

Azza El-Masri

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Education

University of Texas at Austin, TX - *PhD in Journalism and Media*

AUGUST 2021 - PRESENT

Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL - *MA in Media/Communication Studies*

AUGUST 2016 - MAY 2018

- Fulbright Foreign Student Scholarship recipient
- Cognate in Social Psychology

Danish School of Media and Journalism, Aarhus, DK - *Study Abroad Program in Journalism, Multimedia, and World Politics*

AUGUST 2013 - DECEMBER 2013

- Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Scholarship Recipient

American University of Beirut, Beirut, LB - *BA in Media/Communication Studies*

SEPTEMBER 2012 - MAY 2015

- Minor in Sociology
- Graduated with distinction

Teaching Experience

University of Texas at Austin, Austin – *Teaching Assistant*

- J350F – Media Law, Instructor: Dr. Amy Sanders (Fall 2021, Spring 2022)

Professional Experience

Meedan x Birmingham City University, Beirut – *North Africa/Western Asira Program Associate*

DECEMBER 2019 - JUNE 2021

LEBANESE ARCHIVE PROJECT

- Managed the pilot phase of the Lebanese Archive in partnership with three local organizations and Mnemonic/The Yemeni Archive
- Trained partner organizations on open-source data collection, verification, and archiving.

NAWA NEWSROOM

- Built a pan-Arab student newsroom focused on media literacy, fact-checking and open source investigations, bringing students from 5 countries (Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Palestine, and Yemen).
- Created a specialized curriculum to train students on using open-source tools to monitor, fact-check, and verify Arabic COVID-related misinformation.
- Coordinated the production of four Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) on: podcasting, digital security, advocacy and campaigning, and satire writing.
- Facilitated news partnerships with openDemocracy, Raseef22, SKeyes Media, and other independent newsrooms to publish student investigations.

PROGRAMMATIC RESPONSIBILITIES

- Conducted research on auditory misinformation in Lebanon and independent media in the region.
- Provided programmatic support to NAWA partners.

Megaphone News, Beirut - *Producer/Researcher*

MAY 2018 - JULY 2021

- Lead a four-people team of fact-checkers dedicated to countering d/misinformation (e.g. Syrian refugees, the economy, public health).
- Producer of This Week in Lebanon, a weekly news aggregator, and the Daily News Roundup.
- Produced audiovisual open-source investigations on corruption, militia groups, and privacy-related subjects.
- Lead researcher for several explainer projects, including the electoral results infographics and Megaphone's first short web documentary on the 1915-1918 Great Famine.

SMEX, Beirut - *Campaigns Manager + Bread&Net Coordinator*

MAY 2018 - NOVEMBER 2019

- Applied quantitative and qualitative methods to craft and pilot campaign messages on select target audiences, mainly LGBTQ, women, and youth.
- Designed PROXY, a board game to serve as an applied persuasive tool aimed at affecting youths' attitudes and behaviors toward online mobile safety and data security.
- Organized Bread&Net, the first regional digital rights gathering, two years in a row.

Media and Digital Literacy Academy of Beirut, Beirut - *Assistant Director*

MAY 2017 - MAY 2018

- Interviewed and vetted applicants from over 34 countries for MDLAB 2017 and MDLAB 2018.

- Managed and coordinated the social media and press release groups for MDLAB 2017.

Lebanese American University, Beirut - Research Assistant

NOVEMBER 2015 - JULY 2016

- Conducted content and discourse analysis on select ISIS-linked events to serve as case studies for a theoretical model analyzing the mediated public diplomacy strategy of virtual states.

Awards

Thomas Thompson Fellowship – University of Texas at Austin, School of Journalism and Media

2022

Graduate Research Travel Scholarship – University of Texas at Austin, School of Journalism and Media

MAY 2022 - JUNE 2022

Fulbright Foreign Student Scholarship - AMIDEAST/U.S. State Department

AUGUST 2016 - MAY 2018

IBDAA Award for Biodiversity - Nature Conservation Center

APRIL 2015

Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Scholarship - Kingdom of Denmark

AUGUST 2013 - DECEMBER 2013

Publications

El Masri, A. (2021). Hybridity and online public spheres after the Arab Spring: The case of Raseef22. In E. Mohamad & A. Daoui (Eds.). *New Media Discourses, Culture and Politics after the Arab Spring*, London, UK: IB Tauris Press.

Melki, J. & **El Masri, A.** (2016, February). The Paris Attacks: Terror and Recruitment. *Countering Daesh Recruitment Propaganda*, The Carter Center (Working Paper)

Skills

Languages: Arabic (native), French (fluent), English (fluent), Spanish (intermediate)

Surveys: MTurk, SurveyMonkey, Qualtrics

Web Design/Management: Wordpress, HTML, CSS, Hootsuite

Other: SPSS, Check (open source fact-checking and annotation), CrowdTangle (access to Facebook/Instagram/Reddit API), Adobe Photoshop

Affiliations

- Member (representing Lebanon), [Next Billion Network](#), since June 2019
- Advisory Board Member, [Refugees=Partners](#), since June 2018

Invited Talks & Conferences

- **Social turmoil & political repression as disruptive events: on trauma, healing and collective action** with Nighat Dad (Digital Rights Foundation, Facebook Oversight Board) and Dr. Dima Saber (Birmingham City University, Meedan)
 - Birmingham Center for Media and Cultural Research Seminar Series, Online, 11 May 2022
- **Understanding disinformation and fact-checking** with Tamoa Calzadilla (El Detector, Univision)
 - the National Press Foundation Statehouse Reporting Fellowship program, Austin, TX, March 31 2022
- **How misinformation works**
 - guest lecture at Florida State University - Panama City, Online, 1 Nov 2021
- **Current developments in privacy and press freedom in the Middle East**, with Wafa Ben-Hassine (the Omidyar Network) and Ayman Mhanna (Samir Kassir Foundation)
 - American Bar Association, Middle East Committee, Online, 21 Sept 2021
- **“But we're on the same side!” How tools to fight extremism can harm counterspeech**, with Dia Kayyali (Mnemonic) and Jilian York (Electronic Freedom Frontier)
 - RightsCon 2021. Online, 1–7 June 2021.
- **The political economy of disinformation in Lebanon**
 - event sponsored by the Lebanese American University Secular Club. Online, 23 April 2021
- **Independent media in Lebanon after the blast**
 - Internet Freedom Festival: MENA Community Knowledge Sharing Workshop. Online, 20 Nov 2020.
- **Misinformation in the time of revolutions**, with Emna Sayadi (Access Now), Mahmoud Ghazayel (independent fact-checker); moderated by Dalia Othman (Jeem.me)
 - Bread&Net 2019, Beirut, Lebanon, 15 November 2019
- **Misinformation Working Group Meeting at the OTF**
 - Open Technology Fund Summit, Taipei, Taiwan, 4-6 November 2019
- **Let's Get Playin': A demo of SMEX's board game on online mobile safety** – RightsCon 2019, Tunis, Tunisia, 12 June 2019