

AHMED KANNA

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APPOINTMENTS

F 2024 – S 2025	Department Chair, School of International Studies, University of the Pacific
Fall 2021 – present	Professor, International Studies & Anthropology, University of the Pacific
Fall 2019 – Spring 2023	Director, Ethnic Studies Program, University of the Pacific
2015 – 2021	Associate Professor of SIS/Anthropology, University of the Pacific
2009 – 2015	Assistant Professor, SIS/Anthropology, University of the Pacific, Stockton CA
2008 – 2009	Postdoctoral Fellow, Urban/Global Studies, Trinity College, Hartford CT
2006 – 2008	Postdoctoral Fellow, International Studies, University of Iowa, Iowa City IA
2006	Research Fellow, Harvard University Grad. School of Design, Cambridge MA

EDUCATION

2006	PhD, Social Anthropology, Harvard University, Cambridge MA
2000	AM, Middle East Studies, Harvard University, Cambridge MA
1997	BS (honors/distinction), Psychology, James Madison University, Harrisonburg VA

RESEARCH & TEACHING INTERESTS

- urban anthropology & sociology
- race, gender, class, & empire
- social and class struggle movements
- anthropology, Marxism; Marxist engagements with U.S. anthropology and cultural studies

Current Projects:

- Marxist – materialist critiques of U.S. anthropology
- “Post-socialist” German Socialism and Communism

ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

Books

2020	<i>Beyond Exception: New Interpretations of the Arabian Peninsula</i> (with Amélie Le Renard and Neha Vora). Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
2013	<i>The Superlative City: Dubai and the Urban Condition in the Early 21. Century</i> (Editor). Cambridge: Harvard GSD/Harvard University Press.
2012	<i>Rethinking Global Urbanism: Comparative Insights from Secondary Cities</i> (Editor, with Xiangming Chen). New York: Routledge.
2011	<i>Dubai, The City as Corporation</i> . Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.*

* Listed as an “Essential Reading on the Arab State” by *Jadaliyya*, 2018,
<https://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/37665>

* Chapter Two excerpted in *Cities of the Global South Reader*. Edited by F. Miraftab and N. Kudva. New York: Routledge, 2015.

Academic Articles

- In progress Questioning Revolutionary Legacies: Film and Graphic-Novel Representations of the US Socialist Experience in the Long Shadow of the Cold War (tentative title). Working Paper, Department of Anthropology, Harvard University Jakobson Research Workshop. In preparation, submission Winter 2024 – 2025.
- Submitted/Under review Contemplating Capitalism: How Introductory Anthropology Texts Depoliticize Class, Oppression, and the Climate (submitted Spring 2025).
- 2023 Enlisted in Struggle: Being Marxist in a Time of Protracted Crisis. *Focaal: Journal of Global and Historical Anthropology* 95: 61 – 73.
- 2022 ‘Bury Class Society Before It Buries Us All’: Eleanor Burke Leacock’s Vision for a Marxist Feminist Anthropology, *Monthly Review* 73(9): 13 – 25.
- 2021 What Kind of Commons? Logics of Exchange in J. Dua’s *Captured at Sea*. *Society & Space*. November 1, 2021.
- 2018 (with Neha Vora) De-Exceptionalizing the Field: Anthropological Reflections on Migration, Labor, and Identity in Dubai, *Arab Studies Journal* 26(2):74 – 101.
- 2014 ‘A Group Like-Minded Lads in Heaven’: Everydayness and the Production of Dubai Space, *Journal of Urban Affairs* 36(2):605 – 620.
- 2014 (with Najib Hourani), Arab Cities in the Neoliberal Moment, *Journal of Urban Affairs* 36(2):600 – 604.
- 2014 Speaking of the City: Establishing Urban Expertise in the Arab Gulf. *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 46 (1):169 – 171.
- 2012 A Politics of Non-Recognition? Biopolitics of Arab Gulf Worker Protests in the Year of Uprisings. *Interface: A Journal For and About Social Movements* 4(1):146 – 164.
- 2012 Urban Praxis and the Arab Spring. *City* 16(3):337 – 345.
- 2010 Flexible Citizenship in Dubai: Neoliberal Subjectivity in the Emerging ‘City—Corporation.’ *Cultural Anthropology* 25(1):100—129.
- 2009 Making Cadres of the ‘City—Corporation’: Cultural and Identity Politics in Neoliberal Dubai. *Review of Middle East Studies* 43(2):207—218.
- 2005 The ‘State Philosophical’ in the ‘Land without Philosophy’: Shopping Malls, Interior Cities, and the Image of Utopia in Dubai. *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* 16(2):59—73.

