



AMERICAN  
UNIVERSITY  
OF BEIRUT

## AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

### FIFTEENTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EFFECTIVE TEACHING & LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Conference Theme:

“Reimagining Teaching and Learning  
in Higher Education:  
A New Perspective for Generation Alpha”

Friday, April 17, 2026

Online using WebEx

Following are the Presenters' Bios

# KeyNote Speaker

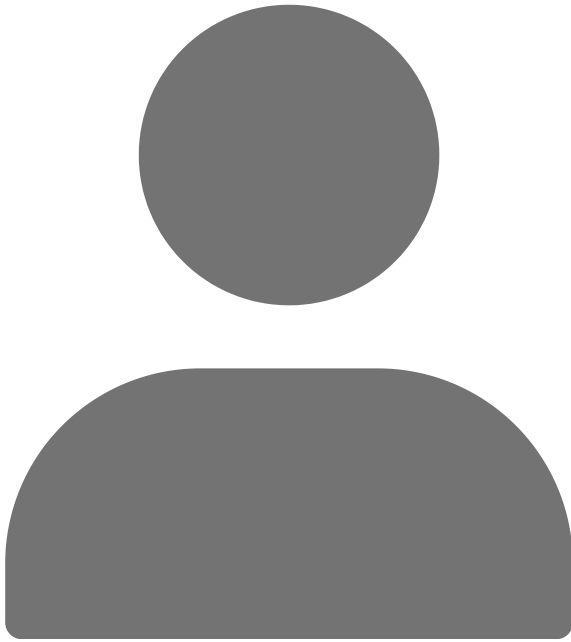


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Jason Gulya

Professor of English and Communications at Berkeley College, as well as a keynote speaker and consultant on AI and education. At Berkeley, he chairs the Academic and Integrity Committee and serves as a member of the AI Task Force. He co-wrote a book titled "Artificial Intelligence, Real Literacy" and is currently writing another book on the role of process-oriented pedagogy in The Age of AI. He has been featured in Chronicle of Higher Ed, Inside Ed, Forbes, Business Insider, and many other publications.

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### Ahlem Rouabhia

An associate professor at the department of French Language and Literature, Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages, Echeick Echahid Larbi Tebessi University, Algeria.

Laboratory of research in media and society studies. She holds a PHD in didactics. She is interested in artificial intelligence pedagogy. She is also interested in innovative teaching practices and new ways to introduce AI in research and teaching.



### Ahmad Smaili

Received a PhD in Mechanical Engineering from Tennessee Technological University. He had served as a faculty member at many institutions including Mississippi State University, Tennessee Technological University, and the American University of Beirut. Dr. Smaili held many administrative roles in institutions of higher learning in Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and the UAE, including Department Chair, Dean of Engineering, Dean of Academic Support Units, Provost, Deputy Vice Chancellor, VP for Academic Affairs, and President. Dr. Smaili also served as a mentor for the Stars of Science Tv program for many years, authored and co-authored over 80 journal and conference articles and reports, and co-authored the Applied Mechatronics textbook published by Oxford University press in 2007. Currently, Dr. Smaili holds the position of an Experiential Designer in Residence at the MSFEA at AUB.





### Aissa Hamzaoui

An associate professor at department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages, Echeick Echahid Larbi Tebessi University, Algeria.

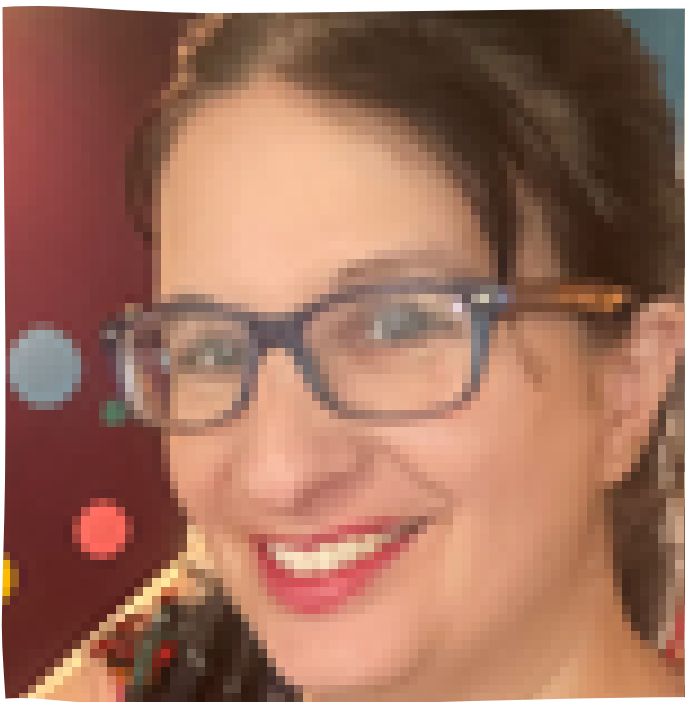
He holds a PhD in applied linguistics which focused on revision activity in writing. Currently, he carries to work on writing in AI times and also focus on discourse analysis and semiotics.



