

A Year of Exceptional Growth

YEAR IN REVIEW 2023–24

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Dean's Reflections

This year was one of growth and progress for Northwestern Qatar as we continued to build on the strong foundation of our vision, mission, and core values. From advancing knowledge and innovation to strengthening global connections, we have made meaningful strides in shaping a future defined by excellence, collaboration, and community.

The Institute for Advanced Study in the Global South (#IAS_NUQ) continues to lead efforts in advancing critical scholarship and amplifying various voices from the Global South. A major milestone was the launch of #IAS_NUQ Press, an academic publishing platform that offers multimodal and multilingual media works, from research briefs to multimedia projects, all accessible in an open repository.

The Institute's Global Undergraduate Fellowship program welcomed its third cohort of student researchers, whose creative projects spanned topics like rural news consumption in Zambia, digital money in Bangladesh, and community-led education in Nepal.

Additionally, through conferences and workshops, including The Global South in an Era of Great Power Competition conference and the Arab Information and Media Studies (AIMS) seminars, the Institute continued to provide a critical platform for research and intellectual exchange.

Our contributions to global conversations, including those on artificial intelligence, reflect our commitment to addressing complex challenges with rigor and creativity. The new Artificial Intelligence Initiative (AI²) builds on Northwestern Qatar's strengths to explore AI's potential and challenges through research, teaching, and professional development. By leveraging our unique location and interdisciplinary expertise, this initiative positions us to contribute to humanity's understanding of AI in ways that are both impactful and globally relevant.

The expanding reach of the Media Majlis Museum has strengthened our ability to engage audiences and amplify stories from Qatar and beyond. The museum's groundbreaking exhibition MetaWhat? has become its most-attended showcase to date, drawing over 14,000 visitors with its exploration of the metaverse through interactive installations, digital avatars, and augmented reality. The exhibition, paired with a virtual reality film, premiered at the Venice International Film Festival and highlighted the museum's role as a leader in using innovative technologies to spark meaningful dialogue on contemporary issues.



A decade of teaching media and politics coupled with our involvement in national research initiatives has deepened our interdisciplinary approach and reinforced the value of collaboration in pushing boundaries. This year, service-based learning and dialogues on environmental sustainability reaffirmed our role in cultivating well-rounded and responsible leaders who are prepared to make a difference.

As you explore this report, you will find a record of achievements that highlight the dedication and vibrancy of our community. Our partnerships, alumni, and innovative initiatives are expanding our impact and positioning us to meet the opportunities and challenges of tomorrow with purpose and confidence.

We are excited about the road ahead and remain committed to building a future rooted in values of excellence, collaboration, community, and sustainability.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marwan".

Marwan M. Kraidy
Dean and CEO
Northwestern Qatar

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Highlights

جامعة نورثويسترن في قطر
Northwestern University in Qatar

This was a year of new beginnings and continued growth.

- ✧ The University welcomed its most selective class to date and graduated a cohort of impactful leaders from the Class of 2024.
- ✧ Northwestern Qatar launches #IAS_NUQ Press, a multimodal, multilingual academic publisher amplifying open-access research by IAS fellows and programs.
- ✧ A new flagship initiative on artificial intelligence (AI) marked an important evolution of institutional vision, while conversations with distinguished scholars deepened understanding critically important issues.
- ✧ The appointment of seasoned professionals brought new voices and talents to the University's senior leadership.





#IAS_NUQ Press Launches to Amplify Global South Scholarship

Northwestern Qatar launched #IAS_NUQ Press, an academic publisher focused on voices and stories from the Global South and the latest extension of #IAS_NUQ. Dean Kraidy praised it as “a significant milestone” that will ensure global impact and local relevance.

The Press offers diverse multimodal and multilingual media works, such as academic papers, multimedia projects, and research briefs, all accessible in an open repository. It also features scholarship from #IAS_NUQ’s fellows through programs like the AIMS

workshops and the Southern Digitalities conference.

The Press’ first publication, “Developing Critical Security Studies from Doha—A Roundtable,” was developed with the Arab Council for Social Science (ACSS) and includes essays by Northwestern Qatar’s faculty and researchers.

Published in English and Arabic, it draws on the expertise of the Critical Security Studies Hub at #IAS_NUQ to explore security through a Global South lens, incorporating border, migration, legal, youth, and feminist studies. Kraidy remarked, “This is just the beginning and shows our collaborative effort to broaden perspectives.”

Breaking Ground on AI

Dean and CEO Marwan M. Kraidy launched the Artificial Intelligence Initiative (AI²). This new flagship program aims to address AI’s challenges and potentials through impactful research, teaching, and professional development as the technology evolves and reshapes daily life globally.

Kraidy, who referred to AI as “a once-in-a-generation opportunity-challenge,” stressed that the initiative capitalizes on the scholarly, creative, and technical



capabilities of Northwestern Qatar, leveraging its special location in the world to assist humanity in navigating the uncertainties of this uncharted terrain. “AI touches upon every domain represented at Northwestern Qatar, so we have unique contributions to make to humanity’s understanding of AI,” he said, adding that the program represents a critical milestone in fulfilling the University’s mission to harness the power of data analytics and generate pioneering research in areas of global interest and concern.

AI² consists of three components, each reflecting a unique pillar of the values that animate the strategic direction of Northwestern Qatar. Among these is new media and AI, bringing our focus on interdisciplinary education to the fore. The Artificial Intelligence and Media Lab (AIM Lab) gathers faculty members, postdoctoral scholars, and undergraduate researchers to advance research efforts on AI and demonstrate our priority to nurture independent inquiry and academic excellence. Finally, professional development opportunities aimed at staff, ranging from skill development workshops to training exercises, reinforce our commitment to staff growth.

AI² is Kraidy’s second strategic initiative at Northwestern Qatar. The first, the Institute for Advanced Study in the Global South (#IAS_NUQ), has expanded and amplified the University’s research footprint while contributing to Northwestern University’s upward trajectory as one of the world’s leading research universities.

