

Lebanese American University

Issue 1  
2016-2017

COMMUNICATION ARTS  
**Connections**



**#ReinventCommunication**



# #REINVENT COMMUNICATION

B.A. in Television & Film - Minor in Audiovisual Production



# #REINVENT COMMUNICATION

B.A. and Minor in Multimedia Journalism



**Jad Melki, Ph.D.**

**Associate Professor,  
Chairperson**

## Why #ReinventCommunication?

Examine communication programs around the world, and you will notice two groups.

The first struggles with low enrollment, program closures, faculty layoffs, and a feeling of anxiety and uncertainty about the future of the communication disciplines and the industry. Examples include Emory University, University of Colorado, and Florida International University, all three of which have recently closed down communication programs.

In contrast, another group thrives with record enrollment, new innovative multidisciplinary programs, and old restructured and expanded programs. Take Columbia University's new Data Journalism M.A. that all but brags about its \$100,000+ tuition per year. Another is Northeastern University's new M.A. in Journalism and Media Innovation, which is run by the College of Arts, Media and Design and houses an eclectic selection of disciplines, including architecture, art, design, communication, game design, journalism, film, music, and theater. Then there is Boston-based Emerson College's new MA in Civic Media, Art and Practice and its recently inaugurated \$85 million building in Los Angeles that hosts several film studios and performance spaces. Several programs in the performing arts are also thriving: Enrollment at Stockton University's Performing Arts programs is booming, especially the Dance program, and the Music program at Stony Brook University continues to expand.

Both of these groups face the same objective situation and see the same risks and problems, yet each reacts in a drastically different way.

One group looks at the industry's struggle to find a sustainable business model and cites closing newspapers as a sign of doom, while the other group views this historic moment as an exciting opportunity for contributing to the change and to reshaping the future of communication. One group, complacent and stagnant, clings on to the past, resists innovation, and is terrified of change, while the other embraces the uncertainty of change, accepts its risks, and charges ahead with a growth mindset and an innovative outlook that reframes communication degrees and moves the field into uncharted arenas.

Something separates these two groups at a fundamental level. It is a spirit of academic innovation, intellectual courage, and selfless dedication, fueled by a visceral awareness of the need for academia to continuously reinvent itself or risk stagnation and irrelevance.

Our motto #ReinventCommunication embodies this same spirit. It is an internal guiding light that directs us to a path of continuous innovation and cautions us from falling into complacency and stagnation. It is an external signpost that reminds us of the rough and perilous path ahead, yet also fills us with a sense of excitement, dedication and discovery, and demands from us hard work, patience, creativity, and resourcefulness.

And I can confidently say, the Department of Communication Arts has been true to this motto. Faculty, staff, students, and alumni have accepted the challenge and full-heartedly joined the struggle to #ReinventCommunication. In the past 18 months, we have successfully reinvented ourselves on almost every level.

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## Education

Our traditional B.A. in Communication Arts has been restructured into four B.A. degrees (Television and Film, Multimedia Journalism, Communication, and Performing Arts) and four minors (Multimedia Journalism, Advertising and Public Relations, Performing Arts, and Audiovisual Production). More curricular developments will be unveiled soon, including M.A. degrees, multidisciplinary minors, and post-graduate diplomas.



## Communication, Promotion and Outreach

In Spring 2017, we launched our first major promotion campaign, led by three faculty members, Nasser Chour, Monika Halkort, and Amr Selim, along with the immense support of our staff Annie Tabakian and Samer Beyhum, and more than 50 students. The centerpiece of the campaign is a six-minute video produced fully in-house. The magazine you are reading is also an integral part of this strategy and could not have been put together without the dedication and talent of Claudia Kozman and her students. In addition, our old website has been redesigned from scratch and integrated into an efficient and comprehensive communication strategy that presents a coherent visual identity and incorporates brochures, posters, and a large array of social media and traditional communication tools. As a result, our internal communication is more consistent, and our external communication with potential students, alumni, donors, the media, and the community is more effective, thanks to the guidance of the office of Marketing and Communication, especially AVP Gabriel Abiad and Assistant Director Zeina Abdallah.

## International Education

The department has developed and expanded multiple international programs, with many more on the way, thanks to the support of Dina Abdul Rahman, head of the International Services, and the encouragement of Elise Salem, Ph.D., vice president of Student Development & Enrollment Management. Our international programs now include the Salzburg Academy summer program that has graduated over 43 LAU students so far, the Danish School of Journalism and Media that is supported by an Erasmus+ scholarship, the Media and Digital Literacy Academy of Beirut (MDLAB) that puts LAU at the center of Lebanese and Arab media education, as well as exchange agreements with Stockton University, Bournemouth University, Free Berlin University, and Kent State University.

## Fundraising

The department has made the bold step of entering the challenging arena of fundraising, which has allowed us to implement many more projects and expand our footprint regionally with programs such as the Media and Digital Literacy Academy of Beirut (MDLAB) that hosted this summer 75 Arab and international media academics, journalists, activists, and students. In 18 months, we raised almost \$850,000. This made us the second highest department in funds raised in the School of Arts and Sciences last year. A big thank you here goes to the sustained dedication of Associate Director of Development Suha Abou Rialy. Our generous donors include the Norwegian Embassy, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), DW Akademie, the European Union, Free Press Unlimited, Media in Cooperation and Transition, the Italian Embassy, the Salzburg Global Seminar, Fransabank, USAID, the Lebanese Ministry of Information, Heinrich Böll Foundation, and the UNESCO.

## Festivals, Concerts and Productions

The department's rich offering of theatrical performances has expanded into multidisciplinary performances, with many more music, dance, and acting workshops and productions offered throughout the year. Thanks to the gigantic efforts of our Performing Arts faculty members Amr Selim and Nadra Assaf and the keen support of our staff Hala Masri, Fouad Anka and George Chdid, the 19-year-old Theater Festival has been restructured into Festival NEXT and now incorporates all our disciplines with the goal of engaging other departments, including literature, poetry, fashion, and design. This year Selim also led the conception and launching of the Imagine Summer Arts Camp for middle and high school students. The camp enrolled double the number of anticipated participants. Many of our performances are now conducted on both campuses and even off campus. Lina Abyad's play *Can't Pay, Won't Pay* was performed in Tripoli and Nabatieh. Our music productions and concerts have quadrupled, thanks to the efforts of our music faculty, especially Selim, Martin Loyato, Joseph Khalife, and Seba Ali. Moreover, the department is extending support to our alumni productions and inviting more local, regional and international artists to perform on campus. Alumnus (and instructor) Omar Moujaes has brought several school plays to campus, while alumnus Awad Awad has produced an LAU-sponsored play that now is making the rounds throughout the country. Overall, our productions and performances have increased in frequency, quality, attendance, and exposure. More importantly, true collaboration among faculty in this arena is slowly but surely becoming the norm.



## Facilities

After weeks of planning and discussion, a committee of faculty, staff, students and alumni developed a master plan to acquire new production equipment, renovate our decrepit facilities and studios, and establish new work spaces and labs. The journalism lab received a major facelift along with new iMacs. Two new multipurpose digital media labs, one in Beirut and one in Byblos, were established for housing courses in editing, multimedia journalism, music production, and sound for film. Thanks to Martin Loyato's persistent efforts, the new lab in the Safadi Fine Arts building will house for the first time a music recording and production course, in addition to a Sound for Film course led by Sarah Kaskas. Thanks to the continuous efforts of staff members Farid Boustany and Samer Beyhum and the strong support of the Facilities Management Department, especially Joseph Shebaya and Dania Dibsi, our department now has cutting-edge equipment and facilities to serve students' needs on both campuses and in all programs. Our music classrooms have been renovated and all our facilities and equipment reservations can now be done online. All these continued renovations and acquisitions will cost over \$1 million by the end of this year.

## Staff

We rely heavily on our staff to handle many diverse tasks and duties, from training students, to helping with facilities and equipment, and running performances and concerts, just to name a few. We continue to work on reinventing their job descriptions and finding roles that are more effective and fulfilling for them. One example is Annie Tabakian's refocusing of her role from the TV/Film program to the Multimedia Journalism and Communication degrees, in addition to handling the colossal task of coordinating the department's communication and promotion efforts. Another is TV/Film studio technician Rima Mirdas, who now also coordinates internships and job placement. George Chdid, whose main task was focused on constructing theater sets, now also supports film students in their fieldwork. The capable Hala Masri and Nicolas Daou, who were mainly focused on theater are now covering all performing arts productions and coordinating with staff and faculty in journalism, TV/Film, and communication. Farid Boustani's effective management of the Beirut TV and Film studios and equipment now also covers equipment for the multimedia journalism and communication programs, while Sami Fayad's skillful handling of the Byblos TV studio now covers the newly established digital media lab. We have also been tremendously lucky in finding the highly talented and energetic Samer Beyhum, who has tirelessly worked with our faculty, students and staff to elevate the level of our facilities, productions and classes. I am also personally grateful for the hard work of academic assistant Houry Gostanian who has proved time and again her ability to competently handle my barrage of requests in Beirut, as well as Lisa Hardan who has recently joined our department as academic assistant in Byblos, working hard with Associate Chairperson Nadra Assaf.



## Faculty

Our top-notch and dedicated body of faculty members has expanded and new faces, methods, and philosophies have enriched our department's v, research and productions. We are tremendously fortunate to attract new high-caliber full-time faculty, including Nasser Chour, a veteran TV/Film professor from Villanova University, Claudia Kozman, an experienced journalist and capable researcher who received her Ph.D. from Indiana University, and accomplished musician Amr Selim who studied at Stony Brook University. And joining us in Fall 2017 are Sarah Kaskas, an award-winning documentary filmmaker and talented sound expert, and visiting faculty Gabriele Cosentino, a researcher in political communication and media studies who got his Ph.D. from New York University. A large number of part-time faculty members has also joined the department recently. We entrust them with teaching our courses. Their connection with the profession and dedication to our students elevate our teaching and strengthen our connection with the industry and the community.



## Final Statement

Early indicators of success are already starting to surface. Enrollment is picking up after several years of attrition. The number of students enrolled in our four majors increased by 4 percent this year, and this fall's soft launch of the new B.A. in Communication already attracted 18 students. Just two semesters after launching our minors, 85 students enrolled in them. In Fall 2016, our department offered 89 courses. This Fall (2017) we offered 131 courses—27 of which are Oral Communication sections, a course that moved from the English Department to our custodianship this year. Student awards are also on the rise, as well as the quality of their work. Participation of our students in study abroad programs drastically jumped from a handful of students two years ago to over 45 students this past year, and so did the number of international and Arab students in our courses and programs.

