



# READING FESTIVAL 2023

## TEACHERS AND LEADERS AS LIFELONG READERS

#CEDUReadingFestival





# TEACHERS AND LEADERS AS LIFELONG READERS

## READING FESTIVAL CONVENORS



**MONA ALJANAHI**

Assistant Dean for  
Student Affairs



**NAJWA MOHAMED  
ALHOSANI**

Vice Dean  
Reading Festival Advisor



**RHODA MYRA  
GARCÉS-BACSAL**

Assistant Dean for Research  
and Graduate Studies

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) aims to produce a **reading generation** that will help establish UAE as the capital of cultural and knowledge content (UAE MOHAP, 2019). The Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE,

His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, stated:

*"The human mind is the centre of development and the book is the tool used to renew the mind. A nation can never grow without a renewed mind and lively, knowledgeable spirit"* (The National, 2016).

The late UAE President, His Highness, Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan further added that:

*"Reading is the first skill needed by our children... The next development phase requires a cultured and reader generation with a passion for curiosity and depth of learning"* (MENA Report, 2016).

This reading festival with the theme: **"Teachers and Leaders as Lifelong Readers"** intends to actualize this vision of a reading nation with teacher-trainees, teachers, school leaders, teacher-educators at the forefront.

The College of Education Office of Assistant Dean for Student Affairs and the Office of Research and Graduate Studies have combined their efforts to organize a month-long reading festival that would celebrate the **joy of reading**: *what it means to be a reader, and what it means to be part of a community of lifelong readers*. The reading festival is meant to be a vibrant month-long event with university-wide literary talent show, literary café sessions celebrating local and UAE-based authors and illustrators, reading challenges, conversations with academics and practitioners on engaging readers, and award-winning international authors and illustrators sharing their literary and creative process throughout the event. The festival intends to go beyond the idea of reading as a mere skill that needs to be acquired, but **reading as a way to know and understand one's self and the world – and the role that each of us play in building a more equitable, sustainable, humane, and inclusive society**.

## READING FESTIVAL COMMITTEE



**MARK BILDON**  
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR  
FOUNDATIONS OF  
EDUCATION



**PEDRO FIGUEIREDO**  
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR  
PHYSICAL EDUCATION



**MOHAMAD SHABAN**  
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR  
CURRICULUM &  
INSTRUCTION



**EMMA PEARSON**  
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR  
CURRICULUM &  
INSTRUCTION



**ASHRAF MUSTAFA**  
LECTURER  
SPECIAL EDUCATION



**NAJLA MOHAMED  
ALOWAIS**  
PHD CANDIDATE



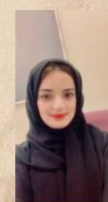
**FAJR ALKOUZ**  
PHD CANDIDATE



**AISHA SALIM AL NUAIMI**  
PROJECTS MANAGER  
DEAN'S OFFICE



**MUZOUN AL MAANI**  
PROJECT COORDINATOR  
DEAN'S OFFICE



**ARWA AL DAHRI**  
SERVICES ASSISTANT  
DEAN'S OFFICE



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**Festival program booklet cover art from  
Shaun Tan's latest book, *Creature* (2022)**

# Week 1

MARCH 1-3, 2023

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**March 01, 2023 | Wednesday**

10 – 11 am, UAEU Crescent Auditorium

***Opening of the CEDU Reading Festival***

Literary Talent Show Announcement

CEDU Reading Challenge 2023

Mystery Book Giveaway

**March 01, 2023 | Wednesday**

11-12 UAEU Crescent Auditorium

***Joy of Reading with Isobel Abulhoul***



Isobel Abulhoul was born and educated in Cambridge, United Kingdom, before moving to Dubai in 1968 (her home ever since). There she co-founded the bookshop chain, Magrudy's, in 1975. In 2008, she founded and became Director of the Emirates Airline Festival of Literature. The festival won the Best Festival in the Middle East Award in 2013 and 2014. Isobel has received official recognition for her tireless campaigning to improve literacy and foster a love of books, particularly for children.



