



CASA Fellows 2022-2023 in Amman

Alexander Barna is a Ph.D. student in the Department of History at Northwestern University where he specializes in Arab and Ottoman intellectual history of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Prior to his doctoral studies, Alex directed the educational outreach program at the University of Chicago's Center for Middle Eastern Studies. He holds an MA in Middle Eastern studies from Harvard University and a BS in biology from Duke University with a second major in the study of religion.

Caitlin Buckley recently graduated with bachelor's degrees in comparative literature and history from the Dual BA program between Columbia University and Sciences Po Paris. Following CASA, she hopes to pursue graduate studies that draw upon her interests in religion, literature, and history.

Will Crass graduated with an MA from The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, where he concentrated on the Middle East and U.S. foreign policy. He completed his BA in international studies and Arabic at Dickinson College and previously worked as a presidential associate at The American University in Cairo. He is interested in political affairs in Iraq and the Levant and hopes to pursue a career in diplomacy in the future.

Cheyenne Curley graduated from Wellesley College as a double major in Middle Eastern studies and comparative literature. During her undergraduate program she was awarded the Critical Language Scholarship for Arabic language and spent her senior year at Middlebury's language school in Amman, Jordan. Cheyenne is very excited to return to Amman for an additional year and hopes to one day combine her knowledge of Arabic with her interest in legal studies.

Sam Dunham is a PhD candidate in political science at Yale University. His work investigates the colonial roots of state capacity in the Middle East and North Africa. He also studies the connections between religion and political attitudes. In 2015, he received a BA in government and economics from the College of William and Mary.

Ryan Ellis recently graduated from Dartmouth College with a BA in comparative literature and Middle Eastern studies. Having studied Spanish and Arabic, his interests include migrant literature, utopian studies, and literatures of the global south. He has also interned with the International Organization for Migration's Iraq mission. After CASA, Ryan hopes to pursue a PhD in comparative literature.

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Ana Estrada Hamm graduated from Washington and Lee University with a BA in politics and computer science and a minor in Middle East South Asia studies. She previously studied Arabic through a Critical Language scholarship in 2021 and 2022 in Tangier, Morocco. Her interests include art history, political economy, religious studies, and hiking. After the CASA program, she hopes to complete a PhD in international development.

Maddie Fisher graduated in August 2022 from Georgetown University's Walsh School of Foreign Service with an MA in Arab studies where her research focused on the development-security nexus and religious, gender, and generational inclusion in peacebuilding in the MENA region. After finishing an undergraduate degree in Arabic from Georgetown in 2017, Maddie was a Fulbright ETA grantee and later went on to do the MENAR fellowship doing peacebuilding work at an international school in Israel-Palestine. For the past three years, Maddie has worked as the event and program manager for Georgetown's Center for Contemporary Arab Studies.

Miller Greene is a recent graduate of the University of Mississippi, where he majored in Arabic and international studies. As part of the Arabic Flagship Program with the University of Arizona, he spent the last six months in Meknes, Morocco. His academic interests center around Muslim-Jewish relations in the Middle East and North Africa, especially in light of normalization efforts between Israel and numerous Arab nations.

Richard Harrod is a PhD candidate in history at Washington University in St. Louis where he focuses on the transnational political, social, and economic history of the Arabian Peninsula – particularly Yemen and Oman. He received his BA from Monmouth College (Illinois) in history and classics and an MA in Middle Eastern studies from the University of Chicago. He previously studied Arabic at the UChicago Summer Language Institute, the Middlebury College Arabic School, and the Sultan Qaboos College for the Teaching of Arabic to Non-Native Speakers in Manah, Oman. After CASA, he will continue dissertation research and hopes to become a professor of modern Middle Eastern history.

Nabil Hassein is a PhD candidate in NYU's Department of Media, Culture, and Communication studying Arabic-based programming languages and communities. Nabil holds a BA in mathematics and computer science and previously worked as a high school teacher, software developer, and tech freelancer.

Christopher Hassel graduated from Duke University with a BA in Asian and Middle Eastern studies with a concentration in Arabic, along with minors in cultural anthropology and economics. He has studied Arabic in Amman, Jordan, as well as studying for one semester in the Anthropology Department at Yarmouk University in Irbid, Jordan. His interests include languages, translation, novels, history, running, and really good plant-based food.

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Sibgha Javaid graduated from the College of the Holy Cross in 2020 with a BA in religious studies and Middle Eastern studies. In May 2022, she received her MA from Harvard Divinity School, where she focused on Islamic studies. Her interests include Sufi literature, Islamic philosophy, virtue ethics, and Persian poetry. After CASA, she hopes to pursue a PhD in religious studies.

