



Hassan II Mohammedia/Casablanca University
Faculty of Letters and Humanities Ben M'Sik, Casablanca



Department of English
Moroccan American Studies Lab

Organizes an International Conference on

*Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Arab Spring and its Implications
for American Studies in Arab Universities*

Marrakech, 5-8 December 2012



Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the conference committee, I would like to invite you to the “First Interdisciplinary American Studies Conference”, which will take place in Marrakech, Morocco from 5th to 8th December, 2012. The theme of the conference is “*Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Arab Spring and its Implications for American Studies in Arab Universities*”.

The conference aims to renew the existing lines of communication and open up new prospects of dialogue between US and Arab scholars of American Studies. The format of two-and-a-half-day conference will include an opening plenary session and three panel presentations. There will also be working groups paralleling the plenary themes to provide room for focus group discussions. The conference will offer an opportunity for the participants to discuss their research findings and share thoughts about their professional experiences and their specific contexts.

The proceedings of the conference will be published by Hassan II Mohammedia/Casablanca University, Faculty of Letters and Humanities Ben M'Sik, Casablanca.

Both the conference committee and I look forward to welcoming you in Marrakech, the ochre city, home of palm trees and capital of the snow-capped High Atlas Mountains.

Best regards,
Dr Abdelmajid Kaddouri
President of the Conference
Dean of Faculty of Humanities
Ben M'Sik, Casablanca

CALL FOR PAPERS

BACKGROUND

Academic interest in American Studies in the Arab World has increased remarkably in recent years to the extent that the subject has acquired the status of an independent discipline in many Arab universities. The fast political changes that have occurred since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the emergence of the US as a dominant super power have incited new and innovative approaches to the study of the American phenomenon. The economic, social and cultural impact of globalization and the unprecedented flow of information have further consolidated the hegemony of American culture worldwide. Within the Arab World, this steady attention paid to the United States has come to counterbalance a long tradition of American scholarly interest in the Middle East and North Africa and contribute to fostering better understanding of the cultural particularities and strategic interests of these geographically distant partners.

More than eight years have elapsed since the inaugural American Studies Regional Conference in Cairo in 2004, an event that officially launched discussions between Arab and American scholars on the ways and means to develop American Studies in Arab universities. Interest in this academic discipline has come at a critical time characterized by cultural and political tensions between the Arab World and the United States of America. This situation has led to a growing conviction on both sides that there is an urgent need today, more than ever before, to know “the other” better and build bonds of trust and channels of cooperation between Americans and Arabs. Relevant themes related to American Studies, both as a discipline and as an area of regional studies, have been identified. Among the recommendations that Arab and American participants in the conference repeatedly stressed was the necessity to create an active Arab Association of American Studies that would aim at bringing together, on a regular basis, Arab and American researchers willing to engage in serious academic dialogue. This association was also supposed to institutionalize, monitor, and evaluate American Studies programs in Arab universities and facilitate networking and exchange among Arab scholars interested in the field. However, since the Cairo Conference very little has been achieved.

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this international conference are as follows:

- To bring together American and Arab scholars' readings of the deep ongoing social and political transformations the Arab region is experiencing and to debate the implications of these changes for American Studies in Arab universities.
- To renew the existing lines of communication and open up new prospects of dialogue for American and Arab researchers interested in American studies.
- To provide an opportunity for Arab and American researchers to discuss the possibilities to support the existing resources, and to encourage research.
- To create an active regional association of American Studies that aims at bringing together, on a regular basis, Arab and American researchers willing to engage in serious academic dialogue.

The conference will include, but will not be limited to, the following issues:

- How has the Arab Spring changed the way Americans perceive the Middle East and North Africa?
- How do Arabs and North Africans look on the United States after the rise of these pro-democracy movements?
- What are the lessons learned from the Arab Spring on both ends?
- The state of the art of American/Arab dialogue
- American Studies in Arab Universities : Local and Global Transformations
- American Studies in Arab Universities : New Technologies
- American Studies in Arab Universities : Pedagogical Challenges

METHODOLOGY

Panel Presentations

Given the interdisciplinary nature of this conference, it will be highly interactive, encouraging cross-disciplinary discussions and providing an opportunity to share information and research findings in different academic fields. The format of the two-and-a-half-day conference includes an opening plenary session and three panel presentations, each followed by an open plenary discussion in the course of which all participants are invited to ask questions and exchange additional insights from their professional experiences and their specific contexts.

Working Groups

There will also be three working groups paralleling the plenary themes and providing an opportunity for focus group discussions. The groups will be led by facilitators and will focus on the following areas:

- 1) American Studies in the Arab Region: Research Interests/Perspectives
- 2) American Studies in the Arab Region: Pedagogical Resources and Challenges
- 3) Arab-American Dialogue: State of the Art

On the last day of the conference, there will be a final plenary session during which each focus group will present its findings, and during which the larger group will reflect on lessons learned and propose the next steps to be taken. A publication of participants' presentations and recommendations is one of the goals of the conference.

