

# Ozum Yesiltas, Ph.D.

## Curriculum Vitae

Department of Political Science  
Texas A&M University-Commerce  
2200 Campbell Street  
Commerce, TX 75428

ozum.yesiltas@tamuc.edu

### EDUCATION

- Ph.D. Department of Politics and International Relations, Florida International University, 2014  
Graduate Certificate: Middle East and Central Asian Studies
- M.S. Department of International Relations, Middle East Technical University, 2006
- M.S. European Studies Program, Middle East Technical University, 2005
- B.A. Department of Sociology, Middle East Technical University, 2001

### PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

- 2017 Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Texas A&M University-Commerce
- 2014 Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, St. Norbert College

### PUBLICATIONS

#### Books

- 2020 Yesiltas, Ozum. "Rethinking Agency in State-Non-State Alliances: Change and Continuity in the U.S.-Kurdish Relationship" (under contract by Lexington Books, Kurdish Societies, Politics, and International Relations Series)

#### Refereed Journal Articles

- 2020 Yesiltas, Ozum. "Power from the Margins: The Case for a 'Coherent' U.S. Foreign Policy towards the Kurds." *Kurdish Studies Journal*. Under Review.
- 2020 Yesiltas, Ozum. "Understanding Rojava: A Critical Analysis of Representations of Kurdish Female Fighters in the U.S. Mainstream Media." *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*. Revised and Resubmitted.

- 2018 Yesiltas, Ozum. "Taking Voluntariness Seriously: Legal Challenges Impeding the Syrian Refugees' Right of Return." *Midsouth Political Science Review* 19: 83-110.
- 2018 Yesiltas, Ozum. "Turkey and the Kurdistan Regional Government: Unlikely Allies?" *The Journal of Turkish Studies* 1 (1): 188-215.
- 2016 Yesiltas, Ozum. "Contested Notions of National Identity, Ethnic Movements and Democratization in Iran." *Studies of Transition States and Societies* 8 (1): 53-68.

### **Book Chapters**

- 2019 Yesiltas, Ozum. "Continuity and Change in Syrian Kurdistan: The Rojava Revolution and Beyond," in Michael Gunter, David Romano and Mehmet Gürses (Eds.), *Kurds in the Middle East: Enduring Problems and New Dynamics* (pp. 129-147). Maryland: Lexington Books.
- 2016 Yesiltas, Ozum. "Turning Challenges into Opportunities: Discursive Formations of the Kurdish Question in Turkey," in F. Donelli, M. Ferez, A. Chiriatti (Eds.), *Modern Turkey: Opportunities and Challenges*. Mexico City: Anahuac University.
- 2015 Yesiltas, Ozum. "Democratization and Ethnic Conflict: Transformation of Turkey's Kurdish Question," in Michael Fonkem (Ed.), *Nationalism and Intra-State Conflicts in a Postcolonial World* (pp. 277-300). Maryland: Lexington Books.
- 2014 Yesiltas, Ozum. "Iraq, Arab Nationalism and Obstacles to Democratic Transition," in David Romano, Mehmet Gürses (Eds.), *Conflict, Democratization, and the Kurds in the Middle East: Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria* (pp. 41-57). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

### **Book Reviews, Research Notes, Web-Based Publications**

- 2020 Yesiltas, Ozum. "Gender Mainstreaming in Teaching International Relations," *Humanities and Social Sciences Online*, Teaching Roundtable XXI-39 on Teaching Gender in IR, May 1, 2020.
- 2019 Yesiltas, Ozum. "The Case for Re-Opening Turkey-Rojava Dialogue," *Washington Kurdish Institute Weekly Digest*, Washington Kurdish Institute, June 18, 2019.
- 2015 Yesiltas Ozum. *Rethinking Iranian Nationalism and Modernity*. Kamran Scot Aghaie, Afshin Marashi (Eds.) in *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 15 (1): 210-212.

### **Manuscripts in Progress**

"Women Fighters in Kurdish Parties: Freedom Fighters or Silent Symbols?"

