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CENTRE FOR THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF
MUSLIM SOCIETIES AND CULTURES

2017 NEWSLETTER

Tenth Anniversary Issue





CENTRE FOR THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MUSLIM SOCIETIES AND CULTURES

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The Centre for the Comparative Study of Muslim Societies and Cultures was established at Simon Fraser University 10 years ago to encourage the academic discussion and public understanding of the cultures and societies of Muslim peoples in the past and present. The Centre works through a variety of programs to broaden the discussion of this important subject and to introduce more complexity and comparison in the analysis. In pursuit of this objective, the Centre has brought numerous academic specialists to campus for lectures and consultations; convened interdisciplinary conferences and workshops; established a highly-regarded summer school alternating between Vancouver and London (UK); organized film festivals, art exhibits, and concerts; created residencies, scholarships and visiting professorships; and solicited contributions of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish language material for the SFU research library.

Newsletter Editor: Derryl MacLean
Newsletter Associate Editor: Ataman Avdan



photo credit: Bruce Bottomley

A Conversation with Dr. Amal Ghazal

Dr. Amal Ghazal is the incoming Director of the CCSMSC in 2017. Born in Lebanon and educated at the American University of Beirut and the University of Alberta, Dr. Ghazal is a distinguished specialist on the modern history of the Middle East and Africa. She is best known for her groundbreaking book, *Islamic Reform and Arab Nationalism: Expanding the Crescent from the Mediterranean to the*

Indian Ocean, 1880s-1930s (London: Routledge, 2010). She is the author of numerous articles as well as co-editor of *The Oxford Handbook of Contemporary Middle Eastern and North African History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016). Dr. Ghazal is a member of the editorial board of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* and the *Journal of Middle East Migration Studies*.

The interview was conducted by Dr. Derryl MacLean, the founding Director of the CCSMSC and a historian of Muslim South and Central Asia.

DM: I am delighted to welcome you to the Centre, SFU, and Vancouver. We are all looking forward to learning more about your brand of insightful scholarship across regions. Were you always interested in Middle East and Islamic history, or is this something that developed later?

AG: It is a great pleasure for me to be the director of this dis-

tinguished Centre and I look forward to moving to SFU and joining the vibrant academic community there with whom I share my passion for and interest in Middle Eastern and Islamic history.

As you mentioned, I was born and raised in Lebanon. As someone who lived through the country's civil war as well as the Israeli invasions, I grew up very interested in politics and in a household where discussions of politics were ongoing. I read newspapers and any books found on the family's bookshelves, and asked so many questions. I was lucky

to have a supportive family who nourished that interest by taking my questions, as a kid, seriously and answering them passionately. Moreover, some family members were involved in politics from head to toe and I grew up fascinated by and curious about their experiences and devotion to political causes. As for Islam, it did not have the same meaning in people's daily lives and daily politics as it has been in the past 25 years or so. So I grew up in an environment where the political language of Islam was not yet dominant. That was something I started to witness when I enrolled at the university. Moreover, my paternal family was secular while my maternal one was religious. Through them all I learned that Islam is a subjective experience, can have different meanings and can be either cherished or challenged or both together in various ways. What was common between the two families was respect and adherence to what they believed were the ethos of Islam: compassion, generosity and humility. But little did I know growing up that understanding Middle Eastern and Islamic history would be my career.

DM: You originally studied at the American University of Beirut. Did Lebanon generally and especially AUB, with its unique curriculum, have an impact on the way you do history?

AG: Studying at the American University of Beirut (AUB) has shaped me in many ways. I had moved to it from my town in the Bekaa Valley, where I attended a Catholic school as well as a public high school. I always enjoyed the history classes but they were merely an exercise in memorization of dates, names and events. I was also exposed to a particular interpretation of history, one that was nationalist and dogmatically anti-Ottoman. When I applied to AUB, my intention was to get a business degree. A friend advised I apply first to a department with lower enrolment then switch to the Business school, which was highly competitive. He randomly ticked History as a first option on my application. As a History major, I had to take at least two history courses every semester. I chose one on Ottoman history, which turned out to be completely different from what I was used to as it involved discussions, debates, critical analysis, trips to the library and independent research. The class was also full of students of different ideological backgrounds and different takes on

Ottoman history, challenging each other on how the past is perceived and interpreted. I was fascinated by what was going on around me. When I took a course the following term on modern Egyptian history and another one on early Islamic history, I realized that nothing but a major in History would speak to my passion, my dreams, and most important, my skills. Thus, after one year at AUB, I decided not to switch to another major and to finish a degree in History. In a nutshell, it was both the curriculum and the very politically vibrant AUB campus that informed my decision to pursue a degree in History.

DM: Your influential book, *Islamic Reform and Arab Nationalism*, was one of the first works of analysis to look at the larger intellectual history of Zanzibar during the Bu Sa'idi period. In the process, you insisted on a much wider international exchange of ideas founded on networks of intellectuals not confined to the Middle East, Africa, or the Indian Ocean littoral. What are networks and why do they matter in our understanding of Muslim societies and cultures?

AG: My interest in intellectual networks emerged when I was working on my MA thesis and realized that discussions about the meaning of modernity, Islam and imperialism were taking place laterally, across regions and continents, adopting similar arguments and terminology. I felt that area-studies, such as Middle Eastern studies, could not capture the scope and scale of what was unraveling intellectually. I then studied African history with a focus on the history of Islam in Africa and realized how disjointed it was from the broader field of Islamic history. I started to think about the network as a methodology to trace and examine the cross-regional connections I had been encountering. I define the networks as interrelated groups of individuals with common interests, values and goals, and who develop their own means of correspondence and communication through which they produce and share what they hold in common.

Networks matter because they capture the connectedness among communities, in this case Muslim ones, despite their linguistic, ethnic or cultural differences. This becomes crucial in an age of nation-states and borders. Networks remind us that the national framework is not

enough to understand how communities define themselves, their identities and their visions, and that the national framework interacts with and is challenged by other contenders. Moreover, networks enable us to understand how ideas travel and become consumed, and how the local and the translocal intersect, feed into, or subvert each other.

DM: While the connections of Zanzibari nationalism to Arab and Turkish nationalisms are quite clear, I wonder about specifically Zanzibari rethinkings of Islam, especially in the case of the new ideologies. Was there a uniquely Zanzibari instance of Islam, given its many local strands such as the Ibadi, the Shafi'i, the Isma'ili, the Shadhiliyya, all of which have different translocal connections? And do modern reformist readings of Islam, with their assumptions of a universal Islam, privilege translocal ways of knowing and practicing Islam over that of the Zanzibar locality? In short, how does the local connect with the translocal or universal without loss of meaning?

AG: At first, I thought that what I encountered was a Zanzibari instance of Islam given the cosmopolitan and mercantile settings in which Islam grew on the island. But the more I read and researched, the more I realized that Zanzibar was not an exception but rather a mirror of similar developments happening almost everywhere else. I see it more as a historical instance, when a mix of factors, including colonialism, anti-colonialism, the printing press, steamship, new ideas of a reformed universal Islam coalesced to produce a specific historical moment characterized by translocal connections at an unprecedented scale. The local was not necessarily idle and fixed in time before the modern period which brought fast and dramatic change, causing much tension over the meaning of what is local and what is not. Thus, the translocal ways of knowing did not dislodge the local per se but created an accelerated process of change and self-redefinition at an unprecedented rate.

DM: You have had an on-going interest in your scholarship on questions of cosmopolitanism in Muslim contexts. This ranges from what you call "Zanzibari cosmopolitanism," with its location in the Indian Ocean, to "Ibadi cos-

mopolitanism," constructed within an Ibadiyya community spread from Oman through Zanzibar to Algeria. Are there different types of "cosmopolitanism" within Muslim communities? Does Ibadi cosmopolitanism, founded on a faith community, differ from Indian Ocean cosmopolitanism, founded on mercantile diasporas?

AG: Ibadi cosmopolitanism is founded on mercantile diasporas (and like Sufism, there is this overlap between the mercantile and the intellectual), and on both Indian Ocean and Mediterranean cosmopolitanisms as they developed by the late 19th century onwards. What this means is that leading members of the Ibadi diaspora became embedded in larger Muslim networks who sought Muslim unity across the sects and transcended a parochial identity and parochial concerns. Anti-colonialism and the desire to empower Muslims during the colonial period fuelled those projects. This does not mean that the Ibadi identity was sidelined or completely subsumed but it rather adapted to new needs for the Ibadi communities. Thus, a cosmopolitan Ibadi was someone who preserved Ibadi identity by embedding it into regional and global intellectual and political currents. Ibadis saw no distinction between what is an Ibadi community and what is an Ibadi sect (and this is a loose translation as sect in Arabic has different words). The overlap makes it hard to distinguish one from the other. Thus, for the sake of preserving Ibadism as a community with a specific sectarian identity, Ibadis had to (re)define their roles and goals as they embraced the language of a reformist Islam, of anti-colonialism, of local nationalism and Arab nationalism. Yet the example of Ibadi cosmopolitanism is one type of Muslim cosmopolitanism. Not all types of Muslim cosmopolitanism relied on the idioms of Islamic reform and Islamic unity. We have a Muslim cosmopolitanism, for example, based on anarchist leftist ideas and idioms void of any reference to religion. When we highlight the different types of cosmopolitanism, we thus shed light on the diverse experiences of Muslims.

Continued on page 18

The 2016 International Summer Program on Muslim Diversity, July 11-15, 2016

The ninth annual International Summer Program, “Expressions of Diversity: An Introduction to Muslim Cultures,” was held at SFU Harbour Centre from July 11-15, 2016, with two academic modules and one cultural exhibit each day. The summer program was founded in 2008 jointly by the Centre for the Comparative Study of Muslim Societies and Cultures (SFU-History) and the Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations (Aga Khan University—UK) as a corrective to widespread views of a monolithic political Islam and as a forum to bring academics back into the public discussion of Islamic and Muslim phenomena. It alternates annually between London and Vancouver.

