Middle East Outreach

Twenty-five K-12 teachers from central and southeast Texas participated in a week-long workshop sponsored by Hemispheres, the outreach consortium of the four National Resource Centers at UT-Austin. This year’s program, entitled “World Cultures through the Arts,” included lectures and interactive, hands-on sessions led by faculty and staff at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, the Center for Asian Studies, the Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies, and the Center for Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies, as well as film screenings and practical application sessions. Over 500 people attended the three nights of musical performances held in conjunction with the institute, which were open to the public. A day-long field trip to the Institute of Texan Cultures and the Texas Folk Life Festival in San Antonio rounded out the week, and received enthusiastic reviews from participants.

Throughout the spring and summer, the Center’s Outreach program has been involved in curriculum development at the new Humanities/Government Magnet for International Studies, which will open at Fulmore Middle School in the Austin Independent School District this fall. Outreach Coordinator Christopher Rose, along with representatives from Hemispheres and the College of Education, worked with Magnet Program director Juanita Simmons and curriculum director Sam Greer in formulating the new program of instruction, and will assist with its implementation during the 2001-2002 school year.

Several Outreach workshops and conferences were held during the spring semester of 2001. The Middle East Language Teachers Workshop, an annual event sponsored by the Western Consortium of Middle East Centers, was hosted by the Center this year, bringing together over thirty faculty members from all over the country to exchange ideas and extend cooperative efforts. The Center also hosted the Texas Association of Middle East Scholars (TAMES) annual meeting, which was extended to two full days due to growing interest among both students and faculty nationwide.

The Center has received funding from the College of Liberal Arts Media Services to begin digitizing our extensive slide and image collection. Once digitized, the Center’s collection of several thousand images will be available on the Internet for search and download, and the on-line database will serve as a detailed catalogue of the collection. Funding was also awarded from the Dean of Liberal Arts in late spring to hire a graduate student assistant during the academic year 2001-02 to oversee the project.

Elisabeth Sheiffer, graduate student in Middle Eastern Studies, presented a paper at TAMES
New Faculty and Administrators at the Center

Assistant Professor Diana K. Davis joined the Department of Geography this spring. In addition to her doctoral degree from the University of California at Berkeley, she also holds a Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) from Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine. She combines these two diverse interests in her work on political ecology, colonial historical geography, and ethnoveterinary research. Her articles have focused on the study of indigenous knowledge systems for range management and animal health care among nomadic cultures, including the Koochi in Afghanistan and nomadic pastoralists in Morocco. Dr. Davis has the distinction of returning to one of her alma maters to teach because she also holds a Master of Arts from the Department of Geography at UT.

Not surprisingly, the first courses that Dr. Davis taught during the spring semester were “Introduction to Geography of the Middle East” and a course on medical geography concerning the geographic distribution of infectious diseases that have had great influence on the shaping of human society, such as malaria, AIDS and others, and how changing economic and production systems affect public health. Current works in progress include several articles based on her geography dissertation, *Overgrazing the Range? A Political Ecology of Pastoralism in Southern Morocco*, and a book about French Colonial environmental history in North Africa.

Dr. Davis brings with her an impressive record of honors and awards, and has found funding for her research projects through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Social Sciences Research Council (SSRC). Political turmoil has halted her work in Afghanistan for the time being, but she was among the first to conduct ethnoveterinary research in this region of the world. Her past work focused on the gender-based differences in ethnoveterinary knowledge of Afghan nomadic pastoralists, where she demonstrated that women knew as much as, if not more than, men in diagnosing and treating livestock disease. The importance of studying such indigenous knowledge and its gendered nature, she explains, is that it can aid international development organizations in finding sustainable initiatives that are anchored in the local environmental and cultural systems.

Dr. Davis is currently examining how environmental history is written, particularly with regard to the impact that French policies and legislation had on the lives of Maghribi nomads during and after the colonial period. Dr. Davis is expanding this research topic to incorporate a variety of countries around the Mediterranean basin in a larger comparative study.

