

Middle Eastern Studies Program Newsletter

Academic Year 2021-2022

Middle Eastern Studies Program
University of Cincinnati

Director, Professor Robert Haug
331 McMicken

Cincinnati, OH 45221

(513) 556-2137

haugt@ucmail.uc.edu

Twitter: @ucmideast

Message from the Interim Director

The 2021-2022 academic year overlapped with profound changes in what might be called “the greater Middle East” and North Africa. As the University of Cincinnati’s Fall Semester began in August, the Taliban was reconquering Afghanistan in the wake of the departure of most U.S. forces. Now, as the Spring Semester draws to a close, many parts of the Middle East and North Africa are grappling with the far-reaching effects – on politics, the economy, and food security – of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

This year, the Middle Eastern Studies Program drew on both UC faculty expertise and outside speakers to address key topics pertaining to the region. Major events included our Fall 2021 faculty panel on Afghanistan and our Spring 2022 guest speaker, Dr. Shirin Saeidi, who presented her new book on women in Iran (see p. 42 for more on these events). Meanwhile, we offered a rich lineup of courses, ranging from Politics of the Middle East to the Dead Sea Scrolls. Next year promises to bring further exciting developments to UC, including the arrival of the new Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati Chair in Judaic Studies, Professor Jennifer Caplan.

- Alex Thurston (School of Public and International Affairs, SPIA),
Interim Director 2021-2022

The Middle Eastern Studies Program offers an undergraduate certificate open to students in any college at UC. This 15-hour certificate aims to give students a solid grounding in the region’s history and culture while also developing students’ capabilities in one or more Middle Eastern languages. Learn more at:
<https://webapps2.uc.edu/e/curriculum/DegreePrograms/Home/MajorMap/4446>.



EDITED BY
SUMIT GANGULY AND DINSHAW MISTRY

ENDURING AND EMERGING ISSUES IN SOUTH ASIAN SECURITY

Faculty Accomplishments

Dinshaw Mistry (SPIA/Asian Studies) published an edited book, *Enduring and Emerging Issues in South Asian Security* (Brookings Institution Press, 2022). It examines US foreign policy and security and governance challenges in the South Asian region, covering Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and other states. Prof. Mistry contributed three chapters to the collection, namely “U.S. Foreign Policy and Security and Governance in South Asia,” “Pakistan, India, and U.S. Strategic Interests,” and “Nuclear Stability in South Asia.”

Rob Haug (History) was a Taft Center Fellow at the Taft Research Center, where he worked on a new monograph tentatively entitled *The Red-Faced Demon of Khurasan: Conquest and Rebellion along an Early Islamic Frontier*. The book uses the adventures of Abdallah Ibn Khazim al-Sulami and his son Musa to explore several themes in the historiography of the Arab conquests and the foundation of the Islamic caliphate including gender, tribalism, and the place of non-Muslim and non-Arab populations within the burgeoning empire of the caliphate. Prof. Haug was also elected to a three-year term as the Secretary of the Association for the Study of Persianate Societies (ASPS) and, separately, elected to a three-year term as the Secretary of Middle East Medievalists (MEM).

SCULPTING *the* SELF

ISLAM, SELFHOOD,
and HUMAN FLOURISHING



MUHAMMAD U. FARUQUE

Faculty Accomplishments, Continued

Muhammad Faruque (Romance and Arabic Languages and Literatures) published *Sculpting the Self: Islam, Selfhood, and Human Flourishing* (University of Michigan Press, 2021). This acclaimed and interdisciplinary book examines three key Muslim thinkers – Mulla Sadra, Shah Wali Allah, and Muhammad Iqbal – and their writings on selfhood.

Alex Thurston (School of Public and International Affairs) was awarded a Faculty Research Scholars Award from the University Research Council at UC. The grant will support his new research project on historical and contemporary trajectories of the Maliki school, one of four major extant schools of Sunni Islamic law.

Events

Fall Event: On August 30, Prof. Haug moderated a faculty panel on “Afghanistan: The Situation Now, How We Got There, and Where We Are Going.” The interdisciplinary panel examined the implications of the Taliban takeover in terms of politics, the impact on the surrounding region, the position of women and girls in the country, human rights, and other themes. Participants included Professors Al Klein (SPIA), Dinshaw Mistry (SPIA/Asian Studies), Steve Porter (History), Rebecca Sanders (SPIA), Alex Thurston (SPIA), and Rina Williams (SPIA).

Spring Event: On April 7, Professor Shirin Saeidi of the University of Arkansas gave a talk on her new book *Women and the Islamic Republic: How Gendered Citizenship Conditions the Iranian State* (Cambridge University Press, 2022). Prof. Saeidi discussed the profound impact of the Iran-Iraq War, especially the roles of women within the Iranian Revolution and during the war. She also offered a probing discussion of both the richness and the ethical complexities of qualitative research.