"Nationalism and Women's Agency: Constructions of Feminist Nationalist Identity in the Kurdish Movements in Iraq and Syria"

## **FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS**

- 2020 Global Human Rights Fellowship, Texas A&M University-Commerce
- 2020 Faculty Development Leave Award, Texas A&M University-Commerce
- 2020 Humanities, Social Sciences & Arts Research Grant, Texas A&M University-Commerce
- 2019 Summer Research Grant, Association for the Study of the Middle East and Africa
- 2019 Visiting Fellow, Washington Kurdish Institute
- 2019 Faculty Development Grant, Texas A&M University-Commerce
- 2018 Centennial Center Research Grant, American Political Science Association
- 2018 Centennial Center Visiting Scholar, American Political Science Association
- 2018 Faculty Development Grant, Texas A&M University-Commerce
- 2012 Dissertation Year Fellowship, Florida International University
- 2011 Dissertation Evidence Acquisition Fellowship, Florida International University
- 2007 Graduate Teaching Assistantship, Florida International University
- 2006 Best Thesis Award, College of Arts and Sciences, Middle East Technical University
- 2001 Highest GPA Award, Department of Sociology, Middle East Technical University

## **CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS**

- 2020 “Kurdish Studies in the United States” Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting Virtual Conference, October 5-17.
- 2019 “Rojava: A Feminist Revolution” Middle East Studies Association, New Orleans, LA, November 14-17.
- 2019 “Power from the Margins: The Case for a ‘Coherent’ U.S. Foreign Policy towards the Kurds” Association for the Study of Middle East and Africa, Washington, D.C., October 31-November 2.
- 2019 “Nationalism and Women’s Agency: Constructions of Feminist Nationalist Identity in the Kurdish Movements in Iraq and Syria” Serbest Kurdish Studies Conference, Evanston, IL, June 7-8.
- 2018 “Understanding Rojava: Western Representations of Kurdish Women Fighting ISIS” Middle East Studies Association, San Antonio, TX, November 15-18.
- 2018 “Taking Voluntariness Seriously: Legal Challenges Impeding the Syrian Refugees’ Right of Return” Association for the Study of Nationalities, New York, NY, May 3-5.
- 2018 “Spoilers of Peace and Dilemmas of American Foreign Policy in the Middle East” International Studies Association, San Francisco, CA, April 4-7.
- 2017 “A Source of Hope among Horror: The Feminist Revolution in Rojava” National Women’s Studies Association, Baltimore, MD, November 16-19.

- 2017 “Rethinking the ‘Right of Return’: An International Law Analysis of the Syrian Refugee Crisis” International Studies Association, Baltimore, MD, February 22-25.
- 2016 “Pragmatism at Work or a Long-Term Shift? Understanding the Nuclear Deal between the U.S. and Iran” International Studies Association, Atlanta, GA, March 16-19.
- 2016 “Nationalizing Iran: Counter-Discourses on Democracy and National identity” International Studies Association, Atlanta, GA, March 16-19.
- 2015 “The Kurdish Spring?” International Studies Association, New Orleans, LA, February 18-21.
- 2014 “Pushing the Boundaries of Human Rights in the Middle East: Lessons from the Green Movement in Iran” International Studies Association, Toronto, Canada, March 26-29.
- 2013 “A Non-Arab Spring: Syria’s Kurdish Predicament” Peace Science Society-International Studies Association, Budapest, Hungary, June 27-29.
- 2013 “Reinterpreting Ethnic Nationalism and Democratization: The Kurdish Experience” International Studies Association, San Francisco, CA, April 3-6.
- 2012 “The Role of Ethnic Movements in the Formation of a Democratic Iran” Middle East Studies Association, Denver, CO, November 17-20.
- 2012 “Co-existence versus Separation: Kurds as Transformative Actors in Turkey” Association for the Study of Nationalities, New York City, NY, April 19-21.
- 2012 “Rethinking the National Question: Anti-Statist Discourses within the Kurdish National Movement, 1990-2012” International Studies Association, San Diego, CA, April 1-4.
- 2012 “Turkish-Syrian Relations: What is Next for the Kurds in the Wake of the Syrian Uprising?” Florida Political Science Association, Tampa, FL, March 17.
- 2011 “Human Agency and the Shifting Focus of Security Thinking in the Middle East” International Studies Association-West, Pasadena, CA, September 23-24.

