CALL FOR APPLICATIONS: MENA WORKSHOP FELLOWS

Research Proposal Development Workshop:
Studying Political Behavior in the Middle East and North Africa
January 6-11, 2024 – Cairo, Egypt

The American Political Science Association (APSA) is pleased to announce a Call for Applications from advanced MA and PhD students who would like to participate in a 2-part workshop (virtual + in-person) that examines the theme of political behavior in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). This skill-building program is specifically designed to support early-career scholars in developing their PhD dissertation proposals or refining research plans for projects within the field of political behavior. The organizers will cover participation costs (including travel, lodging, and materials) for up to 20 qualified applicants. Following their full participation in the workshop, fellows will receive three-years membership to APSA. The deadline for applications is Sunday, September 17, 2023.

Organized in partnership with the American University in Cairo (AUC), the workshop will commence with a 2-hour virtual session held over zoom in October 2023 followed by a 6-day in-person workshop from January 6-11, 2024 at AUC. Together, the program will support fellows in advancing their knowledge of the theoretical frameworks and writing skills necessary to develop research proposals that explore various dimensions of political behavior in the MENA region. Fellows will have the opportunity to refine their research ideas, outline steps for data collection and analysis, and present to peers and senior scholars for constructive feedback on the substance and research design of their proposals. During the program, fellows will be guided in setting clear objectives for their writing, ensuring their proposals are coherent and aligned with their research objectives.

The workshop is part of a multi-year effort to support political science research among early-career scholars in the MENA region, and to strengthen research networks linking Arab scholars with their colleagues overseas. More information on APSA’s MENA Workshops and related MENA programming can be found online at http://web.apsanet.org/mena/.

Workshop Theme: Political Behavior
The program will be led by Drs. Amr Adly (AUC), Nermin Allam (Rutgers University), Mazen Hassan (Cairo University), and Elizabeth Nugent (Princeton University). Together with selected workshop fellows, co-leaders will discuss the diverse field of research which examines the intricate relationship between political behavior, social norms, and institutions. Within the MENA region, we see a number of resilient political norms encompassing both beliefs and behaviors. This workshop focuses on observable political behavior and the influences of state institutions and policies, internal psychological processes, and external social norms. Within this broad theme, we welcome fellows undertaking research from a variety of perspectives including political participation, social movements, and the impact of institutions and norms on political decision-making. In addition to providing detailed feedback on fellows’ research projects, co-leaders will facilitate thoughtful discussion on the following topics:

- **Theory Building:** Are there new theoretical approaches to study aspects of political behavior in the MENA region, like political participation versus political apathy, mobilization versus acquiescence, tolerance versus exclusion, and voting behavior? How do central theories of comparative politics related to modernization, religion in politics, and the political economy of welfare and inequality help us to explain political behavior in the Middle East and North Africa, across time and space?
- **Social and Political Norms:** How do we recognize and measure social and political norms, understood as beliefs and behaviors that influence/restrict individual behavior and whose violation is likely to bring about the risk of social punishment and exclusion? Could negative norms (i.e., political apathy or disinterest) be changed, reversed, or contained? What interventions could lead to such a goal?
• *Gender Norms:* How do gender norms impact political participation and representation? How do these norms factor into political decisions? What are some of the behaviors and strategies employed by women and marginalized gender groups to navigate and/or challenge gendered political norms in different contexts?

• *Institutions:* What are the formal and informal institutions that influence political behavior? What role do religious institutions play in supporting political norms and helping to sustain them?

• *Political Psychology:* Drawing from well-researched and established findings in the fields of cognitive and social psychology, how do internal processes help us to explain the translation and influence of persistent social norms into the political sphere?

• *Methodological Approaches:* What are some of the new research methods (survey questions, participatory research designs, novel experimental designs, text analyses or a combination of these tools) being used to provide insight into political behavior? What techniques are being used to measure political norms in a reliable way, given the social desirability biases surrounding them and the potential for negative backlash when asking respondents about them in the field? How can comparative studies across different countries and regions provide insights into the variations in political behavior?

**Eligible Participants**

Applications are open to advanced MA students and PhD students in political science and other social science disciplines who are citizens of countries in the Arab MENA region. The workshop is tailored for graduate students undertaking or planning research broadly related to the theme of political behavior, particularly those working on projects that include collection of original data, extensive in-country fieldwork, and/or innovative approaches to measuring and studying political behavior. Graduate students enrolled in doctoral programs in political science who have not yet defended their dissertation proposals are especially encouraged to apply. Applications from scholars currently based at universities or research institutes in the region will be prioritized. Scholars should apply with a research project in progress that they will discuss at the workshop. **Professional fluency in English is required.**

**How to Apply**

Interested applicants should review the eligibility requirements and program expectations on the [APSA website](http://web.apsanet.org/mena/), then follow the web link to the online Application Form. Completed applications, including all necessary supporting documents (in PDF or Word Format), must be submitted by **Sunday, September 17.** Selected fellows will be contacted by the end of September.

Applications must be in English and include:

1. The completed online Application Form
2. A detailed recent Curriculum Vitae/resume.
3. A two-page research proposal (1,200 words maximum) describing the work-in-progress you plan to discuss at the workshop. This should outline the research question(s), a concise section discussing the theory and hypotheses argument, the intended methodology (or methodology already employed), and any preliminary findings (if applicable), the project’s (anticipated) contribution(s) to the field, and how it relates to the workshop theme. The research project should not be any part of a co-authored project and should not be an excerpt from a work that is already completed or accepted for publication.
4. One letter of reference on official letterhead and scanned as an electronic file. The letter should be from a dissertation or academic supervisor. Supporting documents can be uploaded with the application material or sent directly to menaworkshops@apsanet.org.

For more information and questions, check our [website](http://web.apsanet.org/mena/) or contact us at menaworkshops@apsanet.org; please do not contact the co-leaders directly.