Contents

2 Message from the Director
3 Upcoming Events
5 Community Engagement
7 Annual Lecture Series
9 Community Iftaar Recap
10 Past Events
12 Middle East and Islamic Consortium of British Columbia
13 Associated Faculty
14 Scholar-in-Residence Profiles
15 Faculty & Student News
17 Student Awards
18 CCMS Team

Newsletter Editor: Amal Ghazal
Newsletter Associate Editor
& Graphic Designer: Amanda Rachmat
Photography: Zhou Yuxin and CCMS Team
Message from the Director

It has been almost a year since I became the director of the Centre for Comparative Muslim Studies (CCMS), replacing Dr. Derryl MacLean who led CCMS for ten years. It has been a very exciting year despite the challenges of transitioning from one institution to another and from one city to another. The excitement derives from the opportunities CCMS provides to engage with the different communities in Vancouver, plan events and affect change.

The first step my Advisory Committee and I took was to simplify the name of the Centre and change its logo to ensure wider promotion and easier recollection. It is now called “Centre for Comparative Muslim Studies” with a distinctive visual logo, the Hoopoe.

I spent the first few months meeting colleagues, students, and members of the Muslim community. The dynamism and creativity I encountered among Muslim youth in particular led to CCMS’ decision to hire a community engagement co-ordinator. Through different activities listed in this newsletter, CCMS has built stronger ties with various groups in Vancouver, including artists, writers and young people full of energy, hope and ideas. My biggest reward has been to hear that CCMS provides a safe and a much-needed space for all to discuss matters related to Islam and Muslims.

CCMS’ activities have aimed to build bridges, foster conversations and invest in community leadership. Our “Being Muslim” conversation series has been graphically recorded and widely shared. Turning words and individual experiences into art is globalizing conversations taking place in Vancouver. Art, in its various forms, remains a powerful tool through which human beings not only express themselves but also explore other cultures. Thus, CCMS is investing in Islamic calligraphy and geometry workshops that explore the beauty and the science behind those art forms.

Our next step is to train youth leadership within the Muslim community, predicated on diversity and inclusivity.

While we are making community engagement a priority, we are also enhancing our academic engagement and further connecting the Centre to the international academic community. We will have an international workshop on trans-regional studies and the Indian Ocean in October 2018.

Our mandate is to enhance public understanding of Muslim experiences, past and present. There is no better way to do so than to hear about your experiences, possible contributions to our program and suggestions for collaboration. I look forward to more partnerships with the communities in Vancouver.

Dr. Amal Ghazal
Director, CCMS

CCMS New Logo

Our logo depicts the hoopoe. It is a bird found in a number of regions. In Muslim cultures, the hoopoe symbolizes wisdom, exploration, and conversation.

The logo thus reflects the mission of our Centre which seeks to provide opportunities for thoughtful conversations and intellectual exploration.
Upcoming Events

October 19-20, 2018
Across the Indian Ocean: Trans-Regional Studies and the Un/Making of Boundaries

October 25, 2018
Film Screening: Soufra
Includes catering and panel discussion

November 21, 2018
Women and the Egyptian Revolution: Engagement and Activism During the 2011 Arab Uprisings

Annual Lecture Series 2018-2019

October 4-5, 2018
Dr. Christina Civantos
“The Legacy of Medieval Muslim Spain: Contemporary Identities and Conceptions of Tolerance”

November 28-29, 2018
Dr. Cemil Aydin
“The Muslim World: The Invention of an Idea”

February 21-22, 2019
Dr. Humeria Iqtidar
“Racism: Perspectives from South Asian Islamic Thought and Practice”

March 21-22, 2019
Dr. Fikret Adaman
“The Environment in Turkey under Authoritarian Populism and Neoliberal Developmentalism”

Across the Indian Ocean: Trans-Regional Studies and the Un/Making of Boundaries
October 2018
Morris J Wosk Centre for Dialogue | SFU

CCMS will hold an international workshop bringing together 16 faculty members and PhD students to discuss the new trends in trans-regional studies around and across the Indian Ocean. The workshop will be held at the Harbor Centre on October 19-20, 2018.

