Greetings from the Chair!

The end of an academic year is a time to celebrate the accomplishments and honors of our faculty, students, and alumni, of which there are many. In addition to the Class Day honors and awards, the many publications, and the scholarly activities described in this newsletter, I would like to draw your attention in particular to the following outstanding accomplishments and honors achieved by members of the NES family. Faculty member Associate Professor Max Weiss was selected one of 32 Andrew Carnegie Fellows, and Professor Bernard Haykel was named an Old Dominion Professor. Undergraduates Alexandra Cerf ’15 and Conor Dube ’15 were elected to Phi Beta Kappa, and Ryan Fulmer ’16 and Hannah Vester ’17 were named members of the inaugural cohort of International Striecker Fellows. Graduate students Sarah Islam was awarded two Hyde Fellowships (both summer and academic year), a Fulbright Fellowship, a Social Science Research Council International Dissertation Research Fellowship, and an American Center for Oriental Research Fellowship; Daniel Fields received a Donald and Mary Hyde Academic-Year Fellowship for Research Abroad in the Humanities; David Weil has been awarded a National Security Education Program (NSEP) David L. Boren Fellowship; Alex Balistreri won Brill’s “Middle East and Islamic Studies Early-Career Paper Prize”; and, in a different type of accomplishment, Cole Bunzel was interviewed on Charlie Rose following the publication of his Brookings Institution paper, “From Paper State to Caliphate: The Ideology of the Islamic State.” Alumni, too, shared in the harvest of honors. Roxani Margariti (Ph.D 2002) was named a Berlin Prize Fellow; Krisztina Szilágyi (Ph.D. 2014) was awarded a Leverhulme Trust Early Career Fellowship; and Joseph Witztum (Ph.D. 2011) was awarded the Polonsky Prize for Creativity and Originality in the Humanistic Disciplines at Hebrew University.

On a different note, NES will be adding four new faculty members come September 2016. We are delighted to welcome Marina Rustow, who will be joining the department as the Khedouri A. Zilkha Professor of Jewish Civilization in the Near East and Professor of Near Eastern Studies and History; Assistant Professor Lara Harb, who studies classical Arabic literature; Assistant Professor Eve Krakowski, who researches the social history of the medieval Middle East; and Assistant Professor Satyel Larson, who specializes in women, gender, and sexuality in the Middle East and North Africa. At the same time, we bid a fond farewell to Assistant Professor Mirjam Künkler, who is moving back to Europe.

Finally, it is with great sadness that I report the passing away of Patricia Crone on July 11, 2016, following a long fight against cancer. Patricia, Andrew W. Mellon Professor Emerita in the School of Historical Research at the Institute for Advanced Study and a long-time contributor to scholarly life in Near Eastern Studies, most recently as Lecturer with the Rank of Full Professor, was a towering figure in the fields of Islamic history and medieval Islamic thought. Her brilliance, wit, energy, and courage will be missed by all those who were privileged to know her.

Muhammad Qasim Zaman
Honors: Alexandra Cerf

Prizes
Bayard and Cleveland Dodge Memorial Thesis Prize (best senior thesis) shared by: Alexandra Cerf, “A Nation Is a Flag and a Football Team: Inclusion and Exclusion in Qatari Football and Society”; and Mason Herson-Hord, “SUMUD TO INTIFADA: Community Struggle in Palestine and the Western Sahara.”

Program in Near Eastern Studies Senior Thesis Prize: Samuel Watters “The Nation Contested: Alevi Identity as a Response to Turkish Nationalism.”

F. O. Kelsey Prize for best second term junior paper: Ali Cebeci ’16, Trustee of this Community: Abū ‘Ubaydah b. al-Jarrāḥ and Early Muslim Authority.

Bayard and Cleveland Dodge Memorial Prize for PhD Dissertation: Oded Zinger, “Women, Gender and Law: Marital Disputes According to Documents from the Cairo Geniza.”

NES Department Majors and Senior Thesis Titles
Alexandra Cerf, “A Nation Is a Flag and a Football Team: Inclusion and Exclusion in Qatari Football and Society” (Adviser: Kevin K. Harris; Reader: Mirjam Künkler).


Ryan Fauber, “Empire’s Fulcrum: Examining the United States Drone Program in the Pakhtūn Tribal Areas of Pakistan as the Successor to a Millennium of Regional Military Strategic Realities” (Adviser: Michael Barry; Reader: Michael A. Reynolds).


Mason Herson-Hord, “SUMUD TO INTIFADA: Community Struggle in Palestine and the Western Sahara” (Adviser: Max D. Weiss; Reader: Jonathan M. Gribetz).

Judith Laffan Memorial Prize for outstanding progress and dedication to the Arabic language: Samone Blair ’18.
Filipa Ioannou, “Two Models of Islamic Statehood: State, Faith, and the Fate of Man in the Political Thought of Abu’l’Ala Mawdudi and Ruhollah Khomeini” (Adviser: M. Qasim Zaman; Reader: Kevan K. Harris).


Mohammad Mousavian, “Rural Health Care In Central Iran: A Study From The Patients’ And The Government’s Perspectives” (Adviser: Mirjam Künkler; Reader: Daniel J. Sheffield).


