

# HYE SHARZHOOM

## Armenian Action

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40<sup>th</sup> Year

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Ethnic Supplement to The Collegian

### “Genocides of the 20th Century” Exhibition in Madden Library



Left to right: Dr. Hagop Ohanessian, Dr. Ümit Kurt, Deborah Sinclair, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Dean Del Hornbuckle, and Dr. Clint Curle.

Photo: Andrew Hagopian

ANNIE RUBIO  
EDITOR

“Sovereignty cannot be conceived as the right to kill millions of people.” These words were spoken by Rafael Lemkin, an American lawyer of Polish-Jewish heritage who coined the term “genocide.” It is difficult to fathom the number of atrocities committed throughout history, but even more difficult to fathom what Winston Churchill once called, “a crime without a name.” Lemkin

set out to define and name the crime perpetrated against the Jews during World War II, in hopes that justice would follow. By doing so, he also put into general use the term now used to characterize the Armenian Genocide of 1915. The Armenian Studies Program and the Henry Madden Library, in partnership with the Mémorial de la Shoah of Paris, are co-sponsoring an exhibition “Genocides of the 20th Century,” which will be on view at the 2nd

SEE EXHIBITION PAGE 7

### ASO Executive Brings New Ideas



Left to right: Violeta Agabekyan, Public Relations; Kara Statler, Treasurer; Claire Kasaian, President; David Safrazian, Vice-President, and Suzanna Ekmekchyan, Secretary.

STAFF REPORT

On Tuesday, September 4, 2018, the Armenian Students Organization (ASO) gathered for their first general meeting of the 2018-2019 school year and held elections for new executive officers. The results were as follows: President, Claire Kasaian; Vice-President,

David Safrazian; Treasurer, Kara Statler; Public Relations, Violeta Agabekyan; and Secretary, Suzanna Ekmekchyan.

CLAIRE KASAIAN  
PRESIDENT

Why did you originally join  
SEE ASO PAGE 4

### Saroyan House Museum Opening Celebration Held at the Satellite Student Union on August 31

ANNIE RUBIO  
EDITOR

William Saroyan is a name many consider synonymous with Fresno, California. He was a beloved writer, whose voice united Armenians across the globe and whose works have brought recognition and pride to the Armenian community. On Friday, August 31, on what would have been Saroyan’s 110th birthday, a celebration was held to mark the opening of the William Saroyan House Museum in Fresno. The reception was held at the Satellite Student Union at Fresno State to honor this momentous occasion, bringing together an international audience. More than 700 community



Photo: Howard K. Watkins

Left to right: Ambassador Grigor Hovhannissian, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Elina Janibekyan, Artur Janibekyan, Hakob Hakobyan, and Avag Simonyan at the festivities.

members gathered alongside visiting dignitaries, university officials, and students to enjoy a program dedicated to Saroyan. Special guest for the evening  
SEE SAROYAN PAGE 7

### Dr. Ümit Kurt Appointed 15th Henry S. Kazan Visiting Professor in Armenian Studies for Fall



Photo: Andrew Hagopian

CLAIRE KASAIAN  
STAFF WRITER

Dr. Ümit Kurt was appointed as the 15th Kazan Visiting Professor in Armenian Studies for the Fall 2018 semester at Fresno State. Dr. Kurt was previously at Fresno

State in the 2015-2016 academic year as a Kazan Research Associate. As part of his duties this Fall, Dr. Kurt is teaching an Armenian Studies class, “The Armenian Genocide in Comparison,” which he describes as, “the history of the Armenian Genocide and making comparisons between the Genocide, the Holocaust, and the Rwandan Genocide. We will be looking for patterns and tendencies and variations and discrepancies in the Genocides.” Dr. Kurt was appointed as a prestigious Polonsky Fellow at the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem in 2017, where he is part of a vibrant research community.

Dr. Kurt was born and raised in Aintab, and when asked about how he learned about the Armenian Genocide he stated that, “After high school, while studying at the university, I read certain history books but did not do any elaborate research. When I was 25 years old I was with friends at a coffee shop in Aintab and I then realized that the coffee shop was originally an Armenian-owned house.” This inspired Dr. Kurt to begin his research on the Armenian Genocide, which also led him to also learn more about the once large Armenian community in Aintab. Dr. Kurt

SEE DR. KURT PAGE 3

### Armenian Studies Program Holds Reunion Filled with Memories for Armenia Trip Participants

STAFF REPORT

More than sixty alumni participants of Armenian Studies Program Summer Study Trips gathered on Friday, April 27, at the Smitcamp Alumni House at Fresno State to celebrate thirty years of summer trips to Armenia. The first Armenian Studies organized trip to Armenia took place in 1988, when Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian led a group of eight students to Yerevan for a one month stay. That turned out to be a historic year as students were eyewitness to the Karabagh movement and the large demonstrations taking place in the



Photo: ASP Archive

The Armenian Studies Program has been conducting Armenia Summer Study Trips since 1988. Alumni of the trips gathered on April 27 to renew friendships.

SEE ASP REUNION PAGE 2



Armenian Studies Program  
Book/Video/CD Archival Gifts

Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Prof. Sergio La Porta, and the Armenian Studies Program would like to thank the donors, authors, and publishers for the following books, periodicals, videos, and archival gifts, either offered personally, or to the Program.

**Hambersom Aghbashian**, Glendale, California, for a copy of his new book *Turkish Intellectuals Who have Recognized the Reality of the Armenian Genocide* (Altadena, CA: Nor Publishing, 2018), vol. II, 150pp., in English. The book discusses fifty Turkish intellectuals who have acknowledged the Armenian Genocide.

**Lucille Apar**, Mariposa, California, for a copy of *Rescued Armenian Treasures from Cilicia: Sacred Art of the Kilikia Museum, Antelias, Lebanon* (2000), 183pp., in English, illustrated. This is a catalog from the Exhibition of the State Gallery Moritzburg Hall Art Museum.