Lisa Patterson is the Center’s new Administrative Assistant. She received her BA from Southwest Texas State University in history and geology. Her areas of historical interest are Europe, the Middle East, North Africa, and Russia. Ms. Patterson brings a varied work experience as well as an interest in the archaeological, geological, and paleological aspects of the region to the Center. We welcome her as the most recent addition to the excellent staff working at the Center.

Visiting Faculty

In Spring 2001, Jonathan Holt Shannon taught two popular courses in the Department of Anthropology (“Anthropology of the Middle East and North Africa” and “Postcolonial Aesthetics and the Question of Authenticity”). Dr. Shannon received his education at Stanford, Hunter College, The American University in Cairo, and The City University of New York. His dissertation, *Among the Jasmine Trees: Music, Modernity, and the Aesthetics of Authenticity in Contemporary Syria*, explores musical aesthetics in relation to broader debates within Syria over cultural modernity. Dr. Shannon’s study is based on extensive field research in Aleppo and Damascus between 1996 and 1998, and was funded by a Fulbright-Hays Research Fellowship and by grants from the Social Science Research Council.

Ralph Stephen Kребbs from The University of Texas at Tyler was awarded a mini-grant to use the Center’s collections and UT library to assist with research and curriculum development.
Publications

Three new books which were described in the Center's last newsletter are available this summer and fall from the University of Texas Press. They are Asmahan's Secrets: Woman, War, and Song by Sherifa Zuhur, Passage to Dusk by Lebanese author Rashid al-Daif (translated by Nirvana Tanoukhi), and They Die Strangers by Yemeni author Abdul al-Wali (translated by Deborah Akers and Abubaker Bagader). The first book is #13 in the Center's Middle East Monograph Series, and the other two are in the Center's Modern Middle East Literatures in Translation Series. Available again are two popular books from the latter series, the novel Year of the Elephant and the memoir Return to Childhood, both by Moroccan author Leila Abouzeid.

With the publication of Passage to Dusk, the Center and the University of Texas Press have together brought out a total of thirty fiction translations and works of criticism. The translations are from Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, and Turkish, and the criticism deals with texts and theories from the cultures that created the original works.

In the spring of 2002, UT Press will publish in the Center's Modern Middle East Series New Bodies, New Selves: Family Planning in Egypt by anthropologist Kamran Asdar Ali. Essentially a critique of contraceptive planning in modern Egypt, this book sheds light on social planning in countries where Western institutions guide local policies. The author builds a complex picture, based on sound ethnographic research and scholarship, of a government trying to respond to its citizenry, international development agencies, Western feminists groups, and conservative Islamicists. Dr. Ali takes into account the views of both male and female Muslim individuals and significant traditional pressures at work in contemporary Egypt.

Mediterranean Crossroads 2001

For the second time, students selected to participate in the Mediterranean Crossroads program had the opportunity to travel in Middle Eastern countries. Over a four-week period in May and June, the students gained firsthand experiences of Egypt and Turkey. The group, accompanied by Professor Marcus and Professor Berman, visited historical sites, lived on the campuses of Turkish universities, and enjoyed Turkish and Egyptian cultural events, food and hospitality. The program included extended stays in Istanbul, Ankara, Konya and Cairo.
Conferences

In April, the Center presented a one-day conference on "Arabic Studies: Language, Text and Cultural Expression." The conference brought together scholars from around the world to discuss the study of Arabic and the ways in which Arabic as language, text, and vehicle for cultural expression opens up paths to understanding Middle Eastern society, past and present. Provocative lectures were given by Dwight Reynolds, University of California, Santa Barbara, Michael Cooperson, University of California, Los Angeles, Alexander Flores, University of Bremen, Germany, Mushira Eid, University of Utah, Uri Shlonsky, University of Geneva, Switzerland, Joseph Aoun, University of Southern California, George Sawa, University of Toronto, and Ali Jihad Racy, University of California, Los Angeles.

