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617-358-1755 (w)

Ph.D., Religion, Columbia University (2007)

M.T.S., Harvard Divinity School (1999)

B.A., Classics, Kenyon College (1995)

Employment

Boston University, Department of Religion: Associate Professor. 2016-

Boston University, Department of Religion: Assistant Professor. 2009-2016.

University of California, Irvine, Department of Religious Studies: Lecturer. 2008-2009.

Columbia University, Department of Middle East Languages and Civilizations: Lecturer. 2004-2007.

Books in Progress

Imam Ali: Avatars and Apparitions

Books

Sunni Chauvinism and the Roots of Muslim Modernism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2023)

Reviews published in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* (2026) 94(1): 190-193, *Reading Religion* (open-access scholarly book review website published by American Academy of Religion that closed May 2026 and now functions as a public archive) <https://readingreligion.org/9780691241647/sunni-chauvinism-and-the-roots-of-muslim-modernism/>, *American Historical Review* (2024) 129(4):1805-1806, *Politics, Religion, & Ideology* (2024) 26(1), 139-141, Saleem Rashid Shah. (2023, August 17). "The Complex Legacy of Muslim Modernism." *The Wire*. <https://thewire.in/books/the-complex-legacy-of-muslim-modernism>, Farah Adeed. (2023, September 17). "The Roots of Intolerance." *Dawn*. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1776303>

The Aga Khan Case: Religion and Identity in Colonial India (Cambridge: Harvard University Press). 2012.

Reviews published in *American Historical Review* (2013) 118 (4): 1167, *Asian Ethnology* (2014) 73 (1-2): 314-316, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (2013) 76 (3): 545-547, *Contemporary South Asia* (2015) 23 (1): 104-105, *The Historian* (2014) 76 (3): 611-613, *History: Reviews of New Books* (2013) 41 (4): 139-140, *Islamic Studies* (2013) 52 (1): 117-121; *Law and History Review* (2014) 31 (1): 207-209, *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* (2013) 36 (4): 688-690, *South Asian History and Culture* (2014) 5 (1): 128-130

Invited Articles

Contributing essay for a book forum discussion on Faisal Devji's *Waning Crescent: The Rise and Fall of Global Islam* (Yale University Press, 2025) *Religious Studies Review* (submitted June 2026).

Edited Journal Volumes

Guest Editor and Co-authored introductory Essay (with SherAli Tareen), *ReOrient: Journal of Critical Muslim Studies*, special issue, *Beyond Revival and Reform: Reorienting the Study of South Asian Islam* (July 2020).

Refereed Articles

"Ali: A Paradigm of Kinetic Charisma" *International Journal of Islam in Asia* (Accepted pending revisions: September 2026).

"Modernist Critiques of Sectarianism: Muhammad Iqbal, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, and the Question of Heresy," *Journal of Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 36:2 (August 2016), 246-255.

"Muhammad Iqbal on Muslim Orthodoxy and Transgression: A Response to Nehru," *ReOrient: The Journal of Critical Muslim Studies* 1:1 (October 2015), 78-92.

"Identity Politics Revisited: Secular and Dissonant Islam in Colonial South Asia," *Modern Asian Studies* 44: 2 (May 2011), 709-733.

"Reading Global Islam through Messianic Renewal in *Dasavatar*," *Journal of Sikh Formations: Religion, Culture, and Theory* 3:2 (December 2007), 151-167.

Book Chapters

"Reading Global Islam through Messianic Renewal in *Dasavatar*." In *Time, History, and Religious Imaginary in South Asia*, edited by Anne Murphy, 55-69. New York: Routledge, 2011. (Reprint of 2007 journal article above).

“Shribuddha’s Gracious Rescue of the Pandavas in *Buddhavatar*.” In *Ginan Texts and Contexts: Essays on Ismaili Hymns of South Asia in Honour of Zawahir Moir*, edited by Tazim Kassam, pp. 133-147. Delhi: Primus, 2010.

Fellowships, Honors, and Awards

Spalding Trust Fellowship (<https://www.spaldingtrust.org.uk>) for “Guru, Imam, Avatar: Porous Portals and Esoteric Pathways to the Divine” conference at Cambridge University, March 2026.

Boston University Center for the Humanities. Jeffrey Henderson Senior Research Fellowship. November 2025.

Boston University Center for the Humanities. “The Contours of Alid Devotion: Past and Present” Faculty Project Award. Boston University. February 2025.

Imam Ali Wisdom in the Humanities Endowed Chair Lecture Series Award. Habib University (Karachi, Pakistan). January 2025.

CURA (Center for Religion and World Affairs) Summer Research Award. Boston University. June 2023.

Jeffrey Henderson Senior Research Fellowship in the Humanities, Boston University. 2016.

Institute for Critical Social Inquiry Fellowship (ICSI). June 2015.

Merlin Swartz Award in Islam and Muslim Studies. February 2015.

