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Visit us online:

<http://www.gsu.edu/mideast>

New in 2007--Intensive Summer Arabic Program!

Have you wanted to take Arabic but were afraid that you didn't have the time? Are you considering taking Arabic next year? For the first time, the Middle East Institute will offer an intensive summer program in Arabic. This program, the only of its kind in Atlanta, will meet for four hours a day on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from June 12 through July 19. Students will complete an entire year of elementary Arabic in just seven weeks.

This course, offered MWF from 10am—1:50pm, is part of the MEI's expanding Arabic program. Led by Dr. Teirab AshShareef, it is a great way to accelerate your language studies. Students will receive six hours of credit and must register for Elementary Arabic I (ARBC 1001) and Elementary Arabic II (ARBC 1002) simultaneously. No prior experience is necessary and this course is not open to native speakers of Arabic. For more information, please contact Dr. Dona Stewart at djstewart@gsu.edu.

Maymester Study Abroad in Egypt and Turkey

The MEI is proud to announce our second offering of *Betwixt and Between: Turkey's Cultural, Political Conflicts Arising in the 21st Century*, May 11 – June 10, 2007. This Maymester study abroad in Turkey, led by lecturer Yesim Ozbarlas, will offer a glimpse of Turkey's historical sites, political situation and current issues regarding minorities, religious movements and women's status within the culture. The course begins in Istanbul, the historic city spanning two continents and two cultures, followed by visits to sites along the coast and in the south, including a yacht tour on the Mediterranean Sea. This Aegean journey ends in Cappadocia. Students will write a final paper and receive 3 credit hours for the course. The deadline for applications is March 15, 2007. For more information, please visit www.gsu.edu/mideast, or contact Yesim Ozbarlas at 404-651-0727 or yozbarlas@aol.com.

The MEI and Department of Art History are also proud to offer *Egypt in the Age of the Pharaohs*, May 14 – 27, 2007. This program gives students an understanding of the art, architecture, history, and culture of ancient Egypt and Nubia, focusing on the nature of pharaonic monuments and objects as the vehicles for ancient Egyptian cultural identity. For twelve days, the class will tour ancient sites in Cairo, Aswan, Luxor, and Nubia via bus and cruise Lake Nasser via boat. For more information, please visit www.gsu.edu/mideast or contact Dr. Melinda Hartwig at 404-651-0587 or mhartwig@gsu.edu.

MEI Welcomes Three New Faculty Members



Dr. Teirab AshShareef is our new Assistant Professor of Arabic Language and Culture. He was born in the Sudan, and graduated with honors from the University of Khartoum with a double major in Arabic and English. He also received an M.A. in Folklore from the same University. He received a second M.A. and a Ph.D. in Arabic Literature from Indiana University in Bloomington in 1988. He has taught at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, the American University in Cairo, Egypt, and the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Dr. AshShareef's research interests are: the Arabic modernist lyric; Arabic poetry and poetics (both classical and modern); Arabic folk/oral poetry; comparative poetics; Arab-Islamic cultural criticism; critical theory and history; and Islam and modernity. He has a forthcoming book on Sudanese folk poetry entitled, "Bani Halba Folk Poetry: the Poetics of Ethno-cultural Identity." His current research is on contemporary Arabic existentialist poetics, and the construction of cultural identity in Sudanese literature and culture.

Dr. Isa Blumi received his PhD from the New York University's History and Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies departments in 2005. His dissertation focused on the late Ottoman Empire and its frontier provinces of Albania and Yemen. He is author of two books and numerous articles on issues pertaining to the late Ottoman Empire, contemporary Albanian affairs, comparative imperialism and political Islam. He is currently completing two book projects on the modern Balkans and a comparative study of modern empires in the Balkans and Red Sea regions.



Ching-Jen Wang is a Ph.D. candidate in the department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at the University of Pennsylvania. He is expecting his doctoral degree in August 2007, and will join the MEI in Fall 2007. His dissertation is entitled "Ibrahim al-Kuni's Magical Realist Writings within the Scope of Psychoanalysis." His research interests include modern Arabic fiction, literary criticism and postcolonial discourse.

GSU Students Compete at Model U.N. and Arab League

Over the past five years, Dr. Rashid Naim has led dedicated groups of GSU students to successful competition in the regional and national Model United Nations (MUN) and Arab League competitions (MAL). A lecturer in the Political Science Department, Dr. Naim uses his students' talent, interest, and hard work and to produce winning results in these regional and national competitions.

Students are required to sign up for a two semester commitment; they earn three credit hours for each MUN semester and two credit hours for each MAL semester. The first semester concentrates on teaching content about the country the students will represent, while the second half teaches them how to use this information to represent the foreign policy interests of the selected country through debate, consensus building, critical thinking, resolution drafting, and public speaking.

In addition, students learn parliamentary procedure and how to caucus and write a resolution through hands-on experience and role-playing exercises. By the end of the course, many students hold this experience as one of their most important during their college career.