## **INVITED TALKS**

- 2019 “Power from the Margins: The Case for a ‘Coherent’ U.S. Foreign Policy towards the Kurds” Roundtable Discussion: U.S. Foreign Policy toward the Kurds and What’s Next in Syria, Washington Kurdish Institute, Washington, D.C., June 21.
- 2018 “Allies or Terrorists? Contradictions in the U.S. Foreign Policy towards the Kurds” Brownbag Speaker Series, American Political Science Association, Centennial Center for Political Science and Public Affairs, Washington D.C., June 27.

- 2016 “Bridging the Gap between the Haves and the Have-nots: A Critical Evaluation of the United Nations” Green Bay Area Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, October 23.
- 2016 “Turkey in the Middle: Domestic and Foreign Perspectives on the Most Recent Events” Global Studies Discussion Series, University of Wisconsin, Green Bay, September 30.
- 2016 “A Panel Discussion on the Current World Refugee Crisis” Middle East Initiative-Center for Middle East Studies and Partnerships, University of Wisconsin, Green Bay, March 9.
- 2015 “The ISIS Threat: The Complex War Raging in Iraq and Syria” St. Norbert College Distinguished Lecture Series, Door County Auditorium, January 17.
- 2014 “Kurds and the Situation in the Middle East” Global Studies Discussion Series, University of Wisconsin, Green Bay, December 5.
- 2014 “Conflict and Transformation in the Middle East: The Kurds and the Rise of the Islamic State” Department of Sociology Brown Bag Lecture Series, University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh, November 19.

## **CAMPUS TALKS**

- 2017 “Oil Dependence and U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East” Great Decisions Lecture Series, St. Norbert College, April 5.
- 2017 “Understanding Trump’s Executive Order on Immigration” Global Scholars Forum, St. Norbert College, February 16.
- 2016 “Masculinities for Jews and Other Non-Christian Others” Cassandra Voss Center Annual Masculinity Summit, St. Norbert College, November 3.
- 2016 “The Future of Kurdistan” Great Decisions Lecture Series, St. Norbert College, March 30.
- 2015 “Understanding the Iran Nuclear Deal” Global Scholars Third Annual Global Governance Panel, St. Norbert College, December 2.
- 2015 “The Paris Attacks: Making Sense of the Senseless” Center for International Education, St. Norbert College, November 18.
- 2015 “We Can’t Look Away: A Conversation about the World Refugee Crisis” Middle East Initiative-Norman Miller Center, St. Norbert College, November 12.
- 2015 “Women Fighters in Kurdish Parties: Freedom Fighters or Silent Symbols?” St. Norbert College Social Science Scholarship Series, November 5.

- 2015 “Syria’s Refugee Crisis” Great Decisions Lecture Series, St. Norbert College, February 25.
- 2015 “ISIS: What You Should Know about the Islamic State” Norman Miller Center, St. Norbert College, February 10.
- 2014 “Iraq and ISIS” Global Scholars Second Annual Global Governance Panel, St. Norbert College, November 19.

## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

### **Texas A&M University-Commerce**

United States Government (Spring 2020, Summer 2020, Fall 2020)  
 Texas Government (Fall 2019, Summer 2020)  
 Principles of U.S. & Texas Government (Fall 2017, Spring 2018, Fall 2018)  
 U.S. & Texas Government: Institutions and Policies (Fall 2017, Summer 2018, Summer 2019)  
 Non-European Political Systems (Fall 2018)  
 International Relations (Fall 2017)  
 U.S. Foreign Policy (Spring 2018, Fall 2019, Fall 2020)  
 Gender in International Relations (Spring 2019)  
 Model Arab League (Spring 2018, Spring 2019, Spring 2020)  
 U.S. Foreign Policy-graduate (Spring 2019)  
 Proseminar in Comparative Politics-graduate (Spring 2020)  
 Problems in International Relations-graduate (Summer 2019)  
 Selected Topics in International Relations-graduate (Summer 2020)  
 Proseminar in International Relations-graduate (Fall 2020)