Humanities Foundation Junior Fellowship, Boston University. 2011.

Virani Lecturer in Islamic Studies, University of British Columbia, Vancouver. 2008.

Dissertation Writing Fellowship, Columbia University. 2004.

Dissertation Research Fellowship, Institute of Historical Research, London. 2002.

Conferences Organized

“Guru, Imam, Avatar: Porous Portals and Esoteric Pathways to the Divine.” Cambridge University, UK. June 2026. Sponsored by the Spalding Trust, U.K. and Boston University’s College of Arts and Sciences Dean’s office.

“The Contours of Alid Devotion: Past and Present.” Boston University. November 2025. Sponsored by Boston University Center for the Humanities, Boston University Center for the Study of Asia, and the Department of Religion.

“Muslim Thought and Practice in South Asia: New Practices and Directions” Boston University 2016. Sponsored by BU Center for the Humanities, American Institute for Pakistan Studies, Muslim Studies, and the Boston University Institute for Culture, Religion, and World Affairs.

Invited Talks

“Imam Ali and the Charismatic Paradigm.” Imam Ali Faculty Chair in the Humanities Lecture Series. Habib University. Karachi, Pakistan. January 2025.

“The Charismatic Paradigm and Modernist Muslim Thought.” Oxford South Asian Intellectual History Seminar, Oxford University, UK. November 2024.

“The Threat and Fascination of Prophets in 19th Century Muslim Political Thought.” Department of Islamic and Middle East Studies, Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, Germany, July 2023.

“Antipathy and Appropriation of ‘Heretical’ Thought in Modernist Islam.” Oxford Political Thought Seminar Series, Oxford University, UK. June 2023.

“Sunni Normative Bias in Modern Muslim Thought.” Florida International University. March 2022.

“Islam and the Politics of Exclusion in Colonial India.” Hebrew University, Israel. June 2019.

“Prophetic Accusations and Aspirations in Modern Muslim Thought.” Florida International University. February 2019.

The ‘Protestant’ Impulse in Modern Islamic Thought.” University of California, Berkeley. March 2018.

“The ‘Protestant’ Impulse in Modern Islamic Thought.” Stanford University. March 2018.

“Esotericism in Modern Muslim Thought: Muhammad Abduh, Rashid Rida, and the Bahai Question.” Georgetown University. January 2018.

“Jamal al-din al-Afghani and Syed Ahmad Khan: Reform, Rivalry, and Heresy in late 19th Century India.” Oxford University, UK. May 2017.

“Tauhid and its Infractions: Modernist Muslim Definition-Making.” “Islam and Religious Identity: The Limits of a Definition” Workshop, UNC-Chapel Hill. October 2016.

“Muhammad Iqbal’s Reconstruction of Spirituality.” Robert Penn Warner Center for the Humanities, Vanderbilt University. November 2015.

“Jawaharlal Nehru and Muhammad Iqbal: An Exchange on Religious Orthodoxy.” South Asia Series, NYU. April 2015.

Minorities within the Minority: Who is/is not a Muslim according to Muhammad Iqbal.” Muslim South Asia Series, Stanford University. October 2014.

“Heresy and Prophetic Authority in Modernist Islamic Thought.” Alwaleed Bin Talal Islamic Studies Faculty Seminar Series, Harvard University. March 2014.

“The ‘Heresy’ of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad According to Muhammad Iqbal.” Department of Religion, Florida International University. February 2014.

“Reflections on a Hindu/Muslim Past and the Modern Turn to Religion.” Religion, Conflict, and Accommodation in Modern India Conference, Institute for Religion and Public Life, Columbia University. October 2013.

“Islam Beyond the Middle East: The Case of the Aga Khan.” Middle East Studies Society, University of Miami. April 2013.

“Defining Religious Conversion: Islamic Ambiguity and British Colonialism in South Asia.” Religion Department Annual Lecture, Mt. Holyoke College. February 2013.

“Legal Identity as Religious Identity: The Aga Khan Case of 1866.” Center for the Humanities Research, University of Western Cape, South Africa. April 2012.

“The Fractured Project of Modernist Islam.” Delhi University, India. January 2012.

“Why the Study of Local Islam Matters.” South Asian Studies Programme, National University of Singapore, Singapore. August 2011.

“Gujarati Islam: Epistemic Shifts from the Early Modern to Modern Periods.” Religion in the making of a region: Perspectives from Gujarat Conference, University of Oxford, UK. July 2010.

“Global Islam and Local Muslim Identity: Readings from the Colonial Archive.” South Asian Institute, Columbia University. April 2009.

“Conversion and Islam: Passages from the Medieval to the Modern.” “Indo-Muslim Cultures in Transition” conference, University of California Irvine. November 2008.

“Incommensurate Languages of Religiosity: Reading ‘Panth’ through the Lens of Sect.” Department of Asian Studies, University of British Columbia. January 2008.