**Dr. Meher Babian**, Glendale, California, for a copy of the book *Book of Soul: Poems, Spiritual Reflections, Luminous Saints of the Armenian Church* (Հոգեմաստեան: Բանաստեղծութիւններ, հոգեւոր խորհրդածութիւններ, Հայ Եկեղեցւոյ լուսապսակ Սուրբեր) by Archbishop Gorun Babian (Antelias: Richard and Tina Carolan Literary Fund, No. 23, 2018), 591pp., in Armenian. The book contains poems written by Archbishop Babian, as well as important information about the Diocese of New Julfa and about the Holy Savior Monastery of New Julfa.

**Dr. Kevork Bardakjian**, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, for a copy of his latest book *Historical-Philological Articles* (Պատմալեզանասիրական Հոդվածներ) (Yerevan: Zangak, 2018), 196pp., in Armenian. This is a collection of Bardakjian’s articles on a variety of topics.

**Bishop Krikor Chiftjian**, Primate of the Atrpatakan Diocese, Tabriz, Iran, for a copy of his new book *Journey through Footsteps of the Armenian Monuments in the Armenian Diocese of Atrpatakan Azerbaijan-Iran* (Tabriz, 2017), 545pp., in Armenian. This fascinating book traces Bishop Chiftjian’s journey through his Diocese rediscovering Armenian churches and monasteries. He visited dozens of these monuments. There are 238 churches in the Diocese.

**Dr. Hayk Demoyan**, Coordinator ArmenianAmerica400 Project, Yerevan, Armenia for a copy of *Armenian Legacy in America: A 400-Year Heritage* (Yerevan, 2018), 619pp., in English. This lavishly illustrated volume is a project of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative, and is a comprehensive history of the Armenian presence in the United States. He also donated several books related to the Armenian Genocide.

**Mesrop Mashtots Matenadaran (Manuscript Library)**, Yerevan, Armenia for a copy of the *General Catalogue of Armenian Manuscripts of the Matenadaran*, Volume IX (Manuscripts 2701-3000), ed. By Gevorg Ter-Vardanyan (Yerevan: Nairi Publishing, 2017), 2,736pp., in Armenian.

**S.E. Mgr Levon Zekiy and Dr. Maxime Yevadian**, France, for a copy of *Arménie: un Atlas Historique*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (Sources d’Arménie), 544pp., in French with maps and *Jubilé de l’Ordre des Pères mékhitaristes* (Sources d’Arménie, 2017), 282pp., in French, published on the occasion of the three-hundredth anniversary of the Mekhitarist Order in Venice.

ASP REUNION, FROM PAGE 1

heart of Yerevan.  
The visit also took place when Armenia was still part of the Soviet Union and the group was hosted by the Committee for Cultural Relations with Armenians Abroad. But the elements of future trips were already in place, with visits to historic sites, museums, meetings with university students, and classes.  
Over the succeeding years each Armenian Studies trip has provided a unique experience to the Fresno State students who participated.  
Students have formed lifelong bonds with those who they traveled with as well as establishing ties to Armenia.  
Altogether there have been eight such trips to Armenia, with the latest having taken place in the summer of 2017.  
More recently, Professors

Sergio La Porta and Hagop Ohanessian have also participated in the trips as co-leaders with Prof. Der Mugrdechian.  
The alumni had a chance to renew friendships, as well as laugh and take pleasure in talking about their experiences, while enjoying a buffet dinner courtesy of the Armenian Studies Program. Following dinner, guests enjoyed a powerpoint presentation that highlighted special moments from each of the Summer Study trips.  
The Summer Study alumni then had an opportunity to express how their trip had made a lasting impact on each of them. Many had visited Armenia since their original trip forming lasting ties.  
All of the participants expressed their appreciation to the Armenian Studies Program for affording them the opportunity to travel to Armenia.

California State University, Fresno  
Armenian Studies Program  
Spring 2019 Schedule of Courses

Course	Units	Time	Day	Instructor
<b>General Education-Breadth, Humanities, Area C2</b>				
• Arm 1B-Elementary Armenian (Class #32149)	4	10:00A-11:50A	MW	B. Der Mugrdechian
• Arm 2A-Intermediate Armenian (Class #36557)	3	09:00A-09:50A	MWF	B. Der Mugrdechian
<b>General Education-Breadth, Arts, Area C1</b>				
• ArmS 20-Arts of Armenia (Class #33208)	3	11:00A-12:15P	TuTh	B. Der Mugrdechian
<b>General Education-Breadth, Area D3</b>				
• ArmS 10-Intro Arm Studies (Class #36120)	3	12:00P-12:50A	MWF	H. Ohanessian
<b>General Education-Integration, Area IC</b>				
• Arm 148-Mastrpcs Arm Cult (Class #33301)	3	2:00P-3:15P	MW	H. Ohanessian
<b>Upper Division Armenian Studies Course</b>				
• ArmS 108B-Arm History II (Class #32148)	3	9:30A-10:45A	TuTh	B. Der Mugrdechian

Get a Minor in Armenian Studies.  
For more information call the Armenian Studies Program at 278-2669.  
Check on requirements for the Minor in Armenian Studies in the current catalog.  
<http://www.fresnostate.edu/catalog/subjects/armenian-studies/armenia-mn.html>

# HYE SHARZHOOM

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**Ümit Kurt**, Kazan Visiting Professor in Armenian Studies



ASP Armenia Study Trip 2017 participants at the Reunion, which brought together more than 60 alumni.

Armenian Studies  
Program Study Trips  
to Armenia

1988, 1990, 2001, 2005,  
2007, 2011, 2014, 2017

The Armenian Studies Program has provided an opportunity for Fresno State students to travel to Armenia as the culminating experience of their college careers.  
Students have experienced the history and culture of Armenia by visiting cultural, religious, and historic sites.



# Dr. Ümit Kurt Presents New Evidence on Cemal Pasha’s Role in the Armenian Genocide of 1915



Photo: Christine Pambukyan

Dr. Ümit Kurt, seventh from left, with students and faculty after his presentation.

**ANNIE RUBIO**  
*EDITOR*

Throughout the deportations and mass atrocities committed during the Armenian Genocide, one member of the Turkish government appeared as a source of hope and benevolence. Cemal Pasha, governor of Adana and Greater Syria, was said to have lenient policies regarding Armenians, going insofar as to face off with the other member of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) government. However, as argued by Dr. Ümit Kurt, Cemal Pasha’s real intent “was aimed at subduing [the Armenians], so as to make them incapable of harming the sovereignty of the Ottoman state.”