The 2016 summer program, directed by Derryl MacLean of SFU History, focused on knowledge, power, and identity in Muslim contexts. Twelve faculty, a visiting professor, three artists, and twenty-three participants were assembled in the Lohn Policy Room to discuss issues of the nature and organization of forms of Islamic knowledge, focusing on actually existing Muslim constructions of knowledge within specific power differentials, including western knowledge of the religion and culture of Muslims.

The 2016 Expressions of Diversity Visiting Professor, Dr. Karim H. Karim, Director of the Carleton Centre for the Study of Islam, focused in his keynote address on Islamic and Western pasts that converge and do not clash, with the argument that these intersections can provide the foundations for a new public policy. The 2016 faculty consisted of Luke Clossey, Thomas Kuehn, Derryl MacLean (all from SFU-History), Sutrisno Hartana (SFU-Cont. Arts), Adel Iskandar (SFU-Communication), Karim Karim (Carleton), Massoud Karimaei (Tehran), Rozita Moini-Shirazi (Emily Carr U.), Gianluca Parolin (ISMC-London), Daromir Rudynyckyj (UVic), Azadeh Yamini-Hamedani (SFU-World Lit), and Hamza Zafer (UWash).

The ISP tradition of late afternoon chai-khanas (“tea-houses” on the silk route) was continued as a venue for informal table-talk among participants and Vancouver artists. This year the focus of the “tea-house” was on calligraphy, music, and art. The graduation ceremony featured a Gamelin orchestra led by Sutrisno Hartana, a court musician from the Paku Alaman palace in the Sultanate of Yogyakarta. Dr. Thomas Kuehn, Director of the CCSMSC, spoke for the CCSMSC, ISMC, and SFU-History in appreciation of the accomplishments of the ISP2016.

International Summer Program 2016 Participants.





International Summer Program 2016

Top left: Calligraphic demonstration by Massoud Karimaei

Top right: Certification Ceremony (T.Kuehn, D. MacLean, Z. Makhdoom)

Middle right: Seminar of Gianluca Parolin (ISMCI)

Bottom: Gamelin orchestra led by Sutrisno Hartana



Annual Lecture Series

Dr. Dietrich Jung, *How To Be a Modern Muslim: Global Social Imaginaries and the Construction of Islamic Identities*, September 24, 2014, SFU Vancouver Campus.

Combining contemporary social theory with Islamic studies, this lecture examined the various ways in which Muslims have dealt with the construction of social orders and forms of subjectivity in the modern age. Taking examples from the



broad stream of Islamic reform movements, it showed the ways in which globally relevant social imaginaries together with Islamic traditions have served as frames of reference for individual and collective ways to construct modern Islamic identities. In pointing to both similarities and differences between Islamic and non-Islamic forms of social order and modern selfhoods, the pre-

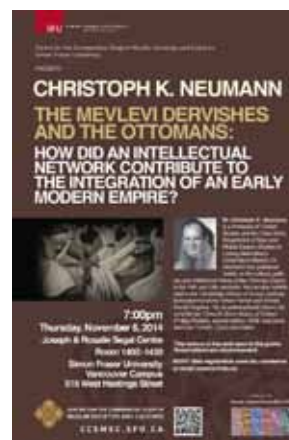
sentation claimed that modern Muslim identities have been constructed with respect to a set of more global paradigms. In this way, the lecture challenged exclusivist assumptions about both Western modernity and modern Islamic ways of life.

Dr. Dietrich Jung is a Professor and Head of Department at the Center for Contemporary Middle East Studies, University of Southern Denmark. Dr. Jung received his Ph.D. from University of Hamburg. He has published numerous scholarly articles on causes of war, peace and conflict studies, political Islam, modern Turkey and on conflicts in the Middle East. Dr. Jung published ten monographs and edited books of which the most recent are *Orientalists, Islamists and the Global Public Sphere: A Genealogy of the Modern Essentialist Image of Islam* (Sheffield: Equinox, 2011) and *The Politics of Modern Muslim Subjectivities: Islam, Youth and Social Activism in the Middle East* (with Marie Juul Petersen and Sara Lei Sparre, New York: Palgrave, 2014).

Dr. Christoph K. Neumann, *The Mevlevi Dervishes and The Ottomans: How Did an Intellectual Network Contribute to the Integration of an Early Modern Empire?* November 6, 2014, SFU-Vancouver Campus.

The Mevlevi order of dervishes operated as a specifically Ottoman institution, as its affiliates often belonged to the Ottoman elite. Members of Muslim Ottoman elites had often to be mobile as their career required them to change places. The convents of the order, located just outside of many urban centres in the Empire, were open to all Mevlevi and served as a network in this situation. This lecture examined how this network functioned. Drawing on a prosopography of Mevlevi poets, the *Tezkire-i Shuara-yi Mevleviye* by the Istanbulite dervish Esrar Dede, completed toward the end of the eighteenth century, the lecture dwelled on the relations between different convents and demonstrates how in the eighteenth century the emergence of Istanbul as a counterweight to the founding asitane in Konya and the exchange between poets contributed to turn the Mevleviye into one of the organisations vital for the coherence of the empire.

Dr. Christoph K. Neumann is a Professor of Turkish Studies and the Head of the Institute of Near and Middle Eastern Studies



at Munich Ludwig Maximilian University. Dr. Neumann has published widely on the cultural, political, and intellectual history of the Ottoman Empire in the 18th and 19th centuries. He has also contributed to the *Cambridge History of Turkey*, and has translated novels by Orhan Pamuk and Ahmed Hamdi Tanpinar. His co-authored book *Kleine Geschichte der Türkei (A Short History of Turkey)* (Philipp Reclam, second edition 2008) was translated into Turkish, Czech and

Italian. He is also the co-editor of several volumes including *Popular Protest and Political Participation in the Ottoman Empire: Studies in Honor of Suraiya Faroqhi*, (with Eleni Gara and M. Erdem Kabadayi, Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi University Press, 2011) and *Untold Histories of the Middle East: Recovering Voices from the 19th and 20th Centuries*, (with Aksin Selçuk Somel and Amy Singer, London: Routledge, 2011).

Dr. Shainool Jiwa, Religious Pluralism and Pragmatic Governance: The Mediterranean Experience during Fatimid Rule, November 26, 2014, SFU-Vancouver Campus.

This lecture examined Fatimid Shia Ismaili Muslim governance and its impact on the medieval Mediterranean world of the 10th-11th centuries – a region inhabited by people from diverse ethnic backgrounds and religious persuasions. During their two and a half century rule (909-1171 CE), the Fatimid rulers, known as Imam-caliphs, developed a model of governance recognised both in medieval and modern times for its inclusivity. Christians and Jews participated actively in imperial administration and non-Shia Muslims were not compelled to adopt a Shia Ismaili interpretation of Islam. The lecture discussed the extent to which

Fatimid policy was the result of the interplay between doctrinal commitments and their lived experience, tempered by local conditions and communal dynamics. It focused on how Fatimid governance was articulated and evolved over the course of the dynasty's rule, and how salient Fatimid figures conceived the relationship between the ruler and subject. It concluded with observations on whether the Fatimid model

of governance led to a distinctive relationship between the Imam-caliphs and their non-Muslim constituencies.

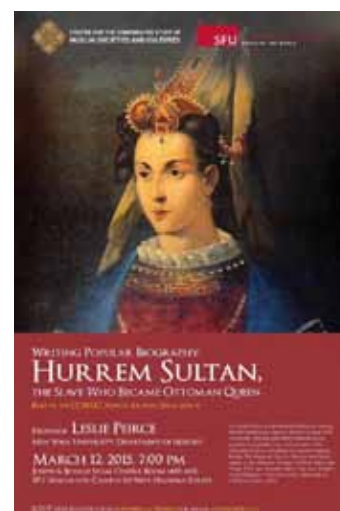
Dr. Shainool Jiwa is the Head of Constituency Studies at the Institute of Ismaili Studies (London) and Member of the Board of Governors for Edinburgh Napier University. An internationally renowned specialist on Fatimid history, she is the author of two major monographs: *Towards a Shi'i Mediterranean Empire: Fatimid Egypt and the Founding of Cairo* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009) and *The Founder of Cairo: The Fatimid Imam-Caliph al-Mu'izz and His Era* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013).



Dr. Leslie Peirce, Writing Popular Biography: Hurrem Sultan, the Slave Who Became Ottoman Queen, March 12, 2015, SFU-Vancouver Campus.

In this lecture, Dr. Peirce explored the challenges and opportunities of writing the popular biography of Hurrem Sultan. Also known as Roxelana, Hurrem Sultan, was born in a small town in today's western Ukraine in 1502 and captured by Crimean Tatars at a young age. She was shipped to Istanbul where she was selected for Suleiman's harem. She became Suleiman's favourite and legal wife, and managed to play critical political roles during her husband's reign and afterwards. Dr. Peirce discussed how Hurrem Sultan has become an important element of public imaginary in recent years and how she has been represented in popular culture.

Dr. Leslie Peirce is the Silver Professor in History, Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at New York University. She has published extensively on questions of gender, law, and society in the Ottoman Empire including two award winning books, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford University Press, 1993) and *Morality Tales: Law and Gender in the Ottoman Court of Aintab* (University of California Press, 2003).



Dr. Resat Kasaba, What Is Wrong With Turkey? October 22, 2015, SFU-Vancouver Campus.

Turkey has been practicing democratic politics for seventy years. It has also been a member of NATO and other western alliances for almost the same amount of time. Why, after all these years, is it, once again, on the verge of an all-out civil war, in danger of becoming totally isolated in its foreign policy, and facing a big economic crisis? This lecture explored short-term and long term factors that have contributed to this situation.



