The 2019-2020 academic year may well go down as one of the most unique years any of us will ever experience in our lives. Whether you are a professor, a teaching assistant, a staff member, or a student, this year challenged us all in multiple ways. Yet, we all faced these challenges head on and kept moving onward.

In reflecting on the 2019-2020 academic year, we wanted to briefly highlight some of the amazing guest speakers and events that took place. The Middle East and South Asia Studies Program welcomed two outstanding Fulbright Language Teaching Assistants this year for the Arabic and Hindi-Urdu programs, Amena Nadeem Gad and Pankaj Narke. For the 11th Annual World Cultural Festival in September, they had booths with Indian snacks and henna painting. We had the opportunity to experience the Wake Forest Gamelan percussion and dance ensembles. The Wake Forest Gamelan ensemble is open to all students, faculty, staff and community members and provides a hands-on exploration of the performing arts of Bali, Indonesia.

We had another successful year of the Arabic Film Series, which featured inspiring films about the first all-women’s race car driving team in the Middle East (“Speed Sisters”) and a Palestinian woman who is distributing rare, ancient heirloom seeds to Palestinian farmers (“Seed Queen”) to more somber documentaries like the one about Syrian construction workers helping to rebuild skyscrapers in Beirut (“Taste of Cement”). The Hindi-Urdu Film Series featured crime thrillers like “Andhadhun” and comedies like “Hindi Medium.”

The Middle East and South Asia Studies Program also sponsored and co-sponsored numerous scholars like Professor Ousmane Kane from Harvard University who spoke about his latest book, “Beyond Timbuktu: An Intellectual History of Muslim West Africa,” which examines the rise of Muslim learning in West Africa from the beginning of Islam to the present day and Professor Mehrzad Boroujerdi from Syracuse University who discussed the politics of enmity of American Iranian relations. We also welcomed from Morocco, Professor Moha Ennaji, who spoke about how youth’s agency performs and transforms society when contesting the prevalent citizen regimes and Professor Paolo Girardelli from Turkey who explored the architectural and urban consequences of the Italian and Levantine settlements in the Eastern Mediterranean.

While we are unable to gather this spring to honor our first graduating class of MESAS Honor students (see page 2-3) or celebrate the achievements of our outstanding Arabic and Hindi-Urdu students (see pages 4-6), we want to congratulate and recognize these students for their hard work and dedication to the study of the Middle East and South Asia regions and the Arabic and Hindi-Urdu languages.
Through the Richter Fellowship, I was able to conduct independent research in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal concerning China’s rise and South Asia’s geostrategic realignment. Under the mentorship of the wonderful Dr. Neil DeVotta, I was able to interview academics, government officials and think tank experts across the three countries, which gave me significant insight into South Asian politics. Conducting this research after taking Politics and Policies of South Asia as well as Contemporary India with Dr. DeVotta sparked my interest in South Asia and provided me with the knowledge I needed to carry out research. After that, I was able to present my research during Undergraduate Research Day which was fulfilling as I was given the opportunity to interact with students, professors and parents interested in the subject. However, I have also been able to satisfy my interest in the Middle East and the Arab world by taking courses like Arab and Islamic Political Thought with Dr. Browers, religious studies courses concerning Islam, and traveling to Morocco to study Arabic and Egypt to study religion. Overall, the Middle East and South Asia Studies program has been the most impactful program for me during my time here at Wake Forest. Choosing to minor in MESAS came naturally to me because of my interests and through this program, I have been able to continue learning about regions of the world, cultures and languages that I enjoy and believe are valuable. I take pride in the fact that I am a MESAS minor and hope many others after me will find this program as fulfilling as I do.