The scholarly productions, collaborations, and public

engagement resulting from AI² are accelerating the ongoing effort to mold the University into a distinctive global multidisciplinary community of evidence-based storytellers focused on the Global South.

Sustainability Takes Center Stage at the Dean’s Global Forum

The latest installment of the Dean’s Global Forum brought Dean Kraidy together with Christoph Lindner, professor of urban studies and dean of The Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment at the University College London. The discussion addressed the increasing importance of sustainability, a central commitment at Northwestern Qatar, which Lindner described as “the meeting place of two really critical things: the environment and inequality.” Echoing the University’s dedication to teamwork, the talk also emphasized the need for collaboration as interdisciplinarity becomes increasingly imperative to tackling issues like sustainability and making the world more socially and environmentally balanced.

Welcoming the Class of 2027

Northwestern Qatar’s 16th convocation ceremony inducted the newest cohort of students, the Class of 2027, marking the beginning of their undergraduate journey. Comprised of 116 students—“chosen from a remarkable pool of more than 1,300 applicants, the largest in the school’s history,” Kraidy said in his opening speech—the incoming students represent 25 nationalities and embody Northwestern Qatar’s commitment to the highest standards of excellence.

VISION



Stimulate intellectually invigorating and provocative discussions about the implications of AI technologies and data science for the future of communication/media/journalism education, liberal arts education, and global AI research and development (R&D) communities.



Foster intellectual discussions to examine the impact of AI technologies and data science on digital platform design, digital media content production, journalism, strategic communication, creative writing, and creative media industries.



Invite interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary conversations about Humane AI, Socially Responsible AI, ethical data science, and sustainable AI-empowered future.

MISSION



Cultivate a dynamic and collaborative ecosystem for R&D on Humane AI, Socially Responsible AI, ethical data science, human-centered metaverse, and sustainable AI-empowered future.



Conduct impactful research on AI-empowered media, AI-empowered metaverse, and AI-VR convergence.



Advance human-AI interaction theory and practice.

Highlights

Among the new students, who boast exceptional academic achievements and represent a dynamic set of talents and aspirations, is Dana Ziani, an aspiring health communication specialist and one of the Qatari students who make up nearly 60 percent of the incoming class. A former member of the Qatari Youth Delegate to the UN, Ziani joined Northwestern Qatar to merge her passions for science and media and contribute to enhancing the levels of health awareness in her community.

Dogyu Lee, the founder of a global magazine in South Korea and an avid writer and violinist, aims to use his education at Northwestern Qatar and experience in Malaysia to tackle social issues in his homeland and amplify Global South voices.

The Class of 2027 also includes Luka Grondskyte, an international student from Lithuania motivated by her firsthand experience with the struggles of post-Soviet countries in reclaiming their identity and preserving their cultural heritage. In her undergraduate career, Grondskyte aims to hone her research skills while leveraging Northwestern Qatar's global education to guide her passion for understanding the dynamics of societal transformations worldwide.



"These exceptional students possess the passion, curiosity, and drive that will make a difference in the media and communication landscape," Kraidy stressed. "We are confident that they will positively contribute to our community and make an impact on the world around them." For his part, Sumitrajit (Sumit) Dhar, associate provost for faculty at Northwestern University and this year's convocation speaker, told the students: "May your imagination and curiosity fly high like the falcon."

The students also heard from Arham Khalid, president of Northwestern Qatar's Student Government, who told them: "Seize every opportunity you get... and if

you don't find the opportunity you want, create one." With this new addition of globally conscious storytellers, critical thinkers, and ethical communicators, Northwestern Qatar renews its commitment to nurturing exceptional individuals, fostering their unique talents, and preparing them to become leaders in their respective fields.

Class of 2024 Graduates: Ready to Lead

Northwestern Qatar celebrated the Class of 2024 at the annual graduation ceremony, which highlighted their accomplishments and offered advice for the future. The graduates, consisting of 126 students from 31 countries, included the school's first Schwarzman Scholar, two Pulitzer Fellows, and an advocate for youth participation in the United Nations' sustainability efforts alongside various leaders, media makers, and emerging scholars.

Dean Kraidy, award-winning counselor Hala Kazim, and student speaker Haya Al Kuwari addressed the accomplished class, each emphasizing a unique element crucial for success after graduation.

Focusing on the role of the ethical communicator during times of crisis and insecurity, Dean Kraidy urged graduates to "look beyond differences, geography, and existing ways of knowing" and to leverage the global education they received at

Northwestern Qatar in the arts, media, and sciences "to bring change and improve the world we live in," reminding them of the resilience, adaptability, and relentless pursuit of excellence they have demonstrated in the face of a global pandemic and ongoing political instability in the region and the world.

In her speech, Kazim underscored the surprising benefits of humility in the pursuit of passion, ambition, and success. "If you are humble, you open the doors to life," she told the graduates, imploring them also to "be open to learning" and to lead with curiosity and open-mindedness as they transition from classroom to industry and embark on the next chapter of their lives.

Class speaker Haya Al Kuwari emphasized to her peers the importance of embracing the uncertainties of the future. "As we celebrate the end of this journey, a new beginning awaits us," she said. "A beginning I encourage you to embrace and welcome with an open heart because, despite our circumstances, our fears, or our doubts, our stories are written within us."

With their graduation, members of the Class of 2027 join Northwestern's global network of more than 250,000 alums. Their journey is a testament to the transformative power of global education and the enduring legacy of Northwestern Qatar.





A Decade of Impact: The Media and Politics Program

Northwestern Qatar celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Media and Politics program, established in 2014 in collaboration with Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q). The program, which graduated its largest cohort of 21 students this year, combines the two schools' expertise in media and communication and international politics, upholding Northwestern Qatar's commitment to cross-disciplinary collaboration to collectively elevate others. Since its inception, a total of 148 students have completed the program—62 from Northwestern Qatar and 86 from GU-Q.