So many more changes I did not list here have taken place in the department, and none of them could have been possible without the steadfast support and unwavering trust of our university leadership, especially President Joseph G. Jabbara, Provost George Najjar, VP Elise Salem, and Dean Nashat Mansour, as well as numerous other colleagues throughout the university. Their guidance, help and blessing have offered the strongest motivation to building an ambitious departmental strategic plan that aims for "national leadership and regional preeminence... and ultimately global influence."

We realize that we still have a long way to fulfill this promise. In the upcoming year, we will continue to reinvent ourselves. We will optimize our current programs by ensuring a balance between theory, professional practice, scientific research and critical inquiry, and by developing new programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels, locally and internationally. We hope to launch our first M.A. program in Fall 2018 and continue to build our research capacity as well as our multidisciplinary artistic output. We will not shy away from constructing the best production and research facilities, hiring top-notch academics, and acquiring the most up-to-date equipment and tools that our students deserve. We view the Communication Arts as a flagship program at LAU and hope to celebrate accomplishments worthy of this status by the 50th anniversary of our department in 2020.



## Nadra Assaf, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor,  
Associate Chairperson

It has been a whirlwind period for our department, and now that we are coming to the end of these two years under a new leadership, I have to admit the trip has been a brilliant one. A few days ago a colleague asked me to sum up in a few words what exactly has happened during this period and after thought I replied with our hashtag “reinvent communication.” I truly think that is what we are doing and this two-year time period was simply the stepping stone to the rocket launch.

A few words about what I have seen different on the Byblos campus: More and new faculty, more performances, more and better equipment and facilities, longer working hours which has led to a much more active campus, more student-faculty interaction, and of course more collegial and academic support.

All of this was made a reality because of the wonderfully dedicated people (faculty, staff and students) in our department. I am thankful and proud, and I stress the second word much more. I am so proud of what has taken place during this restructuring phase, and I am looking forward to the future of the LAU Communication Arts Department.

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**Proudly created by**  
Communication Arts students, staff and faculty at LAU

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## Curricula

### Multimedia Journalism



From investigative reporting to interactive design and data-driven journalism, the Multimedia Journalism program strives to push the boundaries and ensure students gain exposure to the latest trends and practices in the industry. The program offers both a Bachelor of Arts and a Minor in Journalism. Our B.A. prepares students for careers in print, broadcast, and multimedia news, offers courses at the forefront of the field, such as investigative and data journalism, and provides cutting edge facilities in a vibrant teaching environment. The program also equips students for graduate studies. The Minor in Multimedia Journalism offers students from any major the opportunity to learn basic journalism skills and theories in as few as two semesters.



### Television and Film



Our B.A. in Television and Film has graduated generations of directors, producers, and designers. The degree offers practical skills and conceptual knowledge and prepares students for work in the various production, creative, and managerial professions in the TV and film industries. This hands-on intensive program requires students to produce and direct TV shows and short films as well as experience the various production roles and tasks. It provides cutting edge facilities and equipment, as well as prepares students to pursue careers as writers, producers, directors, sound designers, and directors of photography.

## Communication



The Communication program offers a Bachelor of Arts in Communication and a Minor in Advertising and Public Relations. The B.A. in Communication covers three areas: Advertising and Public Relations, Social and Political Communication, and Interpersonal and Organizational Communication. Students may focus on only one or a mix of these three areas. The Minor in Advertising and Public Relations introduces students from any major to the profession and practice of advertising and public relations. Students will acquire basic competencies and skills that help them discern the role of communication in society and understand the main concepts, methods, and approaches used in the advertising and public relations professions.



## Performing Arts



The Performing Arts program offers both a Bachelor of Arts and a Minor in Performing Arts. The B.A. covers a wide range of skills, including acting, voice training, body movement, writing, technical skills, and crafting with lights. Students pursue careers as performers, artists, actors, producers, art managers, teachers, and directors. The program also prepares students for graduate studies. The Minor in Performing Arts offers students from any major basic skills and competencies in dance, music, and theater. The department offers, on a regular basis, various workshops and training sessions in the different aspects of theater, music, and dance, and provides students the opportunity to interact and work with professional local and international artists. Each semester, students majoring in Performing Arts prepare plays as part of their course work, and perform them for the public at our three professionally equipped theaters in Beirut and Byblos.



## Strategic Plan

Our strategic plan includes many exciting new projects and programs. The department will venture into graduate studies in Fall 2018. We are developing several multidisciplinary M.A.s and MFAs focused on multimedia and digital innovation, film and television, and performing arts education and entrepreneurship. In Fall 2017, we inaugurated two multipurpose media labs for our booming TV/Film production, journalism, and music courses. A new film studio, virtual TV sets, and renovation of our theaters are also in the plans, and a whole lot more production equipment and research facilities are on the way, not to mention amazing performances, festivals and celebrations—culminating in our 50th anniversary extravaganza in 2020.



Journalism Lab

## Facilities & Equipment

The Department of Communication Arts accommodates several facilities, including theaters, studios, and labs. LAU houses the Irwin and Gulbenkian theaters on its Beirut campus and Selina Kurban Theater on its Byblos campus. Students are provided with two fully equipped TV and production studios on each campus with the advantage of borrowing DSLR cameras with top notch lighting and sound equipment. The department also offers students access to a specialized Journalism Lab that houses 26 iMacs and a new lab in the Safadi Fine Arts studio that includes PCs and iMacs with the latest editing software on the Beirut campus.



Irwin Theater



SFA Studio



Studio, Byblos



Selina Kurban Theater



SFA Lab



Gulbenkian Theater

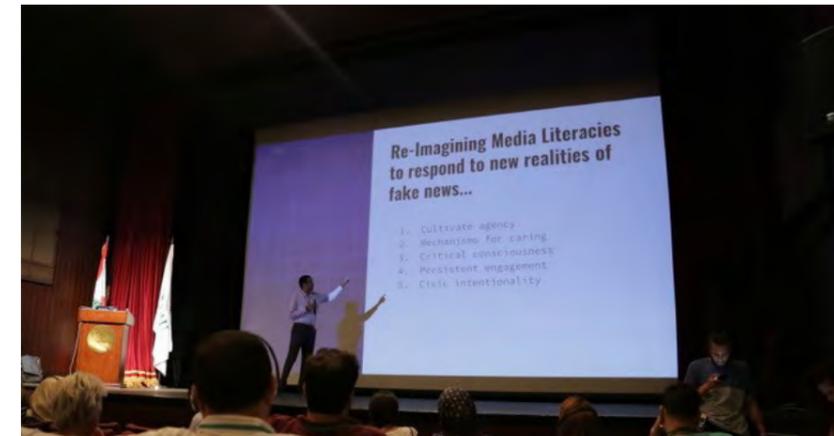
## Course Coordination

Among its new plans that strive for excellence in teaching and learning, the Department of Communication Arts implemented the course coordination strategy in its music classes, with the goal of achieving balance and uniformity among the multiple sections of the courses – particularly the Survey of Middle Eastern Music and Survey of Western Music. Led by Performing Arts faculty members, assistant professors of music, Martin Loyato, Ph.D., and Amr Selim, DMA, the initiative aimed at unifying course content to assure all sections follow the same format in terms of content and assessment, as well as to provide students with an equal experience regardless of the section they are enrolled in. Besides course content coordination, the task of this project was to raise awareness about the various departmental activities among students from other fields and create a larger community involved in performing arts. After a successful semester of course coordination that relied on the cooperation of the various sections' instructors, a thorough assessment of the project will follow with the goal of solving persisting issues and further elevating the level of education to the required standards.

## Institute of Media Research and Training (IMRT)

IMRT is an interdisciplinary center for media research, training, production, and advocacy. We produce research and media content that examines how media shape and are shaped by politics, economics, and cultures; develop media literacy programs and offer training that advances media education in the region; and advocate for ethical, professional, and equitable communication laws and practices and a free media environment.

We aim to empower communities with creative and critical thinking skills and digital competencies and help them become civically engaged global citizens capable of innovatively harnessing the power of media technologies to advance human rights, peace, and social justice.



## Media & Digital Literacy Academy of Beirut



Established in 2013, the Media and Digital Literacy Academy of Beirut (MDLAB) focuses on countering youth radicalization and extremist ideologies by providing training, curricula, and research that focus on media and digital literacy, and integrates themes, lessons, and case studies that promote justice, peace, equality, and human rights.

Since its launch, MDLAB has targeted issues of political division, sectarianism, and extremist ideologies in the Arab region within the context of media literacy education. The academy aims to advance media literacy education in the region and help build media literate individuals, engaged citizens, and empowered communities. MDLAB annually convenes a two-week summer academy and several short workshops that bring together international experts, Arab academics, students, teachers, journalists, and activists to study media literacy, develop locally rooted curricula, and promote critical thinking and citizen media empowerment. MDLAB also develops curricula, research, and multimedia, and publishes all its work, lectures, research, and materials online in a free and open environment on [www.mdlab.center](http://www.mdlab.center).



## Study Abroad

The Department of Communication Arts offers multiple study abroad programs. These include the Danish School of Media and Journalism (DMJX) in Denmark, the Salzburg Academy in Austria, and Stockton University in southern New Jersey for dance, theater, and music. In addition, the department will soon start offering a study abroad program in Hogeschool University of Applied Sciences Utrecht in the Netherlands. The following gives an impression about the study abroad programs the department offers in the Danish School of Media and Journalism and in Salzburg Academy.

### Danish School of Media and Journalism

The Danish School of Media and Journalism (DMJX) is one of the leading schools of journalism and media in the world. Students can earn 15 undergraduate credits in multimedia and TV journalism or in corporate communication. The one semester program combines journalistic training with intensive study in which students learn news reporting and digital media storytelling skills through hands-on courses with world-class instructors and professionals. Students also visit EU institutions like the European Parliament and European Commission, and meet world leaders, EU commissioners, and members of the EU Parliament. LAU students, graduates, and undergraduates, may apply by March for the fall semester or by September for the spring semester.



### Salzburg Academy

The Salzburg Academy is a three-week summer abroad program in Salzburg, Austria, running from July 16 to August 5. It is open to graduate and undergraduate LAU or other university students from all majors. Students earn six credits for two courses in global media literacy as well as skills transferrable to any industry. The courses may count as major or free electives. During the program, students interact with friends, artists, and Nobel Prize and Pulitzer Prize winners from around the globe. For three weeks, participants live, dine and study in one of the most beautiful places on Earth. Students also get the chance to enjoy the world-famous Salzburg Music Festival that coincides with the program. [comm.lau.edu.lb/salzburg](http://comm.lau.edu.lb/salzburg)





## Awards

Students performing during Festival Next  
Gulbenkian Theater, LAU Beirut

## Awards

### Kourken Papazian

Kourken Papazian, a sophomore majoring in TV and Film in the Department of Communication Arts, won the online video competition launched by the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW), in partnership with ESCWA, ABAAD, and U.N. Women Arabic. The competition was part of IWSAW's 16 Days of Activism against #Gender Based Violence #GBV campaign.