*There is a secret trail of books meant to inspire and enlighten you. Find it. - Ben Okri*





**March 01, 2023 | Wednesday**

130-330 PM, UAEU Innovation Lab, Room 1

***Illustration Workshop (Part 1 of 2) by UAEBBY***

Facilitator: Rana Thabet



**March 02, 2023 | Thursday**

10 – 11 AM | UAEU Innovation Lab, Room 2

***Creative Writing Workshop by UAEBBY***

Facilitator: Samya Ayish



*She read books as one would breathe air, to fill up and live. - Annie Dillard, The Living*





**March 02, 2023 | Thursday**

11:30 AM – 12:30 PM | UAEU Innovation Lab, Room 3

***Storytelling Workshop by UAEBBY***

Facilitator: Samya Ayish



**March 02, 2023 | Thursday**

1:30 – 3:30 PM | UAEU Innovation Lab, Room 1

***Illustration Workshop (Part 2 of 2) by UAEBBY***

Facilitator: Rana Thabet



*I read the way a person might swim, to save his or her life.  
I wrote that way too. - Mary Oliver, Wild Geese*



**March 03, 2023 | Friday**

5:00 - 6:30 PM, ZOI Al Ain Café

**Literary Café Session:**

***Celebrating Emirati Women's Voices***

Guest Speakers: Asma Aljilani and Nauf Alalwan



**Asma Aljilani** is an Emirati writer and poet based in Abu Dhabi, UAE. Her first published work is the poetry collection *Constellations of Home* in 2017. The following year, she published her short story "The Falling Year" as part of the anthology *November Falls* with Zimbell House Publishing.



**Nauf Alalwan** has a BA in English Language & Literature and an MA in Translation and Interpreting from the American University of Sharjah. She is an Emirati writer who enjoys reading and writing about her culture. As an avid reader, she enjoys reading novels about the "average woman". This is where she decided to write about this type of characters who feel relatable and real. Her love for the UAE and her culture is the main drive behind her writings.

*By insisting that we read, our mother was gifting us big hearts that have carried us this far. - Sisonke Msimang*

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# Week 2

MARCH 6-10, 2023



**March 07, 2023 | Tuesday**

11:30 – 1:30 PM, UAEU Campus

***“How to Publish Your Writing” Workshop by***

***Alhudhud Publishing House (Arabic)***

Facilitator: **Ali AlShaali**



Ali holds a BSc. in Civil Engineering from the UAE University, and a master's Certificate in Project Management from George Washington University. He's an active member of the Emirates Writers' Union. He published “A Bee and a Rababa”, “Faces and Weary Others” and “The Earth has one Soul”; three anthologies of poetry. Recently, published his fourth poetry anthology: “Guide me to the Cave”, and a Novel that was longlisted for Sheikh Zayed Award.

**March 07, 2023 | Tuesday**

3:30 – 5 PM, UAEU Library – Al Bustan

***PANEL Discussion “Gathering Readers:” Managing  
A Book Club While ‘Adulthood’***



**Moderator:**

**Dr. Mona Aljanahi** serves as Assistant Dean for Student Affairs with the College of Education and is an Assistant Professor with the Curriculum and Instruction Department, UAE University.

*To be set free inside a library, to build a pile of books without having my choices checked -  
this was my first true taste of freedom. - Dina Nayeri*

## GatheringReaders Faculty Panelists:



**Dr. Mark Baidon** served as former Associate Dean at the Office of Educational Research at Nanyang Technological University Singapore, before joining the Foundations of Education Department at College of Education, UAE University.



**Dr. Negmeldin Alsheikh** serves as Associate Professor with the Curriculum and Instruction Department at College of Education, UAE University.

## GatheringReaders PhD Panelists:



**Fajr AlKouz** is an avid reader and listener of books. She is a PhD candidate at UAEU, specializing in language and literacy education. Fajr is a published researcher and is currently an active reviewer for a multi-and-interdisciplinary peer-reviewed journal.



**Najla Al Owais** is a PhD Candidate in the Curriculum and Instruction department, studying mathematics education. She loves reading and teaching math.



**Meghry Nazarian** is currently an English language teacher at Liwa International School and a Ph.D. candidate in the College of Education at United Arab Emirates University. She is a member of Gathering Readers - CEDU since 2021.



**Eqlima Dinar** is a science teacher and an early childhood education consultant and is currently a PhD candidate in UAEU. She enjoys reading books, picture books and manga.

