

APSA MENA Workshops

Political Science in the Arab Middle East & North Africa



CALL FOR APPLICATIONS: MENA WORKSHOP FELLOWS

Studying Public Opinion in the Contemporary Middle East: Challenges, Opportunities and Best Practices.

July 26 to August 20, 2021 – Virtual Program

The American Political Science Association ([APSA](http://www.apsanet.org)) is pleased to announce a Call for Applications from early-career scholars who would like to participate in a 4-week virtual workshop this summer. The workshop will be held from July 26 to August 20 over Zoom and will bring together up to 12 selected fellows. Following their full participation in the workshop, all fellows will receive three-years membership to APSA. **The deadline for applications is Sunday May 31, 2021.**

This workshop is part of a multi-year effort to support political science research among early-career scholars in the Arab 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/>.

Eligible Participants

The workshop is intended for PhD students who are citizens of countries in the Arab MENA region, especially those who are currently based at universities or research institutes in the region. Non-citizens of Arab MENA countries who are currently based at universities or research institutes in the Arab MENA region may also apply. The program is open to scholars in political science and other social science disciplines undertaking research related to the workshop theme (as described below). Scholars should apply with a research project in progress that they will discuss at the workshop. Professional fluency in English is required.

Workshop Theme

The workshop will be led by Mujtaba Isani (King Fahd University, Saudi Arabia), Karl Kaltenthaler (University of Akron, USA), Yuree Noh (Rhode Island College, USA), and Daniel Silverman (Carnegie Mellon University, USA). Together with selected workshop fellows, co-leaders will discuss the growing body of research that use surveys, experiments, and/or focus groups to understand what MENA populations think and want on a wide range of issues, from gender to conflict to religion to democracy. The workshop will spotlight growing areas of MENA public opinion research, such as attitudes toward gender rights, rebel governance, and more, as well as methodological best practices and techniques designed to meet the increasing practical (instability and public health) challenges facing researchers on the ground. In addition to providing detailed feedback on participants' research projects, co-leaders will facilitate thoughtful discussion on the following four topics:

1) Doing and Publishing Public Opinion Research

Conducting public opinion research in the MENA region comes with a myriad of challenges, ranging from the language and framing of survey questions, to apprehensions about answering sensitive questions about governments, security establishments, religion, and militant groups, to a range of other logistical, ethical and analytical concerns. Co-leaders and fellows will share experiences and discuss how to navigate these challenges and effectively succeed in collecting and disseminating MENA public opinion data.

2) Attitudes toward Political and Social Change

A decade after the Arab uprisings, what can public opinion surveys tell us about the aftermath? Have the opinions about political, social and gender issues in the MENA remained static or

transformed over time? Whereas much of comparative political research in the region has traditionally focused on the dynamics of leaders and institutions, scholars have increasingly incorporated citizen preferences in the past two decades. In the post-Arab Spring world, it has become more important to better understand public opinion about rapid political and social changes. This theme will examine some of the current the political and social trends in public opinion polling. In particular, we will look at citizen preferences over political transitions and gender issues.

3) **Attitudes toward Conflict and Violence**

What shapes popular support for rebel and militant groups in the MENA region, from the PKK to Hezbollah to ISIL? Do citizens in enduring conflicts in the region like the Israeli-Palestinian dispute want peace, and what does peace mean to them? Who believes the misinformation and lies that are increasingly spread in MENA conflict settings? This theme will examine research on public opinion in the MENA region toward issues of conflict and violence. We will survey the literature in this area, looking at the continued opportunities for scholars to illuminate how MENA populations are thinking about peace and security issues as well as the major challenges involved in this kind of research.

4) **Attitudes toward External Actors**

This theme will analyze public attitudes toward external actors in the MENA region, from the United States and the well-established literature on anti-Americanism to new bodies of research on attitudes toward actors like the United Nations, European Union, and others. We will look at efforts to understand and explain MENA publics' views about the legitimacy of these actors. Key research questions will include: What factors shape the social legitimacy of external actors in the MENA region? How can we promote cordial foreign relations and improve perceptions of external actors in the Middle East?

How to Apply

First, review the eligibility requirements and program expectations on the APSA website, 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 May 31**. Selected fellows will be contacted by mid-June.

Applications must be in English and include:

1. The completed online [Application Form](#).
2. A detailed recent Curriculum Vitae/resume.
3. A research statement (2,000 words maximum) describing the work-in-progress you plan to discuss at the workshop. This statement should outline your research question(s), a brief literature review, the methods used and/or your plans for data-collection/fieldwork, the project's anticipated contribution(s) to the field, and how it relates to the workshop theme(s). 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. Submissions may be derived from a dissertation project if it fits the workshop theme.
4. One letter of reference on official letterhead and scanned as electronic file. If you are a graduate student, the letter should be from your dissertation / academic supervisor. If you are a researcher or faculty member, the letter can come from a former dissertation supervisor, a colleague at your home institution, a university official, or an employer. Your letter can be uploaded with your application material or sent directly to menaworkshops@apsanet.org.

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