



School of Graduate Studies and Research

Invites faculty, staff, and students to attend

Faculty Research Colloquium

Presented by



Dr. Richard Gauvain

Associate Dean, School of Arts & Sciences

“Ras Al Khaimah – An Emirate in Transition”

Wednesday, November 26, 2014, at 3:30 PM
Conference Room - Building D

Abstract

Within the wider field of Middle Eastern Studies, there has been a surge of interest in the economic, socio-political, and cultural realities of the Gulf. On many levels, the reasons behind this surge of interest are not difficult to understand: despite undergoing recent and profound transformations, most Gulf societies place a premium on retaining their indigenous cultural heritages. Affluent and politically stable, the UAE play a vital role in the development of a contemporary Gulf identity. For the scholar, the UAE also provide an ideal location within which to observe and reflect upon this juxtaposition of modern(ity) and traditional(ism). When scholars from across the academic spectrum write about the UAE, they tend to prioritize the contributions of the larger emirates, Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah. To date, there has been very little research on Ras al-Khaimah itself. This short paper has two aims. The first is to situate the research that has been carried out on Ras al-Khaimah within the wider academic debate concerning the Gulf and, specifically, the UAE. The second is to invite members of AURAK’s scholarly community to participate in an ongoing research project – still in its early stages – that focuses on Ras al-Khaimah as “An Emirate in Transition.” The eventual aim of this project is to create a collaborative, multi-disciplinary work that explores Ras al-Khaimah – both in terms of its historical uniqueness and firmly embedded position within the UAE – through a variety of academic perspectives.

About the Speaker

Dr. Richard Gauvain completed his Ph.D. in the Anthropology of Religious Studies at the University of Glasgow in 2002. He taught Comparative Religions at the American University in Cairo (AUC) between 2003 and 2009, and Middle East Studies at the American University in Dubai between 2009 and 2014. He was a Research Fellow at the University of Durham from 2008-2011. His research interests are many and varied, but primarily concern the creative intersections between “Culture” and “Society” in the Middle East. He has written what remains the only in-depth ethnography of Egyptian Salafism and translated what remains the only systematic form of response to this movement by Egypt’s al-Azhar University. He loves living in Ras al-Khaimah and, like all anthropologists in a new home, wants to start writing about it.