

# SUJA R. SAWAFTA

## EDUCATION:

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- University of Oxford** 2014 – March 2021  
**DPhil (PhD)**, Oriental Studies | Modern Arabic Literature  
**Dissertation Title:** “The Dialectic of the Sea and the Desert: Exile, Commitment, and Dissent in the novels of Abdulrahman Munif”
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill** 2011-2013  
**M.A.**, Romance Languages and Literatures | Franco-Arab Studies  
**Thesis Title:** “Mapping the Middle East: From Bonaparte’s Egypt to Chateaubriand’s Palestine”
- Duke University and The University of North Carolina** 2011-2013  
**Graduate Certificate in Middle Eastern Studies**, The Duke-UNC Consortium for Middle East Studies
- University of North Carolina at Greensboro** 2006-2010  
**B.A.**, International Studies | Global Affairs and International Development,  
French Language & Literature, **Awarded with honors** (Lloyd International Honors College)  
**Honors Thesis Title:** “Land and Culture in Contemporary Levantine Literature and Film”

## PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS:

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- Assistant Professor of Arabic Studies, University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL** January 2021– Present
- Lecturer of Arabic Studies, University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL** August – December 2020
- Visiting Researcher, MESALC, UVA, Charlottesville, VA** Spring 2020
- Visiting Lecturer of Arabic Language & Literature, UVA, Charlottesville, VA** August 2018 - December 2019
- Coordinator & Lecturer of Arabic, UNC-Greensboro, Greensboro, NC** August 2017- May 2018
- Adjunct Lecturer of French, UNC-Greensboro, Greensboro, NC** Fall 2017
- Tutorial Instructor, Stanford University in Oxford, Oxford, UK** Spring 2016
- The Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, UNC Chapel-Hill** August 2011- May 2013  
Graduate Teaching Fellow

## PUBLICATIONS

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### Book Manuscripts in Progress:

*Abdulrahman Munif: Exile and Dissidence in the Making of the Arabic Novel*, proposal under external review.

*Jabra Illuminated: Legacies, Influences, Dialogues*, co-edited with Khalid Lyamlahy (University of Chicago), proposal passed external review, contract forthcoming.

## Peer-Reviewed Articles:

“The Blue Specter of Exile: Dual Displacements and the Othering of Tunisian Jews in *The Parrot* [Dir. Sallam, Al-Rasheed, 2016],” (In Preparation).

“When the Waters Come In, It Will All Turn to Dust: History and the Environment in Abdulrahman Munif’s *Cities of Salt*,” in *Fragile Ecologies: Environmental Urgency in the Literatures of the Middle East* Special Issue, Ed. Charis Olszok, *Middle Eastern Literatures* (Invited, Under Review)

“Abdulrahman Munif Between Sea and Desert, Between Arabic and World Literature,” *Mashriq & Mahjar: Journal of Middle East & North African Migration* (Submitted)

“Cinephilic Life-Writing in *An Iraqi in Paris*,” co-written with Samhita Sunya, in Print Plus cluster on Global South Cinephilias, Ed. Rielle Navitski, *Modernism/modernity* (Accepted, Forthcoming Spring 2023)

## Peer-Reviewed Book Chapters:

“On Jabra and the Wonders and Limits of Exile,” in *Jabra Illuminated: Legacies, Influences, Dialogues*, Eds. Lyamlahy and Sawafta (Forthcoming)

## Non-Refereed Essays, Book Chapters, and Collections:

Guest Editor, “The Arabic Poetry Issue: Revolution and Rebellion,” *International Poetry Review* (Forthcoming, Fall 2023)

## PUBLIC-FACING CREATIVE AND SCHOLARLY WRITINGS

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Book Review, “Hocine Tandjaoui’s *Clamor*: A Poetic Memoir of the Algerian Revolution,” *Middle East Monitor* (2023)

Interview, “George Abraham’s *Birthright* is a Lexicon of Resistance and Return,” *Middle East Monitor* (2023)

Feature, “Meet Yasmeen, Mjalli, The Palestinian Designer Behind Nöl Collective,” *Grazia! Middle East* (2022)

Essay, “Origin Stories: Tracing Jabra and Munif’s Childhoods in Bethlehem and Amman,” in *ArabLit & ArabLit Quarterly* (2022)

Opinion Piece, “Jordan’s official Oscar entry Farha grants Palestinian Diaspora Permission to Narrate” *Middle East Monitor* (2022)

- Reshared by *Informed Comment* under Film Section, [juancole.com](https://www.juancole.com)

Opinion Piece: “Orientalism, Ukraine and the Social Disease of Selective Solidarity,” *Middle East Monitor* (2022)

Poem, “Chasing the Lights of Ajloun,” in the Home Issue, *Jaffat El Aqlam*, Issue 4 (2019)

