

The Bloomsbury Handbook to LGBTQ+ Culture in the Middle East and North Africa

(edited by Feras Alkabani)

Call for Contributions

BRISMES Trustee and Associate Professor of Comparative Literature, [Dr Feras Alkabani](#), has been commissioned to edit *The Bloomsbury Handbook to LGBTQ+ Culture in the Middle East and North Africa*, and would like to invite scholars working on relevant areas covered in the edited collection to contribute a chapter.

The Bloomsbury Handbook to LGBTQ+ Culture in the Middle East and North Africa offers an exploration of LGBTQ+ culture across a region often overlooked or misrepresented in global queer narratives. Through a blend of historical context and contemporary cultural analysis, the book challenges monolithic portrayals and highlights the resilience, creativity and complexity of queer identities across diverse MENA societies and in their diaspora.

The book traces the roots of same-sex desire and gender nonconformity in pre-colonial Arab, Persian, Berber, and Ottoman societies, revealing how colonialism, nationalism, and religious orthodoxy reshaped public attitudes toward LGBTQ+ individuals. Drawing on research and insights from artists, activists and academic researchers working across the region — including Türkiye, the Levant, the Gulf States, Iran and North Africa — this collection presents a portrait of cultural forms, identities and communities forged through affirmation and resistance.

From queer nightlife to digital spaces, literary texts through to cinema, political activist networks to queer-inclusive religious practices, gender non-conforming fashion to drag, the handbook offers different perspectives on how LGBTQ+ people navigate systemic repression while forging vibrant cultures of solidarity and self-expression. It critically examines the role of Western influence, addressing the tension between global LGBTQ+ rights discourse and local cultural sovereignty.

With a focus on intersectionality — particularly the impact of gender, class, religion, and colonial histories — this collection sheds light on the multiplicity of queer cultural identities and forms in MENA. This handbook offers a nuanced look at one of the most misunderstood and misrepresented aspects of Middle Eastern and North African life and is therefore relevant to anyone interested in Middle Eastern and North African studies, gender studies and queer identities.

Chapters will typically be around 8,000 words (with some flexibility); first drafts are expected to start arriving in early 2027.

If you are interested or would like to discuss your potential contribution, please contact Dr Alkabani directly: f.alkabani@sussex.ac.uk.

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