The Department of Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies Presents:

MESAAS Graduate Conference 2014

FIG. 43. MONITORS TEACHING READING
Three drafts of ten each, with their toes to the semicircles painted on the floor, are being taught by monitors from lessons suspended on the wall.

27 - 28 February, 2014

Columbia University in the City of New York
Knox Hall, 606 West 122nd Street
The department of Middle Eastern, South Asian and African Studies at Columbia University is heir to a rich bricolage of work that has more recently consolidated itself behind a unique vision of area studies, fostering a rigorous emphasis on what can be learned from, and not simply about, non-Western traditions and systems of thought, and foregrounding a critical geographical framework for our research that challenges dominant paradigms of inquiry and narratives of modernity as they relate to our three regions. MESAAS is heir and host to a number of intellectual traditions that resist division between the humanities and social sciences. We are interested in examining both classical and emergent questions, not merely as objects of research but as sources of knowledge. As such, we are equally interested in the limits of disciplinary knowledge production, the effects of hegemonic epistemes and paradigms of thought, the work that goes into the construction of ‘areas’ of study, as well as the past and future of area studies.

This year’s conference is a reflection of the diversity and range of thought housed at MESAAS. The majority of panels were formed with a view to shared or overlapping concerns. The presentations range from those on Islam as a textual tradition and a living archive, to others that examine pre-modern epistemology and the organization of knowledge. They include interrogations of ‘culture’ and cultural production, forms of statehood and notions of the political, agency and nationalisms, the mapping of ‘race’, notions of ‘progress’ and aesthetic regimes. We believe the breadth of the panels is given cogency by a common commitment to rigor and creativity. We welcome you to MESAAS, and we hope you enjoy the conference!

The Organizing Committee
February 2014

http://www.mesaasgradcon.org
Sudipta Kaviraj is Professor of Indian Politics and Intellectual History in MESAAS. He works in two fields of intellectual history: Indian social and political thought in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and modern Indian literature and cultural production. His other fields of interest and research include the historical sociology of the Indian state, and some aspects of Western social theory. He received his Ph.D. from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Prior to joining Columbia University, he taught in the Department of Political Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. He has also taught Political Science at JNU, and was an Agatha Harrison Fellow at St. Antony’s College, Oxford. He is a member of the Subaltern Studies Collective. Kaviraj’s books include *The Imaginary Institution of India* (2010) *Civil Society: History and Possibilities*, (co-edited with Sunil Khilnani, 2001), *Politics in India* (edited, 1999), and *The Unhappy Consciousness: Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay and the Formation of Nationalist Discourse in India* (1995).

Ruth Marshall is Associate Professor in the Departments of Political Science and the Study of Religion at the University of Toronto. She is the author of *Political Spiritualities: The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria* (U. Chicago Press, 2009) and numerous articles on the study of Pentecostalism, postcolonial politics, war and citizenship in West Africa. Her current research, funded by a grant from the Social Science Research Council, investigates prayer as political praxis, exploring the ways in which global charismatic Christianity attempts to ‘revive’ Christian faith as a veridictive force through the experience and dissemination of religious speech: tongues, prayer, prophecy, witness and testimony. She is currently working on a book that examines the ethico-political force of religious discourse in the postcolonial world, using concepts of translation and translatability to critically reflect on the problematic work that figures of ‘fundamentalist’ religion play in much contemporary political theory. This academic year she is on leave as a Chancellor Jackman Fellow in the Humanities at the University of Toronto’s Jackman Humanities Institute.
Presenters