Dr. Umit Kurt, Kazan Visiting Professor in Armenian Studies, gave the first of three public lectures on September 21, titled “Rescuer, an Enigma, and a Génocidaire: Cemal Pasha. In his talk, he analyzed Cemal’s role in the Armenian Genocide under three distinct umbrellas of thought, reflecting the diverse opinions of scholars on the question.

While Cemal and the CUP did not differ in their stance on the Armenian “question,” Dr. Kurt stated that “the most fundamental difference was the methods he wanted to employ.” Thus, Cemal Pasha emerged as a strict disciplinarian and assimilationist. He systematically implemented conversions to Islam rather than institute mass exterminations. However, he has been remembered as “a rescuer,” a characteristic which has been greatly influenced by the perceptions of his victims.

Cemal is noted in many personal memoirs as a “conscientious Turk” and someone who saved many Armenians. While those accounts are true, Dr. Kurt argues, “the term rescuer cannot be applied to Cemal Pasha.” His goals were still very aligned with others in the CUP, but his choice of means were more realistic and allowed for a more prosperous “post-Armenian Turkey.”

In his assimilationist policies, Cemal Pasha was increasing his power and authority among the Armenians. The conversions provided relief to dependent

Armenians, and gave an alternative to deportation (and potentially death). However, Dr. Kurt explains that Cemal was instead “reducing the Armenian population to an ethnic minority that no longer posed a threat.” Cemal would always credit himself with policies that would improve the situation of Armenians, while blaming “his friends in Istanbul” whenever decisions were detrimental to them. He continued in this way, maintaining a positive image while still contributing to the genocide.

Given the differing views on Cemal’s politics and agendas, it can be difficult to determine his role as a perpetrator in the Armenian Genocide. Rafael Lemkin, the man who coined the term “genocide,” defined forced assimilation as a cultural technique of genocide. Cemal Pasha and his solution to the Armenian “problem” are genocidal in their own right, even if they are not exterminatory in character. As stated by Dr. Kurt, “they do not absolve him[Cemal] of his own share of responsibility for the genocide.”

Dr. Kurt closed his lecture with the careful distinction that explaining a perpetrator’s actions within a genocide does not equate to forgiveness or legitimization of those actions. “We have an obligation to try to understand how people can turn into killing machines.” By understanding their ideology and motivations, the actions of Cemal and others within the CUP become less incomprehensible.

Understanding how these “regular” human beings became a part of a genocide can lead to prevention of genocides in the future.

## DR. KURT, FROM PAGE 1

said that he realized how ignorant he was about his hometown and how the traces of Armenian presence were erased from Aintab during the Genocide.

Dr. Kurt attended Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts and completed his Ph.D. in 2016 in Holocaust

and Genocide Studies in the Department of History. He is now preparing his dissertation for publication as a book. Dr. Kurt has recently published *Aintab, 1915: Genocide and Perpetrators*, as well as numerous articles and monographs.

Dr. Kurt has written extensively on the Armenian Genocide, the confiscation of

Armenian properties, the transfer of wealth, the transformation of space, mass violence, interethnic conflict, local historiography, early modern Turkish nationalism and the Aintab Armenians.

While at Fresno State Dr. Kurt will be presenting three public lectures, before returning to Jerusalem in December.

# FICAT Students Complete Two-Week Course at Fresno State



Dr. Michael Pifer (fourth from left) and Dr. Sergio La Porta (sixth from left) with FICAT students.

Photo: Barlow Der Mugrdchian

## STAFF REPORT

The Fresno Institute for Classical Armenian Translation (FICAT) hosted nine students from around the world last summer for a two-week intensive reading seminar. This unique program was led by Dr. Sergio La Porta, Haig and Isabel Berberian Professor of Armenian Studies, at Fresno State, and Dr. Michael Pifer, a lecturer at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Participating were Liza Anderson (Claremont School of Theology); Seonyoung Kim (Hannim Biblical Institute, South Korea); Marina Bazzani (Oxford University, United Kingdom); Erin Piñon (Princeton); Jesse Izzon (Quinnipiac College); Jimmy Wolfe (The Ohio University); Kayla Dang (Yale University); Sundar Henny (University of Berne, Switzerland); and Michael Burling (University of Birmingham, United Kingdom). The program was made possible thanks to the generous support of the Fresno State Office of the President and the Armenian Studies Program.

The seminar focused on the production of high-quality translations of texts that are important to the students’ research. Students prepared their translations of texts that were circulated beforehand to the group. During the seminar they then jointly worked on the meaning of each text. In this manner, the students were exposed to a wide variety of texts and each participant received critical feedback to perfect their translation.

The texts presented covered different genres and periods of literature from late antiquity to early modernity and included: *The Epic Histories* attributed to P’awstos, Ezrik’s *Against the Sects*, Ghazar P’arpets’i’s *History, Penitence of Adam*, Aphrahat’s *Demonstrations*, Grigor Narekats’i’s *Book of Lamentation*, Nersēs Shnorhali’s *Hymn for Vardanants*’, Grigor Aknerts’i’s *History of the Nation of Archers*, and Tēr Yovhanniseants’s *History of Jerusalem*.

On Tuesday, June 12, students presented short summaries of their research to the broader Armenian community at a public lecture. The overall presentation,

“Classical Armenian in the 21st Century: Why Armenian Sources Matter to Students Today,” was moderated by Drs. La Porta and Pifer.

During their stay students enjoyed a dinner hosted by President Dr. Joseph and Mrs. Mary Castro at the University House, attended by members of the President’s Armenian Leadership Council. Students were also able to take advantage of being in Fresno to meet other Armenologists, experience the Divine Liturgy of the Armenian Church, sample Armenian cuisine, and witness the majesty of Yosemite National Park.

The leaders of the seminar were immensely pleased with how the two weeks developed and took pleasure in seeing the students continue to improve their ability in Classical Armenian, but the students also shared their positive feedback after the seminar. A brief sample from some of the students follows.