### Ammar Mohanna

Works with the Abdulla Al Ghurair Hub for Digital Teaching and Learning and the Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture at the American University of Beirut. His work focuses on designing and scaling online learning experiences and professional development programs. In 2025, he contributed to the design and delivery of the AI Starter Kit on AUBx, a scenario-based course that supports practical AI literacy for non-technical learners.





### Christina Michaud

Has taught in the Writing Program at Boston University since 2003, where she currently serves as the Associate Director for English Language Learning (ELL). With a background in teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL), she teaches academic writing, creative writing, public speaking, and research writing. Her research interests include teacher training, critical language awareness, translingual writing, ELL placement, and inclusive pedagogies. She has published an English pronunciation textbook and a TESOL teacher training book on lesson planning for novice teachers, and she presents frequently on metacognition, student reflective writing, alternative grading, and antiracist teaching practices, among other topics.



### Claudia Hassan

A higher education educator, curriculum designer, and academic coordinator with over two decades of experience in university teaching and instructional development. She holds a PhD in English Language and Literature from the Lebanese University, with research interests in applied linguistics, digital pedagogy, and instructional design. Claudia has taught undergraduate courses in linguistics and language studies, including Introduction to Linguistics, Syntax, Academic Writing, and Research Methods, and has led curriculum alignment initiatives grounded in learning outcomes and assessment coherence. Her current work focuses on redesigning foundational linguistics courses through inquiry-based learning, authentic language data, and responsible integration of AI tools to support metalinguistic awareness. She has presented at international conferences on teaching and learning in higher education and has published on innovative instructional practices. Claudia is particularly interested in reflective, evidence-informed approaches to improving student engagement and conceptual understanding in linguistics education.





### Dareen Nasr

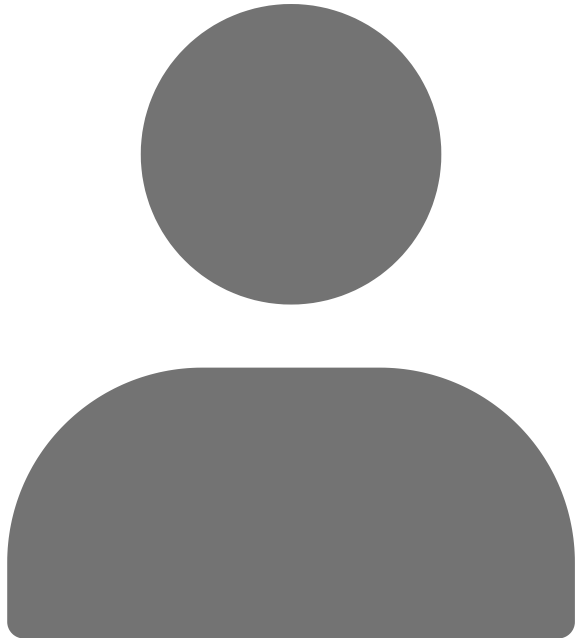
Born in Hasbaya, Lebanon, in 1993. She received the B.A. degree in Education and Teaching Diploma from the Lebanese American University(LAU) in 2015. She received then her Masters in STEM Education from LAU and another Masters in Educational Technology from the Lebanese University in 2021. She is completing her PhD in Educational Technology in Universitat Rovira i Virgili in Spain. Since February 2018, she has been working as an instructor in the Education Department of the Lebanese International University. Her current research interests include technology in education as well as Math and Science education.



### Dina Hakim Hussein Agha

An instructor of sociology in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology & Media Studies (SOAN) at AUB. She also teaches at the Lebanese American University in the Department of Communication, Mobility & Identity (CMI). Her research focuses on the role of the sociologist in public schools, particularly in Lebanese schools. She was also a research associate in the Princeton-AUB initiative under the Khaddit Beirut impact initiative and head of the documentation unit in Khaddit Beirut at AUB. She currently serves as a member in the Faculty Learning Communities (FLC) on Academic Integrity and AI.