### **St. Norbert College**

Introduction to International Studies  
 Introduction to Comparative Politics  
 International Relations Theory  
 Middle East Politics  
 Politics of Modern Iran  
 Global Political Extremism

### **Florida International University**

Politics of the Middle East  
 Contemporary International Problems  
 Peace and Conflict Studies in International Relations  
 International Protection of Human Rights  
 American Foreign Policy

## **UNIVERSITY AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICE**

### **Service to Profession**

Book Manuscript Referee, Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, 2019  
Book Manuscript Referee, W. W. Norton & Company, 2019  
Book Manuscript Referee, Cognella Academic Publishing, 2018  
Book Manuscript Referee, Oxford University Press, 2015  
Manuscript Referee, *Middle East Journal*  
Manuscript Referee, *Studies of Transition States and Societies*  
Manuscript Referee, *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*  
Manuscript Referee, *Japanese Journal of Political Science*  
Manuscript Referee, *Midsouth Political Science Review*  
Secretary, Kurdish Studies Association  
Advisory Council Member, Center for Middle East Studies & Partnerships, University of Wisconsin, Green Bay  
Affiliate Fellow, Washington Kurdish Institute  
Panel Organizer, “The State of Kurdish Studies” Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting Virtual Conference, October 5-17, 2020.

### **University Service**

#### **Texas A&M University-Commerce**

##### *Academic Committee Memberships*

Faculty Senate Academic Life Committee  
Faculty Senate Budget Committee  
Political Science Department Scholarship Committee  
Political Science Department Curriculum Committee  
Global Human Rights Initiative Steering Committee

##### *Memberships in Campus Initiatives*

Anti-Racist Reading Group

##### *Campus Lectures*

“Power from the Margins: The U.S. and the Kurds as a Case of State-Non-State Alliance”  
Honors Colloquium Series, Texas A&M University-Commerce, October 12, 2020

“Syrian Refugees and Human Rights in 2018” Holocaust Days of Remembrance, Texas A&M University-Commerce, February 21, 2018.

“Understanding Rojava: Western Representations of Kurdish Women Fighting ISIS” Gender Studies Lecture Series, Texas A&M University-Commerce, February 20, 2018

##### *Member of Master’s Thesis Committee*

Christopher Michael Rowback, Department of History  
Song Wang, Department of Political Science

*Member of PSCI 595 Non-Thesis Committee*  
David Gosbee, Department of Political Science  
Egzon Krasniqi, Department of Political Science  
Jeffrey Leachman, Department of Political Science  
Rebecca Lynch, Department of Political Science  
Matthew Markovitch, Department of Political Science  
Dovlet Hudayberdiyev, Department of Political Science

*Honor's Thesis Supervisor*  
Benita Audu, Department of Political Science  
Ashley Ramirez, Department of Political Science

*Member of Honor's Thesis Committee*  
Alexandra Corrales, Department of Political Science

*Member of Search Committee*  
Department of History, Spring 2019  
Department of Political Science, Spring 2019

*Faculty Advisor (Assisting the Main Faculty Advisor, Dr. Robert Rodriguez)*  
Mock Organization of American States Program, Fall 2018

*Panel Judge*  
Texas A&M University-Commerce Annual Research Symposium, Spring 2019

*Representative of Texas A&M University-Commerce, Department of Political Science*  
University of North Texas, McNair Conference Graduate Recruitment Fair, Spring 2019

*Lecturer*  
Global Frontier Program, Texas A&M University Commerce, Summer 2019

## **PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

Kurdish Studies Association  
International Studies Association  
American Political Science Association  
Association for the Study of Nationalities  
Middle East Studies Association  
Association for the Study of Middle East and Africa  
National Women's Studies Association

## **LANGUAGES**

Turkish: Native Speaker  
English: Advanced reading, writing, speaking  
Kurdish: Intermediate reading, writing, speaking