Through this video, Papazian aimed at raising awareness against violence with a simple message: "By covering their bruises, #women are keeping the issue taboo. They are hiding it, while reporting #violence is the only way to stop it."



### Michelle Tannous

TV and Film senior Michelle Tannous won one of two awards for best short films at the closing ceremony "La soirée des courts métrages libanais" of the 23rd European Film Festival Awards. Tannous' film, "Lam7a - A Glimpse," which tackled the topic of the Lebanese civil war, won the jury's praise for its originality in treating a very important subject and its maturity in dealing with archival footage.

As part of her award, Tannous was invited to attend the 2017 Cannes Film Festival, courtesy of Institut Français du Liban.



<b>LEBANESE STUDENTS' SHORTS</b>
<i>courts métrages d'étudiants</i>
<b>LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY (LAU)</b>
<i>School of Arts and Sciences, Department of Communication Arts</i>
<b>Lam7a</b>
<b>Réalisateur   Director:</b> Michele Tannous
<b>Interpretes   Cast:</b> Lya Sabban, Marwan Jaffal, Pierre Sarkis, Majed Moussa, Angie Maksoud, Michel Khalil, Rabih Dia, Feras Abdallah
<b>Production:</b> 2016
<b>Durée   Running Time:</b> 10 min
<b>Langue   Language:</b> En arabe sous-titre   In Arabic with English subtitles
Un faux documentaire sur la capacité d'un garçon mystérieux de disparaître, raconté du point de vue des personnes les plus proches de lui. Une histoire de guerre, de mémoire et de farces.
A faux-documentary about a mysterious boy's ability to disappear, told through the point of view of the people closest to him. a story about war, memories and pranks.



## New Faculty Members

Hector Aristizabal and participants in the theater workshop in a group photo during *Festival NEXT*  
Gulbenkian Theater, LAU Beirut

## New Faculty Members

### Jad Melki



**Position** Associate Professor,  
Chairperson

**Program** Journalism and Media Studies

**Degree** Ph.D. in Journalism and Media  
Studies

**Focus** Elevating media education and  
research in Arab universities

by Fatima Al Mahmoud

#### *We're about to start a new semester. How do you reflect on the past year as chairperson?*

A lot of change. A lot of exciting things. A lot of reshuffling, rebuilding, reconstructing, reorganizing. A lot of chaos and vagueness that was removed. A lot of problems that were removed. A lot of new equipment, a lot of new projects and most importantly a new and clear direction. This department historically had a very prominent position in Lebanon and the Arab world among communication programs: it was the premier in Lebanon, one of the top in the Arab world, and the flagship program at LAU. In the past few years, last decade maybe, it lost its way due to many internal factors, and due to external pressures: Changes in the media, changes in technology, but also maybe lack of innovation internally and resistance to change. So this past year, with the help of faculty, staff and students, we were able to turn everything upside down and set ourselves on a path back to where we deserve to be, number one program in Lebanon and the top program in the Arab world.

#### *How has this experience changed you?*

It made me appreciate how difficult change is, it made me appreciate the faculty and staff who are willing to collaborate, and it made me appreciate the value of people who are willing to put the extra effort, the extra time and contribute. They are rare and they don't have to do that. In an environment where everybody is doing their daily job and the minimal, they don't have to put that extra effort. But without these people, nothing could have changed no matter what I did, no matter how much effort I put individually. Every single iota of effort put will help us go into that direction; this is what I mostly appreciate.

#### *What are the challenges of selecting suitable courses for each program?*

The number one challenge right now is to be able to see the direction of the future. Professionals in the field, especially in journalism, have no idea where the field is going. Every few days you have a new suggestion or a new trial for a business model. Many of them are failing, some of them are succeeding, and some are succeeding under certain circumstances. Academia usually follows the industry because the industry moves much more efficiently. We cannot do that anymore. We have to be ahead, we have to be a lab of experimentation for the industry to benefit from us and for society to benefit from us. So that's the one big challenge externally speaking.

Internally, the challenge is helping people see the mission and the vision and see the value in change. Most people will say they like change, but in the end they don't want change because change is disruptive; it means more work, it means you're stepping out of your comfort zone, and you're disrupting processes that have been there for a long time. Change means making people uncomfortable, changing their routine, changing their process. Many of us in this department believe this department deserves better attention and deserves to be number one and we're going to put that effort and make that sacrifice.

#### *How has working at LAU differed from the previous universities you have been at?*

I've worked at six other universities. Each one has its unique advantages and disadvantages, and each one has its own culture, strengths and weaknesses. The strength of LAU is the ability to mix the arts and the professional, the research and the critical. I was telling Nadra [Assaf] how in the past year I've been at LAU I've quadrupled my consumption of art, which I never was able to do because I was not forced to do it before. It enriches my life and my family. The advantage of other universities maybe is that you have a lot of time, space and resources allocated to research, which is good, but I felt my life is lopsided, like I'm not enjoying anything else. I'm living in my own ivory tower and sometimes producing stuff that is going nowhere. Here, it gives you this activism edge like you're more in touch with society and the problems of my country.

#### *You seem to be highly encouraging of the study abroad programs. What specific value do you see in them?*

I've been a fan of that ever since I traveled. I remember the first course I took when I went to the U.S., I felt that that one course, not just the material that I read and studied, but the whole experience with people from around the world, gave me more information and more knowledge and more growth than a whole year of education when I was doing my B.A. in Lebanon. I think every student in communication should do at least one experience abroad, no matter how small, just so that they get out of their paradigm, out of their culture and see how people think, and see how similar we are, and yet how unique. And no matter how many words I express, it doesn't give the full picture until somebody actually jumps into that new culture and sees the difference. It makes people stronger, knowledge wise and culture wise. It builds networks, you become a person who is no longer myopic and living in this village mentality, very closed mentality where you cannot really see beyond the borders of your country or community, to the point where the world becomes so huge and so diverse and so exciting, and it gives you motivation and insight and it encourages you to be better.

#### *Besides being the department chairperson, you also teach. What are the challenges of balancing both jobs?*

Managing time is a big challenge. I'm still technically in a transition period, managing my research, my teaching, my administrative duties, my family, and my own personal life. That has been the toughest part for me personally, and I still haven't found the best balance yet. I'm hoping by next fall I'll achieve that. Teaching new courses that I never taught before, it takes the energy and time of teaching three courses that I've taught before. Because you're doing everything from scratch, you're putting new rubrics, new assignments, and you're doing new readings. I do refresh myself when doing the same course but it's not the same as going through a book of reading every week that you haven't read before or you didn't read for the past ten years.

## Claudia Kozman



**Position** Assistant Professor

**Program** Multimedia Journalism

**Degree** Ph.D. in Mass Communication

**Focus** Analyzing media content and journalistic practices in the Arab region

by Zubaida Jamal

### How was going into the field of sports journalism as a woman?

When I started in the field I was doing something that was becoming popular. So I was there at the right place at the right time, which was in basketball. I'm generally a tough person, I'm independent, and I was not raised to be a certain way just because I was a female. I was dedicated and passionate about sports journalism, so I went into it regardless of obstacles. Was it difficult? Yes and no. It was difficult at first because people in sports were not used to seeing a young female working seriously as a sports journalist, especially since I was petite and looked like a kid. On the bright side, I was a journalist at 18 and most people didn't mind me being there asking questions since I wasn't a threat and I was serious about my work. A few incidents also positively influenced my reputation in Lebanese basketball. Whereas some journalists who weren't fluent in English were translating interviews they conducted with foreign athletes however they wanted, sensationalizing some answers and omitting others, I relayed their answers as they said them. I also put a lot of effort into understanding the game, and asked what I thought were deep questions as opposed to the overused "what can you tell me about the game?" These allowed me to gain the trust of athletes and coaches to a degree that some refused to be interviewed by anyone but me.

### Why did you go into sports journalism?

I liked sports. I don't come from a sports family, but my brother, my sister and I liked sports. I remember when we were teenagers and had nothing to do all summer, we would watch the Olympics from start to finish. Also, with my brother I would talk about basketball a lot and then we started to watch boxing and tennis. It was something we shared.

### What advice would you give women going into sports journalism?

My advice is not only for women. I don't differentiate between types of people. Although women's path in some fields, such as sports, is more difficult than that of men, I still believe that with passion, dedication, commitment, and strength of will, you can achieve your dreams, regardless of the obstacles you face. If women in sports want to use their femininity and be softies, it won't work. They might get away with it a few times, but it will eventually diminish their true value because being in sports means you have to truly understand the game and the psychology behind it. Eventually, people will respect you because you're doing your job well and you're respecting and appreciating theirs. Anything outside of that is irrelevant. This applies to men as well. Do your job, do it well, be true to your values and beliefs, and be consistent in your treatment of others. In other words, be professional. Things will get tough, but if you look to the fire within that drives you to achieve your goals, you'll find the courage to overcome the obstacles and you'll find renewed passion to not only continue in your path but also to excel. The reality is that nothing is perfect. So if you get stuck on the imperfections that stain the idealistic image you have of the world you're working in, you won't progress. That's where dedication and passion help you out. They push you forward because they give you that edge to accept the existence of problems around you and to find positive solutions.

### What do you like best about teaching?

I like people and I like interaction. I also like giving people what I know. I don't like to hold it just for myself. If I've learned something, I want to transfer that knowledge to others. And it's different when I'm teaching in Lebanon because it means that I'm giving back to the community. Seeing a student succeed makes me so happy. Ask any instructor and he or she will tell you the same thing. Even if I am able to make 0.0001 percent of a difference, it's a positive difference. I'm especially happy when students who complain about the workload I give them, particularly in the research methods course, tell me after the semester ends that they've learned more than they expected. Some come back months later to say the course was amazing. I am happy to see that our students have started to gain the maturity to understand that we as faculty plan their education seriously. If I am demanding, it's because this will shape them into more resilient people. If I want them to learn about research, it's because they need it to succeed in anything they do. Having a researcher mentality doesn't only mean you can conduct a scientific study properly. It also means you have learned the proper thought process and are able to evaluate information according to systematic, scientific rules. This applies to how the food you eat might affect you, what types of risks are related to what types of outcomes, how the media illicitly relay information to you, or any other decision you may encounter. Look around you and you'll see how scientific knowledge is everywhere. My interest is in helping students realize the significance of research and analytical thinking.

### What advice would you give your students to succeed in your class or any class in college?

I don't want to comment on other classes because there are so many different types of teaching methods. But, in general, you should have a good relationship with the instructor because once your instructors know you enough, know your struggles, know what you're good or bad at, they can help you. I also require students to take notes in class because I'd like them to get what I say and write it in their own words. This is the first step in the process of learning, which is why I don't allow electronics in class. When you write by hand you're already processing the information and going to the second level. You also have to pay attention in class and follow the instructions we provide you. These rubrics contain clear instructions of what the assignment requires. Research shows rubrics are particularly helpful in allowing students to assess themselves and their peers, and thus recognize the criteria they are asked to fulfill. Rubrics are an essential component of a successful project, so don't disregard them.

