

# Melinda Marie Cohoon

PhD Candidate in Interdisciplinary Near and Middle Eastern Studies  
Specializing in Iranian Studies and Digital Humanities  
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## RESEARCH INTERESTS

Iranian and Iranian-American Gamers; *World of Warcraft*; computational social science; JavaScript in D3; data visualizations; human-computer interaction and UX; virtual ethnography in MMORPGs; social media platforms, YouTube, and Twitch.TV; Big Data; cultural production of Iranian and American video games; intersectionality; critical digital pedagogy; teaching praxis.

**Key themes:** Iran, gamers, ethnography, discourse, and affect theory.

## EDUCATION

<b>Ph.D. Candidate in Interdisciplinary Near and Middle Eastern Studies</b> University of Washington (UW), Seattle, WA	2017-Expected 2023
<b>M.A. in International Studies-Middle East</b> University of Washington (UW), Seattle, WA	2015-2017
<b>B.A. in History and Urban Honors</b> Portland State University (PSU), Portland, OR	2011-2014

## COMPETITIVE GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS

<b>Social Data Research and Dissertation Fellowship</b> , Social Science Research Council	2020-2021
<b>Roshan Institute Fellowship for Excellence in Persian Studies</b> , NELC, UW	2020-2021
<b>Maurice and Lois Schwartz Fellowship</b> , NELC, UW	2020-2021
<b>Diversity &amp; Inclusion in Esports Category (Finalist)</b> , #TheGameHERSAwards, The GameHers	2020
<b>Digital Humanities Summer Fellowship for Digital Projects</b> , Simpson Center, UW	2020
<b>Digital Humanities Summer Institute Tuition Scholarship</b> , DHSI, UVic, BC, Canada	2020
<b>Roshan Institute Fellowship for Excellence in Persian Studies</b> , NELC, UW	2019-2020
<b>Graduate Research Cluster Grant</b> , Simpson Center, UW	2019-2020
<b>Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship, Persian (Summer)</b> , MEC, UW	2019
<b>Digital Humanities Summer Institute Tuition Scholarship</b> , DHSI, UVic, BC, Canada	2019
<b>Digital Humanities Summer Institute Travel Grant</b> , Simpson Center, UW	2019
<b>Carolee Danz Endowed Scholarship (Spring)</b> , UW Libraries	2019
<b>Easa A. Bateh Fellowship (Summer)</b> , NELC, UW	2018
<b>Digital Humanities Summer Institute Travel Grant</b> , Simpson Center, UW	2018
<b>Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship, Turkish (Summer)</b> (Declined), GSC, UW	2018
<b>Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship, Arabic</b> , MEC, UW	2017-2018
<b>Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship, Arabic (Summer)</b> , MEC, UW (Declined)	2017
<b>Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship, Arabic</b> , MEC, UW	2016-2017
<b>Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship, Arabic (Summer)</b> , MEC, UW	2016
<b>The Henry M. Jackson Top Scholar Fellowship</b> , UW	2015-2016
<b>Ronald E. McNair Research Fellowship (Summer)</b> , PSU	2014
<b>Ronald E. McNair Travel Grant (Spring)</b> , PSU	2014

**The Diversity Enrichment Scholarship, DMSS, PSU** 2013-2014  
**President's Equal Access Scholarship, DMSS, PSU** 2013-2014

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

**JSIS 202: Cultural Interactions in an Interdependent World** Spring 2019  
Teaching Assistant | University of Washington, Seattle, WA  
*Description: I led quiz section through an introduction on the theoretical and empirical implications of ethnographic study and advising undergraduate students on how to conduct research.*

**HSTAFM 163: History of the Modern Middle East** Winter 2019  
Teaching Assistant | University of Washington, Seattle, WA  
*Description: I led quiz section on how to conduct historical analysis of primary source materials.*

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE & ASSISTANTSHIPS

**Persian Language Summer School and Pre-Dissertation Research** Summer 2019  
Intermediate-High Persian Language Student | ASPIRANTUM, Yerevan, Armenia  
*Description: I learned Persian and witnessed cross-cultural exchanges between Armenia and Iran. Visited cultural sites, and gaming as well as internet cafes. Pre-dissertation research indicates Iranians' exchange currency, and access PayPal in Yerevan.*

