

2020

2019

2018

2017

2016

2015

2014

2013

2012

2011

2010

2009

2008

2007

2006

2005

2004

2003

2002

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AUB Assistant Professor named member of prestigious Institute for Advanced Study

4/5/2011

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Bilal Orfali, assistant professor of Arabic studies and director of the CAMES Arabic Summer Program at the American University of Beirut, was recently named a visiting member of the School of Historical Studies at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey for the academic year 2011-12.

The Institute for Advanced Study, a private academic institution, independent of Princeton University, is, as its website states, "one of the world's leading centers for theoretical research and intellectual inquiry." Founded in 1930, the institute encourages and supports "fundamental research in the sciences and humanities—the original, often speculative thinking that produces advances in knowledge that change the way we understand the world." The institute brings together a community of top rank scholars, enabling them to pursue research at their own time and pace, free from teaching and other university obligations. Past faculty members have included distinguished scientists and scholars such as Albert Einstein, Kurt Gödel, J. Robert Oppenheimer, Erwin Panofsky, John von Neumann, and George Kennan. Some twenty-five Nobel laureates, thirty-eight Fields Medalists, and many winners of the Wolf and MacArthur prizes have been affiliated with the Institute.

Orfali's research contributes to understanding key literary and social issues of the fourth through tenth centuries such as the significance and nature of the genre of Arabic literary anthology, patronage and courtly life, the working and reworking of books in classical Arabic literature, oral versus aural and written transmission of literary reports, as well as prose and poetry and the several ways in which they are combined and juxtaposed. His project at the institute will focus on the genesis and development of early Sufi poetry by examining the origins of the early Sufi poetic motifs in light of other genres of Arabic poetry such as wine, *ghazal*, and *madih* poetry.



Orfali

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Story Highlights

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- Orfali's research contributes to understanding key literary and social issues of the fourth through tenth centuries.

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