

APSA MENA Workshops

Political Science in the Arab Middle East & North Africa



Visuality and Creation of Liminal Spaces of Participation: Middle East and North African Perspectives

2021 Virtual Summer Program

Co-Leaders:

Amal Abdrabo (Alexandria University), Osman Balkan (Swarthmore College),
Arig Eweida (Alexandria University), and Jillian Schwedler (Hunter College)

This workshop explores how power is produced and reproduced within society, how citizens engage in political expression even in repressive contexts, and how these practices use public spaces as sites of meaning-making. In our sessions we will address the methodological challenges of doing this type of analysis, focusing on forms of interpretative research such as ethnography, participant-observation, interviews, and critical discourse and semiotic analysis. Participants will also be introduced to the field of visuality studies and will develop their own individual research projects.

The workshop will be conducted virtually as a series of discussion sessions held in two blocks. The first three days of the program (July 15 - 17) are focused on theoretical and methodological discussion and will be guided by a set of readings. We will also hear from guest speaker experts in social anthropology. Across these sessions, we encourage fellows to reflect on how the theories and methodologies discussed might connect to their own research projects.

The final two days (August 26 and 28) are focused on research presentations and professional development. Prior to these sessions, fellows will submit a revised research proposal which incorporates some of the theoretical and methodological themes of the workshop (Liminality and Visuality). Co-leaders and fellows will read these submissions in advance and offer detailed feedback during a dedicated discussion of each fellows' work. More details on this block of the workshop will be forthcoming.

Thursday, July 15; 10am – 1pm Eastern (3 hours)

Navigating the Field: The Ethical, Practical, and Political Challenges of Immersive Research in the MENA Region

This virtual workshop aims to introduce participants to the field of visuality (theory, method, and in-field) while developing individual research projects through co-leader and peer feedback. During our first session we will get to know each other and learn about our mutual research interests. We hope to foster an environment of everyone as equals, working and commenting on each other's projects while avoiding the student-expert model in which students pose questions and workshop leaders provide authoritative responses.

Required Readings:

- Janine Clark and Francesco Cavatorta. "Introduction," in *Political Science Research in the Middle East and North Africa: Methodological and Ethical Challenges*. Eds. Janine Clark and Francesco Cavatorta. Oxford University Press, 2018. Pgs. 1 – 22.
- Jillian Schwedler and Janine Clark. "Encountering the Mukhabarat State," in *Political Science Research in the Middle East and North Africa: Methodological and Ethical Challenges*. Eds. Janine Clark and Francesco Cavatorta. Oxford University Press, 2018. Pgs. 23 – 34.
- Nadya Hajj. "Let Go and Let Ali, in *Stories from the Field: A Guide to Navigating Fieldwork in Political Science*. Eds. Peter Krause and Ora Szekely. Columbia University Press, 2020. Pgs. 53-55.
- Peter Krause. "Navigating Born and Chosen Identities in Fieldwork," in *Stories from the Field: A Guide to Navigating Fieldwork in Political Science*. Eds. Peter Krause and Ora Szekely. Columbia University Press, 2020. Pgs. 145-151.

Friday, July 16; 10am – 1pm Eastern (3 hours)

Visuality and Visual Ethnography

Guest Speaker: Samuli Schielke (Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient)

This session is dedicated to discussing the theme of "visuality" through various activities. The first part will be dedicated to discussing assigned readings, with special attention to appropriate methodologies and how they might connect with individual projects. For the remainder of the session, we will be joined by a guest speaker who will lead a discussion of some of their writings, which we will all have read in advance.

Required Readings:

- Nicholas Mirzoeff. "The Right to Look." *Critical Inquiry* 37.3 (2011): Pgs. 473 – 496.
- Samuli Schielke. "Surfaces of Longing: Cosmopolitan Aspiration and Frustration in Egypt." *City & Society* 24.1 (2012): Pgs. 29 – 37.
- Samuli Schielke and Jessica Winegar. "The Writing on the Walls of Egypt." *Middle East Report* 265 (Winter 2012): Pgs. 13 – 17.

- Amal Abdrabo. “Forgive but Not Forget: The Social Role of Cinema in Restoring Collective Memory and Rebuilding Belonging,” in *Memory, Conflicts, Disasters, and the Geopolitics of the Displaced*. Auths. Clara Rachel Eybalin Casseus, Stevens Aguto Odongoh, Amal Adel Abdrabo. IGI Global Publisher, 2020. Pp. 127- 151.

Recommended Further Reading:

- Dipesh Karel. “Visual Ethnography: Thick Description and Cultural Representation.” *Dhaulgiri Journal of Sociology and Anthropology* 9 (2015): Pgs. 147 – 160.
- Julie Peteet. “The Writing on the Walls: The Graffiti of the Intifada.” *Cultural Anthropology* 11.2 (1996): Pgs. 139 – 159.

Saturday, July 17; 10am – 1pm Eastern (3 hours)

Liminality and Urban Ethnography

Guest Speaker: Farha Ghannam (Swarthmore College)

This session is dedicated to discuss the theme of “liminality” through various activities. The first part will be dedicated to discussing assigned readings, with special attention to appropriate methodologies and how they might connect with individual projects. For the remainder of the session, we will be joined by a guest speaker who will lead a discussion of some of their writings, which we will all have read in advance.

Required Reading:

- Bjorn Thomassen. *Liminality and the Modern: Living Through the In-Between*. Chapter 4: Dimensions of Liminality. Pgs. 89 – 110. Ashgate Press, 2021.
- Farha Ghannam. “Mobility, Liminality, and Embodiment in Urban Egypt.” *American Ethnologist* 38.4 (2011): Pgs. 790 – 800.
- Amal Abdrabo. “Third-Spaces and the Creation of Socio-Spatial Identity: Fostering a New Model of Creative Cities (Basel, Switzerland),” in *Handbook of Research on Creative Cities and Advanced Models for Knowledge-Based Urban Development*. Eds. Aly Galaby and Amal Adel Abdrabo. IGI global Publisher. 2021. Pp. 144-172.

Recommended Further Reading:

- Turner, Victor. "Liminality and Communitas," in *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. Aldine Publishing (1969): Pgs. 359–374

Thursday, August 26; 10am – 1pm Eastern (3 hours)

Discussion II: Research Projects and Professional Development

- Welcome & introduction - 15 mins
- 1st paper by **Motasem Abuzaid** (Jill as discussant/moderator) - 25 mins
- 2nd paper by **Laila Mourad** (Amal as discussant/moderator) - 25 mins
- Break – 10 mins
- 3rd paper by **Parichehr Kazemi** (Jill as discussant/moderator) - 25 mins
- 4th paper by **Elsayed Elsehamy** (Amal as discussant/moderator) - 25 mins
- 5th paper by **Amina Karoui** (Arig as discussant/moderator) - 25 mins
- Professional development open discussions & networking by co-leaders- 30 mins

Saturday, August 28; 10am – 1pm Eastern (3 hours)

Discussion II: Research Projects and Professional Development

- 6th paper by **Mona Khneisser** (Arig as discussant/moderator) - 25 mins
- 7th paper by **Sophie Schor** (Osman as discussant/moderator) - 25 mins
- 8th paper by **Taghreed Nour** (Jill as discussant/moderator) - 25 mins
- Break - 10 mins
- 9th paper by **Nabil Ferdaoussi** (Osman as discussant/moderator) - 25 mins
- Professional development open discussions & networking by co-leaders - 30 mins
- APSA Alumni professional development resources & grants by APSA staff - 30 mins