**JSIS 544: Reading Seminar on Middle East Studies** Autumn 2018  
Research Assistant | University of Washington, Seattle, WA  
*Description: I developed pedagogical tools, created courses via Canvas, and increased usability of Interdisciplinary Near and Middle Eastern Studies Program site via Canvas.*

**Arabic Language Summer School and Doctoral Application Research** Summer 2016  
Intermediate Arabic Language Student | Qasid Arabic Institute, Amman, Jordan  
*Description: I learned and experienced cultural nuances of Arabic language. Experienced Pokémon Go! gaming phenomena among Jordanians, indicating the popularity of augmented reality games transnationally.*

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

**Suzzallo Library Central Circulation** Spring 2018-Present  
Student Assistant | The University of Washington, Seattle, WA  
*Description: I currently evaluate digital metadata of journals for accuracy, and other varied tasks to increase patron usability of library materials.*

**Digital Humanities Training at the Summer Institute** Summer 2018 and 2019  
Technological and Pedagogical Training | University of Victoria, Victoria, BC, Canada  
*Description: I received training in DOCKER, Visual Studio Code, web API tools, JavaScript (D3), Scalar, Omeka Classic and S, and metadata extraction.*

**Arabic Translator for the Department of History** Winter 2017-Spring 2017  
Research Assistant to Emeritus Professor Jere Bacharach | University of Washington, Seattle, WA  
*Description: I translated numismatic articles and organized/translated titles of articles in an Excel spreadsheet for a future website catalogue.*

**Gorton Global Leaders Program** Autumn 2015-Spring 2016

Fellow | Slade Gorton Policy Center, The National Bureau of Asian Research, Seattle, WA

*Description: the curriculum focuses on national security, innovation, technology, and democracy. I received professionalization training for community, political, and foreign service-oriented careers. Additionally, I collaborated with other fellows to organize a panel of professionals from Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Center for Regional Disaster Resilience, and Peace Winds America on national disaster protocol.*

### **Diversity and Multicultural Student Services**

Summer 2012-Winter 2013

Student Assistant | Portland State University, Portland, OR

*Description: I created appointments and assisted first-generation students.*

## **SERVICE & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

### **Digital Iran Project**

Principle Investigator and Public Liaison | Seattle, WA

Summer 2020-Autumn 2020

*Description: I engaged with the broader community on Twitch.TV and Twitter for the Digital Iran project, which led to communication about game research and assisting individuals in the community with CVs and resumes. For this project, I received recognition as a finalist for #TheGameHERSAwards under Diversity & Inclusion in Esports Category.*

### **Epilepsy Foundation of America**

Twitch.TV Streamer for Fund Raising | Seattle, WA

Autumn 2020

*Description: I volunteered in a stream relay on Twitch.TV for the Epilepsy Foundation of America for fundraising and spreading awareness on epilepsy.*

### **Food Pantry**

Autumn 2014-Spring 2015

Student Assistant | Portland State University, Portland, OR

*Description: I assisted Portland State students to acquire food.*

### **First Annual Honors College Food Drive**

Autumn 2013-Winter 2014

Program Coordinator | Portland State University, Portland, OR

*Description: I co-organized the first Honors College food drive to decrease and bring awareness about food insecurity among Portland State's students.*

## **PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS**

Journal Article with Rahbar, Victoria. "Barriers in Preservation: Navigating Platforms for Japanese Comics and Iranian Video Game Cultural Artifacts," *Interdisciplinary Digital Engagement in Arts & Humanities*, vol 2(2), Submitting early April.

Journal Article: "Digital Iran: Global Frictions and (Post)colonial Frameworks in Video Games," *Interdisciplinary Digital Engagement in Arts & Humanities*, vol 2(1), Accepted/Forthcoming June 2021/2022.