New Leadership Appointments to Elevate Learning and Engagement

S. Venus Jin, professor in residence, was appointed associate dean for education, and Nisar Keshvani joined Northwestern Qatar as assistant dean for communication and public affairs. In their new roles, Jin, who also served as the director of the Communication Program from 2022 until 2023, oversees curricular and instructional matters, while Keshvani spearheads internal and external communications, aligning them with the University's mission and values.

Keshvani joins from the National University of Singapore (NUS) with three decades of experience in media and public affairs. He has won multiple public relations and communications awards and was recently honored as Public Relations and Communication Leader of the Year at the 2024 Public Relations and Communications Association (PRCA)

Asia Pacific Awards. Both have also joined the Dean's Senior Leadership Council, along with other leaders of the community, to provide guidance to the Dean on strategic and administrative matters.

Cramerotti to Lead the Media Majlis Museum into New Era

Alfredo Cramerotti was appointed director of the Media Majlis Museum. A cultural entrepreneur, curator, writer, broadcaster, and publisher, Cramerotti joins Northwestern Qatar from Mostyn, a public contemporary art gallery in Wales, and has previously curated major exhibitions for biennials and institutions at some of the world's largest artistic gatherings. In his new role, Cramerotti oversees the Media Majlis' conceptual and operational aspects, advancing its position within the cultural landscape of Qatar and the Arab region. Cramerotti holds a doctorate in communication design and photography and has published over 200 texts on art, media, and curatorial practice.

MetaWhat?: A Platform for Community Dialogue on the Metaverse

The Media Majlis at Northwestern Qatar made headlines with MetaWhat?, Qatar's first major metaverse-themed exhibition. Running from August 2023 to May 2024, the exhibition drew over 14,000 visitors, making it the museum's most-attended showcase. Through five interactive installations and cutting-edge displays, including digital avatars, holograms, and augmented reality (AR), MetaWhat? explored the metaverse's implications, opportunities, and challenges.

Curated by Jack Thomas Taylor, curator of art, media and technology at the Media Majlis Museum, the exhibition featured nostalgic collectibles, local and international artworks, and the Gaia installation by British artist Luke Jerram. A key highlight was a Media Majlis-produced virtual reality (VR) film, *Remember this place: 3120'46"N 3446'46"E*, which premiered at the Venice International Film Festival.

Dean Kraidy hailed the exhibition as a pioneering effort to decode the metaverse for a global audience, offering perspectives from the Global South. Alongside the exhibition, MetaWhat? hosted panel discussions and activations.

Meanwhile, a special edition of the museum's edited publication, *Voices and Conversations*, shared knowledge by exploring key terms related to the metaverse. It examined how it can be harnessed as a power for good from the perspectives of regional players in the digital landscape, featuring an A to Z of common words and phrases, as well as a foreword from Dean Kraidy, an introduction by the curator, interviews, a poem, and an end word by Assistant Professor Heather Jaber.

About the Media Majlis Museum

The Media Majlis at Northwestern Qatar exemplifies the University's vision for holistic education by advancing cultural exchange through exhibitions that blend scholarship, art, and media while connecting the art and local communities with the University's academic mission.

In its role, the museum further amplifies Northwestern Qatar's impact by promoting community engagement with journalism and media through engaging exhibitions and programs. By exploring various themes and advancing critical dialogue, the museum empowers communities with evidence-based storytelling and encourages discussions on pressing global and regional issues, enriching our educational mission.



Exploring Tradition and Community Through "Anatomy of a Majlis"

The Media Majlis at Northwestern Qatar took center stage at the inaugural Doha Design, Qatar's landmark biennial dedicated to creative innovation, with an interactive public pavilion—Anatomy of a Majlis. The structure explored the concept of the traditional Arabian majlis, inviting visitors to engage with the space as a living tradition that continues to facilitate community engagement across social, political, and economic spheres. A testament to Northwestern Qatar's principle of community-based storytelling, the structure hosted several activities in the four days of the event, including artwork created by world-renowned photographer and visual artist Marta Lamovsek.



This year, the University bolstered its focus on academic excellence and collaborative research. A major grant advanced national research contributions, while a prestigious fellowship at the Evanston campus reflected our commitment to scholarly exploration. We have increased publications, executive programs, and faculty, boosting our scholarly output and community engagement.

Enriching Academic Offerings

Seven new faculty members joined Northwestern Qatar, bringing “a wealth of experience” across a variety of fields, said Zachary Wright, associate dean for faculty affairs. Dean Kraidy added that their “stellar research and mediamaking will undoubtedly elevate our academic offerings” and enhance the unrivaled education students receive at the University.


The new faculty members represent different backgrounds and skill sets that are poised to expand and bolster Northwestern Qatar’s expertise in core academic areas, from journalism and strategic communication to filmmaking, social sciences, and more.

Mohammed Ibahrine, Scheherazade Safla-Gaffoor, and Zeina Awad joined the Journalism and Strategic Communication Program. A transdisciplinary social scientist by training, Ibahrine’s research examines various topics in marketing communication, including the entrepreneurship ecosystem in the Gulf and the fourth industrial revolution. Safla-Gaffoor, who spent more than two decades in the broadcast and corporate communications industry, focuses on research that aims to empower underrepresented voices, such as the portrayal of women of color in new digital spaces. An international correspondent and news producer, Awad brings to Northwestern Qatar exceptional industry experience developed over 15 years of reporting on top news stories from over 20 countries and in several senior advocacy roles at the United Nations.

7
New faculty

44
Faculty

1:12
Faculty-to-student ratio




18
New courses

6
Minors

Journalism
Residency
placements

+30





Shehram Mokhtar and Nissryne Dib are the latest additions to the Communication Program. A media and television scholar, Mokhtar teaches courses aligned with his scholarly interests in visual culture, critical/cultural theory, transnational media and communication, and gender and sexuality studies. Dib, a filmmaker and Northwestern Qatar alum from the Class of 2015, returns to the school after completing her MFA in film production at the University of California, Los Angeles, where she researched the use of available lighting and the preservation of skin tones in the digital workflow process, among other topics in film.

