

Sumayya Ahmed

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Education

Ph.D., Information Science, August 2016, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill
(Duke-UNC Graduate Certificate in Middle East Studies)
M.A., Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, Washington D.C., 2006
B.A., Sociology & African American Studies, Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT, 1998
(Semester Abroad, School for International Training in Rabat, Morocco, Fall 1996)

Professional Appointments

Executive Director, Black Metropolis Research Consortium (BMRC)
University of Chicago Library, January 2024 - present

Assistant Professor (tenure-track) in Archives Management
School of Library & Information Science, Simmons University, July 2020 – December 2023

Lecturer (Assistant Professor)
Library & Information Studies, University College London-Qatar, October 2016 – June 2020

Doctoral Research Assistant, ELIME-21 (Educating Library and Information Professionals in
the Middle East for the 21st Century)
University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill, School of Information and Library Science
Aug 2011 - Aug 2016

Publications

Ahmed, S. (2026). Collecting Ourselves: Archives, Family History, and Black Southerner
Migration to Chicago. *Southern Cultures*, 32 (1), 6-23.

Ahmed, S., Dumothier, T., & McGinn, K. M. (2024). The Colonial Adventures of
Confiscated Arabic Texts: Ibn Battuta's Rihla Manuscript from North Africa to
the French National Library. *Library Trends*, 72(3), 463-477.

Caswell, M., Ahmed, S., Brilmyer, G., Cifor, M., Douglas, J., Lee, J.A., Lowry, J., Reyes,
V., Salvatore, C. and Sutherland, T. (2024). Envisioning a Paid Community
Archives Internship Program: Challenges and Opportunities. *Journal of Education
for Library and Information Science*, 65(4), 390-409.

Ahmed, S. (2023). Appreciating the Archives and Archival Thinking of the Middle
East and North Africa. *The American Archivist*, 86(2), 320-322. [Co-editor of
Special Section of American Archivist on Archives in the Middle East and North
Africa]

Ahmed, S. (2023). To the Nation, Belong the Archives: The Search for Manuscripts
and Archival Documents in Post-Colonial Morocco, *International Journal of Middle
East Studies*.

Ahmed, S., Clemens, R., Murillo, A. and Patillo, E. (2022). Does it matter: have Black

Lives Matter protests opened spaces for collective action in Libraries, Archives and Museums? *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies* , 4.
<https://journals.litwinbooks.com/index.php/jclis/article/view/168>

- Ahmed, S. (2022). Documenting Doha: Collective Memory and Community Archiving in Qatar. *Journal of Contemporary Archival Studies* 9(10). Available at:
<https://elischolar.library.yale.edu/jcas/vol9/iss1/10>
- Ahmed, S. (2021). People of remembrance: archival thinking and religious memory in Sufi communities. *Archival Science* <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-020-09346-9>
- Ahmed, S. (2019). Reading teach for Arabia in Qatar: Self-critical university studies. *Review of Middle East Studies*, 1-6. doi:10.1017/rms.2019.49.
- Ahmed, S. (2019). Engaging Curation: A literature review. In E. Benoit III & A. Eveleigh *Participatory Archives: Theory and Practice*. Facet Publishing.
- Ahmed, S. (2019) Archives du Maroc? The official and alternative national archives of Morocco. *Archives and Manuscripts*. DOI: [10.1080/01576895.2018.1558408](https://doi.org/10.1080/01576895.2018.1558408) .
- Ahmed, S. (2018). “Seeking information from the lips of people”: Oral History’s place in the archives of Qatar and the Gulf region. *Archival Science*.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-018-9293-8>
- Ahmed, S. (2016). Learned women: three generations of female Islamic scholarship in Morocco. *Journal of North African Studies*, doi: 10.1080/13629387.2016.1158110.
- Ahmed, S. (2016). For a Morocco that reads: the crisis of reading and recent initiatives to revive libraries and reading in Morocco. In A. Click, S. Ahmed, J. Hill, & J.D. Martin III (eds.), *Library and Information Science in the Middle East and North Africa*. Boston: DeGruyter.
- Ahmed, S. (2016). Desert scholarship: The zawiya library of the Naṣiriyya sufi order. In T. Courau and F. Vandermarcq (eds.), *Libraries at the Heart of the Dialogue of Cultures and Religions: History, Present, Future*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Moran, B., Ahmed, S., Click, A., Hill, J., and Martin, J. (2014). [“Flexible Strategies for Uncertain Times: An Innovative Approach to LIS Education in the Middle East and North Africa.”](#) IFLA World Library and Information Congress, Lyon, France, August 16-22, 2014.
- Ahmed, S. (2014) [“Developing Readers: The Crisis of Reading in Morocco and Recent Initiatives to Promote Reading.”](#) IFLA World Library and Information Congress, Lyon, France, August 2014.