Film Screening: Soufra
25 October 2018 | 5:30-8:30 PM
Djavad Mowafaghian Cinema World and Art Centre

In collaboration with SFU’s Vanity Office of Community Engagement, CCMS will screen the documentary Soufra, an inspirational story of Mariam Shaar, a Palestinian refugee in Lebanon. The film “follows Mariam as she sets out against all odds to change her fate by launching a successful catering company, “Soufra,” and then expand it into a food truck business with a diverse team of fellow refugee woman who now share this camp as their home.” The screening will be followed by a panel discussion featuring the local catering company Tayybeh, run by Syrian refugees.

Women and the Egyptian Revolution: Engagement and Activism During the 2011 Arab Uprisings
21 November 2018 | 6-8 PM | Harbour Centre Room 7000
CCMS Annual Lecture Series
October 2018 - March 2019

Every year, the Centre organizes an Annual Lecture Series in which prominent scholars researching areas pertinent to Muslim peoples and cultures present their current research in a free lecture, open to the wider public. Through this lecture series, the Centre continues to fulfill its mission to facilitate public understanding of developments within the Muslim world, and to encourage the academic study of Muslim societies and cultures. For the upcoming series, we will be featuring Christina Civantos, Cemil Aydin, Humeira Iqtidar, and Fikret Adaman. All lectures will take place at the SFU Vancouver Campus at Harbour Centre. Be sure to follow us on social media or refer to our website for further details regarding each lecture.

Dr. Christina Civantos
“The Legacy of Medieval Muslim Spain: Contemporary Identities and Conceptions of Toleration” 4-5 October 2018 - SFU Harbour Centre
Dr. Christina Civantos examines the contemporary presence of medieval Muslim Iberia in Arab and Hispanic cultures and in global understandings of tolerance. During the European Middle Ages, the cities of present-day Spain, ruled by Muslims but also inhabited by Christians and Jews, flourished as centers of intellectual inquiry and artistic production. Today, around the globe concerns about interfaith relations have led to efforts to find earlier models in Muslim Iberia, known in Arabic as al-Andalus. Indeed, al-Andalus has lessons to offer, but not in the ways typically expected. 20th and 21st-century drama, television, and film from the Arab world and its diaspora, Spain, and Argentina demonstrate that al-Andalus is a key element in narratives of religious, national, ethnic, and linguistic identities. While some writers and filmmakers invoke al-Andalus to reiterate exclusionary identities, others use it to critique 20th and 21st-century socio-political issues and to rewrite foundational myths tied to al-Andalus. The insights that these counter-narratives offer regarding identity help us to move toward lasting and equitable tolerance.

Dr. Cemil Aydin
“The Muslim World: The Invention of an Idea” 28-29 November 2018 - SFU Harbour Centre
Shall we assume that the world’s 1.5 billion Muslims constitute a single religio-political entity? This lecture will discuss how our assumptions about the united Muslim World emerged in the second half of the 19th century, and why it is still so widespread in today’s world. By looking at the evolution of the narratives about the Pan-Islamic Muslim solidarity from the 1880s to the 1980s, the lecture will clarify changing content of the idea of Muslim solidarity over three generations of Muslim intellectuals and politicians. Although historical actors invent a narrative of continuity of Muslim unity and connectivity, Pan-Islamism itself was a product of the contradictions of the age of racialized empires, and it went through radical meaning shifts, political instrumentalization, and reinventions over a century. Attention to each period, identified with Ottoman Sultan Abdulhamid, Saudi Arabia’s King Faisal, and Iran’s Ayatullah Khomeini, can teach us about the story of Pan-nationalism, Muslim international and racial thinking on Muslim societies in modern intellectual and international history.

Dr. Humeira Iqtidar
“Racism: Perspectives from South Asian Islamic Thought and Practice”
21-22 February 2019 - Segal Centre | 500 Granville St.
Modern politics is profoundly implicated with race. Yet there is little attention paid to how racism is understood, practiced or contested within Islamic thought and practice. What role does racism play in contemporary Islamic thought? How have Islamic thinkers conceptualized race, and addressed racialized politics? What role does race play in predominantly Muslim polities today? Building on oral histories collected from refugees and migrants from the Tribal Areas within Pakistan, and a critical engagement with the thought of two influential Islamic thinkers, the paper will argue that contemporary racism forces a reassessment of fundamental assumptions about modernity and democratic politics. Islamic thought and practice offers some creative, if complicated, opportunities for that reassessment.