### What do you think got you ahead in your work?

Determination, perseverance, and passion. I don't stop and I don't give up easy. I want something? I work hard to achieve it. I've failed a lot in my life, but I always picked myself up again and I kept at it until it was done. I've learned that failures make success so much more valuable. They also add that level of resiliency that allows you to face bigger challenges. I love what I do: I love sports journalism and I love my job right now. I love being both a researcher and being a teacher. So it's my passion and it's what others did that helped me. So many great people were so selfless with me. They helped me be what I want to be.

### How do you think students graduating from LAU have an upper hand in the job market?

In the past year, we have introduced so many amazing changes in the department. We've built on the tradition of LAU being one of the oldest universities, particularly our department, which will soon celebrate its 50th anniversary. We understand what the market wants and we offer our students specific skills to survive in it. We focus on multimedia journalism, which means we don't ignore what's new; we actually embrace it because this is what students would work in. We still focus on content, and on the basics of journalism, but we don't ignore the new methods of delivery, which are all multimedia. We also provide students with a mix of critical, theoretical, and practical and research skills. I have students who are using their research skills in non-research jobs because they have become critical thinkers who can evaluate messages properly. The practical component of our degrees allows students to excel at writing, editing, shooting videos, and performing, among others.

### What is your favorite thing in your office?

My candle-melt holder, because the colors are so pretty. I've actually decorated my whole office based on this candle's colors! Having all these subtle colors means I don't have to stick to one forever. I can change the shades whenever and however I wish.

## Amr Selim



Position	Assistant Professor
Program	Performing Arts
Degree	Doctor of Musical Arts, Stony Brook University, USA
Focus	Making sure high quality music education is available and affordable

by Ahmad Karakira

### *How did you discover yourself in music?*

I was born into a musical family. My father used to play the oud. My mother was a poet. I'm the youngest of three, both of my siblings went to the conservatory, and they were nine years older than me. So by the time I was born they were already playing an instrument. So, I grew up listening to music, listening to practice sessions: classical and oriental music at the same time. So I was introduced to music at a very early age, and I loved beats and drumming, anything I hear I can translate it to beats. As I started breaking stuff around the house from beating on them, my parents discovered that I might have a talent. So they sent me to the Cairo Conservatory to audition, and in my application I wrote that I would love to be a percussionist. I really would have loved that, but then they saw me and they were like "Oh maybe you should play a wind instrument?" So, they gave me the choice between the trumpet and the French horn, and I chose the horn for no reason because I did not have an idea how they sound like, but the horn was big, complicated, and it looked funny so I picked it.

### *What was the most exciting experience in your life?*

Four summers ago, I went to this magical place called Appel Farm Arts Camp because I was invited to become the head of the music division for the nine-week summer camp. Without a doubt, this place changed my mind and changed the way I looked at music and arts education because in nine weeks we were able to turn kids' lives upside down. It was amazing, and that's an experience I always go back to, to remind myself that it's possible to change.

### *What was one particular memory you can't forget from this experience?*

The first thing I remember is that we had to immediately go out of our comfort zone. The first thing we did was dancing to welcome the faculty, and it was the first time I dance in front of people. Another experience I remember was kids telling me after the concert "Thank you for insisting on teaching me this particular thing I thought I couldn't do." I remember students coming at the beginning of the camp with zero confidence and zero self-awareness, and by the end they were completely different people. That's rewarding for any teacher, I love my job and I love being a teacher.

### *What were the main influencers in your career?*

I would say the challenges themselves. Being told that you can't or being told that you're not good enough. My dad also. I remember conversations with him about music and what music is. Also colleagues that have won awards at my age. Music itself, because I think of music as a way of communicating.

### *What is your view about the world?*

I think it's an interesting planet that has a little bit of everything in it. I like our world even with all of these issues and problems that we're facing. I like it because it's challenging, and I like challenging things, and our time is the absolute right time for arts to lead.

### *What's the dream you want to reach with music and music education?*

I just want people to understand that art education is beyond learning an instrument. I would love for every single person to have the opportunity to play an instrument because I know that by learning an instrument [he or she] is also learning discipline, planning, awareness, team work, and collaboration that we badly need in our world right now.

### *What are your hobbies, other than music?*

Music is not my hobby, man! Music is what I do. Well you know, I really like sitting on the couch and doing nothing. I love walking, but I can't walk forever! What else? Food, I love food! I would literally just go out and eat even if I'm not hungry just to enjoy the food. I think food is art.

### *Egyptian, Lebanese, or American food?*

Come on! Of course not American! Once you put Lebanese and Egyptian food in the question it means "Khalas!" Of course the Egyptian over the Lebanese, but you know, I really like Lebanese salads. I'm not a big fan of salads as you can tell but I love Lebanese salads, I love them, and you grill meat here really well. In Egypt, fowl and ta'amiyya.

## Nasser Chour



Position	Lecturer
Program	TV & Film
Degree	M.A. in Middle Eastern Studies
Focus	Content creation and production for TV and film; using media to address social justice issues

by Sally Farhat

### *When did you discover your passion for filmmaking?*

I think ever since I started having the ability to have a memory I had known that this is the field that I really want to study.

### *What was it that awakened this passion?*

Radio. Because of the war, I had no choice but to be stuck at home most of the time. The only thing I could entertain myself with was listening to the radio since most of the time the electricity was down and batteries easily operated the radio. The ability for me to create visuals of radio content was the alternative to watching TV. I would create characters, locations, and visuals in my mind based on what I'm hearing. That triggered my passion even further to visual storytelling. Not only was I enjoying the process, it was also my escape from the reality of war and destruction.

### *How did you contribute during your stay abroad in changing, to a certain extent, the Western view of Arabs and Islam?*

On many levels, starting from the classroom to the interviews and lectures I gave about Middle Eastern media and specifically cinema. I was also part of a very important center called the Center for Arab and Islamic Studies and I was the one in charge of creating film festivals and giving different presentations about the portrayal of this region, whether in film or in the news. Yet, the most important contributions were in my classes. When you expose or get one student more informed there is a possibility that this one student will take the information and share it with others and that's how it all grows.

### *What was unique about the events (film series, film festivals, workshops...) that you organized abroad?*

The films were about stories from this region told by artists from this region. By giving ownership and the right platform for directors from here or that live here to showcase their work is very important. The audience will see this region from the eyes and lenses of local artists.

### *After a successful stay abroad, what made you come back to Lebanon?*

I never left Lebanon emotionally, psychologically, or at any other level. Even the stories and everything that I do is very much related to Lebanon and this region. Lebanon is home for me and there is nothing more important than the feeling that you feel when you're home. I could've gone doing what I was doing, but for me, I wanted to be the closest I could be to the people and the stories I want to tell. Yes, there were many other reasons of course. For example, professionally, I felt that there are so many projects and stories here that needed to be told and have yet to be told. Furthermore, for someone that uses visual media for storytelling, location is very important and being at a close proximity from that location and people is very important. I'm an ultimate believer that this part is not only rich of what we know it's rich of, but is also rich in the type of stories

### *As a storyteller, what do you consider as your sources of inspiration?*

Life and everything that falls under life: The people you encounter, the experiences that you go through (both the good and the bad) and the moments of joy as well as desperation. Stories are everywhere. We just have to listen and see with fresh sets of ears and eyes constantly.

### *What do you aim to achieve in LAU?*

Putting the communication department on the map as one of the most impressive and leading communication departments in the Arabic-speaking world first, and hopefully eventually worldwide. We have what it takes on all levels: great students, faculty, facilities, and an amazing location. We have some of the brightest students that just need to be empowered and given the tools and knowledge to become tomorrow's professional communicators.

### *What do you yet aspire to achieve on a personal level in the Lebanese movie industry?*

I have a lot that I'm putting on hold now to focus on achieving the collective mission of the department. But on a personal level, I'm a storyteller at heart. I have a lot of stories to tell, ideas to turn into TV formats, and a lot of content that I want to explore. My aim is to use visual media for the betterness of the society and to produce content that has elements of entertainment, empowerment, and hope while shedding the light on topics that are very relevant and truly reflect the beauty and richness of this region.



- Major Productions**
- Student Theater Productions**
- Student Short Films Screening**
- Major Events**
- Workshops**
- Faculty Events**
- Non-Faculty Events**
- Off-Campus Events**

Malinda Haslett and students performing during  
A Musical Extravaganza - Concert  
Gulbenkian Theater, LAU Beirut

## Major Productions

### The Prophet's Anonym

Director: Omar Moujaes

by Sally Farhat

Inspired by the real life of Gibran Khalil Gibran and the women in his life, *The Prophet's Anonym* presented the Lebanese public with an alternate way of understanding the renowned Lebanese author.

Created and directed by TV and Film instructor, Omar Moujaes, *The Prophet's Anonym* was the first of five major productions in the Department of Communication Arts in the Academic Year 2017 - 2016. The play showed for five days at Gulbenkian Theater, LAU Beirut, from November 16 to November 20, 2016.

The play's original script was created by Salim Mujais and Tija Mujais and written by Monda Riachy.

*The Prophet's Anonym* takes place in a fantastical universe, whereby Gibran, played by Ram Noureddine, boards a ship to the mythical western city of Orphalese, the city Gibran mentions in his book *The Prophet*. The aim of the travel was to search for a book containing knowledge of a cure for his mother and brother's illness. On his way there, Gibran encounters three muses and is able to find the love of his life May Ziade – played by Maria Bechara – whom he long knew but has never met.



The play is considered a multi-arts event whereby music, dance, and acting met to narrate the story. The actors, who were all students, represented events in the life of Gibran rather than characters. Thus, the play did not represent Gibran as the prophet but rather as a person with emotions: A person who experiences anger, pain, and love. The dance was choreographed by Tiffany Moujaes and was a mix of contemporary and martial arts.

“From the early phases of reading the script written by Dr. Salim Mujais, we knew it was important to adapt the piece both linguistically and physically,” said Moujaes. “The musical pieces and choreography guided the progression of the story and for me they are great devices in retaining audience attention, entertainment and delivering allegorical concepts.”

The story presented a new image of Gibran that allowed the audience to imagine and to question the character and his life. The audiences were left to analyze the relation between Gibran and the characters. Why does Gibran treat women the way he does? Is he seeing a reflection of his mother in them? Why is May Ziade different? Is she the prophet and the reason why the book and the play are called as such?

“The impressions were obviously mixed and there's no way of telling how everyone felt,” said Moujaes. “Based on the feedback I received, the audience seemed to enjoy mostly the choreography, singing and scenography.”