Book Chapters (all appear in peer-reviewed volumes)

- 2024 Cultivating Socialist Selves: Reading Trotsky Under the Specter of Capitalist Realism, *The Ethnography of Reading at Thirty*, Matthew Rosen, ed. New York: Palgrave, pp. 125 – 147.
- 2021 Outsiders of the Oil States, in Asef Bayat & Linda Herrera, eds. *Global Middle East: Into the 21st Century*, pp. 240 – 252. Oakland: University of California Press.
- 2017 Main Trends in Contemporary Urban Studies of the Middle East/North Africa. In John Rennie Short, ed., *A Research Agenda for Cities (Elgar Research Agendas Series)*, Northampton MA and Cheltenham UK: Edward Elgar.
- 2016 Gulf Urbanism: The Semantic Field of a Spatial Category. In Mehran Kamrava, ed., *Gateways to the World: Port Cities in the Persian Gulf*, pp. 79 – 94. New York: Oxford University Press.
- 2012 Urbanist Ideology and the Production of Space in the United Arab Emirates: An Anthropological Critique. In Marina Peterson and Gary McDonogh, eds., *Global Downtowns*, pp. 90 – 109. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- 2012 Bringing the Less Familiar Cities in and Together (with Xiangming Chen). In Xiangming Chen and Ahmed Kanna, eds. *Rethinking Global Urbanism*, pp. 1 – 14. New York: Routledge.
- 2012 The Trajectories of Two “Asian Tigers:” Capitalism and Empire in Dubai and Singapore. In Xiangming Chen and Ahmed Kanna, eds. *Rethinking Global Urbanism*, pp. 35 – 52. New York: Routledge.

RECENT INVITED LECTURES, CONFERENCE PAPERS, & PRESENTATIONS

- 2025 Intersectionality – Idealism vs. Class Analysis – Materialism: A Critique of Cultural Anthropological Theory. Race, Racialization, and Resistance Conference: Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Humanities, April 25 – 27 at Seattle University, Seattle WA.
- 2025 Contemplating Capitalism: Anthropology Pedagogy’s Erasure of Economic Class, Society for Applied Anthropology Annual Meeting, March 25 – 29, Portland OR.
- 2024 Class Struggle, Marxist Analysis, and De-exceptionalizing the Arab Gulf panel paper, Annual Meeting of the Middle East Studies Association of North America, 13 November 2024.
- 2024 Socialism and Communism in Films and Graphic Novels in the Neoliberal Era. (See also articles section). Invited talk, Roman Jakobson Workshop, Department of Anthropology, Harvard University, April 2024. (Unable to participate because of medical circumstances).
- 2023 Which Kind of Materialism? Marxist Critiques of Cultural Anthropology, virtual talk, Annual Meeting, Amer. Anthropological Association.
- 2021 Standing Side by Side with History: Becoming Marxist in a ‘Post-Socialist’ Time. Panel paper, annual meeting of American Anthropological Association, Baltimore, November 19.
- 2021 Invited book talk on *Beyond Exception*. NYU Abu Dhabi, Abu Dhabi UAE (remotely), Nov. 15.

