



S E R M E I S S

Newsletter

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From the President

Hello SERMEISS members and friends,

Your Executive Board met for a retreat in Valle Crucis, NC April 12-14, and I am pleased to share some of the highlights of the meeting:

- We will soon (most likely in June) have a newly designed website with member profiles, programs, news, and links – www.sermeiss.org;
- We are now offering a book award, a faculty article award, and a graduate student paper award, along with travel scholarships to the conferences.
- We are creating institutional memberships, so if you have several colleagues at the same university, you can take advantage of this membership.
- We plan to host thematic panels and/or spring conferences with the intention of submitting a special issue to an interdisciplinary Middle East journal.
- To increase the scholarly rigor of the organization, presenters will send out their papers in advance of the conference.
- On Sunday morning of the fall meeting, there will be “lightening talks” on emerging issues or projects to allow participants to briefly share analysis of current issues or discuss ideas for early stage or future research.

We are working hard to make SERMEISS an organization with a growing and strong membership. What do you want to see in the organization? Feel free to get in touch with me anytime.

Krista Wiegand
President, SERMEISS
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News of the Society

SERMEISS establishes travel scholarship and literature awards

As mentioned by Krista above, the Board approved three new awards at its retreat in April.

The **SERMEISS Overseas Travel Grant** will provide \$500 and a conference fee waiver in financial support for overseas travel to conduct fieldwork, archival research, survey work, etc. on the Middle East or Islam in any academic discipline in the social sciences or humanities from any

time period. Proposals will be accepted from pre-tenured faculty or doctoral students based at a college or university within the SERMEISS 10-state region. Recipients will be required, upon completion of their overseas travel, to attend a future SERMEISS meeting to present a conference paper sharing the results of their research.

The **SERMEISS Book Prize** awards a \$200 honorarium and a conference fee waiver for outstanding scholarship in Middle Eastern Studies in any academic discipline in the social sciences or humanities from any time period by an author based at a university within the SERMEISS 10-state region. Submitted books should be peer-reviewed nonfiction, published in English, and exhibit original empirical and theoretical contributions. Books published within the last three years (2016, 2017, 2018) will be considered. Edited volumes, handbooks, and novels are not eligible for the book award. SERMEISS will also give an honorable mention award.

The **SERMEISS Article/Book Chapter Prize** awards a \$100 honorarium and a conference fee waiver for outstanding scholarship in Middle Eastern Studies published as a peer-reviewed article or edited volume book chapter from any academic discipline in the social sciences or humanities from any time period by an author based at a university within the SERMEISS 10-state region. The submission should be peer-reviewed nonfiction, published in English within the previous two years (2018 or 2017) and exhibit original empirical and theoretical contributions. SERMEISS will also give an honorable mention award.

Recipients of the literature awards will be required to attend and provide a brief presentation on their publications at the 2019 SERMEISS meeting on October 11-13, 2019 in Valle Crucis, North Carolina or at the SERMEISS Spring 2020 meeting.

Visit sermeiss.org for more details and submission procedures.

Upcoming SERMEISS Events

Now: 2019 membership fee due.

July 9: Notice of election with list of nominees distributed.

July 23: Deadline for receipt of additional nominations.

September 3: Election ballots sent to members.

October 3: Election ballots due.

October 11-13: SERMEISS Annual Meeting, Valle Crucis, North Carolina.

Add Your Name to the SERMEISS Expertise List

SERMEISS maintains a list of members' expertise on our website at sermeiss.org. Add your profile to the list by sending your bio (200-word limit, please) with an email address at the end to edsermeiss@gmail.com.

News of the Members

Cal Allen (Shenandoah University) published "Ratansi Purshottam, the Gujaratis of Muscat, and the Global Connectivity of Indian Ocean Trans-regional Markets," in Edward Alpers & Chhaya Goswami, eds., *Trans-regional Trade and Traders: Situating Gujarat in the Indian Ocean from*

early times to 1900, Oxford University Press: New Delhi, 2019, pp. 269-284 and entries on “Abd al-Aziz al-Saud,” “Abu Dhabi,” “Aden,” “ARAMCO,” “Bahrain,” “Dubai,” “Fahd ibn Abd al-Aziz,” “Faisal ibn Abd al-Aziz,” “Sharif Husayn,” “Khalid ibn Abd al-Aziz,” “Lawrence of Arabia,” “Wahhabism,” “Oman,” “Oman Civil War,” “OPEC,” “Qatar,” “Al-Sabah,” “Saudi Arabia,” “South Arabian Federation,” “Trucial States,” “United Arab Emirates,” “Yemen,” and “Yemen Civil War,” in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Modern World History*, Cambridge University Press, 2018. He was also invited to present “Government and Institutional Development in Oman,” at Understanding Oman: A Unique Player in the Gulf Region conference, The Center for South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, April 22-23, 2019. Cal continues to serve as the Oman country expert for the Varieties of Democracy Project (V-Dem) at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden.