Resat Kasaba is the Stanley D. Golub Chair of International Studies at the University of Washington, where he also directs the Jackson School of International Studies. Dr. Kasaba researches the transformation of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey in the modern period, with a focus on economic and social history. He is the author or editor of numerous books, including *A Moveable*

Empire: Ottoman Nomads, Migrants, and Refugees (University of Washington Press, 2009) and *The Cambridge History of Turkey, vol. IV: Turkey in the Modern World* (Cambridge University Press, 2008).

Dr. Sinan Antoon, Iraq, Violence, Memory, October 1, 2015, SFU-Vancouver Campus.

How does a poet mourn and grieve the death and destruction visited upon one's homeland yet avoid clinging to the nation-state or denying its own congenital violence? The lecture addressed this question and its potential answer in the late works of Sargon Boulus (1944-2008).



Sinan Antoon is a poet, novelist, translator, and academic at the Gallatin School, New York University. His poetry and novels have been translated into English, German, Norwegian, Portuguese, and Italian, and his work has merited the National Translation Award, the Arab American Book Award, and the Saif Ghobash Banipal Prize. Among his recently published books are the novel, *The*

Corpse Washer (Yale University Press, 2014), the collection of poetry, *Laylun Wahidun fi Kull al-Mudun (One Night in All Cities)* (Dar al-Jamal, 2010), and the academic study, *The Poetics of the Obscene in Premodern Arabic Poetry* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

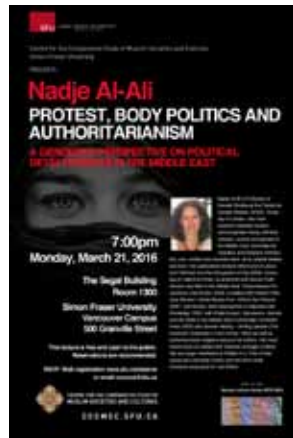


Dr. Nadjé Al-Ali

Dr. Nadjie Al-Ali, Protest, Body Politics and Authoritarianism: A Gendered Perspective on Political Developments In The Middle East, March 21, 2016, SFU-Vancouver Campus.

Why does gender matter when looking at developments in the Middle East? The lecture developed the argument that gender is not a side issue but central to understanding recent developments in the region. Focusing on Iraq, Egypt and Turkey as three different sites of conflict and violence, but also addressing developments in other parts of the Middle East, the talk explored the significance of body politics for wider political developments. It also showed how feminist activism in the region is particularly challenged to not only address gender-based inequalities and forms of injustices but also wider forms of political authoritarianism.

Dr. Nadjie Al-Ali is Professor of Gender Studies at the Centre for Gender Studies, SOAS, University of London. Her publications include *What Kind of Liberation? Women and the Occupation of Iraq* (University of California Press, 2009, co-authored with Nicola Pratt); *Iraqi Women: Untold Stories from 1948 to the Present* (Zed Books, 2007); *Secularism, Gender and the State in the Middle East* (Cambridge University Press, 2000) and *Gender Writing – Writing Gender* (The American University in Cairo Press, 1994). Her most recent book entitled *We are Iraqis: Aesthetics & Politics in a Time of War* (Syracuse University Press, 2013, co-edited with Deborah al-Najjar) won the 2014 Arab-American book prize for non-fiction.



Dr. Karim H. Karim, Re-Imagining Self and Other: Knowledge, Power and the Clash of Ignorance, July 13, 2016, SFU-Vancouver Campus.

The twenty-first century exploded into the global imagination with unforgettable scenes of death and destruction. An apocalyptic “clash of civilizations” seemed to be waged between two old foes – “the West” and “Islam.” Much of the interaction between them is characterized by a mutual lack of awareness of the vital role that each has played historically in shaping the other. Western and Muslim civilizations have



demonstrated a vast capacity for productive engagement. But this long record of collaborative exchange has not prevented a contemporary escalation of the “clash of ignorance” on both sides. The complexities and subtleties of their mutually beneficial relationship are overshadowed by portrayals of unrelenting conflict that promote a continuing cycle of terrorism and war. Canada and

other countries have paid dearly in blood and treasure in the last one and half decades of strife, which seems fated to continue for many more years. It is time to re-imagine Western-Muslim intersections.

Karim H. Karim is the Director of the Carleton Centre for the Study of Islam and Professor of Communication at Carleton University's School of Journalism and Communication. He has also served as Director of the School and of the Institute of Ismaili Studies in London, England, and has been a Visiting Scholar at Harvard University. His most recent publications are the twin volumes: *Re-Imagining the Other: Culture, Media, and Western-Muslim Intersections* and *Engaging the Other: Public Policy and Western-Muslim Intersections*. Karim won the inaugural Robinson Prize for his book *Islamic Peril: Media and Global Violence*. He has been honoured by the Government of Canada for his efforts in promoting collaborative activities between Muslims, Jews, Christians, and other Canadian communities.

Mirhady Endowed Lecture

The Mirhady Endowed Lectureship was established at Simon Fraser University in 2002 through the generosity of Dr. Fereidoun Mirhady and Dr. Katharine Mirhady, with the goal of widening the public understanding of the culture, history, and literature of Iran. It is located in the Department of History.

Dr. Cyrus Schayegh, Global Iran: Reflections on the Modern Period, April 9, 2015, Fletcher Challenge Theater, SFU-Harbour Centre.

Modern Iran is often examined as a nation-state or as part of the Middle East. What insights do we gain when analyzing it through the lens of global developments and vice versa? This

is the question at the heart of my talk, which focuses on three themes. Two are historical: Iranian thinkers of globalization and 1970s Iran as part of accelerating globalization. The third is historiographic, exploring possible contributions of (Iranian) area studies to writing global histories.

Cyrus Schayegh is an Associate Professor of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University. His forth-

coming book, *Transnationalization: A History of the Modern Middle East* (Harvard University Press, 2015), examines the sociospatial manifestations of economic, cultural, and administrative processes in Greater Syria (present-day Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Israel/Palestine) during a transformative century, from 1850-1950. Dr. Schayegh is the author of *Who Is Knowledgeable Is Strong: Science, Class, and the Formation of Modern Iranian Society, 1900-1950* (University of California Press, 2009), an important and timely analysis of the role of the biomedical sciences in the emergence of a modern Iranian class system.



Dr. Kathryn Babayan, Disturbing the City of Isfahan: An Urban Education of the Senses, February 4, 2016, Fletcher Challenge Theater, SFU-Harbour Centre.

Writing in seventeenth century Isfahan experienced a transformation beyond epigraphy and the medium of stone or ceramics onto the surface of a sheet of paper with the assemblage of a new kind of book, the anthology, or majmu'a/muraqqa'. Monumental public writing and the more intimate writing on paper reveal a larger cultural turn towards writing. Albums of calligraphy, paintings, letters, essays and poetry were produced at court and in elite households as part of a cultured practice of adab, or etiquette. Dr. Babayan is interested in the multiplication of materials for writing in and

about the city. Writing on paper, the attention to subjective knowledge production, and its assemblage into anthologies represents different ways of being in the city, a subject that was explored in this talk. Dr. Babayan concentrated on the genre of shahrashub (city disturbance), written about Isfahan as allegory of a spiritual journey to paradise,

copied and collected in anthologies produced in Isfahan for private consumption.

Kathryn Babayan is Associate Professor of Iranian History and Culture at the Department of Near Eastern Studies and the Department of History, as well as the Director of the



**DRS FEREIDOUN AND KATHARINE MIRHADY
ENDOWED LECTURE IN IRANIAN STUDIES**


**Global Iran: Reflections on
the Modern Period**

You are invited to attend the 12th annual Drs Fereidoun and Katharine Mirhady Endowed Lecture in Iranian Studies.



Speaker: Cyrus Schayegh
Princeton University

Thursday, 9 April 2015, 7 PM
Fletcher Challenge Theater, Room 1900
Simon Fraser University, Vancouver Campus
515 West Hastings Street, Vancouver

This lecture is free and open to the public.
As seating is limited, reservations are recommended.
Please register online at
www.sfu.ca/history/events.html

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**DRS FEREIDOUN AND KATHARINE MIRHADY
ENDOWED LECTURE IN IRANIAN STUDIES**


**Disturbing the City of Isfahan:
An Urban Education of the Senses**

You are invited to attend the 14th annual Drs Fereidoun and Katharine Mirhady Endowed Lecture in Iranian Studies.

Speaker: Kathryn Babayan
University of Michigan

Thursday, 4 February 2016, 7 PM
Fletcher Challenge Theater, Room 1900
Simon Fraser University, Vancouver Campus
515 West Hastings Street, Vancouver

This lecture is free and open to the public.
As seating is limited, reservations are recommended.
Please register online at
www.sfu.ca/history/events.html

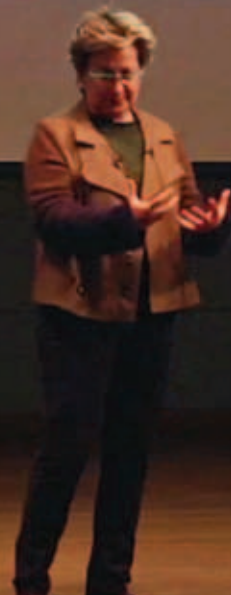
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Armenian Studies Program, University of Michigan. She is the author of *Mystics, Monarchs and Messiahs: Cultural Landscapes of Early Modern Iran* (2003); co-author of *Slaves of the Shah: New Elites of Safavid Iran*, with Sussan Babaie, Ina Baghdiantz-McCabe, and Massumeh Farhad (2004); and co-editor with Afsaneh Najmabadi of *Islamicate Sexualities*

Studies: Translations Across Temporal Geographies of Desire, (2008). She is currently working on a monograph entitled *The City as Anthology: Visualizing Cultures of Literacy in Early Modern Isfahan*.

Dr. Kathryn Babayan



WINTER 2015 COLLOQUIA SERIES: CONVERSATIONS TO CONFRONT ISLAMOPHOBIA

Rima Berns-McGown (Simon Fraser University), “‘Imported Conflict,’ Imported Trauma: Myth, Reality, & Islamophobia,” February 4, 2015.