Dr. Fikret Adaman
“The Environment in Turkey under Authoritarian Populism and Neoliberal Developmentalism”
21-22 March 2019 - Segal Centre | 500 Granville St.
The talk will discuss how Justice and Development Party’s policies have since 2002 had a detrimental impact on the environment, sustainability, and the long-term health of the Turkish economy, claiming that environmental conflicts in Turkey are not merely about the environment but intersect with contemporary politics of religion, ethnicity, gender, and class.
Simon Fraser University prides itself on being the “engaged” university. Its deliberate appeal to make academia relevant to the communities it serves is what drew me to it in the first place to do the Certificate in Dialogue and Civic Engagement. I came to the city 18 months ago and attended many public events held at SFU as a way to get to know the city and figure out my place in it. I am now grateful for the opportunity to be contributing through my work at the Centre for Comparative Muslim Studies.

Art has always been a medium to bring diverse voices together and explore something new that draws on the old. The Calligraphy and Islamic Geometric Design Workshop hosted at the Surrey Central Library was sold out within a week. It shows the appetite for this knowledge provided by our local artists, Nikhat Qureshi, Tauheed Faheem and Zacharia Buckles.

In celebration of Black History Month, the Centre hosted the first community dialogue in the “Being Muslim” series. “Being Black and Muslim in Metro Vancouver” created a space, for the first time in Metro Vancouver, for individuals who self-identify as Black and/or Muslim to sit together and share their experiences. The event formally concluded after a couple of hours but the conversation was so rich that a number of participants stayed until midnight bonding over their common experiences, grateful for this unique space. Our evening’s graphic recorder, Drawing for Change’s Tiaré Jung, stayed until midnight capturing the conversation to share it with the broader community.

“Decolonial Solidarity” was our next dialogue event which found various racialized and indigenous groups in the city coming together to unpack the colonial legacies and their current impacts. Participants commented on the wide range of people that found entry into the conversation and reflected on the way experiences were shared across time and space. We’re grateful to Camille Dumond for her willingness and skill in co-facilitating, holding space for these difficult but necessary conversations.

Being in Metro Vancouver comes with regular reminders that we are on unceded land. How do Muslims show up on this land? What is their role in reconciliation and beyond? “Being Muslim on Unceded Land” used a timeline activity created by...
Rain Daniels and Laurie Harding to allow members of the Muslim community to talk through the history of settler-Indigenous relations on this land and think about where they fit into this picture. Many of the wonderful insights and calls to deepen our relationships with Indigenous communities were captured by Aaron Lao.

In a post-9/11 world, Muslim communities have faced increased strain, particularly in North America. “Being Muslim in a Context of Anti-Muslim Racism” was held to discuss how the surrounding context has impacted our lives. Personal, heart-felt and difficult stories were shared that added a layer of context to what being Muslim here means.

The month of Ramadan is typically one of reflection, celebration and community and there was no better way to accomplish all three than by hosting a Community Iftaar at the UBC Farm. The farm manager, Chiyi Tam, provided an insightful tour that emphasized the value of the Indigenous knowledge in caring for the land and being in relationship with it – adding food for greater spiritual reflection. Come sunset a wonderful meal was shared in the greenhouse and yurt, with many attendees experiencing their first Iftaar meal.

As the month started drawing to a close, we had our second community Iftaar at Sunset Beach. The beach conveniently overlooked Vanier Park across the inlet where the Centre has partnered with the Vancouver Biennale, activating its installation of Ajlan Gharem’s work Paradise Has Many Gates. This partnership also included a “Being a Muslim Artist” workshop.

We look forward to having you join us at one of our upcoming events:

Vancouver Mural Festival
August 7 - 12
CCMS sponsors a mural by artist Doaa Jamal

Being a Queer and Trans Muslim – date TBD

Look out for a special announcement coming soon around our major 2019 project: the Muslim Community Fellowship.

