

## International

# Workshops in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)

APSA's MENA Workshops program continued this spring with conferences taking place in Amman, Jordan and Tunis, Tunisia. The events are part of a multi-year initiative to support political science research and networking in the Arab Middle East and North Africa through a series of residential workshops at regional universities and research institutions. With support provided by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the MENA Workshops program is a major component of APSA's engagement with political science communities outside the United States and support for research networks linking US scholars with their colleagues overseas.

The Amman workshop was hosted in cooperation with Birzeit University, the Palestinian American Research Center (PARC), and the American Center of Oriental Research (ACOR), and held at ACOR's research and residential facilities in Amman, Jordan from May 11–15. The workshop was led by a team of faculty from the United States and Palestine. Participants included 19 political and social scientists (13 scholars from the region and 6 from Europe), who were competitively selected from a pool of over 70 applicants.

Titled "Explaining Cross National Variations in Challenges to Old Regimes during the Early Stages of the Arab Spring Move-

ments," the workshop canvassed various theoretical and methodological approaches that could be used to better understand these challenges, focusing on factors such as social movements, military and domestic security forces, economic conditions, and use of social media. Throughout their discussions, participants drew on an extensive set of readings as well as their own research. Participants also made time to visit the ancient city of Jerash and enjoy the attractions of downtown Amman. For the next several months, participants will continue to develop their research projects for presentation and peer review at a follow-up workshop in September 2014.

The Tunis workshop was organized in cooperation with Le Centre d'Etudes Maghrébines à Tunis (CEMAT) from June 3–9 and was the follow-up event to the February workshop in Cairo, Egypt. Participants included 15 political and social scientists from a wide range of universities and research institutions.



A team of faculty from the United States and Lebanon led the program, titled "The Political Economy of Economic Development." The workshop combined approaches from international relations, comparative politics, and economics to address "big questions" in the political economy of development. The program included a panel presentation on Tunisia's National Electoral Commission given by local academics and politicians, as well as significant time for participants to present and receive feedback on their own research projects. The group also visited the ancient sites of El Jem and Kairouan. Concluding their participation in the five-month workshop program, alumni were provided three years' complimentary membership to APSA and are now eligible to apply for small grants to support their further research.

For more information on the 2014 workshops or the overall program, visit [www.apsanet.org/menaworkshops](http://www.apsanet.org/menaworkshops).

Above, workshop fellows (from left to right) Mona Farag, Chadi Abou Daher, Jinan Al Habbal, May Darwich, Abdul-Wahab Kayyali, and Guy Burton enjoy the sunset in Sidi Bousaid at the close of the workshop in Tunis, Tunisia.



Left, workshop fellows (from left to right) Ammar Maleki, Arin Ayanian, Tareq Al Taie, Ahmed Azzam, and Ayfer Erdogan during a small group discussion in the ACOR seminar room, Amman, Jordan. Photos by Andrew Stinson. (Color online.)