“As a result of the time spent in Fresno my understanding of classical Armenian and my knowledge of Armenian history and culture have increased enormously.... This year’s seminar has been truly successful, and I am very grateful to Fresno State, the Fresno Armenian community, and our instructors for making it happen!”

“This year’s seminar has given me a springboard into my dissertation research, but studying Classical Armenian has enriched my research on the religions of the ancient Near East in ways that I never could have expected.”

“The program challenged my colleagues and I to broaden our knowledge of Armenian culture, history, and the evolution of Classical Armenian over a span of more than a millennium.”

“Dr. La Porta and Dr. Pifer are dedicated instructors, whose leadership and guidance extend far beyond the classroom. They are invested in our growth as scholars and professionals, whose insight and experience is evident in their teaching.”

The impact these future scholars will have on the field and on academia in general will even further enhance the legacy of the Armenian Studies Program and the Fresno Armenian community whose support has made it possible.

## Give Your Way to the Armenian Studies Program

### There are many ways to support the Armenian Studies Program.

- 1) A gift today could come through the donation of cash, stock, or goods.
- 2) The Armenian Studies Program can also be supported in the future in estate plans.

**Regardless of how a donation is made, each gift impacts the lives of students and faculty at Fresno State.**

**Armenian Studies Program • 5245 N. Backer Ave. PB4  
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## ASO Holds Elections of Officers



ASO members at the first general meeting of the semester.

Photo: Barlow Der Mugrdchian

**SUZANNA EKMEKCHYAN**  
STAFF WRITER

The Armenian Student Organization (ASO) started its year off with elections for a new executive at the first general meeting of the year which took place on Tuesday, September 4. Elected were Claire Kasaian, President; David Safrastian, Vice-President; Kara Statler, Treasurer; Suzanna Ekmekchyan, Secretary; and Violeta Aghabekyan, Public Relations. New and continuing members of ASO came together to begin planning future activities throughout the semester.

To start the year off right, ASO's kick off social was a "Barbeque and Game Night." All of the members contributed side-dishes and then worked together to barbeque hamburgers and hotdogs. After the meal, members gathered around a

long table and played fun board games. The evening was filled with laughter and joy. It was the perfect opportunity for members to get to know each other and to form a strong bond.

On Friday, September 21, Independence Day of the Republic of Armenia, the ASO set up a booth in the Free Speech area on campus. The booth included a display with pictures and information about Armenia. There was also Armenian music playing and some ASO members displayed their cultural pride by dancing. Many students visited the booth and learned about the history of Armenian Independence Day.

ASO has many more things in store for the upcoming semester and members are very excited and looking forward to having a fun year filled with lifelong memories.

### ASO, FROM PAGE 1

#### ASO?

I wanted to make new friends in college and ASO gave me just that. I also wanted to learn more about my culture and to be more involved.

#### What impact did ASO have on your college career?

ASO made me love being at Fresno State. I was considering switching schools and then I started to get more involved and I became close with the other students involved. The friends I have made will be friends for the rest of my life. ASO has also allowed me to meet so many people and has given me so many experiences.

#### Why did you run for an ASO executive position?

I wanted to be President because I was an executive officer last year and I want to make a positive impact. I also wanted to bring in fresh and new ideas for events and socials.

**DAVID SAFRAZIAN**  
VICE-PRESIDENT

#### Why did you originally join ASO?

I wanted to be around other Armenian students who had similar interests. The Armenian Studies Program influenced me to come to Fresno State, so the first thing I did was to join ASO. Joining ASO has been my favorite thing at Fresno State."

#### What impact did ASO have on



Photo: Barlow Der Mugrdchian

Left to right: Suzanna Ekmekchyan, Kara Statler, Claire Kasaian, and David Safrastian in the Free Speech area at Fresno State. The ASO was marking the 27th Anniversary of the Republic of Armenia.

#### your college career?

Being in ASO has allowed me to meet many new people and build friendships that will last a lifetime. I feel as if I am more connected with the Armenian students in the area because of this club. I have a place and a purpose here because of ASO.

#### Why did you run for an ASO executive position?

I decided to run for Vice President because I have been very involved since I came to Fresno State and I wanted to take on more responsibility to enrich the club with new ideas.

**KARA STATLER**  
TREASURER

## Saroyan Museum Ribbon-Cutting Held August 31

### STAFF REPORT

The Saroyan House Museum was inaugurated on Friday, August 31, with a festive ribbon-cutting ceremony and the unveiling of a Saroyan plaque on his former home at 2729 West Griffith Way.

The ceremony, which took place immediately before the celebration at the Satellite Student Union at Fresno State, culminated more than two years of planning and construction, which transformed the home into an innovative House Museum.

Fresno Mayor Lee Brand and "Renaissance Cultural and Intellectual Foundation" founder Artur Janibekyan cut the red ribbon, allowing guests inside to tour the Museum for the first time. Janibekyan and Councilwoman Esmeralda Soria had moments earlier unveiled the bronze plaque marking the historic site as a former Saroyan home.

Saroyan House Board member Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdchian was the emcee for the afternoon, opening his comments by giving an overview of the Museum project. He then introduced the Mayor, Councilwoman Soria, and Artur Janibekyan, who each made brief remarks.

Just a day earlier, the Mayor and City Council had issued a proclamation declaring August 31, 2018 as "William Saroyan Day" in the city of Fresno. They also recognized the achievement in opening the Saroyan House Museum.

Among the invited guests



Photo: ASP Archive

Left to right: Fresno City Council President Esmeralda Soria, "Renaissance Culture and Intellectual Foundation" founder Artur Janibekyan, and Fresno City Mayor Lee Brand.

at the ribbon-cutting ceremony were Ambassador Grigor Hovhannisian, Ambassador of Armenia to the United States; Fresno State President Dr. and Mrs. Joseph I. and Mary Castro; Hank Saroyan, nephew of William Saroyan; Saroyan Project Director Hakob Hakobyan; and Project Manager Avag Simonyan.

At the end of the official program guests were given an escorted tour of the new Museum. Many were impressed by how the innovative technology mediated

a greater understanding of the writer himself.

The state-of-the-art House Museum has walls composed of interactive panels which highlight Saroyan's life through photos and through his paintings. A Saroyan hologram was the culmination of the tour.