Keith Walters, associate professor of Linguistics and Middle Eastern Studies and Graduate Advisor at the Center, organized this year's annual conference for the American Institute for Maghrib Studies (AIMS). The theme of this year's conference was "Language(s) in North Africa: Multiple Practices, Multiple Identities, and Multiple Ideologies." While Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria share a great deal, such as the presence of Arabic diglossia and Berber languages, a period of French colonial rule, the struggles for independence, and the contemporary pressures of globalization, including the spread of English, the countries are distinct in many ways. These similarities and differences offer linguists and social scientists fertile opportunities for understanding the complex ways in which language, language choice, language use, and language policies come to be linked to and represent various constructions of identity at the personal, local, national, and transnational levels. At the same time, scholars of this area face a great challenge in keeping up-to-date about developments in each of the three countries, and opportunities for dialogue among North African researchers and between North African and US researchers are all too rare. Held in the historic American Legation Museum in Tangier, Morocco, May 23-27, this year's conference brought together nearly twenty researchers from Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, and the United States, including several UT alumni who now teach in the US, Morocco, or Tunisia. Dr. Walters will also edit the proceedings of the conference. In addition to the usual published volume of papers, which will be distributed by the University of Tunis, papers will be posted on the World Wide Web in order to make them available to the widest possible readership, a first for an AIMS conference.

Lectures

Yıldız Erdener, Assistant Professor of Turkish in the Department of Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures, with the support of Faik Gür, graduate student in the History Department and Assistant Instructor in the Turkish language program, organized a "Turkish Spring Lecture Series." On April 4, 2001 Dr. Kemal Silay, the chair of Ottoman and Modern Turkish Studies in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at Indiana University, presented a lecture on "Ottoman Poetry after the Ottomans: A Semiotic Reading of the Politics of Scholarship in Turkish Studies." The second lecture was delivered on April 5, 2001 by Dr. Çağlar Keyder, a sociologist at SUNY-Binghamton and Bogaziçi University in Istanbul. His presentation was entitled "National Identity and the European Union Debate in Turkey." The final lecture was presented on April 6, 2001 by Dr. Ahmet Karamustafa who teaches at Washington University in St. Louis. Karamustafa's lecture was on "Islam as Freedom: Views of a Modern Turkish Scholar of Religion." All lectures were stimulating and very well attended. The lecture series was supported by the Department of Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures.

In March, the writer, lecturer and educator Stuart Schoffman, whose commentaries on culture and politics are widely read, presented a talk entitled "Sharon, Arafat, and the Irony of Israeli History." The lecture drew an audience of about 70 people, and was followed by a lively discussion.

Colloquium Series

The Center's Spring colloquium series included lectures on a variety of topics. James P. Grehan, visiting lecturer in the Department of History, gave a talk entitled "Street Violence and Social Imagination in Ottoman
Damascus,” which dealt with the phenomenon of crowds in late 19th-century Syria and what they tell us about the political culture of the premodern Middle East.

Donald Frey, vice president of the Institute of Nautical Archaeology in Bodrum, Turkey, gave a slide lecture entitled “Voyage From Antiquity: Underwater Archaeology in Turkey.” He discussed the Institute’s role in excavating two primary shipwrecks off the coast of Turkey as a general introduction to the science of nautical archaeology.

William A. Mitchell of Baylor University presented “An Assessment of Human Aftershocks following Thirty Years of Earthquake Disasters in Turkey.” In his talk, Dr. Mitchell discussed rapid response tactics in Turkey and ways in which the country has learned from its seismic past to prepare for the future.


Mounira Charrad, an assistant professor in the Department of Sociology, spoke on “Citizenship and Gender: Lessons from Tunisia.” In her talk, Dr. Charrad discussed the relationship between citizenship rights and gender in the case of Tunisia, as well as women’s citizenship rights in recent Tunisian history.

Khalil Shikaki, director of the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research in Ramallah, spoke on “The Palestinian Political Map and the Challenges of State Building,” in which he described the obstacles to creating a Palestinian state connected to the current Palestinian leadership structure.

“Modernity, Emotion and the Aesthetics of Authenticity in Contemporary Syria” was the title of a talk by Jonathan Shannon, visiting lecturer in Anthropology and Middle Eastern Studies. Drawing on his field research among musicians and artists in Syria, Dr. Shannon explored the concern with “authenticity” and aesthetic discourse relating to emotional expression of performance and presentation.

Poet Khaled Mattawa, an assistant professor in the creative writing program of the English Department, gave a poetry reading and led a conversation about the centrality in his work of his bilingualism as an Arab-American poet and the role that translation plays in his writing.

