Professor Paula Rayman, Director of the Middle East Center for Peace, Development and Culture, was honored as a “Distinguished American Speaker” by the United States Ambassador to Israel, Daniel Shapiro. She presented a talk, “The Role of Women in Building Positive Peace,” which covered how women’s movements in Israel and internationally are advancing new visions for peace. She detailed the eight pillars of positive peace and ways in which women are bringing new momentum to ending violence and building sustainable peace. Examples included how she worked with Israeli Jewish and Arab women from “Open House,” a coexistence center in Ramle, Israel, to work on techniques of non-violent communication and her role in advising a new organization called “Women Waging Peace” which is committed to bringing women to the table in peace negotiations.

Ambassador Daniel Shapiro introduced Professor Rayman and explained the objective of the speaker series, which is to bring American speakers to Israeli audiences in order to strengthen connections between the US and Israel. He described how the talk by Professor Rayman would help in “building understanding between Jews and Arabs in Israel” in order to further “[the US Embassy’s] mission in laying the groundwork for the one of the overriding US goals of achieving a two-state solution to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.”

The large audience included government officials, heads of NGOs, and academic leaders. The Prime Minister’s Office was represented by Ms. Vered Swid, the Director for the Authority for the Advancement of Women. Also attending from the Israeli government was Israel’s Commissioner of Equal Employment, Ms. Tziona Koenig Yair. UMass Lowell’s partner universities were represented by Professors Samuel Kenig and Hannah Dodiuk from Shenkar College and Professor Keren Sharvit from University of Haifa.

Professor Rayman’s speech in November was the second time she presented at the request of the United States Embassy: In 2011, she gave a Distinguished American Speaker talk on ‘Beyond Coexistence’ and how nonviolent action has been instrumental in advancing the quest for democracy and better social and economic conditions in the US and the region.
Enhancing Intercultural Understanding: Opening Doors to Kuwait

Through a unique academic-industry partnership with Raytheon Co., UMass Lowell will offer undergraduate and graduate degrees in Kuwait starting in the fall 2015 semester.

"UMass Lowell is honored to join Raytheon and GUST in this academic-industry partnership to provide the people of Kuwait with world-class educational programs that will in turn foster economic development," said UMass Lowell Chancellor Marty Meehan. "Through the new academic, research and experiential education opportunities presented by this program, UMass Lowell’s students and faculty will also benefit. In today’s ever-shrinking world, a global perspective gives our graduates an advantage by ensuring they have the understanding of other cultures necessary for professional and personal success."

The new partnership includes the Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST), where UMass Lowell will offer programs in fields including engineering, business, education, science, and security studies. UMass Lowell will become the first American university to offer its U.S.-accredited degrees in Kuwait through such a model, which will be funded by Raytheon and tuition and fees paid by Kuwaiti students.

The goals of the program include helping Kuwait expand educational opportunities to diversify the skills of its workforce and identifying collaborative research and innovation opportunities with GUST.

In addition, UMass Lowell and GUST will collaborate on dual-degree programs and, with Raytheon’s support, a new engineering college will be established on the GUST campus that will serve students of both institutions.

“We believe that both GUST and Raytheon share our UMass Lowell values of delivering high-quality education, research and outreach in support of advancing regional, national and international economic and social development," said UMass Lowell Provost Ahmed Abdelal. “We are proud that our planning with Raytheon and GUST has come to fruition in this unique, industry-supported educational partnership. This will advance higher education in Kuwait and the Gulf region and will enhance intercultural understanding between citizens of the United States and Kuwait.”

Plans call for as many as two dozen undergraduate and graduate degrees to be offered by UMass Lowell at GUST with enrollment expected to reach 1,200 students when the programs are fully established. UMass Lowell students and faculty will also have the opportunity to study and conduct research on the campus.