INTENDED OUTCOME

- The development of a succinct set of recommendations and a publication of the proceedings of this conference.
- The development of a strategy for sharing these recommendations with a broader group of international partners to be identified with the help of the participants.
- The creation of an American-Arab network or association of researchers interested in American studies.



PRESENTATIONS

Presentations will be allowed 20 minutes. Please submit no more than a 250-word abstract by June 30th, 2012 to Pr. Amine Moumine, the conference coordinator.

Email: americanstudiesmorocco@gmail.com

Abstracts should include: name, institutional affiliation, current position, email address, title of paper and at least five keywords that best describe the subject of your submission. The two official languages of the conference are Arabic and English. Translation from and to these languages will be available during the activities of the conference.

Please tick all that apply.

1. Format(s):

Plenary presentation

Workshop

Other, please describe

2. Equipment:

LCD Projector

DVD & TV

Overhead Projector

Other, please specify

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PUBLICATION OF THE PAPERS

- The selection panel of the conference committee will consider all paper abstracts received by the submission deadline to ensure that the proposed paper is relevant to the conference.
- All proposals will be subjected to peer-review.
- Authors whose abstracts are accepted will be notified by July 30th, 2012.
- All accepted papers of the conference will be published in Conference Proceedings by Hassan II Mohammedia/Casablanca University, Faculty of Letters and Humanities Ben M'Sik, Casablanca. The deadline for the submission of the papers is October 30, 2012.
- All full papers will be double-blind reviewed to ensure compliance with academic standards.
- Comparative and empirical research is highly desirable.



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Please address questions and forms to Pr. Amine Moumine, the conference coordinator.

Email: americanstudiesmorocco@gmail.com

(Exactly as your name is written in your passport)

Title

Last name

Middle name

First name

Please let us know the first and last name you would like to appear on your nametag:

Last name

Middle name

First name

Current Position + Organization Name:

Organization Address *(include city and zip/postal code)*

Tel: _____ Fax: _____

Email address:

Country of citizenship:

Contact Person (+Tel. #) _____
(in case of emergency)

Dietary Requirements: _____



PERSONAL BIOGRAPHY AND PHOTO FOR DIRECTORY

Please complete and return this form along with a passport-size photograph via email (attach photo in jpg file format) to Pr.Amine Moumine, the conference coordinator.

Email: americanstudiesmorocco@gmail.com

The biographical statement contains specifically what each participant considers most notable of his/her experience and pertinent to the conference topic. A directory containing biographies and photographs of participants is an important conference document, useful throughout the entire meeting. Please note that the biographical information should not be more than ten (10) lines.

Please include the following information:

- Name, country of citizenship
- Title, organization
- Former position(s), organization(s)
- Research experience/interests
- Educational degrees, university and location
- Other relevant information

The space below is provided for a biographical statement. The conference organizing committee reserves the right, if necessary, to make stylistic changes to the information provided.

TRAVEL INFORMATION

Please return to Pr. Amine Moumine, the conference coordinator.
 Email: americanstudiesmorocco@gmail.com

Travel Itinerary [to be decided later](#)

Arrival in Casablanca	Departure from Casablanca
Date: To	Date:
Time:	Time:
Flight	Flight:

Please note that obtaining a visa can take from a few days to over a month. If you need a visa for Morocco, please contact Pr.Amine Moumine, the conference coordinator:

Email: americanstudiesmorocco@gmail.com

Room Preference: non-smoking [] smoking []

ACCOMMODATION



The conference will be organized in the ochre city, Marrakech, a valley of palm trees at the foot of the snow-capped High Atlas Mountains. Hotel El Andalous will host the participants and the activities of the conference.

The hotel is located in the heart of Marrakech residential area, Hivernage, ten minutes walk from the historic place Jemâa El Fna, the city center and one of the busiest squares in the world. The Koutoubia Minaret, the famous palace La Mamounia and the Menara gardens are within walking distance.

Please visit Hotel El Andalous site for further information:
<http://www.elandalous-marrakech.com/html/en-index.php>

Cultural Guided Tour

On December 8th, the participants are welcome to join a cultural guided tour of Marrakech and a visit to Tin Mil, a 12th century mosque nestled at the base of the High Atlas Mountains.



PARTNERS

Governmental Partners

- Moroccan Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Executive Training
- Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation
- The American Embassy, Morocco
- The City Council of Marrakech

Academic Partners

- Hassan II Mohammedia/Casablanca University
- Kennesaw State University
- Dar America, Casablanca
- Moroccan American Commission for Educational & Cultural Exchange (MACECE)
- Tangier American Legation Institute for Moroccan Studies (TALIM)

Sponsors

- The American Embassy, Morocco
- Hassan II Mohammedia/Casablanca University
- Faculty of Letters and Humanities Ben M'Sik, Casablanca



CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

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Dean Abdelmajid Kaddouri

Members of the Committee

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Pr. Gerald Loftus, Director TALIM
Pr. Andrea Appell
Pr. Abdessalam CHTIOUI
Pr. Khalil SAADANI
Pr. Mustapha SAMADI
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