Jason Thompson, an associate professor of history at the American University in Cairo, gave an illustrated lecture about his recent publication of Edward William Lane’s Description of Egypt. Considered by Lane to be his most important work, the Description was never published, but passed over in favor of other works such as the Arabic-English Lexicon. Thompson discussed Lane’s life and times and the importance of this text.

Special Concerts Performed

During the Spring semester, the Center for Middle Eastern Studies presented two musical concerts that were well attended by the public. In conjunction with the Western Consortium of Middle East Centers, the Center sponsored a tour by members of The Al-Farabi Ensemble from Tunis, who gave a concert of Arabic classical music selections. The Center also presented a concert of Ladino music from the Sephardic Jewish tradition in Spain. Performed by the Austin Middle Eastern Music Ensemble with guest vocalist Allison Lund, the concert was offered twice, once at an evening performance and again in an afternoon performance in conjunction with the College of Liberal Arts Explore UT event.
New Turkish Language Scholarship

Stephen J. Peterson, an alumnus of the graduate program in Middle Eastern Studies, has established a fellowship for the study of Turkish at the University of Texas. The fellowship, administered by the Center, currently provides a stipend of $1,000 a year. Amanda Jackson, graduate student at the Center, has been selected as the first recipient of the award for the 2001-2002 academic year.

Mr. Peterson graduated in Spring 1999 with an M.A. in Middle Eastern Studies as well as an M.B.A., and is currently employed in the Marketing Department of The Pillsbury Company. In the course of his graduate studies, he received two FLAS awards for the study of advanced Turkish. His generous donation, made in gratitude of the support he received from the program, is much appreciated.

Faculty and Staff News

Ina Berman, Germanic Studies, has accepted a new position at the Ohio State University, beginning in Fall 2001. The Center’s new associate director will be Keith Walters, from the Department of Linguistics.


Kate Gillespie (Marketing Administration), Edward Sayre and Liel Riddle, published “Palestinian Interest in Homeland Investment,” Middle East Journal, Vol. 55 No. 2, Spring 2001. This article is the fourth publication that evolved out of a project on diaspora investment initiated by a Ford Foundation area studies grant for research between faculty members and students. Edward Sayre is a former undergraduate in MES at UT. He completed his Ph.D. in Economics here and will be an assistant professor at Agnes Scott College next fall. Liel Riddle received her B.A. and M.A. degrees in Middle Eastern Studies at UT and graduated with her Ph.D. in Sociology this past May. She begins as an assistant professor in international marketing at George Washington University next fall.

Clement Henry, Government, co-authored a book with Robert Springborg entitled Globalization and the Politics of Development in the Middle East (Modern Middle East Series, Cambridge University Press), which is available for preordering at www.amazon.com. In March 2002, he will be co-directing (with Ziya Onis of Koc University, Istanbul) a workshop on “Islamic Capital and Islamist Politics: Patterns of Integration, Separation, and Uneasy Coexistence”; details can be found at the following site (http://www.iue.it/RSC/MED/ meeting2002/Welcome.html). In May 2001, Dr. Henry presented a paper with his Government Department colleague Catherine Boone on “Banking reform, political reform, and development” at the Centro de Investigacion y Docencia Economicas (CIDE) in Mexico City. He also presented a paper at MESA in Orlando on “Islamic Finance as Political Development.”


Sharpe, 2001; and, with Gulsah Yildirim, “The Site Where the She-Camel Knelt Down: Exegesis, Gender and the Public Domain” in Feminist Movements: Origins and Orientations, eds. F. Sadiqi et al. (Fez: Faculty of Letters, 2000); Dr. Kahera was invited to present on “Islam and Africa: A Global, Cultural and Historical Perspective” at the Institute of Global and Cultural Studies, Binghamton University, Binghamton NY, April 19-22, 2001.

Deborah Kapchan, Anthropology, received a Fulbright-Hays fellowship to do research on poetry and translation in Morocco over the next three summers. Her project is entitled “Poetic Justice: Translating Art and Ideology in Morocco.”