Rima Berns-McGown was Associate Director of the CCSMSC in 2014-15 and the Jack & Doris Shadbolt Fellow (SFU). She was the research director of the Mosaic Institute’s recently released “Perception & Reality of ‘Imported Conflict’ in Canada” and is the author of *Muslims in the Diaspora: The Somali Communities of London and Toronto*.

Itrath Syed (Simon Fraser University), “Between Competing Secularisms: Muslims in the Canadian Public Sphere,” February 26, 2015.

Itrath Syed is a doctoral candidate in the School of Communication (SFU). She has published and presented numerous articles and papers, including “The Great Canadian ‘Shari’a’ Debate” in *Islam in the Hinterlands: Muslim Cultural Politics in Canada*.

Sunera Thobani (University of British Columbia), “Gender, Feminism, and Islamophobia,” March 3, 2015.

Sunera Thobani is Associate Professor at the Institute for Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Social Justice (UBC), the author of *Exalted Subjects: Studies in the Making of Race and Nation in Canada*, and the co-editor of *States of Race: Critical Race Feminist Theory for the 21st Century*.

Adel Iskandar (Simon Fraser University), “Confronting Collapsible Categories: Islam and the Media,” March 11, 2015.

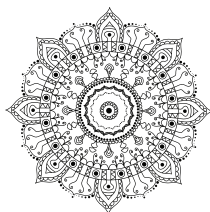
Adel Iskandar is Assistant Professor of Global Communication (SFU) and the author or editor of numerous books, including *Egypt In Flux: Essays on an Unfinished Revolution*; *Al-Jazeera: The Story of the Network that is Rattling Governments and Redefining Modern Journalism*; *Edward Said: A Legacy of Emancipation and Representation*; and *Mediating the Arab Uprisings*.

Summer Pervez (Kwantlen Polytechnic University), “On Being a ‘Muslim’ Filmmaker: Expectations and Assumptions,” March 18, 2015.

Summer Pervez is a filmmaker, screenwriter, poet, and academic who also teaches in the Department of English at Kwantlen Polytechnic University.

Hawa Y. Mire (York University), “Blackness in Islamophobia: Missing the Interlocking Nuances in a Young Somalia Diaspora,” March 26, 2015.

Hawa Y. Mire is a diasporic Somali storyteller, writer, and academic strategist whose work focuses on the implications of indigeneity, oral history, and resistance. Her research looks to incorporate traditional Somali stories with discourses of constructed identity.



Other Events

A Celebration of the Sufi Legacy in South Asia, September 6-13, 2014. Part 1: Film Festival: “Moner Manush,” with Director Goutam Ghose, and “Milange Babey Ratan De Mele Te,” with director Ajay Bhardwaj. **Part 2:** Public Forum: Spirituality, Humanity, and the Marginalized in Sufism: keynote address by Dr. Nile Green (UCLA), with panelists Seemi Ghazi (IUBC), Zahid Makhdoom (Vancouver), Madan Gopal Singh (Delhi U), and Enakshi Chatterjee (Sunandan, Kolkata). **Part 3:** Public Concert: Songs of Waris Shah, Bullah Shah, Kabir, and Lalon Fakir, with Madan Gopal Singh and the Char Yaar (Delhi), Farida Parveen and Gazi Abdul Hakim (Bangla Desh), and Enakshi Chatterjee (Kolkata).

Dr. Annick Germain (Institut national de la recherche scientifique), “Making Space for Religious Diversity: Controversies on Places of Worship and City Planning in Montreal,” October 7, 2014, SFU-Harbour Centre. Co-sponsored with SFU’s Urban Studies Program.

Dr. Barnett Rubin (Center on International Cooperation, NYU), “What Will Happen to Afghanistan after the NATO Forces Leave?” November 19, 2014, SFU-Harbour Centre. Co-sponsored with SFU’s Vancity Office of Community Engagement, Indian Summer Festival, and SFU’s School for International Studies.

“Revolution and Performance: A Conversation with Egyptian Musician Ramy Essam,” November 28, 2014, SFU-Harbour Centre. Co-sponsored by SFU’s Institute for the Humanities and School of Communications.

Dr. Adel Iskandar (SFU), “From Immolation to Preservation: The Self and Identity Politics since the Arab Uprisings,” January 22, 2015, SFU-Harbour Centre. Co-sponsored with SFU’s Institute for the Humanities.

Dr. Bassam Haddad (George Mason University), “Understanding the Syrian Tragedy Four Years On,” February 2, 2015, SFU-Harbour Centre. Co-sponsored with SFU’s School for International Studies, School of Communications, and Institute for the Humanities.

Sonallah Ibrahim, “Writing Against the Grain” March 2, 2015, SFU-Harbour Centre. Co-sponsored with SFU’s Institute for the Humanities, School for International Studies, World Literature Program, Contemporary Arts Graduate Program, and Institute for Performance Studies. Sonallah Ibrahim is an Egyptian novelist and winner of the Ibn Rushd Prize for Freedom and Thought (2004).

Dr. Peyman Vahabzadeh (University of Victoria), “Acts of Liberation: A Phenomenology of Violence and Nonviolence,” March 13, 2015, SFU-Harbour Centre. Co-sponsored by SFU’s Institute for the Humanities.

Dr. Omid Safi (Duke University), “Jalal ud-Din Rumi: Love as the GPS of Divine Secrets,” June 25, 2015, SFU-Harbour Centre. Co-sponsored with Aga Khan University’s Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations.

Conference: “Iran’s Struggle for Social Justice: Canadian and International Perspectives,” University of Victoria, July 10-12, 2015. Co-sponsored with University of Victoria’s Political Science Department.

Film Screening: A Sinner in Mecca, March 30, 2016, Djavad Mowafaghian Cinema, Goldcorp Centre for the Arts, SFU-Vancouver. Co-sponsored by Department of Humanities.



Promotional Photo from
“A Sinner in Mecca Film”



Book Donations:

Top: Presentation Volume of the Ganj-i Latif, gifted by Zahid Makhdoom.
 Bottom: Presentation of books by the Pakistan Consul General for the Al-lamah Iqbal Memorial Urdu Collection. D. MacLean (Director, CCSMSC), Dr. Muhammad Tariq (Consul General), Fahad Amjad (Consul), Beth Ann Locke (FASS) and Jennifer Spear (Chair, History).

Library Collections

The SFU Library has six ongoing collections in Middle East and Muslim Studies

The Allamah Iqbal Memorial Urdu Collection contains 250 volumes, primarily in Urdu with some Persian and English texts, on the work of Iqbal and the cultural history of Indo-Pakistan. It was enriched in 2015 by a donation of 125 books and in 2016 by an additional 51 books primarily in English and Urdu from Dr. Muhammed Tariq, the Pakistan Consul General of Vancouver.

The Collection of Ottoman and Turkish Studies contains over 200 books primarily on Ottoman and Turkish republican socioeconomic, political, and intellectual history.

The World Lebanese Cultural Union Arabic Collection holds over 100 volumes of recently published Arabic works, primarily on the history, society, and culture of Lebanon. This year WLCU donated 35 books to the collection.

Dr. Fritz Lehman Collection of Bihar and Muslim South Asia currently holds approximately 220 volumes, and is particularly rich in Bihar records, gazetteers, books, and pamphlets in Urdu, Persian, and English. It includes the original Bihar Survey and Settlement Reports.

The Lami Nasserpour Persian Collection has over 800 volumes in Farsi on history, politics, memoirs, mysticism, art, and literature, including valuable editions and commentaries on Hafiz, Rumi, Sa'adi, and Firdawsi. In 2016, the CCSMSC augmented the collection with books on the intellectual history of Iran.

William and Gretchen Cleveland Arabic Collection and Digitalization Project consists of approximately 750 Arabic books and is rich in first-edition Beirut and Cairo imprints in history, memoirs, travelogues, and novels. The late Dr. William L. Cleveland (1941-2006) was Professor Emeritus in the Department of History, Simon Fraser University. A world-renowned scholar of the Middle East and North Africa, he

was the founder of SFU's Middle East and Islamic program and the mentor of numerous undergraduate and graduate students. His publications, including his seminal work, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, now in its fifth edition, are required readings in most North American institutes of higher education.

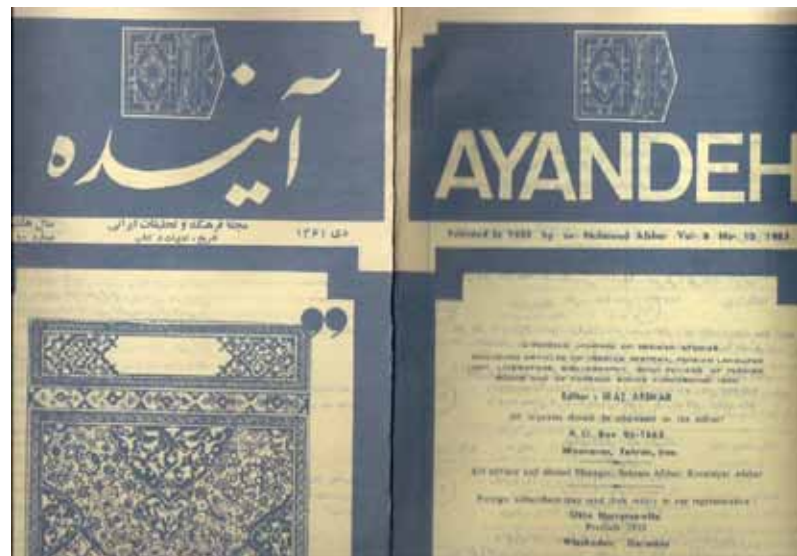
The Cleveland Collection Digitization Project of the Centre for the Comparative Study of Muslim Societies and Cultures (CCSMSC-SFU) aims to convert many of the Arabic works in this collection into a digital format, which will allow researchers access to the material used by Professor Cleveland in his research.

New Donations:

Ayandeh, an important Persian journal founded in Tehran by Mahmood Afshar in 1925 and continued by Iran Afshar, 50 volumes from the 1980s, gifted by Peter Stokoe (Ottawa).

