LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

It is a pleasure to mark the beginning of a new semester and academic year with this new student publication from the Middle East Studies Center. The newsletter is expected to be published quarterly with news on our faculty, students, visiting professors and scholars, and alumni, as well as highlights from past and upcoming events.

Among the highlights of the 2016–17 academic year were visits from the Indian, South Korean, and Indonesian Ambassadors to Egypt. Luigi Narbonne, former EU Ambassador to Saudi Arabia and Director of the Middle East Direction Programme at the European University Institute in Florence, led a small delegation to discuss new perspectives on regional security and political economy. Ambassador Aly Erfan developed the Syria Reader, a compendium for the Syria crisis.

I was involved in a number of conferences and events, including: the Middle East Studies Association (MESA) conference in Boston; the Netherlands’ Ministry of Defence Conference on Africa here in Cairo; the International Studies Association conference in Baltimore; a CASAR sponsored event on Arab-U.S. relations; a CMRS sponsored workshop on Euromed migration; a Tahrir Dialogue on Japan-Arab Dialogue Towards Stability in the Middle East at our Tahrir Square campus; and two roundtables on middle powers in the Middle East held at Georgetown University.

I have been fortunate to meet Professor Dennis Sullivan, Co-Director of Middle East Studies at Northeastern University, in Boston and in Cairo, to discuss ways in which the Middle East Studies Center at AUC can cooperate further with Northeastern and the Boston Consortium for Arab Region Studies (BCARS). Indeed, we have already submitted joint funding applications and look forward to working on more, as well as co-hosting a reception at the MESA conference in November 2017. MESC signed its first MoU with the American Research Center in Egypt in 2016 and we look forward to building more relationships in 2017-2018.

At this time we welcome a new faculty member, Professor of Practice Karim Haggag, who is a career diplomat with over 25 years of service in the Egyptian diplomatic corps. I would like to congratulate those Middle East Studies students who have passed their MA dissertations and degrees this year, my faculty colleagues who supported their work, and I praise the effort of our student fellows who have been active in working on important projects for the center. I thank the MESC administrative staff who have helped me navigate around AUC and the world since I joined last year. As AUC’s centenary approaches, I look forward to working with faculty, students and alumni at AUC and beyond to make Middle East Studies at AUC an even greater success in future.

IN THIS ISSUE

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR
A message from Robert Mason

SPOTLIGHT ON MESC
Q&A with Claire Begbie on the inaugural film series, spring 2017 event recap

ON SYRIA
Upcoming research on Iran’s role in Syria; Ambassador Aly Erfan on the Syria Reader

FROM THE FIELD
An interview with Dr. Jeongmin Seo

AROUND THE CENTER
Updates from faculty and students; MESC working paper series
INAUGURAL FILM SERIES

AN INTERVIEW WITH CLAIRE BEGBIE

During the 2016-2017 academic year, MA candidate, Claire Begbie organized a monthly film series showcasing a range of films on Palestine. The series, which brought together students and faculty, was designed to facilitate dialogue and engagement on critical regional issues through cultural events highlighting diverse cinematic perspectives.

How did you decide on Palestine as the subject of the inaugural series, and how did you attempt to cover the issue in an original way?

Having spent a year studying in Palestine myself, I had already become interested in its beautiful and diverse cultural productions, notably cinema. A chat with Dr. Ginsberg from the AUC Film Department, who specializes in Palestinian cinema, was the other determining factor. We hoped that in showing a selection of Palestinian films, we could engage other students and touch on various important topics for discussion.

Can you describe some of your memorable or surprising experiences from the events?

It was always nice to meet and hear insights from some Palestinians at the events. One time, when we showed Arab Lotfi’s Tell your Tale Little Bird (Egypt, 2007)—a film about Palestinian women freedom fighters in the 1970s—not only was Arab Lotfi present for the Q&A, one of the former resistance fighters herself showed up to the screening.

