



2019–2020

# PRINCE ALWALEED BIN TALAL ISLAMIC STUDIES PROGRAM AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY

YEAR IN REVIEW









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**COVER:** *Stari Most, Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina*,  
Harvard Fine Arts Library, Digital Images & Slides Collection

**EDITOR:** Meryum Kazmi, Program Coordinator

**GRAPHIC DESIGN:** Ivan Bolivar



# Director's Message

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*Professor Tarek Masoud*

The Alwaleed bin Talal Islamic Studies Program, then, is heir to an almost 400-year-old legacy of Harvard scholarship on the Muslim world. It has been my honor to contribute to the preservation of that legacy as the program's fourth faculty director. And, although my term ends with the 2020-2021 academic year, I cannot help but feel that the future of Islamic studies at this great university will be even brighter than its past.

There are several reasons for my optimism. The first is the extraordinary quality of the Islamic studies faculty across the University's 12 schools. The twelve members of the program's steering committee—a veritable who's who of humanists, scientists, and social scientists working on the Muslim world—only scratches the surface of Harvard's tremendous human capital in the broad area of Islamic studies. Last year, Harvard students could choose among 37 courses on topics related to Islam and the Muslim-world, from David Roxburgh's course on Medieval Architecture in Iran and Central Asia, to Cemal Kafadar's course on the social, economic, and political effects of the introduction of coffee and the

**THE STUDY OF ISLAM AND** of Muslim peoples has always had a place at Harvard. The University's first president, Henry Dunster, was a scholar of what was then called the "Orient"; and Harvard's second president, Charles Chauncy, actually offered courses in Arabic.

institution of the coffeehouse in the 15th century; to Malika Zeghal's course on Islam and politics in the modern Middle East; to Khalil Abdur-Rashid's course on Islam in America. (You can browse a complete listing of courses on Islam on pages 21-28 of this report). With new junior hires in Islamic and Middle Eastern studies in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and in the Divinity School, the University's commitment to remaining at the forefront of the study of Islam and Muslims could not be more evident. The Alwaleed Program contributes to our faculty's important work through our research grants program (page 16), and through our public events and faculty-led seminars (pages 17-19).

A second reason for my optimism is the extraordinary quality of the students that have taken up the study of Islam at Harvard. The Alwaleed Program celebrates these students annually with its prizes for best doctoral dissertation and best undergraduate thesis in Islamic studies. Last year, there were so many credible entrants for the best dissertation prize that the committee chose to recognize two worthy efforts: The first, by Dr. Mary Elston, was a dissertation on the reform of Islamic education at al-Azhar in Egypt (which you can read about on page 14). The second, by Dr. Mira Schwerda, which the committee recognized with an honorable mention, was a study of the role of photography in chronicling and contributing to political mobilization in early 20th century Iran. The prize for best undergraduate thesis was awarded to Murat Eczacıbaşı, who explored how the post-Ottoman Turkish state used mass education, and in particular the teaching of approved versions of modern and



medieval history, to inculcate in its citizens a new, secular, Republican national identity. The creativity and care exhibited in all of these works suggest powerfully that Harvard not only possesses the world's finest Islamic studies faculty, but that it is training the next generation of scholars who will take up that mantle.

A third reason for my optimism about Islamic studies at Harvard in general, and the Islamic studies program in particular, is the quality and creativity of the team that I have been fortunate to work with these past three years. As programs across the higher education landscape were thwarted by the coronavirus pandemic or forced to pare back their activities, the Alwaleed Program team—Executive Director Harry Bastermajian, and Program Coordinator Meryum Kazmi—went into overdrive. Not only did they enable the program to maintain a high tempo of public events (including two highly attended seminars on the history of pandemics in the Middle East, about which you can read on page 20), but they also found new ways to connect the Alwaleed Program to the world. Two of these initiatives, launched in 2021, you will not read about in this report (which covers only the prior academic year) but I cannot resist mentioning them. The first is a new podcast, entitled *Harvard Islamica*, in which Meryum and Harry interview Harvard faculty and students in the field of Islamic studies, bringing their work to a wider, non-specialist audience. The first episodes are already available on iTunes and other streaming platforms, and I encourage readers to seek them out. The second enterprise launched by the Alwaleed Program in 2021 is an online, interactive history of the study of Islam at Harvard. When most Americans were binge-watching television programs and waiting for a vaccine, Harry and Meryum dove into the archives, uncovering a hidden history of Islam and Islamic studies at Harvard that dates to the University's very beginnings. In fact, the factoids with which I opened this letter were not testaments to my own erudition,

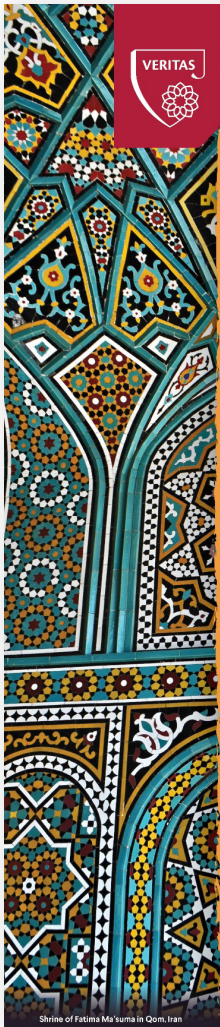
but rather things that I learned from the Alwaleed team's extraordinary work on this project.

A final reason for my sunny outlook on the future of this enterprise is the tremendous support that the next director of this program can count on from the highest reaches of the University's leadership. Provost Alan Garber and Vice Provost for International Affairs Mark Elliot have been stalwart champions of this program, and Mark in particular has gone to great lengths to evangelize about Islamic studies and the Alwaleed Program to all who will listen. In addition to ongoing financial support from the Provost's office, the program has also benefited from emergency support from the deans of the Business School, the Kennedy School of Government, and the Divinity School. Dean David Hempton of the latter institution deserves special thanks for his ongoing commitment to this program.

Although I therefore have no shortage of reasons to be optimistic about the future of Islamic studies at Harvard, I am under no illusion as to the work that remains to be done. The program has benefited enormously in the past year from financial support of the provost and the dean of the Divinity school, but the task of securing an endowment that will enable the program to fully deliver on its mission of catalyzing and supporting scholarship on the Muslim world remains one for the next director to achieve. And though the program boasts faculty affiliates from across the University, it remains without an academic home, having been separated from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences in 2016. Re-establishing that relationship between the University's sole program on the study of Islam and the University's scholarly center of gravity, is also a task that awaits the next director. That said, given all of the glittering achievements of this program and its team over the past year, and all of the resources upon which the next director can call, I should think that the prospects of success are great indeed.

# Alwaleed Bin Talal Seminar in Islamic Studies

The Alwaleed Bin Talal Seminar in Islamic Studies, led by Professor Shady Nasser, brings world-class experts from an array of fields within Islamic studies to engage with the Harvard community on a range of topics. Recordings can be viewed at [islamicstudies.harvard.edu/seminar](http://islamicstudies.harvard.edu/seminar).



**VERITAS**

**ALWALEED BIN TALAL SEMINAR IN ISLAMIC STUDIES**

**Fall 2019**

**Thursday, September 26, 2019 4-5:30pm**  
**WILLIAM JAMES HALL 1550**

**Gender and Curriculum in the Islamic Studies Classroom**

**Kecia Ali**  
Professor of Religion, Boston University  
Co-sponsors: Studies in Women, Gender and Sexuality

**Thursday, October 24, 2019 4-5:30pm**  
**WILLIAM JAMES HALL 1550**

**Anglo-Persian Texts and the Colonial Understanding of Religion**

**Carl Ernst**  
William R. Keenan, Jr. Distinguished Professor of Islamic Studies, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
Co-sponsors: The Aga Khan Fund for Iranian Studies

**Monday, November 25, 2019 1-2:30pm**  
**WASSERSTEIN HALL 3016**

**Early Shiite Law and the Construction of the Shari'a**

**Robert Gleave**  
Professor of Arabic Studies, University of Exeter  
Co-sponsors: The Law and Religion Lecture Series (The Committee on Study of Religion, The Center for Middle Eastern Studies, The Julius Rabinowitz Program on Jewish & Israeli Law at Harvard Law School, Program on Law and Society in the Muslim World at Harvard Law School and Program in Islamic Law at Harvard Law School)

**PRINCE ALWALEED BIN TALAL ISLAMIC STUDIES PROGRAM AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY**

Harvard Semitic Museum  
6 Divinity Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02138  
T: 617-495-3379  
F: 617-860-0996

[islamicstudies@harvard.edu](mailto:islamicstudies@harvard.edu)  
f HarvardISP  
t HarvardIslamic  
@ASPIHarvard

Please contact Farah El-Sharif, Seminar Coordinator, with any questions at [felsharif@harvard.edu](mailto:felsharif@harvard.edu)

Shrine of Fatima Ma'suma in Qom, Iran





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**SEPTEMBER 26, 2019**

## “Gender and Curriculum in the Islamic Studies Classroom”

*by Kecia Ali*

On September 26, 2019, Kecia Ali, Professor of Religion at Boston University, delivered a seminar on the challenges and opportunities scholars face in meaningfully integrating women and gender into Islamic studies, particularly in their teaching. She pointed out that while Islamic studies is by no means

unique in being a male-dominated field, a conversation about how to include women and gender not only as subjects of study but also to include the works of female scholars on syllabi, is overdue for the field. Through sharing her own experiences with teaching, creating syllabi, and writing a new book, Professor Ali argued that it is increasingly possible to integrate both the topics of women and gender and readings by women scholars, including Muslim women scholars, throughout courses on Islam, rather than simply limiting them to subjects of study in one unit.



