University’s School of Global and International Studies.

Hilo Sugita is writing her MA thesis on a Ptolemaic-period coffin lid in the Indiana University Art Museum; her project includes the creation of a three-dimensional digital model of the coffin lid, and complete translations of all of its texts. She has received fully-funded offers to pursue her Ph.D. in Egyptology from the University of Toronto, the University of Chicago, and Harvard University. Hilo was also awarded a NELC travel fellowship in Fall 2015.

Yasser Sultan was awarded a NELC Travel Fellowship, which enabled him to travel to the annual Middle Eastern Studies Association (MESA) conference in Denver, CO, from November 21 -24. There, he presented his paper, “What If She Were the Exegete? A Feminist Critique of the Classical Tafsirs on the Issue of Interfaith Marriage.”

Richard Solomon (2018) conducted research on Israeli-Palestinian relations at the Apulie Research Institute - Jerusalem in the summer of 2015. His first study investigates Israeli occupation practices documented within the past year. The second is a case study on Beit El, an Israeli settlement north of Ramallah. Richard is also a Wells Scholar.

Drew Szparaga graduated a semester early, completing his degree in December 2015. He now works for Partnership for a Secure America, a public affairs organization in Washington DC. PSA is a nonprofit founded by former Representative Lee Hamilton and the late Senator Warren Rudman to advance bipartisanism on today’s critical national security and foreign policy challenges.
NELC Alumni and Friend Updates

Laila Ayoubi published her novel Niki’s Honor (Page Publishing, 2015), which is currently being used alongside the text book at Butler University in Indianapolis in its Global Historical Studies, Women’s Resistance courses.


Tamara Gilbert has been named as Director of Travel Industry Sales for Omni Hotels & Resorts (La Costa Resort & Spa).

Rabbi Valerie Joseph, FKA Valerie Henion, of IU class 1975, received her Board Chaplain Certification in January 2016 from NAJC, the National Association of Jewish Chaplains.

Lindsay Krantz presented her talks “Parting the Red Sea: Menstruation Beyond the Abrahamic Context” in Grand Rapids, MI on January 24, 2016; “Bleeding on the Inside: Prisoners’ Menstruation” at East Michigan University on December 2, 2015 and November 20, 2015; “A Real Conversation About Race Relations in America” at the University of Michigan, Detroit Center, on August 1, 2015; “I See a Pattern: Systems Theory and Emergence” in Grand Rapids, MI on July 19, 2015; and “Shackled During Labor: Health Care of Incarcerated Mothers” at EMU: Women’s Resource Center, on March 25, 2015. She also facilitates a weekly creative writing and meditation workshop at Women’s Huron Valley Correctional Facility (the only all-women’s prison in Michigan), and is the director of events of the Non-Profit Leadership Alliance at EMU.

Elijah Reynolds is a Lecturer in the Modern Languages & Literatures Department at Santa Clara University. He developed the Arabic Program at SCU where he created and now teaches courses for all levels of Arabic language, Arabic Sociolinguistics, Arab Identity, the Arab-American Experience, and Reading the Quran. In 2015, he received a grant to develop a special program at SCU teaching computer programming to Iraqi Girl Scouts in Jordan. In 2016, he continued the program with the local chapter of Engineers Without Borders in conjunction with the International Rescue Committee in implementing a curriculum and database for professionalization serving Iraqi and Afghan refugees in the South San Francisco Bay Area. Since 2014, he regularly offers seminars on the linguistic analysis of the Quran for community members through his non-profit Academy of Quranic Linguistics. In 2016, he was invited to be the Keynote Speaker at The Horizon Academy Institute’s Gala Dinner in Calgary, Canada, entitled “Arabic for Life”.

Lin Zhao participated in a month long Persian language training course in Tehran, Iran in summer 2015. On her return, she started teaching in Xi’an International Studies University.

NELC Graduates

We congratulate the following NELC students for their hard-earned degrees this 2015-2016 academic year!

B.A. Recipients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summer 2015</th>
<th>Fall 2015</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Boyd</td>
<td>Andrew Szparaga</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kristen Cherry</td>
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Expected Spring 2016

| Wahidah Aziz | Rummer Bershtein |
| Nicholas Bognanno | Andrew Davis |
| Briana Felsen | Abigail Fisher |
| Tyler Nocita | Tyler Russell |
| Samantha Schmidt | John Sprinkle |
| Amanda Yacoub |           |

M.A. Recipients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall 2015</th>
<th>Expected Spring 2016</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zachary Wilkinson</td>
<td>Marine Brichard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lingxin Zhang</td>
<td>Katie Larson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jennifer Webeck</td>
<td>Alecia Binhack</td>
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Minor Recipients

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<tr>
<th>Summer 2015</th>
<th>Fall 2015</th>
<th>Expected Spring 2016</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rachel Coy</td>
<td>John Dechant</td>
<td>Nomair Ashraf</td>
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<tr>
<td>Victor Marmolejo</td>
<td></td>
<td>Alyson Eickleberry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corrine O’Brien</td>
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<td>Idun Hauge</td>
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<td>Jennifer Webbeck</td>
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<td>Emma Johnson</td>
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<td>Haseeb Mohideen</td>
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<td>Katelyn Russell</td>
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<td>Avinash Sajnani</td>
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<td>Chiang Tieng Tan</td>
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Ph.D. Recipients

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<th>Expected Spring 2016</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jedidiah Anderson</td>
<td>John Dechant</td>
<td>Anwar Alsaaad</td>
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<td>Ali Alnahhabi</td>
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<td>Inci Aksu Kargin</td>
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Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures
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