Cast: Maria Bechara, Roy Bou Chaaya, Stephanie Tadros, Amie Chiniara, Antoine Awad, Shahine Fraiha, Mira Majzoub, Noha Miari, May Nabbout, Yara Al-Nasrany, and Ram Nour Eldin. Set & Poster Designer: Tiffany Moujaes. Lighting Designer: Mezyed Azrai, Khaled Abi Jomaa, and Mahmoud Maarawi. Costume Designer: Mony Moujaess. Makeup Designer: Lama Saab, Choreographer: Yara Al-Nasrani. Sound Designer: Ramzi Madi. Music Composers: “Fer'et Aa Nota” band (Wajdy Abou diab, Ragheed Jreidini, Zaher Hamadeh, Jihad Zogheib, and Ali Sabbah), and Maria Bechara. CG Artist: Ryan Ghossein. Stage Manager: Kinda Darwaich. Assitant Stage Manager: Tracy Shelhot, Melanie El-Sayegh, Robin Masih, and Mariam Nabbout. Makeup crew Supervisor: Line Itani. Publicity Manager: Marwan ElHasbini. House Manager: Dana Mroueh and Tala Nashar. Ticket Booth Supervisor: Zeina Badran. Set Crew: Petra Radieh, Lana Sultan, Samer Shaara, and Julia Ghanimeh. Light Crew: Mahammad Al-Bissat. Makeup crew: Petra Chamaa.

## Can't Pay, Won't Pay ما فينا ندفع! ما لـج ندفع!

Director: Lina Abyad, Ph.D.

by Fatima Al Mahmoud

A Macarena performance, a prayer to an imaginary saint, and a powerful message – *Can't Pay! Won't Pay!* was one memorable production.

Written by Italian actor and recipient of the 1997 Nobel Prize in literature, Dario FO, the play was adapted and directed by Associate Professor of Theater Lina Abyad, Ph.D., and was shown from March 14 to March 20, 2017 at Irwin Hall Auditorium, LAU Beirut campus.

The play spoke of Antoinette and Rita, two working class housewives who steal goods from their local supermarket to protest the unreasonable increasing prices. Respectively, their husbands also steal stacks of sugar and flour after being informed they would be losing their jobs. For one hour and a half, the couples attempt to conceal the stolen goods from one another and from law enforcement. On a wider scale, the play reflected the reality of living in Lebanon, where the public struggles to keep up with the greediness of those in power.

Although unplanned, the play coincided with the Lebanese government's decision to add 22 taxes on locals. "People thought that we had information previous to [the showing of] the play," said Abyad. "I think this is not the first time this happens."

FO originally wrote this piece to reflect and criticize the social settings of life in Italy; however, it proved to be fitting of the Lebanese situation as well. "I think Dario FO is really very close to the social problem Italy was facing at one point and I think these problems are still being faced by people being in Italy and in Lebanon," added Abyad.

Beyond simply addressing government abuse of power and the poor living conditions of people, the play carried a powerful message. Through the different events and dialogues of the play, FO and Abyad were able to transmit a lesson to the audience. The production framed the humanistic side of law enforcement that secretly supports the public, their demands, and the need for change. It painted an image of unity between law enforcement and the people.

In brief, the performance demonstrated that change and reform are in the hands of the community, but are only achievable if people work together.

Cast: Yassin Abboud, Hiba Sleiman Haidar, Alaa Itani, Dareen Shamseddine, Sany Abdel Baki, and Bassel Madi. Set Designer: Hana Fakhoury. Lighting Designer: Omar Moujaess. Sound Designer and Operator: Mohamad Shour. Costume Designer: Ghina Sibaii. Graphic Designer: Nour Andrea Nassar. Stage Manager: Christopher Al Zoummar. Props Manager: Rachid Hneineh. Wardrobe Mistress: Rana Hardan. Makeup: Meghan Itani. House Manager: Tala Al Nachar. Ticket Booth Supervisor: Zeina Badran. Assistant: Mohamad Yassin. Backstage Crew: Rami Halabi, Wizar Deeb, Rami Zoueyhed, Noha Miari, and Elaly Serhal. Set Construction, Publicity and Ticket Booth crew: Karawan El Bizri, Omar Hamadeh, Wael Serbey, Razan Slim, Samer Chaar, Serouj Kdenian, Farouk Kouftarou, Dana Mroue, and Dayana Mansour.



## I am Not a Terrorist

Director: Martin Loyato, Ph.D.

by Ghida Ladkani

Mixing light-mapped visuals with experimental eclectic music to create a world all their own, Assistant Professor of Music Martin Loyato, Ph.D., and his students brought forth a show, creating a performance that was as astonishing as it was powerful.

The experimental performance, *I Am Not a Terrorist*, was one of the Department of Communication Arts's four major theatre productions in the spring semester, showing at Irwin theatre on the LAU Beirut campus on April 19 and April 20.

The show, that was the product of a semester's work from Loyato and a group of his students, criticized and called out one of the most prominent issues of our modern world: ignorance and judgement.

"I intend to arouse thoughts and feelings that might create a constructive awareness of today's current international sociopolitical situation," said Loyato. "One can see how Middle Eastern individuals have been mistreated and misjudged by the West just because they were born in these lands. Nowadays, this is a very important for people who look different from the Western 'norm'. There's a problem of ignorance, more than anything, people are judged and stereotyped."

The show, comprised of three scenes, discussed terrorism and the reasons behind it, tackling the thirst for war and oil from the West in the middle East, and the silence and ignorance that support these moves. It comes after months of research and hard work from the entire team, with Loyato spending "over 10 hours a day in the theatre, for weeks, designing the set and making sure everything is being done well." He wrote the show, directed it, and overlooked the production.



"I wrote the entire show this time, although the students have a big part in creating," Loyato said. "There are two songs in Arabic, and I don't speak Arabic, so in the second scene, the Guantanamo Bay stories, where people are detained for years and they are not released or charged, and after 10 or 12 years they get out, having lost their lives, the song was written by Sandra Azki, one of our students."

The music of the show is a fusion of many forms. It is created from scratch for the show, and created around the talents who were participating.

"This time, we have two piano players, we also have Moe Zahzah, who plays the guitar and the clarinet, there's Mortada who plays the Oud, and a lot of singers. We even created instruments, with knives and metal, creating sound sculptures, and cups. So the people who aren't trained to play instruments have a lot to do as well," Loyato said.

For Karl Bourjeily, one of the participants in the show, the journey has been rewarding.

"[This] is the best learning experience you can find anywhere; it's very experimental from music to visuals to the way the show is treated," said Bourjeily. "This is experimentation on a higher level as we have the resources to do it well. Be it on a personal level or as an artist, this show is very important to me. Dr. Loyato truly teaches us well, to be artists and well-rounded people."

As for Majd Khiami, a singer in the show, the message of the production is one of the most important ones in today's world.

*Team: Sandra Azki (voice, percussion, sound sculptures instrument & Arabic lyrics), Karl Bou Rjeily (guitar, electronics & videographer), Nadine Daouk (voice, dance & choreography), Lynn el Jbeily (voice & piano), Omar Hamadeh (voice & choreography), Mortada Hariri (oud), Majd Khiami (voice & sound sculptures instrument), Natalie Maalouf (voice, percussion & choreography), Rayan Najd (voice & piano), Mohammed Zahzah (clarinet, electric guitar, electronics), Martin Loyato (trumpet, percussion & sound sculptures instrument), Ali Fakh (videographer), Rayan chehab (videographer & editor), Ghida Ladkani (lighting designer, motion/kinetic typography and operator), and Rami Inaty (project mapping, motion/kinetic typography operator). Writer, director, Sound Sculpture Instruments, Poster and set designer: Martin Loyato. Assistant music director: Mohammed Zahzah. Stage manager: Joelle Kahaleh. Makeup Artist: Meghan Itani. Sound engineer: Tarek Al Madani. Program designer: Awad Awad. Ticket booth supervisor: Zeina Badran. House Manager: Tala Al Nachar, and Dana Mroue.*

## Alternative Facts

أحلى من الشرف مفيش

Director: Amr Selim, D.M.A.

by Ahmad Karakira

In the spring of 2017, the Lebanese community was treated to the musical performance “Alternative Facts” by Alter, a multidisciplinary ensemble of LAU students with skills ranging from set design to rap music.

“Alternative Facts” aimed to shed light on Western coverage of Arab-related daily news. The performance that took eight weeks of preparation was presented in Selina Korban Theatre in LAU Byblos and Gulbenkian Theater in LAU Beirut, on April 10 and April 12, respectively.

Before the official start of the performance, a woman asked the audience gathered outside the theater to grab a sign that has revolutionary thoughts on it.

Upon the opening of the theater doors, the crowd had already been divided into two sections: chaotic and peaceful.

Inside, the performance started with broadcast news about different Arabic and Western issues such as social and economic problems, terrorism, racism, and U.S. President Donald Trump. Each news piece was followed by an Arabic or Western musical performance related to the topic.



Assistant Professor of Music Amr Selim, DMA, who founded Alter and directed “Alternative Facts,” believes there is always more than meets the eye.

“Each story has more than one side,” Selim said. “When we hear or see something on the news, it doesn’t mean that it’s the only thing we can get.”

Selim aims to encourage people to think twice and “try to see the layers behind anything we hear and see.”

According to Selim, the play deals with relevant issues from different perspectives and tries to ridicule the way some Western TV channels report Arabic news.

In addition to Arabic news, Selim also chose to talk about the African-American struggle.

“Even in American news no one talks about their [African-Americans] struggle, especially about lynching that affected their history and who they are,” Selim said. “I can relate to their struggle because I’m a minority too, being a Muslim in America.”

On the issue of censorship, Selim contended the performance was merely describing news as is. “I was mirroring what’s in the news,” Selim said. “I didn’t bring any news that I made, and these are the things people know.”

TV and Film senior May Nabbout, who did the voiceover as well as the set design, said every prop in the set has its meaning and symbol. Nabbout explained that the left side of the theater represents destruction, oppression, war, and poverty songs, while the right side represents the peaceful side, optimism, and revolutionary songs.

The set design and the ticket booth were also constructed in a manner to involve the audience.

*Team: Vocals and guitar: Stephanie Tadros and Paul Marjaba. Vocals: Chris Samaha. Piano: Ikram Hamizi. Wisdrum and drums: Ukpe Udoeka. Violin: Elie Chahine. Oud: Jamil Moussa. Spoken word: Bassam Haddad. Voice over: May Nabbout and Roy Bou Chaaya. Choreography and dance: Yara Al-Nasrany and Antoine Awad. Set Designers: Christy Samaha and May Nabbout. Lighting Designer: Yara Al-Nasrany. Lighting operator: Alex Dahdah. Sound Engineer: Majd Al-Alam, Graphic Designer: Ali Zoghdani. Stage Managers: May Nabbout and Karim Serhan. House managers: Reda Zorkot, Tala Al Nachar, Dana Mroue. Assistant Director: Stephanie Tadros.*

# Alumni Productions

## Ayyoubé

Director: Awad Awad

by Fatima Al Mahmoud

Mistreated. Sidelined. Rejected. Abused. That is the state of a Palestinian woman living in a refugee camp in Lebanon as narrated by alumnus Awad H. Awad in his play *Ayyoubé*.