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**OCTOBER 24, 2019**

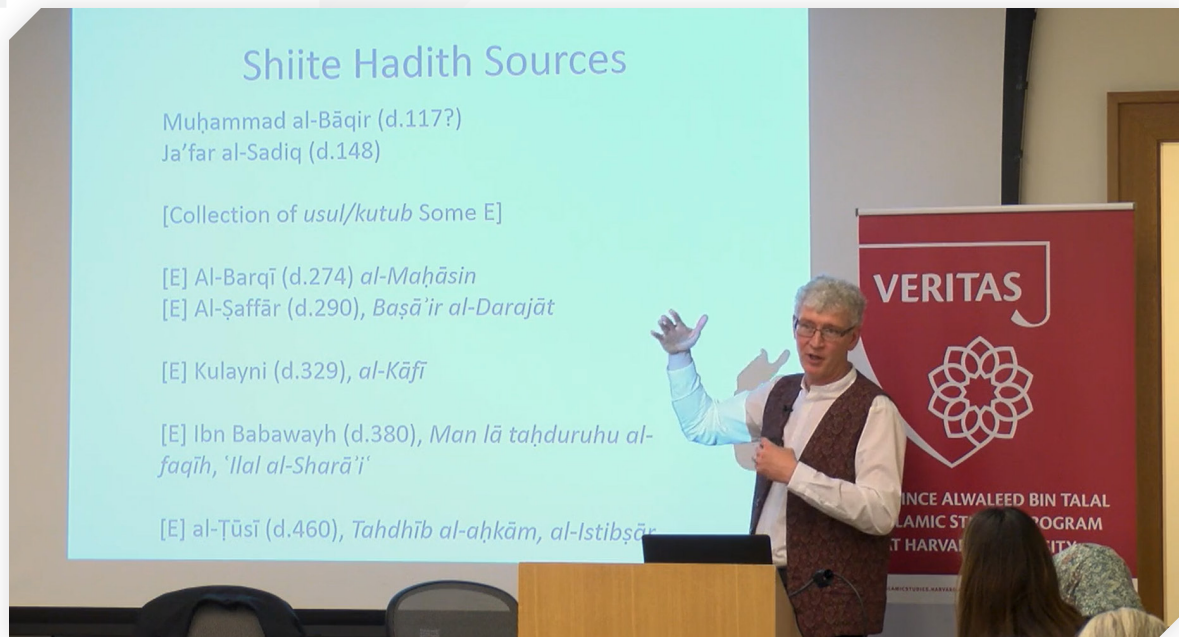
## “Anglo-Persian Texts and the Colonial Understanding of Religion”

*by Carl Ernst*

On October 24, 2019, Carl Ernst, William R. Keenan, Jr. Distinguished Professor of Islamic Studies at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, delivered a fascinating presentation that, while not directly related to Islam or Muslims, explored developments

following British colonization in the Islamicate milieu of late Mughal India. Professor Ernst examined two texts on Indian religions written by Hindu authors that were commissioned by British colonial officials. Both texts were written in Persian, the principal language of governance and culture at that time, and drew on Islamic religious vocabulary. The analysis highlighted the tension between the different taxonomies of religion displayed in these texts and explored the impact of Protestant and missionary concepts of religion on the emerging notion of Hinduism.





**NOVEMBER 25, 2019**

## “Early Shiite Law and the Construction of the Shari’a”

by Robert Gleave

On November 25, 2019, Robert Gleave, Professor of Arabic Studies at the University of Exeter, presented research on the development of Shiite law that he is conducting through the project on Law, Authority, and Learning in Imami Shi’i Islam (LAWALISI). Professor

Gleave presented his analysis of the chapters on ritual purity found in the major Shiite hadith collections and other case studies and argued that, far from being a later development, as argued in some secondary literature, Shiite law developed alongside and in conversation with Sunni law and that the Shiite imams occupied a status similar to that of the early Sunni jurists.



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**FEBRUARY 28, 2020**

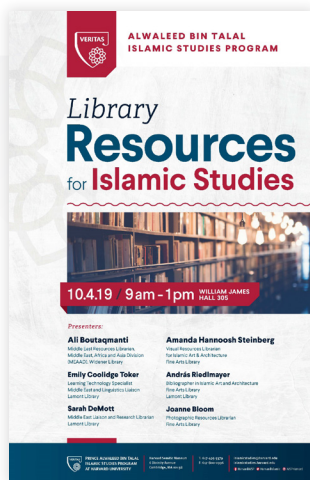
**“Wonder-full Edirne:  
A Marvelous Ottoman Town”**  
*by Amy Singer*

On February 28, 2020, Amy Singer, Hassenfeld Chair in Islamic Studies and Professor of History at Brandeis University, spoke about the historical significance of Edirne, a city that, although it appears to have been the most

important Ottoman city in Southern Europe until the Ottoman era and beyond, has been largely overlooked in scholarship. Through examining the text, *Tarih-i Edirne Hikayet-i Beşir Çelebi* (*The History of Edirne and Tale of Beşir Çelebi*), Professor Singer finds that Edirne was believed to have natural health advantages as well as spiritual significance, on the basis of wondrous legends, that legitimized its status among Ottoman cities.



# Research Methods in Islamic Studies Workshop



**THE RESEARCH METHODS** in Islamic Studies Workshop is a bi-annual workshop that engages graduate students and faculty active in the field of Islamic studies around current methodological questions. Where Islamic studies is informed by, intervenes in, and adds to cognate

disciplines such as anthropology, area studies, history, art history, Near Eastern studies, and religious studies, this is an especially productive undertaking. The workshop showcases novel and established methods and draws special attention to the burgeoning potential of the Digital Humanities. Besides offering intellectual and logistical support, the workshop connects researchers to the various libraries, research institutes and other services at Harvard (and beyond) with the aim of fostering research opportunities and collaboration. Johannes Makar, Ph.D. student in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, continued in his role as Workshop Coordinator in 2019-20.

The Fall 2019 workshop on “Library Resources for Islamic Studies” familiarized Islamic studies researchers, both old and new, with the vast resources available at the Harvard libraries. Presenters included librarians Ali Boutaqmanti, Emily Coolidge Toker, Sarah DeMott, Amanda Hanoosh Steinberg, Andras Reidlmayer, and Joanne Bloom. Attendees learned how to utilize Harvard’s many search tools, digital collections, and visual resources, and the importance of working with the libraries’ physical resources that far outnumber those that have been digitized. The Spring 2020 workshop was cancelled due to COVID-19.



# Alwaleed Bin Talal Thesis Prizes

In May 2020, the Alwaleed Program awarded its second annual Prize for Best Undergraduate Thesis in Islamic Studies and first-ever Prize for Best Dissertation in Islamic Studies.

Due to the number of excellent submissions, the Selection Committee also recognized an honorable mention for the dissertation prize.

**ALWALEED BIN TALAL  
ISLAMIC STUDIES PROGRAM**

## Alwaleed Bin Talal Thesis Prizes



We are pleased to announce that in addition to the Alwaleed Bin Talal Prize for **Best Undergraduate Thesis in Islamic Studies**, we will also offer a prize for the **Best Dissertation in Islamic Studies**. The prizes recognize students who make original contributions to current scholarly discourse on Islam and Muslim societies, past and present. Theses will be evaluated based on the quality of the research, originality of topic, clarity of expression, and strength of argument.

Please send the thesis and letter of nomination to [islamicstudies@harvard.edu](mailto:islamicstudies@harvard.edu) and write "[Student's Last Name] Undergraduate/Doctoral Thesis Nomination" in the subject line for consideration. The awards will be announced by May 15, 2020.

**All submissions are due by  
Friday, April 17, 2020 at 5pm**

**UNDERGRADUATE**  
**\$2,000** cash award

This prize is open to Harvard College students in all academic disciplines in the class of 2020. Students may self-nominate. However, nominations from faculty advisors are encouraged. This prize carries a \$2,000 cash award.

**DOCTORAL**  
**\$3,000** cash award

This prize is open to Harvard doctoral students in all disciplines who complete their Ph.D. between November 2019 and May 2020. A nomination from a faculty advisor is required. This prize carries a \$3,000 cash award.

**PRINCE ALWALEED BIN TALAL  
ISLAMIC STUDIES PROGRAM  
AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY**

Harvard Semitic Museum  
6 Divinity Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02138

T: 617-495-3379  
F: 617-300-0936

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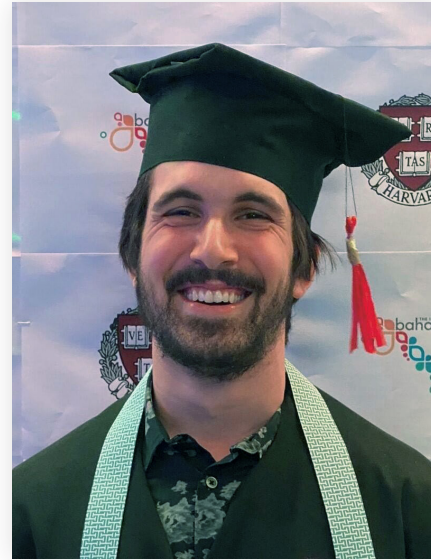
HarvardAISIP • HarvardIslamic • AISIPHarvard



## Alwaleed Prize for Best Undergraduate Thesis in Islamic Studies

**MURAT ECZACIBAŞI** was awarded the Alwaleed Bin Talal Prize for Best Undergraduate Thesis in Islamic Studies for his thesis, *“Reflections on the Imperial Past: The Evolution of Early High School History Textbooks in the Republic of Turkey.”*

Murat Eczacıbaşı, a history concentrator, conducted an extensive study of the evolution of republican Turkish political ideology regarding national identity through a rigorous textual analysis of state-approved high school history textbooks. While other studies have examined textbooks published in specific periods and their presentation of modern and late medieval history, Murat’s study is unique in its broad perspective of examining nine textbooks from different periods and their presentation of ancient and early medieval history. His advisor, Professor Cemal Kafadar, praised Murat’s work as “a brilliant analysis that sharpens and deepens our understanding of the most significant political, ideological, and cultural ruptures in the history of the Turkish Republic” and worth publishing as an article due to its originality and being of great interest to scholars researching post-Ottoman societies and nationalism.