Day Without Violence Lecture: America through Arab Eyes

In a presentation to a full audience in O’Leary Library, Dr. Shibley Telhami reviewed public opinion polls in the United States and the Arab World and assessed changing public perceptions of issues that concern both sides. Dr. Telhami is the Anwar Sadat Professor for Peace and Development at University of Maryland, College Park, and non-resident senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. The speech “America in Arab Eyes and Arabs in American Eyes” was the 20th Annual “Day Without Violence” Lecture at University of Massachusetts Lowell. The audience of two hundred people included UMass Lowell students and faculty, community members, and students from Lowell High School. Reverend Imogene Stulken introduced the Day Without Violence lecture and noted that UMass Lowell had a distinguished history of holding events related to understanding peace. Provost Ahmed Abdelal welcomed Dr. Telhami and hosted a gathering of faculty and staff who engaged in discussion with the guest scholar.

Combatting Violence Against Women: New Project of United States Institute of Peace

Dr. Paula Rayman will serve as the MENA Gender Consultant to develop a United States Institute of Peace (USIP) Special Report documenting the implementation of United Nations Resolution 1325 and subsequent National Action Plans (NAPs) in the MENA region. Comparative case-studies and analysis will also be presented from other regions, especially from countries which have had recent conflict and post-conflict experiences. The Special Report will also explore the important issue of how attention to gender roles and gender justice has interfaced with countering violent extremism. As part of this exploration, the Report will include examples of nascent and established nonviolent women’s movements in the MENA region and beyond.
Focus on Recognition: Scholars to Address Transitions to Democracy

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

The Middle East Center for Peace, Development and Culture at University of Massachusetts Lowell and the Chaim Herzog Center for Middle East Studies and Diplomacy at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev are collaborating on a Working Seminar on Recognition: Transition to Democracy. This Seminar, organized by Dr. Paula Rayman from University of Massachusetts Lowell and Dr. Yoram Meital from Ben-Gurion University, will bring together a small group of leading scholars to promote understanding and creative thinking on the topic of Recognition in the context of the potential transition to democracy in the Middle East.

A primary goal of the workshop is to explore how these varying themes and levels of analysis of recognition inform each other, and how it creates ‘new’ meanings or maintains ‘old’ ones. What commonalities and differences appear as we understand recognition from an inter-disciplinary perspective?

Recognition is important because identity is partially shaped by recognition or its absence, and so the lack of recognition can inflict damage on a person and serve as a form of oppression.

Withholding recognition can lead minorities to feel marginalized and pose obstacles to the development of their self-esteem, causing them to become less than full participants in society. This presents problems for societies wishing to maintain peaceful conditions because three of the eight pillars of positive peace (equitable distribution of resources, acceptance of the rights of others, and good relations with neighbors) are related to the presence or lack of recognition.

Ultimately, there is nothing more important in building towards positive peace and security than establishing conditions necessary for recognition. It is vital to have discussion around these issues since, as evidenced from the post-Arab Spring, the sincere desire by demonstrators for democracy is not sufficient to create lasting peace and security. It is hoped that this conference will add depth and nuance to the understanding of recognition, which will in turn inform policy-makers, academics, and civil society. The workshop will focus on recognition in the Middle East, especially Egypt, Israel, Tunisia, and as well as the Palestinian society.

A successful Seminar will have lasting impact beyond the days of the events. All participants will submit papers prior to the Seminar, which will then be published along with the seminar conclusions.

---

Middle East Center Leads Non-Violent Communication Training

Dr. Paula Rayman and Mr. Seth Izen conducted a workshop in non-violent communication for Arab and Jewish women. The training was held at Open House, a Center dedicated to fostering communication and understanding between Arabs and Jews. The workshop discussed the principles and techniques of empathetic communication. Putting down the principles to practice, Jewish and Arab women paired up to convey to each other their personal concept of peace. Dalia Landau, the founder of Open House, remarked that “These skills are a much needed life-long practice, we realize, which we hope to implement in our daily life and hopefully to follow up with Paula and Seth whenever they are in the country.”

---

Recognition Seminar Participants/Discussants

**Prof. Yoram Meital (Co-Chair)**
Dr. Yoram Meital is Chairman of the Chaim Herzog Center for Middle East Studies and Diplomacy at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev.

**Prof. Paula Rayman (Co-Chair)**
Dr. Paula Rayman is Director of the Middle East Center for Peace, Development, and Culture at University of Massachusetts Lowell.

**Mr. Gregory Aftandilian**
Mr. Aftandian is an independent consultant and university lecturer on Middle East politics and is currently an Associate at the Middle East Center here on campus.

