

Name: Hadil Djadri
Major: International Relations
Graduation Year: 2025
Year(s) in lab: 1 year

1. What project(s) are you involved in?

New York Times (NYT) Media Project, the NYTMP Term Progress Project, and the EWIC Database Project. On the NYT Media Project, I am currently analyzing the representation of Algerians in the 1960s.

2. When did you join the lab?

I joined the lab in Winter 2023, which was during my second year at UC Davis.

3. How did you hear about the lab?

My Arabic instructor posted a Canvas Announcement about the research opportunity.

4. What was the greatest learning experience you have obtained so far from the lab?

The greatest learning experience I have obtained so far in the lab would be conducting effective content analysis of newspaper articles. Dr. Joseph trains us to analyze the representation of our respective terms in the NYT articles and draw conclusions about the overall patterns of representation and how they may change over time. In my experience, many of the skills we learn through the NYT Media Project like content analysis have become wired in my thinking, and I cannot “unsee” the nuanced patterns of representation. For example, I find myself paying greater attention to how words are chosen carefully in representing an event or group of people.

5. In what ways has the lab challenged you?

Prior to joining the lab, I had never presented academic research in front of an audience. Thus, presenting at the 2023 UC Davis Middle East/South Asia Studies Symposium and the Undergraduate Research Conference within the first few months of my lab internship was an invaluable opportunity for me. By that point, I had grown accustomed to analyzing my research findings in written form, but articulating my research findings verbally was another “hurdle” that I found to be more challenging. However, with support and guidance from Dr. Joseph and my research team, I was able to present at the conferences successfully and I learned a lot about myself as a public speaker through the process.

6. Why is the lab a unique experience for undergraduate students?

I feel that there are more opportunities to get involved with undergraduate research in STEM than there are in social sciences and humanities, so the Joseph Lab is unique in that sense. The NYT Media Project specifically is an opportunity for students to apply what they learn in courses on the Middle East and North Africa to the historical context that they may need to understand certain events in the NYT articles. At the same time, students gain a lot of knowledge from analyzing the articles that they may not have known otherwise. For example, I have learned so much more about Algerian history in the 1960s through the NYT's representation of Algerians in their fight for independence.

Another facet of the lab that makes the experience unique is that it is a very collaborative research environment. During my first quarter in the lab, the Team Lead of the New York Times Media Project at the time expressed how researching in a team environment allows us to "check each other's blind spots," meaning we often identify nuances in each other's articles that we may not have noticed on our own. I believe the interchange of ideas and interpretations amongst interns enriches our understandings of the NYT articles and the context in which they were written.

7. What are some highlights from your time in the lab?

One of my highlights from my time in the lab so far is working in a team environment and getting to know other interns. I really like the exchange of knowledge that often occurs as we work in the lab together. I have learned so much from other interns, who are very knowledgeable about various areas of study in the Middle East and North Africa. Our quarterly lab dinners strengthen our lab community because we socialize and get to know one another more outside of the lab setting. Thank you to Dr. Joseph for welcoming us to her home and creating this community!

Another highlight would be the Proposal Writing Workshop that Dr. Joseph led in February 2024. Dr. Joseph has a breadth of experience and advice to share with us. One piece of advice from Dr. Joseph that stood out to me during this workshop was to "Embrace doubt. Nothing is as growthful in our own intellectual developments as doubt." I believe this is the heart of the research experience because it challenges our preconceptions of what the research process will tell us. Being comfortable with uncertainty can be difficult, yet ultimately it pushes us to grow and consider other interpretations of our research. Dr. Joseph cultivates a lab community that embraces growth in the research process, and I am forever thankful for the opportunity to be part of this community.

8. If you could describe the lab in one word, what would it be and why?

Enriching. The lab focuses not only on the product and quality of our research but also the process itself, which adds value to our growth as researchers, critical thinkers, and learners.

9. How has the lab prepared you for your future endeavors?

Interning in the lab so far has given me the opportunity to finetune skills in research, public speaking, and analytical writing that would make me successful in any future endeavor. For

example, I now have greater confidence with public speaking and presenting research, which will be an integral skill in graduate school and in any workspace.