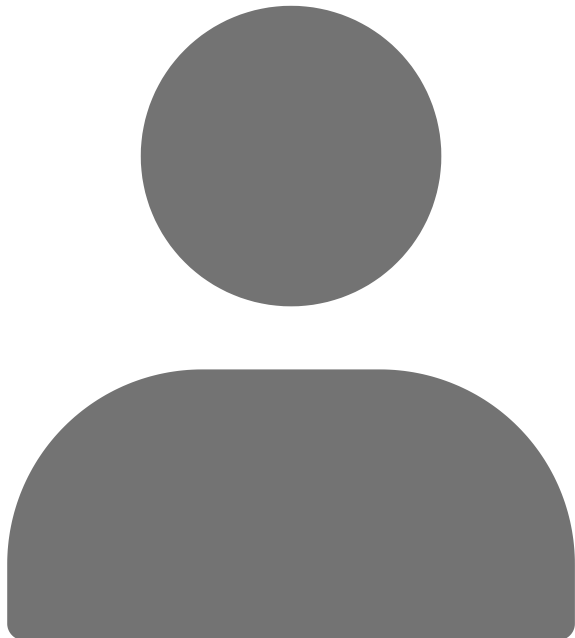


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### Dorota Fleszar

Teaches first-year composition at the American University of Beirut. She has experience as a writing program administrator and co-organizer of writing symposia and conferences. She currently serves on the editorial board of the MENA Writing Studies Journal.

Dorota is a doctoral candidate in the Composition and Applied Linguistics program at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Her research interests include reading pedagogies, writing program administration, and mentoring.



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### Eman Saleh

PhD. in English Language ,Applied Linguistics

Assistant Professor at the LU and AUL

Fixed Teacher at the Lebanese Public School

Accredited International Trainer ,American Tesol Academy

Member at many educational journals ( Almanafeth ,East Journal, JSD and Index Journal).

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## Fatimah Hussain Alebrahim

An expert in instructional design and online teaching with extensive experience in higher education across the USA and the GCC. She holds a Ph.D. in Educational Technology and specializes in designing and assuring the quality of online and hybrid courses using research-based instructional strategies and Quality Matters standards.

She has led over 50 instructional design projects, taught graduate-level courses in online and hybrid formats, and supported faculty through course design and professional development. She is Quality Matters-certified and brings deep expertise in online pedagogy, faculty development, accessibility, OER, and continuous course quality improvement, while contributing to regional initiatives aligned with sustainability and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and advancing excellence and innovation in digital higher education.

Her work has been recognized through multiple honors, including the Dean's Citation for Outstanding Dissertation Award, the Academic Excellence Award, and the Team Roadrunner Award for Instructional Design Excellence.



## Fatme Khalifeh

A university instructor at Lebanese International University (faculty of education) and a doctoral researcher in Educational Technology at Universitat Rovira i Virgili-Spain. Her work examines how technology-enhanced, learner-centered pedagogies strengthen critical thinking and authentic problem solving in higher education. Through the scholarship of teaching and learning, she develops practical, evidence-based guidance for faculty reimagining teaching for digitally fluent learners, including Generation Alpha, while addressing implementation challenges such as educator readiness, equitable access, and assessment of critical thinking outcomes.





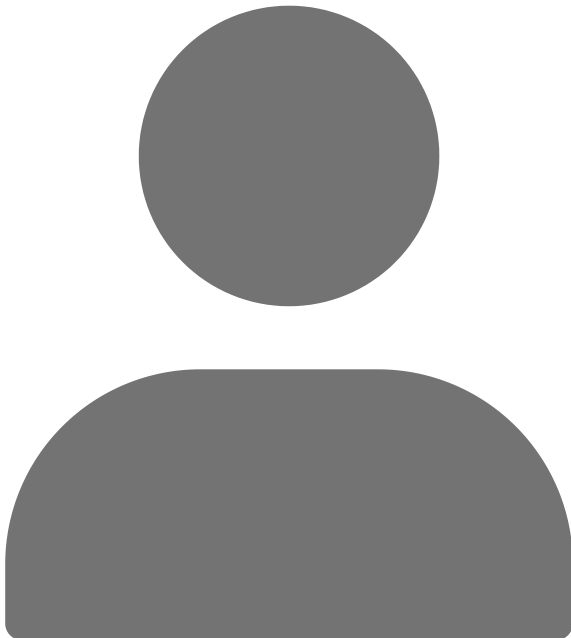
### Hanadi Chatila

A professor at the Lebanese University, Faculty of Education. She has many years of experience in teaching and is actively engaged in educational research and academic development. She has published numerous articles in the field of education and is a member in the Lebanese Educational sciences association.