Dan Laufer, a lecturer at MES who teaches a course on the business environment in Israel, was invited by the University of Utah to give a presentation on the topic of Israeli-Jordanian Joint Ventures at the Hinckley Institute of Politics. His presentation was broadcast by NPR (National Public Radio) in Salt Lake City in February 2001. In addition, Mr. Laufer’s review of Immigrant Entrepreneurs and Immigrant Absorption in the United States and Israel appeared in the February 2001 edition of the Academy of Management Executive.

Harold Liebowitz, MELC, published a review of Bare Bones: Ancient Artifacts from Animal Bones by Etan Ayalon and Chagit Sorek (Tel Aviv: Eretz Israel Museum, 1999) in the Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research 317(2001). Dr. Liebowitz is also serving as a reviewer of proposed articles on bone and ivory artifacts for the same journal. In summer 2001, he traveled to southern Spain to study Jewish Life in Andalusia, and to Israel to work on the publication of material from the university’s excavations in northern Israel, which are conducted under Dr. Liebowitz’s direction.

Roger Louis, History, is currently serving as president of the American Historical Association. He also received the Pro Bene Meritis Award from the College of Liberal Arts.


Marjorie Payne, the Center’s long-time Executive Assistant, visited Austin in April and received a warm welcome from all of her friends. Mrs. Payne relocated last year and is greatly enjoying her retirement in Berwyn, Pennsylvania, with her husband Jim.

Avraham Zilkha, MELC, signed a contract with Yale University Press for publication of his English-Hebrew dictionary. It is scheduled to be out by the end of the year, and will complement the English-Hebrew dictionary which was published by the same press.

Student and Alumni News

The following students graduated in May 2001 with a Master’s degree in Middle Eastern Studies: Vitessa Del Prete, James Gentry, Kristin V. Monroe, John Morgan, and Michael Morton.

Geneive Abdo, (B.A. Government, 1989) was elected a John Simon Guggenheim Fellow for Nonfiction by the 2001 Committee of Selection in the field of Creative Arts. Only 183 out of 2,728 applicants were given this award “to do research in any field of knowledge under the freest possible conditions, irrespective of race, color or creed.”

Saba Ghori, (joint MES/LBJ student) is working at the US Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan, as a summer intern for the US State Department. A Pickle Fellowship through the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs and grant money from the Center for Asian Studies as well as the Study Abroad Office are helping defray her expenses.

continued on back page
Student and Alumni News
continued from previous page

Sarah Fox Özkân (joint MES/LBJ student) was selected for an internship with the United Nations in New York during the summer.

Michael Juge (MA Middle Eastern Studies, 2000), after completing his basic training, has entered the Diplomatic Security Service of the U.S. Department of State and has been posted to New York. He is engaged to Marjorie Trace (Joint MBA/MA, 2000), and the two are planning a spring wedding.

Kristin V. Monroe, who received her M.A. from the Center this May, has been awarded a four-year fellowship to study anthropology of the Middle East at Stanford starting in September. She was also awarded a Fulbright grant to research Palestinian communities in Amman, Jordan. Kristin is spending most of the summer improving her Arabic in Tangier, Morocco.

John Morgan, who received his M.A. from the Center this May, has been awarded a five-year fellowship to study the Islamic history of medieval North Africa and Spain at Stanford starting in September.

Lauren Towler, (joint MES/GSIS student), presented a paper at the Second International Conference on Middle Eastern Dance at Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa, CA on May 25-28, 2001. The title of her paper was “Orientalistic Notions: Danse Orientale in the United States.”

Center for Middle Eastern Studies
The University of Texas at Austin
Austin, Texas 78712-1193 USA

The Newsletter is published by the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Texas at Austin.

Abraham Marcus
Director

Hillary Hutchinson
Executive Assistant

Nina Berman, Annes McCann-Baker
Editors

Diane Watts
Production, Design, Photographs

For information on the Center, contact us at:
The University of Texas at Austin
Austin, Texas 78712
Tel: 512 471-3881
Fax: 512 471-7834
cmes@menic.utexas.edu
http://menic.utexas.edu/menic/cmes

Not printed with state funds

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit No. 391
Austin, Texas

Please take a moment to check your address as it appears above. If there are any changes, please make them on the label and return it to the Center for Middle Eastern Studies.