How does film help shape your understanding of the issues surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

I think that discussing highly political issues such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is important for students learning about the region and can be enhanced through the political aesthetics of cinema. As I continue to watch Palestinian films and learn about the cause and its history, I am increasingly interested in the complexity of Palestinian identity and the Palestinian experience as an occupied and displaced people. Cinema, in playing with time and space, has the ability to convey layers, nuances and intersecting struggles that mainstream media paint black and white.

What can we expect from the 2017-2018 film series?

Ideally, the film series at MESC should reflect the interests of its student body and the diverse cinemas in the region. Since the series dedicated to Palestinian film received great feedback and gained a particular audience, it would nice to have a revival. Additionally, we hope to touch on other issues and new perspectives.

“Cinema, in playing with time and space, has the ability to convey layers, nuances and intersecting struggles that mainstream media paint black and white.”
**EVENT RECAP**

**INDIA-EGYPT: NEW PARTNERSHIP IN A NEW ERA**

A talk with Sanjay Bhattacharyya, India’s Ambassador to Egypt, on Indian-Egyptian bilateral engagement across various spheres, including cultural and economic-particularly science and technology exchange.

**THE RIGHT TO RETURN: THE KEY TO PEACE**

A talk with Dr. Salman Abu Sitta, a Palestinian researcher and member of the London-based Palestine Land Society, on the possibility of a peaceful return of the Palestinian refugees to their homeland under the guardianship of international law. His latest book, “Mapping my Return: A Palestinian Memoir” provides a counter-memory to the dominant narratives on the occupation of Palestine.

**KOREA’S POLICY ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE KOREA-EGYPT PARTNERSHIP**

A talk with Yoon Soon-Gu, South Korea’s Ambassador to Egypt, on how Korea’s own economic transformation influences its development work in Egypt, specifically in the field of education.

**BUILDING PEACE IN YEMEN**

A talk with Shoji Maktary, a former Fulbright scholar and Yemen Country Director for the nonprofit, Search for Common Ground, on his work building peace at the community level through an acceptance-oriented framework.

**EGYPT-INDONESIA RELATIONS: TOWARDS STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP AMIDST GLOBAL UNCERTAINTY**

A talk with H.E. Helmy Fauzy, Indonesia’s Ambassador to Egypt, on the current state of Egypt-Indonesia bilateral relations in the areas of politics, trade and development and navigating turbulent to develop a stronger partnership.

**STATUS AND PROSPECTS OF ISLAMIC FINANCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

A talk with Dr. Ali Soliman, chair of the Association of Former International Civil Servants of the United Nations, on what Islamic finance can bring to international finance, which includes modalities of reform such as, transparent contractual relationships, asset-based financing and targeted debt policies.

Mark your Calendar

On Wednesday November 1, Mustafa Popal, Minister Counselor for Political Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo, and Sam Werberg, Press Attaché and U.S. Embassy Spokesperson, will give a lunchtime lecture on “American Diplomacy in Action” in the MESC Conference Room at 1:00pm.

MESC is accepting entries for its inaugural 2017 photography competition, with a $100 AUC bookshop credit for the winning image. Submit your photographs capturing the culture, personalities or architecture related to Middle East studies. Photos can be taken from your travels in Egypt, across the region or internationally. The competition is open to current and former undergraduate and postgraduate Middle East studies students or those who have taken a course at MESC.

To enter, fill out the application form http://schools.aucegypt.edu/GAPP/mesc/Pages/MESC-Photo-Competition.aspx by 5 pm on December 5, 2017.
ON SYRIA

Iranian Policy in the Syria Conflict

DR. ROBERT MASON

The research I undertook on Iranian policy in Syria was conducted in Cairo and at the Changing Character of War Programme (CCW) at the University of Oxford, where I was fortunate to be a Visiting Fellow in the Michaelmas term 2016. The detailed feedback I received from Dr. Rob Johnson, the CCW director, and other visitors at the programme was truly exceptional, and I was fortunate to receive additional comments from Dr. Homa Katouzian, professor of Iranian Studies.