Pascal Missak Abidor, McGill University
Bader al-Saif, Georgetown University
Andrew Stedman Alger, CUNY Graduate Center
Hasan Azad, Columbia University
Hashim Bin Rashid, Columbia University
Antonia Sigrid Bosanquet, Berlin Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies
Giovanni Carrera, McGill University
Matan Cohen, Columbia University
Owen Cornwall, Columbia University
Ahmed Dardir, Columbia University
Lori De Lucia, UCLA
Yasmine Djerbal, Queen’s University
Anna Dowell, Duke University
Danielle Drori, New York University
Jeffery Dyer, Boston College
Salha Reema Fadda, University of Oxford
Omar Farahat, Columbia University
Claudie Fioroni, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva
Oscar Jarzmik, University of Toronto
Vishal Kamath, Rutgers
Matan Kaminer, University of Michigan
Naveen Kanalu, Université de Strasbourg/Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main
Koca Mehmet Kentel, University of Washington
Sohaib Khan, Columbia University
Mina Khanlarzadeh, Columbia University
Shaadi Khoury, George Washington University
Owain Lawson, American University in Cairo
Nora Cherishian Lessersohn, Harvard University

Katie Logan, University of Texas at Austin
Ariela Marcus-Sells, Stanford University
Wendell Marsh, Columbia University
Salmaan Mirza, Harvard University
Taylor Moore, Rutgers University
Liron Mor, Cornell University
Hira Nabi, The New School for Public Engagement
Jacob Olidort, Princeton University
Marianna Reis, Columbia University
Andrea Daniel Rosengarten, Columbia University
Zahra Sabri, McGill University
Nour K Sacranie, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London
Abhijit Sarkar, University of Oxford
Marcela Schluter, Emory University
Noa Shaindlinger, University of Toronto
Kamal Soleimani, Columbia University
Baris Tasyakan, UC San Diego
Cihan Tekay, CUNY Graduate Center
Ayse Betul Tekin, Columbia University
Kenan Tekin, Columbia University
Mohammad Syifa Amin Widigdo, Indiana University Bloomington
Yuenmei Wong, Columbia University
Kimberly Wortmann, Harvard University
Li Xiaoyue, Georgetown University
Osman Yilmaz, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University/Columbia University
Rahile Yilmaz, Marmara University/Columbia University
Anna-Esther Younes, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva
Taylor Zajicek, University of Washington

Discussants

Muhsin al-Musawi, Professor, MESAAS
Judith Butler, Professor, English and Comparative Literature
Mamadou Diouf, Professor, MESAAS and Institute for African Studies
Omar Farahat, PhD Candidate, MESAAS
Michael Griffiths, Postdoctoral Fellow, Institute for Comparative Literature and Society
Wael Hallaq, Professor, MESAAS
Farbod Honarpisheh, PhD Candidate, MESAAS
Katharina Ivanyi, Assistant Professor, Religion
Hossein Kamaly, Assistant Professor, Asian and Middle Eastern Cultures, Barnard College
Sudipta Kaviraj, Professor, MESAAS
Mania Kia, Assistant Professor, MESAAS
Timothy Mitchell, Professor and Chair, MESAAS
Dan Miron, Professor, MESAAS
Christine Philiou, Associate Professor, History
Linda Sayed, Adjunct Assistant Professor, MESAAS
Thursday, February 27th, 2014

REGISTRATION | 8:30–9:30 AM | KNOX HALL, Lobby
LIGHT BREAKFAST | 8:30–9:30 AM

OPENING PLENARY | 9:30–10:30 AM | KNOX 208
Welcome Remarks: Matan Cohen
Opening Address: Sudipta Kaviraj
Marx and Postcolonial Thinking

SESSION 1 | 10:45 AM–12:45 PM
Scanning the Shelves of the African Islamic Library | KNOX 207
Wendell Marsh, Reading Sudanic Africa in the Margins: the Perils of Commentary
Kimberly Wortmann, Intellectual Cartographies in the Medieval Western Sahel (c. 1464–1627)
Ariela Marcus-Sells, Spells and Prayers: Discussing Muslim Practice in Saharan Society
Discussant: Mamadiou Diouf
Moderator: Tommaso Manfredini

Narrating Progress | KNOX 208
Bader al-Saif, Surveying Thaqafat al-Takhalluf in Modern & Contemporary Arabic Literature: an Intellectual Historiography
Taylor Moore, “Superstitious Women”: Cultivating the Upper Egyptian Fellaha in SemiColonial Egypt
Andrew Stedman Alger, Religious Education and Revolution in Hashemite Iraq
Yasmine Djerbal, Gender, Nation and Postcolonial Contexts: An Algerian Experience
Discussant: Sudipta Kaviraj
Moderator: Sohini Pillai