Maybe this is why we read, and why in moments of darkness we return to books: to find words for what we already know.  
- Alberto Manguel, *A Reading Diary*



**March 08, 2023 | Wednesday**

9:45 – 11:30 AM, Mohammed Bin Rashid Library, Dubai

***Creatures Make Us Human***

**Invited Guest Speaker: Shaun Tan**



Shaun Tan is a multi-award-winning Australian artist, writer and film maker. He has won the Academy Award (the Oscar's) for his short animated film based on his picturebook, *The Lost Thing*. He is also a recipient of the prestigious Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award in Sweden and the Kate Greenaway Medal in the UK.



*Sometimes we find our true ancestors in other countries and become enlarged because we know their essays, their novels, those paragraphs that becalm us or devastate us, and so we no longer remain solitary in the distance. - Michael Ondaatje*





**March 09, 2023 | Thursday**

Morning, Seniors' Happiness Center, Dubai

***Literary Outreach Activity with Senior Citizens***

***Led by Dr. Mohammed Shaban***



**Dr. Shaban** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. He is also a visual artist. His interests include the therapeutic value of art experience for all children, and particularly those experiencing behavioral difficulties.



**Dr. Negmeldin Alsheikh** serves as Associate Professor with the Curriculum and Instruction Department at College of Education, UAE University.

**March 09, 2023 | Thursday**

11:30-1:30 PM, National Charity School Primary Dubai

***Literary Outreach Activity with Students and***

***Celebration of Women Teachers***



**Dr. Shaban** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. He is also a visual artist. He will lead the **art activity with students.**



**Dr. Pedro Figueiredo** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Health and Physical Education. He will be leading the **movement and read-aloud activity with students.**



Sometimes we find our true ancestors in other countries and become enlarged because we know their essays, their novels, those paragraphs that becalm us or devastate us, and so we no longer remain solitary in the distance. - Michael Ondaatje

**March 09, 2023 | Thursday**

11:30 – 1:30 PM, UAEU Campus

***Kids Story Edition Workshop by Alhudhud Publishing House (Arabic)***

Facilitator: Alaa Zein



**Alaa** wrote a poetry collection on various emotional, romantic, social and patriotic topics, and he participated in many poetry evenings in Syria and in Dubai. Recently in Dubai, he participated in the "Short + Sweet poetry 2018" competition at Alserkal Avenue and won the "Best Regional Language" award. He also participated in the Youth Theater

Celebration in 2018, held by Dubai Culture.

*To acquire the habit of reading is to construct for yourself a refuge from almost all the miseries of life.*

*- W. Somerset Maugham, Books and You*

**March 10, 2023 | Friday**

5 – 6:30 PM, ZOI Café, Al Ain

***Literary Café Session: “Poetry That Feeds The Soul”***

**Invited Guest Poets:**



**Dr. Afra Atiq** is an Emirati spoken word poet who was born in the United Arab Emirates. Atiq holds a PhD in Media and Creative Industries from the United Arab Emirates University and is the co-founder of the Untitled Chapters, a collective of female Emirati writers. Now, she works as a full-time poet. In 2015, She was named the "Best Performer" by Rooftop

Rhythms and won the Abu Dhabi Music and Art Foundation Creativity award for her poem "An Open Letter to Cancer" in 2017.



**Danabelle Gutierrez** is a Filipina artist born in Manila and raised in Cairo, Vienna and Muscat. She is a multi-award-winning artist, writer, actress and photographer. Her work has been published in several magazine and she is the author of & *Until the Dreams Come* and *I Long To Be the River* and is working on her third book.

*When you read a great book, you don't escape from life, you plunge deeper into it.*

*- Julian Barnes, A Life with Books*

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...quismod lacinia at quis. Ut tellus elementum  
...icies lacus sed turnis tincidunt id aliquet*

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# Week 3

MARCH 13-17, 2023



**March 13, 2023 | Monday**

AM, Al Muhairib School for Secondary Education

***Literacy Outreach Activity: Read-Aloud with Students of Determination led by Dr. Ashraf Moustafa and SPED undergraduate students***



**Dr. Ashraf Mustafa** is an instructor of Special Education at UAEU. He holds both a PhD and a master's degree in special education, with a subspecialty in sensory disabilities, and has field experience in the field of special education for more than twenty years.