Book Review: "Paulo Lemos Horta's *Marvellous Thieves: Secret Authors of the Arabian Nights*," *Review of Middle East Studies*, vol. 53(2), December 2019. DOI: 10.1017/rms.2019.47.

Journal Article: "The British-American Imperial Agenda in Iraq: The Oil and Railway line from Kirkuk to Haifa, 1920-1932," *PSU McNair Scholars Online Journal*, Vol. 9, 2015. DOI: 10.15760/mcnair.2015.30.

## THESES

"The Imperial Frontier: Tribal Dynamics and Oil in Qajar Persia 1901-1910," *Dissertations and Theses: International Studies – Middle East*, June 2017.

<https://digital.lib.washington.edu/researchworks/handle/1773/39904>.

"Palestinian Women of the Intifada: The Women's Committees, 1987-1988," *University Honors Theses*, 2014. Paper 88. DOI: 10.15760/honors.78.

## ONGOING DIGITAL HUMANITIES PROJECTS

Multiplatform project: *Digital Iran: Anticolonial and Imperial Narratives of Iran in Video Games*, latest update October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020. <http://digitaliranproject.com>, [https://twitter.com/IranDH\\_project](https://twitter.com/IranDH_project), [https://www.twitch.tv/digital\\_iran](https://www.twitch.tv/digital_iran), and <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0ABxo2oGRDxr2yfL08Hwwg>.

Omeka project: *The Digital Borderlands: Glocalizing Iranian Video Games*, latest update June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020. <http://iranianvideogames.com/cms/>.

## OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Blog post: "Prince of Persia and Queering the Near East," *Digital Iran: Anticolonial and Imperial Narratives of Iran in Video Games*, October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020. <http://digitaliranproject.com/prince-of-persia-and-queering-the-near-east/>.

Newsletter: "Near and Middle Eastern Studies Students Present a Virtual Panel at the 2020 Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting," *Middle East Center Newsletter*, Fall 2020.

Blog post: "Battlefield 3: The Affective Dimensions of a Virtual Middle East," *Digital Iran: Anticolonial and Imperial Narratives of Iran in Video Games*, August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020. <http://digitaliranproject.com/battlefield-3-the-affective-dimensions-of-a-virtual-middle-east/>.

Blog post with Rahbar, Victoria: "Reading and Playing Right to Left: Preserving Japanese Comics and Iranian Video Games," *Near Eastern Languages & Civilization*, June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020. <https://nelc.washington.edu/news/2020/06/29/reading-and-playing-right-left-preserving-japanese-comics-and-iranian-video-games>.

Newsletter: "An Interview with Journalist and Iran Specialist Barbara Slavin," *Middle East Center Newsletter*, Fall 2019. <https://jsis.washington.edu/mideast/news/newsletter/fall-2019/>.

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Showcase: "Digital Iran: Narratives of (De)colonization in Video Games," *Hacking the Academy: Simpson Center Digital Humanities Summer Fellows Showcase*, University of Washington, October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

Panel Presenter: "The Affective Entanglement: Iranian Women Gamers Online," "Ethnographies of the Everyday: Negotiating Iranian Subjectivities through Gender Performance, Music, and Video Games." *Middle East Studies Association Conference*, Virtual Meeting, October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

Conference Presenter: "The Digital Borderlands: Glocalizing Iranian Video Games," *Digital Humanities Summer Institute Virtual Conference*, University of Victoria, Victoria, BC, CA, June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020.

Capstone Presenter: "Reimagining History through Digital Cultural Artifacts: A Teaching Method," *NMES Capstone* sponsored by the Walter M. Chapin Simpson Center, University of Washington, Seattle, WA, May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

Conference Presenter: "The Imperial Frontier: Tribal Dynamics and Oil in Qajar Persia, 1901-1910," *Graduate Student Conference in Middle East Studies*, University of Washington, Seattle, WA, May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

Symposium Presenter: "The British-American Agenda in Iraq, 1920-1932," *The Ronald E. McNair Undergraduate Symposium*, Portland State University, Portland, Oregon, August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

Symposium Presenter: "Palestinian Women of the Intifada: The Women's Committees, 1987-1988," *Honors Symposium*, Portland State University, Portland, Oregon, May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

Conference Presenter: "The Imperial Agenda and Oil Concessions in Iraq, 1920-1932," *Middle East Conference*, Portland State University, Portland, Oregon, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2014.