Visit our website or follow us on social media for event updates and details.
www.sfu.ca/ccms
www.facebook.com/ccms.sfu
www.twitter.com/ccms_sfu

Find all graphic recordings from the Being Muslim Conversation Series on our website: sfu.ca/ccms
Dina Rizk Khoury  George Washington University
Iraq’s Twentieth Century Wars and the Making of the Iraqi Present, 1980-2003
Thursday, September 21, 2017, 7pm
SFU Vancouver Campus
Joseph and Rosalie Segal Rooms 1420-1430
515 West Hastings Street, Vancouver

Zeinab Abul-Magd  Oberlin College
The Army and Revolution in Egypt: Historical Perspectives on a Current Crisis
Thursday, October 19, 2017, 7pm
SFU Vancouver Campus
Joseph and Rosalie Segal Rooms 1420-1430
515 West Hastings Street, Vancouver

Dr. Dina Rizk Khoury is Professor of History and International Affairs at the George Washington University. She won the Turkish Studies Association and British Society of Middle Eastern Studies awards with her first book, State and Provincial Society in the Ottoman Empire, (Cambridge University Press, 1997, 2002). A specialist on war and memory in the Middle East, her most recent book, Iraq in Wartime: Soldiering, Martyrdom and Remembrance (Cambridge University Press, 2013) argues that war was a form of everyday bureaucratic governance that transformed the manner in which Iraqis made claims to citizenship and expressed notions of selfhood.

Zvi Ben-Dor Benite  New York University
Why Did Matteo Ricci of the Society of Jesus Lie about the Muslims of China? China, Europe, and Their Islamic Worlds in the 16th Century
Thursday, February 22, 2018, 7pm
SFU Vancouver Campus
Joseph and Rosalie Segal Rooms 1420-1430
515 West Hastings Street, Vancouver

John Tofik Karam  University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Manifold Destiny: Lebanese at an American Crossroads
Thursday, March 8, 2018, 7pm
SFU Vancouver Campus
Joseph and Rosalie Segal Rooms 1420-1430
515 West Hastings Street, Vancouver

Dr. John Tofik Karam is Associate Professor in Area and Ethnic Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. A scholar who reframes the Middle East and the Americas through their mutually entangled imaginaries, his book, Another Arabesque: Syrian-Lebanese Ethnicity in Neoliberal Brazil (Temple University Press, 2007), won awards from the Arab American National Museum and the Brazilian Studies Association and was translated into Arabic and Portuguese. His current book project is Manifold Destiny: Arabs at a South American Border Remaking the Hemisphere.
Dina Rizk Khoury  
Iraq’s Twentieth Century Wars and the Making of the Iraqi Present, 1980-2003

This talk focused on the impact of the Iran-Iraq and the First Gulf Wars and the UN embargo on the social and political life of Iraqis. How did war shape the political and social practices of Iraqi citizens as they dealt with the demands of the government and the increased militarization of their daily lives? What were the repercussions of the belligerent humanitarianism deployed by the US under the auspices of the UN embargo on the politics of the everyday life in Iraq?

Zeinab Abul-Magd  
The Army and Revolution in Egypt: Historical Perspectives on a Current Crisis

When the popular uprisings broke out across Egypt in January 2011, the oppressed masses overthrew a military dictator who had ruled the country for thirty years. The army soon afterwards took full power anew, by deploying a patriotic discourse about saving and guarding the nation. In Egypt’s post-colonial history since the 1950s, the military institution has constantly hegemonized the state and economy, and deeply securitized everyday life and urban spaces of civilian citizens across social classes. Under another military president today, increasing poverty and simmering public rage might lead to a new wave of uprisings in the foreseeable future.

Zvi Ben-Dor Benite  
Why Did Matteo Ricci of the Society of Jesus Lie about the Muslims of China? China, Europe, and Their Islamic Worlds in the 16th Century

This talk presents and discusses a passage in one of Matteo Ricci’s earliest reports on China in which he describes the Muslims of the city of Canton. He will analyze the passage against the broader context of the Portuguese and Ming China in the late 16th century explaining how Ricci addresses keys issues such the “problem” of Islam and Muslims in the Indian Ocean and their presence in China on the one hand, and plan to attack China on the other.

John Tofik Karam  
Manifold Destiny: Lebanese at an American Crossroads

This lecture and seminar explored the transnational trade and activism of Muslim Arabs across the tri-borderland. In fulfilling what Dr. Karam calls a “manifold destiny,” Muslim Arabs are constitutive of, and constituted by, multiple centers of power in the hemisphere. They animate and endure various “state exceptions,” whereby states suspend laws or norms in allegedly “exceptional” circumstances which become part of the status quo. In trading and mobilizing under past authoritarian governments as well as present-day counterterrorist regimes, Muslim Arabs face a similar fate in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century Americas.
Community Iftaar at UBC Farms
Monday, May 28

Special thanks to Zhou Yuxin for photographing our event and sharing these photos with us.
Past Events | Sponsored & Co-Sponsored