NES Certificate in Language and Culture Recipients and Departments

Certificate in Arabic Language and Culture
Conleigh Byers (CEE)
Hannah Cumming (WWS)
Hannah Ho (CS)
Jacqueline Nicholas (WWS)

Certificate in Persian Language and Culture
Ellyssa Czajkowski (NES)
Helen Greene (COM)

Faculty News
Lecturer in Near Eastern Studies Michael Barry gave the Kamran Djam Annual Lectures at the Centre for Iranian Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London on February 2–3, 2015. His two lectures were “Nizâmî: Mirror of the Unseen World” and “Nizâmî’s Brides of the Seven Climes.” Barry also presented a lecture, “Carver of Light: Matisse and the Art of Persia and Islam,” sponsored by the Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Iran and Persian Gulf Studies on April 30, 2015, at Princeton University.

Mark Cohen, Khedouri A. Zilka Professor of Jewish Civilization in the Near East, Emeritus, spent the fall semester as a visiting professor at the New York University Abu Dhabi campus, teaching a seminar on “Jews in the Muslim World in the Middle Ages” and a noncredit course in Judeo-Arabic. Cohen recounted his experience in “What I Learned Teaching Arabs About Judaism in Abu Dhabi,” which appeared in the newspaper Forward on February 13, 2015.

Class of 1943 University Professor of Near Eastern Studies Michael Cook’s Ancient Religions, Modern Politics: The Islamic Case in Comparative Perspective (Princeton University Press, 2014) was short-listed for the 2015 Sheikh Zayed Book Award, which “recognises written works tackling Arab civilisation and culture, including humanities, fine arts, literature (novels, shorts stories).”

Cook’s article, “Written and oral aspects of an early Wahhābī epistle,” appeared in Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies 78 (February 2105). An abstract of the article may be read here.

A one-day colloquium in honor of Patricia Crone, who until her retirement was a visiting lecturer with the rank of professor in NES, was held at the School of Historical Studies, Institute for Advanced Study, on February 25, 2015. NES-connected participants included Professor Michael Cook, who presented “Muhammad’s deputies in Medina”; Visiting Fellow Daniel J. Sheffield, who spoke on “Nativism and Prophethood in Early Modern Iran: Ažar Kayvān and the Quest for Universal Religion”; and Lecturer with the rank of Professor in Near Eastern Studies Sabine Schmidtke, who opened the colloquium.

Crone has also been honored with a Festschrift, Islamic Cultures, Islamic Contexts: Essays in Honor of Professor Patricia Crone (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

the Nineteenth Century”.

“This volume brings together articles on various aspects of the intellectual and social histories of Islamicate societies and of the traditions and contexts that contributed to their formation and evolution. Written by leading scholars . . . the volume is a testament to the breadth and to the sustained, deep impact of the corpus of the honoree, Professor Patricia Crone.”

Retired Senior Lecturer in Turkish Erika Gilson spoke on “The Quest for a Common Alphabet and Common Language for Turkish” in the Program in Translation and Intercultural Communication Spring 2015 Lecture Series.”

Molly Greene (Ph.D. 1993), Professor of History and Hellenistic Studies and affiliated faculty member of NES, participated in the panel discussion, “The Time to Divest: Palestine, South Africa, and the Moral Duty of the University,” held on April 8.

Assistant Professor Jonathan Gribetz spoke on “The PLO’S Judaism” in the Workshops in Judaic Studies series on April 17.

Professor Bernard Haykel, a historian of the Arabian Peninsula and a scholar of Islamic law and Islamic political movements, was named an Old Dominion Professor for the 2015–16 academic year. The Old Dominion Professorship “program is designed to provide additional research time for faculty members and to enhance the humanities community more broadly by providing a core group of senior faculty with time and resources to engage colleagues and students from across the university in sustained discussions of their work... Old Dominion Professors are appointed for a term of one year, one semester of which would otherwise have been devoted to a regular sabbatical leave. The Professorship extends that leave to one full year. Old Dominion Professors are expected to be in residence for the year and to engage in the intellectual life of the Council and the university. To foster a community of scholars, Old Dominion Professors are provided with offices in a congenial setting outside their home departments. They participate in Humanities Council activities, typically as Faculty Fellows in the Society of Fellows.” To read more about this professorship, click here.

Haykel co-authored with Robyn Creswell an article, “Battle Lines,” which appeared in the June 8 issue of The New Yorker. To read the article click here.

Haykel also wrote “ISIS: A Primer” for the June 3 issue of Princeton Alumni Weekly. In it he explains the beliefs and goals of the Islamic State. To read this article click here.

Amaney Jamal, Edwards S. Sanford Professor of Politics, Director of the Mamdouha S. Bobst Center for Peace and Justice, and associated NES faculty member, appeared on an MSNBC panel discussing justification and public perception of a possible strike on Syria. To view the videos click on Part 1, Part 2, Part 3, and Part 4.

Assistant Professor Mirjam Künkler and David Kloos (Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, KITLV) convened a workshop on “Female Islamic Authority in Comparative Perspective: Exemplars, Institutions, Practices,” held in Leiden, January 8–9, 2015. “Providing a reference point for the workshop as a whole, Mirjam Künkler gave an overview of recent state and society-driven initiatives for the promotion of female Islamic authority. . . . In light of the limits of top-down programs in training women as religious authority, Künkler called for a research agenda that turns the attention towards the way women are perceived as religious authorities by local communities. The other papers [in the workshop] complemented this analysis by exploring how female Islamic leaders and authorities have been gathering a following by building up a community.” To read a report on the workshop, click here.

