Book Nook
(The following books have been published by NELC faculty in the past academic year.)

Ibn Taymiyya,
The Book of Faith
translated by Salman Al-Ani and Shadia Tell
(Iman Publishing House, 2010)

Islam, the State and Political Authority: Medieval Issues and Modern Concerns
edited by Asma Afsaruddin
(Palgrave-Macmillan, 2011)

The Mantle Odes: Arabic Praise Poems to the Prophet Muhammad
Suzanne Stetkevych
(Indiana University Press, 2010)

God and Logic in Islam: the Caliphate of Reason
John Walbridge
(Cambridge University Press, 2011)

CHAIR’S MESSAGE

It is a great privilege and honor to assume my role as chairperson of NELC, taking over from my predecessor, Nazif Shahrani. A NELC alumna I met recently in Washington D.C. remarked to me: “You have big shoes to fill.” And indeed I do - especially when one remembers that Iraqi-born professor of history, Wadie Jwaideh, founded the department in 1966 and steered its course insightfully for over two decades. His widow, Dr. Alice Jwaideh, passed away last year (see our tribute to her on p.5), bringing an end to the inaugural era of NELC.

Last year - 2011 - was an unusually busy and productive year for our faculty, students, and staff. Prominent among the highlights of last year was the hiring of Aziza Khazzoom, an Israeli Studies specialist, who is a sociologist by training. We were also successful in our search for an assistant professor of Arabic, which resulted in the appointment of Nader Morkus, a specialist in Arabic pedagogy and second-language acquisition. We are greatly looking forward to welcoming professors Morkus and Khazzoom in Fall 2012. The Center for the Study of the Middle East and the College of Arts and Sciences provided valuable support for these new appointments.

It was also a banner year for adding to our office staff and for augmenting and reorganizing office space. With the expert advice of our office manager, Janet Thoms, we were able to welcome Connie Sue May, to our staff in Fall, 2011, as our new full-time Graduate and Administrative Secretary, and also to hire two new Graduate Assistants. With additional office space and personnel, we are better able to serve the needs of our faculty and students.

NELC is also delighted to host Dr. Samar Attar as visiting professor of modern Arabic literature during the spring semester, 2012. A recognized novelist who spent her youth in the tumultuous sixties in a changing Middle East and went on to establish a distinguished academic and literary career in Australia and Germany, she has brought considerable energy and fresh perspectives to the classes she is currently teaching for us. Read all about her fascinating life and the intellectual and political luminaries she has met over the years in our exclusive interview with her.

Our distinguished faculty continues to chalk up impressive accomplishments in their respective fields of specialization. We draw your attention to the Book Nook and Faculty News section for a list of their achievements in the recent past. Our students, undergraduate and graduate, have also earned distinctions in the past year, which we happily document here.

Over the past year, NELC has sponsored a number of lectures and other events with various units of the University that have contributed to the dissemination of expert knowledge on a wide variety of topics concerning the Middle East, …

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We would like to offer a warm welcome to Connie Sue May, our new full-time administrative graduate coordinator. Connie came to NELC in August 2011 and has been a tremendous asset in organizing the department and processing the record number of graduate applications we received this year. Connie’s contributions have our department running better than ever. In addition, Professor Steven Vinson is our new Director of Graduate Studies and has gotten off to a running start helping our graduate students. Finally, we would also like to welcome Zachary Kelly and Christopher Sorensen as our new graduate assistants for the 2011/2012 academic year. We are grateful for our wonderful office staff and all they do!

NELC carried on its ten-year running tradition of holding the annual Wadie Jwaideh Memorial Lecture. This year was especially significant, as the lecture was held in memory of the late Alice Jwaideh, who, along with other family members, has generously supported NELC over the years. This year’s lecture was given by Lisa Wedeen, Mary R. Morton Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago, and was titled “Abandoning ‘Legitimacy’?: Order, Disorder, and Ideology in Syria.” The lecture had unprecedented attendance, and we are grateful that many members of the Jwaideh family were able to attend.

NELC held its Ninth Annual Victor Danner Memorial Lecture, which was another highly successful event. This year’s guest lecturer was Professor James W. Morris of Boston College, who gave a lecture on “The Servants of the All-Compassionate: Building Communities of Realization in a Global Civilization.” As is tradition, the lecture doubled as NELC’s end-of-year reception, and we had the opportunity to recognize our students who received various honors throughout the year.