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## Alwaleed Bin Talal Prize for Best Dissertation in Islamic Studies

**DR. MARY ELSTON** was awarded the Alwaleed Bin Talal Prize for Best Dissertation in Islamic Studies for her dissertation, *“Reviving Turāth: Islamic Education in Modern Egypt.”* Mary analyzes the intellectual and pedagogical movement of ‘ulamā’ who seek to revive what they call the “Islamic heritage” (turāth), which Mary describes as referring to a temporal, ethical, and epistemological configuration that the ‘ulamā’ allege existed before the beginning of the modernizing reforms of al-Azhar at the end of the 19th century. The turāth revival

is an attempt to counter modern reformism (the project of rationalizing institutions in order to catch up with the West) and Islamism (the project to reinforce the place of Islam in the state and public sphere). She shows how the ‘ulamā’s understanding of modern Islamic intellectual history is mobilized to build their own religious authority and how the turāth constitutes a recent alternative to modern reformism and Islamism, thereby enriching our understanding of modern Islamic intellectual history and what modern reformism and Islamism have in common. This work is based on two years of ethnographic research at al-Azhar and analysis of the writings of reformers including Muhammad Abduh, Mahmud Shaltut and Ali Gomaa. Mary’s advisor, Professor Malika Zeghal, considers her dissertation to be a particularly important contribution to Islamic studies due to its exploration of the issue of reform of Islamic education at al-Azhar in the modern period with an innovative methodological combination of historical textual analysis and ethnography, an eye to historical continuities, and a focus on epistemic changes in conceptions of Islamic knowledge and their relation to the politics of reform. Mary’s dissertation was chosen by the Committee for its clarity, innovative methodological combination and impressive findings.





The Selection Committee also recognized **DR. MIRA XENIA SCHWERDA** as honorable mention for her dissertation, ***“How Photography Changed Politics: The Case of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution (1905-1911).”*** Through her dissertation that reconceptualizes the Iranian Constitutional period (1905-1911) as one of spectacle in which photography played a central role in defining, mobilizing, and memorializing political movements and their leaders, Mira has made innovative contributions to the study of the economy of image in revolutionary thought, a nascent area particularly in Middle Eastern and Islamic studies.

Unknown photographer, *Munir al-Muluk Ahmadi dressed in costume*, ca. 1936-7. Ashrafi Family Collection, digitized for Women’s Worlds in Qajar Iran, record no. 1138A129.



# Faculty Research Grants

The Alwaleed Program offers grants for early-career faculty that are conducting new research in Islamic studies. The following are the 2019-20 awardees:



## Intisar Rabb

Henry L. Shattuck Professor of Law,  
Harvard Law School

In December 2019, Professor Intisar Rabb held an international workshop and book launch for a new English translation of one of the earliest works on Islamic law, Malik b. Anas's *al-Muwatta'* (Harvard University Press, 2019). A recording of this event can be found at [pil.law.harvard.edu/videos](http://pil.law.harvard.edu/videos).



## Melani Cammett

Clarence Dillon Professor  
of International Affairs, Department  
of Government

Professor Melani Cammett was awarded a grant for a workshop entitled, "Explaining Poverty in the Middle East: The Economics and Politics of Solidarity," that aims to serve as the incubator for an ambitious comparative project on the role of solidarity-based economic mechanisms in achieving reductions in extreme poverty in the Middle East.



## Justine K. Landau

Associate Professor of Near Eastern  
Languages and Civilizations,  
Faculty of Arts and Sciences

Professor Justine Landau was awarded a grant for a workshop entitled, "Occasion and Circumstance in Premodern Persian Court Poetry" that will bring together a variety of scholars from Europe and the United States whose work offers fresh critical thought on the conditions and circulation of pre-modern Persian court poetry, aiming to unpack the very notion of "poetic occasion" at the core of the courtly patronage system, and open new avenues for research.



## Pablo Pérez-Ramos

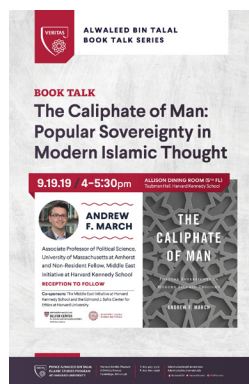
Assistant Professor of Landscape  
Architecture, Harvard Graduate  
School of Design

Professor Pablo Pérez-Ramos received a grant to conduct research for a project entitled, "The Possible Garden: Arid Landscape Morphologies and Islamic Agronomic Tradition," where he investigates and documents the agricultural strategies and horticultural tactics from the Islamic agronomic tradition that are currently in use in the cultivation of arid lands in Tunisia and Algeria.

# Events

## SERIES WITH OUR PARTNERS

The Alwaleed Program is proud to support on-going events with our partners. **The Islam in Africa Brown Bag Lecture Series** is convened by Professor Ousmane Kane on Wednesdays at lunchtime and features speakers from different universities who present on their work related to Islam in Africa. The **Middle East Beyond Borders Graduate Student Workshop** is chaired by Professors Malika Zeghal and Kristen Stilt and provides graduate students working on the Middle East an opportunity to discuss and get feedback on their scholarly writing. Under the direction of Professor Intisar Rabb, the Program in Islamic Law at Harvard Law School holds an **Islamic Law Lecture Series** in which leading experts in Islamic law give lunch talks on a range of topics.



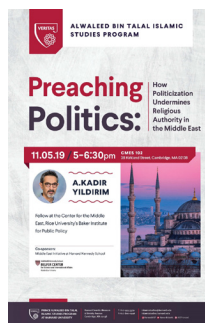
**ON SEPTEMBER 19, 2019**, the Alwaleed Program hosted a book talk in collaboration with the Middle East Initiative at the Harvard Kennedy School and the Safra Center for Ethics by Andrew March, Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst on his new book, *The*

*Caliphate of Man*. In this talk, Professor March explored the idea in 20<sup>th</sup> century Islamic political thought of the caliphate not as an office held by an individual, but as the popular sovereignty of the Muslim community that is guided by their moral unity based on Islam. Professor March traces the development of this idea by thinkers such as Mawdudi, Qutb, and Ghannouchi and discusses the challenges in applying it after the Arab Spring due to the reality of moral pluralism in Muslim societies.

## Conference on “Africa, Globalization, and the Muslim Worlds”

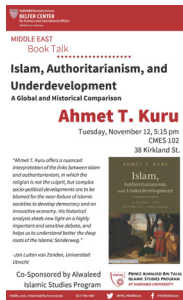


**ON SEPTEMBER 19-21, 2019**, Professor Kane hosted his annual conference on Islam in Africa, this year entitled, Conference on “Africa, Globalization, and the Muslim Lands.” Zekeria Ould Ahmed Salem of Northwestern University delivered a keynote lecture about Mauritanian scholars and their contribution to the reconstruction of religious authority in the Muslim world. In total, 17 papers were presented by scholars from around the world on topics ranging from Senegalese Sufi brotherhoods to the emergence of Shiism in Cape Town to West African Sufism in Jerusalem.



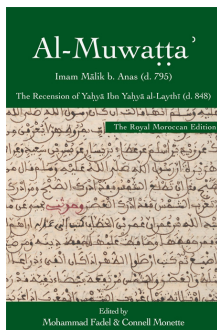
**ON NOVEMBER 5, 2019**, the Alwaleed Program co-sponsored a talk hosted by Professor Tarek Masoud and the Middle East Initiative at the Harvard Kennedy School by A. Kadir Yildirim, Fellow at the Center for the Middle East at Rice University’s Baker Institute for Public Policy. Dr. Yildirim presented his research on public opinion on religious authority in Muslim-majority countries in the Middle East.





**ON NOVEMBER 12, 2019**, the Alwaleed Program co-sponsored a book talk by Ahmet Kuru, Professor of Political Science at San Diego State University, on his new book, *Islam, Authoritarianism, and Underdevelopment: A Global and Historical Comparison* (2019). Professor Kuru argued that alliances between Muslim scholars

and military states led to a stifling of intellectual and economic creativity and that it is such alliances, rather than Islam itself, that are to blame for widespread authoritarianism and economic underdevelopment in Muslim-majority countries today.



**ON DECEMBER 9, 2019**, the Program in Islamic Law at Harvard Law School held two events, co-sponsored by the Alwaleed Islamic Studies Program, on the occasion of the publication of a new English translation of the 2013 Royal Moroccan Critical Edition of Mālik b. Anas's *Muwatta'* (Harvard University Press, 2019).



## Symposium Roundtable

Following an online symposium in the new *Journal in Islamic Law* on the early Islamic law treatise, *al-Muwatta'* (by Mālik b. Anas in the 8th century), a select panel of scholars brought the written ideas into conversation with one another in a symposium roundtable at Harvard Law School. The roundtable featured Professor Kecia Ali (Boston University), Professor Ahmed El Shamsy (University of Chicago), and Dr. Mariam Sheibani (Harvard Law School) as panelists, and presented opportunities for the specialist community to engage in discussion on the text with both the panelists and the author-translators of the book, Professors Mohammad Fadel (University of Toronto Faculty of Law) and Connell Monette (American College Casablanca).