Associate Professor Cyrus Schayegh spoke on “The Making of the Modern World: A Middle Eastern Perspective” in a lecture sponsored by the History Department on March 3.

Associate Professor of History and Near Eastern Studies Max Weiss has been selected one of 32 Andrew Carnegie Fellows in the “inaugural class of a major annual fellowship program that will provide support for scholars in the social sciences and humanities. The Fellows will receive awards of up to $200,000 each, which will enable them to take sabbaticals in order to devote time to their research and writing.” The 2015 theme is: “Current and Future Challenges to U.S. Democracy and International Order.” For more information about this honor, click here.

Faculty Books


“This volume presents fifteen chapters written by the select few academics allowed into Saudi Arabia over the past decade. Their research focuses on the different sectors of Saudi society. As such, this book gathers new insights from the field and provides the most up-to-date research on the country’s social, cultural, economic and political dynamics.”

Haykel co-wrote the “Introduction” and contributed a chapter, “Oil in Saudi Arabian Culture and Politics: From Tribal Poets to Al-Qaeda’s Ideologues.” Three former Transregional Institute fellows contributed to the volume: fellow editor Thomas Hegghammer (“Introduction” and “Classical” and ‘Global’ Jihadism in Saudi Arabia); Nabil Mouline (“Enforcing the State’s Islam: The Functioning of the Committee of Senior Scholars”); and former Princeton Global Scholar Giacomo Luciani (“Saudi Arabia and the World Oil Market”). For more information about this book click here.


This paper was presented originally as part of The Dallah Albaraka Lectures on Islamic Law and Civilization on September 24, 2013. The title of this work is “not meant to suggest that Islam, or Islamic law, has failed in some general or normative sense. Rather, the lecture will argue that the effort by modern Sunni Muslim reformers, and their Islamist followers, to generate Islamic legal rulings has failed to achieve the political vision of a powerful and confident Islamic order.” To access this paper click here.
Undergraduate news

Alexandra Cerf ’15 and Conor Dube ’15 were elected to Phi Beta Kappa, the oldest of all national honorary scholastic societies, having been founded in 1776. “Election to this chapter is based on scholastic standing and is open to candidates for the A.B. and B.S.E. degrees in their senior year. The chapter generally includes in its membership the highest-ranking tenth of each graduating class.”

Andrew Hanna ‘16 was an AMIDEAST Education Abroad Morocco correspondent during spring semester 2015. To read his postings click here.

Mason Herson-Hord ‘15, who did his senior thesis research undercover in the occupied Western Sahara this summer, hosted a screening of the documentary Life Is Waiting: Referendum and Resistance in Western Sahara. After the screening, Herson-Hord answered questions about the film and the conflict.


Ryan Fulmer ’16 and Hannah Vester ’17 were named members of the inaugural cohort of International Striecker Fellows. The Streicker International Fellows Fund was established in 2015 to provide undergraduate students with the opportunity to carry out substantive research or educational projects while immersed in a foreign culture. The fellows [design] their own projects or internships in conjunction with host organizations outside the United States. During their summer abroad, they will delve more deeply into their areas of study, expand their perspectives, and improve their ability to speak another language.” Fulmer, a Woodrow Wilson major working toward a certificate in Near Eastern Studies, interned with the Social and Economic Survey Research Institute in Qatar, conduct primary field surveys and explore the region’s culture. Vester, a Politics major also working toward a certificate in Near Eastern Studies, interned with Shatil in Jerusalem, an organization that has been on the cutting edge of building civil society and actively promoting democracy, tolerance, and social justice in Israel for 30 years.

Final Public Orals

Samuel R. Helfont successfully defended his Ph.D. dissertation, “Compulsion in Religion: The Authoritarian Roots of Saddam Hussein’s Islam,” on May 18, 2015. The examination chair was Bernard A. Haykel, and the examiners were M. Qasim Zaman and Dina Khoury (George Washington University).

On May 12, 2015, Jacob Olidort successfully defended his Ph.D. dissertation, “In Defense of Tradition: Muhammad Nasir Al-Din Al-Albani and the Salafi Method.” His advisor was Bernard A. Haykel, and the examiners were M. Qasim Zaman and Michael F. Laffan (History).

Mona Abdel Hamid Zaki successfully defended her Ph.D. dissertation, “Jahannam in Medieval Islamic Thought,” on June 12, 2015. Michael A. Cook was the examination chair, and Andras Hamori and John W. Borneman (Anthropology) were the examiners.

Chad M. Mowbray successfully defended his master’s thesis, “Four Approaches to Ablām an-Nasr, Poetess of the Islamic State,” on May 14, 2015. Andras P. Hamori was the thesis advisor.

Graduate Student News

Usaama al-Azami, a sixth-year graduate student, led a six-week study group on “Islam & Modernity,” part of the Muslim Life Program’s Spring 2015 Islamic Literacy Series, “Circles of Knowledge.”