Symposium Presenter: "Oil Concession and the Iraqi Railway, 1920-1929," *Undergraduate Symposium*, University of Washington, Seattle, WA, May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

## WORKSHOPS & TALKS

Moderator: "In Conversation with Mana Kia: Persianate Selves," *Persian Studies Workshop Series Spring 2021* sponsored by the Department of Near Eastern languages and Civilization and Persian and Iranian Studies Program, University of Washington, Seattle, WA, March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GeuM1aETb3U>.

Invited TALK: "Digital Iran: Anticolonial and Imperial Narratives of Iran in Video Games," *Society of Scholars Virtual Meeting*, Walter Chapin Simpson Center for the Humanities, University of Washington, Seattle, WA, October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

Workshop Co-Presenter with Rahbar, Victoria: "Reading and Playing Right to Left: Preserving Japanese Comics and Iranian Video Games," *The Right to Left Virtual Workshop*, University of Victoria, Victoria, BC, CA, June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

Workshop lead with Elezovic, Arna., and Apa Pomeshikov, Ayda: "Introduction to Interdisciplinary Ethnographies: Defining Ethnography in Anthropology and Science and Technology Studies," *Interdisciplinary Ethnographies Workshop Series* sponsored by the Walter Chapin Simpson Center for the Humanities, University of Washington, Seattle, WA, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019.

## RECENT MEDIA

### *UW Social Media Posts*

"Near & Middle Eastern Studies doctoral student Mindy Cohoon studies how Iranian & Iranian American women experience harassment on gaming platforms. Her college career has been supported by 23(!) fellowships, grants & scholarships. #PhilanthropyFriday," December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020.  
<https://twitter.com/UW/status/1334939837917503489>.

## ***UW Grad School Social Media Posts***

“How to Find Fellowships,” January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CKoviRvgPB2/>.

Retweet of UW post, December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020.  
<https://twitter.com/UWGradSchool/status/1334945471102476288>.

“Near and Middle Eastern Studies doctoral student Mindy Cohoon,” November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020.  
<https://www.instagram.com/p/CHYpuXAggrab/>.

## ***Articles***

Bamber, William: “Student profile: Melinda Cohoon – Exploring the Political Worlds of Online Videogaming, between Iranian Gamers and the 2020 US Election,” *Near and Middle Eastern Studies*, October 30, 2020. <https://sites.uw.edu/nmephd/2020/10/30/student-profile-melinda-cohoon-exploring-the-political-worlds-of-online-videogaming-between-iranian-gamers-and-the-2020-us-election/>.

Stringer, Kate: “The Right to Play Games,” *UW Graduate School*, October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020.  
<https://grad.washington.edu/mindy-cohoon/>.

## **TECHNICAL SKILLS & LANGUAGES**

**Programs, Tools, and Platforms:** Omeka Classic, OmekaS, Neatline, Docker, WordPress, Canvas, Scalar, Visual Code Studio, Excel, CSV, Atlas.Ti, NVivo, XMedia Recode, Open Broadcasting System, Streamlabs, Audacity, Twitch.TV

**Languages, Scripts, Subsets:** JavaScript (D3) | CSS | JSON | HTML Basic | Python | R | C++

**Research Methods:** Participant-Observation | Textual and Discourse Analysis | Interviews | Virtual Ethnography | Web Scraping and Data Mining | Data Visualization

**Persian:** Advanced reading, speaking, and writing.

**Arabic:** Advanced reading, speaking, and writing.

**French:** Intermediate reading, speaking, and writing.

## **PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

Associated Students of the University of Washington  
Humanities, Arts, Science and Technology Alliance and Collaboratory  
Islamicate Digital Humanities Network  
Middle East Studies Association  
Phi Alpha Theta; Beta Chapter of Portland State University  
Society for Social Studies of Science