

CASA Cairo Fellows 2012-2013

Andrew Alger received an M.A. in Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Chicago in 2012, where he was also the recipient of an Academic Year Foreign Languages and Area Studies Fellowship. He is interested in the historical development of public education in the Arab world. After CASA, he hopes to begin a Ph.D. program or teach English in a foreign university.

Niko Banac is a Ph.D. candidate in the Dept. of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at UCLA. He holds a B.A. from the University of Chicago where he also majored in the same field. He studies classical Arabic literature. His primary interest is in classical Arabic literature and aesthetics, as well as hermeneutics and especially its relationship to experience.

Will Barnes graduated from the University of Tennessee in 2010 where he studied history. Thereafter, he enrolled in the Qasid Arabic Institute in Amman, Jordan. Will is interested in Iraqi history, especially the years under Saddam Hussein. He plans to start graduate school a year after finishing CASA and hopes to find work in the Middle East that allows him to continue to learn Arabic in the interim.

Jordan Bellquist graduated this fall from the University of Texas at Austin with a dual degree in Arabic Language and Literature and Film. She has studied Arabic in Alexandria, Egypt and Ifrane, Morocco as part of the UT Arabic Flagship Program. Directly after completing CASA, she plans to attend graduate school to further her Arabic studies.

Randell Bentley graduated from Brigham Young University in April 2012 with a major in Linguistics and a minor in Arabic and Linguistic Computing. He has previously studied Arabic in Tunisia (CLS), Egypt, and Jordan. He is interested in dialectal studies and using corpora to study lexicography. After CASA, he plans on pursuing graduate studies in Linguistics and Arabic.

Miriam Berger graduated from Wesleyan University in 2012 with a B.A. in the College of Social Studies, a multidisciplinary study of history, economics, philosophy, and government. Her professional interests lie in Middle Eastern studies and journalism. Miriam has studied and traveled in Jordan, Israel, Palestine, and Syria, including at Qasid Arabic Institute in Amman, Jordan, and the Middlebury Arabic Language School in California. She researched in Ramallah in August 2011 on local Palestinian journalism. After CASA, Miriam will remain in Cairo to conduct Fulbright research on how the internet has affected Egyptian newspapers.

Chloe Bordewich graduated this year from Princeton University with a B.A. in Near Eastern Studies and a minor in French, focusing on the historiography of modern Egypt and the Arab world more generally. She has also studied Arabic in Morocco (Al-Akhawayn University) and France (the Sorbonne). Eventually, she plans to pursue either a Ph.D. in global history or a career in political development and international election law.

Claire Cooley graduated from Tufts University in 2010 with a B.A. in History, Arabic, and Middle Eastern Studies. In November 2010, she moved to Cairo where she worked at The Resettlement Legal Aid Project at St. Andrew's Refugee Services and studied Arabic. Last year she started Uprisings in Translation, a blog in which she translates and contextualizes street art and graffiti she finds around Cairo. In the future she would like to pursue a Ph.D. in Middle Eastern Studies.

Ethan Cooper graduated from the University of Chicago with a B.A. in Linguistics. He then spent six years with the U.S. Government as an Arabic Language Analyst. Currently he is pursuing an MA in Arabic Studies at the University of Texas-Austin.

Paul Cuno-Booth graduated in May from the University of Texas at Austin with a B.A. in Arabic and Humanities. Academically, he's interested in contemporary literature, translation, and Islamic thought. In actual life, he's into jogging, cooking, reading, and talking to Egyptian cab drivers. Career-wise, he's undecided but considering journalism and international law.

Kevin Donahue graduated from Princeton University in 2012 with a B.A. in Public Policy and International Affairs. He has studied Arabic in Irbid, Jordan, and Nizwa, Oman, and last summer interned with the Moroccan National Human Rights Council in Rabat. He is interested in religion and state relations, learning, meeting new people, web-comics, and Ultimate Frisbee. After CASA Kevin hopes to find a job.