Alex Balistreri, a fourth-year graduate student, won Brill’s “Middle East and Islamic Studies Early-Career Paper Prize” for his article “Turkey’s Forgotten Political Opposition: The Demise of Kadirbeyoglu Zeki Bey.” The article, which will be published in an upcoming issue of Die Welt des Islam, “analyses the political biography of a local notable and politician of the Black Sea region who played an important role in the early stage of the national movement in Anatolia in 1918. […] Based on a wide range of hardly known archival and biographical source material and by evaluating a good number of contemporary periodicals, the author impressively succeeds in providing a fresh insight into the diversity of the Turkish national movement in the decisive period after the First World War.” The “Middle East and Islamic Studies Early-Career Paper Prize is an annual prize awarded for an outstanding article in the field of Middle East and Islamic Studies to encourage and support early-career scholars seeking to publish in leading academic journals.”

Cole Bunzel, a third-year graduate student, authored a Brookings Institution paper, “From Paper State to Caliphate: The Ideology of the Islamic State,” in which he “documents for the first time the ideological development of the Islamic State (also known as ISIS) from its grounding in a distinct Islamic theological tradition, known as Wahhabism, to its conception in Afghanistan in 2001, to its abortive founding in Iraq in 2006 and subsequent resurgence in 2013–2014.” The paper was summarized in the Washington Post, and Bunzel also appeared on Charlie Rose to discuss his research. To watch this interview click here.

Enis Dinç, a Visiting Student Research Collaborator, discussed his research, “From the Ottoman Empire to the Greek-Turkish War: A Brief History of Cinema from Mustafa Kemal’s Perspective,” at a Seeger Center for Hellenic Studies Workshop on April 2015.

Second-year graduate student Daniel Fields was awarded a Donald and Mary Hyde Academic-Year Fellowship for Research Abroad in the Humanities for 2015–16. The Hyde Academic Year Research Fellowship covers expenses of living abroad for up to 10 months, as well as the cost of travel from and back to the United States.

Fourth-year graduate student Zach Foster’s article, “What’s a Palestinian? Uncovering Cultural Complexities,” was published on foreignaffairs.com in March 2015 and discusses the controversy over Palestinian identity.

Nebil Husayn, a fifth-year graduate student, published two articles. “Scepticism and Uncontested History: A Review Article” appeared in Journal of Shi’a Islamic Studies 7, no. 4 (2014) and “critically reviews the recent film and literary contributions of Tom Holland to the field of Islamic history.” “Mechanisms of Authoritarian Rule in Bahrain” appeared in Arab Studies Quarterly 37, no. 1 (2015) and “identifies the different elements in Bahraini society and government that indicate the existence of authoritarian rule and the mechanisms which perpetuate it.”

Fourth-year graduate student Sarah Islam was awarded two Hyde Fellowships (both summer and academic year), a Fulbright Fellowship, a Social Science Research Council International Dissertation Research Fellowship, and an American Center for Oriental Research Fellowship to pursue dissertation research in Amman, Jordan. She is examining primary sources related to the legal works of Ibn ʿĀbidīn (d. 1252 AH/1836 AD) and other post-formative jurists for her project, “Blasphemy as a Legal Category in Early and Medieval Islamic History”. She will be spending most of the academic year at the Center for Documents and Manuscripts at the University of Jordan.

Islam was also one of a select number of faculty and university members invited to join the Office of the Dean of the Graduate School Task Force on the Future of the Graduate School established in conjunction with a strategic planning process launched by the Trustees of Princeton University in 2014 to guide the University as it makes financial and policy choices on how best to pursue its institutional mission in the coming years. The Task Force conducted a self-study to identify strengths and weaknesses in the university’s current offerings and to develop a suite of recommendations to enhance the University’s graduate programs. As a member of the committee on academic policies, Islam, in conjunction with fellow members, analyzed data on the efficacy of current institutional academic procedures, budgetary allocations, and division-specific structures. Based on this evaluation and a comparative assessment of Princeton’s peer institutions, the committee issued recommendations on how best to re-structure Princeton’s offerings in the context of current financial constraints. Issues addressed included division and enrollment size, graduate degree length and funding, as well as professional development programming for students. The final report was presented to the Trustees and other university governing bodies at the close of 2014–15 academic year.

Sixth-year Ph.D. student Jacob Olidort’s research paper, “The Politics of ‘Quietest’ Salafism,” was published by the Brookings Institution in February 2015. In it, Olidort “explores the political writings of so-called quietist Salafis and their impact on modern Middle East conflict.” Following the appearance of the paper, Will McCants (Ph.D. 2006), a fellow in Brookings’ Center for Middle East Policy and director of the Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World, interviewed Olidort about whether Quietist Salafism is the antidote to ISIS. To read this interview click here.

Second-year Ph.D. student Matthew Schumann was awarded the Johnson Garrett ’35 Memorial Merit Fellowship for this year. The fellowship was established in 1986 to support graduate students, with preference given first to students in the Program of Near Eastern Studies.

Fourth-year graduate student David Weil has been awarded a National Security Education Program (NSEP) David L. Boren Fellowship for 2015–16. “Boren Fellowships … provide unique funding opportunities for U.S. graduate students to study less commonly taught languages in world regions critical to U.S. interests, and under-represented in study abroad, including Africa, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, Eurasia, Latin America, and the Middle East. … Boren Fellows represent a vital pool of highly motivated individuals who wish to work in the federal national security are-
Unto the Sultan argues that the Ottoman state considered the Greek Orthodox ecclesiastical hierarchy primarily as tax farmers (mültezim) for cash income derived from the church's widespread holdings. [...] Papademetriou demonstrates that minority communities and institutions in the Ottoman Empire, up to now, have been considered either from within the community, or from outside, from the Ottoman perspective. This new approach allows us to consider internal Greek Orthodox communal concerns, but from within the larger Ottoman social and economic context. Render Unto the Sultan challenges the long established concept of the 'Millet System', the historical model in which the religious leader served both a civil as well as a religious authority. From the Ottoman-state's perspective, the hierarchy was there to serve the religious and economic function rather than the political one.”

