



## NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2021

### ONLINE LEARNING

"Thank you for such a great quarter! You made online learning very fun" was one of the comments we received from our dedicated language students. We are excited to see that the incredible efforts our instructors put into making a challenging learning environment accessible to all students is being recognized. **Having fun in our classes is about engaging, motivating and inspiring students to learn.**

### WINTER QUARTER 2021 COURSES



In order to keep everybody safe, we continue to teach online. We are welcoming 104 enrolled students in 14 courses this quarter and are pleased to share our [Winter 2021 courses](#) with you.

Some of the highlights this quarter are two NEW courses: [ARABIC 245 - Current Events in the Middle East](#) taught by Ragy Mikhaeel, and [HEBREW 245 - Current Events in Israel](#) taught by Hanna Tzucker-Seltzer.

In each of the new intermediate-level courses, students are exploring a variety of news topics through online news media. The students are building a comprehensive vocabulary while exploring and learning to respect alternative topics, ideas and diversity of views as expressed in current media sources.

Both of these courses make use of the innovative learning site [Foreigncy.us](#). Each lesson helps students enhance their vocabulary through an integrated flashcard program. Each student is assigned a personal language training dashboard where they can track their learning progress and save lessons and flashcards that need more work. This critical and innovative language learning tool will be used in class for interactive work and class discussions and outside of class to deepen and broaden language proficiency.

### COLLABORATION WITH MENA STUDIES

The [MENA Languages Program](#) and the [MENA Studies Program](#) recently collaborated on some great events.

Arabic Language Instructor Ragy Mikhaeel's **ARABIC 316 - Classic Arabic Texts** students benefitted from a guest lecture by the **MENA Studies Program Director, Rebecca Johnson**. The topic was *Arabian Nights: A Historical Review*.



During a Fall Quarter MENA Monday Meeting, the MENA Studies faculty and graduate students and the Arabic Language instructors met virtually for an Arabic poetry translation colloquium. Interpretations of Hijāzī's work and Abū Hawwāsh's poems were discussed.

Continuing in the Winter Quarter, Hebrew Language Instructors Hanna Tzucker-Seltzer and Ronit Alexander will present at a MENA Monday Meeting on February 8 on the topic of Language as a Space of Inclusion. ([Click here to register.](#)) This topic is especially important as it dovetails with two crucial initiatives at Northwestern: the forthcoming Northwestern guide for inclusive teaching offering eight inclusive teaching principles and the work of the Weinberg College Inclusive Teaching Working Group co-chaired by Myrna Garcia, and Marcelo Vincés.

Other collaborative events with MENA Studies are planned for the Spring Quarter and will focus on Turkish and Persian.

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

We enjoy following and sharing the language journeys of our MENA Languages students. Here is a glimpse of how our current and recent students are using their MENA Languages in their research, interests, and careers. Please [let us know](#) if you have your own story to share!

### Moderator of SPOT Lecture with EU Official regarding Science Diplomacy in the MENA Region

Arabic language student Emma Zajdela, PhD Candidate, in her position as the Science Diplomacy Chair of NU's Science Policy Outreach Taskforce, moderated a lecture on the European Union science diplomacy work in Africa and MENA countries. The speaker, of Tunisian origins, was Dr. Fadila Boughanemi, who is the Deputy Head of the Unit for Asia, Africa, and MENA at the EU Commission, Directorate General for Research and Innovation.



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### Foreign Service Institute Program Assistant

Former Arabic language student, Katherine Salvadio, WCAS '20, has been working at the United States Department of State's foreign affairs training center. After majoring in MENA Studies and in



Communications, Kate used her Arabic language skills to produce an event recognizing U.S. Diplomacy honorees at the United States Embassy in Tunis. The event was covered in Arabic by broadcast news outlet alHurra; [click here for the video](#) of the coverage.

## Presidential Associate Program Officer at American University in Cairo

Former Arabic language student, Carter Rothman, WCAS '20, was awarded placement in the prestigious Presidential Associates Program at American University in Cairo. The Program provides recent graduates the opportunity to work at the highest levels of an international university, to further their Arabic language study and experience life in Cairo. Carter's career interests include the foreign service or the humanitarian field.



## Center for Arabic Study Abroad Fellow

Former Arabic language student, Connor Echols, Medill '20, won a fellowship at the highly selective CASA program. CASA provides advanced level training in Arabic language and culture, and CASA alumni have defined U.S.-Middle East relations for the last half-century. Connor deferred his fellowship to the Fall of 2021, when he hopes to continue his studies in Jordan.

## Undergraduate Language Grants - Apply!

Many MENA Languages students have won a ULG each year for summer study, and we encourage students to [apply by the January 29, 2021 deadline](#).

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## FACULTY EXCELLENCE

The MENA Languages Instructors continue to amaze us with their desire to develop courses that engage students' interests, and well as with their drive to best utilize the technology that has become so important over these past months.

Especially in her role as Chair of NU's Council on Language Instruction, our Turkish Language Instructor Oya Topçuoğlu has seen how the language instructors have done a tremendous job adapting to the new and unfamiliar environment of remote teaching and its many challenges.

Oya and the CLI commend the instructors for how they leveraged new tools and technologies to enhance the students' learning experiences, and also for how they came together as a community to share best practices, tips, tools and resources. Many of our faculty participated: Fatima Khan presented best practices to language faculty on using Panopto, and Ronit Alexander introduced many language instructors to Quizlet, to name just a few.