**Ms. Diana Buttu**
Ms. Buttu, a former spokesperson for the Palestinian Authority, is a fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government and Harvard Law School.

**Prof. Dale Eickelman**
Dr. Eickelman is the Ralph and Richard Lazarus Professor of Anthropology and Human Relations at Dartmouth College.

**Prof. Herbert Kelman**
Dr. Kelman is the Richard Clarke Cabot Professor of Social Ethics, Emeritus, at Harvard University and was Director of the Program on International Conflict Analysis and Resolution at Harvard’s Weatherhead Center for International Affairs.

**Prof. Amal Jamal**
Prof. Jamal is Chair of the Department of Political Science at Tel Aviv University, head of the Walter Leibach Institute and academic Head of the International MA in Political Science & Political Communication at Tel Aviv University.

**Prof. Maya Kahanoff**
Dr. Maya Kahanoff, a lecturer at the Swiss Center Graduate Program for Conflict Research, Management & Resolution and an associate research fellow at the Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

**Dr. Victoria Montgomery**
Dr. Victoria Montgomery is a Research Fellow within the School of Politics, International Studies and Philosophy at Queen’s University, Belfast.

**Prof. Nira Yuval-Davis**
Prof. Yuval-Davis is the Director of the Research Centre on Migration, Refugees and Belonging (CMRB) at the University of East London.
Student Voices: ISIS, Israel, Iran

The Middle East Center hosted a series of lunchtime learning sessions to provide a forum for students to discuss urgent issues facing the region. Assistant Director Seth Izen and Associate Greg Aftandilian led discussions on “Can ISIS be defeated?” “Israel after the elections: Is there hope for peace?” and “Iran’s nuclear program: Is a deal possible?” The sessions were attended by students across the campus and from a variety of backgrounds—some attendees served in the military and had traveled to the Middle East, others were focusing on the region in classes, and others came to learn for the first time about the issues.

Cultural Experiences: Exploring Arab Female Identity

The University of Massachusetts Lowell art gallery hosted works by renowned artist Lalla Essaydi. The exhibition was organized by Professor Ellen Wetmore of the Art Department. Essaydi is a Moroccan-born artist who received her MFA from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston in 2003. Essaydi’s work explores the complexities of Arab female identity, both from an insider’s experience of her own Moroccan childhood, and with the outsider perspective of a Western trained artist. This dual perspective allows her to explore the physical and psychological spaces of the harem, the veil, and the odalisque with a non-essentializing gaze, disrupting Orientalist notions of what it is to be both Arabic and female.

Essaydi’s prints are part of a collaborative performance project that takes place in her childhood home in Morocco with female friends and family members as partners. Together with the artist, these women use calligraphy, bullet casings, henna, their bodies and their gaze to subvert traditional and/or imposed notions of gender, ethnicity and identity. They speak to us of a richly layered and multi-faceted world, a world that is poorly understood here in the West.

From UAE to USA: Digital Media Exchange Begins

The Digital Media Program under the direction of Dr. Wael Kamal, Director of the Program and a lecturer in the Art Department, is hosting 10 students of University of Sharjah this summer 2015. The group is the first exchange after signing the MOU between UMass Lowell and Sharjah University in 2013. Students will be attending two Digital Media courses for credit and will be involved in numerous activities on campus in collaboration with the Middle East Center for Peace, Development and Culture, the Art Department and other offices including Difference Makers, and the International Students and Scholars Office.

Pursuing Justice Through Art: 2015

The Middle East Center co-sponsored a Multi-Cultural Genocide Exhibition and Symposium organized by the Whistler House Museum of Art. In recognition of April being International Genocide Month, the Whistler House Museum of Art presented a symposium and exhibition entitled, “Pursuing Justice Through Art: 2015”. The exhibition ran from March 18 to April 25, where works of art were displayed by artists whose themes are rooted in genocide and Holocaust memories and commemoration. The year 2015 is significant in genocide history. It is the 100th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, the 70th Anniversary of the end of the Jewish Holocaust, and the 40th Anniversary of the Cambodian Genocide. The word “genocide” was coined in 1944 to name a particularly shocking and horrific crime of violence.