In the spring, Dr. Naim travels with these students to the regional and national MAL (Spartanburg, S.C. and Washington D.C.) and MUN (Atlanta and N.Y.) competitions. The GSU MAL team has won the Four Outstanding Delegation awards (the top award) in its last four appearances at the Regional MAL Conference. At its first National competition two team members won outstanding delegate awards. The GSU MUN team has won five awards in the last four MUN conferences it has attended. The National Model in the Spring is held in New York and is the largest United Nations simulation in the world. This Spring 145 schools and UN clubs participated. About 80 of these were teams from other countries. The GSU MUN team has won the Honorable Mention Award (top 15% of teams) at this national



Dr. Rashid Naim and the MAL team after receiving top honors at the regional competition in Spartanburg, SC.

meetings in each of the three years it has attended this conference.

Part of the teams' success is their ability to raise funds to travel to the competitions. The students have used personal fund raising strategies, but last year Provost Dr. Henry awarded the group \$25,000. Dr. Henry noted that, "GSU is delighted to support students engaged in intellectual activities that enhance their understanding of the world we live in." The Middle East Institute also funds the MAL's trip to the regional competition and partially funds their trip to the national competition. The MEI would also like to thank the chair of the Political Science Department, Dr. William Downs, for his continued support of the MAL and MUN teams.

(continued from page four...) ten weeks, the equivalent of 200 hours of classroom instruction, I was able to successfully skip from elementary to advanced Arabic upon my return to Georgia State. I will also be returning to Yemen this summer as a David L. Boren National Security Education Program Fellow. For more information, go to www.ylcint.com. Alternatively, you may also contact me at low2@student.gsu.edu.

Middle East Socio-Political Association

Our student organization, MESPA, has enjoyed a successful first semester! Over the past few months we have had lectures by Professor Khalil Abdur Rashid on "Ramadan, Practices and Beliefs" and by Dr. Michael Herb on "Democracy and Monarchies in the Gulf." In addition to an information session on study abroad opportunities in the Middle East, how to fund study abroad, and a presentation about careers in Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies was held. Several MESPA members attended the Iranian Film Festival as well as the GSU screening of *A Time for Cherries*.



Students display crafts and traditional clothing from Syria and Lebanon.

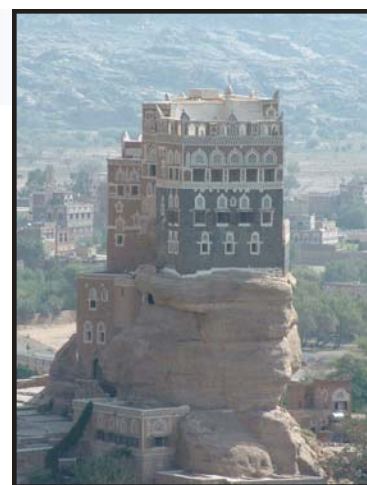
The highlight of the semester was the hugely popular Eid Festival that included an outdoor festival and a showcase of handicrafts from the Middle East. The outdoor festival consisted of food from the Muslim world, a headscarf display and Arabic calligraphy. The cultural showcase featured handicrafts and photos from Kuwait, Yemen, Egypt, Lebanon and Syria as well as informational tables set up by our friends at the Alif Institute and the American Friends Service Committee. Over 300 people were able to take part in the festivities, due in great part by the food donation from Ali Baba's and the help of many volunteers. For more information about MESPA or to join our e-mail list for events, please send an e-mail to mspa.gsu@gmail.com.

Summer in Sana'a? By Michael Christopher Low

On February 12, 2006, the Middle East Institute hosted Sabri Saleem, president and founder of the Yemen Language Center and the newly founded Yemen College of Middle Eastern Studies in Sana'a, Yemen. During his visit, Sabri discussed both year-long and intensive summer Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies programs with both students and faculty. With both five and ten week summer programs, which include housing and airfare, starting from only \$2,350, Yemen represents an affordable option for those looking to sharpen their Arabic during the summer term.

More importantly, Yemen provides a uniquely authentic setting for Arabic training. Unlike more popular programs in Amman, Beirut, and Cairo, where English and French are widely spoken, students who choose to study in Yemen will be forced to speak Arabic in almost every conceivable situation. Whether bargaining with your taxi driver, going out to eat at a local restaurant, bargaining in Sana'a's famous *Souq al-Milh*, or attending a Yemeni wedding, students will be immersed in a world sheltered from the pervasive influences of Western colonialism and globalization. Moreover, as opposed to many other Arab countries where the local dialect differs widely from the Modern Standard Arabic students have previously studied, Yemeni dialects are widely considered to be the closest to classical Arabic.

Having spent last summer in Sana'a as a fellow at the American Institute for Yemeni Studies and having studied at the Yemen Language Center, I highly recommend the program. After studying there for (Continued on page three...)



Dar al-Hajjar, the rock palace of Imam Yahya, is one of Yemen's most famous monuments. Photo by Michael Christopher Low.