- 2021 Invited book talk on *Beyond Exception*. University of Southern California (remotely), Sept. 27.
- 2021 Discussant, Assoc. for Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies (AGAPS) Graduate Student Workshop, July 28 – 29.
- 2021 Webinar talk on book panel, *Global Middle East*, Asef Bayat and Linda Herrera eds. March 12.
- 2020 Discussant, *Archive Wars: The Politics of History in Saudi Arabia* with author Rosie Bsheer, Middle East Studies Program, George Washington University, October 22.
- 2020 Invited [book talk](#) on *Beyond Exception: New Interpretations of the Arabian Peninsula*. University of Virginia Arabian Peninsula and Gulf Studies Program (with Amelie Le Renard and Neha Vora), September 25.
- 2019 Discussant, ‘Mobility, Value, and Infrastructure in and out of Africa: A New Book Roundtable,’ Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Vancouver BC, 20 November.
- 2019 Class Struggles & Western Imperialism in the Arab Gulf. Address to the University of the Pacific United Nations Club. 14 November.
- 2019 De-Exceptionalizing the Arab Gulf: Bringing Back Class Struggle & Social Reproduction. Invited Lecture, UC Santa Cruz Humanities Center, April 24.
- 2017 Panel Paper, Assoc. of American Geographers, Boston, 6 April 2017.
- 2017 Invited Paper, De-Exceptionalizing Urban Space: Labor and Class in the Contemporary Gulf City, Harvard University Graduate School of Design, 7 – 8 April, 2017.
- 2017 Roundtable Participant, “The Embargo of Palestine in America’s Political Imaginary,” American Ethnological Society Annual Meeting, Stanford University, April 1.
- 2016 The Concept of Class in MENA Urban Studies, Annual Meeting of Middle East Studies Association of North America, Boston.
- 2016 Chair, ‘Beyond the Square: Urbanism and Arab Uprisings’ Panel, Annual Meeting of Middle East Studies Association of North America, Boston.
- 2016 Invited Roundtable Paper, ‘Ethnography Inside Out: Activism and Research among Urban Social Movements in the United States,’ CUNY Graduate Center, 9/26/16.
- 2016 Invited Discussant, *Beyond the Square: Urbanism and the Arab Uprisings* (Deen Sharp, Claire Panetta, eds.) book launch, NYU Kevorkian Center, 9/26/16.
- 2016 Urban Spaces and Popular Culture in Middle East/North Africa. Lecture to K-12 Teachers Summer Institute, UC Berkeley Office of Resources for International and Area Studies (ORIAS), 19 July.
- 2016 The Rise of the Urban in Military Counterinsurgency. University of Gent, Belgium, 20 April.

- 2016 Invited Lecture, Spaces of Bourgeois Gratification, Class, and Race in Dubai. University of Gent, Belgium, 19 April.
- 2016 Invited Paper, The Urban Turn in U.S. Counterinsurgency: Beyond the Critique of Orientalism. The Entrepreneur and The Broker Workshop, CETREN, Georg-August-Universität, Göttingen, Germany, Jan. 13 – 16.
- 2015 Discussant, Flexible Militaries, Adaptive Soldiers, Panel, American Anthropological Association, Denver, November.
- 2015 Panel Paper, The Spatial Politics of Vitality in Dubai, Panel Paper, American Anthropological Association, Denver, November.
- 2015 Panel Paper, The Politics of Comfort in the Urban Arab Gulf, Panel Paper, Middle East Studies Association, Denver, November.
- 2015 Panel Paper, The New Urban Counterinsurgency Theory, Panel Paper, American Studies Association, Toronto, October.
- 2015 Arab Gulf Urbanism: The Semantic Field of a Category of Space. Invited Panel Paper, Middle East Studies Center, University of Chicago, April 11.
- 2015 Capitalizing Urbanism: The New Urban Counterinsurgency and its “Laws of Motion,” Invited Lecture, College of William and Mary, April 1.
- 2014 Invited Panel Paper, Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation. November 2014.

COURSES TAUGHT AT PACIFIC

ANTH 053: Introduction to Cultural Anthropology
 ANTH 132/193: Modern Middle East
 ANTH 193A: Urban Anthropology
 CORE 02: Feminist & Queer Critiques of United States (“American”) Exceptionalism
 CORE 02: Social and Economic Justice Struggles from Below
 ETHN 011: Introduction to Ethnic Studies
 INTL 81: Perspectives on World History (solo and with Professors A. Giraldez, A. Richard, and S. Sample)
 INTL 113: World Geography for the Social Sciences
 INTL 151: Cross-Cultural Training 1
 INTL 185: SIS Senior Capstone
 PACS 001: Pacific Seminar 1
 PACS 003: Pacific Seminar 3
 SOCI 061: Urban Society
 Independent Studies and Theses: through F25, I have mentored ten IS and thesis projects. Please dm me for more details.