SESSION 2 | 2:00–4:00 PM
Islam, Modernity, and Political Form: The Impossible State | KNOX 207
Hasan Azad, “The Islamic State is Not a Dream”: Hizb ut-Tahrir’s Thinking Through the Modern State
Kamal Soleimani, Islamist Arab Nationalism: The Arab-Centrism of Islamic Political Thought between the late 19th and Early 20th Centuries
Yuenmei Wong, Shari’a-Queers: Islamic Law and the Construction of New Muslims’ Sexual Identities in Malaysia
Discussant: Wael Hallaq
Moderator: Neda Bolourchi

Locating Culture | KNOX 208
Mina Khanlarzadeh, Lalehzari Music: Unsung Artists of Iranian Song
Salha Reema Fadda, The Political Economy of Cultural Intervention in Palestine
Katie Logan, Google It: Virtual Maps and the Anxieties of Forgetting in Modern Arabic Literature
Discussant: Muhsin al-Musawi
Moderator: Henny Ziai

LUNCH BREAK | 1:00–1:45 PM
Thursday, February 27th, 2014

Racialized Cartographies | KNOX 403

Vishal Kamath, *Hybridity and Spatial Imagination in the Persian Gulf: Locating the Banu Ka‘b Arabs from 1707 to 1775*

Pascal Missak Abidor, *Genealogy of a Geography: Jabal Amiil Between ‘Asabiya and Wataniya*

Owain Lawson, “History is Merely a Bird of Passage”: Environmental Determinism, Racialization, and Nationalism in Mandate Lebanon

Andrea Daniel Rosengarten, *Other “Coloureds”: Categorization and Identity of Colonial Namibia’s Mixed-Race Communities, 1914-1939*

**Moderator:** Andrew Ollett

SESSION 3 | 4:15–6:15 PM

Education, Knowledge, and Modernity | KNOX 207

Salmaan Mirza, *Preaching Business Education*

Kenan Tekin, *Knowledge and Social Imagination in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire: Sacaklizade and Yahya Nevî’s Organization of Disciplines*

Shaadi Khoury, *Al-Hilal’s Survey of 1919-1920 and the Nahda’s Contentious Language Debate*

**Discussant:** Linda Sayed  
**Moderator:** Casey Primel

Islamic Reform in Modern Thought and Politics | KNOX 208

Jacob Olidort, *The Mosque as Message: Albani and the Politicization of Piety in 1950’s Damascus*

Ayse Betul Tekin, *Muhammad Abduh’s Approach to Religion: Between Tradition and Modernity*

Zahra Sabri, *Citizen Khan and the Face of Non-‘fundamentalist’ Islam in Pakistan Today*

**Discussant:** Hossein Kamaly  
**Moderator:** Angela Giordani

Humor and Re-Appropriation in Palestinian and Hebrew Literatures | KNOX 403

Danielle Drori, *What’s Funny about Mistranslation?: The Translation of Don-Quixote into Hebrew*

Liron Mor, *What’s Funny about Occupation?: Re-appropriations in Imil Habibi’s Pessoptimist*

**Discussant:** Dan Miron  
**Moderator:** Roni Henig

WELCOME REMARKS (Timothy Mitchell, Chair, MESAAS) | 7:00 PM

DINNER | 7:00–9:00 PM
Friday, February 28th, 2014

SESSION 4 | 9:15–11:15 AM

Colonizing Strategies | KNOX 207
Abhijit Sarkar, The State in the Kitchen: State-Intervention in Food and Popular Responses in Wartime India (1939-45)

Oscar Jarzmik, “Adjusting to Powerlessness” in Occupied Jerusalem: Ethnopsychiatry and the Organizing Principles of Municipal Policy after the June 1967 War

Hashim bin Rashid, Enclosing the River Indus

Noa Shaindlinger, Point of No Return

Discussant: Michael Griffiths
Moderator: Matan Cohen

Classical Islam: Ethics, Language, and Epistemology | KNOX 403
Osman Yilmaz, A Dating of al-Suyūtī’s Grammatical Khilāf Book

