



CASA Fellows 2023-2024 in Morocco

Courtland Blake recently graduated from Virginia Tech with a double major in International Relations and Arabic. During her undergraduate program, she spent a year studying abroad at the American University in Cairo Tahrir Square campus and also studied at the Middlebury Arabic Language school. Her interests include history, foreign policy, languages, hiking, traveling, and reading.

Elizabeth Concepcion recently graduated from Columbia University with a bachelor's degree in history. She is interested in the history of public health in the Middle East. After CASA, she hopes to pursue graduate studies that build on her interest in the history of science and Middle Eastern history.

Zachary Culbertson recently graduated with his Master's in Arab Studies with a focus on political structures from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service. He also completed his undergraduate degree in regional studies of the Middle East and North Africa at the same university. He hopes to apply his Arabic skills to a future career in diplomacy or law.

Alexa Davis recently graduated from Emory University with BAs in Psychology & Linguistics and Arabic. During her time at Emory, she completed two years at the Oxford College; studied abroad in Amman, Jordan, and London, England; participated in Critical Language Scholars; and completed undergraduate research. After CASA, Alexa hopes to obtain an MA in Politics of the Middle East and work in diplomacy.

Rory Fitzpatrick recently graduated from the University of Arizona with a BA in Philosophy, Politics, Economics, and Law in addition to Arabic. He studies in Meknes as part of the 2022-2023 Arabic Flagship Program. He is looking forward to further developing his understanding of Moroccan Darija.

Ryann Hubbard recently graduated from the University of Iowa with a BA in international studies and a BS in economics. She was twice awarded a Critical Language Scholarship for Arabic, studying in Jordan and Oman. She is interested in the intellectual and political history of decolonization in North and sub-Saharan Africa, especially that of settler colonies.

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Jannah Kalai graduated with an MA in Arab Studies from Georgetown University where her academic research centered around authoritarian governance, the conflict-development nexus, and Arabic literature. She holds a BA in international relations from Boston University. Following CASA, she hopes to work in conflict analysis and prevention.

Erin Kelleher is a PhD student in the Department of Middle Eastern Studies' history track at the University of Texas at Austin. She is interested in the Ottoman Empire's enduring sociocultural impact and continued influence on Tunisia during the period of French colonial rule.

Mohammad Lotfi recently graduated from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service, with a Bachelor's Degree in Security Studies, and Howard University's Air Force ROTC program. Following CASA, he will enter active duty in the Air Force as a Second Lieutenant.

Iam Mars studied linguistics and Arabic studies at the University of Maryland, College Park. His studies primarily lie in the philosophy of language and the law. Iam completed his capstone year in Meknes, Morocco, where he would later become resident director for another study abroad program. Iam intends on attending law school after CASA.

Lucas Meyer-Lee graduated from Swarthmore College with a BA in History, Culture, and Interpretation Theory and Peace & Conflict Studies. Lucas' research interests include historical reproduction, comparative literature, mass incarceration, and literary theory. Following CASA, Lucas will begin a fellowship with Quaker Voluntary Service.

Ella Nasi recently graduated with a bachelor's degree in psychology and completed the Privilege and Poverty Academic Cluster at Middlebury College. She fell in love with studying Arabic in her second year at Middlebury, and in addition to taking academic classes, she deepened her learning through the Critical Language Scholarship virtually based in Meknes, Morocco during the summer of 2021. After finishing CASA, she hopes to gain work experience across a variety of mental healthcare domains before pursuing graduate studies in clinical psychology.

Juan Ramirez is a PhD student in history at Georgetown University researching the history of capitalism in 19th and 20th century North Africa, especially Tunisia. He previously graduated from Georgetown's MA in Arab Studies program. Prior to his graduate studies, he researched and wrote on the political and business environments in the Middle East and North Africa for five years, having lived in Morocco, Tunisia, and Oman. He obtained a BA in political science from Columbia University and is a first-generation college graduate.

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Charles Sills is a PhD student studying Syrian history at the University of California, Davis (UC-Davis). His recent work reconsiders the legacy of American archaeological extraction in Mandate Syria, and American cultural institutions' plunder of Syrian antiquities during the interwar period. He joined the history PhD program at UC-Davis after a brief stint at the American University of Beirut (AUB), where he began his doctorate in history in 2019. Before moving to Lebanon, Charles earned a Master's in history at the University of Georgia and bachelor's degrees in history and political science at Georgia State University. In 2022, he studied Arabic in Tangier, Morocco as a Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) fellow. After CASA, Charles looks forward to completing his PhD and pursuing a career in academia.

Julia Smith studied International Studies and Community Development at Covenant College and she recently completed the CASA@AUC Fellowship at the American University in Cairo. Her academic interests include Arabic literature, politics and religion, and global development strategies. When she's not studying, she enjoys running, hiking and camping, and traveling.

Livian Stokes is a recent graduate with a first class undergraduate degree in International Relations and Arabic from the University of St Andrews in Scotland. She previously took a gap year in Rabat, Morocco, and also studied abroad in Amman, Jordan at the Qasid Institute. Her academic interests focus on the Arab-Israeli conflict and political violence in the Arab world. She has been studying Arabic for six years and is honoured to be a CASA fellow.