In November, NELC had the opportunity to sponsor a screening of Out of Cordoba, a groundbreaking film by director Jacob Bender at the IU Cinema. Out of Cordoba is a documentary about Averroes the Muslim and Maimonides the Jew, the two leading thinkers of Islamic Spain. The film explores the historical importance of these two “wise men of Cordoba,” as well as their contemporary impact on today’s Jews, Muslims, and Christians, and interfaith relations. After the screening, students were able to interact with the director during a question and answer session. Attendance was extremely enthusiastic and a great educational experience was had by all. We also appreciate the generous support from fellow sponsors at Indiana University: the Robert A. and Sandra S. Borns Jewish Studies Program, the Medieval Studies Institute, the College of Arts & Sciences Fall 2011 Themester, IU Cinema, and the Center for the Study of the Middle East.

...highlights from which are featured in this newsletter. We also continue to pursue greater academic collaboration with other programs and schools: the faculties of NELC and SPEA recently approved a joint masters program that we hope will be on the books by Fall 2012.

We do not intend to rest on our laurels, however. Middle East Studies is in a strong growth phase nationally and it is a trend reflected in the growth of our undergraduate majors and minors and in the dramatic increase in the number of applications for admission into our selective masters and PhD programs. We remain committed to seeing this upward trajectory continue as we pull together as a team. Much of what we do is nurtured by your continued support and encouragement. Please support our efforts and donate generously to NELC as we work together to realize our goals and aspire to excellence.

Asma Afsaruddin
Michael Bevers: I understand you have led an interesting life meeting a variety of notable people. You have a broad academic experience as well. Could you share some of the more interesting people and what path you took in academics?

Samar Attar: If you mean by ‘notables’ politicians, then I have met, as a young woman, three individuals who played a vital role in their countries. They are: Gamal Abd al-Nasser, Anwar al-Sadat, and Jawaharlal Nehru. I was born in Damascus, Syria. As an undergraduate student, I attended Damascus University studying English and Arabic literature, eventually attaining two Licence es Lettres degrees. Then I went to Eastern Canada to pursue my higher education. In 1966 I received a Canadian grant to attend Harvard University in order to work on my MA thesis on the influence of T.S. Eliot on modern Arabic Poetry. During my stay at Harvard, I translated some poems by Salah ‘Abd al-Sabur for the International Poetry Conference that was held there. The university published these poems along with others in a booklet for the conference. In 1968, I came to the US again to work on my doctorate in comparative literature, and eventually I received my Ph.D. from the State University of New York at Binghamton focusing on English, French and German.

Michael Bevers: You are an accomplished scholar and author, who has written and published academic works, as well as two novels. I read your poem, “The Return of the Dead.” For me the poem evokes the bleakness of both war and winter with their harshness and drab desperation, yet with an undertone of hope. How long have you been writing?

Samar Attar: I began writing when I was still a child. My poems and short stories were published in Syrian and Lebanese newspapers and journals when I was still fourteen years old. But my academic career began in Canada and the USA. My latest book is *Intellectuals in the Wasteland*, published in 2011. The poem you mentioned was written on the banks of the Mississippi River in Minnesota. It was winter, and the river was frozen. A Spanish scholar, Maleni Lopez Perez, published a collection of my poems under the title *The Return of the Dead* in 2008. I dedicated my first novel, *Lina: A Portrait of a Damascene Girl* to my Indian Professor D.P. Varma. The protagonist in this novel is a teenager in Damascus. The second novel follows the teenager to young womanhood in *The House on Arnus Square*. Now it is only a natural progression of the story to write a third novel about this Damascene woman in the United States.

Michael Bevers: Why did you dedicate the novel to Professor Varma?

Samar Attar: A major influence on my life was Professor Varma of Damascus University. He cast me as Desdemona in Shakespeare’s *Othello*. I had to dye my long black hair blonde to play the role. The drama students invited the politicians and the diplomats of the day to the performance. The production coincided with the early years of the United Arab Republic, when Syria and Egypt were one country. One of the invitees, President Gamal ‘Abd al-Nasser, attended. My performance earned me the opportunity to meet Nasser and be interviewed by the Voice of America among others. However, upon the dissolution of the UAR in September 1961, the Syrian military authorities expelled Dr. Varma from Syria for his association with Nasser during the production of *Othello*. So after many years when I published my novel, *Lina*, in English translation in the USA I dedicated it to him. But alas, he died in New York City before the novel appeared.

Michael Bevers: I understand you spent time in Algeria. How was the experience?