“The story is basically about a Palestinian woman who has been mistreated through her life starting with her own family, and by her parents-in-law, as well as her husband and community around her, and by her society that planted a lot of ideas that are against her,” explained Awad, a TV and Film graduate from the Department of Communication Arts.

Being a Palestinian himself, Awad, who wrote and directed the play, spoke out against the public rejection and ill treatment of Palestinians. He took a stand against their imprisonment and deprivation of rights. And he shed light on the refugee crisis, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the reality of Arab women in a play that ran at LAU Beirut from May 8 to May 10.

### The Team

Both the production crew and the cast are composed of LAU students, alumni and faculty members. The diversity allows for an exchange of ideas, concepts and perceptions by different groups of people. Engaging students in the play was considered a responsibility for Awad. “We owe it to each other and we owe it to the younger generation of students as alumni to teach them and to transmit the knowledge we have learned, as well as take from them their ideas and knowledge,” he said.

Aliya Khalidi, Ph.D., is a lecturer of theater at LAU. Awad and Khalidi have previously collaborated in works like *Anbara* and *Eighty Steps*. Their collaboration persisted as Khalidi was an integral part of *Ayyoubé*'s cast, despite her initial reluctance. “She was hesitant because she wasn't sure that she wanted to act in general, and I was very sure that I want her for the part. And now we're doing a lot of good work together,” Awad said.



### The First Major Alumni Production

With the increasing number of closing theaters, fresh and enthusiastic graduates like Awad no longer have chances to premiere their work. Plays are losing their prominence and have become less valuable. However, LAU has stepped forward to help launch Awad's career in theater by displaying his play on campus. “It's a good initiative from LAU to help alumni get where they want to get, and it is also an incubator to have this product released and then we can take it, as well as the name of LAU with us outside,” Awad said. The Chair of the Department of Communication Arts, Jad Melki, Ph.D., accepted Awad's proposal of premiering *Ayyoubé* at LAU Beirut. He then proceeded to support and assist Awad, alongside staff members including Annie Tabakian, Hala Masri, George Chdid and Fouad Anka.

### The Journey

The production team also included a tour to showcase the play in various Palestinian refugee camps and Lebanese cities. Awad aimed for the widest exposure possible of the ideas and message behind the play, with the intention of delivering the concept to people “who need to know what's going on.” Through the play, Awad hopes to encourage people, especially women, to speak up and express themselves. He believes that “you have a voice and you can use it, just be aware that it exists.”

The play also targeted the Lebanese population, in hopes of clarifying that Palestinians are not what the media portray them to be. Palestinians “are not terrorists that are in Ein El Helwe,” explained Awad. He believes that the Syrian crisis has raised general awareness of the presence of Palestinian refugees, but that should not be translated into sympathy, but rather equality. “We need to be treated like anyone else. We don't need people to write articles about us and keep us under the microscope and study us from the outside. No, we want to engage, we want to be engaged with,” he said. He further elaborated on the experience of being a refugee and how it varies from one individual to another, but with one thing certain: They all want to return to their country. Unfortunately, Palestinian refugees do not have that enlisted in their choices.

Cast: Aliya Khalidi, Mira Sidawi, and Tala Al Nachar. Director: Awad Awad. Assistant Director: Rayan Sukkar. Scenography: Ghina Sibaii. Drawings: Mohammed Khayyata. Light designer: Mohammed Hissi. Sound designer: Mohammad Zahzah. Makeup designer: Albert Rizkallah. Production Assistant: Zeina Badran, Sarah Moussawi, Bahaa Radwan. Stage manager: Hani El Hendy. Technical director: Mira Sheab. House manager: Marwan El Hasbini. Promo video: Mohammad Yassine and Natalie Hamadeh. Light operator: Noha Miari. Sound Operator: Farouk Kafatrou. Set crew: Moustapha Masri. Light crew: Jad Abou akar, Iyad Tcheleby, Rahaf Jammal, and Samer Shaar. Ticket booth crew: Omar Hamadeh, Tala Al Nachar, Dana Mroue, Samer Wehby, and Hady Nizam. Backstage crew: Celine Hurt, Roy Saab, and Nadine Mahmasani.

# Student Film Screenings

## Documentaries

### Bloom

directed by **Nour Hourani**  
produced by **Angela Zoghbi**

Mia is a soul full of love. She frees herself as soon as she feels the hoop moving on her body, to the beats of her music.

### Cage

directed by **Jad Misri**  
produced by **Cynthia Samuel**

Jad Misri visits his past, in a place that made him realize where he wants to be in his life. Back to the cage for a night, in order to leave it for good.



### Dark Blue

directed by **Carina Ashkar**  
produced by **Iyad Tcheleby**

Yara is a pole dancer who was born with a cleft palate disorder. She talks about her struggles growing up alongside bullies, and the faith she had in herself that things will turn around.

### Stories from Raouche

directed by **Olafur Gestsson**  
produced by **Nadine Akkad**

A story about diverse people who are connected by one small piece of land which holds a different value for each of them.

## Fiction

### Apple Showers

directed by **Ghewa Taha**  
produced by **Ghida Ladkani**

Taj has trouble fitting into the dangerous lifestyle of her boyfriend and his two friends. As she tries to uncover what's behind their secrecy, she ends up falling into their pattern.

### Point of View

directed by **Karem Monzer**  
produced by **Karim Soueid**

A struggle between the past, present and an uncertain future... mass schizophrenia!

### Wara el Heit

directed by **Line Itani**  
produced by **Firas Itani**

In a city where drought reigns, teardrops are the instated currency.

### Earthbound

directed by **Roger Azar**  
produced by **Yara Amache**

After escaping a car accident, Selim goes directly to his childhood house in a manic state to finally confront his father about his past, and the emotional struggles in their family tree.



## Contact

directed by **Rinade Al Baba**  
produced by **Sandrila Ghrawi**

After tripping over a machine that makes weird sounds, Nayla goes on a quest to validate her belief that the machine is a mediator between aliens and humans.

## Anti Li

directed by **Nourhan Fakhoury**  
produced by **Yasmine Arnaout**

Khaled is facing an unusual love with his city Beirut and struggles to fit in.

## Thikra

directed by **Jad Abu Samad**  
produced by **Nadine Akkad**

Anthony, after losing his young daughter to a genetic disease, finally agrees to make a deal with the devil.

## Patience

directed by **Carol Saab**  
produced by **Hussein Taher**

Late 1980s, in a house in the village her husband has stopped sending her news from the war front.

## Occupational Hazard

directed by **Joy AbouZeid**  
produced by **Aceel Kibbi**

A 20-year-old woman seeks vengeance after her boyfriend psychologically abuses her.

## 3abath

directed by **Rima Srour**  
produced by **Yara Srour**

A former soldier killed in a past war is brought back to the present, only to witness the vast destruction he left in each of his victims.

## Student Theater Productions

### عمارة المعلم كندوز

directed by **Rinade Al Baba**  
produced by **Sandrila Ghrawi**

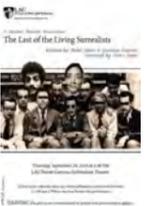
The play tackles the dominance of appearances and capitalism in society.



### The Last of the Living Surrealists

directed by **Firas Itani**

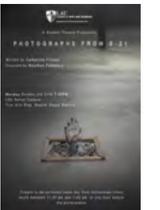
A movement piece that explores the life journey of Yoni and Moni, two surrealist dancers, and takes us through their desires, dreams and endless grapple with the system.



### Photographs S-21

directed by **Nourhan Fakhoury**

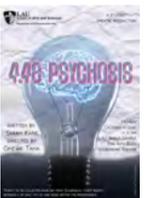
Two photographs come to life in an exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art, New York City. They are of young Cambodians whose photos were taken a moment before their execution.



### 4.48 Psychosis

directed by **Ghewa Taha**

A haunting play written in a stream of consciousness through poetic fragments. The character flies us through his journey of pain and mental state degradation as he clings to his moment of clarity, 4.48 a.m.



### A Little Box of Oblivion

directed by **Jad Abdul Samad**

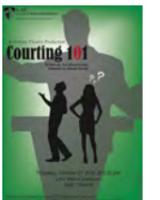
A box, innocently placed on a park bench, becomes the center of intrigue and the wild imaginings of the characters.



### Courting 101

directed by **Nicole Daniel**

"Courting 101" is a class designed to unravel the timeless mysteries of romance and dating.



## Call of the Revolution

directed by **Fatima Al Ahmad**

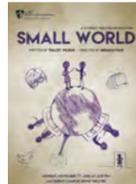
The play narrates the story of a family dealing with the commencement of a revolution, with all its complexities. It provides a close-up on the hopes and expectations Andreyev had for the revolution.



## Small World

directed by **Meghan Itani**

Three random couples meet on blind dates only to find out some really strange things about each other in a play on dishonesty and relationships.



## انت من انت

directed by **Nourhan Fakhoury**

The play deals with a national and social issue as two people meet in a barren land. During their meeting, surprises take place one after the other to reveal their common past.



## The New Tenant

directed by **Jawad El Mawla**

An absurdist play on a gentleman that moves into a new flat and his encounter with the caretaker and furniture movers.



## Circus

directed by **Maia Asfour**

The play deals with recurring nightmares and how they influence reality. It was influenced by the power of dreams and the symbols within.



## Death Knocks

directed by **Karim Ali**  
produced by **Sandrila Ghrawi**

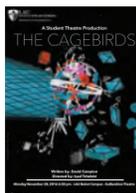
The play talks about how death is never the way one expects it to be. It is a comic illustration of the meeting between death and a nonbeliever.



## The Cagebirds

directed by **Iyad Tcheleby**

The characters are trapped in an environment that is not natural to them and have developed a kind of psychological instability which prevents them from understanding their oppression; they reflect aspects of human behavior.



## NOT I

directed by **Natalie Maalouf**

The play is a short dramatic monologue.



## The Pitchfork Disney

directed by **Mada Harb**

Two long monologues tackling fear, where one of the characters was afraid of everything and the other feared nothing. What would happen if these two characters collided?



## The Gas Heart

directed by **Tania Bizri**

Originally French, *The Gas Heart* is one of the most recognizable plays inspired by the anti-establishment trend known as Dadaism.



## While the Auto Waits

directed by **Ram Nouredine**

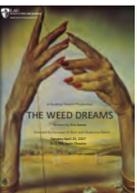
The play mocks people who chase money and glory and reflects the gap between rich and poor in an attempt to criticize customs of society.