## Book Launch: New Translation of *al-Muwatta'*

The Program in Islamic Law also hosted a public book launch for the new translation of *al-Muwatta'*. The book launch engaged the broader community in conversations about this new translation and the significance of the text, which has central, enduring relevance for Islamic law and society across time and place. It featured commentary on the book from the author-translators, Professors Mohammad Fadel (University of Toronto Faculty of Law) and Connell Monette (American College Casablanca), as well as from an esteemed panel of commentators, including Professor Kecia Ali (Boston University), Professor Ahmed El Shamsy (University of Chicago), and Dr. Mariam Sheibani (Harvard Law School). A reception and book signing followed.

## Conference on the “Transmission and Reception of the Qur’an in Light of Recent Scholarship”




**AT THE END OF THE FALL 2019 SEMESTER**, Professor Shady Nasser convened a conference in which leading experts in Qur’anic studies from North America and Europe shared their recent and impactful work related to the history of the reception of the Qur’an. This conference was supported by the Alwaleed Program’s Early Faculty Research Grant awarded to Professor Nasser in 2018-19 and was co-sponsored by a number of other Harvard programs and centers.

The conference attracted both specialists and a general audience from across Harvard and other universities including Brandeis University, Yale University and the University of Chicago. The speakers included François Déroche, Professor of the History of the Qur’an, Text and Transmission, Collège de France; Walid Saleh, Professor of Islamic Studies and Director of the Institute of Islamic Studies, University of Toronto; Behnam Sadeghi, Fellow in QuCip, University of Oxford; Gabriel Reynolds, Professor of Islamic Studies and Theology, University of Notre Dame; Alba Fedeli, Research Associate, Universität Hamburg; Geoffrey Khan, Regius Professor of Hebrew, University of Cambridge; Intisar Rabb, Professor of Law and Director of the Program in Islamic Law, Harvard Law School; and the chair of the conference, Shady Nasser, Associate Professor of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University.



**IN A DIRECTOR’S SERIES LECTURE** co-hosted by the Middle East Initiative at the Harvard Kennedy School on March 5, 2020, Daniel Philpott, Professor of Political Science at the University of Notre Dame, presented on his recent book, *Religious Freedom in Islam: The Fate of a Universal Human Right in the Muslim World Today* (2019). The lecture was followed by a discussion moderated by Professor Tarek Masoud about the meaning of religious freedom in Muslim-majority countries and its challenges and opportunities.




**ALWALEED BIN TALAL  
DIRECTOR'S SERIES**

# Religious Freedom in Islam


**3.5.20 / 4:30 – 6PM**

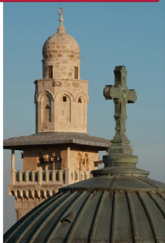
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Uttauer Center, Harvard Kennedy School




**DANIEL  
PHILPOTT**

Professor of Political Science, University of Notre Dame and author of *Religious Freedom in Islam: The Fate of a Universal Human Right in the Muslim World Today* (2019)

Co-sponsor:  
 **HELFER CENTER**  
for Science and International Affairs  
Middle East Initiative



 **PRINCE ALWALEED BIN TALAL  
ISLAMIC STUDIES PROGRAM**  
at HARVARD UNIVERSITY

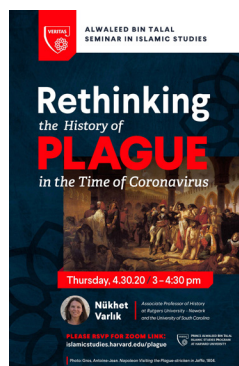
Harvard Kennedy School  
73 Garden Street  
Cambridge, MA 02138

T: 617-495-3279  
F: 617-495-1995

alwaleed@harvard.edu  
ken尼迪@harvard.edu

# Adapting to the Pandemic

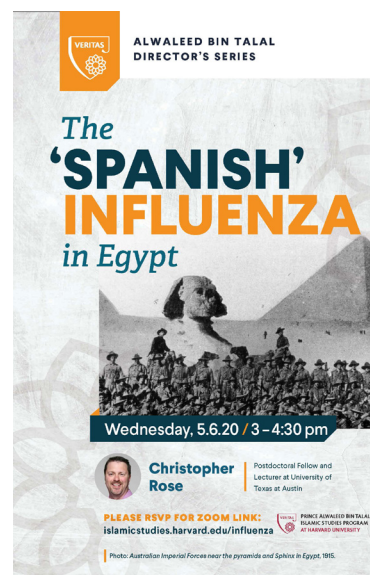
**IN MARCH 2020**, the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic forced Harvard University to swiftly transition to online instruction and activities after the spring recess. The Alwaleed Program adapted to this unprecedented situation by keeping the Islamic studies community engaged in new programming of interest amidst the health crisis. While scheduled in-person seminars with Amira Bennison, Ahmed al-Rahim, and Wheeler Thackston had to be postponed, new webinars were arranged on the history of infectious diseases in Muslim societies. These webinars attracted attendees not only from Harvard, but from around the world.



## “Rethinking the History of Plague in the Time of Coronavirus” by Nükhet Varlık

**ON APRIL 30, 2020**, Nükhet Varlık, Associate Professor of History at Rutgers University in Newark and the University of South Carolina, delivered a timely webinar discussing

the plague in European and Ottoman historiography, questioning Eurocentric narratives and “epidemiological Orientalism,” and reflecting on how we can understand this history in light of the current pandemic.



## “The ‘Spanish’ Influenza in Egypt” by Christopher Rose

**ON MAY 6, 2020**, Christopher Rose, Postdoctoral Fellow and Lecturer at University of Texas at Austin, delivered a webinar as part of our Director’s Series on the previously-overlooked history of the devastating ‘Spanish’ influenza in Egypt in 1918 and how it contributed to peasant participation in the 1919 Egyptian Revolution.





# Fall 2019 Course List

Select courses on Islam  
and the Muslim world

COURSE	INSTRUCTOR	DESCRIPTION
Race and Gender in the History of Islam in the U.S. and Europe	<i>Leila Ahmed</i>	This course explored key contemporary works in the history of Islam in the U.S. and Europe, primarily in the 20th and 21st centuries. It carefully explored, in particular, themes of race and gender.
Religion, Gender, Identity in 21st Century Diasporic Muslim Fiction	<i>Leila Ahmed</i>	This course explored 21st century novels by writers of Muslim background based in Europe and the U.S.— exploring, among others, themes of border crossings, the Muslim immigrant experience, figurations of gender and sexuality, and representations - and contestations - of Islam in the West.
Muslim Voices in Contemporary World Literatures	<i>Ali Asani</i>	This Freshman Seminar investigated the viewpoints of prominent Muslim writers on “hot button” issues such as terrorism, mixing religion and politics, the rights of women, and the “West” as reflected in novels, short stories and poetry from different parts of the world.
Multisensory Religion: Rethinking Islam Through the Arts	<i>Ali Asani</i>	This course focused on Islam as a case study through which we can explore the complex and multifaceted relationship between religion and the arts. Students learned to listen, see, and experience those “silent” forms of Islam by studying Muslims’ engagement with the literary arts as well as sound and visual arts (Qur’an and poetic recitations, music, dance, drama, architecture, calligraphy, and miniature painting).
African Art and Religion	<i>Suzanne Blier</i>	African art and architecture frequently engage, represent, connect to, or communicate with spiritual forces. A wide variety of religious beliefs, including an array of both local traditions and broader regional and global faiths such as Christianity and Islam are practiced in Africa. The arts offer us an important lens into each of these faiths.

## FALL 2019 COURSE LIST

COURSE	INSTRUCTOR	DESCRIPTION
Love, Sanctity, and Authority: An Introduction to Shi'i Islam	<i>Nicholas Boylston</i>	After examining the historical contexts in which the three branches of Shiism (Twelver, Isma'ili, and Zaydi) arose, this course addressed Shi'a theologies, rituals, law, spiritualities and notions of authority, comparing views across the three branches and highlighting their internal differences through history.
Arabic Philosophical Texts Seminar	<i>Khaled El-Rouayheb</i>	Readings on selected topics in Islamic philosophy.
Introduction to Islamic Theology and Philosophy: Early and Modern Periods	<i>Khaled El-Rouayheb</i>	This course explored the thought of some of the major Islamic philosophers and theologians in the 19th and 20th centuries: Muhammad Abduh, Muhammad Iqbal, Said Nursi, Sayyid Qutb, Ali Shariati, Murtaza Mutahheri and Abdolkarim Soroush.
The Ottoman Empire and the World: Ca. 1000-1550	<i>Cemal Kafadar</i>	This course surveyed the emergence of the Ottoman state from a frontier principality into a world empire in its social, political and cultural dimensions. Topics included pre-Ottoman Anatolia; frontier society; methods of conquest; centralization and institutionalization of power; land regime and peasantry; urbanization; intercommunal relations; religion and learning; and architecture and literature. Relations with Byzantium as well as Islamic and European states were examined.
Topics in Ottoman Social and Cultural History Seminar	<i>Cemal Kafadar</i>	Selected topics in Ottoman social and cultural history.
Revolutionary Politics in Contemporary Iran	<i>Payam Mohseni</i>	This course examined the intricacies of Iranian politics since the 1979 revolution. It explored a broad range of topics including the causes of the Iranian revolution; the political implications of the Islamic regime's institutional architecture; the competitive factional dynamics within the ruling elite; Iranian foreign policy; Iran-US relations and nuclear negotiations; and Shi'a political ideology.