“The Rise and Fall of the Balfour Declaration”
Dr. Marin Bunton, University of Victoria
23 November 2017
SFU Harbour Centre

A Half Century of Occupation
Gershon Shafir
9 November 2017
Djavad Mowafaghian World Art Centre

Women’s Sport as Politics
Homa Hoodfar
14 November 2017
Douglas College

“Local Responses to Boko Haram: Managing Crisis”
Dr. Jennifer Lofkrantz, American University of Nigeria
11 January 2018
SFU Harbour Centre

“Who Are We, Where Are We Headed?”
Dr. Amyn Sajoo, Simon Fraser University
13 January 2018, 17 February 2018 & 17 March 2018
The Ismaili Centre Burnaby

“Political Prisoners In Israeli Jails”
Sahar Francis and Sobhi al-Zabaidi
5 March 2018
SFU Harbour Centre

“Loyalty, Repression and War: Sufism in Contemporary Syria”
Dr. Leif Stenberg, Aga Khan University
12 March 2018
SFU Harbour Centre
“Digital Middle East: The Unfulfilled Promise of the Information Revolution”
Dr. Mohamed Zayani, Georgetown University Qatar
1 May 2018
SFU Harbour Centre

“Petro Cities, Futurism, & Ecological Disasters in the Arabian Peninsula”
Dr Omar al-Shehabi, University College, Oxford
9 May 2018
SFU Harbour Centre

“Azadeh Emadi: Motion within Motion”
Artist Talk & Conversation
Dr. Laura U. Marks, Simon Fraser University
10 May 2018
grunt gallery

“Creative Algorithms: From Islamic Art to Digital Media”
Dr. Laura U. Marks
23 May 2018
SFU Harbour Centre

Dr. Ramzy Baroud and the Palestine Narrative
28 February 2018
SFU Harbour Centre

Waynon/Void Film Screening Presented by the World Lebanese Cultural Union BC Council
10 March, 2018
VanDusen Botanical Garden
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

10th Annual Student Conference
April 7th, 2018 | University of Victoria

The MEICON-BC Student Conference 2018 showcased the graduate and senior undergraduate work of a plethora of interdisciplinary research from outstanding students of Middle Eastern studies. This year’s eight panels included: “Identity in Context,” “Literature and Legacy: The Dynamism of Text,” “Perceiving the Islamic Gaze: Imagery and Discourse,” “Envisioning Law and Policy,” “Cultural Intersections and Political Identity,” “Medieval Materiality and Technology,” “Texts and Intellectual History”, and “Women and the Middle East.”

This year’s conference also included an object handling session.

The Andrew Rippin Essay Prize
Annual Award of $500

The Andrew Rippen Essay Prize has been established in honour of late Professor Rippen of University of Victoria. This prize recognizes excellence in the 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. This year’s recipient is Simon Fraser University Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women’s Studies Masters Student, Soheyla Tabai, for her paper entitled, “Iranian Women: Diaspora and Creation of Third Culture”. Her paper was from Dr. Habiba Zaman’s course, “Immigrants, Women and Transnational Migration”.

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

Yildiz Atasoy
Professor, Sociology.
Development studies; 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; Advisory Board Member of CCMS.
Comparative world history of religions; early modern China, Mexico, Mughals.

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

Doxiadis, Evdoxios
Assistant Professor, History
Modern Greece, Modern Mediterranean, law, and gender.

Aude-Claire Fourot
Assistant Professor, Political Science
Immigration and integration; multiculturalism; Islam in Europe and Canada; religion and public sphere.

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

Adel Iskandar
Assistant Professor of Global Communication; Advisory Board Member of CCMS.
Social media, communications, modern Middle East, post colonialism.

Thomas Kuehn
Associate Professor, History; Director of CCMS
Social and cultural history of the Ottoman empire and Turkey.

Sonja Luehrmann
Assistant 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; Advisory Board Member of CCMS.
History of religion; Islamics; early modern South and Central Asia; Islam in the West.

Laura Marks
Dena Wosk Professor in Art and Culture Studies.
Cinema in the Arab world; Islamic genealogy of new media art.

Tanmir Moustafa
Professor and Stephen Jarlskowsky Chair, School for International Studies.
Law and society; religion and politics; politics of the Middle East.