Rachel Leslie received a master's in public policy from the University of Maryland-College Park and a graduate diploma in Middle East politics from the American University in Cairo. She studied Arabic in Tunisia and previously lived and worked in Syria, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Jerusalem, and Egypt. Her interests include religious literacy/interreligious dialogue, global history, and foreign policy.

Benjamin Loy is a graduate of the University of Oregon with a BA in religious studies and linguistics with a Second Language Acquisition Teaching certificate. He self-studies a variety of languages, including Arabic, Mandarin, and Turkish. He has done some research in Shia studies but is interested generally in all things related to religion, literature, history, and understanding the human condition. He enjoys tutoring people in Arabic.

Nathaniel Moses is a PhD student in history at Harvard University, focusing on Ottoman and Middle Eastern history. He received a Master of Philosophy at the University of Cambridge and his AB from Princeton University. His main research areas include the history of science and the environment as well as social and intellectual history.

Lillian Massoud-Judge is a PhD student in political science at the University of Chicago. Her research centers around the discursive construction of state and economy in the broader Middle East; collective action and institutional change during civil war; and finance and capital accumulation in the Islamic world.

Dillon Nordhoff is a graduate from Brigham Young University, with a double major in Arabic and Spanish translation. As an undergraduate student, he worked as a Spanish medical interpreter and has studied Arabic in Jordan at Qasid as well as in Morocco in the Flagship program. His experience abroad, coupled with his exposure to Levantine Arabic at a young age, sparked his research interests which center on mutual intelligibility of Arabic dialects, sociolinguistics, and dialectology.

Olivia Odell graduated from Northern Arizona University with a BA in international relations. She then worked with various non-profit organizations in Utah and California through AmeriCorps, followed by six months in Morocco as a Peace Corps volunteer. Most recently, Olivia completed her MA in MENA studies at the University of Arizona, with a focus on migration scholarship and human rights. She hopes to use Arabic in her future career working for international NGOs or in diplomacy.

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Abir Petiwala graduated from Macaulay Honors College at CUNY, where she majored in French Language and Literature and Middle Eastern Studies. Since then, she has worked at several agencies within NYC government, including the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs and a local non-profit organization.

Spenser Rapone is a PhD student at the University of Texas at Austin, where he studies modern Arab intellectual history. His current research project focuses on the question of violence and its relationship with the self, soul, and spirit in modern Arab thought. In general, Spenser is interested in the universal significance of Arab intellectual history as it manifests within a particular context.

Theo J. Rossi is a doctoral student at the University of Cambridge, where she researches the history of mental healthcare in 19th-century Egypt. She is also pursuing a master's in Arabic pedagogy at Middlebury College. Theo previously lived in Doha and Cairo, where she worked for the Brookings Institution and the United Nations.

Rashad Saleh is a Palestinian-American filmmaker. After graduating from Oberlin College, he worked as a video and marketing associate at the American University in Cairo. Rashad returned to the United States during COVID where he has since worked as a freelance video producer while continuing his Arabic studies virtually. Currently serving in the video department at Doctors Without Borders, Rashad plans to combine his film and MENA studies background to produce documentary and narrative films in the Arab world.

Julia Schwartz graduated from Grinnell College with a BA in French literature in 2014 and completed her MA in Arabic at the University of Michigan in 2022. Julia worked in early childhood education after college, and then spent three years teaching English in Morocco before returning to the US for her master's program. She is looking forward to immersing herself in the Jordanian dialect and learning more about Arabic literature during her time in CASA, and afterward hopes to work as an interpreter or translator.

Sofia Smith is a PhD student at the University of Chicago in political science focusing on gender, media, and exemplarity. Previously, she worked on cultural heritage and development projects in Jordan. Sofia holds a MA in international economics and Middle East studies from Johns Hopkins SAIS, and a BA in politics, philosophy, and economics from Denison University.

Stuart Ahn Sones recently graduated from Indiana University, where he received his BA in anthropology and Middle Eastern languages and cultures. His undergraduate experience culminated in a year of Arabic study in Meknes, Morocco through the Arabic Flagship program as a Boren Scholar. After CASA, he hopes to pursue a PhD in anthropology exploring affect, sound, and performance in social and religious movements in North Africa. In his free time, Stuart enjoys listening to music of different cultural traditions and playing oud, guitar, and Korean percussion.