## FALL 2019 COURSE LIST

COURSE	INSTRUCTOR	DESCRIPTION
Introduction to the Qur'an	<i>Shady Nasser</i>	A critical introduction to the Qur'an as text and as scripture, focusing on its origins, form, and content, with attention to its ongoing life in Arab-Islamic society. The course examined traditional scholarship and contemporary views on the Qur'an (mainly through YouTube videos, lectures, interviews). These were presented and discussed in comparison with the classical-traditional views on various themes of the Qur'anic text.
Introduction to the Qur'anic Sciences	<i>Shady Nasser</i>	This seminar consisted of a close reading of major selections from al-Suyūṭī's work on Qur'anic sciences (al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān). Topics include history of the transmission of the Qur'anic text, schools of exegesis, abrogation, occasions of revelation, inimitability, revelation, and rhetorical devices. It was dedicated to reading the primary sources in Arabic as well as discussing the secondary literature and scholarship written on the relevant topics.
Architectural Icons and Landscapes of Early Modern Islamic Empires: Between Transregional and Local	<i>Gülru Necipoğlu</i>	Between the 16th and 18th centuries, three empires - the Mediterranean-based Ottomans, Safavids in Iran, and Mughals in the Indian subcontinent - developed interconnected yet distinctive architectural, material, and visual cultures with individualized ornamental idioms by fusing their common transregional Timurid heritage with local traditions. The course explored connections between empire building, iconic monuments, and garden landscapes with respect to design, materiality, aesthetics, religion, imperial identity, and theories of dynastic legitimacy.
Introduction to Islamic Art: Visual and Portable Arts in Context	<i>David Roxburgh</i>	This course introduced key examples of the arts of the book, calligraphy, and portable arts between 650 and 1650 in the Islamic world, from the rise of Islam through to the pre-modern Gunpowder Empires. Themes included production and patronage; systems of object content and use; correspondences across media; and cross-cultural relationships of content and form.



## FALL 2019 COURSE LIST

COURSE	INSTRUCTOR	DESCRIPTION
Islam vs. Image? Visual Representations in Islamic Art	<i>David Roxburgh</i>	Is Islam against images? This Freshman Seminar was an opportunity for personal reflection and to study the issues at stake in questions about the values, forms, and functions of images and examined a broad variety of images produced throughout the Islamic lands from 600–1900. Students learned that the condition of images in Islam is as diverse and complex as the religion itself which cannot be reduced to a unified or monolithic expression, to a singular system of belief.
Islamic Law: Human Rights Advocacy in the Muslim World	<i>Salma Waheedi</i>	After providing an introduction to Islamic law, this course addressed difficult questions at the intersection of human rights law and some interpretations of Islamic law. The course focused on how human rights organizations -- international, regional, and local -- have worked on cases in these areas of concern and considered how such organizations can most effectively address issues that involve religious belief and practice.
Islam and Politics in the Modern Middle East	<i>Malika Zeghal</i>	The course critically examined the ideologies and political strategies of 20th century Islamist movements, as well as their origins and evolution. It related the emergence of organized Islamist movements in the first part of the 20th century to earlier Islamic reformist narratives and explored the political and social contexts in which these movements emerged and evolved. Particular attention was given to the ideas these movements developed and to the texts they published and disseminated.
Reading al-Manar in the Interwar Period	<i>Malika Zeghal</i>	Meeting approximately every other week, graduate students established digital maps and databases based on al-Manar and other periodicals in Morocco, Tunisia, and Egypt in the Interwar Period.

# Spring 2020 Course List

COURSE	INSTRUCTOR	DESCRIPTION
Islam in the American Public Sphere: A Case Study for Strategic Diversity Leadership	<i>Khalil Abdur-Rashid</i>	This course examined Islam and the American Muslim community as a case study which reveals the challenges and perspectives emerging from the encounter of a global faith community in America with the intersection of race, religion, and politics in America. Islam and being Muslim has been treated in America in religious, racial and political tones. However, because the nature of race has been and continues to be central to the American political project, the religious impact of racial identities is too often overlooked.
Spiritual Cultivation in Islam Part II: The Modern Era	<i>Khalil Abdur-Rashid</i>	This course, part of the HDS Initiative on Islamic Spiritual Life and Service, was designed for students preparing for vocation in a variety of settings in which they will provide Islamically-inspired service and support. The course acquainted students with Islamic pedagogy and practice on spiritual cultivation, highlighting the foundational importance of spiritual-ethical virtues in Islamic piety and the lifelong quest for nearness to and knowledge of God.
Topics in Hindi-Urdu Literature	<i>Ali Asani</i>	A course for students with native or near-native proficiency with readings in a variety of genres from Hindi and/or Urdu literature based on student interest.
Oil and the Arabian Peninsula: Culture, Power, History Seminar	<i>Rosie Bsheer</i>	The Arabian Peninsula has long been at the center of global circulations of commodities, capital, military power, and cultural knowledge. This course uses its focus on oil to examine the complex global linkages – through financial and resource flows, regulatory bodies, political institutions, labor markets, kinship networks, and religious circuits – that shape the region.

## SPRING 2020 COURSE LIST

COURSE	INSTRUCTOR	DESCRIPTION
Power and Identity in the Middle East	<i>Melani Cammett</i>	Why are some countries governed democratically while dictators seem to have a firm grasp on power in others? Why do people threaten and even kill each other in the name of ethnicity or religion in some places and times but not others? This course gave students a chance to explore these questions in the context of the Middle East, a region that has been widely perceived as a bastion of authoritarianism and a hotbed of ethnic and religious politics and political violence.
Arabic Philosophical Texts Seminar	<i>Khaled El-Rouayheb</i>	Readings on selected topics in Islamic philosophy.
Major Works of Islamic Civilization	<i>Khaled El-Rouayheb</i>	This course explored a number of major works to give students an exposure to different, co-existing cultural traditions within Islamic civilization. Readings included selections from the universal chronicle of al-Tabari (d. 923), the forty hadith of al-Nawawi (d. 1277), a work on the lives of the Shi'i Imams by al-Shaykh al-Mufid (d. 1044), the autobiography of al-Ghazali (d. 1111), the Gulistan of Sa'di (d. 1291), the famous Introduction to History of Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406), and a manual on Sufism by Aisha al-Ba'uniyya (d. 1516).
Hadith Jibril: An introduction to the theological, legal, and spiritual dimensions of Islam	<i>Yasir Fahmy</i>	This course engaged in a critical reading and analysis of Hadith Jibril. Also known as Umm Al-Hadith (or the mother of Prophetic narrations), this narration gathers the essential acts and practices that are to be performed, internally and externally, in the life of a Muslim.
Intimacy and Emotion in the Lives of Muslim Women	<i>Alicia Izharuddin</i>	This course engaged with critical issues in gender and emotions at the intersection of Muslim identity and culture. It brought to the fore interdisciplinary scholarship – spanning media studies, anthropology and sociology – that corrects Orientalist imaginings of the 'Muslim woman' as silent and passive.



## SPRING 2020 COURSE LIST

COURSE	INSTRUCTOR	DESCRIPTION
Coffee and Nighttime: History and Politics, 1400-2020	<i>Cemal Kafadar</i>	Since the 15th century, individuals and societies in different parts of the world adopted a gradually but unmistakably quickening tempo in their everyday lives and started to make more uses of the nighttime. In this reconfiguration of the architecture of day and night, people turned to various psychotropic substances such as coffee to help them better manipulate times of activity and repose and created new social institutions such as coffeehouses. The course offered a history of these developments until our own time of "living 24/7" in terms of their social, economic, political, and biological consequences.
Advanced Readings in Classical Arabic Bridge IV: Religious Sciences	<i>Shady Nasser</i>	Readings on selected topics in the Islamic religious sciences including Qur'anic sciences, hadith sciences, and law.
Sophomore Excursion Course	<i>Gülru Necipoğlu, Jinah Kim, and Melissa McCormick</i>	This course introduces sophomore concentrators to on-site study of art and architecture through the case study of a particular geographic and cultural area. This year's excursion was to India.
Islamic Ornament: Aesthetics of Abstraction and Theories of Perception	<i>Gülru Necipoğlu</i>	This course critically explored the historiography and interpretations of Islamic ornament. Themes included ornamentality and abstraction, theories of perception, Orientalist discourses on the so-called "arabesque," resonances of non-figural abstraction with modernism and postmodern aesthetics.
Landmarks in World Architecture	<i>David Roxburgh and Lisa Haber-Thompson</i>	This course examined major works of world architecture and the unique aesthetic, cultural, and historical issues that frame them. Faculty members each lectured on an outstanding example in their area of expertise, drawing from various periods and such diverse cultures as modern and contemporary Europe and America, early modern Japan, Mughal India, Renaissance and medieval Europe, and ancient Rome.

## SPRING 2020 COURSE LIST

COURSE	INSTRUCTOR	DESCRIPTION
Medieval Architecture in Iran and Central Asia	<i>David Roxburgh</i>	This seminar examined cities and monuments built in Greater Iran and Central Asia from the 11th through 15th centuries spanning three principal dynastic periods (Seljuqs, Mongols, and Timurids). Various functional types—mosques, madrasas, minarets, tombs—, urban systems, and spatial organization are studied including the cities of Baghdad, Bukhara, Herat, Isfahan, Mashhad, Nishapur, Rayy, and Samarkand.
Al-Ghazali's Thought and Legacy	<i>Mariam Sheibani</i>	Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) is known as “The Proof of Islam” and is widely considered to be the most influential philosopher, theologian, and mystic in Sunni Islam. Students studied al-Ghazālī’s writings focusing on the following areas: epistemology, scriptural hermeneutics, classification of knowledge, the Divine names and attributes, prophethood, the Qur’ān, religious psychology, political and social dimensions of religion and religious practice, and heresiography.
Islamic Institutions - Middle East & Beyond: Modern Transformations & Debates (19th-21st centuries)	<i>Malika Zeghal</i>	This graduate seminar explored the transformation of Islamic institutions in the modern period, such as religious endowments (awqaf), sharia courts, and Islamic education. Students engaged with the historiography of these institutions and with primary sources in Arabic to open new paths for research.
The Modern Middle East Real and Imagined: An Introduction	<i>Malika Zeghal</i>	This introduction to Middle Eastern studies covered topics such as reformism, economic development, colonialism and nationalism, authoritarianism and democratization, sectarianism, culture, gender, literature and the arts, as well as the role of religion in politics. Most of these topics, in one way or another, spoke to the construction of nation-states in the Middle East and to the challenges they have been confronting.