## The Weed Dreams

directed by **Karawan Al Bizri**  
**Madonna Slim**

Three people meet during their new leaders' inauguration and discover each other's actual dreams for the future of their country. The play highlights the impact of the political system on people's minds.



## Friends

directed by **Meghan Itani**

Three young men and three young women live in the same apartment complex and face life and love in New York. They can't resist sticking their noses into one another's businesses which always leads to the kind of hilarity average people will never experience.



## Events

### International Dance Day Festival in Lebanon

Director: Nadra Assaf, Ph.D.

by Sally Farhat

Over a period of nine days, children, adults, students, and professionals participated in various workshops as part of the seventh Annual International Dance Day Festival in Lebanon (IDDFL), which LAU hosted from March 31 to April 8, 2017.

The festival that brought together renowned Lebanese and international dance instructors ended with two gala performances in the Byblos Public Garden (Wagon Park) on April 7, and Gulbenkian Theater, LAU Beirut campus, on April 8.

IDDFL was built with the aim of expanding the Lebanese dance field. To achieve this goal the festival works on enhancing public understanding of dance, exposing Lebanese dancers to international workshops that include lectures as well as practice, and creating ties between dancers to increase their learning experience.

“I was here last year and I feel like I have learned so much from the people, the culture, and the dancers here,” said Matthew Henley, expert in modern and jazz dance styles and an experienced choreographer in the festival. “But I also felt like I was also able to share things I’m excited about and wanted to come back and deepen that experience.”



The festival started with auditions after which dancers were picked to work over a period of one week with international guests. The following six days included daily two-hour rehearsals for the chosen dancers in preparation of the gala that embraced 13 dance performances. The six days also included various dance classes and workshops that were conducted by professional dancers and were open to the public.

This year’s event introduced a few changes in comparison to previous years. The festival and workshops included classes for different levels and ages but focused mainly on PFA majors and professionals rather than the entire community.

“I know I didn’t let the community down but I switched around a few of the formulas from the past and made it more effective and intensive for PFAs and professionals,” said Assistant Professor of Dance, Nadra Assaf, Ph.D., who has organized and directed IDDFL since 2011. “I think the gala at the end speaks to the success of that because in six days they put together what I think to be a really brilliant show.”

The festival included three LAU performing arts students, Yara Al-Nasrany, Antoine Awad, and Karim Sarhan, who took part in the activities as dancers and choreographers.

## Dancing with the Profs

Supervisor: Nadra Assaf, Ph.D.



by Milya Chehayeb

In its efforts to reinforce its commitment to fostering positive relationships with students, the Department of Communication Arts hosted the long-awaited event “Dancing with the Profs” on March 8, 2017 in Selina Korbán Theater on Byblos campus.

LAU’s recreation of the famous show “Dancing with the Stars” brought together students with talent and professors with drive, charisma, and energy.

Assistant Professor of Chemistry Robin Taleb, Ph.D., wowed the audience and judges when he won the competition alongside his student partner Yara Al Nasrany.

The panel of judges was composed of former dancing champion and current “Dancing with the Stars” judge Rabih Nahhas, fitness expert George Assaf, LAU Assistant Professor of Music Amr Selim, DMA, and LAU Associate Chair of the Department of Communication Arts Nadra Assaf, Ph.D.

Participating professors and students came from different backgrounds, but they all had one goal in mind: to win the final prize. The full list of participants consisted of: English instructor Amy Youssef, with student Antoine Awad; Assistant Professor of Food Science and Technology Hussein Hassan, Ph.D., with Angela el Zoghbi; Assistant Professor of Chemistry Rony Khnayzer, Ph.D., with Josiane Matar; Assistant Professor of Multimedia Journalism Claudia Kozman, Ph.D., with Romario Akiki; and History and Cultural Studies instructor Pierre Sarkis, with Ghinwa Ghorayeb.

Akiki and Al-Nasrany organized the event under Assaf’s supervision. Akiki and Al-Nasrany were in charge of recruiting dancers and professors, choosing suitable dance choreographies, and organizing rehearsals on a weekly basis. They were also responsible for managing the technical and digital aspects as well as all details behind the scenes.

For Akiki, executing such a program was not easy. As a former president of the LAU Dance Club in Byblos, Akiki expressed his motivation to revive the club’s importance and pitch the idea of “Dancing with the Profs.” Little did he know that the contest would upgrade from a small-scale club event to a departmental program.

Performing Arts major Nasrany added that an event such as this one carries a powerful impact on LAU where an art form, such as dance, can reach out to both students and faculty members.

Kozman highlighted the importance of this event saying it “enhances student-instructor relationships.”

The event was a huge success and a significant improvement from last year’s edition.

“Dance was celebrated in a beautiful way that night,” Nasrany said. “And that is what the occasion was all about.”



## Imagine Summer Arts Camp

Artistic Director: Amr Selim, DMA.

by Ahmad Karakira

Culminating in a student-led performance of singing, acting, dance, and music, Imagine Summer Arts Camp drew to a close on July 21, 2017.

After two weeks of preparations, lectures, and workshops, the Department of Communication Arts concluded the first edition of its summer arts camp by a performance led by the young participants at Gulbenkian Theater on LAU Beirut campus.

Thirty students from various backgrounds and areas in Lebanon took part in the two-week camp, which was created and directed by Assistant Professor of Music, Amr Selim, DMA. In addition to receiving lectures about acting, singing, dancing, and playing instruments, the students also took part in workshops in song-writing, clowning, journalism, and architecture.

As the first of its kind in the Arab region, the camp aims at providing the young generation (ages 12 to 16) with much more than two weeks of recreational activities.

"Imagine is an umbrella for people to feel, to imagine and to know that they are accepted, appreciated, and needed," Selim said. "We're trying to create an environment for these kids with artistic brains and minds."

Selim, who joined the Department of Communication Arts in 2016 as a Performing Arts faculty member, revealed that everything in the performance from acting, dancing, and singing was a creation of every single person in the camp. Campers cooperated with the instructors to decide on what to perform.

Selim believes that introducing campers to more than one art and attending different workshops helps in increasing their knowledge and developing their way of thinking, regardless of how limited resources are.



"We're trying to let them learn the value of creativity, the value of thinking outside the box, and the value of combining and connecting ideas from each other and from different classes to create an even better idea," Selim said.

For Selim, the biggest challenge was to prove that the camp's idea is valid and to switch the campers' mentality from a school mentality to a creative one that the culture and the educational system in Lebanon need.

The success of the camp was reflected in the campers' willingness to attend the second edition of the camp next summer, scheduled to run from July 16 to August 3, 2018.

"I surveyed all the students and 100 percent of them said that they will come back, while 95 percent of them said that they would like the camp to be longer, which is a huge sign of success," Selim said.

Adjunct Assistant Professor of Music Seba Ali, DMA, believes that students have acquired and learned important values in a short time.

"Campers have learned how to be responsible and they've learned and understood that their abilities and talents are limitless," Ali said. "They were able to do great professional things in no time."

Acting instructor, technical director, and faculty member Omar Moujaes admits that the campers showed enthusiasm and interest in learning about acting, unlike in some schools where acting is an obligatory class.

"I teach kids from the same ages in a school, and the reactions here are more genuine," Moujaes said. "I've never seen these kinds of reactions whenever I did exercises. They were very interactive."

In addition to instructors, several LAU students from different majors were monitoring the work of the camp. TV and Film student and camp monitor, Lynn Jbeily, was glad she had the chance to help campers improve themselves and was quite surprised by their talents.

"What's interesting is that we're not just teaching the little campers but we're also learning from them," Jbeily said. "I truly wish I was in such a camp as a child."

## Festival NEXT

Artistic Directors: Amr Selim, DMA, and Nadra Assaf, Ph.D.

by Connections staff

By reinventing the 19 year-old LAU International University Theater Festival and rebranding it as Festival NEXT, the Department of Communication Arts continued its tradition of creating artistic performances that showcased the talents of students, faculty, and guests alike.

Organized and directed by Assistant Professor of Music Amr Selim, DMA, and Assistant Professor of Dance Nadra Assaf, Ph.D., the five-day festival that launched on August 26, 2011, exposed participants to various workshops and performances in music, theater, dance, and writing. The production of Festival NEXT, which is a multidisciplinary festival that evolved from LAU's prominent annual theater festival, was itself a collaborative effort between LAU faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends.

In its previous editions, the festival invited international artists to participate in the event and share their experiences and skills. Among those invited this year was renowned Colombian theater director and psychologist Hector Aristizabal who ran a three-day workshop on theater in action.

"Theater is the modern word for ritual, and ritual is the place where humanity heals," said Aristizabal, who used to employ theater in his work as a psychologist. "Before we had psychiatrists we had storytelling, and the theater is a place where we can open up. It's very therapeutic."

Psychologist and LAU alumna Nadine Saidi agreed. "I'm interested in group dynamics and it has been an enlightening experience. I really enjoyed the playfulness involved."

Part of the goal to reinvent the festival was to engage more local artists and students, and this year Brummana High School students performed the play *Mount Purgatory*. Led by Omar Moujaes, the play also included actors from LAU and the community, reflecting the festival's new spirit of strong and meaningful community engagement and service.



The festival comprised various activities, some of which were the Verbatim Theater workshop by theater actress and director Sahar Assaf, the Improvisational Acting workshop by stage director and social activist Lucien Bourjeili, the Scriptwriting workshop by storyteller Tamer Habib, and the Indian dance class and performance by Indian dance expert Prathiba Netesan. Group work and collaboration were evident in every workshop and performance.

"The new interdisciplinary program and name of the festival reflect where we currently are as a department," explained Jad Melki, Ph.D., chairperson of the Department of Communication Arts. "We are on our next phase in moving toward the future of communication. We are the builders of the next generation of communicators in the region. We are what perpetually reinvents and continuously comes next."

As the department recently expanded its offerings to four sharply defined yet interdependent programs in performing arts, multimedia journalism, television and film, and communication, Festival NEXT, said Melki, now reflects its multidisciplinary nature. "We've designed it so as to allow for the flexibility of incorporating in the future even more of LAU's thriving artistic disciplines, such as design, fashion, poetry and literature."

According to Egyptian violinist Said Kamal, who ran a workshop on the Arabic violin and performed with fellow musician Amro Salah on the last night of the festival, such interdisciplinary festivals are highly instrumental in promoting a renewed appreciation for the arts undisturbed by commercialization.