The paper provides an overview of Iranian foreign policy from 1979 to the present, and argues that economic factors are hugely important in Iranian foreign policy, particularly in returning to higher oil production and revenues and in attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and technology transfer. This I already knew to some extent, having conducted research in Iran for my Ph.D. on economic factors in the foreign policies of Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Syria is crucial to Iran on a number of levels. In religious terms (Syria is home to a number of Shia shrines), ideologically, in the way both states see the regional and international order, and in the strategic depth that Syria gives Iran by providing unfettered access to an increasingly emboldened and well-equipped Hezbollah. The security aspect in Syria is also important. It has drawn U.S. attention away from concentrating on Iran and has further increased Iran’s sphere of influence which had already grown following U.S. intervention in Iraq in 2003. Iran continues to feel encircled by U.S. military forces based in the Gulf and across Central Asia; therefore, Syria is also a function of Iran’s realist perceptions, assumptions and calculations. As Gause notes, the future of Syria will largely dictate who is perceived to have won this round for influence across the entire Middle East—forces allied to Iran (Shia Islamists) or forces allied to Saudi Arabia (Sunni).

Robert Mason FHEA is an associate professor and director of the Middle East Studies Center at The American University in Cairo. His research focus is on the international relations of the Middle East, with an emphasis on the Gulf states. His most recent book is: "Reassessing Order and Disorder in the Middle East: Regional Imbalance or Disintegration?"
What is interesting is that this Iranian government policy is being compromised by competition in the political system, none more so than from the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) which pursues an independent regional policy and enjoys a great deal of support from the Supreme Leader. This at a time when the Iranian government is attempting to maximize sanction relief and rehabilitate its international relations and reputation amongst western states. Reconciling the competing agendas of Rouhani’s reformist government and the IRGC will require determination on the part of President Hassan Rouhani and his cabinet, as well as popular domestic support and approval from the Supreme Leader.

Although the position of reformists have been augmented by Rouhani’s recent re-election, it is in no way guaranteed. We have seen reformists come and go without being able to make the kind of reforms they hoped to make in unifying the state under a single civilian leadership. Former president Rafsanjani was an influential voice against hardliners but he died in 2017, and former president Khatami is deemed to be an unmentionable personality in the press under a 2015 edict from the conservative-led judicial system.

"Syria is in effect a testing ground for the Supreme Leader to assess which power center—the government or the IRGC—is most effective at securing Iranian interests abroad."

Syria is in effect a testing ground for the Supreme Leader to assess which power center—the government or the IRGC—is most effective at securing Iranian interests abroad. So far the evidence is inconclusive, but there have been indications that the IRGC gives Iran the ability to calibrate and re-calibrate its commitment to the conflict and flexibility in the means by which it supports President Assad, which is important for a state that values the techniques of asymmetric warfare. The paper also finds that the Syrian government’s reliance on Russian military intervention means that Iranian interests in Syria could be threatened over time especially if Russia chooses to operate a residual presence there. This may also be the case if Russia chooses to expand its relationships, infrastructure and influence to other parts of the Middle East where Iran has significant interests.

From Practice to the Classroom: The Inspiration behind the Syria Reader
INTERVIEW WITH AMBASSADOR ALY ERFAN

Ambassador Aly Erfan recalls his experience working on some of the region’s most consequential issues, how teaching at AUC feels like coming home and the inspiration behind the Syria Reader.

As a young boy growing up in Egypt during the turbulent 1970s, Ambassador Aly Erfan was consumed by the news. He watched as Egypt played a pivotal role in regional issues and observed how diplomats, like Nabil Elaraby, helped steer Egypt and the region toward a more peaceful future. After witnessing the 1973 War and the signing of the Camp David Accords, he was inspired to join the foreign service to protect the interests of Egypt.