### Issam Srour

Director of the Abdulla Al Ghurair Hub for Digital Teaching and Learning, MSFEA, American University of Beirut (AUB)





### Jasmina Najjar

An academic, communication consultant, author, copywriter, and Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Marketing. Before joining AUS, she taught academic writing, technical communication, and business communication at the American University of Beirut (AUB) and was a journalist, editor-in-chief, and senior advertising creative with major pan-Arab accounts. While at AUB, she impacted course-specific and program-wide development as a Course Coordinator and Program Coordinator. Passionate about digital pedagogy and innovation, she's received recognition for teaching excellence.



### Mariam Khalifeh

A master's graduate (faculty of education) and a secondary-level English teacher. Her current work focuses on how AI, media, and educational technologies are reshaping modern teaching and learning practices, particularly in language education. She is interested in practical classroom applications of AI-supported tools for lesson planning, feedback, differentiation, and learner engagement, as well as the role of media literacy in helping students evaluate information, build critical thinking, and communicate responsibly in digital spaces. Through ongoing professional learning and classroom-based inquiry, she aims to contribute evidence-informed practices that help educators adopt technology thoughtfully and meaningfully.





### Marie Claire Chamieh

A Credentialed and Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) by the Commission on Dietetic Registration, Dr, Chamieh has been a member of the Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences since 2005, contributing extensively to teaching, program leadership, and experiential education. She is recognized for her expertise in evidence-based dietetics education, experiential learning, and curriculum and practicum development aligned with Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) standards. She has played a leading role in advancing clinical training through innovative teaching methodologies, case-based learning, and simulation-driven instruction that prepare students for professional excellence.

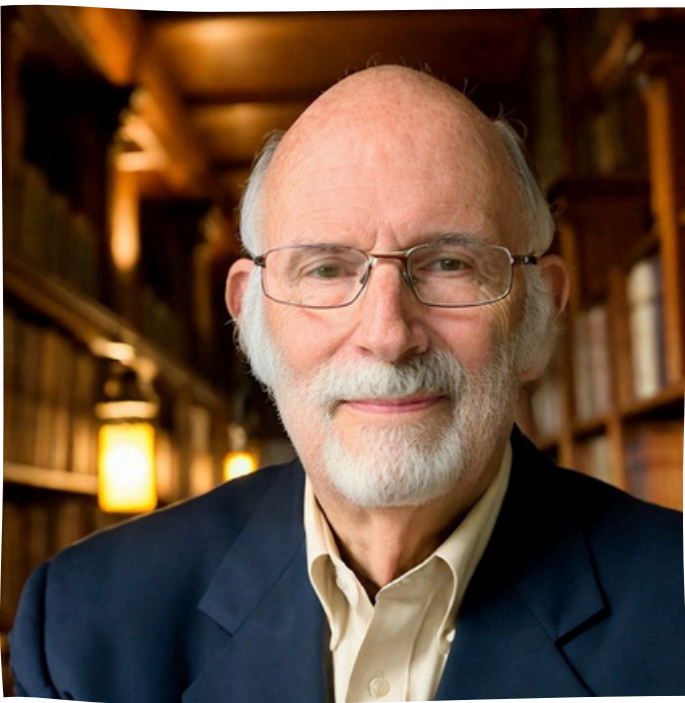
Her primary focus as a main investigator centers on the critical intersection of nutrition, physical activity, and nutritional status in patients with cancer. She also contributes to interdisciplinary studies addressing broader nutrition and health outcomes in individuals with chronic diseases.



### May Mikati

An instructor of writing at the American University of Beirut. She has coordinated courses and contributed to Lebanese national curriculum English language textbooks. After more than a decade of teaching, she earned a Master Online Teacher certificate from the University of Illinois based on several courses including a practicum. Having delivered Technical English in blended format for many years before the start of the pandemic, teaching in the pandemic was unproblematic for her. More recently she co-facilitated a course module through virtual exchange with a colleague at Oakland University in Michigan, presenting the experience at the International Virtual Exchange Conference in Greece. In her spare time, she blogs; she also facilitates a group for Oxford and Cambridge Alumni in Lebanon, which she initiated virtually on social media.