Interview, “The comeback of rapper-poet Omar Offendum,” *Middle East Monitor* (2019)

Book Review, “A Woman is No Man,” *Middle East Monitor* (2019)

Opinion Piece, “From Munif to Khashoggi: the cost of dissent in the new Saudi Age,” *Middle East Monitor*, (2018)

Album Review, “From the Balfour to the Balfon: 47Soul proves there’s passion in the Exodus,” *Middle East Monitor* (2018)

## LITERARY TRANSLATIONS

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Hlehel, Ala'. Trans. Suja Sawafta, (Ed.) Nathalie Handal. "The City and the Writer: In Qadita with Ala' Hlehel," *Words Without Borders*, 2016 (Also published in "Palestinians and the City," a project run by the Center for Palestine Studies at Columbia University, commissioned).

Badr, Liana. Trans. Suja Sawafta, (Ed.) Nathalie Handal. "The City and the Writer: In Jerusalem with Liana Badr," *Words Without Borders*, 2016 (Also published in "Palestinians and the City," a project run by the Center for Palestine Studies at Columbia University, commissioned).

## FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS, & AWARDS

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UMiami Provost's Research Award	2023-2024
Oxford University Centre for Islamic Studies Visiting Research Fellowship	Trinity Term (April-June 2023)
Slow Factory Systemic Change Fellow	Spring 2023
TARII   The Academic Research Institute in Iraq Fellowship for US Scholars	2022-2023
UMiami Center for the Humanities Faculty Fellowship	2022-2023
UMiami Fellowship in the Arts & Humanities	2022-2023
Young Changemaker, Middle East Mediterranean (MEM) Summer Summit	August 2022
Course Scholarship, Barcelona Summer School of the Mediterranean & Middle East	July 2022
UMiami DaVinci Scholars Program 2022-2023 Course Proposal Selectee	October 2021
UVA MESALC Departmental Research Award	November 2019
UVA MESALC Departmental Research Award	August 2018
UNCG Languages, Literatures, & Cultures Departmental Research Award	August 2017
The Antonian Fund STAR Grant, Oxford University	March 2017
The Antonian Fund STAR Grant, Oxford University	December 2016
AHRC-TORCH Graduate Fund Grant, Oxford University	2016-2017
Graduate Teaching Fellowship in French, Department of Romance Languages, UNC	2011-2013
René Hadré Scholarship for French Studies, UNCG	2010-2011
Abraham's Vision Conflict Resolution Fellowship (Full Scholarship)	2009-2010
Lloyd International Honors College Study Abroad Scholarship, UNCG	December 2008

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

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"Malta as Haven, Home, & Archipelago: Exile and The Mediterranean in Walid Nabhan's *Exodus of the Storks*," Arab Passages: Literary Interventions and Worldly Transits Panel, American Comparative Literature Association Annual Meeting, Chicago Illinois, March 13-16<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

"Reading between History and Myth: Protest, Petroleum, and Panorama in Munif's *Cities of Salt*," Twelfth Nordic Conference on Middle Eastern Studies: The Middle East in Myth and Reality, University of Iceland, September 22-24<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

"Cinephilic Life-Writing in an *Iraqi in Paris*," Interdisciplinary Modernism Workshop, Wilson Center for Humanities and Arts, University of Georgia, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

"Saadawi & Fanon: Towards a Medical Ethics of Socio-Political Liberation," Body, Medicine, and Feminism: The Life and Work of Nawal El-Saadawi, Duke University, April 7-8<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

“Beyond the Noble Savage: Munif, Koni, and the grace of the Animal World,” From Morning Hunt to Beloved Gazelle, University of Cambridge, December 15-17<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

“To Stand Accused: Abdulrahman Munif’s Negotiation of an Arab Exile in Amman,” The Arab World as *Ghurba* Conference, University of Warwick, June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019.

“A Novel for the People: The Use of a ‘Middle Language’ in the Works of Abdulrahman Munif,” Languages of Legitimation: Cambridge Graduate Middle East Conference, University of Cambridge, June 6-7<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

“The Dialectic of the Sea and the Desert: Exile, Commitment, and Dissent in the Novels of Abdulrahman Munif,” MESALC Interdisciplinary Forum, University of Virginia, February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

Conference Convener, “Crossings: Negotiating Borders and Boundaries in the Eastern Mediterranean,” University of Oxford, April 29-30<sup>th</sup>, 2017

“Othering Jerusalem: The Politics of Imperial Representation,” Duke-UNC Islam in the Global Context Series, The University of North Carolina, October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012

## **INVITED TALKS**

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“Orientalism & the Environment,” Open Edu Lecture, Slow Factory Foundation Spring Fellowship Series, February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