Paul Sedra
Associate Professor, History; Advisory Board Member of CCMS.
Modern Middle East; education and the rise of the modern state; Egyptian cinema.

Ken Seigneurie
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
Assistant Professor, Comparative World Literature; Advisory Board Member of CCSMSC.
Interconnections of literature and philosophy, emphasis on the semiotics of translation.

Habiba Zaman
Professor, Gender, Sexualituy and Women’s Studies.
Women and development; globalization and women’s work; Bangladesh.
Dr. Amyn B. Sajoo
Scholar-in-Residence

As a specialist in civic culture, religion and law, Amyn Sajoo’s current research is at the interface of human rights, public ethics and Islam. He teaches in the departments of History and International Studies at SFU. With the support of an SFU “International Engagement” grant, Dr. Sajoo is leading an initiative with Dr. Derryl MacLean on “Citizenship & Religion,” which includes 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.

The Shari’a: History, Ethics and Law Book Launch
24 May 2018 - SFU Harbour Centre

Why is the shari’a—which conjures up images of a politicised religion in many parts of the world—understood in the ways that it is today? Muslims & non-Muslims alike read much into the idea, often with scant regard for its historical & cultural underpinnings. The politics of identity has deeply shaped contemporary life, secular and sacred, including our understanding of the shari’a. Yet at the core of this idea is the quest for a moral compass to navigate a path through life, informed by revelation and its diverse interpretations. Popular myths on the nature of shari’a are challenged in this volume by leading scholars, to illuminate how we arrived here and where we may be headed.

Dr. Youcef Soufi
Scholar-in-Residence

Dr. Soufi’s main area of interest is the culture of critical debate within classical Islamic jurisprudence. He is currently working on a book project examining the historical emergence and impact of juristic debate gatherings on the Islamic legal tradition. The book explores the inextricable link between faith and critical inquiry among the juristic class. He focuses on four transcripts of 11th century debates between the famed Shafi’i jurist, Abu Ishaq al-Shirazi (d.1083), and opposing adversaries both within and outside of his legal school. Shirazi and his colleagues gathered together across schools in a devotional and ruthless act of mutual critique aiming to discover God’s law. They used the debate gathering as an opportunity to explore and test out various argumentative proofs for contentious legal cases. Neither wealth nor fame mattered in the debating arena, only rational argument was taken as a sound foundation for truth. And yet, as their discussion topics show, Islamic legal debate also depended upon and re-enforced a hierarchical power structure between jurist elites and lay-Muslims and non-Muslim minorities. These power structures limited the critical potential of classical Islam.
Dr. Luke Clossey this year saw fieldwork in the Netherlands, Italy, Romania, and Israel for the Global Jesus, as well as oral-history work with Dr. Ferguson in support of the new “Isaz to Cascadia” project on the twentieth-century migration of a Buddhist fundamentalist movement from Thailand to Canada. Some 8250 images of Jesus, taken over 10+ years, have been submitted to the SFU Library to add to its digital collections. He was also one of 9 co-authors of the “Unbelieved and Historians” articles (the trailer for which is up on youtube).

Dr. Parrin Dossa has a new publication entitled, Transnational Aging and Reconfigurations of Kin Work (Ed.) Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, Camden, London.

Dr. Thomas Kuehn continues to work on his current book project that studies concepts and practices of Ottoman imperial governance in the long nineteenth century. At conferences and workshops in Washington, DC, at the Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO) in Berlin, at McGill University, and the Université de Québec à Montréal (UQÀM), he presented portions of my work-in-progress that focus on contested forms of late Ottoman environmental knowledge and governmental practice as well as the ties of Ottoman-Arab army contractors and fiscal entrepreneurs to Anatolia and India at the turn of the twentieth century. Dr. Kuehn also served as an adjudicator of the “First Article Prize” of the Comité International des Études Pré-Ottomanes et Ottomanes (CIÉPO).

Dr. Amyn Sajoo has been focusing his research on “religion and citizenship” in which he has hosted a series of public conversations co-sponsored by the Centre, in both Vancouver and Toronto.

Dr. Tamir Moustafa’s new book, Constituting Religion: Islam, Liberal Rights, and the Malaysian State (Cambridge Studies in Law and Society), will be published this Fall. Using the case study of Malaysia, Constituting Religion examines how legal arrangements enable litigation and feed the construction of a ‘rights-versus-rites binary’ in law, politics, and the popular imagination. By drawing on extensive primary source material and tracing controversial cases from the court of law to the court of public opinion, this study theorizes the ‘judicialization of religion’ and the radiating effects of courts on popular legal and religious consciousness. The book documents how legal institutions catalyze ideological struggles, which stand to redefine the nation and its politics.