Joint appointments this year include Rajiv K. Mishra in the Communication and Liberal Arts programs and Matthias Krug in the Communication and Journalism and Strategic Communication programs. Mishra’s teaching and research explore a range of areas related to his interdisciplinary background in computer science, internet, sociology, science policy studies, and science and technology studies (STS), such as large technological systems and infrastructures, digital state and welfare, and alternative science and technology spaces. A writer and former international journalist, Krug has authored on Qatar’s football and sports history, and his teaching explores themes at the intersection of creativity, strategy, communications, and storytelling across digital and publishing spheres.

The new cohort joins a group of faculty and researchers at Northwestern Qatar dedicated to cutting-edge research and contributes with years of research, teaching, and industry experience in their respective fields to the school’s commitment to providing aspiring storytellers with the highest caliber of education and mentorship.

QNRF Grant Supports the Digital Citizenship Project at Northwestern Qatar

Northwestern Qatar Associate Professor Eddy Borges-Rey was selected to lead a research sub-project, the Digital Citizenship Ambassadors, to help individuals in Qatar and across the region improve their digital citizenship skills. The project is part of a major research cluster, *The Future of Digital Citizenship in Qatar: a Social-Technical Framework*, which received a \$4 million grant from the Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF) National Priorities Research Programme. The cluster supports five additional sub-projects covering a wide range of topics in an interdisciplinary approach that reinforces Northwestern Qatar’s core focus on collaborative research for empowering students and community members alike.

Executive Education Program Expands with New Masterclasses

The Executive Education Program at Northwestern Qatar introduced three new masterclasses in Fall 2023 focused on social media strategy, reputation management, and stakeholder communication, which were delivered by faculty members Matthias Krug, Ilhem Allagui, and George Anghelcev. For years, the program has helped equip local professionals with the skills and tools needed for the future of digital media and communication. This year, the new courses offered participants the skills to harness social media's power for business growth, craft an integrated branding strategy to manage brand reputation, and navigate the complexities of stakeholder engagement in modern organizations.

Faculty Expands Global Knowledge with Scholarly Contributions

This year, Northwestern Qatar faculty published six books on a variety of topics such as technology, politics, journalism, and TV dramas, enhancing the University's research impact and its role in global knowledge creation.

Eddy Borges-Rey, who specializes in digital journalism and emerging media, is the co-editor of *The Routledge Companion to Journalism in the Global South*. Responding to growing calls to decenter and decolonize journalism, the book offers 42 chapters from leading scholars across the Global South that challenge the historical imposition of Western

journalism standards while also exploring alternative viewpoints and methodologies rooted in the customs, traditions, and cultures of the Global South.

Another book, *Electrifying Indonesia: Technology and Social Justice in National Development*, was published by Anto Mohsin, an STS scholar. The contribution, which also received the First Book Subvention Award from the Association for Asian Studies (AAS), highlights the entanglement of politics and technology in Indonesia's postcolonial development efforts, showing how the state leveraged electrification as a central part of its nation-building project.

The groundbreaking global success of Turkish drama serials is the subject of the latest book by Miriam Berg, who researches media consumption patterns of Arab, refugee, and diasporic communities. Titled *Turkish Drama Serials: The Importance and Influence of a Globally Popular Television Phenomenon*, the book investigates the reasons for the allure of Turkish dramas to audiences in three regions, while analyzing their role as instruments of cultural diplomacy and soft power that have influenced viewers' perceptions of Turkey, its people, and its culture.

Joe F. Khalil is the co-author of *The Digital Double Bind: Change and Stasis in the Middle East*, which builds on his research and teaching interests in understanding changes and continuities in the media. The new book challenges conventional narratives of digital transformation in the Middle East through a



more nuanced understanding of the region's digital trajectory that emphasizes both its promises and tensions while also offering frameworks and road maps for more critical engagements with media and technology development in the Global South.

A comprehensive exploration of the nature of creative writing practice was published under the title *The Scholarship of Creative Writing Practice: Beyond Craft, Pedagogy, and the Academy* Co-edited Sam Meekings, a scholar, internationally renowned poet, and novelist. The first of its kind, the book departs from a predominant focus on pedagogical methods to offer a perspective on writing life as experienced by international writers and academics, including Meekings, who contributes a chapter on the relationship between writing and mental health.

Sami Hermez, associate professor of anthropology and director of the Liberal Arts Program, wrote *My Brother, My Land: A Story from Palestine*. This narrative ethnography explores a Palestinian family's life under Israeli occupation, highlighting the ethical dilemmas of armed resistance. Hermez explained that the book is driven by the main character's resilience and his own personal dedication to opposing settler colonialism.

Anto Mohsin Joins Buffett Fellowship for Cross-Institutional Collaboration

Assistant Professor Anto Mohsin has been chosen for the first group of Buffett Faculty Fellows at Northwestern University's Roberta Buffett Institute for Global Affairs. An expert in STS, Mohsin focuses on infrastructure, energy, and the environment in Southeast Asia. As part of the fellowship activities, Mohsin has been actively involved, along with 10 other scholars from seven Northwestern University

schools, in conducting research with fellowship support and assisting the Buffett Institute in developing research and curricular initiatives.