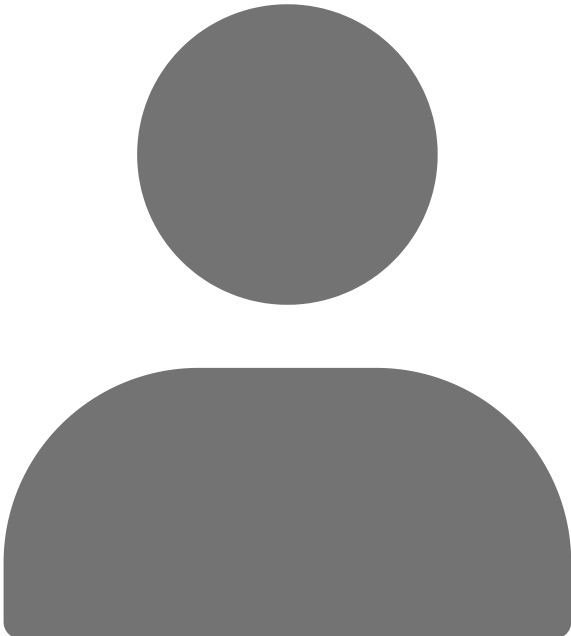
### Milton Cox

PhD, Mathematics, Indiana University, founded the Center for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching at Miami University. He initiated and directed the Original Lilly Conference on College Teaching, now in its 44th year. In 1990 he founded the Journal on Excellence in College Teaching, serving as Editor-in-Chief for 35 years. In 2024 Milt contributed forewords to three books about faculty learning communities and was Guest Co-Editor of the Journal for Research and Practice in College Teaching special issue on case clinics in social learning spaces.



### Mohammad Harb

Director of the Engineering Learning Lab (ELL), MSFEA, American University of Beirut (AUB)





## Nadeen Fayyad

Science inquiry skills instructor and practicum coordinator at Haigazian University, instructor at the Lebanese University faculty of education, a trainer for biology and science teachers and a high school biology teacher and coordinator, with extensive experience in teaching in both public and private sectors.



## Nadine El Dandachli

A university instructor at the Lebanese University and the American University of Science and Technology. She serves as the educational supervisor and consultant for the four Makassed Schools in Saida, Lebanon. Nadine is also a question writer on the team of Educational Leadership experts for the Educational Professional Licensure project at the Ministry of Education in the U.A.E. She is one of the leadership experts responsible for writing and vetting test questions for the computer-delivered licensure test required for school leaders in specific programs, such as vocational schools, to be certified. Nadine earned her Ph.D. in Educational Sciences from the University of Saint Joseph, where her thesis investigated the effects of blended learning strategies on the academic achievement of postgraduate university students. She is an academic and educator who believes the world needs more critical thinkers, leaders, and decision-makers. Nadine is an educational researcher passionate about examining how new and current teaching methods impact the development of critical thinking, leadership skills, and student motivation.





## Najwa ElGerges

Has a BSc in Nursing from Lebanese University (1988), a Master in Public Health (Concentration: Health Services Administration) from American University of Beirut (1991) and a Doctorate in Education from University Haute-Alsace France (2018). She is currently an associate professor of Nursing and the nursing program academic advisor at the Faculty of Nursing & Health Sciences at Notre Dame University. Dr. ElGerges contributed to the review of the nursing curriculum, learning objectives, establishing the clinical lab, networking with the clinical settings and the graduation of highly skilled nurses at NDU and acted as an academic consultant for some Lebanese Universities.



## Narod Seroujian

An Instructor of Anthropology in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Media Studies (SOAM) and a research affiliate of the program on Medical History, Ethics, and Politics (MHEP) at the American University of Beirut. She teaches undergraduate courses at the SOAM department and is a member of the university's Faculty Learning Community (FLC) on Academic Integrity and Artificial Intelligence (AI), launched by the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). Seroujian's research focuses on the anthropological study of wounds and scars, the affective materiality of bodies, and the politics of care in Lebanon. She was the 2020 recipient of the Amsterdam Merit Scholarship from the Graduate School of Social Sciences at the University of Amsterdam, where she earned her MSc cum laude in Medical Anthropology and Sociology. She holds a BA in Sociology and Anthropology from the American University of Beirut and a second BA in Performing Arts (with a concentration in Violin Performance) from Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory.





### **Nathalie Al Kakoun**

A researcher and educator at the American University of Beirut, affiliated with the Engineering Learning Lab and CIRCL within MSFEA. Her work sits at the intersection of engineering education, human-centred design, behavioural science, and digitally-enhanced pedagogy. She designs scalable, student-centred learning experiences across engineering and interdisciplinary education, while also supporting faculty through practical, reusable teaching playbooks and course redesign frameworks. Her broader research examines how personal values, mental models, and design processes shape creativity, responsibility, and decision-making in engineering education, with the aim of fostering more reflective, socially considerate, and impactful learning and engineering design.