Here are some of the other Faculty accomplishments to note.

We welcome our new Hebrew Language Instructor, [Ronit Alexander](#). Ronit has been a great addition to the Hebrew Language team. She is teaching First-Year Hebrew this year, in addition to organizing guest speakers and hosting language tables. Welcome, Ronit!



We congratulate [Oya Topçuoğlu](#), our Turkish Language Instructor, on her well-deserved promotion to Assistant Professor of Instruction. Oya sets a high standard in her teaching, advising, service, and her many other contributions. Many of her Turkish language students have won awards and scholarships - Fulbright, ULG, Gilman, ARIT - in recent years, and all have credited Oya with encouraging and inspiring their success. Congratulations to Oya!

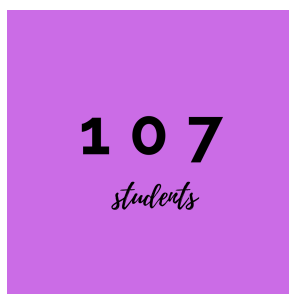


We congratulate [Fadia Antabli](#), one of our Arabic Language Instructors, on being chosen for an International Classroom Partnering Grant, awarded by NU's Office of the Vice President for International Relations and the Buffett Institute for Global Affairs. Fadia's award-winning proposal was chosen in part because it seeks to further internationalize the NU student experience as well as develop NU's institutional partnership with La Sorbonne-Nouvelle (Paris 3). Congratulations, Fadia!

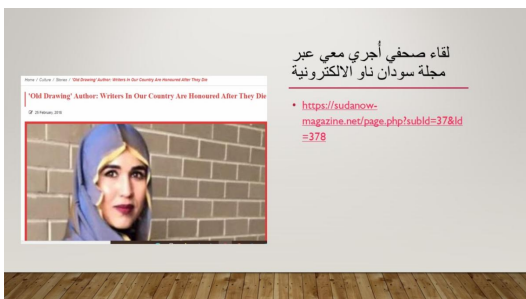
We congratulate [Fatima Khan](#), one of our Arabic Language Instructors, on releasing her project [Arabic Student's Dictionary](#). The site is unique as it helps look up an Arabic word more accurately than google translate. The ideal search is from Arabic to English, but learners can search by transliteration or also English words. The guesswork of figuring out the root is eliminated. The dictionary has been very well received and preliminary reviews are excellent. Congratulations, Fatima.



## FALL QUARTER RECAP



Our instructors hosted guest speakers from around the world to provide language and cultural discussions for their MENA Languages students. A few of the topics are highlighted here.



Dr. Rana Raddawi arranged for cultural presentations and discussions for Arabic Language students. Ms. Nafisa Al-Sharfi, a writer and academic, shared her experience living in Sudan and Egypt before coming to the United States. Dr. Al-Hassan Diab, a young Syrian currently living in Damascus/Syria, shared personal videos and images of the sights and unique traditions in Syria, and answered students' questions about daily life as a young person living in the Middle East.

Our Hebrew Language students had the opportunity to have discussions with speakers living in Israel. Professor Sami Chetrit, a renowned poet, filmmaker, and author, was born in Morocco



and grew up in Israel: The theme of his talk was "I Am An Arab-Jew". In his talk he examined the rich Jewish-Arab history, culture, and the conflicts. Dr. Maya de Vries, currently teaching in the Department of Communication and Journalism at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, discussed the relationship between Jews and Arabs in Jerusalem, and specifically, the joys and challenges of sending her children to a Hebrew/Arabic bilingual school in Jerusalem.



**I Am An Arab-Jew**

**PROFESSOR SAMI SHALOM CHETRIT**

The MENA Languages Program & The Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies at Northwestern University are proud to invite you to join a fascinating talk about identity and bias in modern Israeli society.

Chetrit chairs the School of Audio and Visual Arts in Sapir College, Israel. He is a renowned poet, a filmmaker and an author of novels and essay books. He was born in Morocco and grew up in Israel. In his writing he examines the rich Jewish-Arab history, culture and conflicts.

The event will be conducted in English.

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8TH, 11:30 AM-12:30 PM CT**  
[PLEASE REGISTER IN ADVANCE HERE](#)

Northwestern Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies  
Northwestern Program in Middle East and North African Languages



MENA Languages Program  
The Crown Center for Jewish and Israel Studies

**Bilingualism in Jerusalem**

Join us for a talk with Maya de Vries who will share the joys and challenges of sending her children to Yad Beyad, the bilingual school in Jerusalem and her views on the relationship between Jews and Arabs in Jerusalem.

Dr. Maya de Vries - Kedem is a professor in the Department of Communication and Journalism and in the Program in Conflict Research, Management and Resolution in the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

Maya is married to Dan and is a mother of Tom who is 8 years old, and Harel, who is 6.

**NOV 22 - 1:30 PM TO 2:45 PM**

THE TALK WILL BE IN ENGLISH  
[REGISTER HERE](#)

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## STAYING IN TOUCH

Students and others can always reach us. Please feel free to connect with Franziska Lys, the Director or the MENA Languages Program by [scheduling a zoom meeting](#). Professor Lys is eager to meet students anytime. Students can also [email](#) Charlene Mitchell, our program assistant, if they have a question or need a permission number for a class.



### Please forward this Newsletter and share our story!

The content of this Newsletter was produced by MENA Languages Program Director [Franziska Lys](#) and Program Assistant [Charlene Mitchell](#). Contact us with any questions or comments.

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