“Orientalism, Zionism, and the Nakba,” International Perspectives on Decolonization and Apartheid in Palestine, Conference Organized by Middle East Monitor, February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

Moderator, “In Protest and Solidarity: A Teach-in on the Feminist Uprising in Iran,” UMiami Department of Gender and Sexuality Studies, FIU Center for the Urban Environment, November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

“Munif wa-l-manfa: hal al-manfi wa-l-riwaya al-arabiyya fi-l-qarn al-‘ishrin (Munif and Exile: The Exilic Condition and the Arabic Novel in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century),” Arabic Circle at the University of Chicago (Al-Nadwa al-‘arabiyya), April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

“Woman at Point Zero: The Feminist Legacy of Nawal El Saadawi,” GSS Colloquium, University of Miami, April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

Keynote Address, UNC-Greensboro University Marshall Induction Ceremony, April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018

“A Brief History of Orientalist Images in the Ottoman Levant,” Interfaith-Peace Builders Webinar, June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017

“Navigating Space and Place in Israel/Palestine,” Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Oxford, March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015

“Between Art and Resistance: Graffiti from Berlin to Bethlehem,” Department of Geography, University of North Carolina, February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013

“The Use of Language and Art in the Arab Spring,” CHICLE Language Institute, Carrboro, NC, October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012

“Islamophobia and the Politics of Othering Post-9/11,” The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011 and November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010

## **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICE (SELECT)**

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Film & Arts Programming Director, Core Planning Group, DC Palestinian Film and Arts Festival (DCPFAF), 2021- Present.

Guest, “MEMO in Conversation with Dr Suja Sawafta, ‘Farha and the Palestinian Permission to Narrate,’” Middle East Monitor, December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

**SAWAFTA**

Young Changemaker, Middle East Mediterranean (MEM) Summer Summit Workshop with the Federation of Swiss Ambassadors to the Middle East, Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Amman, Jordan, June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

Guest / Interviewee, “Russian-Ukraine News Coverage Draws Questions About Support,” YES! Weekly Feature Written by Naima Said, March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

Guest, “MEMO in Conversation with Dr Suja Sawafta, ‘Orientalism, Ukraine, and Selective Solidarity,’” Middle East Monitor, March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

Guest, “Assistant Professor of Arabic Studies Suja Sawafta [afikra Conversations],” The afikra Podcast, May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

Moderator, Returning Home: A Tribute to Mourid Barghouti, Palestinian Youth Movement Land Day Event, March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

Panelist, Islamic Society of Greater Houston Inspire & Innovate Webinar Series: Inspiring Women Series, January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

Judge, Annual Ghassan Kanafani Resistance Arts Scholarship, 2020-2021.

Guest, “The Environmental Politics of Abdulrahman Munif,” Ottoman History Podcast, Episode 414. June 15, 2019.

Guest Moderator, “Selected Readings from Hanan Al-Shaykh’s *Story of Zahra*,” The Jefferson Literary & Debate Society, University of Virginia, November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

Moderator, “Panel Discussion: Building Community: Refugees + Immigrants in the Triad,” Weatherspoon Art Museum, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2018.

Guest, “The Afterlives of 9/11 and its Impact on the Muslim American Community,” Woke Wednesdays, December 27<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

Discussant, “And They Said Refugee,” Film Premiere, Exeter College, University of Oxford, November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015.

Guest, “Goolsby Defends Potential Racial Justice Act,” *The State of Things*, with Frank Statio and Alexis Pauline Gumbs, WUNC/NPR. April 5, 2013

## **CERTIFICATIONS & ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL TRAINING**

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### **The American University of Rome**

January 2023

**Course:** “Protecting Our Future: An Introduction to Cultural Heritage”

### **Barcelona Summer School of the Middle East and Mediterranean | IBEI & BURL**

July 2022

**Course:** “The Continued Effects of the Colonial Era on the EU’s Foreign Policy Towards its Mediterranean/Southern Neighborhood”

### **Accelerated Turkish Language Program, Faculty of Oriental Studies, Oxford University**

October 2015-June 2017

### **Preparation for Learning and Teaching in Oxford (PLTO), Humanities Division**

January 2017

### **TESOL/TESL/TFL Certification, Oxford Seminars**

July 2013

### **ROML 700: Theories and Techniques of Teaching, UNC**

Fall Semester 2011

## **COURSES & TEACHING**

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### **University of Miami**

**MLL 370/ECS 375:** Orientalism & the Environment (da Vinci Scholars Program Seminar)

**ARB 312:** Arab Cultures: A Cultural History of the Arab World

### **SAWAFTA**

**ARB 315/ ARB 208/ MLL 322/GSS 360:** Orientalism & Sexuality  
**ARB 315 / ARB 207/ GSS 360:** Writers & Rebels: The Female Renegades of Arabic Literature & Film  
**ARB 310/FRE 310/MLL 325:** Franco-Arab Cinema  
**ARB 201:** Intermediate Arabic I  
**ARB 202:** Intermediate Arabic II  
**ARB 203:** Advanced Arabic I  
**ARB 591:** Directed Readings (Undergraduate Independent Study)  
**ARB 792:** Directed Readings (Graduate Independent Study)  
**FRE 202:** Intermediate French II  
**Faculty Contributor, Native American and Global Indigenous Studies Program**