Samar Attar: Before receiving my doctoral degree, I taught Arabic at the Monterey Institute of International Studies (not to be confused with Defense Language Institute of Monterey) heading the Arabic Program. In 1973, I left California for Algeria in order to teach English and American Literature at the University of Algiers. The teaching conditions proved a…

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Professor Afsaruddin presented an invited paper at the international conference on “Terrorism, Martyrdom, and Religion: European Perspectives in Global Context,” held at Birkbeck College, University of London, April 7-9, 2011. She also gave an invited paper at the Third Annual Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Islamic Studies Program Conference entitled “Contemporary Muslim Thinkers on Good Governance,” held at the Center for Middle East Studies, Harvard University, April 16-17, 2011. She was an invited participant at a roundtable discussion on “Women and Religion” at the conference Women’s Tribune 2011 held in Essaouira, Morocco, May 6-8, 2011. Between May 16-19, 2011, she took part in the Building Bridges seminar organized by the Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams at the Georgetown University campus in Doha, Qatar. Professor Afsaruddin also presented an invited paper and took part in a plenary roundtable discussion at the recent inaugural conference of the project entitled *Intertwined Worlds: the Judeo-Islamic Tradition*, held at the Woolf Institute, Cambridge University, England, Sept. 11-12, 2011, on whose advisory board she also serves. She served as round-table discussant and gave an invited paper at the international conference on “Knowledge and Education in Classical Islam: Historical Foundations and Contemporary Impact,” held Oct. 2-4, 2011, at Göttingen University, Germany, organized in conjunction with al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt. On October 18, she gave the plenary lecture “Islam in an Age of Pluralism: Rethinking Modernity” at Wellesley College and an invited presentation on classical Islamic education at a conference on Islamic Scholasticism organized by Azad University in Dubai, UAE, Dec. 16-18, 2011.

Afsaruddin served as an advisor to the Pew Forum in 2011 for their “Global Survey of Muslims” project and was recently appointed a member of the academic council of the Prince al-Waleed bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University. She continues to serve as Chair of the Board of Directors of the Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy based in Washington DC and as a senior editor of the *Oxford Encyclopedia of Islam and Women* (forthcoming in 2013).

Çiğdem Balım was appointed the Associate Director of the Center for the Study of the Middle East (CSME) and continued her duties as the Director of Language Instruction at NELC. She co-edited and authored sections of two volumes titled *Avrasya'da Yeniden Çizilen Sınırlar ve İnşa Edilen Kimlikler ve Türkiye* (New borders in Eurasia, and reconstructed identities and Turkey) (forthcoming 2012), and was invited to speak at the conference “The Turkic Republics at the 20th Anniversary of their Independence”, Ankara, Turkey, October 2011. Her interview with Prof. Yasir Suleiman of Cambridge University (UK) for WSIF Profiles Program was broadcasted on 12/12/2011, and she herself was interviewed by the Center for Middle Eastern Strategic Studies (Ankara, Turkey) (10/07/2011). Dr. Balım conducted two Teacher Training Workshops for International Baccalaureate K-12 teachers, in Istanbul and Ankara, training over 100 teachers and co-authored a project for the STARTALK program and taught at the same program training teachers of Turkish and Arabic for K-12 during the Summer of 2011. She was an advisor to the TASTI (Turkey-Armenia Summer Teaching Institute) project of School of Education during Summer 2011 and developed and taught a course titled “Through the Eyes of the Author: War and Peace in the modern Middle East.”

Kevin Martin was invited to present his current research as part of a series of lectures sponsored by Ohio State’s Title VI Middle East Studies Center. Entitled “‘A New Kind of Propaganda’: State Building, the Cold War, and the Damascus International Exposition,” it was an overview of the geo-political element of his second book project, ‘An Opportunity for Material and Moral Gain’: A Cultural History of the Damascus International Exposition, 1954-1957. The talk was attended by Middle East History graduates students, faculty of the Middle East Studies Center (MESC), and members of the general public.

Abdulkader Sinno is spending his sabbatical year researching Muslim representation in European politics and the dynamics of democratization in the wake of the revolutions that began the Arab Spring, particularly in Egypt and Tunisia. In 2011, he published three chapters in edited volumes, a contribution to a symposium in *Perspectives on Politics*, and a book review in *IJMES*. He gave invited lectures at UC Berkeley (two invitations, including a week-long one), the RAND Corporation, and Vanderbilt University. He also presented two papers at the American Political Science Association meeting and presented a paper and chaired a panel at the Midwest Political Science Association meeting.
Student News

Undergraduate

NELC is pleased to showcase some outstanding undergraduate students. Earlier this year, four NELC students were inducted into Phi Beta Kappa, the nation’s oldest academic society. Congratulations to Ella Hartley, Scott Williamson, Geoffrey Tennent, and Suzie Zimmerman (pictured below with Prof. Afsaruddin, from left to right, at the Phi Beta Kappa dinner).