Yabsera Bekele
Major:
• Bachelor of Arts in Politics and International Affairs
Minors:
• Middle East and South Asia Studies
• Religion

Researching China’s Rise and South Asia’s Geostrategic Realignment

The Ready-Made Garment Industry in Bangladesh

In a twelve-week study, I researched three intersectional fields that discussed the Ready-Made Garment (RMG) industry in Bangladesh and why its inherent exploitation has remained relatively unchanged despite mounting international pressure. The first field of research contextualized the formation and growth of the RMG industry, anchoring the 2013 Rana Plaza Factory Collapse as a central turning point in the policy narrative. The second focused on the complexities surrounding reform, weighing the vast economic gain attributed to the comparative advantage of the industry to the social sustainability behind the methodology of its success. The third part of my research examined potential solutions to the crisis by studying proposed policy reform theories and their relevance to Bangladesh. My research of the RMG industry in Bangladesh has given me a holistic understanding of some of the most prominent issues in development and labor rights in South Asia. The research has helped me to discern the field of study I hope to pursue post-graduation, continuing my examination of the barriers to unionization and collective action in Bangladesh. I would like to thank Dr. Neil DeVotta, not only for his willingness to guide me through my research, but also for his unwavering commitment to make me a better writer, thinker, and researcher. My research could not have been executed without Dr. DeVotta’s astounding expertise in South Asian politics and I find myself extremely privileged to have had the opportunity to be one of many students who can thank Dr. DeVotta for providing the pinnacle of their higher education at Wake Forest.
Impactful Study Abroad and Internship Experiences

My MESAS courses opened the door for several of my favorite college experiences, especially my terms abroad. In the summer of 2018, I participated in an Arabic language intensive program in Amman, Jordan. My time in Jordan was not only my first impression of the Middle East, but also my first real experience abroad. As such, I am particularly attuned to the role of language and regional studies in opening the minds of students who otherwise might only see their corner of the world. Back in the United States, I had the opportunity to apply my Arabic and research skills to an internship with the Project on Middle East Democracy in Washington, DC for the spring of 2019. In addition to learning a great deal about the advocacy field, I enjoyed considerable access to events on American foreign policy in the Middle East featuring the experts and policymakers whom I could only read about in Winston-Salem. Before an unceremonious evacuation, I enjoyed the many delights of studying in Rabat, Morocco this spring, namely dubbed Turkish soap operas, lethally sweet tea, and impromptu *darija* (Moroccan colloquial) lessons in the medina.

I am endlessly grateful to the faculty who have encouraged and supported me over the years. In particular, I would like to thank Dr. May and Professor Jumana of the Arabic program for their patience and resolve — I owe each of my tiny linguistic successes to you. Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. Obiedat and Dr. Wilkins for their efforts in rounding out the edges of a political science education with literature and history.

Herbalism and Prophetic Medicine in Morocco’s Healthcare System

As a Middle East and South Asia (MESAS) Studies minor, I have been able to expand my horizons far beyond what I ever thought imaginable. Through the Richter Fellowship I traveled to Fez, Morocco to investigate the role of herbalism and Prophetic Medicine in the healthcare system of Morocco. Drs. Darlene May and Steven Folmar served as my mentors and provided their expertise as I crafted this project leading up to my departure. This project showcased the various factors that influence human health including socioeconomic status and cultural beliefs. As a future physician, understanding various components of healthcare in other nations provides a unique and insightful opportunity to deliver exceptional care. As the United States experiences a demographic shift favoring a more diverse population, physicians will be required to understand belief systems towards healthcare from various cultural populations. Not only did the Richter Fellowship allow me to enhance my knowledge of different cultures in a healthcare context, but the Middle East and South Asia Studies minor was a catalyst in exposing me to these types of opportunities. Late afternoon spontaneous meetings with Dr. May was how my Richter project arose and the ongoing mentorship and guidance from Dr. May has allowed me to have many amazing collegiate experiences. Moreover, as I start medical school in the fall, the knowledge I have acquired through the MESAS minor will grant me a unique perspective throughout my studies and practice.
The Arabic Program, founded in 2005, has been recognizing its top students in both the first-year class and the class of graduating minors every spring since 2017. It has become the custom for Dr. Darlene May and Dr. Ahmad Obiedat to host a celebration in April during which the accomplishments of all the Arabic students are celebrated and the top students are presented with special award certificates designed by Dr. Obiedat. Because of the pandemic we must forego our celebratory gathering this spring; however, we will continue to honor our students by introducing them to you here in the MESAS newsletter.