### **Neamat Midani**

An English instructor at LIU university. She has 15-year-experience in teaching English in different private schools. She has worked for 6 years with the UNICEF in teaching refugees English language as a second language. She has been teaching at LIU for 3 years, and she is recently completes her PhD study at URV university in Spain.





### Nour El Saify

The Instructional Media Team Lead at the American University of Beirut. She specializes in guiding the content preparation process in collaboration with Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and Instructional Designers (IDs), in line with departmental guidelines for online course development. Through content analysis, she ensures alignment between course material and an effective mix of media elements, while coordinating with various production assets to deliver high-quality digital learning resources. The media team translates complex and abstract content into visually engaging, pedagogically sound multimedia lessons that support learning objectives.



### Olga Fleonova

Holds a PhD in Linguistics from Lomonosov Moscow State University, Russia. She is currently an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Philology, Shenzhen MSU-BIT University, China. She previously taught at universities in Russia (Lomonosov Moscow State University, Penza State University) and Lebanon (University of Balamand). She has more than 30 years of experience teaching courses in theoretical and applied linguistics, academic writing, EFL and ESP courses to students of sciences, social sciences and humanities at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Her research interests include multimodality in academic writing, simulations and project-based learning in English classrooms, learner autonomy and agency, discourse analysis, language and ideology, and language policies. In her teaching she also widely employs creative writing tasks.





## Phyllis Cox

Instructor, Miami University's Institute for Learning in Retirement, earned her BS in Education, Indiana University and MS in reading, Miami University. She has taught elementary and secondary education in Indiana and Ohio. Milton and Phyllis, with local craftsmen, visited the Gamble House in Pasadena to experience the Greenes' architecture and reconstructed their home into a Greene and Greene craftsman.



## Rania Hussein

A qualified English language instructor with extensive teaching experience across both school and university contexts. She holds a Ph.D. in English Linguistics from Beirut Arab University, where her doctoral research focused on applied linguistics and innovative approaches to language teaching and learning. Dr. Hussein is deeply committed to advancing language education through research-informed pedagogy and the integration of technology in the classroom. Her professional interests include corpus-based instruction, academic writing, discourse analysis, and learner autonomy in second language acquisition. In addition to her teaching expertise, she is recognized for her strong communication, leadership, and mentoring skills, which enable her to create supportive and engaging learning environments. Dr. Hussein actively participates in academic research and professional development activities and seeks to bridge theory and practice by implementing evidence-based instructional strategies that enhance students' linguistic competence and academic performance. Her work reflects a sustained dedication to improving the quality of English language education through innovation and reflective practice.





### Rozan Dakroub

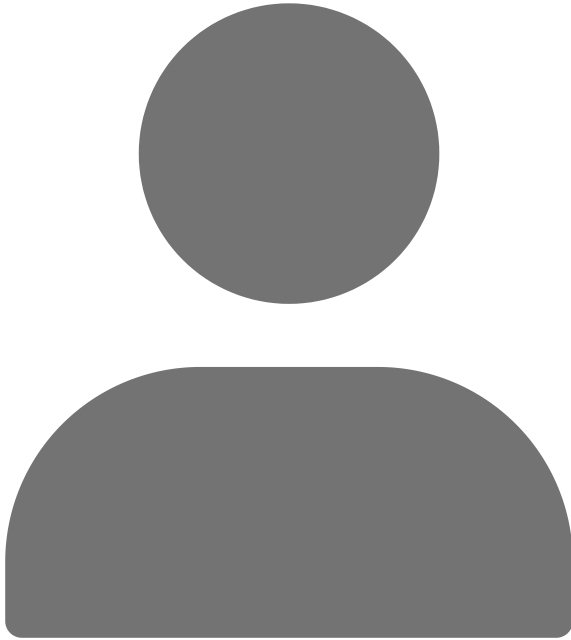
An Instructional Designer at the American University of Beirut. She specializes in collaborating with Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and the Media Team to prepare high-quality online and blended courses. Working closely with SMEs, she facilitates the course development process by helping to translate their expert knowledge into clear learning objectives, well-structured content, and engaging activities. She conducts research providing evidence-based recommendations that enhance course design. This partnership ensures strong pedagogical alignment, turning rich subject-matter expertise into structured learning pathways. These structured pathways are then enriched in collaboration with the Media Team through purposeful multimedia integration. Her approach is grounded in frameworks like ADDIE and Understanding by Design (UbD), enabling her to bridge pedagogical theory with student-centered design.