Scott Williamson was also just recently awarded a coveted fellowship from the Center for Arabic Study Abroad (CASA) to study Arabic in Egypt next year. In addition, Brian Campbell and Suzie Zimmerman were awarded Critical Languages Scholarships to study Arabic abroad. Our hearty congratulations to all!

Graduate

The NELC graduate students have been very busy this past year. Jedidiah Anderson presented a paper at the Jil Jadid 2011 conference at the University of Texas, Austin. Justin Kitchens presented a paper at the annual conference of the National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages in spring 2011. Two NELC students, John Dechant and Mustafa Binmayaba, also gave papers at the MESA conference this year in Washington D.C. Dechant also received a competitive travel award from the College of Arts & Sciences to present his paper. Ahmad Y. Almallah has been appointed a tenure-track assistant professor of Arabic at Middlebury College. Waed Athamneh has been appointed a tenure-track assistant professor of Arabic studies at Connecticut College, where she is already setting up an Arabic Studies Program. Finally, Katrin Jomaa is teaching Arabic at Emory University as a visiting lecturer during 2011-12.

In Memoriam

Alice Mary Reid Jwaideh
May 1, 1927 - July 7, 2011

Alice Reid Jwaideh passed away on July 7, 2011 at the age of 84. She was known by many in the NELC community through her husband, the late Dr. Wadie Jwaideh, whose death preceded hers by ten years. Alice was a remarkable woman, ahead of her time in many ways. She had a long and full professional life, earning academic degrees and working as a researcher, editor and professor during an era when many women did not work outside the home. She still managed to find the time to remain very involved in the lives of her two daughters (and later her three grandsons), to support her many social and political causes, and to be an ardent supporter of Wadie’s career and lifework during their 50-year marriage.

After Wadie’s passing, Alice continued to champion him. She was a driving force behind the creation of the Wadie Jwaideh Memorial Lecture Series. She worked closely with members of the NELC faculty and staff to spread the word and help raise the funds necessary to establish the series on a permanent basis through the IU Foundation. She personally contacted former students, colleagues, friends and relatives from all over the world for donations, and always wanted to be involved in planning the next event. The Series is now in its tenth year, with sufficient funds to ensure a lasting legacy to both Wadie and the department that he founded.

Alice was also instrumental in the posthumous publication of Wadie’s Ph.D. thesis on Kurdish nationalism. Ever the perfectionist, Wadie never felt that his work was “ready” to be published. After his death, Alice was determined to at least try, and found that Syracuse University was very interested in the project. She spent months working on the manuscript in conjunction with Syracuse University Press editors. She also relied heavily on the tremendous knowledge and expertise of Wadie’s sister, Dr. Albertine Jwaideh of the University of Toronto. In 2006, more than fifty years after it was written, Wadie’s thesis was published as The Kurdish National Movement: Its Origins and Development. It was subsequently honored by Choice Magazine as one of their Outstanding Academic Titles for 2006, one of 597 books chosen from more than 25,000 titles submitted to Choice during 2006.

Alice was born and raised in Syracuse, New York. She graduated magna cum laude from Syracuse University in 1949 with a B.A. in Journalism and Russian Studies. She was a member of Phi Beta Kappa and associate editor of the University newspaper. Alice earned her M.A. from Georgetown University in Political Science in 1952. During the early years of her career, she was a researcher, writer, and editor for the Library of Congress and the Department of State.

After moving to Bloomington in 1960, Alice began graduate studies in Psychology at Indiana University. She worked as a research assistant and associate instructor in Psychology and in her spare time edited several books for the IU Press. In 1968 she received her Ph.D. in Experimental Psychology from IU, with a focus on learning theory. The following year she joined the faculty of the Instructional Systems Technology Department (IST) in the School of Education. Alice taught in IST until her retirement in 1991, directing twenty-three doctoral dissertations and directing or co-directing several federally funded projects in the same areas. According to her colleagues, she was known for the extraordinary rapport that she had with her students, who admired her free and open style and especially appreciated her warm and wise counsel.

Alice met her future husband, Wadie Jwaideh, while an undergraduate at Syracuse University, where Wadie was studying for his Ph.D. They were married in 1950, in Washington D.C., and spent the next decade there. They moved to Bloomington in 1960 with their two young daughters, Dara and Layl, when Wadie joined the faculty of Indiana University. They celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary a few months before Wadie passed away in 2001.