#### **University of Virginia**

**ARAB 4210/7210:** Introduction to Arabic Drama (taught in MSA for Advanced Arabic Students)  
**ARTR 3290/5290:** Exile/Return in Arabic Literature  
**ARAB 3810/5810:** Modern Arabic Fiction (taught in MSA for Advanced Arabic Students)  
**ARTR 3350/5350:** Writing Rebellion: An Introduction to the Female Renegades of Arabic Literature & Film  
**ARAB 4890/8890:** Bedouins, Indigeneity & Environment

#### **University of North Carolina at Greensboro**

**ARB 101:** Elementary Arabic I  
**ARB 102:** Elementary Arabic II  
**ARB 203:** Intermediate Arabic I  
**ARB 204:** Intermediate Arabic II  
**HSS 217:** Exile/Return in Arabic Literature  
**Co-Instructor, FRE 455/693:** “Introduction to Francophone Caribbean Literature”

#### **Stanford University in Oxford**

**Tutorial:** “Geopolitical Shock and Identity in the Levant”

#### **University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**

**French 101:** Elementary French I (Instructor of Record, Taught in Collaboration)  
**French 102:** Elementary French II (Instructor of Record, Taught in Collaboration)

#### **Other Teaching Experience:**

**ESL Instructor, Interlink Language Centers/ TVTC College, Jeddah, KSA** August 2013 – July 2014

- Courses taught : communication, language module workshops, reading, and writing.

### **SERVICE TO THE UNIVERSITY**

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#### **University of Miami**

Director of Arabic Studies, Michelle Bowman Underwood Department of Modern Languages & Literatures (2022-Present)  
Member, Graduate Studies Committee, Michelle Bowman Underwood Department of Modern Languages & Literatures (2022-Present)  
Member, Gender and Sexuality Studies Steering Committee (2021-2023)  
Peer Reviewer, 2023-2024 Arts & Humanities Fellowship  
Member, Undergraduate Studies Committee, Department of Modern Languages and Literatures (2020-2022)  
Member, Lectures Committee, Department of Modern Languages and Literatures (2020 – 2021)  
Assistant Director of Arabic Studies, Department of Modern Languages and Literatures (2020-2021)  
Judge, Student Award for Outstanding Writing in Islamic Studies, Department of Religious Studies, Spring 2021

#### **University of North Carolina at Greensboro**

Coordinator of Arabic, Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures (2017-2018)  
Affiliated scholar, UNCG Islamic Studies Research Network. (2017-2018)

## GRADUATE STUDENT EXAM COMMITTEES

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Dissertation Co-Supervisor, and Member of Prospectus Committee, Rim ElBelkacemi  
Member, Qualifying Exam, Prospectus, and Dissertation Committee, Nadiyah Amer

## TRANSLATION WORK (SELECT)

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### **Migrant-Rights.org**

2023

Translator, “Wafidun” or ‘Migrants’? Is a legal term necessary or is it a linguistic luxury?” by Hana Bouhaji  
+ Translator’s Note/Companion Piece on semantics surrounding migration and modern slavery in the GCC

### **Staff Translator, Middle East Monitor, London, United Kingdom**

2013-2017

Translated Arabic news, reports, and opinion pieces into English within 24 hours of initial publication

### **The Islamic Political Party Platform Project, Department of Sociology, University of North Carolina**

2013

Project Directed by Dr. Charles Kurzman

Translator, Hizb al-Mutamar al-Watani al-Sudani (National Congress Party of Sudan), 2010

Translator, Jami’yyat al-Wifaq al-Watani al-Islami (National Islamic Reconciliation Society of Bahrain), 2010

Translator, Hizb al-Islah wa-l-Tanmiyya (Party of Reform and Development, PRD, Tunisia), 2011

Translator, Haraka al-Dusturiyya al-Islamiyya (Islamic Constitutional Movement of Kuwait), 2012

## ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS

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American Comparative Literature Association (ACLA)

Modern Language Association (MLA)

Middle East Studies Association (MESA)

The Mediterranean Seminar, Associate

Palestinian American Research Center (PARC)

## LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

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English: Native Fluency

Arabic: Native Fluency

French: Full Professional Fluency

Spanish: Intermediate Fluency

Reading languages: Turkish, Italian, Maltese