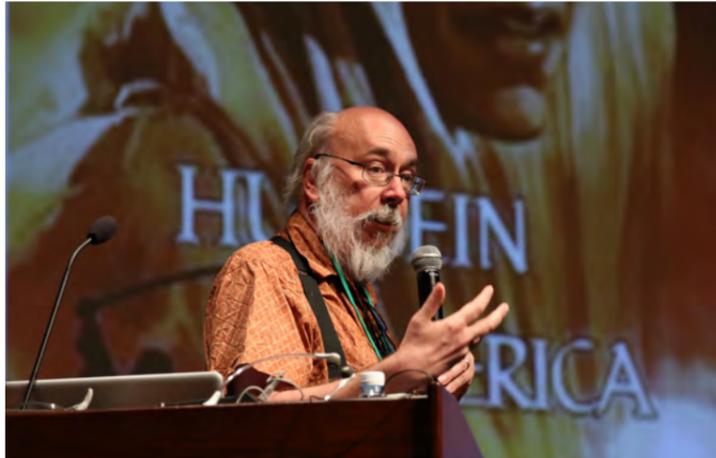
Salah also acknowledged the importance of such an event. "Commercial music has its place and purpose, but I love initiatives like this one that bring people together to create and enjoy music with artistic merit," added Salah.

As the event brought together a variety of high quality artists and educators, it established itself as a model for all future versions.

"Because of the team spirit and the quality of the workshops and performances, Festival NEXT succeeded spectacularly and offered us a proven concept and prototype for our next big Festival NEXT in 2018, which will coincide with the 20th anniversary of this festival," said Melki.

## MDLAB Goes Global

Director: Jad Melki, Ph.D.



by Sally Farhat

As part of its aim to increase media and digital literacy in the Arab region, the Media and Digital Literacy Academy of Beirut (MDLAB) returned this year in its fifth edition to target a global audience rather than a regional one.

Sponsored by the Norwegian Embassy, organized by the Institute of Media Research and Training (IMRT) at LAU, and co-sponsored by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), DW Akademie, and the European Union, MDLAB 2017 was open to more than 70 participants from 34 institutions and 15 different countries from August 7 to August 18 at LAU Beirut.

Participating countries from the Arab region included Egypt, Palestine, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Bahrain, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, and Yemen. And for the first time, the non-Arab countries that participated were Germany, United States, China, Russia, Bulgaria, and Iran.

The academy covered various topics ranging from media education, fake news, and gender equality, to digital security, privacy and surveillance, youth radicalization, and countering extremism.

“Programs like MDLAB are important because they allow for the dissemination and the spreading in media and digital literacy education,” said Sarah Mallat, instructor of media studies at the Lebanese American University.

Participants attended several keynote lectures, including Associate Professor in the Department of Marketing Communication at Emerson College Paul Mihalidis’, Ph.D., “Media, Civic Engagement, and Fake News,” Associate Professor of Journalism and Broadcasting at Florida International University Moses Shumow’s, Ph.D., “Privacy, Surveillance, and Security,” and Associate Professor and Chairperson of the Department of Communication Arts at LAU Jad Melki’s, Ph.D., “The Communication Design of Modern Terrorism: The ISIS Media and Strategy.”

The academy also comprised six panels, in addition to the screening of the documentary “Fallen Television” by Maya Majzoub and The Media Education Foundation’s documentary “The Occupation of the American Mind: Israel’s PR Wars in the U.S.” Professor of Communication at the University of Massachusetts Sut Jhally’s, Ph.D., screening was followed by a Q&A session with him and pro-Palestine narrator and Pink Floyd co-founder Roger Waters.

“I’ve been coming to MDLAB since [it] began,” said Raghda El Zein, a participant and instructor at LAU and the American University of Science and Technology. “I always get new information that I contribute to my classrooms at AUST.”

On the last day of the academy, participants presented the projects they built on the knowledge and skills they gained over a period of 10 days. A closing ceremony, that included the distribution of certificates and a concert by Faia Younan, followed the presentations and marked the end of MDLAB 2017.

“Challenging, exciting, and informative,” Naila Hamdy, associate professor at the American University of Cairo and faculty participant from Egypt, described her two-week experience at MDLAB.

Since its launch in 2013, MDLAB’s aim remains to battle radicalization, extremist ideologies, human rights injustice, gender inequality, and empower the media education scene in the region. Since then, MDLAB has helped in developing media literacy in the region in general and in the region’s universities and schools specifically. Today, over 36 universities and a huge number of schools incorporate media literacy into their curricula in comparison to none prior to 2013. Consequently, and as recognition for all the efforts placed by MDLAB, its founder Melki received the UNESCO-



## Workshops

Fall 2016

### Acting Workshop on Short Scenes

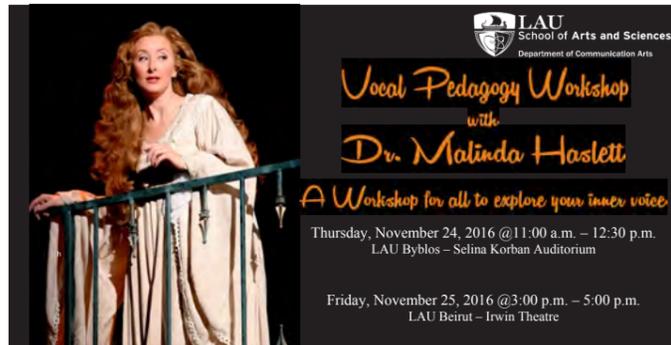
conducted by **Catherine Coray - NYU Abu Dhabi**

The workshop focused on short scenes, where participants memorized scenes in advance.

### Vocal Pedagogy

conducted by **Malinda Haslett, Ph.D.**

An interactive workshop focused on mind/body/voice work that culminates in a group song.



Spring 2017

### Content Creation Workshop

conducted by **Nasser Chour**

The workshop focused on content and structure of the department's promotional video.

### SAS Fair Workshop for High School Students

conducted by **Department of Comm Arts**

In preparation for the fourth Annual School of Arts and Sciences High School Fair, the Department of Communication Arts launched three workshops in journalism, script-writing, and performing arts.

## Data Visualization and Human Rights

conducted by **Monika Halkort**

The workshop showed journalism students how to identify and combat hate speech against refugees with data driven stories and multimedia skills.

## Creation and Recreation

conducted by **Jacqueline Leung, Ph.D.**

The workshop allowed participants to practice artistic risk taking and the skill of quick creative thinking while collaborating with others, by exploring free improvisation.



## Viewpoints Workshop

conducted by **Catherine Coray - NYU Abu Dhabi**

The workshop was for students who participated in "Acting Workshop on Short Stories" which took place in October 2016.

## Faculty Events

Fall 2016

### Piano Recital " روابط - LINKS "

faculty **Seba Ali**

The solo 60-minute performance that combined piano with visuals was inspired by the concept of life as a string of actions.



## Music Performance: "A Musical Extravaganza"

faculty **Malinda Haslett, Seba Ali, Amr Selim & LAU students**

An hour long show of opera, jazz, and cabaret songs from the most beloved works. The show revolved around the four seasons (spring, summer, autumn, and winter).



### Spring 2017

## Departmental Promotional Campaign

faculty **Department of Communication Arts**

The launching of the department's promotional campaign, which included posters, brochures, and a promotional video.

## Music Performance: "Music & Conflict"

faculty **Ray Furuta, Seba Ali, Amr Selim, Ghassan Sahhab**  
in collaboration with students **Roger Azar, Nour Hourany, Soumar Al Kamand**

A concert featuring guest artists from the U.S. and Canada.



## Music Performance: "Momentum"

faculty **Nadra Assaf, Sany Abdul Baki, Omar Moujaes, Jimmy Beshara**

A performance that combined dance, music and silent acting.



## Video Competition about Youth and Money

faculty **Department of Communication Arts**

The winner of the competition received a full scholarship for Salzburg Academy, presented by Fransabank.

## Panel Discussion: "Arts & Politics: A Mutual Relation"

faculty **Ray Furuta, Imad Salame, Mona Knio, and Amr Selim**

The panel discussed the role of arts in politics and how politics have influenced arts and artists.



## Other Events

### Fall 2016

#### Panel Discussion: "From ChiNN to BBChi"

panelists **Salam Al Zaatari & Abdel Rahim Augi**  
 moderator **Maya Majzoub**



#### Film Screening: "3000 Nights"

director **Mai Masri**

#### Film Screening: "بالحلال" (Bil Halal)

director **Assad Fouladkar**



### Spring 2017

#### Book Launching: The Lebanese Media - Anatomy of a System in Perpetual Crisis

author **Sarah El Richani**

#### BBC Pop Up (BBC's mobile) Documentary-Making Bureau

supervisor **Benjamin Zand**

#### Film Screening: "Rim and Her Sisters"

director **Leyla Assaf Tengroth**

#### Public Relation : The New Age of Communication

speakers **Joe Chemali (Managing Director of MSL Group)**  
**Tala Arakji (Senior Planner MSL Group - Leo Burnett)**

## Off-Campus Events

### Research

#### Data Power Conference

by **Monika Halkort**

location **Ottawa, Canada**

“Metric Power: Rethinking Data Infrastructures from the Margins of the State.”



#### International Communication Association Annual Conference

by **Claudia Kozman & Jad Melki**

location **San Diego, USA**

“Media dependency and trust during conflict: How Syrian nationals engage with traditional and digital media.”

#### International Communication Association Annual Conference

by **Raluca Cozma & Claudia Kozman**

location **San Diego, USA**

“Social media as information subsidy in the news coverage of the Syrian crisis: A cross-national analysis.”

## Guest Lecturers

#### Performance Practice of Middle Eastern Music on the French Horn

by **Amr Selim**

location **Manhattan School of Music, New York, USA.**

**Aaron Copland School of Music, Queens**

**College, CUNY, New York, USA.**



#### NoonArts: The Horn in the Time of Beethoven

by **Amr Selim**

location **LAU NY, New York, USA**

#### Music in Islam

by **Amr Selim**

location **LAU NY, New York, USA**

#### Data.Measure.Value: Data Activism in Palestinian Refugee Camps

by **Monika Halkort**

location **Refugee Outreach and Research Network,**

**Academy of Science, Vienna, Austria**

*A Thank You to our Supporters*

In an economic climate where parents struggle to pay the tuitions of their daughters and sons, and in a region where the arts are relegated low priority for funding and high importance for censorship, every ounce of support and every drop of donation counts – be it monetary or inkind.

We dedicate this page to thank all those who supported our department, faculty, and students during these dire economic times and suffocating political arena.

We thank the hundreds of artists, students, academics, activists, and professionals who dedicated time, expertise, effort and finances to our activities, classes, and research. We have more names to list than there is space in this publication. They act in our plays, help in stage designs and equipment set-up, offer guest lectures and workshops, donate props and musical instruments, provide guidance and advice, and offer steadfast support when we push the envelope – and push it we often do!

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Without your help and support, our enormous operation will come to a halt, and our students will miss invaluable experiences and indispensable opportunities. We thank you all and promise you to continue to strive for elevating the communication arts and sciences in Lebanon and the Arab region and persist to push for a just, free and democratic society, where creativity thrives, opportunity abounds, and life prospers.

*Jad Melki, Ph.D.*  
Associate Professor of Journalism and Media Studies  
Chairperson, Department of Communication Arts





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