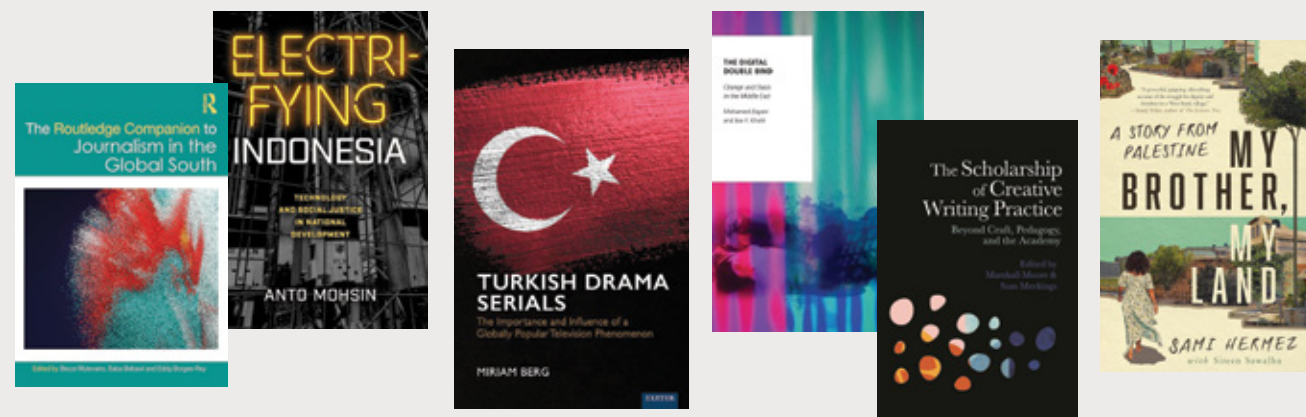
Promoting Understanding with the Hiwar Speaker Series

Several global media specialists examined journalism and geopolitical issues this year during the Hiwar Speaker Series, a community platform at Northwestern Qatar aimed at promoting understanding through conversations with thought leaders and industry experts.

Among the speakers was Dena Takturi, senior presenter and producer at AJ+ and one of the channel's founding members. The talk addressed the flaws of the coverage on Gaza, examining the media narrative construction of Palestinians in the region and globally.

The event also highlighted Takturi's many contributions to this area, both through her role as host of the docuseries *Direct From with Dena Takturi*, which has been selected for a Peabody Award and two Edward R. Murrow Awards, as well as through her co-authorship of the memoir *They Called Me A Lioness: A Palestinian Girl's Fight for Freedom*, which chronicles the life of young Palestinian activist Ahed Tamimi. It was published by One World/Penguin Random House in 2022 and awarded a Palestine Book Award.

This year's Hiwar Series speakers also included Lina Attalah, an award-winning journalist who explored the growth of independent journalism in the Arab world amid government crackdowns. She discussed her experience as co-founder and chief editor of *Mada Masr*, an independent news website in Cairo, and the challenges of leading it to prominence in investigative journalism.



Academics

Attalah highlighted issues like the censorship and shutdown of media critical of the state as well as increased restrictions since *Mada Masr*'s launch in 2013 due to its focus on exposing corruption and authoritarianism. Attalah pointed out that the publication now enjoys freedom due to its legacy and reputation for quality journalism over the past decade, which acts as a source of strength, especially in times of danger, despite the challenges it faces.

The series also featured Senior Researcher at Data & Society Ranjit Singh, who discussed the “ordinary ethics of AI,” which refers to the judgments and sensibilities developed by individuals who deal with the daily imperfections of technological systems. Singh challenged the common Global North academic view of AI as a tool designed to prioritize “objective values” and outcomes like fairness and transparency and emphasized understanding AI as shaped by those who confront its shortcomings firsthand.

Singh explained that viewing AI as a tool shapes its regulation by focusing on norms for better design. Conversely, seeing AI through its impact on most people helps identify harms and rationalize fair processes for addressing issues. “We can’t separate our ethics from everyday life,” he said.

Liberal Arts Speaker Series Hosts Book Launch on Palestinians’ Everyday Lives

Author Suzanne Hassan Hammad discussed the intersection of place, meaning, and resistance in the everyday lives of Palestinians in the West Bank in her book debut at the Liberal Arts Program Speaker Series. Hammad’s book *Emplaced Resistance in Occupied Palestine: Stories of a Village, Its People, and Their Land* emphasizes the importance of understanding Palestinian popular resistance as “emplaced”—characterized by a struggle over space, place, and history.



Research

This year, significant announcements and accomplishments have enhanced the University's research capabilities. A new publishing house was established to highlight local perspectives and original research. Additionally, student researchers were chosen to participate in the latest group of the Global Undergraduate Fellowship program. Awards acknowledging student creativity and scholarship reflected the University's dedication to academic excellence.

Sixteen Student Researchers Join #IAS_NUQ Global Undergraduate Fellowship

Sixteen student researchers from Northwestern Qatar joined #IAS_NUQ as part of the third cohort of its Global Undergraduate Fellowship program. With funding and mentorship from the #IAS_NUQ staff and Northwestern Qatar faculty, these fellows embarked on research and creative projects focused on evidence-based storytelling about the Global South. Their projects cover diverse topics such as rural news consumption in Zambia, digital money in Bangladesh, TikTok use in Pakistani beauty salons, and community-led education in Nepal.

Global Undergraduate Fellowship Second Cohort Wraps Up with Showcase of Diverse Projects

Fifteen student researchers showcased their Global Undergraduate Fellowship projects at #IAS_NUQ. The Fellowship supports original research on the Global South in various formats, including research papers and documentary films. These works are further published by #IAS_NUQ Press and presented annually to the Northwestern Qatar community. This year, the presentations covered cultural, economic, and social topics in Africa, Latin America, and South Asia.

Unpacking Global Power Competition

#IAS_NUQ, in collaboration with the Security in Context (SIC) network, explored global power competition and its effects on the Global South at the 2023 conference, The Global South in an Era of Great Power Competition. Part of the AIMS project and organized by Sami Hermez, associate professor and director of the Liberal Arts Program, the event gathered global scholars to discuss the emerging world order, security politics, militarism, and geopolitics.