Papademetriou is the Constantine and Georgian Georgiou Endowed Professor of Greek History, and Executive Director of the Interdisciplinary Center for Hellenic Studies at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey. For more about the book click here.

Alan Verskin (Ph.D. 2010), an assistant professor of History at the University of Rhode Island, has published Islamic Law and the Crisis of the Reconquista: The Debate on the Status of Muslim Communities in Christendom, with Brill (2015).

“The Reconquista left unprecedentedly large numbers of Muslims living under Christian rule. Since Islamic religious and legal institutions had been developed by scholars who lived under Muslim rule and who assumed this condition as a given, how Muslims should proceed in the absence of such rule became the subject of extensive intellectual investigation. In Islamic Law and the Crisis of the Reconquista, Alan Verskin examines the way in which the Iberian school of Mālikī law developed in response to the political, theological, and practical difficulties posed by the Reconquista. He shows how religious concepts, even those very central to the Islamic religious experience, could be rethought and reinterpreted in order to respond to the changing needs of Muslims.” For more about the book click here.

Yeşim Arat (Politics Ph.D. 1983) returned to Princeton on April 8, 2015, to speak on “The Decline of Democracy in Turkey: Popular Support, Institutional Decay” as part of PIIRS’ Project on Democracy and Development. Arat is Professor of Political Science and International Relations at Boğaziçi University.

Caner Dagli (Ph.D. 2006) has published a response, “The Phony Islam of ISIS,” to Graeme Wood’s Atlantic cover story, “What ISIS Really Wants,” in the February 27, 2015, issue of the Atlantic. To read this article click here. Dagli is an associate professor of religious studies at the College of the Holy Cross.

Lelabari Giwa-Ojuri (B.A, Politics 2014, Certificate in NES) was a Princeton Project 55 Fellow during 2014–15 at the Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services (CASES), where she worked with youth ages 16–24 with felony charges who are facing a prison sentence. She identified individuals who were eligible for the youth development program, which provides education, employment, clinical and legal services as an alternative to incarceration. Before attending Princeton, Giwa-Ojuri had participated in Princeton’s Bridge Year program. She was based in Serbia and spent half the program in the city of Novi Sad working at the Yugoslav Youth Association against HIV/AIDS and the other half in the city of Niš working at the Club for Youth Empowerment. To read more about her experiences click here.

Najam I. Haider (Ph.D. 2007) will be a member of the School of Historical Studies at the Institute for Advanced Studies during spring 2016. Haider is an Assistant Professor of Religion, Barnard College, Columbia University.

Eric Lob (Ph.D. 2013) co-authored with Amir Hossein Mahdavi a Washington Post blog posting, “Understanding Iran’s supreme leader on the nuclear deal,” that appeared April 14. Lob is an assistant professor of politics and international relations at Florida International University.

Roxani Margariti (Ph.D 2002), an Associate Professor of Middle Eastern Studies at Emory University, was named a Berlin Prize
Fellow for 2015–16. Her project will be “Insular Crossroads: The Local, Regional and Global Story of the Red Sea’s Dahlak Archipelago (Tenth to Seventeenth Centuries).” Berlin Prizes are conferred by the American Academy, which offers residential fellowships to emerging as well as established scholars, writers, and professionals who wish to engage in independent study in Berlin. Fellowships are typically awarded for an academic semester or, in some cases, for an entire academic year.


“This book considers an important and largely neglected area of Islamic law by exploring how medieval Muslim jurists resolved criminal cases that could not be proven beyond a doubt. Intisar A. Rabb calls into question a controversial popular notion about Islamic law today, which is that Islamic law is a divine legal tradition that has little room for discretion or doubt, particularly in Islamic criminal law. Despite its contemporary popularity, that notion turns out to have been far outside the mainstream of Islamic law for most of its history. Instead of rejecting doubt, medieval Muslim scholars largely embraced it. In fact, they used doubt to enlarge their own power and to construct Islamic criminal law itself. Through a close examination of legal, historical, and theological sources, and a range of illustrative case studies, this book shows that Muslim jurists developed a highly sophisticated and regulated system for dealing with Islam’s unique concept of doubt, which evolved from the seventh to the sixteenth century.” For more about this book click here.

Rabb, a professor at Harvard Law School and co-director of the school’s Islamic Legal Studies Program, is creating a Website, SHARIASource, “to serve as the go-to resource on Islamic legal issues by gathering basic information, primary and secondary sources, and scholarly debates on topics spanning dozens of countries and more than 1,400 years of history. Though explicitly designed for easy public consumption, the site’s foundation will be in academic discussions, with a strong emphasis on connecting scholars from different disciplines to new sources and to each other. As a result, SHARIASource is part of a twenty-first-century digitization revolution that will change not only how knowledge is collected, but also how it is created.” The expected beta launch of the Web site is 2016. For more about this resource click here.

