



## AASA Arab American Studies Association

### Message from the President

Dear all,

Happy Arab American Heritage month, Ramadan Kareem, Happy Easter, Happy Passover, Happy Nowruz, and Happy Spring!

With this newsletter, we hope to start a tradition of sharing association and member news with the community at large every spring and fall. There is no mistaking the season today. As I type, I can see sunshine outside my window and hear a cacophony of bird songs from the trees nearby, sure signs of spring in the air, at least for those of us in the northern hemisphere. I hope the change of seasons brings you comfort and renewed energy wherever you may be.

This month gives us much to celebrate, including exciting events and publications in Arab American studies. Of these I'd like to highlight two upcoming AASA virtual roundtable discussions, one focused on translation and Arab American studies and the other focused on SWANA/MENA categories and their implications for Arab American studies. I hope you can register and join us for these important conversations. Please also save the date for our tri-annual AASA in-person conference, which is scheduled for April 12-14, 2024, at the Arab American National Museum in Dearborn, MI. There are many more exciting events and member news to share with you, which you can find listed below. I trust you will find it all stimulating, and I really hope it will inspire you to renew your membership and continued participation in AASA.

With best wishes,  
Pauline

Pauline Homsy Vinson  
AASA President, Spring 2023

### Website Update

I am happy to announce that we have updated our website [arabamericanstudies.org](http://arabamericanstudies.org) with the goal of making joining or renewing membership a much easier streamlined process than before. If you haven't yet renewed your 2023 membership or joined AASA, please do so [here](#).

## 2023 AASA Virtual Round Table Discussions

AASA is excited to host two virtual roundtable discussions this month. They are:

**Monday, April 24, 2023, 3:30pm EST - The Place of Translation in Arab American Studies.** This virtual roundtable explores the relationship between translation studies and Arab American studies. Its purpose is to generate an open-ended dialogue within the two fields. To learn more and register, please click [here](#).

**Tuesday, April 25, 2023, 3:30pm EST - MENA and SWANA Categories and their Implications on Public Policy, Research, and Higher Ed.** This virtual panel examines the uses of the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) and SWANA (Southwest Asia and North Africa) categories in relation to Arab American studies, public policy, and anti-racist advocacy in higher education. To learn more and register, please click [here](#).

## Save the date for AASA 2024 in-person Conference, April 12-14

We are happy to announce that we will be holding the 2024 AASA in-person conference at the Arab American National Museum in Dearborn, MI on April 12-14. Please keep a lookout for a CFP coming soon to your inbox.

## Arab American Scholarly Book Celebrations

To mark Arab American Heritage month, you might look through the Scholarly Books in Arab American Studies slide show, which began as a book celebration we put together for our 2022 AASA conference in San Diego and have since updated to include more recent work. You can find it on our website under the newly created [Resources](#) tab. Feel free to share it with your networks if you like. We will be adding to this list on a rolling basis. Please send your recommendations to Danielle Haque at [secretary@arabamericanstudies.org](mailto:secretary@arabamericanstudies.org)

## Book Talks in Arab American Studies this Month

This month features a number of virtual book talks by AASA members. Please register to attend them if you can. They are:

**Friday, April 14, 12-1:30 pm PST via Zoom.** The Critical SWANA Studies Research Cluster at USC presents Queering Critical SWANA Studies with Charlotte Karam Albrecht, author of [Possible Histories: Arab Americans and the Queer Ecology of Peddling](#), and Mejdulene Shomali, author of [Between Banat: Queer Arab Critique and Transnational Arab Archives](#). For more information and to register, please click [here](#).

**Monday, April 17 at 12 noon PST via Zoom.** Louise Cainkar, Pauline Homsy Vinson, and Amira Jarmakani discuss [Sajjilu Arab American: A Reader in SWANA Studies](#) with Keith Feldman, virtual session hosted by the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. For more information and to register, please click [here](#).

In case you missed it, here's a [link](#) to a book talk that Evelyn Alsultany gave about her newest publication [Broken: The Failed Promise of Muslim Inclusion](#).

## Other News and Accolades

Below is a sampling of accomplishments by our members. Congratulations to all!

Evelyn Alsultany's book *Broken: The Failed Promise of Muslim Inclusion* (NYU Press, 2022) was listed as one of the 10 best scholarly books of 2022 by *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and was a finalist for the Association of American Publishers' Prose Award. She has published short pieces based on the book in [Time Magazine](#), [The Chronicle of Higher Education](#), and [The Democracy Paradox](#). She has spoken about the book at various forums including the Sundance Film Festival and on many podcasts including "[I'm a Muslim and That's Okay](#)" and "[Diffused Congruence: The American Muslim Experience](#)." She was recently promoted to full professor at USC.

Louise Cankar, [Racial Control under the guise of terror threat: Policing of US Muslim, Arab, and SWANA communities](#) was published in *Critical Studies on Terrorism*. Volume 16, Issue 1 (2023): pp 152-175.

Edward Curtis' Arab Indianapolis [community history project](#) is expanding beyond its original [blog](#), [book](#), and [heritage trail](#). [Indiana Humanities](#) has sponsored 20 statewide screenings of and dialogues about the project's [documentary](#). [National PBS learning media](#) has featured eight lesson plans and classroom activities based on the project, and the community's first historical [monument](#) is scheduled to be installed this year at Lucas Oil Stadium.