Recognizing Creative Works

Nine student projects were recognized for their excellence in research, journalism, and media at Northwestern Qatar's 11th Media and Research Awards. The awards celebrate academic and creative achievements by inviting students to submit work in nine categories judged by industry professionals. The 2024 edition added two new categories—sound and interactive media and animation—and attracted a record 150 submissions in fields like creative writing, documentary, moving images, journalistic writing, narrative fiction, and research.

4
Monographs

18
Book chapters

5
Edited volumes

28
Journal articles

16
Grants and fellowships

Creative scholarship
5

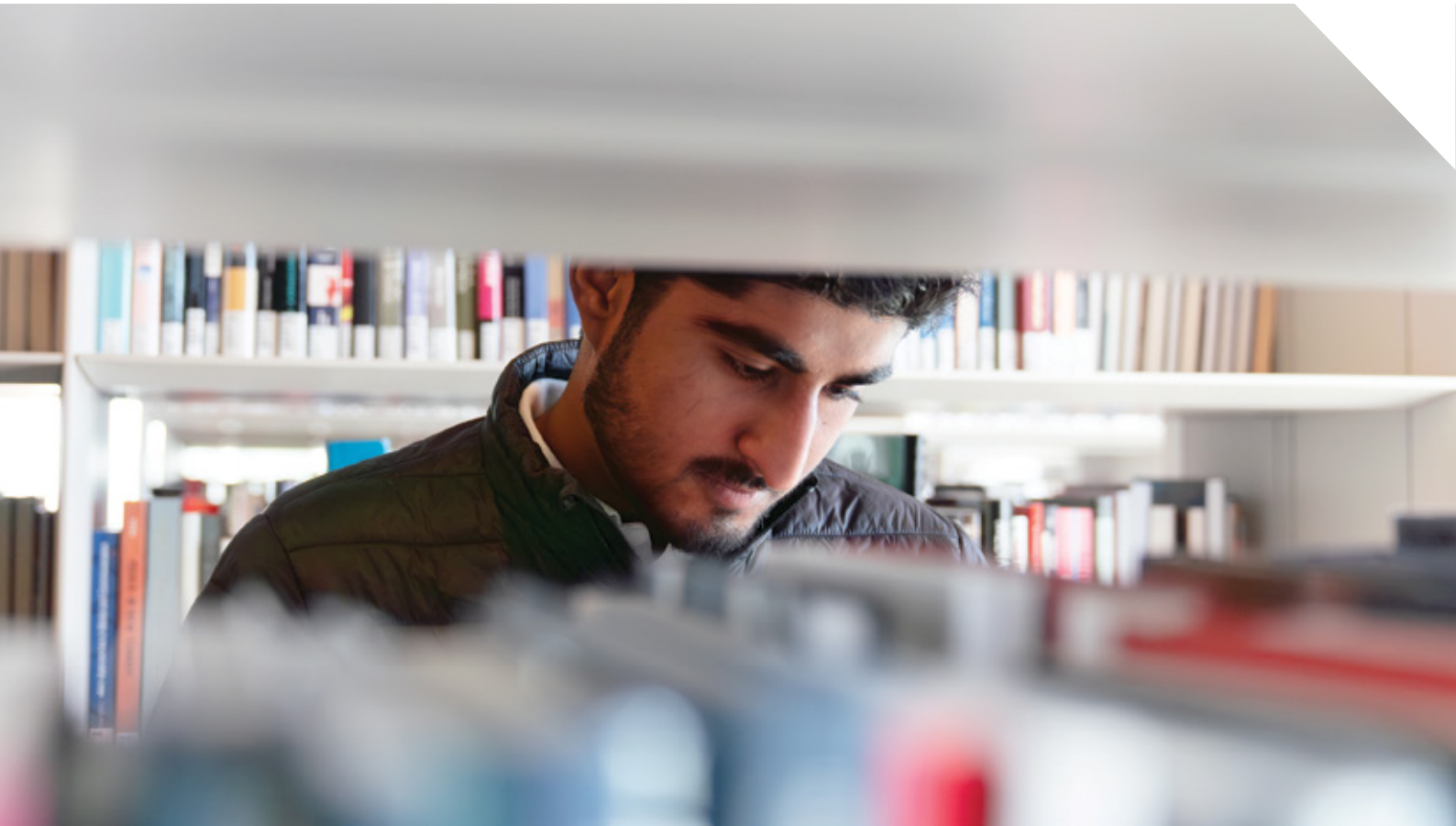


8
Awards

15
Journalistic writing and public scholarship

Conference papers and scholarly talks

74



AIMS Seminars Address Press Issues in the Global South

Media specialists, including those from Northwestern Qatar, discussed various overlooked issues impacting the Global South during the AIMS Virtual Seminar Series.

Heather Jaber, an assistant professor at Northwestern Qatar, gave a talk titled “Recoding the National: A Digital Media Analytic for the Global South.” She explored how popular media in the Global South contests national identities, focusing on the Egyptian TV drama *Awalem Khafeya* (“Hidden Worlds”). Jaber examined how such shows reframe real-world scandals to influence audiences’ emotions and reinforce national sovereignty during crises and in a growing global media market.

In another session, **Leila Tayeb, assistant professor at Northwestern Qatar**, discussed Digital Intimacy and Violence in Contemporary Libya. She highlighted how post-2011 civil war Libya relies heavily on digital communication to keep families connected. This digital reliance also offers young people new ways to form connections and intimacy, especially given militia restrictions on mixed-gender spaces and women’s mobility, showcasing a society influenced by collective trauma.

The series also included a talk by **Nadia Yaqub, chair of the Department of Asian Studies at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**. She discussed editing *Gaza on Screen*, a book with contributions from scholars and filmmakers connected to Gaza. Inspired by her curation of Columbia University’s 2019 Gaza on Screen film festival, Yaqub emphasized the importance of screens in linking Gaza to the world and fostering hope for a different future.