# Malika Zeghal

PRINCE ALWALEED BIN TALAL PROFESSOR IN

CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC THOUGHT AND LIFE

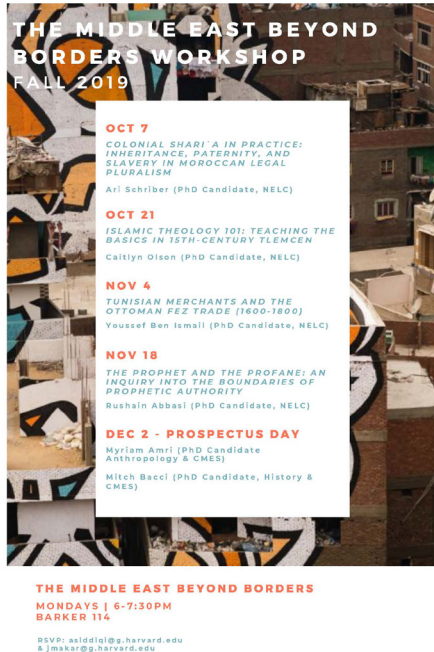
**MALIKA ZEGHAL** is Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Professor in Contemporary Islamic Thought and Life in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Affiliated Professor of Government in the Department of Government, and a Member of the Committee on the Study of Religion. Her work focuses on the interaction between Islam and politics in the modern Middle East. She is particularly interested in studying the formation of modern Muslim states and their religious institutions, as well as the intellectual and political genealogies of Islamist movements in the region. She also has an interest in modern Islamic intellectual history in the Middle East, Europe and North America.

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Islamic intellectual history in the Middle East, Europe and North America.

In the 2019-20 academic year, she taught courses for both undergraduate and graduate students and served as the Director of Graduate Studies for the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. She has continued to pursue her own research, which has included expanding her methods and working on collaborative projects with her graduate students.

Professor Zeghal taught a general education course on "Islam and Politics in the Modern Middle East," and an undergraduate course, "Introduction to the Modern Middle East," which gave students an overview of the history and politics of the region along with critical insights into the debates surrounding issues related to religion, colonialism, nationalism, governance, and economic policies. She also taught a graduate seminar on "Islamic Institutions in the Middle East and Beyond: Modern Transformations and Debates" that examined the development of



Islamic educational institutions, religious endowments (*awqaf*) and shari'a courts from the 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

Along with Professor Kristen Stilt, Professor of Law and Director of the Program on Law and Society at Harvard Law School, Professor Zeghal directs the Middle East Beyond Borders Graduate Student Workshop. In 2019-20, it was organized by Johannes Makar and Armaan Siddiqi, Ph.D. students in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, and gives scholars at Harvard, primarily graduate students, across academic disciplines an opportunity to present and receive feedback on their work. Presentations included “Colonial Shari’a in Practice: Inheritance, Paternity,

and Slavery in Moroccan Legal Pluralism” by Ari Schriber, Ph.D. student in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, “Enjoining the Public to Strengthen the Province through Learning: An Emerging Government’s Spread of Printed Books, 1820s-1840s” by Dr. Kathryn Schwartz, Assistant Professor at UMass Amherst, and “Damascus Restored: Shāfi’ism in 5th/11th and 6th/12th Century Damascus” by Dr. Mariam Sheibani, Visiting Fellow at the Program in Islamic Law at Harvard Law School.

In recent years, Professor Zeghal has expanded her research to include the latest digital methods. She is an affiliated faculty member of the Institute for Quantitative Social Science (IQSS), a Harvard-wide center that empowers researchers to not only study the world’s problems, but also to help solve them by employing cutting-edge methods and technologies. Currently, Professor Zeghal is working with a group of Ph.D. students on her research project, “Reading *al-Manar* in the Interwar Period,” in which they develop digital maps and databases using *al-Manar* and other periodicals from Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt in the period between the two World Wars.

Professor Zeghal has also continued her ongoing research in the National Tunisian Archives (Tunis, Tunisia) and in the French Diplomatic Archives (Nantes, France) and is completing a book on Islam and the state in the Middle East in the modern period (19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> century), which is forthcoming from Princeton University Press.



# David Roxburgh

PRINCE ALWALEED BIN TALAL PROFESSOR OF ISLAMIC ART HISTORY



**DAVID ROXBURGH** is Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Professor of Islamic Art History and Chair of the Department of History of Art and Architecture. In the academic year 2019-20, Professor David Roxburgh taught four courses: the Freshman Seminar, “Islam vs. Image? Visual Representations in Islamic Art:” the introductory lecture course, “Art in the Wake of the Mongol Conquests: Genghis Khan and His Successors;” a pro-seminar, “Medieval Architecture in Greater Iran and Central Asia;” and another introductory lecture course, “Landmarks of World Architecture,” co-taught with Lisa Haber-Thompson.

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of World Architecture,” co-taught with Lisa Haber-Thompson.

During the year he presented lectures and served as a moderator at conferences. In September 2019, he spoke on “The Birth of Art/Craft in Mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century Iran: Dialogues Between Subject, Medium, Composition,” at the conference “The Art Academy Outside Europe,” Clark Institute, Williamstown, Mass. In November he delivered a paper titled “New Technologies of the Image in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Iran,” for the conference “Re-Thinking Modernity: Global Art History Conference” (organized by Dean Shao Yiyang), at the Central Academy of Fine Art (CAFA), Beijing. As honorary professor at CAFA he was also invited to present the keynote lecture on the “The Timurid-Ming Embassy of 1419-1422” in which he focused on the narrative recorded by Muslim artist Ghiyath al-Din Naqqash and his journey across Central Asia to China and Beijing. Other events scheduled for spring and early summer of 2020—at the CNRS, Paris, and Portland State University—were postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the year Professor Roxburgh completed some new essays, or edits to ongoing writing projects, that have all gone to press with publication dates now in 2021, comprising studies on the Suez Canal inauguration ceremonies of November 1869; two essays, one on the diagram in Islamicate manuscripts, the other on the book of fixed stars by Abd

al-Rahman al-Sufi (both for the co-edited conference proceedings on the diagram conference held at Dumbarton Oaks in spring 2018). He also contributed entries to the *Encyclopaedia of Islam Three*. Other studies that appeared in print in 2019 include: “The Art of Writing and its Collection in the Islamic Lands” and catalogue entries in *Bestowing Beauty: Masterpieces from Persian Lands—Selections from the Hossein Afshar Collection*, ed. Aimee Froom (Houston and New Haven: Museum of Fine Arts and Yale University Press, 2019); and “Emulation in the Arts of the Book: Baysunghur’s Two *Kalila wa Dimna* Manuscripts,” in *The Arts of Iran in Istanbul and Anatolia*, ed. Olga Davidson and Marianna Shreve Simpson (Cambridge and Boston, Mass.: Harvard University Press and the ILEX Foundation, 2019), 150-85. Whenever time permits, outside of Chairing his Department, advising and teaching, and other responsibilities at Harvard and to his field, Professor Roxburgh continues to work on his study of art-making in Herat in the first quarter of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

In 2020, Professor Roxburgh concluded his 4-year tenure as President of the National Committee for the History, the U.S. affiliate of the Comité International d’Histoire de l’Art (CIHA), as well as his role as a Vice President of CIHA.



# Ousmane Kane

PRINCE ALWALEED BIN TALAL PROFESSOR OF

CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC RELIGION AND SOCIETY

**OUSMANE KANE** is Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Professor of Contemporary Islamic Religion and Society at Harvard Divinity School, Professor of African and African American Studies, Denominational Counselor to Muslim Students, and Weatherhead Center Distinguished Faculty Research Associate.

In 2019-20, Professor Kane continued to be active in the intellectual and spiritual life of Harvard, and in the broader field of Islam in Africa, through his teaching, research, and community engagement. His efforts have been recognized internationally. In August 2019, the Senegalese Chamber of Commerce, Agriculture, and Industry awarded Professor Kane the Golden Peanut (Cauris d'or) for academic excellence.

In summer 2019, Professor Kane led his annual study abroad trip to Senegal through Harvard Summer School. This program allowed undergraduates to explore belief, knowledge, and society in the Senegambia region of Francophone Africa. Students learned about the formation and transformation of the religious

landscape of the region including the roles of Islam, Christianity, and African traditional religions; the development of the educational system with Arabic and later French as mediums of instruction; and the colonial and postcolonial transformations of social relations. Through reading novels, viewing paintings, listening to music, watching movies, and visiting religious pilgrimage sites, students gained a rich experience of the culture of the modern Senegambia.

On September 19-21, 2019, Professor Kane hosted his annual conference on Islam in Africa, this year entitled, "Conference on Africa, Globalization, and the Muslim Lands." Zekeria Ould Ahmed Salem of Northwestern University delivered a keynote lecture about Mauritanian scholars and their contribution to the reconstruction of religious authority in the Muslim world. In total, 17 papers were presented by scholars from around the world on topics ranging from Senegalese Sufi brotherhoods to the emergence of Shiism in Cape Town to West African Sufism in Jerusalem. Professor Kane will host the fifth Islam in

Africa conference entitled “The Fayda Tijaniyya Sufi Community. A Major Articulation of Global Islam” on April 22-24, 2021.

This year’s Islam in Africa Lecture Series that explores “Critical Perspectives on the Development and Dynamics of Islam in Africa” featured five talks by scholars at Harvard and other universities. These talks were “Religious Commemoration as Embodied Heritage: The Two Prayers of Amadu Bamba in Saint-Louis, Senegal” by Tidiane Lo, “The Construction of a Doctrine in *Kitāb al-Rimāḥ*: Gnosis and Revival in 19<sup>th</sup> Century West Africa” by Farah El-Sharif, “Spiritual Capital: Islamic Education and Social Change in a Zanzibari Madrasa” by Caitlyn Bolton, “Women Islamic Leaders in West Africa”

by Joseph Hill, and “Global Muslim Blackness: Grassroots Initiatives for a Humanitarianism Reimagined” by Rhea Rahman.