The Award for First Rank in the First Year
The winner of this award is Omar Shaltout, who has maintained a near-perfect average of 99.65 throughout his first year of study of Modern Standard Arabic in ARB 111 and ARB 112. Omar is a freshman and a member of the class of 2023. A pre-med student, he plans to major in Biology and minor in Arabic with the aim of attending medical school and working in health care. His favorite activities are hiking and playing soccer. Although he is a native of Winston-Salem, his family’s roots are in Egypt. His decision to study Arabic came out of his desire to develop a closer connection to his heritage and to improve his communication skills with family back in Egypt.

The Award for Outstanding Senior in Arabic
This year there are eight graduating seniors who have minored in Arabic. The top award goes to David Mulder, who has taken a total of nine classes offered by the Arabic Program: 7 classes in MSA (Modern Standard Arabic), spanning the Elementary, Intermediate, Upper Intermediate, and Advanced levels; 1 class in Lebanese dialect; and 1 literature course. He has served the Arabic Program the past four years as a much sought after tutor in the Learning Assistance Center.

David previously won the Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Third Year of Arabic in 2017. That same year he received a URECA Summer Research Fellowship, which he used to produce an annotated and illustrated English translation of the 60-page Egypt and Syria sections of the 12th-century travel chronicle The Travels of Ibn Ju-bayr. David created a dozen original pen-and-ink drawings and watercolors to accompany and illustrate his translation of this classic Arabic travelogue.

In his spare time, David loves to draw, write and read both fiction and non-fiction. For the past several years he has been involved with Bookmarks by either volunteering at the annual Festival of Books and Authors or working at their non-profit bookstore. At Wake Forest David designed his own interdisciplinary major in Ancient Near Eastern Studies, supplementing it with a minor in Arabic. After graduating in May with the academic honors of summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa, he will enter the Ph. D. program in Art History at the University of Pennsylvania, where he will focus on the art of ancient Mesopotamia. He hopes to use his Arabic skills in his future profession to access research sources written in Arabic and to communicate with Arabic-speaking colleagues in both archaeological and museum work.
The Senior Award for Excellence in Arabic
This award is shared this year by two of our graduating minors: **Ashley Estrela** and **Morgan Fogleman**.

**Ashley** has taken a total of eight language classes spanning the elementary through the upper intermediate levels as well as two literature courses. She also studied the Moroccan dialect during a spring semester in Rabat, the political capital of Morocco, and a summer in Fes, the spiritual capital of Morocco, on the WFU Summer Study Abroad Program. She is a Politics and International Affairs major with minors in Arabic and Middle East South Asia Studies. For the past three years she has served as a shift leader for Campus Kitchen, and this year she was director of concerts for the Student Union. Her favorite foci outside of academia are the discipline of yoga and a special feline named Mr. Loon. After graduating in May with the academic honors of summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa, she will be moving to Washington, D.C., to do federal consulting work for the information technology consulting firm CGI. Her plan is to return to school in a few years to pursue an M.A. in Islamic Studies and take her study of Arabic to a higher level.

**Morgan** has taken a total of eight language classes spanning the elementary through the advanced levels as well as two literature courses. She has also studied two dialects: Jordanian during a summer study abroad program in Amman; and Moroccan during half a semester in Meknes. Unfortunately, her Morocco study abroad program this spring was cut short because of the pandemic. She is a Politics and International Affairs major with minors in Arabic and Middle East South Asia Studies. Her on-campus activities have included membership in the Dow Jones Club as well as multiple years working in the library and serving as an RA for Residence Life and Housing. After graduating in May with the academic honor of summa cum laude, she will be moving to Washington, D.C., to complete an internship with the Department of Defense. After that, there will be a “real” job on the horizon, hopefully in an Arabic-speaking location somewhere on the Mediterranean!