Omar Al-Ghazzi, associate professor in the Department of Media and Communications at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), also joined the virtual stage as a featured speaker in a talk titled “The Time of the State: Arrested Futurity in Lebanese Media.” Challenging a predominant focus on understanding Lebanon through spatial considerations, such as “Where is the state?” Al-Ghazzi proposed locating state narratives within mediated representations of time, including TV advertising and commercially produced media, where ruling oligarchs perpetuate a historical and colonial vision of Lebanese exceptionalism and resilience.

Sarah El-Richani, assistant professor of mass communications at the American University in Cairo discussed digital violence against women journalists in a seminar this year. She pointed out that Lebanon is especially vulnerable to such tactics, including intimidation, shaming, and discrediting by patriarchal systems. The talk also highlighted the resilience and strategies these women use to combat harassment.

The AIMS project, which includes this seminar series, is supported by a \$350,000 grant from Carnegie Corporation of New York to Northwestern Qatar, awarded in 2023. The grant aims to advance AIMS and support global knowledge dissemination.



With this backing, the project is focused on making the field more interdisciplinary, multilingual, collaborative, and research-based while also being relevant to policy. Additionally, it strengthens connections between arabophone, anglophone, and francophone Arab scholars and integrates their work into transnational knowledge networks based in the Global South.

The project leadership also draws on the expertise of Northwestern Qatar faculty and researchers. In this vein, Sami Hermez is spearheading a collaborative research initiative between AIMS and SIC titled Global South Insecurity in an Era of Great Power Competition while also coordinating the Qatar hub of the Critical Security Studies network.

Student Experience



Ishmael Bonsu is the first student from Northwestern Qatar to be selected for the Schwarzman Scholars program. Engagement with AI inspired a student-designed tech platform. Students continued to cover underreported issues with new Pulitzer Center Reporting Fellowships. More students and alumni filmmakers were recognized and awarded by the Doha Film Institute (DFI). Alumni continued to amplify their impact as they contributed to international media coverage of regional events.

Ishmael Bonsu Selected for Prestigious Schwarzman Scholars Program

Northwestern Qatar student Ishmael Bonsu was chosen for the ninth cohort of Schwarzman Scholars, one of the top graduate fellowship programs worldwide. The award offers fully funded scholarships for studying global affairs at Schwarzman College at Tsinghua University in Beijing. Bonsu was selected from over 4,000 applicants. His research focuses on China’s data collection efforts and its impact on migration policy. This achievement reflects the high academic standards at Northwestern Qatar, which also celebrated its first Rhodes Scholar in 2023.

Abenezer Bekele Develops AI-Based Job Aggregator for Student Loan Relief


Northwestern Qatar student Abenezer Bekele designed and developed an AI-based job aggregator, Loan Relief, to help fellow students across the Qatar Foundation (QF) match with and apply for relevant opportunities to repay their student loans. Leveraging advanced AI algorithms, Bekele’s online platform works by aggregating job listings

475
Total number
of students

51
Countries
represented

55%
International
students

Student clubs
35+

 720 Alumni

Job placement rate 83%

60+ Student
internships

in companies approved by QF as part of its list of organizations that students can work for after graduation to repay their QF-received financial aid in a unique loan repayment method. An international student from Ethiopia, Bekele also founded the school’s first data science club, harnessing the technological possibilities of a world-class education in media and communication.

Studio 20Q’s 10th Premiere Anniversary Celebrates Students’ Cinematic Talent

Seven Northwestern Qatar student films were presented at Studio 20Q’s Premiere 2024, which was attended by over 300 guests and featured projects on social, cultural, and political issues in the Global South. Studio 20Q is a student-run film club that annually supports Northwestern Qatar students and alumni with grants to create films, which are showcased at a spring red-carpet gala.

This year’s 10th-anniversary premiere included the first short film co-produced by students from Northwestern Qatar and VCUarts Qatar’s Film and Design minor program.

Student Experience

The seven films showcased at Studio 20Q Premiere 2024 included:

- “Muntazir,” which documents the experience of young girls left behind by their migrant fathers. Produced by Farina Amir ’22 and Moom Thahinah ’22.
- “K Khais?,” which depicts the struggles of overseas workers in maintaining their livelihood while battling illness. Produced by Paribesh Sitoula ’23 and Samip Khulal ’24.
- “Lehrein,” which follows the journey of overcoming trauma through water therapy. Produced by Fatima Romzan, Fatima Dauleh ’22, and Noora Al Henzab (Film and Design minor).
- “Bint Al-Sayyad,” which explores a post-apocalyptic Arab village where kindness is outlawed. Produced by Yazid Taki ’24, Khalifa Al-Kuwari ’24, Ahmad Al-Mushaddani, and Karam Sleiman ’24.
- “Asliyat,” which tackles the challenges of language barriers for migrant workers. Produced by Abdullah Imran ’23 and Mohammed Al-Khulaifi ’23.
- “Ghar,” which showcases the plight of abandoned women in their quest for shelter. Produced by Farhia Ahmed ’24 and Noor Ul Ain ’24.
- “Musafir,” which highlights the emotional toll of entrenched misogyny for young women in Pakistan. Produced by Neeha Rashid ’23 and Nadia Al Hinai ’23.

Growth in International Reporting

Northwestern Qatar journalism students Mishaal Hasan Shirazi and Sarah Shamim won the 2023 Pulitzer Center Reporting Fellowship. The team reported on climate change’s impact on minority religious groups and marginalized working-class families in Pakistan, creating a documentary and an interactive piece to highlight policy and development issues. Since 2006, Northwestern Qatar’s partnership with the Pulitzer Center has awarded students several grants to pursue international reporting on underreported topics.



TEDxNorthwesternUQatar Explores Women’s Empowerment in Conference

TEDxNorthwesternUQatar brought the spirit of TED’s mission of “ideas worth spreading” to campus through powerful talks on women’s empowerment in its 2023 conference, Two Steps Forward. The event gathered students with speakers from across Education City universities to discuss women in education, entrepreneurship, and politics, as well as ideas to build a more equitable future for all. TEDxNorthwesternUQatar, an independently organized TEDx conference held annually at Northwestern Qatar, emerges from TED, a global platform celebrating the power of ideas through talks, conferences, and various projects.