Iran Nameh, Persian journal, 60 volumes from 1991-2009, gifted by Dr. Peyman Vahabzadeh (Victoria).

Ganj-i Latif of Shah 'Abd al-Latif, *Risalo*, presentation volume gifted by Zahid Makhdoom.



A Conversation with Dr. Amal Ghazal

Continued from page 5

DM: In a recent issue of *Jadaliyya*, you and Larbi Sadiki argued that the understanding of ISIS, both in the Middle East and the West, has been compromised by assumptions ingrained within the discourse of orientalism. Perhaps you could elaborate. What are the implications of thinking of the framing of ISIS in these terms?

AG: Larbi Sadiki, a prominent Tunisian political scientist, and I have had concerns about how the discussion of ISIS in the West follows a dichotomous approach: is ISIS Islamic or not? We thought that was simplistic and unrepresentative of major political and intellectual developments in the 20th century that have made the rise of ISIS possible. We have also noticed that analysis of ISIS in the West sidelines the writings and opinions of Arab and Muslim intellectuals who are not based in the West on the topic. We concluded that this smacks of Orientalism, even among those who were denying any relationship between Islam and ISIS. The voice from the East, so to speak, remains marginalized or neglected, brought in randomly only to justify this or that opinion published in the West on the relationship between ISIS and Islam. Writers and intellectuals in the West are posing as the ultimate authority on ISIS, and framing their debates in relationship to Islamophobia. This was turning the debate into something that concerns the West, rather than the societies directly affected by ISIS. Larbi had written a piece to Al-Jazeera English on the escalating clash within the abode of Islam, pointing to the problems the Middle East has been facing in terms of escalating violence, archaic forms of rule and contemptible interpretations of religious texts. Thus, framing ISIS in dichotomous terms does not reflect the scale of problems certain majority Muslim societies have been facing, including a chaotic and amateurish interpretation of religious texts, the debates over the overlap between religious and political authorities, the constant calls to reevaluate the role of religious heritage in contemporary life, etc. It ignores all efforts made by Muslim (and non-Muslim) intellectuals in those societies to seriously engage in those debates and discussions and challenge the status quo.

DM: To move from scholarship to teaching, your future colleagues here at SFU are looking forward with much pleasure to your participation in the Middle East and Islamic Concentration in History. What is your approach to teaching and what courses would you want to teach?

AG: Teaching for me focuses, first and foremost, on developing students' analytical and writing skills. The challenge for us is not so much in providing students with information but in providing them with the training to know what to do with it. We teach them how to transform information into a systematic body of knowledge. One comment I often hear from my students, both undergraduate and graduate, is that I push them hard. What they mean is that I challenge them to give me the best out of their writing and analytical skills, and I do so gradually. I start from the bottom up with them and diversify the assignments to reach that goal. The ultimate goal is for the students to become independent thinkers who can make judgments on their own. This is especially pertinent in the field of Islamic and Middle East studies. Islam, the Middle East and Muslims are daily news in the West. The coverage is generally very superficial and can be hostile. Students will be able to see beyond the headlines and the coverage when well-trained. After all, independent thinking ensures we have mature citizenship.

I will be offering initially a history of the modern Middle East and a seminar course on slavery and women in Muslim societies. However, there are three new courses I would like to teach at SFU eventually. One relates to the Indian Ocean and its port cities, another on the Sahara, and a third on popular culture in the Middle East.

DM: I understand from colleagues that at Dalhousie you have taught a very popular course on "Food for Thought: History and the Culinary Cultures of the Islamic World." Why does food matter in history?

AG: Let me tell you how this idea came up. First, I had been thinking about a course that would introduce my students to Middle Eastern societies through a cultural lens. In 2007, I visited the Mزاب valley in Algeria. I noticed how women, dressed very conservatively, were walking back from the market carrying the French baguette, which was served for me with every meal I had at the guest house where I stayed. I

asked my host to get me Algerian bread. He looked confused, pointed to the baguette and said: “But this is the Algerian bread!” I said: “No, this is the French baguette. I would like to have the round-shaped bread that I had just had in Algiers.” He made a phone call and was reassured that there was a local woman who could make that bread for me. I got very intrigued by this episode. Here I am in the Algerian desert hosted by a very conservative community whose traditions the French were not able to change, but for their bread. By then, I had also realized that food was key to my identity as an immigrant in North America and was also a major conduit through which I channelled my culture to my daughter who was born and raised in Canada. Upon returning from Algeria, I started to do research on the topic of food and Middle Eastern and Islamic history, in relationship to politics, class, family, religion, gender, etc. The more I read, the more I was convinced how much food is essential to shaping and defining identities at different levels. I might have been the first in Canada, if not North America, to offer a course on the history and the culinary cultures of the Muslim world, with a focus on the Middle East. Students love this course for two reasons. It immediately brings a personal element into the discussion with students gradually realizing the importance of food in shaping their identity and relationship with the larger society. It also opens their eyes to the cultural richness within Muslim societies and to the commonalities they share with those societies. Food humanizes us.

DM: The Centre was established some ten years ago to encourage the academic and public understanding of the cultures and societies within Muslim contexts. What is your view of the importance of this overall mission? What parts of the various programs do you find of most interest?

AG: There is nothing more urgent now than to further promote the mission of the Centre. The Centre speaks to values that we, as citizens and academics, cherish and defend: diversity, open-mindedness, and a desire to understand and appreciate other cultures. Islam and Muslims are part of the fabric of our societies here in the West, and have increasingly become a major part of public discourses and policies. Yet public awareness of what Islam is and who Muslims are remains lacking. This is where the Centre comes to play a critical role by engaging the wider academic public as well as the general public to raise the level of this awareness and

to show the richness and diversity of Muslim societies and cultures, including the richness and diversity of non-Muslim communities who enrich and share the space with Muslim societies and cultures. While I can't separate the different activities of the Center from each other as they all define its overall mission, I find its International Summer Program to be key to its mission and unique in its set-up to engage the interested public, nationally and internationally. The other program I find of most interest is the MEICON-BC workshops the Centre holds and that involve students and faculty across British Columbia. In sum, the broader the audience is, the more I find the program to be interesting.

DM: While of course it will take a while to move into the role as Director of the CCSMSC, what do you have in mind for programs to move this larger mission forward over the next ten years?

AG: The Center has already a wide range of activities that we need to preserve. What I would like to do moving forward is advertise these activities nationally and promote the Centre as a hub for academic and public events of great significance, not only in BC, but also in Canada and North America. The Centre is unique in its mission and resources within Canada, and we will seek ways to connect it to other Centres across the country and work collectively on our common goals. The Centre is posed to continue leading in that collective effort.

Once I become more familiar with the BC communities, I will work with my colleagues at SFU to look for more ways to engage the public. There is an urgent need to keep this aspect of the Centre's mission as a priority to counter the rising Islamophobia and to respond to any developments associated with the new reality in the USA in the wake of the elections.

DM: Thank you very much for your time and thoughts. We are looking forward to your arrival at Simon Fraser University.





MEICON-BC Presenters and Chairs



MEICON-BC Conference Panel

Middle East and Islamic Consortium of British Columbia (MEICON-BC)

Seventh Annual Student Conference, March 28, 2015, Simon Fraser University

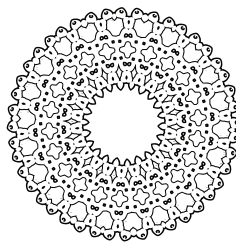
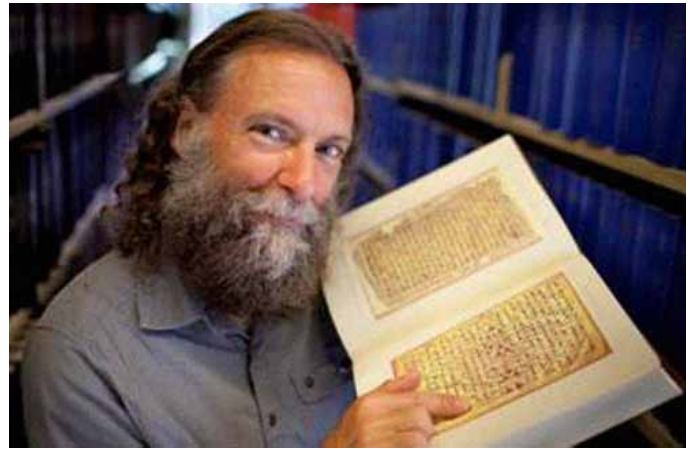
The MEICON-BC Student Conference 2015 highlighted the graduate work of a cross-disciplinary group of graduate and senior undergraduate students on diverse issues related to the Middle East and the Islamic world. There were seven paper sessions, each of which dealt with specific social, political, economic, and/or cultural issues and consisted of three or four presenters. Featured subjects included “Identity and Representation in the Diaspora,” “Reconceptualizing Islamic Texts and Movements,” “Art and Architecture: Practice, Concept, and Representation,” “The Political Contexts of Palestinian Movements,” and “Nationalism and Revolution in Iran.” The conference featured a keynote concert by a world-renowned Iranian-Canadian musician Hossein Behroozinia and his ensemble.

The Middle East and Islamic Consortium of British Columbia (MEICON-BC) was established in 2008 to provide an organizational basis for communication and cooperation among BC academics. MEICON-BC sponsors the annual Student Conference and a weekly e-digest of information on matters of interest to academics. To subscribe, please send a request to meiconbc@sfu.ca

The Andrew Rippin Essay Prize

The Andrew Rippin Essay Prize has been established in honour of late Professor Rippin of University of Victoria. This Prize recognizes excellence in critical thought and scholarship within the general field of Islamic Studies consistent with the scholarship of Dr. Rippin. It is awarded to the best paper at the Annual MEICON-BC Student Conference.

For further information, see www.sfu.ca/ccsmc/meicon-bc.



