

APSA MENA Workshops

Political Science in the Arab Middle East & North Africa



CALL FOR APPLICATIONS: MENA METHODS WORKSHOP

Addressing Decolonization and Extractivism in Academic Research in the MENA Region

August 16-20, 2025 – Amman, Jordan

The American Political Science Association ([APSA](https://www.apsanet.org/)) is pleased to announce a Call for Applications from early-career scholars who would like to participate in a 4-day workshop addressing the issues of decolonization and extractivism in academic research on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). The in-person workshop will be held August 16-20 in Amman, Jordan. Organizers will cover participation costs, including travel, lodging, and materials, for up to 20 qualified applicants. Following their full participation in the program, fellows will receive a one-year membership to APSA. **The deadline for applications is Sunday, April 27, 2025.**

The workshop is part of a multi-year effort to support political science research among early-career scholars in the MENA region and strengthen research networks linking Arab scholars with their colleagues overseas. More information on APSA's MENA programming can be found online at <http://web.apsanet.org/mena/>.

Eligible Participants

Applications are open to PhD candidates, post-doctoral fellows, and other early-career scholars (those who received their PhDs within the past 5 years) in political science and other social science disciplines who are citizens of countries in the MENA region. *Priority will be given to scholars currently based at universities or research institutes in the region.* Professional fluency in English is required.

Program Content

The 4-day workshop will be led by Drs. Rola El-Husseini (Lund University), Sarah Anne Rennick (Arab Reform Initiative, Paris), Nadine Sika (American University in Cairo), and Saloua Zerhouni (Mohammed V University). Together with selected fellows, co-leaders will discuss the pervasive issue of extractivism in academia within the MENA region, where the exploitation of knowledge and other intellectual resources from marginalized communities and local research partners remains prevalent. The program seeks to gather insights from diverse social positionalities to enhance awareness and sensitivity to extractive knowledge practices in the region, while also encouraging early-career scholars to reflect upon their own positionalities and how these influence knowledge production about the MENA region in western academia. Through thematic discussions and exercises on positionality and knowledge production, fellows will reflect on the concepts of intellectual extractivism, democratization of knowledge, intersectionality, and reflexivity, while considering how social identities, epistemic hierarchies, and the market of knowledge production may impact their own academic and professional careers. In preparation for the sessions, invited scholars will be expected to review a set of readings/resources, accessible several weeks before the program.

Co-leaders will engage participants in thoughtful discussion on the following topics and sub-themes:

- **Intellectual extractivism:** Intellectual extractivism in academic research refers to exploitative practices in knowledge production, particularly involving marginalized individuals and communities or those subject to asymmetric power dynamics in the academic marketplace. Intellectual extractivism manifests in various forms, including the collection and analysis of data, the role of the "local" in research partnerships, the communication of research findings, and the publication processes. Co-leaders and fellows will share experiences, discuss decolonializing political science research in MENA, identify extractive methodologies and practices within research collaborations, and discuss strategies for navigating them. Discussions will also explore how reciprocity, epistemic hierarchies, and neocolonial structures shape academic research and the potential harms faced by immigrant, exiled, and/or diasporic scholars.

- **Positionality:** This subtheme will explore the classical positionalities in sociology of insiders vs outsiders, as well as the concept of “halfies” introduced by Lila Abu-Lughod. We will challenge the notion of insiders and outsiders as dichotomies, instead considering them as two positions on a continuum.
- **Ethics, Engaged Scholarship, and Methodologies of Care:** We will explore alternative approaches to research ethics and methodologies that challenge traditional extractivist practices. Inspired by the codes of ethics co-developed with local populations, co-leaders will engage fellows in discussing the development of an ethical research code grounded in the cultures and ethics of the MENA region. We also seek to promote alternative methodological approaches to knowledge production that counter the extractivist nature of academic research. This will include participatory methods that collapse the hierarchies between research and research participants. This theme will build on the work done by the [REMENA project](#).
- **Knowledge production:** These sessions will address the production of knowledge relevant to the region and its dissemination in the languages of the region. We will explore how power and hierarchy in knowledge production can marginalize 'local' researchers. The reality of research production in the Arab world is often constrained by a lack of alternative interpretations and structures aimed at producing knowledge free from such hierarchies. Fundamental questions related to the political economy of knowledge production and issues of ownership will also be addressed, as well as a discussion about the purpose of scholarship and how research can be repositioned to achieve broader goals of transformative praxis.

Subsequent Engagements: Following their participation in the workshop, scholars will be encouraged to apply for the [MENA Mentoring Initiative](#). Scholars from the workshop will be prioritized for being paired with a mentor for a period of 3-6 months to advance a specific scholarly output (journal article, book chapter, book project, dataset, etc.).

How to Apply

Interested applicants should 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 April 27, 2025**. Selected fellows will be notified by the end of May.

Applications must be submitted in English and include:

1. The completed online [Application Form](#).
2. A detailed recent Curriculum Vitae/resume.
3. A one-page cover letter describing, in detail, your motivation to attend the program, highlighting your current research interests and methodologies and how this training will benefit your research plans and/or professional development. *Please be as specific as possible.*
4. A summary of your PhD proposal or current research project (maximum 1500 words) outlining what you are working on and the methods you are employing to gather data.
5. One letter of reference on official letterhead and scanned as an electronic file. If you are a graduate student, the letter should be from your dissertation/academic supervisor. If you are a postdoctoral fellow, the letter can come from a former dissertation supervisor, a colleague at your home institution, a university official, or an employer.

Supporting documents can be uploaded with the application materials or sent directly to menaworkshops@apsanet.org. For more information and questions, check our [website](#) or contact delissa@apsanet.org; please do not contact the co-leaders directly.