Matt Buehler (University of Tennessee-Knoxville) published his first book, *Why Alliances Fail: Islamist and Leftist Coalitions in North Africa*, Syracuse University Press: Syracuse, NY, 2018, and also received an Early-Career Excellence in Research/Creative Achievement Award from the College of Arts & Sciences at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville.

Rkia Cornell (Emory University) published *Rabi’a from Narrative to Myth: The Many Faces of Islam’s Most Famous Woman Saint, Rabi’a al-’Adawiyya (ca. 717-801 CE)*, Oneworld Academic: Oxford and London, 2018. This literary, historiographical, and genealogical study discusses major themes and tropes in the myth of Rabi’a al-’Adawiyya of Basra, the quintessential Muslim woman saint, that have developed over 1200 years. A Chinese translation of Rkia’s *Early Sufi Women*, Ma Zhongrong, trans., University of Nationalities Press: Gansu Province, China, 2016, has also been published.

Fran Hassenchal (Old Dominion University) published “Fears of Dissolution and Loss: Orhan Pamuk’s Characters in Relation to the Treaty of Sèvres” in Sandhya Rao Mehta, ed., *Language and Literature in a Glocal World*, Springer Press: NY, 2018, pp. 177-92. She also presented “Stages of Being Foreign as Portrayed in Three Maghrebi Films,” at the Fifth World Congress for Middle Eastern Studies, Seville, Spain, July 16-20, 2018); “Radio SAWA: Is Anybody Listening?” at the Arab-U.S. Association for Communication Educators, Lafayette, Louisiana, October 25-28, 2018; and “Visual Metaphor Used in the Film *Hell Bent for Election* to Reelect President Roosevelt in 1944” at the Popular Culture Association, Washington, DC April 16-20 2019. Fran chairs the Politics in Print and Electronic Media section for the Popular Culture Association. She will be on Sabbatical/research leave in the fall 2019.

Rolin Mainuddin (North Carolina Central University) published a pedagogical essay, “Grappling with the Arab-Israeli Conflict at a Historically Black College and University: Reflections on an Accidental Journey,” in Rachel S. Harris, ed., *Teaching the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, Wayne State University Press: Detroit, 2019, pp. 301-308. Rolin also participated in the Teaching with Impact Workshop at the Israel Institute, Rye Brook, NY, January 7-9, 2019.

Former SERMEISS president **Jim Miller** retired in August 2018 after nine years as Executive Director of the Moroccan-American Commission for Educational and Cultural Exchange (MACECE), best known as the Fulbright Commission in Morocco. Jim reports that he left behind a very effective staff in Rabat and a decade of memories. He now lives along the west side of Skaneateles Lake in the Finger Lakes region of Upstate New York and looks forward to attending SERMEISS weekends in the future. Contact Jim at miller3james@gmail.com

Louisa Moffitt (Marist School) reports that Marist School in Atlanta held its annual Model Arab League in January 2019 with 268 students in attendance. Mike Luckovich, Pulitzer Prize-winning political cartoonist for the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, presented the keynote address. He is a clear-eyed critic of the current presidential policy in the Middle East, and he illustrated his talk with recently published cartoons. The Alif Institute and the Arab-American women's Society of Georgia provided a Middle Eastern lunch for all the students on the second day of the conference.

Liz Pope (University of West Georgia) was awarded the Patricia Cranton Distinguished Dissertation Award for Outstanding Contribution to a Living Theory of Transformative Learning and published "Continuers in research interviews: A closer look at the construction of rapport in talk about interfaith dialogue," in Kathryn Roulston, ed., *Interactional Studies of Qualitative Research Interviews*, John Benjamins Publishing Co.: Amsterdam & Philadelphia, 2019, pp. 219-38.

Caroline and John Williams (College of William and Mary) have moved from Williamsburg, Va. to Baltimore, Md. Caroline reports that it was an eviscerating affair, but they found new homes for many of the things we collected in Egypt and in the Middle East over a sixty year period at the Aga Khan Museum in Toronto, the Oriental Museum in Durham, England, the American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE) office in Alexandria, Va., the Special Collections at Swem Library at The College of William and Mary, and for slides at the Aga Khan Documentation Center at M.I.T. "The frontiers of time are being pushed ever onwards and upwards, and here we are beginning a new life at a time when our grandparents were long gone." Caroline's new e-mail address is ccwill516@gmail.com.

The *SERMEISS Newsletter* is published twice a year (Spring and Fall). Please send your news and announcements to Executive Director Cal Allen at edsermeiss@gmail.com.