Sofia Fenner is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Political Science at the University of Chicago. She received her M.A. in Social Sciences from the University of Chicago in 2008, and her B.A. from Yale University in 2007. She has studied and worked in Egypt, Oman, and Morocco. Her academic interests are in state-building and organizational politics. After completing CASA, she hopes to pursue fieldwork for her dissertation while continuing her lifelong interest in international education and cross-cultural communication.

Francisco Fernandez graduated from the University of Notre Dame in 2010 with a B.A. in philosophy and Arabic. He graduated from the University of Chicago with an M.A. in Middle Eastern Studies in June 2012. His academic interests include the philosophy of literature and the literary history of the Middle East.

Mitchell Ford graduated in May 2011 from The George Washington University with a B.A. in Arabic Studies. He is currently pursuing an M.A. in Arabic at Georgetown University. He is particularly interested in Arabic dialectology. Directly, after completing CASA he intends to complete his M.A. and then go on to pursue a Ph.D. in Arabic Linguistics.

Jordan Gerstler-Holton graduated in 2007 from Vassar College with a B.A. in International Studies. He previously studied Arabic in Morocco, the West Bank, and ALI at AUC. Since late 2010, Jordan has worked as an editor and journalist based out of Cairo. He plans to pursue a fellowship-supported M.A. in International Affairs at the John Hopkins University, SAIS, shortly after completing CASA.

Omid Ghaemmaghami is a Ph.D. candidate in early Islamic thought at the University of Toronto. He received his M.A. in Islamic and Near Eastern Studies from Washington University in St. Louis in 2005. Omid was born and spent his childhood in Tehran, Iran and has also lived in the United States, Canada and Damascus.

Michelle Ha graduated from Dartmouth College in 2011 with a B.A. in Government. She is interested in cosmopolitanism and international legal theory, and hopes to work in diplomacy and foreign affairs in the future. She studied Arabic in Amman, Jordan with the Critical Language Scholarship program during the summer of 2010 and, before joining CASA, she was a presidential scholar in the Office of the President at AUC.

William Hussman studied Arabic in Cairo and Amman, and worked as a linguist in the U.S. Air Force before graduating with a B.A. in Middle East Studies/Arabic from Brigham Young University. His Arabic sociolinguistic interests include social media, conflict journalism, dialectology, and pedagogy. After CASA, William plans to study Arabic pedagogy at the University of Texas at Austin.

Elisabeth Jaquette graduated from Swarthmore College in 2007 with a B.A. in Sociology and Anthropology. She lived in Cairo from 2007-2011, working as a history teacher and then for an environmental and social consulting firm. She is currently a M.A. student in Anthropology at Columbia University. She has a personal interest in modern Arabic literature, and her academic interests include development issues and political anthropology in Egypt.

Nathaniel J. Kim graduated this year from UCLA with a B.A. in Arabic Studies. He has studied Arabic in Egypt (fall 2010, summer 2011) and International Relations in Turkey (spring 2011). His academic interests include the international relations of the Middle East and Africa, human rights, democratization, and U.S. foreign policy. After completing CASA, he plans to pursue a Ph.D. in international relations.

Andrew Leber graduated from Brown University in 2012 with a B.A. in International Relations. His academic work has focused on the political economy of the Arab world, while working to translate and promote Arabic theater in his spare time. After completing CASA, he plans to return to the United States and work for a DC-area language consultancy while continuing to promote and popularize Arab history and literature.

Thomas Leddy-Cecere received his B.A. from Dartmouth College, majoring in linguistics and Arabic language and literature. He is currently pursuing an M.A. in the Department of Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Texas at Austin with an interest in sociolinguistics.

Valerie Montes graduated from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor in December 2011 with a B.A. in Middle Eastern and North African Studies. Previously she has studied Arabic in Jordan, Egypt, and Tunisia. After CASA she will pursue her graduate studies in Arabic literature and sociolinguistics at the University of Texas at Austin.

Andrea Nashar received her bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan and recently graduated from the University of Maryland's Arabic Flagship program. She is interested in Arabic language pedagogy, and in particular the challenge of incorporating spoken dialects into Arabic study.