Faculty Profile

Dr. Parin Dossa, Professor of Anthropology and Associate Member in the Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies, received her education on three continents: Africa, Europe and North America. Her long-standing interest in displacement and critical feminist ethnography has



led her to focus on the interface between social inequality, health and gender. Based on her research on social suffering and narratives of trauma, Dr. Dossa explores the differential effects of structural violence on the lived realities of Muslim women, including diaspora. She grounds her analysis in methodologies that capture the

reconstitution of lives on the margins of society. This orientation questions the conceptualization of the local and the everyday as discrete from the body politic and presents an alternative view of the margins as a site for the making of a just world.

Dr. Dossa's field work on Muslim women in the diaspora has resulted in several interrelated projects: racialized bodies and disabling worlds; policy implications of storytelling; testimonial narratives and social memory; place, health and everyday life; social suffering; and violence in war and peace.

Dr. Dossa's books include *Transnational Aging and Reconfigurations of Kin Work* (co-edited with Cati Coe, Rutgers University Press, forthcoming), *Afghanistan Remembers: Narratives of Violence and Culinary Practices* (University of Toronto Press, 2014), *Racialized Bodies, Disabling Worlds: Storied Lives of Immigrant Muslim Women* (University of Toronto Press, 2009), *Politics and Poetics of Migration: Narratives of Iranian Women from the Diaspora* (Canadian Scholar's Press, 2004).

Wenona Giles (Department of Anthropology, York University) describes Dr. Dossa's latest book, *Afghanistan Remembers*, as "an important contribution to the literature on memory and memorialization, the gender relations of war, immigration and diaspora studies, and the political economy and anthropology of food."

Student Profile

Arlen Wiesenthal is a MA student and historian of the Ottoman Empire with an interest in the cultivation of persona, the dissemination and contestation of public image, and the personification of empire. He completed his Bachelor of Arts (Honors) at SFU in 2015 with a focus on Middle East and Islamic History, and has since lectured on early Turkish intellectual history and Mughal monarchical culture. While his central focus lies in the Ottoman world (circa 1300-1922) and on the Ottoman dynasty, his work focuses more generally on the relationships between institutional development, cultural production, and the creation of "official"



constructions of kingship and legitimacy as abstract objects of consumption. His current research project (under the supervision of Dr. Thomas Kuehn) is an exploration of late Ottoman "cultures of monarchy" that seeks to expand the scope of the study of the Ottoman dynasty to include its presence in social and cultural time and space.

Research Positions

Dr. Aryn Sajoo, Scholar-In-Residence

As a specialist in civic culture, religion and law, Aryn Sajoo's current research is at the interface of human rights, public ethics and Islam. He teaches in the SFU departments of History and International Studies. With the support of an SFU "International Engagement" grant, Dr. Sajoo is co-leader of an initiative on "Citizenship & Religion" with Dr. MacLean that will include workshops and publications in partnership with the Aga Khan University, London.



Educated at King's College London and McGill University, Montreal, Dr. Sajoo's early career was with the Canadian departments of Justice and Foreign Affairs in Ottawa. He then served as the 1993-4 Canada-ASEAN Fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore

-- with fieldwork in Malaysia and Indonesia -- culminating in the monograph *Pluralism in Old Societies and New States*. This was followed by affiliations on both sides of the Atlantic at Cambridge, McGill, and the Institute of Ismaili Studies (IIS), London.

He has served as the editor since 2009 of the Muslim Heritage Series, in which the fifth publication, *The Shari'a: History, Ethics and Law*, will be published this year by I.B. Tauris. The Canadian launch of the preceding volume, *The Shi'i World: Pathways in Tradition and Modernity* (co-edited with Farhad Daftary and Shainool Jiwa) was sponsored by the CCSMSC in Vancouver—with subsequent launch events in Lisbon, London and Nairobi. He has contributed extensively to scholarly journals and anthologies - and his writings have appeared in the *Guardian*, *Open Democracy*, *Globe & Mail*, *Asian Wall Street Journal*, *Times Higher Education Supplement*, and the *Christian Science Monitor*.

Nahid Ghani, Research Associate

Dr. Nahid Ghani is a historian of ancient Iranian culture and society whose research is based on Middle Persian, Avestan, Manichaean, Jewish Persian, and New Persian. She completed a PhD in Ancient Iranian

Culture and Languages at the University of Tehran in 2013 with a dissertation on marriage laws in Zoroastrian jurisprudential texts. She published a book on old Jewish-Persian texts in 2009 and has presented numerous papers at learned conferences. She also serves on the editorial board of *IranVij* (Tehran).



Dr. Ghani was resident at the CCSMSC in the first phase of a new project that examines the emergence of a science of archaeology and museums in Iran and their functions as arenas of disputation in the emergence of Iranian nationalism and authoritarianism.

Obituaries

John Spagnolo

One of the History Departments earliest members, John Spagnolo, passed away this spring on the evening of March 21, 2016. He was 81 and had been battling cancer for some time with impressive pluck, persistence and grace. His daughters Rebecca and Tabitha have written an affecting tribute that appeared in the Vancouver Sun in early April. Friends and family, they wrote “will remember him as an accomplished scholar, but will miss him always for his youthful sense of humour, occasional byzantine ways, gentlemanly manner and, above all, his resplendent smile to the end.”

John's roots were in the Levant and Eastern Mediterranean and that region was the focus of his research and teaching. He began life in the insular, Hassidic neighbourhood of Mea Shearim in old Jerusalem. Some of his early childhood was spent in Cairo. In his late childhood and in his youth and early adulthood he lived in Beirut. That was



when Beirut was being called the Paris of the Middle East and was known as an enclave of peace and stability.

John's mother was Jewish. His grandfather was a rabbi and the two of them, his mother and grandfather, had emigrated from Minsk—in what is now Byelorussia. They went first to the United States, and after some time to Jerusalem. John's father was of Italian origin and a strict Roman Catholic. The name Spagnolo also suggests a distant Spanish ancestor; and John's father, who was banker, did serve as Spanish consul in Beirut. John's father possessed a Spanish passport and John himself carried a Spanish passport when he first arrived in Canada.

To satisfy both his mother and his father, John, at the age of thirteen, was obliged to perform two rites of passage, a bar mitzvah and a Catholic confirmation. This conflicted experience left him permanently wary of all organized religion. He thereafter called

himself a Deist and avoided churches and synagogues. John's friends in Beirut were expatriate—mostly British and American. Within this community he met his charming, energetic and spirited British wife Penny, who had grown up in Cairo and Beirut. As a schoolboy he attended the American community school in Beirut. From there he went on to the American University of Beirut where he acquired a gracious mentor and a lifetime friend in Albert Hourani, the distinguished Oxford scholar of the Middle East. Hourani, who was British-born, but from a Christian Lebanese family, held a visiting appointment in Beirut for a year while John was an undergraduate. It was Hourani who encouraged John to come to Oxford for his doctorate; and later when prospects collapsed for John's continuing appointment at the American University of Beirut, Hourani found him a position at Simon Fraser University. Twenty-five years later, John was the editor of a festschrift for Hourani with contributions from an international cast of Hourani's protégés.

John joined Simon Fraser University in its second year. His arrival was a major step in validating a founding conception of the History Department, which was to offer modern and internationally relevant history in place of the traditional Canadian emphasis on the long history of the Western World. Teaching Middle Eastern History was an innovation in Canada and Simon Fraser University was taking the lead. John was essential to the project. In casual conversation, John would make light of the shifting fortunes of the program as they rose and fell while the Middle East lunged from hot news to cold and back to hot. When all was quiet, enrolments would slip. When headlines were dark and dire, students would line up for more classes. In the battle for the survival of a new program at a Canadian university, a Middle East crisis could be seen as good thing; but, although John said little to underline the fact, it was all profoundly real and personal for him.

In 1972, with warnings of trouble to come in Lebanon, John's estranged parents both asked for help to leave. John flew to Beirut to manage the red tape for them and the hazards of travel and he brought his father back permanently to live in Vancouver. That same year Penny's mother came to Vancouver, so it was a full and memorable year for the whole family. During a later crisis John returned to the Middle East for an aunt who had become a refugee at an acute stage of the long Lebanese Civil War. From Canada he was able to arrange an interview for her with Canadian immigration officers, initially in Amman, Jordan; and then he flew to Beirut to bring her back to Vancouver.

Many of John's students and colleagues, looking at his dress for classes—cravat, shirt and jacket, taking in his always polite, always

kind and considerate manner—probably did not guess the full range of his talents, or how well suited he was for life in suburban Vancouver. He was a handyman—fully capable of handling any kind of household challenge, plumbing, building or electrical, or, in the garden wrestling with rock walls and other heavy work. And he was an expert around cars, having started stripping and reassembling them in his youth in Beirut. And he loved to drive. In his early twenties he had driven from Beirut to Oxford just to see the university, driving both ways through Marshall Tito’s Yugoslavia before the modernization of that country’s roadways. This was a trip he repeated each summer while he was pursuing his doctorate at Oxford. And he later did it with Penny to reach the Ottoman archives in Istanbul before carrying on to Beirut. So it was natural for him immediately to take to the roads in North America, and an annual summer drive to Palo Alto in California was just part of his family’s routine.

Vancouver and SFU seemed to suit him very well as places where he and Penny have made warm and lasting friends, raised a caring family, and found rich expression for their interests and talents. His departure leaves an emptiness in many lives.