Thus began a career that would span 30 years and deal with some of the region’s most contentious and critical issues. His work as a diplomat took him to the United Nations in New York where he worked on arms control issues and prepared Egypt’s policy positions on developments in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

This close involvement with the Middle East Peace Process continued during his time as Assistant to the Foreign Minister where he maintained close contact with policy-makers engaged in negotiations with Israel and represented Egypt at regional and international conferences. Throughout his diverse diplomatic career, Erfan was able to work closely with the very people that had initially inspired him to pursue a career in foreign affairs. When Nabil Elaraby became Secretary General of the League of Arab States in 2011, Erfan served as his Political Advisor and Chef de Cabinet.

During this critical post-Arab Spring period, he coordinated policy planning and advised the Secretary General on substantive policy issues such as, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the crisis in Syria. “While the job of a diplomat can be diverse with an individual working on many different files, including economic issues or even strengthening bilateral relationships between two countries, the files I was mostly assigned were mainly
focused on conflict and crisis issues,” he told the MESC Newsletter in an interview.

Despite fulfilling a boyhood desire to work in foreign affairs, his time in the Foreign Ministry was not without its challenges. Erfan acknowledges that his extensive involvement with some of the region’s most protracted conflicts, most recently the crisis in Syria, shaped the way he perceives the region. “Although I was in the inner-kitchen of the Ministry, I must say there are sad and painful memories that I will carry from the turbulent five years, even though it was memorable,” he revealed. However, he argues that the region cannot be understood without understanding its conflicts, particularly the weight of the Palestine-Israel conflict on both the general population and decision-makers in the region.

Despite the challenges of working on conflict and crisis issues, he feels fortunate to have served as a diplomat in the region during the critical post-Cold War period that saw breakthroughs in the Middle East Peace Process and developments in non-proliferation issues. A personal career highlight was the opportunity to witness Nelson Mandela’s address to the United Nations General Assembly in 1990 after his release from prison. “I was there in the General Assembly when Nelson Mandela walked in. I witnessed this moment in history. This will always be something that I cherish very deeply,” he shared.

“It is very important for a diplomat, who deals with the region and the world, to be exposed to many interests and acquire knowledge in so many streams.”

After spending five years engaged in some of the region’s most contentious issues as Chef de Cabinet and Political Advisor at the League of Arab States, Erfan was ready for a change. In the summer of 2016, he returned to AUC as a Professor of Practice in the School of Global Affairs and Public Policy (GAPP). Viewing his return to campus as a sort of homecoming, Erfan credits his own experiences as a student at the American University in Cairo (AUC) for helping him gain the critical thinking skills, writing skills and breadth of knowledge he relied on throughout his diplomatic career. Erfan graduated with a Bachelors of Arts degree in Political Science in 1982 and went on to gain a Masters of Arts in Near East Area Studies from London’s School of Oriental and African Studies in 1987.

Yet, his passion for learning about the history and culture of the world drove him to study diverse subjects in tandem with his political science coursework. “It is very important for a diplomat, who deals with the region and the world, to be exposed to many interests and acquire knowledge in so many streams,” he said. “I took courses on film, Islamic art and literature other than my minor, which was comparative literature. I found this wide exposure very useful for me as a diplomat.” As he developed this diverse knowledge, he continued to push himself outside his comfort zone by acting and producing plays in AUC’s Arabic Theater. “I was very active in the Arabic theater, it gives you self-confidence and the ability to address a crowd,” he recalled. “I would say that the skills I acquired in this context helped me to communicate and negotiate ideas with numerous people in the multilateral context.”