### Ruba Hamade

The Project Manager at the Abdulla Al Ghurair Hub for Digital Teaching and Learning at MSFEA, AUB with over 18 years of experience spanning marketing, program development, and operations. In her most recent role as Academic Programs Manager at the hub, she has led the end-to-end development and management of online academic programs, from inception and market research through to launch and continuous improvement. She worked closely with faculty, instructional design, and marketing teams to shape relevant, high-impact offerings aligned with regional needs, while overseeing program performance and operations. She now leads the Hub's operations further strengthening its impact across the region.





## Sarah Debbek

Brings over a decade of international experience in higher education, with an extensive career in instructional design, educational development, and university teaching across universities in the United States and Canada. She earned her Master of Education and Doctor of Philosophy in Education from Washington State University. She holds a double-major Bachelor's degree in Digital Technology & Culture, and Linguistics, graduating with honors. Prior to joining Qatar University in 2023 as a Senior Instructional Designer, she led institution and faculty-wide digital transformation projects focused on the design and implementation of high-quality online and blended academic programs such as competency-based digital engineering projects at Queen's University and a micro-credentials digital initiative at York University. Her work emphasized faculty collaboration, learner-centered pedagogical practices and the strategic integration of educational technologies.



## Salam Syagha

A dedicated educator with over two decades of experience, marked by continuous academic and professional growth. Beginning her teaching career in 1998 while earning her Bachelor's in English Literature and Language from the Lebanese University (2001), she quickly advanced to coordinator roles at Irfan School and HNC. In 2008, she secured a position as a high school English teacher through the Government Civil Service Exam. Simultaneously, she earned an MBA from AUL in 2010 (GPA 3.54). Returning to Hasbaya, she taught at multiple high schools and expanded her impact by joining the faculty of the Lebanese International University (LIU) in 2011. Demonstrating her commitment to educational leadership, she completed a Master's in Education from LIU in 2018 (GPA 3.78) and is currently a doctoral candidate in Education at the Lebanese University. Beyond her teaching and academic pursuits, Salam Syagha is a published author, co-authoring the "My Kindergarten Cosmo" book series. She has also presented at numerous international conferences at AUB and achieved second place in the Arab Oscar's short story writing competition for the MENA region.