Shimon Shamir (Ph.D. 1989) was a 2014–15 Fellow at the School of Historical Studies, Institute for Advanced Study. Shamir, who is Professor Emeritus of Modern Middle Eastern History, Tel Aviv University, and former Israeli Ambassador to Egypt and Jordan, spoke about “Should Israel Regard Itself As Middle Eastern: The Internal Debate.”

Amy Singer (Ph.D. 1989) was a 2014–15 Fellow at the School of Historical Studies, Institute for Advanced Study. Singer is Professor of Middle Eastern and African History at Tel Aviv University.

Alice Su ’13 (BA WWS, Certificate in Near Eastern Studies) was interviewed on Jordanian TV about her work as a journalist covering the Syrian refugees in Jordan. The interview, in Arabic, may be seen here.

Kristzina Szilágyi (Ph.D. 2014) was awarded a Leverhulme Trust Early Career Fellowship. “Early Career Fellowships aim to provide career development opportunities for those who are at a relatively early stage of their academic careers, but who have a proven record of research. The expectation is that Fellows should undertake a significant piece of publishable work during their tenure, and that the Fellowships should lead to a more permanent academic position. . . Fellowships can be held at universities or at other institutions of higher education in the UK.” The Fellowship pays 50% of the salary costs for a three-year academic research position.

Joseph Witztum (Ph.D. 2011) was awarded the Polonsky Prize for Creativity and Originality in the Humanistic Disciplines in the post-doctoral researcher category for his dissertation, “The Syriac Milieu of the Quran: The Recasting of Biblical Narratives,” which was advised by Michael A. Cook. The Polonsky Prizes, which also include categories for researchers and graduate students, were established in 2005 by Dr. Leonard Polonsky to provide support for research in the Humanities at Hebrew University.

**Events**

**Brown Bag Lunch Talks**


**Carolyn L. Drucker Memorial Lecture**

The Carolyn L. Drucker Memorial Lecture was endowed in memory of Carolyn Louise Drucker, a member of the Class of 1980 who died in 1978. Drucker was studying Hebrew and shared her family’s interest in Jew-
ish studies and Jewish affairs. The 37th annual lecture, “Should Israel Regard Itself As Middle Eastern: The Internal Debate,” was presented by Shimon Shamir (Ph.D. 1961) on Tuesday, April 28, 2015.

“Shamir is Professor Emeritus of Modern Middle Eastern History at Tel Aviv University and former Israeli Ambassador to Egypt and to Jordan. Throughout his career on the faculty of Tel Aviv University and in his exemplary public service, Professor Shamir has been intensively engaged in cultural and political dialogue with Arab and Muslim interlocutors. In 1982 he founded, and became the first director of the Israeli Academic Center in Cairo, which promotes scientific and intellectual exchanges between Israeli and Egyptian academics. In 2002 he was elected Vice-President of the Parliament of Cultures, founded by prominent Jordanian and Turkish personalities.”

Leon B. Poullada Memorial Lecture

This public lecture series was established by the family and friends of Leon B. Poullada (1913–1987), a career US diplomat whose service took him to South Asia, Afghanistan, and Iran. Mr. Poullada retired with the rank of ambassador and then earned a doctoral degree in Politics and Near Eastern Studies in 1970 at Princeton University.

Thereafter, he devoted almost two decades to teaching and scholarship. In recognition of his diplomatic and scholarly contributions, especially his long association with the peoples of Persian and Turkish languages and cultures, this series, under the auspices of the Program in Near Eastern Studies, invites eminent scholars in Islamic studies, broadly defined, to present the results of their scholarship in a form meaningful to the non-specialist.

The 2015 lecture series, “Ottomans and Jews in the Literary Imagination of the Other, from Fifteenth through the Twentieth Century,” was presented by Marc David Baer, Professor of International History, London School of Economics, April 14–16, 2015. He is the author of Honored by the Glory of Islam: Conversion and Conquest in Ottoman Europe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), which received the Middle East Studies Association of North America’s Albert Hourani Book Award in 2008. He is also the author of The Dönme: Jewish Converts, Muslim Revolutionaries, and Secular Turks (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010).

Near East and the World Seminar Series

The 2014–15 edition of the Near East and the World Seminar Series had as its theme, “Christianity in the Near East: Past, Present…Future?” During the Spring semester, six talks were given: Mary Mikhail, Near East School of Theology, spoke on “The Christians of Syria and Lebanon and Their Arab Spring”; Geoffrey Khan, Regius Professor of Hebrew, Cambridge University, talked about “The Modern Aramaic Dialects of the Christians and Jews of Iraq and Iran”; Columba Stewart, OSB, St. John’s University, School of Theology and Seminary, presented “Outracing Ignorance: Rescuing the Christian Manuscripts and Cultures of Syria and Iraq”; Peter Starr, Prof. Dr. Fuat Sezgin Foundation for the History of Science in Islam, Istanbul, discussed “The Mediators: Christians in the Service of Islamic Culture”; and Fr. Samir Khalil Samir, Professor of Eastern Christian Theology and Islamic Studies at Saint-Joseph University (Beirut), the Pontifical Oriental Institute (Rome) and at the Centre Sèvres (Paris), spoke on “The Role of Christians—in the Past—within the Arab-Islamic Society of the Middle East” and “The Role of Christians—Today and Tomorrow—within the Arab-Islamic Society of the Middle East.”