Admission to the Saroyan House Museum is free and the Museum will be open Tuesday-Saturday by online reservation only at saroyanhouse.com.

## Armenian Studies Scholarships 2018-2019

### Visit our website to apply:

[www.fresnostate.edu/artshum/armenianstudies/students/scholarships-offered.html](http://www.fresnostate.edu/artshum/armenianstudies/students/scholarships-offered.html)

### 1) Complete, sign, and return the Armenian Studies Program supplemental form by October 31, 2018.

You may return the form to our office, Peters Business Building 384, or if you are taking an Armenian Studies courses, give it to the instructor.

### 2) Go to the Fresno State Scholarship website, <http://www.fresnostate.edu/studentaffairs/financialaid/scholarships/scholarshipapplication/index.html>

Apply online for all Armenian or Armenian Studies scholarship opportunities.

This application process opens October 1, and the priority period runs until October 31.

**SUZANNA EKMEKCHYAN**  
SECRETARY

#### Why did you originally join ASO?

I chose to be a part of ASO because I wanted to meet more people like myself and be a part of a group that would always make me feel included."

#### What impact did ASO have on your college experience?

Considering that college is a very individual experience for each person, I feel that ASO has made its members, including myself, feel as though they belong to something. It has also encouraged a sense of responsibility and commitment to the organization which I believe are factors of the essential life skills that we develop in college.

#### Why did you run for an ASO executive position?

I loved being a part of the executive last year and the

decision-making process. I really enjoyed getting to organize fun social events for the ASO and to encourage them to form lifelong connections with each other."

**VIOLETA AGABEKYAN**  
PUBLIC RELATIONS

#### Why did you join ASO?

I joined ASO because of its Armenian aspect. I felt like I needed to connect to other Armenians and the club helped me do just that."

#### What impact did ASO have on your college experience?

ASO has provided me with caring friends and has given me courage to go out of my comfort zone. It also has lead me to pursue a Minor in Armenian Studies.

#### Why did you run for an ASO executive position?

I was curious to learn what the executives do and wanted to be part of the planning process.



Armenian Artists Featured in New Exhibition



Left to right: CCA Director Dr. Cindy Urrutia, Henrik Abedian, and Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian.

ARSHAK ABELYAN  
STAFF WRITER

The perspectives of two artists on war and violence are expressed in the works of Armenian artists Varaz Samuelian and Henrik Abedian, who are featured in an exhibition on “The Business of Regret: War, Chaos, and the Rejection of Violence.”

The exhibition is a collaboration between the Center for Creativity and the Arts (CCA), the Armenian Studies Program, the Department of Art & Design, and the M Street Graduate studios. The art will be on view through the end of October at the M Street Graduate Studios at 1419 M Street in Fresno.

Students and faculty participated in an “Artist Talk” on Wednesday, October 3 which preceded the formal opening of the exhibition on October 4.

The “Artist Talk” featured artist Henrik Abedian and Armenian Studies Program Coordinator Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, speaking about Varaz Samuelian. The panel was moderated by CCA director Dr. Cindy Urrutia.

Prof. Der Mugrdechian opened the evening with a discussion of the late Varaz Samuelian’s art and the inspiration behind it.

Many of Samuelian’s work, especially his lithographs, express his strong opposition to war. Samuelian was the child of Genocide survivors and he was also a veteran of World War II, where he served time in a Nazi prisoner-of-war camp. When he was captured during World War II, he witnessed the mass execution of the Jewish people which is also portrayed in some of his art. These experiences became the basis of the works in this exhibition. But Samuelian

also chose to emphasize life in his art, especially in his oil works, which are also on display. The bright oils are in stark contrast to the black and white lithographs.

“I want to open a conversation through art,” said Abedian. A veteran of the Iran-Iraq war, Abedian experienced first-hand the horrors of war, and its impact is felt throughout his art. Abedian takes photographs of ordinary weapons of violence, such as guns and hand grenades, and transforms them into works of art, thereby making them less violent and taking away their power to instill fear.

The opening reception for the exhibition took place at the M Street Graduate Studios on Thursday, October 4, as part of the Fresno Art Hop. Works by Abedian and Samuelian are intersecting with each other on the walls, engendering a conversation between the artists and the viewer.

Abedian draws inspiration from diverse artists such as Andy Warhol and Michelangelo and uses digital means to produce his art. One such example is called, “What Would Warhol Do?” Abedian includes a photo of Marilyn Monroe with one of Warhol’s quotes, “I like boring things.”

The exhibition was truly about showing how people can use objects that we associate with war and make something good out of it. It is an opportunity that only a few get the chance to see. The art represented not only Armenian history, but also connected to the history of the entire world.

Photo: Andrew Hagopian

Armenian Studies Program Directors and Endowed Chair Holders Meet at UC Irvine for Workshop

STAFF REPORT

The Society for Armenian Studies held an Armenian Studies Chairs and Directors Workshop on the campus of the University of California, Irvine, on Saturday, September 29.

Armenian Studies Program Directors and holders of endowed Chairs in Armenian Studies from across the nation met to discuss a variety of issues and challenges facing the field.

The workshop was co-organized by Dr. Bedross Der Matossian, SAS President; Dr. Houri Berberian, Family Meghrouni Presidential Chair in Armenian Studies at the University of California, Irvine; and Dr. Sebouh Aslanian, Hovannisian Chair in Modern Armenian History at UCLA.

The all-day workshop included discussions in four areas: the State of Armenian Studies Programs; Graduate Training: Past, Present, and Future; Cooperation between Armenian Studies Programs; and the Future of Chairs and Programs.

Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Director of the Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State, and a former President of the Society for Armenian Studies, participated in the workshop.

The Armenian Studies Program at the University



Left to right: Razmik Panossian (Gulbenkian Foundation), Kevork Bardakjian (Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor), Christina Maranci (Tufts), Barlow Der Mugrdechian (California State University, Fresno), Salpi Ghazarian (USC), Bedross Der Matossian (Univ. of Nebraska, Lincoln), Kathryn Babayan (Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor), Sebouh Aslanian (UCLA), Vahe Sahakyan (SAS), Taner Akçam (Clark University), Ara Sanjian (Univ. of Michigan, Dearborn), Houri Berberian (UC Irvine), Marc Mamigonian (NAASR), and Vahram Shemmasian (California State University, Northridge).

of California Irvine hosted a reception for the visiting scholars, the local community, and campus administrators.