(Photograph from Aly Erfan)
Erfan is excited to see this process of educational and personal development occurring in his own classroom today. As he teaches classes on negotiations, conflict resolution and regional security issues, he is able to approach the same subjects he worked on during his career from a fresh perspective. “Recounting, sitting back and looking at the same processes from the outside-in rather than the inside-out is a special and interesting experience,” he said. He views teaching at GAPP as an opportunity to share some of the knowledge and experience he has acquired throughout his extensive diplomatic career with the next generation of policy-makers and scholars.

This desire to help prepare the next generation for the challenges of a career in foreign affairs helped inspire him to create the Syria Reader, an online compendium of official documents on the Syria crisis. While working on the Syria file at the League of Arab States, Erfan struggled to quickly and easily retrieve official documents on the conflict because they were not located in a central source. “I know how important documents are, primary sources are, and this is a very essential part of research,” he said. “I thought it would be a good idea to have one place for all the original documents as an easy and handy research tool, especially as the Syria issue is still unfolding on the ground. It is history being made.” He began collecting documents in September 2016. After growing to over 450 documents, the compendium was made available to the AUC community through Google Drive in May 2017.

“I thought it would be a good idea to have one place for all the original documents as an easy and handy research tool, especially as the Syria issue is still unfolding on the ground. It is history being made.”

By curating and collecting the most relevant official documents into an accessible, central location, Erfan hopes to help simplify the work of scholars, policy-makers, journalists and humanitarian workers engaged in issues related to the crisis in Syria. “Just imagine yourself researching an issue. You have a whole world of events and documents. So, all of the documents that relate to the Syrian crisis will be put in one website and from there the public can easily access and download the documents.” The curation and collection of documents into a central location and the development of a corresponding timeline are designed to ease the work of scholars, policy-makers, journalists and various non-governmental organizations engaged in issues related to the conflict in Syria. The collection includes all relevant United Nations resolutions from the General Assembly and the Security Council, resolutions of the League of Arab States and official statements by the different parties to the crisis and the reports of various organs and mechanisms dealing with issues of chemical weapons use and humanitarian aid. It includes a periodically updated timeline that covers the major events from March 2011 until the present.

Erfan hopes his engagement with students in the classroom and the development of the Syria Reader will help future diplomats and scholars analyze regional, national and global policy issues from a multifaceted approach. When asked what advice he has for students as they embark on their careers, he said: “whether you pursue academia or practice, there is no right or wrong answer. You do what your preference is as long as you cherish the moment. Live life to the fullest whether you are in academia or you are a practitioner. Enjoy every single minute of it.”

The Syria Reader will become available to the general public by late Fall 2017. The documents and timeline will be accessible online through the websites of MESC, GAPP, and Cairo Review of International Affairs.

Click the website above for direct link.
In an August interview with the MESC Newsletter, Jeongmin Seo called Cairo an extraordinarily fascinating city since it is a place where people can simultaneously experience the 20th and 21st century. “It is a city where you can see a Mercedes while passing by farming land at the same time.” Elaborating on his time in Egypt as a precious time, he revealed that drinking coffee and speaking the local dialect with Egyptians were some of his fondest moments. “Café time was my favorite time in Cairo,” he said. “I could hear diverse opinions from different people such as writers, secular liberalists, and persons with ‘Lihya’ at the cafés in Khan-al-Khalili.” However, his time in Cairo was not without challenges. During his first visit to the AUC campus a few days after arriving in Cairo, a bombing attack occurred, which reminded him of the region’s conflicts.

Life in Cairo

Eager to share his views on Egypt and the region, Jeongmin Seo was particularly grateful to have access to the AUC library. He recalls the AUC library as a treasure island, with its abundance of data before the prevalence of the internet—a place where he could research and write. Learning the paradigm of Egypt and, to a large extent, of the Middle East, was the biggest advantage for him in choosing AUC. Jeongmin Seo credits his experience in Cairo, after moving to the United Kingdom to pursue a D.Phil in politics, with exposing him to diverse viewpoints; this helped him both to avoid developing a monolithic view of the Middle East region and to engage in critical discussions with a variety of colleagues.