Princeton Islamic Studies Colloquium


Intensive Course on Christian Arabic

Thanks to a number of generous grants from the David A. Gardner ’69 Magic Project, since 2004 the Near Eastern Studies Department at Princeton University has organized a series of short, intensive courses for graduate students on a variety of subjects in the broad field of Islamic studies not normally covered in the Princeton curriculum. In each case, an internationally recognized expert has been brought in to teach the course over a period of five weekdays. In 2015 the course was devoted to Christian Arabic and was taught by Alexander Treiger of Dalhousie University, an expert on Christian Arabic literature, Sufism, and medieval Arabic philosophy.

The course focused on Christian literature in Arabic, with emphasis on the Arabic-speaking Chalcedonian Christians (called “Melkites” or “Rum”). The first part offered a general survey of Middle Eastern Christi-anity, its ecclesiastical, ethnic, and linguistic divisions, and Christian Arabic Studies as a field of research, central to the study of the Christian Orient and highly pertinent to neighboring fields (Late Antiquity, Syriac Studies, Islamic Studies, Byzantine Studies, etc.). Particular attention was given to the library of the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai—arguably the richest repository of Arab Christian manuscripts in the world, at least as far as Melkite material is concerned. A special session was devoted to dated manuscript colophons from the Sinai collection. The second part of the
course focused on select genres of Christian literature in Arabic: biblical and patristic translations, apologetic and polemical literature, and world chronicles.

**Conference**
The conference “Climate and Society in Byzantine and Ottoman Anatolia, 300–1900 CE: Towards Understanding the Impact of Climate on Complex Societies of the Pre-Industrial Era,” held May 1–3, 2016, examined the evidence and interpretations for climate change and its environmental impact in Anatolia from the 2nd century to the 20th century in a broad comparative perspective. Scholars from 19 institutions participated in the event.

**Graduate Applicant Visit Weekend**
On the weekend of February 27–28, the Department and Program invited twelve Ph.D. and four M.A. applicants to campus for an intensive two days of interviews, language evaluations, and presentations. The visit allowed the faculty to get to know the applicants in person and, as important, gave the prospective students an opportunity to meet with potential advisors.

**Individual events**
Near Eastern Studies sponsored or co-sponsored a number of lectures and events during the Spring semester, a sample of which follow. On February 10, Hugh Kennedy (SOAS, University of London) spoke on “Archaeological evidence and the study of the economy of the early Islamic Middle East.” On February 26, Etty Terem, Rhodes College, talked about “Old Texts, New Practices: Islamic Reform in Modern Morocco.” On March 3, Kavus Abushov, Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy, discussed “The Right for Self-Determination and the Recent Events in Eastern Europe: Is There a Norm Erosion?” On March 9, Nahyan Fancy (DePauw University and Rutgers University) presented “Did Renaissance Physicians Know the Work of Ibn al-Nafis? Re-examining an Old Debate in Light of New Work on the Arabic Medical Commentaries.” On March 10, Shaul Shaked, Schwarzmann University Professor emeritus at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, talked about “The Jews of Bamiyan: A Community of Traders and Scholars in Eleventh-Century Khorasan.” On March 11, the award-winning documentary film Tînthîr-Jerusalem (2013) was screened and followed by a Q&A with its director, Kamal Hachkar. On March 12 Sadik Al-Azm discussed “The Syria Revolt from the Inside.” On March 31, Roy Mottahedeh, Gurney Professor of History at Harvard University, discussed “Ghaznavid Paegeyrics as Historical Source.” On April 22, Nicolas Sims-Williams spoke on the “Rediscovery of Sogdian.”

**New Jersey Teacher Training Workshop**
On May 2, 2015, the Program in Near Eastern Studies hosted a Teacher Training Workshop geared to secondary school teachers and community college faculty from the greater Princeton area on “Islam in the West.” Cyrus Schayegh, Director, Program in Near Eastern Studies, opened the workshop with a talk about “Islam and the West through the Ages: A Primer,” and was followed by graduate student Samuel Helfont, who discussed “Islam vs. Islamism,” assistant professor M’hamed Oualdi, who spoke on “Islam and Western Europe,” Edwards S. Sanford Professor of Politics Amaney Jamal, who presented “Islam in the United States, and graduate student Cole Bunzel, who discussed “Western Muslims in ISIS.”

**Social Events**
A farewell reception was held on May 30 in honor of Mirjam Künkler, who was leaving after eight years in NES to return to Europe.

The annual end-of-year language party was held May 1. Some fifty students and faculty attended the event, which included both homemade and catered Near Eastern foods.

**Postdocs and Visiting Fellows**
**Postdocs**
William Smiley, a post-doctoral research fellow in NES, gave a workshop on “The Islamic Law of Revolts and the Greek War of Independence” at the Seeger Center for Hellenic Studies. Smiley argued that the new definitions of sovereignty the Ottomans articulated through Islamic law had much in common with concepts of international law that emerged from the Atlantic World, amidst North and South American independence movements and the United States Civil War. Beginning in August 2015, Smiley will be Assistant Professor of History and Humanities at Reed College in Portland, Oregon.