In addition to these four outstanding students, we offer to all of our graduating minors and, indeed, all the students in our Arabic Program our congratulations for a job well done and best wishes for success to all those who are leaving WFU to begin a new phase of their lives.
The Hindi-Urdu program, founded in fall 2018, is pleased to congratulate the first group of students to complete HNU 201 (Intermediate Hindi-Urdu II), fulfilling Wake’s foreign language requirement.

As the academic year comes to a close, we would like to recognize students of Hindi-Urdu who have demonstrated their dedication to language study by maintaining perfect records throughout the year in both attendance and assignments.

From Elementary Hindi-Urdu, Shadil Ahmad is a senior majoring in Biology (Pre-med). During his time at Wake, he has been active in research and volunteer work in area medical facilities. Shadil plans to pursue a career in medicine after graduating in May.

From Intermediate Hindi-Urdu, Elizabeth Dicus is a senior majoring in Math and Computer Science. She spent the fall 2018 semester in Nepal as a member of the SIT program, studying Nepali and conducting research on human trafficking. Elizabeth was selected by the CLS program to study Hindi in Jaipur, India during the summer 2020. (Unfortunately, this program was cancelled due to Covid-19.) Upon graduating in May, Elizabeth plans to pursue a career in anti-trafficking and will begin an internship in this field in the fall.

Pankaj Narke, FLTA for the Hindi-Urdu program, set up a table representing India at the 11th Annual World Cultural Festival in September 2019.

The festival is an annual celebration of difference intended to unite, inspire and entertain the entire campus community. Features of the festival include creative displays and activities, a wide variety of cultural foods, information about different cultural groups and various performances.

Read about his experience on page 8.
What inspired you to apply to be a Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant in the United States?
I love traveling and exploring different cultures. This program was the perfect opportunity to combine that with my passion for teaching which I’ve been working in since 2016.

What was most surprising or something you were not expecting about living in Winston-Salem and/or the United States?
American society is a very individualistic one. And that’s very different from Egyptian society. It has its merits as owing to privacy but at the same time it lacked a certain aspect of coziness in relationships. That’s my very personal opinion. I love how people I don’t know, mainly older people in Winston-Salem, greet me in the street even when they don’t know me.

How did you grow as a teacher during your time at Wake Forest University and especially during the unexpected move to online teaching after Spring Break?
It has been great to help with teaching my native language Arabic but what was even more amazing was teaching my own dialect which I use every day, express myself with and joke with my friends with. And introducing the students to Egyptian culture was so much fun. Moving online was unexpected for everyone and I think only a handful of us were prepared for it with prior experience. I’ve been wanting to get into the field of online teaching for a long time now and I think this move has given me the push I much needed so that I would further explore it in the future.

Is there a particular moment or memory from the past nine months that stands out to you or means the most?
Seeing snow and playing with it for the first time. It’s quiet a beautiful memory that I’ll always cherish.

How has this experience impacted or shaped your future and what has this experience meant to you?
I feel that I grew as a person and understood myself more. It made me sure of the things that I wanted in the future and opened new opportunities and possibilities.
Dr. Pankaj Narke

Where are you from? Pune, India
Languages you speak? Marathi, Hindi, & English
Educational Background: PhD in Second Language Education from EFL University, Hyderabad (India).
Area of specialization: Technology in Language Teaching Research Interests: Second/Foreign Language Education, Language Learning Assessment, Intercultural Communication

What inspired you to apply to be a Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant in the United States?
Being a researcher in the field of language education, I was always fascinated to see different processes and strategies employed by language learners while learning a second or foreign language. As a language teacher myself, I strongly believe that the teachers’ position as a native speaker of a particular language is a great resource for the learners to get authentic input. The Fulbright FLTA program provides an opportunity of being the authentic resource of the target language among a group of learners with varied learning abilities and educational/social backgrounds. Moreover, it is also an opportunity to learn about the American education system, of which I have always been an admirer.