SERVICE TO THE U. OF THE PACIFIC & STOCKTON COMMUNITY; U. PACIFIC AWARDS

F 24 – present Advisor, UOP Arab Student Union
 F 24 – present Advisor, UOP Calligraphy Club
 F 23 – present Academic Council

F 23 – S24	Academic Council Library Subcommittee
F 23 – S24	Academic Council Executive Board
S 2023	Academic Council (filling in for Professor Bill Herrin)
F 2022	Professor Daniel O'Neill Promotion to Full Professor Committee (responsible for analyzing data and writing summary and analysis of teaching and advising)
S 2022	Moderator, Pacific Undergraduate Research & Creativity Conference (PURCC)
F 2020 –	University Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee (UCDEI)
F 2019 – S22	Academic Council
F 19 – S 23	Director, University of the Pacific Ethnic Studies Program
F 2018 – S19	International Programs and Services Committee
2017 – 18	Outstanding Teacher of the Year, Chosen by SIS Students
Spring '18	College of the Pacific Council
2016 – 2018	Academic Affairs Committee on Undergraduate Studies
2015 – 2016	Faculty Diploma & Hooding Ceremony Speaker, Chosen by SIS Seniors
2015 – F16	Academic Council, University of the Pacific
2015 (S/F)	SIS P&T Committee, Professor Yong Kim (Prof. Susan Sample, Chair)
2013 (Fall)	Third Year Review Committee, Professor Niru Yadav (Prof. Bill Herrin, Chair)
2013 – 2016	Ethnic Studies Committee
2013 (Fall)	Lecture on History of 20 th Century Iran, OLLI Program
Fall 2013 – Spring 2016	Chair, Univ. of the Pacific Diversity Curriculum Committee
2012 – 2015	Univ. of the Pacific Diversity Curriculum Committee
2011 – 2012	Outstanding Teacher of the Year, Chosen by SIS Students
2011 – 2012	Search Committee, SIS Dean Search
2010 – 2013	Academic Council, University of the Pacific
2011	Presentation on Islam to Stockton retirees, DeRosa Center, UOP, April 15
2011	Panelist, "Egypt: The Whole Story" Event organized by Muslim Student Association, Feb. 15
2011	Teach-in, Egyptian Revolution (with Prof. A. Giraldez), Feb. 10
2011	Interviews with <i>Stockton Record</i> and <i>Modesto Bee</i> on Middle East current events/Arab Spring
2010	Fulbright Applications Interviewer, University of the Pacific Fellowships (assisted Dr. Susan Weiner), Fall Semester.
2010	Short Invited Talk on Stereotypes of Muslims and Islamophobia, University of the Pacific "Answering the 9/11 Call: Be the Change 2010," Sept. 12.
2010	Invited Presentation, "What is Arab Culture?" University of the Pacific International Club, Spring Semester.
2009—10	Faculty Research Committee, University of the Pacific

OTHER TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2009	Trinity College, International Studies, The Making of Modern Dubai
2008	Trinity College, Dept of Anthropology, Introduction to Urban Anthropology
2008	University of Iowa, International Studies, Cities of the Global South
2007	University of Iowa, International Studies, Modern Arab Narratives of Identity
2006-07	University of Iowa, International Studies, The Middle East Today: A Social Inquiry
2006	Harvard University, Department of Anthropology, Undergraduate Thesis Reader
2005	Harvard University, Core Program, Food and Culture, Head Teaching Fellow
2004	Harvard University, Core Program, Modern Arabic Narratives: Self, Society, and Culture (Teaching Fellow)
2002-03	Harvard University, Department of Anthropology, Food and Culture (Teaching Fellow)

- 2002 Harvard University, Core Program, Understanding Islam and Contemporary Muslim Societies
(Teaching Fellow)
- 2002 Harvard University, Core Program, Religion and Modernization: Cultural
Revolutions and Secularism (Teaching Fellow)

SERVICE TO DISCIPLINE (EDITORIAL BOARD, EXTERNAL READER/REFeree ACTIVITIES, ETC.)