Dr. Tyrus Miller, Dean of the School of Humanities warmly greeted the guests and Dr. Houri Berberian then introduced the

visiting scholars, who interacted with community members.

A report will be written on the workshop outlining the main points of the discussion. This will provide a roadmap for future activities.

Visit

Hye Sharzhoom online at: [hyesharzhoom.com](http://hyesharzhoom.com)

“Armenians in Fresno” Subject of Weekend Class at Fresno State



Left to right: Yervand Boyajyan, Kara Statler, Dustin Vartanian, Violeta Agabekyan, Gregory Krikorian, Joel Ramirez, Molly Gostanian, Cole Egoian, Claire Kasaian, Stephen Gonzalez, Emily Sirabian, Peter Safrastian, Suzanna Ekmekchyan, Marina Chardukian, Dikran Dzhezyan, Mitch Statler, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, and David Safrastian in front of the new Saroyan House Museum.

Photo: Paula Der Matoian

DUSTIN VARTANIAN  
STAFF WRITER

What is an Armenian? Why did Armenians choose Fresno as one of their early destinations? How did they get here? These were some of the questions posed during the “Armenians in Fresno” weekend course taught by Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian of the Armenian Studies Program.

This Armenian Studies course was a rare opportunity to learn about the first Armenian settlers of the San Joaquin Valley. On October 5th and 6th, a group of eighteen Fresno State students took advantage of an opportunity to learn more about the Armenian community. This class took Armenian, American, and World History into account to explain the different waves of Armenians who immigrated to the San Joaquin Valley in the 20th century. Many students took the course because of their interest in the progress Armenians made since their arrival to the United States.

Fresno State student Pete Safrastian said he took the course “to learn more about the Armenian community in Fresno and how the Armenians have developed since the first generation... I don’t have a ton of knowledge about first generation Armenians, so this class enhanced my learning of what my ancestors went through.”

The “Armenians in Fresno” class did not take place only in the classroom. Professor Der Mugrdechian escorted the class to several Armenian landmarks in Fresno. These included the Ararat Cemetery, the David of Sassoon Statue, Holy Trinity Church Armenian Church, Old Armenian Town, and the William Saroyan House Museum.

While students walked around Downtown Fresno they tried to envision what life looked like for their ancestors. Today, a majority of the old Armenian neighborhoods have been demolished.

“I think about way back when my great grandparents were here establishing them-selves. It was really cool to envision that,” said

Molly Gostanian.

In addition, the class was very interactive. Students engaged in conversations about the major theme of the class; what is our identity? They discussed how their personal identity was different from that of the first generation. Some explained how their culture has become more Americanized. Others discussed how it is possible to be both an American and Armenian. The students learned that this was not a new concept and was a question to many Armenians for a number of years now. Even the great William Saroyan questioned this in his writing. The students read one of his short stories called “Antranik of Armenia.”

“Well, the truth is I am both and neither. I love Armenia and America and I belong to both, but I am only this: an inhabitant of the earth, and so are you, whoever you are,” wrote Saroyan.

Many Armenians in the San Joaquin Valley became famous. The students learned about many well-known Armenians from Monte Melkonian to Jerry Tarkanian. Many of the successful Armenians in the Central Valley either started with nothing or their family started with nothing when they first settled in the United States.

Gregory Krikorian, one of the students of the class, said, “It was really interesting to learn about all of the famous Armenians and it makes me want to be one of the famous Armenians that people learn about one day. We are here learning about them and it is very influential to us to strive for success in the future.”

When the eventful weekend concluded, students left with more knowledge about their past. They learned about each other and also learned about themselves as individuals. They even learned the most valuable lesson of the class; the story of our ancestors must be learned and passed on to generations to come.

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# Richard Hagopian Discusses Armenian Song Repertoire



Left to right: Phillip Hagopian, oud master Richard Hagopian, and Andrew Hagopian.

ANDREW HAGOPIAN  
STAFF WRITER

National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) artist Richard Hagopian gave a performance and lecture, April 26, 2018, titled “Armenian Song Repertoire of the Middle East.” Accompanying him were his grandsons, Phillip and Andrew Hagopian, who were showcased on the *Kanun* (the Middle Eastern Lap Harp) and the *Dumbeg* (goblet shaped hand drum). Together, the Hagopian trio took the audience on a journey through the vast span of Armenian music history.

Hagopian’s presentation was co-sponsored by the Middle East Studies Lecture, Performance, and Film Series, the Armenian Studies Program, and the Global Music Lecture Series at Fresno State.

Armenians can trace their oldest form of music, which is liturgical music of the Armenian Apostolic Church, to the fourth century. Richard Hagopian further explained that the church music is founded upon 8 melodic modes from which all other Armenian music evolved. The Armenian Church music library is the largest in world, containing over twenty-two hundred *sharagans* (hymns). Armenian, as well as Greek musicians, used these eight modes through the 19th century, which is the basis of modern Armenian music.

Hagopian asserted that the instruments that he demonstrated during the lecture were used by Armenians for many years. He cited evidence from 13th-15th century Armenian manuscripts, which clearly depict the use of these instruments in marginal illustrations. Even though

these instruments may have been borrowed, they have been dominant in Armenian music for generations.

The *Kanun* is a 75-stringed instrument played by plucking the strings using picks supported by rings on both index fingers. The *Kanun* looks similar to the inside of a piano. The *Kanun* uses sets of three strings, each the same note, to produce the same tone. Using the *Kanun*, Andrew Hagopian demonstrated the many quarter tones used in Armenian music, illustrating his point by transitioning from a B natural to a B-flat.

The *oud*, a non-fretted instrument, is an 11-stringed instrument tuned in unison, four notes in fourths and two notes in octaves. It is an acoustical instrument made completely of wood and it was originally strung with catgut string or gut strings. Within the last century there have been numerous modifications to the instrument.