Professor Kane is currently editing an interdisciplinary volume entitled, *Islamic Scholarship in Africa: New Directions and Global Contexts* forthcoming in Spring 2021, that seeks to fill the lacuna of the study of Islamic erudition in West Africa. The work will be simultaneously published in French as *Erudition islamique en Afrique. Nouvelles pistes de recherche et contexte Mondial* and include chapters by scholars who are contributing to the rapidly growing body of knowledge on the topic that is enriching not only Islamic studies, but also African studies. He is also co-editing with Zekeria Ahmed Salem

a special issue of the journal *Religions* entitled “Africa, Globalization and the Muslim Worlds” in which select papers of the third Islam in Africa conference “West Africa and the Maghreb” and the fourth one entitled “Africa, Globalization and the Muslim Worlds” will be published.

Prior to the COVID-19 lockdown, Professor Kane was active in delivering lectures about his work. In October 2019, he delivered a talk at the Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown



Professor Kane and students in the 2019 Summer Study Abroad Program in Dakar, Senegal/photo credit: Ousmane Kane



University about his book, *Beyond Timbuktu: An Intellectual History of Muslim West Africa* (2016). In January 2020, he spoke about “The Transformation of the Pilgrimage Tradition in West Africa” at the Barker Center at Harvard University.

In 2019-20, Professor Kane taught courses on “Critical Perspectives in the Dynamics and Development of Islam in Africa,” “Islam, Modernity and Politics,” and a two-semester course on “Spiritual Cultivation in Islam,” with a focus on the Classical Era in the fall term and the Modern Era in the spring term.

In addition to his teaching, research and writing, Professor Kane is highly engaged with students. He advises Master of Theological Studies and Master of Divinity students at Harvard Divinity School and Ph.D. students in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. He also serves as spiritual counselor to Muslim students. In this capacity, he has been hosting a weekly gathering for dhikr and spiritual cultivation for them in his home on Friday evenings since 2014. Professor Kane is also the coordinator of the Initiative in Islamic Spiritual Life at Harvard Divinity School.

Professor Kane also supported the expansion of Islamic studies at Harvard Divinity School by serving as chair of the search committee for open faculty positions in Islamic studies. These efforts led to the hiring of Terenjit Sevea, a specialist in Islam in Southeast Asia, and Mohsin Goudarzi, a scholar of early Islam.







# Steering Committee

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## Gareth Doherty

Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture and Director of the Master in Landscape Architecture Program, Harvard Graduate School of Design

Gareth Doherty's research broadens discussions on ethnography and participatory methods by asking how a socio-cultural perspective can inspire design innovations. Each of Doherty's publications, including *Paradoxes of Green: Landscapes of a City-State*, expands the limits and scope of landscape architectural theory and design by considering people-centered issues alongside environmental and aesthetic concerns. Doherty addresses these issues through research on designed landscapes across the postcolonial and Islamic worlds.



## William Granara

Professor of the Practice of Arabic on the Gordon Gray Endowment, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

William Granara is professor of Arabic and Comparative Literature and Director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University. He specializes in the literature and history of the Arab Mediterranean in both the medieval and modern periods. He is the author of *Narrating Muslim Sicily: War and Peace in the Medieval Mediterranean World* (2019) and *Ibn Hamdis the Sicilian* (July 2021). He also writes on contemporary Arabic literature and has published translations of several Arabic novels into English: *The Earthquake* (2000), *Granada* (2004), and *The Battle of Poitiers* (2011). His articles include: "Nostalgia, Arab Nationalism, and the Andalusian Chronotope in the Evolution of the Modern Arabic Novel" (2005); "Nile Crossings: Hospitality and Revenge in Egyptian Rural Narratives" (2010); and "The Mediterranean in Colonial North African Literature: Contesting Views" (2019).





## Gülru Necipoğlu

Aga Khan Professor of Islamic Art, Department of History of Art and Architecture

Gülru Necipoğlu specializes in the arts and architecture of the pre-modern Islamic world, with a focus on the Mediterranean and the eastern Islamic lands. She is interested in questions of aesthetic cosmopolitanism, transregional connectivity between early modern Islamicate empires (Ottoman, Safavid, Mughal), and cross-cultural artistic exchanges with Byzantium and Renaissance/Baroque Europe. Her studies have also addressed architectural practice, plans and drawings, aesthetics of abstraction, and geometric design. Her critical concerns encompass methodological and historiographical issues in modern constructions of the field of Islamic art.



## Malika Zeghal

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## Leila Ahmed

Victor S. Thomas Research  
Professor of Divinity, Harvard  
Divinity School

Leila Ahmed came to the Divinity School in 1999 as the first professor of women's studies in religion and was appointed to the Victor S. Thomas chair in 2003. Her latest book, *A Quiet Revolution: The Veil's Resurgence, from the Middle East to America*, has been widely acclaimed and was the winner of the Grawemeyer Award in Religion for 2012. Her current research and writing interests include Islam and gender in America, and issues of gender, race, and class in the Middle East in the late colonial era.



## Khaled El-Rouayheb

James Richard Jewett  
Professor of Arabic and Islamic  
Intellectual History; Chair,  
Department of Near Eastern  
Languages and Civilizations

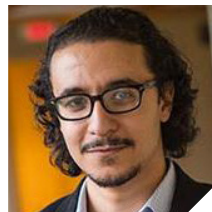
Khaled El-Rouayheb specializes in the intellectual and cultural history of the Arabic-Islamic world in the early-modern period (1500-1800), the history of Arabic logic and Islamic theology and philosophy. His recent publications include *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Philosophy* [2016] co-edited with Sabine Schmidtke and his latest book, *The Development of Arabic Logic (1200-1800)* [2019].



## Salmaan Keshavjee

Professor of Global Health and Social Medicine, Harvard Medical School

Salmaan Keshavjee is a professor in the Department of Global Health and Social Medicine and Department of Medicine at Harvard Medical School, and director of Harvard Medical School's Center for Global Health Delivery–Dubai. He also serves as a physician in the Division of Global Health Equity at the Brigham and Women's Hospital. He has conducted research in medical anthropology on the health transition in post-Soviet Tajikistan and extensive work on tuberculosis including working with the Division of Global Health Equity and the Boston-based non-profit, Partners in Health, on a multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) treatment program in Tomsk, Russia. He is the author of *Blind Spot: How Neoliberalism Infiltrated Global Health* (2014).



## Ahmed Ragab

Richard T. Watson  
Associate Professor of Science and Religion,  
Harvard Divinity School

Professor Ragab is a physician, a historian of science and medicine, and a scholar of science and religion. His work spans various fields and disciplines. He studies the history of science and medicine, science and religion and the development of cultures of science and cultures of religion in the Middle East and the Islamic World. Professor Ragab also studies various questions related to science and religion in the U.S. with a focus on U.S. Muslim communities.





## Ali Asani

Murray A. Albertson Professor of Middle Eastern Studies and Professor of Indo-Muslim and Islamic Religion and Cultures

Ali Asani holds a joint appointment between the Committee on the Study of Religion and Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. He also serves on the faculty of the Departments of South Asian Studies and African and African American Studies. A specialist of Islam in South Asia, Professor Asani's teaching and research focus on Shia and Sufi devotional traditions in the region. He also teaches courses on Islam in the Harvard's General Education Program, emphasizing the role of the sound arts, visual arts, and poetic arts as the primary ways in which most Muslims around the world experience their faith.



## Kristin E. Fabbe

Associate Professor of Business Administration and Hellman Faculty Fellow, Harvard Business School

Kristin Fabbe is an Associate Professor in the Business, Government, and International Economy Unit. Her primary expertise is in comparative politics, with a regional focus on the Middle East and southeastern Europe, particularly Turkey and Greece. Her recent book is *Disciples of the State?: Religion and State-Building in the Former Ottoman World* (Cambridge University Press, 2019).



## Shady H. Nasser

Associate Professor of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

Shady Nasser teaches Arabic literature and Islamic Civilizations courses. His research interest is Qur'anic studies in general with particular focus on the history of the transmission of the text, its language, and its reception among the early Muslim community. Pre-Islamic and early Islamic poetry, Akhbar Literature, and Ḥadith transmission, are also among Professor Nasser's research interests. He is the chair of the Alwaleed Bin Talal Seminar in Islamic Studies and in December 2019, he convened a conference on "The Transmission and Reception of the Qur'an in Light of Recent Scholarship."



## David Roxburgh

Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Professor of Islamic Art History; Chair, Department of History of Art and Architecture

David Roxburgh has pursued interests including aesthetics and the history of reception—and approaches to the study of art history. He has focused on primary written sources, manuscript painting, art of the book, calligraphy, Timurid art and architecture, exchanges between China and the Islamic lands, travel narratives, and histories of collecting, exhibitions, and museums. He is currently working on two books: the first on the study of Medieval Iranian architecture through the archive of Myron Bement Smith; the second on art and literature in Herat in the early 1400s.

# Alwaleed Fellows

*Each year, two promising Ph.D. students in Islamic studies are selected by the Committee on the Study of Religion as Alwaleed Fellows whose stipends are supported by Prince Alwaleed's gift.*



## John Nowak

John Nowak is a Ph.D. student in Islamic studies with the Committee on the Study of Religion at

Harvard University. His research interests are at the intersection of religious identity, reform/revival, and literature in the context of 19th and 20th century South Asia. Mr. Nowak's work considers the ways in which modernity has shaped notions of authority, normativity, and individual devotional piety. He seeks to challenge binaries, such as political/apolitical, legal/mystical, charismatic/bureaucratic, and traditionalist/reformist.

