Afghanistan Research Initiative
The University of Central Asia’s Afghanistan Research Initiative (ARI) aims to help sustain the research and capacity gains made over the last decade and continue producing knowledge critical to the country’s present and future. ARI, a programme of the University’s Graduate School of Development, is supported by a three-year grant from Canada’s International Development Research Centre and the Aga Khan Foundation of Canada. ARI is based at the University’s main office in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic.

Research Grants Programme
ARI announces the second round of calls for applications to the Research Grants Programme. This programme supports Afghan scholars in the diaspora or non-Afghan scholars holding university or research positions conducting research in the social sciences, humanities, gender studies, and biological, earth and environmental sciences and who can engage Afghan students as assistants in their projects. Grants of up to $25,000 will be awarded to eligible candidates (click here).

The deadline for applications: 15 July 2023.

For further information, contact: aru@ucentralasia.org (subject header: Research grants).
Dr. Azeta Hatef

Dr. Azeta Hatef is an Assistant Professor of Journalism Studies at Emerson College. She is a media researcher and award-winning instructor. Dr. Hatef’s research explores questions related to identity, belongingness, and representation, with a specific focus on media and Afghanistan. She has conducted research in Afghanistan examining the complex global beauty industry, as well as the development of independent media in the country. Hatef was the recipient of a Fulbright Research Scholarship in the Czech Republic. Her research examined minority media production and social media engagement among Romani activists to better understand the contextualized dynamics of these mediated spaces in providing marginalized groups spaces to negotiate identities, build communities, and experience feelings of belongingness. Dr. Hatef’s current research focuses on the Afghan diaspora and representation of Afghans within U.S. news media and popular culture in the aftermath of the War on Terror campaign, where her work examines the complicated nature of media visibility.

Dr. Orzala Nemat

Dr. Orzala Nemat is an Afghan scholar, a women’s rights and a think tank leader. She is an expert in political ethnography, holding a PhD in Development Studies from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) and an MSc in Development Planning from the University College London (UCL). Dr. Nemat founded and is currently leading Development Research Group Limited (DRG), which aims to promote the multi-disciplinary concept of development studies in the developing world through research and evaluations, academic debates and discussions, open-access teaching, and mentorship. Dr. Nemat served as the director of Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) from 2016–2022. Dr. Nemat has also taught courses on development and conflict, development practice, gender, democracy, and human rights at various universities in Afghanistan and internationally.

Dr. Nemat assisted and helped the most marginalised members of society through educational programs, building schools, protecting female victims of violence through shelters and peacebuilding for children and leading advocacy for legal reform. She also supported various grassroots, national and international organisations for over 23 years of her professional life in different capacities. Dr Nemat was acting chairperson of the Open Society Foundation’s Afghanistan until July 2021, and currently, she serves on Afghanaid, a British Charity working in Afghanistan, as a trustee.

Dr. Shamshad Pasarlay

Dr. Shamshad Pasarlay is a visiting lecturer of law at the University of Chicago. He was a columnist (2022) for the Blog of the International Journal of Constitutional Law (I·CONnect). Previously, Dr. Pasarlay was a lecturer at Herat University School of Law and Political Science in Afghanistan and a visiting research fellow at the Centre for Asian Legal Studies, National University of Singapore. He teaches and researches in the areas of comparative constitutional studies, law and religion; institutional engineering in divided societies; Islamic law and courts; and Islamic constitutionalism. His forthcoming book (under contract with Cambridge University Press) explores how conflict-prone deeply divided societies may adopt a workable constitutional design under unsteady political conditions. Dr. Pasarlay has worked in the area of legal reform in Afghanistan with many international rule of law organizations. He received his BA in Islamic studies from Kabul University and an LLM and PhD in comparative constitutional studies from the University of Washington School of Law.
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UPCOMING EVENT

This exhibition is a portrait of Afghanistan before the Taliban regained control of the country in 2021.

27 April 2023 6:00 PM AEST

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NEW BOOKS

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By Andrew Quilty

Told through the eyes of witnesses to the fall of Kabul, Walkley award-winning journalist Andrew Quilty’s debut book offers a remarkable record of this historic moment.

Publication date: May 2023.

Warrior Diplomat: A Green Beret’s Battles from Washington to Afghanistan

By Michael G. Waltz, Peter Bergen

Grappling with centuries-old feuds, defeating a shrewd insurgency, and navigating the sometimes paralyzing bureaucracy of the U.S. military are issues that prompt sleepless nights for both policymakers in Washington, DC and soldiers at war, albeit for different reasons.

Publication date: June 2023.

What the Taliban Told Me

By Ian Fritz

When Ian Fritz joined the Air Force at eighteen, he did so out of necessity. He’d too often slept through his classes as he worked long hours at a Chinese restaurant to help pay the bills for his trailer-dwelling family in Lake City, Florida.

Publication date: August 2023.