Hagopian began his musical journey, by playing a short segment of *Der Voghormia* (Lord Have Mercy), typically sung or chanted in the Armenian Church, as an example of early Armenian liturgical music. The Hagopian trio then performed a number of songs from the regions of Kharpert, Erzerum, Dikranagerd, and finally Sepastia.

One of the most popular Armenian dances, the *Halay*, which has Kurdish influence, was performed by the trio. They then performed the *Kochari* which is the eastern version of the *Halay*.

The Richard Hagopian Ensemble provided an interesting presentation about the different modes and the history of the Armenian music and instruments.



Andrew Hagopian, right, explaining the *kanun*.

Photo: Alain Ekmalian

# Vardanyan Assesses Armenian Studies Role in Supporting Student Identity and Sense of Belonging

MARINE VARDANYAN  
SPECIAL TO HYE SHARZHOOM

For more than 40 years, Armenian-American students have gone through Fresno State’s Armenian Studies Program, enrolling in courses, participating in activities, and building relationships with professors and peers. Since its inception, more than 12,000 students have taken courses offered by the ASP and more than 130 students have graduated with a Minor. Many alumni can testify to the great impact their time with the Program has had on their lives. However, the experiences of these students have never been formally explored and recorded. In fact, studies on Armenian-Americans in general are very limited, with author Anny P. Bakalian referring to the group as “hidden-minorities.”

Without research on Armenian-American students, colleges and universities cannot draw ethnic specific data to inform their practice and provide the best services to this population.

As an alumna of the Program, I decided to focus my graduate research in the field of Educational Leadership and Administration on Fresno State’s Armenian Studies Program and explore the role it plays in supporting Armenian-American student identity and sense of belonging.

Author and scholar Terrell Lamont Strayhorn describes sense of belonging as “the students’ perceived social support on campus, a feeling or sensation of connectedness, the experience of mattering or feeling cared about, accepted, respected, and valued by and important to the group and others on campus.” My qualitative study entailed a questionnaire and in-person interview of 11 students. These participants were non-first year Armenian-American college students enrolled full-time at Fresno State and involved with the Armenian Studies Program. Of the 11 participants, six identified as male, five as female,

with ages ranging from 19 to 36. All of the students had different majors, but six were pursuing a Minor in Armenian Studies.

My research questions were: How does the Armenian Studies Program shape the identity of Armenian-American college students? What role does the Armenian Studies Program play in Armenian-American college students’ sense of belonging? The study provided great insight into the experiences of Armenian-American college students at Fresno State. The main takeaways were:

Engagement with the Program evoked feelings of ethnic pride and a greater sense of ethnic group membership. These sentiments were a result of the classes, public lectures, Armenia study trips, and other services provided by the Program which allowed students to learn about their heritage and engage with their community.

The fostering of relationships and social networks with both peers and school entities plays a significant role in how welcomed, appreciated, and supported the students feel at Fresno State.

## Participant Quotes:

“It [the Armenian Studies Program] has given me something to do. ... I think it has given me something to do on my Friday nights, on my Tuesday nights, when there are lectures and events. ... If I didn’t do it, then it would be ‘What am I doing? I’m just going to school and that’s it.’”

“My first semester, I wanted to leave, I did not want to be here. The closest friend I had at Fresno State left, and I was thinking, ‘I didn’t even want to come here in the first place.’ ASO definitely helped me feel more welcome. I was able to make friends... It has made me feel more comfortable



Photo: ASP Archive

**Marine Vardanyan**  
at Fresno State. Now, I want to stay here and continue to grow with the ASO and continue with the Program.”

“I have gone to the banquets and met the President of Fresno State. If it weren’t for the Armenian Studies Program, the President wouldn’t have had any connection with me.... Now when we see each other, he recognizes me, and we greet each other.”

The findings from my study suggest Armenian-American student engagement with the Armenian Studies Program built greater awareness and ethnic pride, fostered ethnic membership, facilitated social and peer networks, and connected students to campus administrators.

This study highlights the supportive role of the Armenian Studies Program, expands on how it enhances Armenian-American college students’ experiences, and provides information needed to best understand and serve this group of students. I am excited to have contributed to the Armenian Studies Program, to the limited knowledge that exists on Armenian-American students, and to have given a voice to my Armenian-American peers at Fresno State.

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“Genocides of the 20th Century”



Photo: Andrew Hagopian

Dr. Clint Curle

EXHIBITION, FROM PAGE 1

Floor Leon S. Peters Ellipse Gallery of the Library until October 31. The exhibition focuses on the Armenian Genocide, the Jewish Holocaust, and the Rwandan Genocide, while touching on other contemporary genocides as well. This touring exhibition reaches many diverse audiences in its mission to educate and prevent genocide. The Opening Reception for the exhibition was held in the Madden Library on Thursday, September 6. Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Director of the Armenian Studies Program, who planned the exhibition’s coming to Fresno State, gave introductory remarks. Special guests included Delritta Hornbuckle, Dean of Library Services at Fresno State’s

Henry Madden Library and Dean Dr. Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval, Dean of the College of Arts and Humanities at Fresno State, as well as many faculty, students, and members of the community. Deborah Sinclair, Head of Touring Exhibitions for the Mémorial de la Shoah, introduced the exhibition as a basis of reflection for how to prevent genocides. “Comparing genocides does not take away their specificities... It leads to a better understanding of their mechanisms.” Although the exhibit features three main genocides of the twentieth century, it does not mean there is no room to honor and recognize others. “All victims of genocide are entitled to the same interest, the same sympathy, and that should lead us to looking into other genocides,”

William Saroyan House Museum Celebration Attracts More than 700

SAROYAN, FROM PAGE 1

was Mr. Artur Janibekyan, founder of the “Renaissance Cultural and Intellectual Foundation” and the chief donor of the Saroyan House project. The Saroyan House Museum project began with the purchase in 2016 of Saroyan’s former home on Griffith Way. This was one of the two homes that Saroyan lived and worked in over the last seventeen years of his life. A movement to collect and preserve Saroyan’s works for future generations began. The plan was that the Saroyan Museum would be innovative, boasting an interactive experience, with digital archives and a hologram of Saroyan. The Museum also has a research space for students and writers to study and work. Admission to the House Museum is free but reservations are required and can be made online at saroyanhouse.com. The opening celebration included remarks by Fresno State President Dr. Joseph Castro and by the Ambassador of Armenia to the United States, Grigor Hovannissian. Ambassador Hovhannisian, who grew up behind the Iron Curtain in Soviet Armenia, recalled how Saroyan’s voice broke through that cultural barrier and reconnected Armenians to their roots. Although Saroyan was born and raised in California, his works spanned across the globe. Many prominent voices spoke about Saroyan and his impact on Fresno and the Armenian community as a whole. Saroyan’s nephew Hank Saroyan recalled his interactions and humorous stories about the noted writer. Charles Janigian emphasized the