SLE: Students Build, Connect, and Serve in Cambodia

Students visited Cambodia this year in a transformative journey rooted in personal development and community service as part of the 2023 Service Learning Experience (SLE) program. Participants like Fatema Janahi built eco bungalow structures in Khnar Po village and engaged in other activities aimed at building resilience, compassion, and a deeper connection to the world. Each year, the SLE program provides students with immersive, hands-on educational opportunities for tackling real-world development challenges in communities in need of support.



Northwestern Qatar Talents Shine at DFI’s MIQ and Qumra Programs

Students and alumni showcased their films at DFI’s Made in Qatar (MIQ) and Qumra programs. The 10th MIQ edition highlighted six films by alumni, with Awad Hashim Karrar earning a Special Jury Mention and Karim Emara winning Best Film. At Qumra, Mayar Hamdan, Latifa Al Darwish, Amal Al-Muftah, and Hamad AlFayhani presented their upcoming projects, amplifying local voices in cinema.

Students Explore Regional Media Landscape in GME

Students visited regional media sites as part of the 2023 Global Media Experience (GME) program. The tour included prominent media corporations like Al Arabiya, Arab News, and MBC, where students

engaged with experts to learn more about the state of the industry. Organized as part of Student Experience’s career services, GME helps students network and improve employability while exploring the regional job market.

News from the Frontlines

This year, alumni reported on major Global South events. Alumni like Mohammed Eltayeb ’20, Asmahan Qarjouli ’20, Salwa Sadek ’20, and Al Anoud Al-Aqeedi ’23 covered crucial incidents, from Morocco’s earthquake and Libya’s floods to the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan and the Gaza conflict. Their work provided detailed accounts of these events and highlighted their impact on affected communities.

Global Impact

This year, the University expanded its global reach by participating in numerous international conferences, highlighting research on Global South scholarship, technology’s future, Middle East studies, and interdisciplinary and decolonial media approaches. An esteemed industry award also acknowledged the University’s groundbreaking communication team globally.

Leading Scholarly Engagement at Web Summit Qatar 2024

The Northwestern Qatar community joined thousands of entrepreneurs, investors, and organizations to discuss and shape the future of technology at Web Summit Qatar 2024, the world’s premier technology conference, as part of a new partnership. Faculty hosted special sessions as part of the partnership, including a masterclass on the transformative

potential of AI in media, led by Venus Jin, and a presentation by Spencer Striker, associate professor in residence, on his award-winning digital learning series History of Adventures. The collaboration is one of several institutional partnerships with Northwestern Qatar that leverage its expertise and resources to enable breakthroughs that benefit Qatar and the rest of the world.

Northwestern Qatar Leads Global South Discussions at ICA Conference

Northwestern Qatar led scholarly engagement on the Global South at the 74th annual conference of the International Communication Association (ICA), which convened more than 4,000 scholars. Ten faculty and researchers affiliated with #IAS_NUQ were featured at the conference, including two student researchers, contributing to a total of 13 sessions and securing 17 individual slots with their selected works. The delegation, which also organized a panel and two preconferences, presented on topics related to the conference theme—Communication and Global Human Rights—and particularly to the Global South’s politics and media histories.



Brand reach
in impressions

6.2b

59%
Share of voice

Earned media
+2.5k

Media reach
151
Countries and territories

#IAS_NUQ Scholars Contribute to Global Media Conversations at IAMCR

#IAS_NUQ explored interdisciplinary methods in mediated communication at the 2024 International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) conference. The event, hosted by a coalition of seven New Zealand universities, brought together over 2,800 academics from 100 countries under the

theme Weaving People Together: Communicative Projects of Decolonizing, Engaging, and Listening. The Northwestern Qatar team, including researchers, postdoctoral scholars, and Global Undergraduate Fellows from #IAS_NUQ, showcased evidence-based studies on Algeria, Guinea, Nepal, and Rwanda, covering a variety of disciplines, methodologies, and regions.

Amplifying Middle East Scholarship at MESA Conference

Northwestern Qatar scholars showcased their scholarship in the field of Middle East studies at the 57th annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association (MESA), one of the world’s largest gatherings for Middle East studies scholarship and research. Participating faculty, students, and alumni presented on a variety of issues pertinent to the Middle East, such as the region’s adaptation to the digital era, media representations of the 2011 Egyptian uprising, and Japanese digital citizen diplomacy in Turkey.

Northwestern Qatar

Mission

Northwestern University in Qatar is a multidisciplinary community of evidence-based storytellers focused on the Global South. Driven by our core values of excellence, community, collaboration, and sustainability, we are a distinctive global institution that delivers an exceptional education in media arts, sciences, and crafts. Positioned at the forefront of knowledge production and digital innovation, we amplify Northwestern University's global impact in research, teaching, and service through our partnership with Qatar Foundation, contributing to Qatar's rise into a knowledge society.

Core Values

Excellence

We are committed to the highest standards, and believe that academic integrity, intellectual rigor, independent inquiry, and free expression catalyze excellence. We strive to expand intellectual, creative, and professional boundaries in pursuit of excellence.

Community

We are committed to the growth of the whole person, and believe that our pluralism, mutual care, rational dialogue, civic engagement, and a global outlook, anchor our identity and belonging. We speak with an authentic voice to all constituents.

Collaboration

We are committed to shared governance, teamwork, and peer-mentoring, through which we build a resilient institution, make decisions at the most appropriate level, resolve challenges, accomplish our mission, and collectively elevate ourselves and others.

Sustainability

We are committed to human, institutional, and environmental sustainability, to the careful stewardship of resources, and to building a forward-looking institution; we believe in maximizing the positive impact of our work on one another, our university, and the earth.



Northwestern

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