--- Hugh Johnston

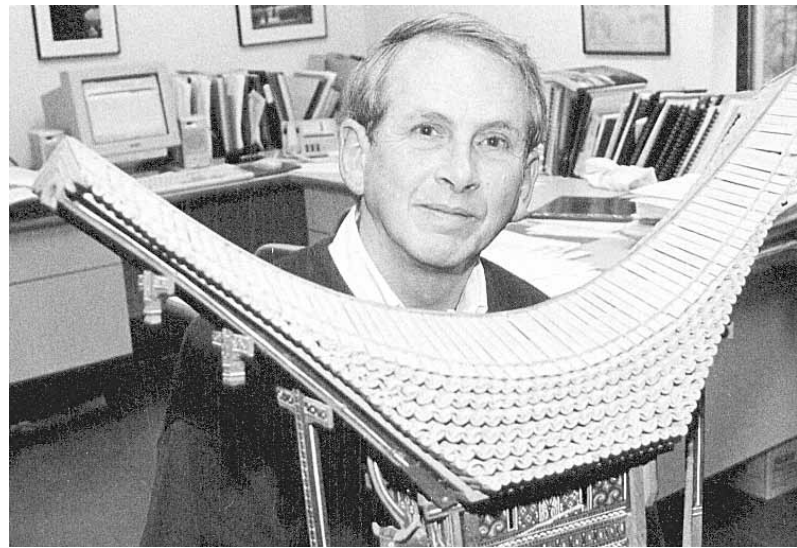
Chris Dagg

Chris Dagg, diplomat, specialist on Indonesia, and director of project and support services for SFU International for thirty years, died on Saturday July 16, 2016 in New Westminster, BC.

Dagg began his career in the Canadian Foreign Service, serving in Vietnam on the multinational monitoring team and then in Indonesia, where he quickly became Canada’s foremost expert on the history and politics of this important nation, an expertise that was founded on impressive linguistic skills and a depth of appreciation for Indonesian culture. He came to SFU in 1987 as the director of SFU’s pioneering project to build Faculties of Science in universities in Indonesia, and more recently served as the director of SFU’s China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development, retiring in 2015.

“Chris exemplified vision, dedication, humility and international diplomacy, and he will be sorely missed by colleagues and friends around the world,” says Sarah Dench, previous Executive Director of SFU International. “He had a profound impact on many lives.”

Dagg was a co-organizer of the SFU Indonesian Initiative of the Centre for the Comparative Study of Muslim Societies and Cultures from 2006 to 2014. In this capacity, he provided advice for a series of cooperative workshops between SFU and Syarif Hidayatullah University (Jakarta) and Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University (Yogyakarta) in 2006 and 2012. He also co-organized the influential workshop, “Interfaith Dialogue in Plural Societies: Canada and Indonesia,” held to critical acclaim in 2013. “Chris was an exuberant, erudite, and effective advocate of the importance of Indonesia for the understanding of contemporary Islam,” says Derryl MacLean, Director of the CCSMSC. “He made



friends of colleagues and colleagues of friends, and will be greatly missed by all of us.”

Chris Dagg was the recipient of the Canadian Peacekeeping Service Medal in 2002. To mark his legacy, SFU instituted in 2015 the Chris Dagg Award for International Impact. This award recognizes SFU faculty and staff who are shaping and advancing the University’s international reputation.

--- Derryl MacLean

Student Awards

Edward W. Said Memorial Scholarship

The Edward W. Said Memorial Scholarship provides support for a graduate student at SFU pursuing research on some facet of the study of Muslim societies and cultures, past or present, consistent with the mission of the CC-SMSC and the perspectives of Edward Said.

The latest recipients of the Edward Said Memorial Scholarship are Ataman Avdan (2015) and Arlen Wiesenthal (2016) (pictured below).



Muslim Studies Graduate Student Award

The Muslim Studies Graduate Student Award provides financial support for a graduate student in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences who requires travel abroad to undertake research in some aspect of Muslim society and

culture. It is supported by the Dossa Endowment Fund. The latest recipients of the Muslim Studies Graduate Travel Award are Ataman Avdan (2015) and Arlen Wiesenthal (2016).

Aziz and Parin Dossa Endowed Essay Prize in Islamic and Muslim Studies

The Dossa Essay Prize recognizes innovative graduate research and communication in the area of Islamic and Muslim Studies within Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. The prize is granted to an essay written within FASS in the three previous terms which demonstrates excellence in the analysis of Islamic and Muslim phenomena within social, cultural, and/or political contexts, based on original scholarship, critical thought, and clarity of communication.

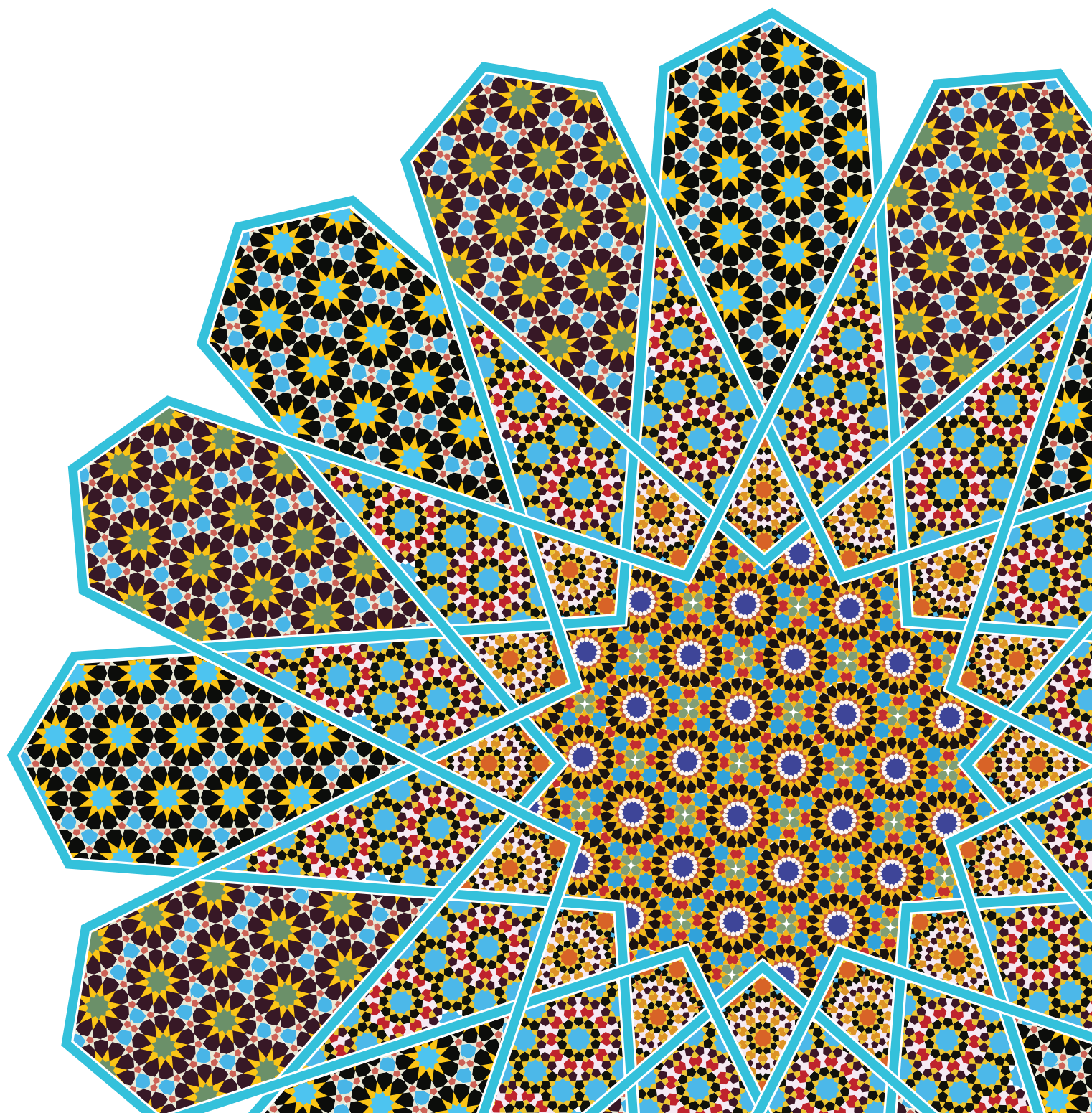
In its inaugural year, the prize was given to Arlen Wiesenthal's essay entitled "The 'Infidel Sultan' Revisited: Sultan Mahmud II and the Propagation of the Ruler Cult in the Late Ottoman Empire (1826-1839)."

Abstract:

Drawing on a broad range of primary sources, such as sultanic portraits, portrait medals, and the accounts of European observers, this paper examines the practices of monarchical performance, image-management, and leader veneration introduced by the Ottoman emperor Sultan Mahmud II (r. 1808-39) in the later years of his reign (c. 1826-39). While a number of studies have analyzed the changes in Ottoman imperial culture, state structure, and social organization that characterized this period, little attention has been paid to the ways in which Mahmud II and his regime reformulated the Ottoman ruler cult through the particular fashion in which this sultan inhabited his ceremonial-performative role as the personification of the Ottoman Empire. Wiesenthal argues that by altering the image of the Ottoman sultan in official dynastic portraiture, Mahmud II forever changed the public presentation and symbolic lexicon of the Ottoman dynasty (Osmanlı Hanedanı or "The House of Osman"). At the same time, the paper demonstrates that he also extended the scope of the "dynastic image" (the abstract-symbolic representation of the ruling sultan) by displaying large-scale por-

traits in public places, by sending them to European rulers and provincial magnates as part of inter-imperial and intra-imperial diplomatic gift economies, and by bestowing miniature portraits of himself (*tasvir-ı humayun*) to select Ottoman and foreign officials as symbols of loyalty. The paper therefore charts the ways in which Mahmud II personalized the performance of Ottoman kingship in response to the relatively impersonalized modes that typified the previous century. In devoting specific attention to the development of a revamped dynastic cult that was more

expansive in its social scope inasmuch as it transcended the limited audience of the imperial court and extended into the Ottoman public and international diplomatic spheres, this paper proposes a new perspective on the culture and politics of the Ottoman monarchy in this crucial portion of the long nineteenth century.