What was most surprising or something you were not expecting about living in Winston-Salem and/or the United States?
This is my first time to be in the United States. Every place I have got an opportunity to be in has always pleasantly surprised me for various reasons. Talking about Winston-Salem specifically, I am in love with the overall environment and the nature I am always surrounded by. I was thrilled by the sporting culture at Wake. Being a sports lover, I had a great time witnessing amazing performances by the Wake Soccer and Volleyball teams. This experience was far more than what I had expected. Another surprise was to see people’s awareness about the Indian culture and their respect for the same. While speaking with friends/colleagues, they shared their thoughts on the cultural practices, political movement, education system, and the contribution of Indian citizens in the American society.

How did you grow as a teacher during your time at Wake Forest University and especially during the unexpected move to online teaching after Spring Break?
It was an amazing experience to have students from various parts of the world in my class. As a teacher and teaching assistant, I could interact with them very closely, understand their perspectives, beliefs, attitude towards a foreign language. I hosted several discussion sessions with my students in which we explored the possibilities of using Hindi in their everyday life, opportunities to connect with the native speakers, and exploring online resources such as Bollywood. The entire experience was enriching. Particularly, as a graduate student I met some amazing teachers. They are not just scholars, but also wonderful human beings. They gave me many suggestions regarding my career in research and teaching field. I am thankful to them all.

Is there a particular moment or memory from the past nine months that stands out to you or means the most?
Yes, when I presented my research paper at the WISE conference organized by Wake Forest University in February 2020. I got an amazing experience of interacting with scholars from different academic and non-academic institutions. Also, at the 11th Annual World Cultural Festival – September 2019, I had set up a cultural table to represent India. I got an amazing response from many students. It was an amazing experience too.

How has this experience impacted or shaped your future and what has this experience meant to you?
As I mentioned in one of my responses earlier, this is my first visit to the United States. With such positive experiences, I am definitely looking forward to being in contact with Wake and people I met here. There is a lot to explore and learn. My academic and professional interests meet very closely with the facilities and opportunities at Wake. The rich input from the professors will definitely help me grow as a professional.

Anything else you want to share about your experience?
Being a part of the MESAS Department was such an enriching experience. I had amazing time at Wake as the teachers and students made me feel at home. I was invited for the Thanksgiving dinner at Dr. Rais Rahman’s home. When I went there, I felt like I was with my own family. Similarly, many Indian students gathered at Professor Mitra’s place for Diwali, the festival of lights. Professor Michaelle Browers, the director of MESAS, welcomed all the faculty members and TAs by arranging a welcome dinner at her place. Everyone was welcoming, respectful and comforting. All these events made me feel the warmth that teaching community at Wake has for a new member. I will always remember these beautiful moments in my life.
Lina Benabdallah - Politics and International Affairs


This volume examines Sayyid Ahmad Khan’s life, his contribution, and legacy in the China’s rise to power is one of the biggest questions in International Relations theory (IRT) and foreign policy circles. Although power has been a core concept of IRT for a long time, the faces and mechanisms of power as it relates to Chinese foreign policymaking has changed the contours of that debate. The rise of China and other powers across the global political arena sparks a new visibility for different kinds of encounters between states, particularly between China and other Global South states. These encounters are more visible to IR scholars because of the increasing influence that rising powers have in the international system.

This book shows that foreign policy encounters between rising powers and Global South states do not necessarily exhibit the same logics, behaviors, or investment strategies of Euro-American hegemons. Instead, they have distinctive features that require new theoretical frameworks for analysis. *Shaping the Future of Power* probes the types of power mechanisms that build, diffuse, and project China’s power in Africa. One must take into account the processes of knowledge production, social capital formation, and skills transfers that Chinese foreign policy directs toward African states to fully understand China’s power-building mechanisms. The relational power framework requires these elements to capture both the material aspects and ideational people-centered aspects to power. By examining China’s investments in human resource development programs for Africa, the book reveals a vital, yet undertheorized, aspect of China’s foreign policy making.