Aali Mirjat, MA
Aali has conducted research for and wrote her thesis “Sympathy and the Unbelieved in Modern Retellings of Sindhi Sufi Folktales”, which she defended this summer. She was a Teaching Assistant for a course on Canadian history and a Tutor Marker for a course on Alexander the Great. Aali also presented papers at the Qualicum and SACPAN conferences, and helped organize the annual Kurultai of the Institut für die Späte Altzeit.

Benjamin Dipple, MA
Benjamin finished his coursework and successfully defended my thesis prospectus. He was a teaching assistant for HIST 106: The Making of Modern Europe during the fall semester and HIST 102: Canada Since Confederation during the spring. He is currently in the process of conducting research and will begin writing his thesis in the fall. Benjamin is researching four different Turkish individuals who he views as cultural brokers between the United States and Turkey from 1919 to 1952. These individuals were journalists, activists, and public intellectuals who travelled between both countries and were educated in American institutions. They wrote in both English and Turkish for American and Turkish audiences. As prominent figures, they were in important positions to try to influence the perceptions and relations between the two countries. He spent this summer carrying out this research at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University in California as well as the Ataturk Library in Istanbul, Turkey. Benjamin’s research was generously funded by the Muslim Studies Graduate Student Travel Award from the Centre for Comparative Muslim Studies and the Graduate International Research Travel Award.

Recent Events

July 14
Islamic Geometric Design
Arabic Calligraphy

July 28
Islamic Geometric Design

July 21
Being Muslim: The Gendered Experience
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 CCMS and the perspectives of Edward Said. The latest recipients of the Edward Said Memorial Scholarship are Ardalan Rezamand (2017) with an honourable mention to Jelena Golubovic (2017).

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 recipient of the Muslim Studies Graduate Travel Award is Benjamin Dipple.

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. The latest recipient of the Dossa Essay Prize is Aali Mirjat (2017)

CCMS & Lyre Magazine Original Creative Writing Award
CCMS has partnered with the Lyre Magazine, an undergraduate literary magazine organized by students of Simon Fraser University’s World Literature program, to create this inaugural award to celebrate our favourite original piece written in Persian, Arabic, Turkish, Kurdish, Urdu, Bengali, Punjabi, or Malay. The winner will be announced at the launch of the magazine’s 9th edition this fall.
Dr. Amal Ghazal, Director

Dr. Ghazal was born and raised in Lebanon, where she attended the American University of Beirut and earned a BA in History. She moved to Canada in 1996. She completed her MA and PhD at the University of Alberta, and held a SSHRC post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Toronto. She was a faculty member in the History Department at Dalhousie University between 2006 and 2017. She specializes in the history of the Middle East and Muslim Societies in Africa.

Janine-Marie Conrad, Program Assistant

Ardalan Rezamand, Research Assistant

Ardalan Rezamand is a PhD Candidate at the Department of History, Simon Fraser University. He completed his BA at University of California at Santa Barbara in 1998 with double-majors in Philosophy and Islamic & Near Eastern Studies. He worked as a healthcare analyst and a personal banker before returning to academia in 2008. Ardalan attended Simon Fraser University for his MA studies graduating with an MA in History in 2012. His MA thesis traced the influence of academic philosophy in the formation of a modern Iranian identity. Currently he is completing his PhD thesis on the introduction of Western academic philosophy to Iran and its impact on the Pahlavi modernization project.

Aslam Bulbulia, Community Engagement Initiatives

Aslam is a recent settler on Coast Salish territories with South African-Indian heritage. Through travel and studies, he explored political science, philosophy, city-planning, development, Islamic law and spirituality, user-centred design and decoloniality. He is currently leading Community Engagement Initiatives with the centre and involved with the Muslim Urbanists network.

Amanda Rachmat, Research Assistant and Graphic Designer

Amanda recently completed a BA with a joint major in World Literature and International Studies at SFU, with a concentration in economic development and environmental issues. This summer she participated in Harvard University’s Institute for World Literature hosted at the University of Tokyo. She hopes to continue studying the intersections of culture, gender, and the environment.