Kieran J. O'Connor graduated from the University of Notre Dame in 2009, where he studied Arabic and Political Science. In May 2012, he received his Master's degree in Near Eastern Studies from New York University. He wrote his thesis on the development of parallel Irish and Palestinian nationalisms in the early twentieth century and the resultant sympathy and cooperation between Irish and Palestinian nationalists, particularly post-1967.

Griffin Olsen graduated this year from Brigham Young University with a B.A. in Middle East Studies/Arabic. Griffin has studied Arabic in both Cairo and Amman. After completing CASA, he plans to attend medical school.

Kelby Olson finished her M.A. in Middle Eastern Studies from Harvard this year and is particularly interested in modern Egyptian history and cultural anthropology. She has previously studied Arabic in Egypt and after completing CASA, she hopes to pursue a Ph.D. in Middle Eastern History so she can teach.

Sara Rangwala graduated in December 2011 with a B.A. in Economics and a minor in Public Health from Washington University in Saint Louis. She has studied Arabic at her university as well as in Alexandria, Egypt. Her academic interests are numerous and include Teaching Arabic as a Second Language, Islam and Gender Studies, specifically female circumcision. After CASA, she plans on pursuing a Master's in Public Health and in the future would like to work on development in the Middle East.

Laura Reid graduated from Northwestern University in June 2011 with degrees in both Urban Studies and Middle East Languages & Civilizations. She has studied Arabic in Marrakesh and Rabat, Morocco and in Alexandria, Egypt, where she later taught English at AMIDEAST. Throughout college, she studied urbanization in the Middle East—especially the slums of Morocco and Egypt—and in her thesis, she evaluated the success of the new towns program in Egypt. After CASA, Laura hopes to enter a master's program in international development and then to return to the Middle East for a career in development.

Nina Rinaldi studies linguistics at the University of Oregon, where she is writing an honors thesis about geminate consonants in Kuwaiti Arabic. She has previously studied Arabic at the University of Oregon and in Tangier, Morocco. Directly after completing CASA she intends to return to university to complete her B.A.

Carissa Skrivanek has a B.A. in English from Davidson College and is a Master's candidate in International Relations at the American Public University. She has studied in Cairo and Amman, and her academic interests include social and cultural contexts of political change in South/Central Asia. She was a military linguist and Honor Graduate from the Defense Language Institute, and after CASA she hopes to transition to interpretation.

Lindsey Smith graduated this year from the University of Texas at Austin with a B.A. in Government. After having worked in civil rights for several years, she hopes to continue in that field. Academically, she is interested in Arabic literature and translation as well as the January 25th Revolution, which she plans to research in the coming year.

Robin Socol graduated from Tufts University in 2011, where she majored in Middle Eastern Studies and Psychology. After graduating, she worked for an educational non-profit in Boston. She has lived in Morocco twice and is very interested in Moroccan culture and especially traditional foods. In the future, she hopes to teach Arabic in American high schools.

Navdeep Sokhey finished her B.A. in 2011 at Gettysburg College in Globalization Studies, with a regional focus on the Middle East. She has studied Arabic in Egypt at AUC-ALI, and at Middlebury's summer intensive program. Nav's academic interests include Arabic linguistics, pedagogy, and language study through the media. After CASA, Nav will pursue her M.A. and eventually her Ph.D. in Arabic Studies.

Dexter Thompson-Pomeroy graduated this year from Columbia University with a B.A. in Political Science and Linguistics. He has studied Arabic for four years. His interests include US relations with the Arab world, Turkey's expanding role in the Middle East, and the political dynamics of cultural, religious and linguistic minorities. Directly after completing CASA, he hopes to pursue graduate studies in International Relations.

Meir Walters is a Ph.D. candidate in Government at Georgetown University. He previously studied Arabic in Morocco and Egypt, and his research focuses on national identity and social change. After CASA, he will stay in Cairo to study Egyptian media and film with a Fulbright research grant.

Scott Williamson graduated from Indiana University in 2012 with degrees in Political Science and Middle East Studies. He has studied Arabic in Jordan with the UVA-Yarmouk University Summer Arabic Program and the CIEE Amman Arabic Language Program. After completing CASA, Scott hopes to earn a Ph.D. in political science.