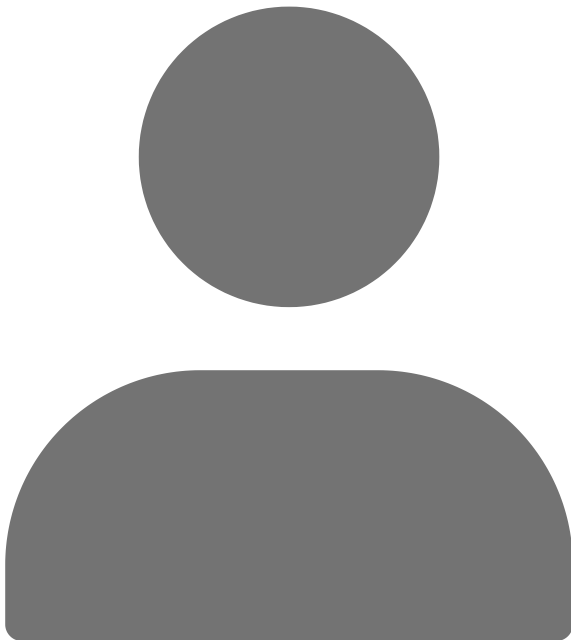
## Stephanie Farah

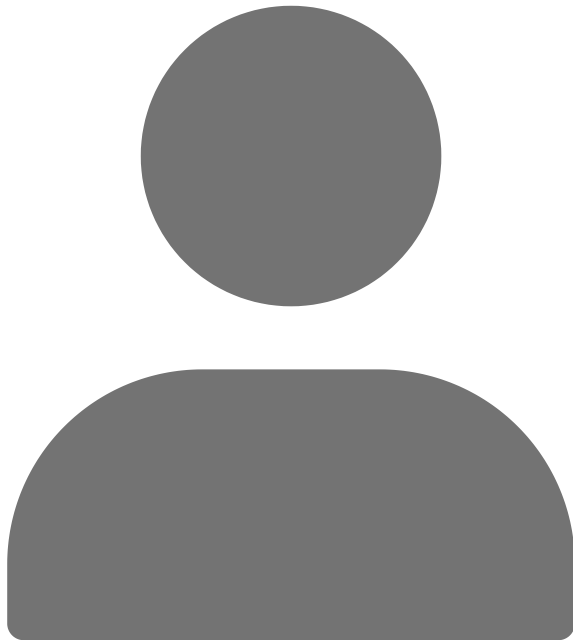
An instructor of English in the Department of Communication, Arts and Languages at LAU. She has taught linguistics, rhetoric, oral communication, business English and English language courses at several universities and institutions in Lebanon and Canada. She has also trained public speakers, delivered soft skills training for organizations and companies in Lebanon, and engaged in data analysis projects in the UAE. Her research interests include political discourse analysis, propaganda and language manipulation, language and psychological trauma, neurolinguistics, critical thinking, independent learning and hybrid course design, all of which are topics that she has conducted studies on and presented at conferences in Lebanon and the USA. She was also a Fulbright scholar at North Carolina State University where she worked on devising strategies to train writing center tutors.



## Tania Harb

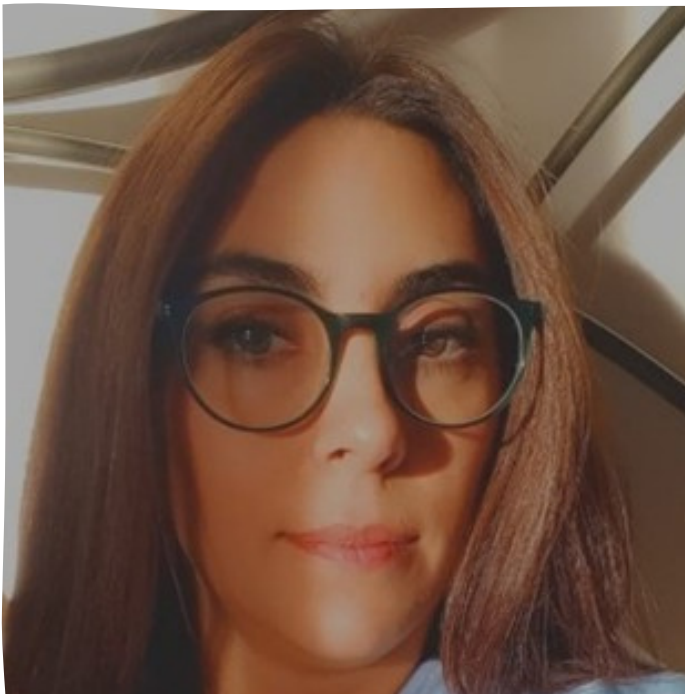
Grew up in Gabon to Lebanese parents and completed her secondary education at Blaise Pascal School, where she earned a French Scientific Baccalaureate. She began her undergraduate studies at the American University of Beirut before transferring to the Lebanese American University to pursue a degree in pharmacy. French is her home language; she learned Lebanese Arabic through interaction with Lebanese communities and completed an intensive English language program. Tania's academic interests focus on pharmacy and healthcare, while her personal interests include exploring questions of identity, language, and her family's Lebanese origins shaped by a multicultural upbringing.





## Zakia Djebbari

A Professor of English with academic and professional interest in the digital transformation of higher education. Her research focuses on the intersection of Artificial Intelligence, Englishisation (EMI), and higher education policy, with a particular emphasis on innovation, equity, and access in developing contexts. She is currently leading a project on Englishizing and digitalizing the Algerian higher education. This project explores how AI-enhanced platforms can support personalized learning, improve assessment practices, and reduce regional disparities in access to quality English education. Her work aims to reimagine teaching and learning for Generation Alpha by designing technology-mediated, inclusive, and future-oriented educational models that align with global academic and professional demands.



## Zinnia Shweiry

An educator and researcher with a PhD in Applied Linguistics. Her research interests include linguistic landscapes, the use of L1 in language learning, critical thinking, teaching and learning in higher education, AI and its impact on education, translation studies, community-based learning, creative and academic writing, plagiarism, interdisciplinarity, as well as the use of art in teaching. She has extensive experience teaching languages, communication skills, translation studies, and humanities at institutions such as the American University of Beirut (AUB) and Saint George University of Beirut (SGUB) where, in addition to teaching, she serves her role as the Humanities Coordinator and Book and Movie Club founder. Her most recent publication is a book titled Arabizi as a Learning and Teaching Resource: A Linguistic Study of Arabic in a Foreign Language Classroom (Feb, 2025). Her hobbies include painting, reading, traveling, hiking, and baking.