Digital Project

[Qatar Talking Archives \(www.qatartalkingarchives.org\)](http://www.qatartalkingarchives.org) - A repository for Qatari oral histories. [currently being revamped]

Book Reviews

- Ahmed, S. (2025). Laura E. Helton, [Scattered and Fugitive Things: How Black Collectors Created Archives and Remade History](#). *Archivaria*, 99, 180-183.
- Ahmed, S. (2021). [Agadir: Book Review](#). *MELA Notes: Journal of Middle Eastern Librarianship*
- Ahmed, S. (2013). A Muslim suicide by BenSalem Himmich. *MELA Notes: Journal of Middle Eastern Librarianship* [86 \(2013\)](#).

Ahmed, S. (2012). Human rights, suffering, and aesthetics in political prison literature. *InterActions: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies*, [8\(2\) 2012](#).

Academic and Archival Internships

Moroccan Ministry of Culture, Directorate of the Book, Rabat, June-August 2015
Assistant on Hassan II Prize for Manuscripts and Archival Documents
Al-Akhawayn University, Mohammed VI Library, Ifrane, Morocco, Nov –Dec. 2013
Information Literacy and Research Strategy Trainer
Duke University Islamic Studies Center, Transcultural Islam Research Network (TIRN),
Durham, NC, November 2012 – May 2013, Website and Social Media Assistant Editor
National Library of Morocco (BNRM) June-July 2012, Assistant in Manuscript Division

Research Grants and Fellowships

Mellon Foundation, Public Knowledge Program Grant for [Faculty Organizing for Community Archives Support Project](#) (Co-PI for the Black Metropolis Research Consortium, July 2024-2027)
American Institute on Maghreb Studies (AIMS) Research Grant, July – August 2022
Simmons University Public Humanities Faculty Fellowship Spring 2022
Simmons University Hazel Dick Leonard Faculty Fellowship, Spring 2021
American Institute on Maghreb Studies (AIMS) Research Grant, May –August 2015
American Institute on Maghreb Studies (Aims) Research Grant, June-August 2012
Foreign Language Area Studies Fellowship (FLAS), for Advanced Arabic Reading, June –July 2012
Institute of Museum & Library Services (IMLS), Educating Librarians in the Middle East for the 21st Century (ELIME-21) Fellowship 2011-2015
US State Department Fulbright Research Fellowship, Morocco 2007-2008
US State Department Critical Language Enhancement Award, September–December 2007,
Advanced Modern Standard Arabic at the Arabic Language Institute of Fez (ALIF)
Georgetown University Qatar Arabic Language Study Fellowship, September 2004 –January 2005,
Arabic language study at Qatar University, Doha
Foreign Language Area Studies Fellowship (FLAS), for Advanced Arabic, June- August 2004
US Department of Education, Ronald E. McNair Scholars Fellowship 1997-1998

Awards

2nd Place, Juried Doctoral Student Research Poster Award for “We Call on Citizens to be Aware of the Value of what is in their Homes:” a Case Study of the Hassan II Prize for Manuscripts and Archival Documents in Post-Colonial Morocco. Association of Library & Information Science Education (ALISE) Conference, January 2016, Boston, MA

1st Place, Juried Student Poster Award for “The Hassan II Prize for Manuscripts and Archival Documents: the Tension between Archival Disclosure and National Heritage in Morocco.” Archival Education & Research Institute (*AERI*), July 14-18, 2014, University of Pittsburgh, PA

Herbert L. Bodman Award for Best Paper by a Graduate Student for “The Tradition of Female Islamic Education in Morocco,” Southeast Regional Middle East & Islamic Studies Seminar, March 17, 2012, UNC-Chapel Hill