Aleksan Harutyunyan and Hasmik Harutyunyan were invited from Yerevan to perform Saroyan’s original songs, “Bari-Bari” and “Giragi Picnic.”

need to keep the study of Saroyan alive. This opening ceremony was not only a milestone for the Armenian community, but for Fresno as a whole. Saroyan loved Fresno and always paid homage to his home and life here. In the words of Congressman Jim Costa, “I may be not be Armenian, but tonight everyone is an honorary Armenian.” Costa had vivid memories of Saroyan riding his bicycle through Fresno, although he had achieved fame as an accomplished writer. The new House Museum will allow all of Fresno to learn about and honor the memory of Saroyan. In addition to being an accomplished author, William Saroyan was also a playwright, songwriter, and artist. His songs “Bari-Bari” and “Giragi Picnic” were performed by Aleksan Harutyunyan and Hasmik Harutyunyan. The lively performances demonstrated

another dimension of Saroyan’s works, and reminded everyone of his talents. A documentary film gave an overview of Saroyan’s life and about his works. When guests entered the Satellite Student Union, they were greeted by a display of photographs of Saroyan hanging from the walls. The Saroyan House Museum recognized several people for their outstanding contribution to the Museum project. These individuals were honored with Appreciation Awards from the Renaissance Foundation. One of the recipients, Professor Barlow Der Mugrdechian of the Armenian Studies Program, expressed his desire that the Saroyan House Museum would be a valuable resource for many generations to come. Artur Janibekyan, founder of the Renaissance Foundation, echoed these ideas with hopes that this project will inspire many others like it. After the program, guests received souvenir gifts provided by the Renaissance Cultural and Educational Foundation and then enjoyed a reception which followed. when we stand up against racism and oppression.” The Fresno State College of Arts and Humanities, College of Social Sciences, the Jewish Studies Program, the Consulate General of France in San Francisco, the Embassy of France in the United States, and SNCF also supported the showing. This exhibition was designed, created, and distributed by the Mémorial de la Shoah in Paris, France (curators Georges Bensoussan, Joel Kotek, and Yves Ternon), and made possible through the generous support of SNCF.

Armenian Series at The Press  
at Fresno State

<http://www.thepressatcsufresno.org/>

stated Sinclair. The exhibition examines what happened during each genocide, connecting the present to the past. Sinclair hopes that it will serve as a driving force for recognition that is necessary today. Dr. Clint Curle, Senior Advisor to the President at the Canadian Museum of Human Rights, in Winnipeg, was the featured speaker for the evening. He spoke on the concept and patterns of genocides and opened with his frank sentiment, “I wish we didn’t have to have this talk.” Before the formal definition of genocide, international laws were based of sovereignty of nations and did not criminalize the actions of governments. The Nuremberg Trials served as a time to reestablish the law in Europe. Dr. Curle also discussed the work of Rafael Lemkin in defining genocide. Lemkin identified physical, biological, and cultural techniques in genocides that result in the complete erasure of a race. The discussion shifted the topic from the history of genocides to the prevention of them. The broad passive complicity of the public enables the execution of a genocide. “The vulnerability of

every genocide is that it requires people to sit on their hands,” said Dr. Curle. Dr. Curle introduced a method of genocide prevention to combat this. The public health model is based in education, comparing the eradication of genocide to the development of the polio vaccine. Beginning with children, education on genocides and dehumanization can prevent the “disease” of genocide. By continually educating them, they can be empowered to prevent genocides in the future. Dr. Clure left the audience with the sentiment, “genocide will end



Photo: Andrew Hagopian

The exhibition featured panels on the Armenian Genocide, the Jewish Holocaust, and the Rwandan Genocide.



**The Armenian Studies Program,  
Homenetmen Fresno Sassoon Chapter,  
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on the occasion of the 100th Anniversary of Homenetmen  
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**“The Republic of Armenia:  
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**Dr. Richard Hovannisian**  
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In this centennial year of the Republic of Armenia, Professor Hovannisian will reflect on the enormous challenges of establishing the first independent Armenian state in more than 500 years. In an illustrated power-point presentation, he will assess how the difficult road to independence evolved into an opportunity for a self-sustainable united sovereign republic that would gather in the historic homelands and all elements of the Armenian people the world over.



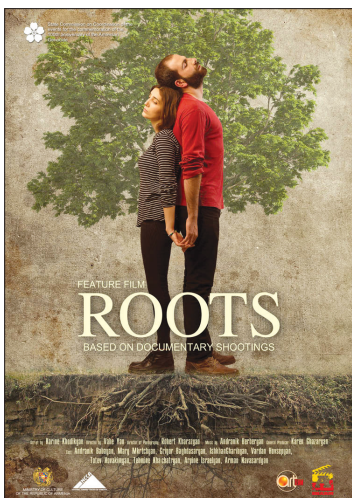
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**“Roots”**

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“Roots,” by Armenian director Vahé Yan, tells the story of a Boston-based journalist-blogger named Aram who decides to visit Armenia on the eve of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide in 2015 and cover the commemorative events on his blog.

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**“The Curious Case of Ahmed Necmeddian Bey:  
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in Aintab on the Eve of 1915”**

by

**Dr. Ümit Kurt**

**Tuesday, November 6, 2018 • 7:30PM**

**University Business Center,  
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**Free admission**



Dr. Ümit Kurt

**“The Hidden Map of Historic Armenia”**

**presented by Explorer Steven Sim  
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**Special screening of the video-  
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**Tuesday, November 13, 2018 • 7:30PM**

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Steven Sim and  
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