**Kevan Harris**, a postdoctoral research fellow in NES and the Associate Director of Princeton’s Center for Iran and Persian Gulf Studies, will be taking up a position as Assistant Professor of Transregional Institute Events
The Institute for the Transregional Study of the Contemporary Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia sponsored several events during the spring semester. On February 16 the film Syria: Snapshots of History in the Making (Syria, 2014) was screened. The work of the Abounaddara Collective, the film was nominated for several prizes. The screening was followed by a discussion and Q&A with the co-founder of the Abounaddara Collective, Charif Kiwan. On March 3, Sadik J. Al-Azm, Visiting Fellow, TRI, spoke on “ISIS – Daesh Now: Notes from the Underground.” On March 24, Emmanuel Szurek, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, TRI, discussed the “Politics of Identity or Language Policies? From Erdogan to Atatürk.” On March 31, Max Rodenbeck, the Middle East Bureau Chief for The Economist, presented “The Arab Exception?”
Sara Pursley, a Cotsen Postdoctoral Fellow at the Princeton University Society of Fellows and lecturer in the Department of Near Eastern Studies, has an article (which originally grew out of an NES Brown Bag Lunch presentation) on Jadaliyya, an independent ezine produced by the Arab Studies Institute.

Daniel Sheffield will be joining the Department of History at the University of Washington as an assistant professor for the history of the Islamic world before 1850. He is currently a Link-Cotsen Postdoctoral Fellow in the Princeton University Society of Fellows in the Liberal Arts and lecturer in the Department of Near Eastern Studies.

Former postdoctoral research fellow Senem Aslan’s book, Nation-Building in Turkey and Morocco: Governing Kurdish and Berber Dissent, was published by Cambridge University Press in 2014. “Through a comparative historical analysis, this book compares the evolution of Kurdish mobilization in Turkey with the Berber mobilization in Morocco by looking at the different nation-building strategies of the respective states. Using a variety of sources, including archival documents, interviews, and memoirs, Senem Aslan emphasizes the varying levels of willingness and the varying capabilities of the Turkish and Moroccan states to intrude into their citizens’ lives. She argues that complex interactions at the ground level—where states have demanded changes in everyday behavior, such as how to dress, what language to speak, what names to give children, and more mundane practices—account for the nature of emerging state-minority relations. By taking the local and informal interactions between state officials and citizens seriously, this study calls attention to the actual implementation of state policies and the often unintended consequences of these policies.” For more about this book click here.

Visiting Fellows

Giray Fidan, Associate Professor of Sinology at Gazi University in Turkey has joined the department as a visiting fellow. His time here will involve research and writing on the topic of relations between the Ottoman Empire and China and the Chinese perception of Turkey from the 16th through the 20th centuries.

TRI Fellows

Emmanuel Szurek organized with Marie Bossaert a workshop, “Toward A Transnational History of Turkish Studies (18th–20th Centuries),” to be held November 12–13, 2015, at the Institut Français d’Études Anatoliennes (Istanbul).

Sadik Al-Azm gave two talks on campus in March: “ISIS – Daesh Now: Notes from the Underground” (March 3); and “The Syria Revolt from the Inside” (March 12).

Language events

Film Series

The following films were shown during the Spring Film Series: in Arabic, Borders, directed by Duraid Lahham, and Garbage Dreams, directed by Mai Iskander; in Hebrew, The Song of the Siren and Cupcakes, both directed by Eytan Fox; in Persian, Don’t be Tired!, directed by Moshen Gharaei; and Facing Mirrors, directed by Negar Azarbayjani; and in Turkish, Bir Küçük Eylül Meselesi (A Small September Affair, 2014), directed by Kerem Deren, Kiş Uykusu (Winter Sleep, 2014), directed by Nuri Bilge Ceylan, and The Other Town (2011), a documentary by Nefin Dinç, who gave a short talk and answered questions after the screening.

Arabic Talks

There were two Arabic class talks during the spring semester. The first was “Translating Arabic Literature,” given by Barbara Romaine, Villa Nova University, Institute for Global Interdisciplinary Studies, and the second was “Professional Interpreting,” given by Luisa Duarte-Silva, Princeton University, International Intern Programs – OIT.

Persian Talks and Cultural Events

On February 26, Kambiz Eslami, Princeton University Library, discussed “The Book of Kings, Shahnameh.” On March 12, the Persian classes received a guided tour of the Princeton Art Museum exhibition of Persian and Indian miniature paintings. Three days later they received a tour of the Persian Collections and Manuscripts in Firestone Library given by Kimberley E. Lehman, Special Collections Assistant, Library-Collection Development. J. M. Mollahati, Oberlin College, spoke to the Persian classes on the “Role of Persian Poetry and Friendship in Political Relationships” on March 23. Persian New Year was celebrated on March 26 with traditional Persian music performances and a discussion about Persian New Year. A “Persian Calligraphy Workshop” was taught by Manzar Moghbeli on April 15.

Turkish Talk

Visiting Student Research Collaborator Enis Dinç discussed “Atatürk’e Göre Film” on April 3.

Class Day 2015 Images

Departmental Chair M. Qasim Zaman welcoming graduates and guests to Class Day

Faculty, graduates, family, and friends
Class Day scenes

Daniel Sheffield and Michael Cook

Greg Bell, Thomas Hefter, and Jacqueline Nicholas

Oded Zinger and Naama Paz

Warren Crandall with Bernard Haykel, M. Qasim Zaman, and guest

Michael Barry and Samone Blair '18

Mason Herson-Hord with Nancy Coffin, Erika Gilson, and guest