Middle East and Korea

Despite an academic focus on state-society relations and the interplay between religion and politics in the contemporary Middle East, Jeongmin Seo has often been called on to share his analysis on the relationship between Korea and the Middle East region. With the continued growth of the Asian economies, particularly with the emergence of China and India as world economic powers, the ties between Asia and the Middle East have dramatically increased. While the Asian economic presence in the Middle East will continue to grow significantly over the coming years, the strategic implications of this involvement are less clear. In the face of the complicated, volatile geopolitical tensions in the region, many Asian countries continue to hesitate to develop stronger strategic relationships here. “Many countries still pursue a cautious approach to the Middle East due to the sensitive political dynamics, especially the inter-state relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran,” Jeongmin Seo asserted. “The insecurity is leading many Asian countries to [continue to] focus on improving economic ties in the region.” South Korea is one of the Asian countries endeavoring to improve its economic ties in the Middle East. In particular, Korea has been focused on economic cooperation with the Middle East as it is vital to its energy security. “The oil dependency of many Asian countries has driven [their] involvement in the Middle East,” Jeongmin Seo contends.

Although [Korea’s] energy security has increased with the advent of Shale gas, Korea remains dependent on Middle East oil.” However, Korea’s bilateral relationship with Egypt has been limited by Egypt’s recent economic challenges, which limit its comparative trading advantage with countries such as Vietnam or Indonesia. More recently, the amicable diplomatic relationship between Egypt and North Korea threatens the deepening of its relationship with South Korea. Despite Egypt’s status as a popular tourist destination for Koreans, min Seo stresses that “there should be more cultural exchanges between Egypt and Korea in order to strengthen the [bilateral] relationship in many areas.”

The Middle East as an Academic Field

The continued prevalence of misconceptions about the region has always motivated min Seo to work to bring fresh perspectives and approaches to the study of the diverse and dynamic region. “The Middle East is a flexible and ever-changing place. One should not look at the Middle East as static”, min Seo says. Since 9/11 and the Arab Spring, the interdisciplinary field of Middle East studies has been experiencing new directions in thinking, teaching and writing about a region that avoids the errors of outdated scholarship mired in false misconceptions and reductive assumptions.

When asked what advice he has for those interested in pursuing a career in the Middle East studies field, he recommended that students focus on a specific track within the field to develop an area of expertise. Jeongmin Seo stressed that non-native Arabic speaking students should prioritize learning the language. arguing that communicating with the local population is vital in area studies. Addressing the recent rise in policy-centric academia, Jeongmin Seo highlighted the importance of maintaining a balance between academia and policy by studying the region’s diversity, outside of solely a religious or policy perspective.
Franz Josef Berger  
*MESC Diploma student*

During my summer holidays, I had the opportunity to revisit a country that is likely among the least visited countries in the world: Afghanistan. I had been to Afghanistan already before: Between 2014 and 2016, I worked for a German NGO in Afghanistan. This summer, my former employer asked me back to help with a strategy document.

On the day I arrived, a huge truck bomb—the deadliest since 2001—went off. As security was tightened, I wasn’t allowed to leave my residence in Kabul for almost a week. Only “essential” movements were allowed during this time.

Occasionally, I had time to reconnect with old friends. As journalists, they were much less restricted in their movements around town and possessed significant knowledge about Afghanistan, which made them excellent interlocutors.

It was interesting to get their perspective on a variety of topics such as, tourism in Afghanistan, Afghan refugees in Europe, the infamous “mother of all bombs” that was dropped by US forces just a few weeks prior, the demise of journalism in the social media age, and the intricacies of reporting from a conflict zone.

One day I had the chance to partake in a barbecue that was organized at a friend’s place—the talk of the day were tortoises (a fairly common pet among expatriates in Afghanistan) and their hibernation strategies. As I chewed on my steak and listened to the birds chirping in the tree tops, I couldn’t see any indication that only 50 km away “Talibanland” began.

