



AY 19-20 UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH REPORT

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OFFICE OF UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH
NYU ABU DHABI

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Research at NYU Abu Dhabi is embedded in a student's academic life, and undergraduate students are afforded the opportunity to participate in research projects alongside world-class faculty and researchers throughout the academic year and summer. NYUAD's Office of Undergraduate Research aims to promote and support undergraduate research, scholarship and creative activities across the disciplines, by administering various programs to facilitate this.

This report showcases some of the excellent undergraduate research that has taken place over the summer, as well as during the academic year, and celebrates the accomplishments of NYUAD's undergraduate researchers. Our students have shown their thirst for knowledge and an eagerness to push academic boundaries. Their research and creative works have in-turn led to publications in world-leading journals and presentations at prestigious conferences across the world. During the summer, undergraduate students are able to engage in full-time research, either by working independently on their own research projects, or by assisting faculty with existing projects. This gives students the opportunity to hone their research skills by becoming active investigators, who demonstrate creativity and learn the ability to tackle new and exciting challenges.

The COVID-19 pandemic has produced unprecedented challenges across the globe. Despite the effects of this pandemic and the significant changes it may have caused to our daily lives, NYUAD remained committed to supporting undergraduates to continue their research activities where possible. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the inspiring faculty and research staff at NYUAD and beyond, who have ensured undergraduate research continuity in these challenging times. In some instances, the switch to a virtual setting has involved considerably reframing entire research projects and plans, which previously relied on in-person work. Timelines and goals were adjusted, and individualized work plans were made. This would not have been possible without the support of faculty who have managed online collaborations and have proven their determination and commitment to continue to support students in their growth.

A special thank you and appreciation is extended to the Office of Undergraduate Research Faculty Committee, who advise on the office's programs, guidelines and new initiatives, and this year reviewed in excess of 150 research grant and fellowship applications. The Committee comprises of Andrea Valerio Macciò, Nelida Fuccaro, Olivier Bochet and Pradeep George. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Vice Provost and Associate Vice Chancellor of Global Education and Outreach Carol Brandt, who oversees the development of NYUAD's summer programs of experiential learning, serving more than 500 students in internships and undergraduate research. Finally, I would like to acknowledge and thank Assistant Director of the Office of Undergraduate Research Farhana Goha, for her work over the years in overseeing and developing the programs within the office.

NADA MESSAIKEH

Associate Vice Provost, Research Administration and Financial Planning



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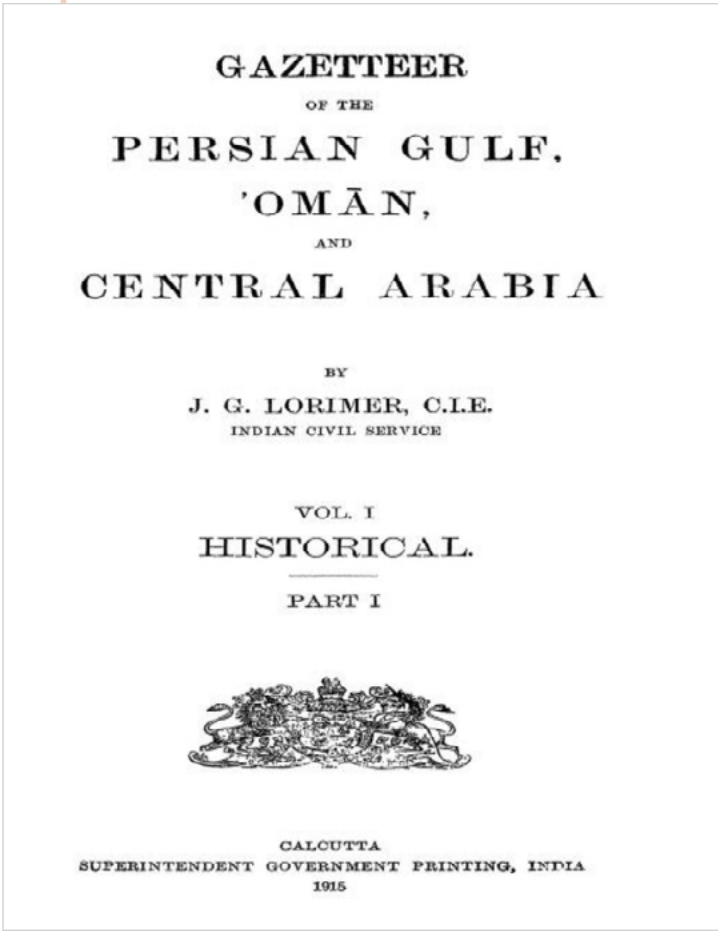


David Joseph Wrisley
Associate Professor of Digital Humanities

It is an invaluable experience for a student who will be pursuing graduate studies to have an opportunity to pursue hands-on research, in close collaboration with a group of faculty and researchers. Students are able to bring what they learned in their classroom and Capstone research, and apply this to the day-to-day research and decision-making of historical research. We had biweekly team meetings, consultations for decision-making, and training sessions for the acquisition of new digital skills. This team work is an important opportunity for 360 degree learning to take place.

The OpenGulf Twitter account (@open_gulf).

Title page of Lorimer's Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia (1915). Credit: Open license: archive.org.



Faculty Supervisors Nora Barakat & David Joseph Wrisley


OPENGULF

OpenGulf is a set of interconnected digital projects focusing on historical documentation about the Arabian Gulf. The project specifically looks at the historical geography of the Gulf region as well as handwritten archival materials from the pre-oil period, creating data for both spatial analysis and AI-powered handwriting recognition and automated transcription. This project will turn data that is currently located in print archives, and make it accessible and available to global historians.

This project began with John G. Lorimer's Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia, extracting 23,000 unique place names in the Gulf region with a total of 51,000 annotations from the Gazetteer's Geographical Dictionary, and geolocating them. The project also involved organizing and mapping the Dictionary's statistical information (e.g. number of livestock or date palms) by geographical location in order to generate novel research questions. We provided visualization for some of this data and explored the creation of a more formal gazetteer. OpenGulf's web page: opengulf.github.io


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The variety of handwritings included in the Bushire Residency Papers. Credit CC license ; British Library Indian Office Records / QDL.