Mr. Nowak received his B.A. with First Class Honors in Political Science and a minor in Arabic Language from McGill University. He also holds a Master of Theological Studies in Islamic studies from Harvard Divinity School.

### How did your scholarship develop in the 2019-20 academic year?

“During the past academic year, I continued to develop and refine my scholarship on reform/revival movements and Muslim identity

formation in the context of 19th and 20th century South Asia. I have become increasingly interested in the ways in which reformers (such as ‘ulama, Sufi pirs, and “modernists”) utilized cheap, vernacular printing, improved means of mobility, and missionizing techniques to assert their normative vision in the public sphere, both within the subcontinent and globally. I have also been reflecting on the ways in which modernity has re-entrenched charismatic authority. Throughout the year, I further strengthened my abilities in primary languages of scholarship by completing a reading course in Urdu discursive prose and two reading courses on Indo-Persian literature. These courses have assisted me in my work reading, translating, and analyzing the writings of 19th and 20th century South Asian Islamic scholars and reformers. I also had the opportunity to more deeply consider the religious, social and historical context of my inquiry through coursework on the Upanisads, the Bhagavad Gita, and colonial and post-colonial histories of South Asia. Additionally, I presented a paper on Shibli Nomani, the Aligarh Institute Gazette, and the shifting contours of Ashraf, North-Indian Muslim identity at the MESAAS 10th Annual Graduate Conference at Columbia University.”





## Adnan Adrian Wood-Smith

Adnan Adrian Wood-Smith is a Ph.D. student in the Study of Religion

at Harvard University whose research focuses on the Arabic poetry of the Senegalese Muslim scholar Shaykh Ibrahim Niasse and his followers, and on the significance of poetry to Shaykh Ibrahim's *Fayḍah* movement, a global Sufi revival movement whose followers are numbered at around 100 million. Adnan has translated several poems of Shaykh Ibrahim and his students, as well as selections of their prose works. He has spent time within communities of the *Fayḍah* in Senegal and Mauritania, where he intends to conduct his fieldwork. Adnan served as the Muslim Chaplain at Brown University for five years, and has taught Arabic at Zaytuna College in Berkeley, California. He received his B.A. in Arabic Language and Literature from Dartmouth College.

### How did your scholarship develop in the 2019-20 academic year?

“In my first year in the Ph.D. program, I completed coursework in Islamic aesthetics, Islamic spirituality, language, and the study of religion. I was able to attain basic proficiency in Hausa, allowing me to start studying Hausa manuscripts of Islamic poetry written in Arabic script during the next year of my program. My coursework enabled me to expand my methodological horizons from primarily textual studies into the field of ethnography, and I plan on turning at least one of my term papers from my first year into a journal article. I oversaw a project to transcribe the entire poetic corpus of Shaykh Ibrahim Niasse in a searchable and easily navigable format, published a book review of Oludamini Ogunnaike's *Poetry in Praise of Prophetic Perfection*, and was accepted to present my research on Shaykh Ibrahim at the upcoming conferences of the American Academy of Religion and the African Studies Association.”

# Alwaleed Program Team

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**Professor  
Tarek Masoud**

Director

Tarek Masoud is a Professor of Public Policy and the Sultan of Oman Professor of International Relations at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, where he is also Faculty Chair of the Middle East Initiative. His research focuses on political development in Arabic-speaking and Muslim-majority countries. He is the author of *Counting Islam: Religion, Class, and Elections in Egypt* (2014), of *The Arab Spring: Pathways of Repression and Reform* with Jason Brownlee and Andrew Reynolds (2015), as well as of several articles and book chapters. He is a 2009 Carnegie Scholar, a trustee of the American University in Cairo, a member of the editorial board of the *Journal of Democracy*, and the recipient of grants from the National Science Foundation and the Paul and Daisy Soros foundation, among others. He holds an A.B. from Brown and a Ph.D. from Yale, both in political science.



**Dr. Harry  
Bastermajian**

Executive Director

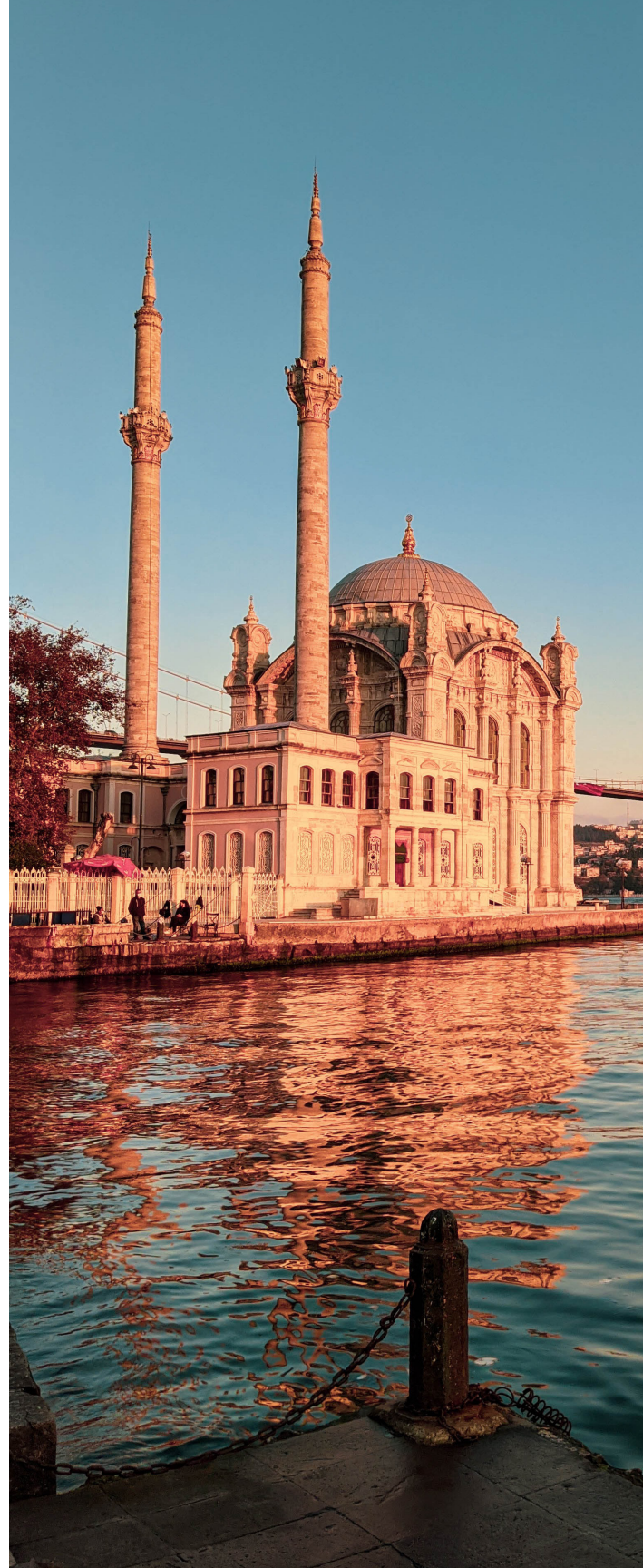
Harry Bastermajian is the Executive Director of the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Islamic Studies Program at Harvard University and Instructor in the Division of Continuing Education at Harvard University where he teaches courses on Islamic and Middle Eastern history. Dr. Bastermajian earned his Ph.D. in Islamic History and Civilization from the University of Chicago, as well as an A.M. in Islamic History and an A.M. in Middle Eastern Studies. He took his undergraduate degree in Economics and International Relations from Lake Forest College. His dissertation examined Armenian identity formation in nineteenth century Istanbul. His research interests include the role of the press in late modern Islamic empires, religious and ethnic minorities in the Muslim world, and inter-communal relations in the late Ottoman Empire. Prior to joining the Alwaleed Program, Dr. Bastermajian coordinated the Andrew W. Mellon Islamic Studies Initiative at the University of Chicago and was the graduate programs administrator at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard.



## Meryum Kazmi

Program Coordinator

Meryum Kazmi is the Program Coordinator for the Alwaleed bin Talal Islamic Studies Program at Harvard University. After working in urban education through AmeriCorps and BPE (formerly Boston Plan for Excellence), she became more interested in Islamic studies and was a student, instructor and program manager at Fawakih, an Arabic institute based in Herndon, Virginia. Meryum also studied and later taught grammar at the Qasid Arabic Institute in Amman, Jordan. She earned her B.A. in History at Georgetown University and A.M. in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University.





## Student Coordinators

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**Farah El-Sharif**

Seminar Coordinator

Farah El-Sharif coordinates the Alwaleed Bin Talal Seminar in Islamic Studies. She is a Ph.D. student in Islamic intellectual history at Harvard where she focuses on the North and West African knowledge production in the 19th century. Her interests lie within themes of colonialism and epistemology, as well as the intersection of Sufism and Islamic Law. She completed her Master's in Islamic Studies at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California and earned her bachelor's degree in Culture and Politics at Georgetown's School of Foreign Service with a concentration in Culture and Politics.



**Johannes Makar**

Workshop Coordinator

Johannes Makar coordinates the Research Methods in Islamic Studies Workshop. He is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations (NELC). His research focuses on religious and political reform in the late Ottoman Empire, with special attention to the Coptic community.





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# PRINCE ALWALEED BIN TALAL ISLAMIC STUDIES PROGRAM AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Harvard Museum of the Ancient Near East  
6 Divinity Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02138

T: 617-495-3379  
F: 617-496-8904

[islamicstudies@harvard.edu](mailto:islamicstudies@harvard.edu)  
[islamicstudies.harvard.edu](http://islamicstudies.harvard.edu)