Yieun Kim  
*MESC MA student*

This summer, I attended several Middle East-related events held in Seoul, South Korea. Recently, there has been an increase in the number of events held in Korea that showcase and generate awareness about the art and culture of the Middle East. This trend is helping to challenge prevailing notions of Islamophobia and misconceptions about the Arab world.

One of the exhibitions I attended was “The Roads of Arabia: Archaeological Treasures of Saudi Arabia,” a joint initiative of Saudi Aramco’s King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture and the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage (SCTH) held in the National Museum of Korea. Youngjae Kim, minister-counselor and spokesman at the Embassy of Korea in Riyadh, said that the event was “a very useful occasion to change the (stereotypical) image of Saudi Arabia.”

Continued on page 10

Sara Hussein  
*MESC MA student*

I was chosen to present a research paper at the annual conference of the British Society of Middle East Studies (BRISMES). The theme of this year’s conference held at the University of Edinburgh was titled “Movement and Migration in the Middle East,” exploring issues of mobility and exchange across the region. I was awarded a support grant from AUC to showcase my research on Egyptian migration.

My paper, “Investigating the Increase of Cross-Mediterranean Egyptian Irregular Migration” discussed the sharp rise in figures of Egyptians choosing to emigrate through irregular means and investigated the conditions and structural factors associated with this phenomenon.

My research was well received.

My experience at BRISMES in Edinburgh left me feeling inspired and motivated. I feel lucky to have been able to learn from and engage with notable Middle East scholars and fellow students on a variety of pertinent issues in Middle East Studies. The opportunity to hear constructive feedback on my research was particularly helpful. It was an enlightening trip and I am very grateful for the chance to attend and present at BRISMES.
However, my favorite event was an exhibition of Egyptian surrealist paintings titled "When Art Becomes Liberty: The Egyptian Surrealists (1938-1965). The event featured a connection to my new home university as it was co-organized by the Sharjah Art Foundation, the Egyptian Ministry of Culture and the American University in Cairo. I particularly enjoyed discovering how members of the surrealist Art and Liberty Group became agents of social change and influenced the trajectory of modern Egyptian art. I was also moved by their unique portrayals of oppression and poverty within Egyptian society. I was extremely surprised at how many Koreans attended the events, and could see the rising interest on the Middle East. This made me see the positive prospect of stronger cooperation between the Middle East and Korea.

**MESC WORKING PAPER SERIES**

The Middle East Studies Center Working Paper Series is a platform for individual scholars and contributes to international social science and humanities scholarship on the Middle East and the wider Islamic world, from the seventh century to the present. It allows for publication, dissemination, and discussion of new research on a relatively fast track. It is quicker than the usual timelines for publication of articles in journals or books.

Visiting scholars are generally expected to submit a working paper during, or shortly after, their Middle East Studies Center residency. Other scholars are welcome to submit papers at any time. The general editor of the Working Paper series is Middle East Studies Center Director Robert Mason, associate professor at The American University in Cairo.

Recent Publications:

**Sadia Agsous (2017) “Palestinian Identity in Hybrid Texts in Hebrew.”**

Click here to download

**Pietro Longo (2016) "Salafism and Takfirism in Tunisia Between Al-Nahda’s Discourses and Local Peculiarities."**

Click here to download

For more information on submission guidelines, Click here.

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**Editors' Note**

Thank you for reading the first issue of the MESC newsletter. We hope that this newsletter will serve as a valuable means to connect current students, alumni and the broader AUC community with MESC events, projects and programs.

Special thanks to Heather Hunt, John Roedel and Mohamed Gameel.

We want to know what you think! Please fill out a short survey to help us improve future issues.

Click here

If you have any inquiries about the newsletter, please send us an email at mescnews@aucegypt.edu

Jessie Steinhauer
Yieun Kim