Dissertation and Thesis Committees

PhD Dissertation Committee member, Jasmine Ali, Department of Geography, McGill University, 2021 -

External Reader, Beth Derderian, PhD Dissertation, Department of Anthropology, Northwestern University,
2019

Board Memberships

City & Society, Editorial Board

Dialectical Anthropology, Advisory Board

Disciplinary Association Service:

Councilor, Society for Urban, National, and Transnational/Global Anthropology (SUNTA), 2016 – 2019: work
included service on undergraduate student paper prize, graduate student paper prize, & program
committee

Chair, Dissertation Award Committee, Association for Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies (AGAPS), Fall
2022: chair duties included reading PhD dissertations, organizing committee meetings and
discussions, writing award statement and presenting it at annual meeting of the Middle East
Studies Association of North America (MESA)

Journal Articles Refereed for:

Afrika Focus
American Ethnologist
Antipode
Architectural Theory Review
Citizenship Studies
City
City & Society
History Compass
Human Organization
International Journal of Middle East Studies
International Journal of Urban and Regional Research

Book Manuscripts Refereed for:

Berghahn Books (Summer 2013)
Northwestern University Press (Spring 2021)
University of Minnesota Press (Summer 2011, Spring 2014, Spring 2015)
Wiley-Blackwell Press (Summer 2011)

Other Referee and External Reviewer Activities

New Project Proposal, Research Foundation Flanders (FWO), 2013.

Third International Conference of the Center for the Study of Architecture and Urbanism in the Arab Region (CSAAR), Dhahran, Saudi Arabia/Sharjah, UAE, 2007 – 2008

I have served as a tenure and promotion external reference for several colleagues outside Pacific

BOOK REVIEWS

- 2021 *Ungovernable Life: Mandatory Medicine and Statecraft in Iraq* by Omar Dewachi.
Anthropology of the Middle East, Spring 2021.
- 2014 *Impossible Citizens: Dubai's Indian Diaspora* by Neha Vora. *Anthropos*.
- 2014 *A Joint Enterprise: Indian Elites and the Making of British Bombay* by Preeti Chopra.
Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies.
- 2012 *City of Strangers: Gulf Migration and the Indian Community in Bahrain* by Andrew M. Gardner. *American Ethnologist* 39(1): 215 – 216.
- 2009 *Dubai: The Vulnerability of Success* by C.M. Davidson, *Review of Middle East Studies* 43(1):79—81.
- 2009 *Transnational Migration to Israel in Global Comparative Context* by Sarah S. Willen, *Review of Middle East Studies* 43(1):144—146.

MEDIA ACTIVITIES, INTERVIEWS, OP-EDS

Al-Akhbar
Aljazeera
Anthropology News
Associated Press
CBS 13 Sacramento
CKUT Radio, “Caravan,” (Montreal, QC)
Huffington Post
Iowa City Press-Citizen
Jadaliyya
KPFA Radio, “Voices of the Middle East” (Berkeley, CA)
KPFK Radio, “Flip the Script” (Los Angeles, CA)
Modesto (California) Bee
National Public Radio, Austria
PBS Wide Angle (Background research interview, *The Sand Castle*)
Stockton (California) Record
Voice of the Cape, Cape Town, South Africa

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

- 2000 – Present American Anthropological Association
2003 – Present Middle East Studies Association of North America
2024 – Present Society for Applied Anthropology

LANGUAGES

English native fluency

Modern Standard Arabic	comprehension near-fluent, speech and reading intermediate to advanced (B2)
German	comprehension and reading advanced (C1); speech adv.-interm. (B2); writing intermediate (B1)

REFERENCES

Please email me for references.