Alice is survived by her daughter Dara and her three grandsons: Alexander Jwaideh Khan of Bloomington, and Devon and Derek Pleasants of Davis California.
Professor Hasan El-Shamy travels to China

“Professor, mentor, and scholar awarded high academic honor”

For a number of years, NELC’s Professor Hasan El-Shamy has been a critical mentor for many of the Chinese students who have come to Indiana University to study folklore. During this time, Professor El-Shamy was able to work with many students from China’s prestigious East China Normal University (ECNU) as a mentor and sponsor, helping them fulfill the terms of their fellowships and propelling them to various academic successes. Professor El-Shamy’s wealth of published materials on folklore and research methodologies was discovered as a veritable treasure trove by Chinese students who then took the next step to travel to IU to work with him as one of the leaders in his field.

While technological advances were making Professor El-Shamy’s book more accessible to Chinese scholars, he began supervising another Chinese doctoral student whose mentor in China was the Chairman of the Institute of Anthropological and Folklore School at ECNU, Professor Tian Zhaoyuan. As Professor Tian became familiar with the scope of Professor El-Shamy’s work, he was impressed enough to invite him to China to visit and lecture at ECNU, an invitation which Professor El-Shamy was only too happy to accept.

It was during this trip to China that Professor El-Shamy was nominated to receive ECNU’s highest academic honor, the “Daxia (Great China) Forum Lecture.” Soon after the nomination was submitted, the dean of ECNU’s College of Arts and Sciences gave his approval, and Professor El-Shamy presented the 94th Daxia Forum Lecture. Ms. Lei Weiping, who had previously been a visiting scholar at IU, was able to assist Professor El-Shamy as a translator.

During his visit to China, Professor El-Shamy was kept busy, giving a total of ten lectures and a number of interviews and other presentations on the side. His lectures included such topics as “A Motif Index of the Thousand and One Nights,” “African and Middle Eastern Narrative,” and “The Genres of International Folk Tale,” among several others. Besides lecturing the students of ECNU, Professor El-Shamy’s presentations were recorded for distribution to students around the world.

While the purpose of Professor El-Shamy’s visit was strictly academic, he could not help but be impressed by the people of Shanghai and the city itself. “Meeting scores of Chinese graduate students and faculty members has been very memorable,” he said. He added that he “[was] very impressed by their desire to learn new approaches and to share ideas, as well as the very cordial relations between students and the faculty.”

While visiting ECNU, Professor El-Shamy had the opportunity to visit many of the sites around Shanghai, China’s largest city, and came away with pleasant memories of the experience. “Shanghai proved to be a vibrant city with exceptionally well-cared for streets, parks, and means of transportation; progress and construction can be seen everywhere,” he said. “Visiting a number of Chinese sites, academic and non-academic, and interacting […] with individuals from various walks of life proved to be an enlightening experience.” True to his academic roots, he was sure to stop by Shanghai’s largest main bookstore. “The main bookstore in the city and the number and variety of books offered for sale seemed to dwarf those of any bookstore I had seen before.”

More than anything, though, Professor El-Shamy’s experience with the people of China left the deepest impression on him. “The friendliness and hospitality of everyone I met are certainly the most memorable experiences I had during that trip.”
...challenge there. Without textbooks I had to type many books for the students, among them Melville’s *Moby Dick*. After a few years, I moved to Sydney, Australia where I taught drama and later Arabic language and literature.

Michael Bevers: Currently you teach a graduate seminar, “The Vision of Homeland in Modern Arabic Literature” and will offer a second-8 week undergraduate course, “Arabs’ Perception of Europeans in Modern Arabic Literature.” How did you end up at Indiana University?

Samar Attar: During my tenure in Australia, I kept my contact with Harvard University. Finding Arabic instruction lacking internationally, I found myself working at Harvard developing a seven-book course on Modern Standard Arabic published in Beirut in 1988, 1991 and 1998. When I was a Visiting Scholar at Harvard in 1994, I met Professor Asma Afsaruddin who invited me to speak about my recently published novel: *Lina: A Portrait of a Damascene Girl*. But since then I have been meeting Asma at international conferences, particularly at the University of Gottingen in Germany. She is the one who invited me here.

Michael Bevers: You continue to teach, write and speak. What issues and interests challenge you today?

Samar Attar: I have been always interested in East-West relations. My book, *The Vital Roots of European Enlightenment*, published by Lexington Books in 2007, for example, enters into the ever-intensifying East-West debate. I challenge the Western notion that the Enlightenment was a purely Western development. This collection of essays deals with the influence of Ibn Tufayl on major European thinkers. His thoughts are found in different variations and to different degrees in the books of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Isaac Newton, Rousseau, Voltaire and Kant. I would challenge scholars across disciplines to look closer at this 12th century Andalusian scholar.
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