Presentations

- "Mapping to Remember: Female Maqams as Archival Records and Heritage Sites in Asfi (Safi), Morocco," Jadal Women's Research Dialogue Conference, Al Mujadilah Center, Doha, Qatar, January 31- February 2, 2026.
- "Locating, Archiving and Providing Access to Black Chicago History: The BMRC and Support from the Mellon Foundation 2009-2027," Sustaining Black Archives Panel, Association for the Study of African American Life and History Conference, Atlanta, Georgia, September 25, 2025
- "Generally National: 100 Years of the Library-Archives of Rabat, Morocco," Colonial Encounters and Manuscripts in Muslim Societies Workshop, Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC), University of Hamburg, Germany, June 19-21, 2025
- "Archives and History Writing in Contemporary Morocco," Le Maroc Contemporain: Historiographies, Sources, et Méthodes, Université Libre de Bruxelles, May 22, 2024 (virtual)
- "Collective Sentiment, Sonic Heritage: Considerations for Archiving Nabati Poetry," Culture of the Desert Book Convening, King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, May 5, 2024
- "Thinking about What and Whom Archivist Save" UNC Chapel Hill School of Information and Library Science (SILS) Alumni Lecture (virtual), March 23, 2024
- "Looking Inward: the Search for Indigenous Records in the Wake of Colonization in Morocco," Archival Repatriation & Decolonization in the Middle East & North Africa Panel, International Council on Archives Congress, Abu Dhabi, UAE October 11, 2023
- "Community archiving activity in the Gulf: a focus on Qatar," NYU Abu Dhabi Institute, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, October 12, 2023
- Roundtable: "The Maghreb Archiving Project," Middle East Studies Association (MESA) Annual Meeting, December 3, 2022 (panelist)
- "Archival Formations: Igoudar - Amazigh Collective Granaries and Archival History," Archival Research and Education Institute (AERI), Invited Keynote, July 12, 2022
- "From Private Archives: Using Societal Provenance to Connect Islamic(ate) Manuscripts to Local Communities in Morocco," Middle East Librarians Association Social Justice Lecture Series, Virtual (Invited Talk), December 13, 2021
- "Plotting the Journey: Ibn Battuta's Rihla Manuscript and the Silence of Colonial Confiscations," Migrations of The Book Conference, Texas A & M University, Virtual, October 14, 2021 (co-presenter)
- "What Matters to Archives? Preliminary Survey Results of Archivists and Archival Scholars on Institutional Responses to 2020 BLM Calls for Social Justice," Archival Education and Research Institute ([AERI](#)), Virtual, July 15, 2021 (co-presenter)
- Roundtable: "Anti-Racist Pedagogy in Archives and Digital Curation," Archival Education and Research Institute ([AERI](#)), Virtual, July 13, 2021 (panelist)

- Roundtable: “Decolonizing Islamic Manuscript Studies” British Society for Middle East Studies (BRIMSES), Virtual, July 8, 2021 (panelist and co-convenor)
- “Lost in Transcription: Transcripts of Qatari Arabic on the Qatar Talking Archives Project (QTAP) site” Digital Humanities Summer Institute (DHSI), Right to Left Conference, June 8, 2021
- “A Fractured Inheritance: The Problems, Challenges, and Opportunities of Collecting Manuscript Fragments” Rare Book School (RBS), Panelist, September 15, 2020
- “More Heritage, Less Archivist: An Exploration of the Paucity of Archivists in the Heritage Practices of Qatar” Archival Education and Research Institute (AERI), University of Liverpool, July 8-12, 2019
- “To the Nation, Belong the Archives: Nationalist Archival Imagination and Contemporary Contests for Morocco’s Documentary Heritage” *En Quête D’archives / In Search of Archives Contemporary Approaches to the Past* Conference, Berlin, Germany, January 23 – 26, 2019
- “From the Archives of Pre-colonial Medicine: An 1832 Moroccan Medical Diploma” [The Medical Humanities in the Middle East Conference](#), Doha, Qatar, November 17, 2018
- “Is This the National Archive? Colonial Records and Present-Day Silence in the Archives of Morocco” Society of American Archivists Conference, Washington D.C., August 16, 2018
- “The Qatar Talking Archives Project: Collecting Information about Qatar’s Oral Histories” UCL Qatar Symposium on Community Archives: Preserving Public History and Memory in the Middle East, Msheireb Museums, Doha, Qatar, May 3, 2018
- “I’ve only been here for two days, how do you...?” WhatsApp group as a social and collaborative information seeking platform for Muslim expatriate women in Qatar” iConference 2018, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, UK, March 25-28, 2018 ([Poster](#))
- “Avenues for Digital Research Projects on Morocco” Digital Humanities Abu Dhabi (DHAD), New York University- Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates April 10-12, 2017
- “And We Keep a Copy: Digitization, Ownership and Colonial Memories in Morocco” Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting (MESA), Washington D.C., November 22-25, 2014
- “Flexible Strategies for Uncertain Times: An Innovative Approach to Library & Information Science Education in the Middle East and North Africa”, IFLA World Library and Information Congress, Lyon, France, August 16-22, 2014
- “Developing Readers: The Crisis of Reading in Morocco and Recent Initiatives to Promote Reading” IFLA World Library and Information Congress, Lyon, France, August 16-22, 2014
- “Desert Scholarship: The Zawiya Library of the Nasiriyya Sufi Brotherhood” (by video), IFLA - Religious Libraries in Dialogue Special Interest Group Satellite Meeting, Paris, France, August 25- 26, 2014