Elizabeth Clendinning - Music


“An ambitious work that can really spark scholarship that intersects ethnomusicology, performance studies, and the scholarship on teaching and learning. Clendinning discusses the positive aspects of world music ensembles, but is also open about the ethical issues involved in running a gamelan in an institution of higher education.” —Eric Hung, Music of Asian America Research Center

Gamelan and American academic institutions have maintained their close association for more than sixty years. Elizabeth A. Clendinning illuminates what it means to devote one’s life to world music ensemble education by examining the career and community surrounding the Balinese-American performer and teacher I Made Lasmawan. Weaving together stories of Indonesian and American practitioners, colleagues, and friends, Clendinning shows the impact of academic world music ensembles on the local and transnational communities devoted to education and the performing arts. While arguing for the importance of such ensembles, Clendinning also spotlights how performers and educators use them to create stable and rewarding artistic communities. Cross-cultural ensemble education emerges as a worthy goal for students and teachers alike, particularly at a time when people around the world express more enthusiasm about raising walls to keep others out rather than building bridges to invite them in.
Chanchal Dadlani - Art History


By the 18th century, the Mughal Empire was well beyond its so-called golden age. Its control of the Indian subcontinent was increasingly threatened by regional Indian states, as well as by the encroaching British Empire. In response to a rapidly changing sociopolitical landscape, the Mughal emperors used architecture to harness their illustrious past and stage cultural authority for contemporary audiences. Chanchal Dadlani provides the first in-depth look at this crucial period of architectural history. Discussing a rich array of built forms and urban spaces—from grand imperial mosques to Delhi’s bustling thoroughfares—the volume sheds light on long-overlooked buildings. It also explores representations of architectural monuments that circulated in the form of building plans, manuscript paintings, and postcards. Ultimately, the book reveals how Mughal architects, artists, and patrons built on the cultural legacy of their imperial predecessors to create the very concept of a historical style identifiable as Mughal.

Peter Knapczyk - Hindi-Urdu


“Reading Hindi: Novice to Intermediate” is an innovative collection of graded readings that are both accessible in language and engaging in content, specifically designed for adult learners of Hindi.

Ideal for those just starting out in Hindi, the texts provide culturally rich content written in simple, level-appropriate language, with a range of activities to reinforce learning. The graded readings support the learner as they build their confidence with the language, gradually encountering a wider range of grammar constructions and vocabulary as the book progresses. Reading Hindi can be used alongside a main textbook and is ideal for both class-use and independent study.

Raisur Rahman - History


This volume examines Sayyid Ahmad Khan’s life, his contribution, and legacy in the context of current times. The editors engage his writings, ideas, and activities to read and present his work critically, not as a biographical account of his life but approach his work keeping in mind the tumultuous political events and changes of the nineteenth century, after the failed revolt of 1857 when Indians were transformed into colonial subjects. The collective anxieties of the Indian communities, particularly the Muslims, cried out for a new local leadership; Sayyid Ahmad Khan rose up to this occasion etching the way forward for Indians, in general, and Muslims in particular. Sayyid Ahmad Khan’s multifaceted work offers an important understanding for national thinking emerging from the location of the Muslim, but it is not a ‘minority’ voice with vested political interests rather a constructive and integrative voice of relevance even today for addressing difficult problems.
**Penny Sinanoglou - History**


“Partitioning Palestine” is the first history of the ideological and political forces that led to the idea of partition—that is, a division of territory and sovereignty—in British mandate Palestine in the first half of the twentieth century. Inverting the spate of narratives that focus on how the idea contributed to, or hindered, the development of future Israeli and Palestinian states, Penny Sinanoglou asks instead what drove and constrained British policymaking around partition, and why partition was simultaneously so appealing to British policymakers yet ultimately proved so difficult for them to enact. Taking a broad view not only of local and regional factors, but also of Palestine’s place in the British empire and its status as a League of Nations mandate, Sinanoglou deftly recasts the story of partition in Palestine as a struggle to maintain imperial control. After all, British partition plans imagined space both for a Zionist state indebted to Britain and for continued British control over key geostrategic assets, depending in large part on the forced movement of Arab populations. With her detailed look at the development of the idea of partition from its origins in the 1920s, Sinanoglou makes a bold contribution to our understanding of the complex interplay between internationalism and imperialism at the end of the British empire and reveals the legacies of British partitionist thinking in the broader history of decolonization in the modern Middle East.