**March 13, 2023 | Monday**

11:30 AM – 1:30 PM, UAEU Campus

***How To Write A Story Workshop by Alhudhud Publishing House (Arabic)***

Facilitator: Nadia Al Najjar



**Nadia Al-Najjar** is an Emirati novelist from Dubai. She holds a BA in Computer Science. She participated in The Emirati Novelist Program and The Children's Literature Workshop organized by the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation.

**March 14, 2023 | Tuesday**

10 AM – 2 PM, Crescent Auditorium, UAEU

**Film Viewing: *Poupelle of Chimneytown***

**Invited Guest Speaker: Mr. Akihiro Nishino**



**Moderator: Dr. Mona Aljanahi** serves as Assistant Dean for Student Affairs with the College of Education and is an Assistant Professor with the Curriculum and Instruction Department, UAE University.



**Invited Guest Speaker:**

**Mr. Akihiro Nishino** is a comedian/children's book author and illustrator. His body of work includes Dr. Ink's Starry-Sky Cinema, Zip & Candy Robots Christmas, Poupelle of Chimney Town, and others. He worked as a scriptwriter and director for

the movie Poupelle of Chimney Town. His online salon, Akihiro Nishino Entertainment Laboratory, boasts over 38,000 members and is the biggest online community in Japan. His talent is not limited to entertainment and crosses over to different genres of business and activities.



**March 15, 2023 | Wednesday**  
AM, House of Wisdom, Sharjah

***PANEL Discussion with Young Readers for Emirati Children's Day***



**Moderator: Fajr AlKouz** is an avid reader and listener of books. She is a PhD candidate at UAEU, specializing in language and literacy education. Fajr is a published researcher and is currently an active reviewer for a multi-and-interdisciplinary peer-reviewed journal.



**Moderator: Najla Al Owais** is a PhD Candidate in the Curriculum and Instruction department, studying mathematics education. She loves reading and teaching math.

**March 16, 2023 | Thursday**

2:30 – 4 PM, Tawam Hospital, Al Ain

***Literacy Outreach Activity: Read-aloud to children led by Dr. Emma Pearson***



**Dr. Emma Pearson** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. She has had experience teaching at various universities around the world. Her research interests center around connecting early childhood education to families and communities through integrated approaches that promote nurturing care.



*I was raised among books, making invisible friends in pages that seemed cast from dust and whose smell I carry on my hands to this day. - Carlos Ruiz Zafón, The Shadow of the Wind*



**March 16, 2023 | Thursday**

5 – 6:30 PM, Zoi Café, Al Ain

***Literacy Outreach Activity: Panel Discussion -  
Building A Better World Through Books  
led by Dr. Mark Baildon***



**Moderator: Dr. Mark Baildon** served as former Associate Dean at the Office of Educational Research at Nanyang Technological University Singapore, before joining the Foundations of Education Department at College of Education, UAE University.

**Panelists:**



**Jawaher Alkaabi,  
PhD Student**



**Eqlima Dinar,  
PhD Student**

**Asmahan Alkaabi  
PhD Student**

*I love the solitude of reading. I love the deep dive into someone else's story,  
the delicious ache of a last page. - Naomi Shihab Nye*

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# Week 4

MARCH 20-21, 2023



**March 20, 2023 | Monday**

11:00 – 1:00 PM, UAEU Crescent Auditorium

***Literary Talent Show Final Performance***

**March 21, 2023 | Tuesday**

11:15 AM – 1:00 PM, UAEU Crescent Auditorium

***Closing Ceremony and Awarding of Literary Talent Show and Reading Challenge Award***

***An Interview with H.E. Zaki Anwar Nusseibeh on His Life As A Reader***



**His Excellency Zaki Anwar**

**Nusseibeh** is the Cultural Advisor to His Highness the President of the UAE Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and the Chancellor of the United Arab Emirates University. His Excellency has received many honors for his services to cultural diplomacy nationally and from foreign governments and international institutes.



**Moderator: Dr. Najwa Mohamed**

**Alhosani** serves as the Vice Dean for the College of Education, UAE University, and serves as the Festival Advisor for the CEDU Reading Festival Committee.

... books grant us myriad possibilities: the possibility of change, the possibility of illumination. – Alberto Manguel