Antonia Sigrid Bosanquet, The Polemics of Here and There: Place, Space and Telling in Ahkam Ahl al-Dhimma

Giovanni Carrera, The Epistemological Role of Language in al-Razi’s Hermeneutics

Discussant: Katharina Ivanyi
Moderator: Sohaib Khan

SESSION 5 | 11:30 AM–1:30 PM

Regimes of Labor | KNOX 207
Claudie Fioroni, From “Politics of Work” to “Politics at Work”: An Analysis of Subjection Processes at the Jordan Phosphate Mine Company


Matan Kaminer, The Wages of Agricultural Work in Israel

Li Xiaoyue, Illness as Discourse–Medical Representations of Workers’ Diseases

Discussant: Timothy Mitchell
Moderator: Matthew Ghazarian

Rethinking the Political | KNOX 208
Ahmed Dardir, Martyr Genealogies: The Practice of al Khawarij and Umm al Mu’minin as Subjugated Knowledge

Matan Cohen, Disengaged Lives: Palestine and the Question of Vulnerability

Anna-Esther Younes, The New Europe and the Figure of the Jew

Marianna Reis, Strategies of Legitimization: Deploying Palestinians as Israeli Arab Agents of the Zionist State

Discussant: Judith Butler
Moderator: Nasser Abourahme

Visual Politics | KNOX 403
Hira Nabi, Between Islam and Cinema in Pakistan: Spectacle and Jaloos

Taylor Zajicek, Capturing Turkish-Soviet Convergence on Film

Nour K Sacranie, Alternative Remembrances: Memory, History and the Civil War in Contemporary Lebanese Art

Anna Dowell, Of Bodies and Buildings: Reading Claims to Citizenship and Grievability in Images of Violence

Discussant: Farbod Honarpisheh
Moderator: Mohammad Sadegh Ansari
Friday, February 28th, 2014

LUNCH BREAK | 1:30–3:30 PM

SESSION 6 | 3:30–5:30 PM

Islamic Law and Jurisprudence | KNOX 207
Rahile Yilmaz, Criticizing Muslim Traditions: A Critical Analysis of Muslim and Western Academic Approaches to the Study of Hadith
Omar Farahat, Divine Command Ethics in the Jurisprudence of Abu Bakr b. al-Baqillani
Sohaib Khan, Efficiency Matters: Virtues of Maximization and the Moral Failings of Islamic Banking and Finance
Discussant: Omar Farahat

Medieval Arts and Sciences | KNOX 403
Owen Cornwall, Alexander and the Astrolabe in India
Naveen Kanalu, Marga/Desi or the ‘Path’ and the ‘Country’ in Vernacularization: The Shaping of Pre-modern Kannada Literary Culture
Marcela Schlueter, To the Letter: Examining Paratextuality and Pedagogy in the Letters of Abu’l Qasim al-Junayd, Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi, and Nizamuddin Auliya
Discussant: Mana Kia
Moderator: Kyle Schirmann

Modern Ottoman History: Urban Politics and Regional Growth | KNOX 208
Koca Mehmet Kentel, Cosmopolitanism over Dead Bodies: Subway, Cemetery, Garden and Urban Dualities in the Late 19th Century Istanbul
Baris Tasyakan, The Politics of Fire: Ottoman Istanbul in the Late Eighteenth Century
Nora Cherishian Lessersohn, ‘Provincial Cosmopolitanism’ in Late Ottoman Anatolia: Recovering Armenian Complexity through Hovhannes Cherishian’s (1886-1967) Memoir
Discussant: Christine Philiou
Moderator: Kenan Tekin

CLOSING PLENARY | 6:00–7:00 PM | 501 SCHERMERHORN

Introduction: Wendell Marsh

DINNER | 7:00 PM–9:00 PM
Acknowledgements

Organizing Committee
Nasser Abourahme
Matan Cohen
Omar Farahat
Sarah Hawas
Sohaib Khan
Wendell Marsh
Kenan Tekin

We Thank:

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