News of Members and Affiliates

Yildiz Atasoy (Sociology) has published an article “Repossession, Re-informalization and Dispossession: The ‘Muddy Terrain’ of Land Commodification in Turkey” in *Journal of Agrarian Change* (August 2017, online first) and presented her latest work in several conferences including the CIRIEC International Research Conference on Social Economy (Lisbon) and IV World Congress of Rural Sociology (Toronto). Her new book *Commodification of Global Agrifood Systems and Agro-Ecology: Convergences and Divergences in and Beyond Turkey* will be published by Routledge in 2017.

Luke Clossey (History) has published an article, “The Unbelieved and Historians, Part I: A Challenge” (co-authored with Kyle Jackson, Brandon Marriott, Andrew Redden, and Karin Vélez) in *History Compass* 14 (12), December 2016.

Evdoxios Doxiadis (Hellenic Studies) had three chapters in edited volumes appear in 2016. The first was a chapter titled “A Place in the Nation: Jews and the Greek state in the long 19th century” which was published in *The Jews and the Nation-States of Southeast Europe from the 1848 Revolutions to the Great Depression: Combining Viewpoints on a Controversial Story*, (edited by Tullia Catalan and Marco Dogo, Cambridge Scholars Press, 2016). He also published “Innovation, Emulation, or Tradition? Greek family law in the first decades of the modern Greek state” in *New Perspectives on Women’s Legal History*, (edited by Marion Roewekamp and Sara Kimble, Routledge, 2016) and “Women, Wealth, and the State 1750-1860” in *Wealth in the Ottoman and Post-Ottoman Balkans, A Socio-Economic History*, (edited by Evguenia Davidova, I.B. Tauris, 2016). He also presented his latest work at several conferences including the 8th Conference of the European Network “Gender Differences in the History of European Legal Cultures” and the American Historical Association Annual Conference.

Thomas Kuehn (History) has published two encyclopedia articles (“Colonialisme” and “Yémen”) in *Dictionnaire de l’Empire Ottoman* (edited by François Georgeon, Nicolas Vatin, and Gilles Veinstein Paris: Fayard, 2015). He was also awarded a Visiting Research Fellowship at the Zentrum Moderner Orient, Berlin that allowed him to work there on aspects of his book project on Ottoman imperial governance in the long nineteenth century from 15 September to 23 October 2016.

Sonja Luehrmann (Sociology and Anthropology) received the Waldo Gifford Leland Award from the Society of American Archivists for *Religion in Secular Archives: Soviet Atheism and Historical Knowledge* (Oxford University Press, 2015).

Derryl Maclean (History) received the 2015 Dean’s Medal for Academic Excellence. He presented the keynote address (“From Household to Community: The Origins and Significance of the Mahdavi Da’irah”) at the International Mahdavia Islamic Conference, Chicago, April 4, 2015, and the keynote address (“Muhammad Iqbal and the Reconstruction of Islamic Cosmopolitanism”) at the Canadian Urdu Association Iqbal Day, November 20, 2016. Dr. MacLean’s assessment of Persianate millennialism (“Shaping a Millennial Historiography in Persianate South Asia: The Sirat of Bandagi Miyan Shah ‘Abd al-Rahman”) will appear in *Studies in Islamic Historiography* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, forthcoming). He has published two book reviews recently in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (London).

Laura Marks (Contemporary Arts) has published her new book *Hanan al-Cinema: Affections for the Moving Image* (MIT Press, 2015) and this book won the Frank Mather Jewett award for Art Criticism from the College Art Association. It’s also one of Choice magazine’s Outstanding Books of the Year. She delivered a keynote address, “Suwar fil Sarayan--Figures in a Flow” at University of Kansas Annual Film and



Media Studies Graduate Symposium (January 2017).

AR Rezamand (History) published a book chapter, “Justice Interrupted: The University and the Imam,” in *Iran’s Struggles for Social Justice: Economics, Agency, Justice, Activism* (edited by Peyman Vahabzadeh, Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

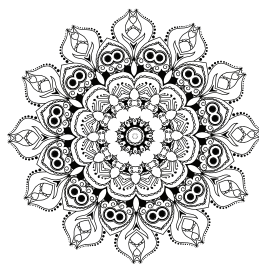
Ken Seigneurie (World Literature) published a translation of ‘*Awdat al-almānī ila rushdih*’ by Rashid al-Daif as “How the German Came to His Senses” in *What Makes a Man? Sex Talk in Beirut and Berlin*, edited by Rashid al-Daif and Joachim Helfer (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2015). He also presented his recent work, “For World Literary Values in the

Non-Anglophone Classroom,” at the Modern Language Association Annual Convention (January 2017).

Arlen Wiesenthal (History) has presented two conference papers: “Jahangir’s Dream: ‘Gunpowder Empires,’ Visual Representation, and Universal Sovereignty in Early Modern Eurasia” at Qualicum History Conference and “‘The Floral Preoccupations of Ahmed III’: A Review of Methodological Approaches to The Ottoman ‘Tulip Period’” at the Middle East and Islamic Consortium of British Columbia.



D. MacLean receives Iqbal Panel from the Canada Urdu Association



News of SFU Middle East and Islamic Studies Alumni

Shadaab Rahemtulla (B.A., MA, SFU History, 2007) has recently accepted a Lectureship in the School of Theology, Religion, and Islamic Studies at the University of Wales. His



doctoral thesis at the University of Oxford has been published as *Qur'an of the Oppressed: Liberation Theology and Gender Justice in Islam* (Oxford University Press, 2017). The book is an analysis of the progressive Qur'an projects of the South African Farid Esack, the Indian Asghar Ali Engineer, the African American Amina

Wadud, and the Pakistani American Asma Barlas.

Joseph Howard (MA, SFU History, 2014) is currently pursuing his doctorate at the Indian Ocean World Centre at McGill University.

Pheroze Unwalla (MA, SFU History, 2008) is Visiting Assistant Professor of Islamic History at Whitman College (Walla Walla, WA). He completed his doctorate at SOAS, University of London in 2014.

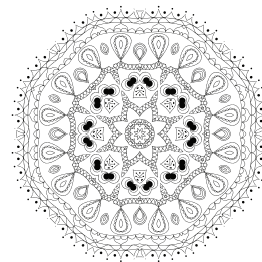
Brandon Marriott (MA, SFU History, 2008) has recently published his *Transnational Networks and Cross-Religious Exchange in the Seventeenth-Century Mediterranean and Atlantic Worlds: Sabbatai Sevi and the Lost Tribes of Israel* (Routledge, 2015). He completed his doctorate at Oxford University in 2012.

Serdar Kaya (PhD, SFU Pol. Sci., 2015) has published *Freedom of Expression versus Religious Sensitivities: Muhammad Cartoons* (Istanbul: Liber Plus, 2017). He is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of Queensland.

Jim Quilty (MA, SFU History), recently curated the exhibition, "Figures upon Landscape," in collaboration with the Beirut Art Centre. Quilty is the editor of the Arts and Culture section of the *Daily Star of Beirut*.

Stefans Martens (SFU History, 2009) is a journalist with the *Hürriyet Daily News* of Istanbul.

Henri Lauziere (SFU History, MA) is Associate Professor in the Department of History at Northwestern University, where he recently received a Weinberg Distinguished Teaching Award. His first book, *The Making of Salafism: Islamic Reform in the Twentieth Century*, was published in 2016 by Columbia University Press.



Associated Faculty

Robert Anderson

Professor, Communication.
International development and communication; South Asia, Indonesia.

Yildiz Atasoy

Professor, Sociology.
Political economy and sociology; gender relations; Islamic politics; Turkey; Middle East.

Len Berggren

Professor Emeritus, Mathematics.
History of mathematical sciences in ancient Greece and medieval Islam.

Hugo Cardoso

Assistant Professor, Department of Archaeology.
Bioarchaeology, forensic anthropology; child health in medieval Portugal; the bioarchaeology of Muslim Portugal.

Luke Clossey

Associate Professor, History.
Comparative world history of religions; early modern; Mughals; China, Mexico.

Parin Dossa

Professor, Anthropology.
Migration, gender, and health; Muslim women; Iranians in the diaspora.

Evdoxios Doxiadis

Academic Coordinator and Lecturer, Hellenic Studies.
Early modern; Ottoman Empire; Greece; state-building.

Aude-Claire Fourot

Associate Professor, Political Science.
Public policies; ethno-religious diversity; Islam in Canada.

Andre Gerolymatos

Chair, Hellenic Studies.
Professor, History.
Hellenism; Greek-Turkish military history; international relations and Muslim politics.

Amal Ghazal

Associate Professor, History.
Middle East, North Africa, Indian Ocean, Muslim Networks.

Adel Iskandar

Assistant Professor, Global Communication.
Media; identity; and politics.

Thomas Kuehn

Associate Professor, History.
Social and cultural history of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey.

Sonja Luehrmann

Associate Professor, Department of Sociology and Anthropology.
Anthropology of religion; Russia/Soviet Union; atheism and secularism: Orthodox Christianity; Muslim populations; interreligious relations.

Derryl MacLean

Associate Professor, History.
History of religion; Islamics; early modern South and Central Asia; Islam in the West.

Laura Marks

Dena Wosk Professor of Art and Culture Studies, School for the Contemporary Arts.
Cinema in the Arab world; Islamic genealogy of new media art.

Mark McPherran

Professor, Philosophy.
Ancient Greek philosophy and religion; ethics; Islamic philosophy.

Tamir Moustafa

Jarislowsky Chair in Religion and Cultural Change, School for International Studies.
Comparative law; religion and politics; Middle East; Egypt.

Paul Sedra

Associate Professor, History.
Modern Middle East; education and the rise of the modern state; Egyptian cinema.

Ken Seigneurie

Director, World Literature.
Professor, World Literature.
Modern Arabic, French, and British fiction; literary theory and the history of humanist thought.

Ozlem Sensoy

Associate Professor, Education.
Constructions of Muslims in North America through education and media.

Azadeh Yamini-Hamedani

Associate Professor, World Literature.
Interconnections of literature and philosophy; semiotics of translations; Persian literature.

Habiba Zaman

Professor, Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies.
Women and development; globalization and women's work; Bangladesh.



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