Lucy El-Sharif received the Outstanding Dissertation Award from AERA (American Educational Research Association).

Suad Joseph will be giving a number of keynote addresses and workshops in Cairo next month. These include: 2023 May 13 Keynote address: Mona Abaza Conference. American University in Cairo; 2023 May 15 Presenting Proposal Writing Workshop. American University in Cairo; 2023 May 16. Presenting Writing Workshop. American University in Cairo; and 2023 May 18. Keynote Address. Nowaihi Conference. American University in Cairo.

Joe Kadi has published a collection of short stories titled *The Great Loss of the Twentieth Century*, Tertulia Press, 2023. In the words of Amira Jarmakani, "*The Great Loss of the Twentieth Century* is a collection of stories that will first sear a hole in your heart, next make you realize that the hole was already there, and finally show you how to embrace it—on your own terms—on a path toward radical healing and love."

Sunaina Maira, Sophia Armen, Thomas Simsarian Dolan, Manijeh Moradian, Soham Patel, Stan Thangaraj, Ida Yalzadeh, and Roozbeh Shirazi joined in a roundtable discussion on April 8 at the Association for Asian American Studies (AAAS) based on a special Forum for *JAAS*, "Thinking SWANA in Asian American Studies," co-edited by Sunaina Maira and Roozbeh Shirazi (forthcoming June 2023).

Leila Piazza published a paper “Arab Americans and Census Reclassification: Recognition is Due.” You can find an oral presentation of it [here](#).

The Center for Arab American Studies at The University of Michigan - Dearborn has been nominated for a 2023 Michigan Humanities Award. Sally Howell was director until last year and Pauline Homsy Vinson is the Center’s current interim director.

## Advocacy

### Establishing a MENA category at the federal level.

As you may know, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is soliciting public comment on an initial proposal to revise Statistical Policy Directive Number 15 (Directive 15), which outlines the federal standards for data on race and ethnicity. The deadline to submit public comment is April 27, 2023. Here is a [link](#) with templates provided by the National Network for Arab American Communities (NNAAC). Here is the [link](#) to comment directly on the Federal Register.

AASA has signed on to a letter that the National Network for Arab American Communities (NNAAC) intends to submit to the OMB as a comment in advance of the deadline. The letter is addressed to the OMB from researchers and research organizations concerned with detailed data and community-based research. It urges the OMB to require federal agencies to collect detailed data on race and ethnicity through a combined question that includes a MENA response option. To review the letter, [click here](#).

## Opportunities

### Fellowships

The MESA Global Academy offers competitive [fellowships](#) to Middle East Studies scholars from the MENA region who are currently displaced in North America. The Global Academy awards \$5,000 scholarships and facilitates programming for its fellows, including speaking engagements at partner universities across the United States, publication opportunities, mentoring, and professional development workshops. The deadline for applications is May 1, 2023.

### Calls For Submissions

*The Companion to Contemporary Arab American Literature*, eds. Pauline Kaldas, Lisa Suhair Majaj, and Carol W.N. Fadda (Routledge). This collection will address the exciting theoretical and thematic engagements currently animating the field of Arab American literary studies. It will situate these works within the intersecting landscapes of US and Arab/Middle Eastern/Southwest Asian/North African contexts, reflecting the rich and growing literary output of Arab American and other diasporic SWANA writers. Please send a 250-word abstract and bio by July 21, 2023 to: [pkaldas@hollins.edu](mailto:pkaldas@hollins.edu); [lmajaj@cytanet.com.cy](mailto:lmajaj@cytanet.com.cy); [cfaddaco@syr.edu](mailto:cfaddaco@syr.edu) Full-length essays of 7000-8000 words will be due by March 1, 2024

*Centering the Margins: Reimagining the field of Arab American Studies*. The field of Arab American Studies has produced cutting-edge research on various aspects of Arab American lives and experiences,

yielding important insights into their intersections with nation, race, gender, sex, and generations. However, the stories and experiences of Arab Americans hailing from the Levant have often been at the center of much scholarly attention in this field, with immigration to the United States from Greater Syria from the 1880s to the 1920s often standing in as its historical point of origin. What happens when voices and experiences that have occupied the margins of Arab American studies move to the center of intellectual conversation and research focus? What happens when we draw on multiple origins that converge and differ among many historical and cultural vectors? This edited collection proposes an answer by centering communities and experiences from the periphery in relationship to Arab American studies as a field. Please submit a 300–400-word abstract that describes your project’s scope, argument, and methodology, along with your CV, no later than April 15, 2023 to the volume’s co-editors, Dr. Waleed F. Mahdi ([wfm@ou.edu](mailto:wfm@ou.edu)) and Dr. Danielle Haque ([danielle.haque@mnsu.edu](mailto:danielle.haque@mnsu.edu)). The volume will be published in a university press.

### Send us your updates

Please send us your news to Danielle Haque at [secretary@arabamericanstudies.org](mailto:secretary@arabamericanstudies.org) so we can share it with the rest of the membership at AASA!