“Andalusian Astronomers: Connecting Manuscripts on Astronomy from Early Islamic Spain,”
Islamic Manuscript Conference, Queen’s College, Cambridge, July 9-11, 2012

“Female Islamic Education in Morocco,” Southeast Regional Middle East and Islamic Studies
Seminar, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, March 17, 2012

Teaching

Simmons University, Boston, MA, USA

Oral History (LIS-433, graduate, Fall 2021; Spring 2022)

Introduction to Archival Theory and Practice (LIS-438, graduate, Fall 2020, 2021,2022; 2023 Spring 2021,
2022)

Archives, History, and Collective Memory (LIS-443, graduate, Fall 2020, 2022, 2023 Spring 2021)

Archival Appraisal (LIS 441, graduate Fall 2023)

University College London-Qatar, Doha, Qatar

Islamic Manuscripts (UCLQ0017), Spring 2019

Introduction to Archives and Preservation (UCLQ 0015) Fall 2018,2019

Research Methods in Information and Library Science (UCLQ 0020), Fall 2017,2018,2019

Reference and Information Services (UCLQG414), Fall 2017

Digital Resources for the Humanities (UCQG408), Spring 2017

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA

Tools for Information Literacy

(INLS 161-002), undergraduate, Spring 2016) [Website](#)

National Archives: Politics, Memory and Public History (INLS 690-241, graduate, Fall 2015,
(developed original course)

Access, Outreach, and Public Service in Cultural Heritage Repositories

(INLS 754) graduate, Fall 2015, co-Instructor with Dr. Denise Anthony. [Website](#).

History of the Book (INLS 550, graduate, Spring 2015), served as graduate teaching assistant
and taught sections on the book in the Muslim world). [Website](#).

Service to the Profession

Member, Steering Committee, Archival Education and Research Initiative 2023-Present

Member, Advisory Board, Dominican University School of Information Studies 2024-Present

Member, Simmons University SLIS Admissions Committee 2021- 2023

Member, Simmons University Assessment Committee, Fall 2023

Member Simmons University DEI Committee, Fall 2021 – 2022

Member, Editorial Board of *The American Archivist* journal, 2019- 2023

UCL Qatar Institutional Review Board (IRB) member (2019- 2020)

Peer Reviewer: *The American Archivist*, *Journal of North African Studies*, and *Mashriq*

& *Mahjar: Journal of Middle East and North African Migration Studies*

Supervisor, sixteen MA student theses (2017-2020), UCL Qatar
Masters (Thesis) Dissertation Coordinator, University College London- Qatar 2017-2018
Convener, UCL Qatar 2019 [Symposium on Living Arabic Script Manuscript Cultures](#), Doha, Qatar, April 15-16, 2019
Convener, UCL Qatar 2018 Symposium on Community Archives: Preserving Public History and Memory in the Middle East, Msheireb Museums, Doha, Qatar, May 3, 2018.
Organizing Committee, 2012 Duke-UNC Graduate Islamic Studies Conference, “Making Sense of Islam: Sensuality and Affect in the Muslim Humanities”
Doctoral Representative, Faculty Diversity Committee, SILS, UNC-Chapel Hill 2012-2013
Community Outreach Speaker, UNC-Chapel Hill Carolina Center for the Study of the Middle East and Muslim Civilizations 2012- 2016

Professional affiliations

Society of American Archivists (SAA)
Archival Education and Research Initiative (AERI)
American Institute of Maghrib Studies (AIMS)
International Council on Archives (ICA)
Middle East Librarians Association (MELA)

Languages

Native English speaker
Advanced Modern Standard Arabic (reading, writing, speaking)
Advanced Moroccan Arabic dialect (speaking)
Intermediate French (reading, writing, speaking)
Beginner Turkish (reading, speaking)