“The Secular Grammar of Muslim Identity in Colonial India.” Politics of Religion-Making conference, Hofstra University. October 2007.

The Avatar/Imam and Converting Communities.” Siting South Asia conference, Columbia University. October 2005.

“Where Secular Canonicity Meets Popular Theology: *Dasavatar* in the Aga Khan Case of 1866.” South Asian Muslims and the State: New Approaches in History, Historical Anthropology, and Political Theory conference, University of Edinburgh, Scotland, UK. June 2005.

“Chameleon Dispositions: Muhammad Shah as Secular Messiah,” “Siting Secularism” conference, Oberlin College. September 2003.

Conference Papers

Invited respondent for “Devotion in Islamic Contexts” conference. University of Pennsylvania. April 2026.

Invited respondent for “Beyond Sectarianism: Ambiguity, Hermeneutics, and the Formations of Religious Identity in Islam” book panel. American Academy of Religion, Boston. November 2025.

Invited panelist for “Religious Canopies in South Asia” conference. Cambridge University. May 2025.

Invited panelist for “Lived Islam in South Asia” workshop. Princeton University. November 2022.

Invited panelist for “Teaching South Asian Islam(s)” panel. American Academy of Religion, Denver. November 2022.

Invited panelist for “Global ‘Religion’: Invention, Translation, Critique” conference. Northwestern University. June 2022

Invited panelist for “Religion in Muslim Traditions” conference. May 2019. Williams College. May 2019.

Invited respondent for “Finding Religion: Reconsidering Concepts and Methods for Studying Religion” conference. CURA Boston University. April 2019.

Invited respondent for “Religion as Critique: Islamic Critical Thinking from Mecca to the Marketplace” book panel. American Academy of Religion, Denver. November 2018.

Invited respondent for “What is Madrasa?” book panel. Annual Conference on South Asia, Madison, WI. November 2015.

“The Interface of Prophecy and Modernity in the Teachings of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad.” American Historical Association, New York. January 2015.

“Declarations of Prophetic Authority and Heresy in Colonial India.” Association for Asian Studies, Philadelphia, PA. March 2014.

“Effacing Messianic Possibility and Constituting Identity: The Case of Nineteenth Century Ismailis.” Annual Conference on South Asia, Madison, WI. October 2013.

“The Modernist Islam Legacy in the Discipline of Religion.” International Comparative Literature Association, Paris, France. July 2013.

“Sect-Making and Secularism: Colonial Law in Nineteenth Century Bombay.” Association for Asian Studies, San Diego, CA. March 2013.

“Islam in the Colonial Nationalist Public Sphere.” American Historical Association, Boston, MA. January 2013.

“Secular and ‘Dissonant’ Islam in Partition Identity Politics.” Annual Conference on South Asia, Madison, WI. October 2010.

“Islam as Discourse: Identity Construction in Medieval and Modern India.” American Academy of Religion, Chicago, IL. November 2008.

“Vernacular Messianic Time in the Ismaili Ginan Tradition.” Association for Asian Studies, Boston, MA. March 2007.

Academic Presentations at Boston University

“Sunni Chauvinism and the Roots of Muslim Modernism,” Book talk with response from Cemil Aydin, Professor of History, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC. October 5, 2023.

“Sunni Chauvinism and Muslim Modernism.” Religion department Faculty Colloquium, April 2021.

“The Conceptual Limitations of the term ‘Sect’ in the Study of Islam.” Tertullia presentation, February 2012.

“Why Religion and Politics are Inseparable in the Study of Islam.” Asian Studies Initiative, February 2012.

“The Contours and Cracks of Modernist Islam.” Society of Muslim Studies and Civilizations, November 2011.

“The Difference between Religious Identity versus Religious Practice in South Asian Islam.” Religion department Faculty Colloquium, April 2011.

Courses Taught

Boston University: Religion and Politics in South Asia, Sufism, Islam, Modern Islam, Hinduism, Introduction to Asian Religions, Theory and Methods in the Study of Religion, Islam in the Eyes of

the West, Religion and Violence, Introduction to World Religions.

University of California, Irvine: Introduction to World Religions: Asian Religions.

Columbia University: Major Texts of the Middle East and India and Introduction to Hinduism.

Academic and Administrative Service to the University

CURA Board Member, 2025-

Academic Conduct Committee 2025-2026.

Director of Undergraduate Studies. Spring 2022-Spring 2026.

Ad-Hoc Committee for Religion Department Chair Search. 2018 and 2022-2023.

Religion Department Committee on Academic Progress. 2019-21.

Religion Department Merit Review Committee. Spring 2019 and 2022.

College of Arts and Sciences Academic Policy Committee. 2018-2021.

Faculty Coordinator for the Religion Department Faculty Colloquium. 2014-2016, 2022-2023.

Religion Department Coordinator for International Relations and Religion Program. 2013-2016.

Service to the Profession beyond Boston University

Reviewer for *ReOrient* and *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* (CSSAAME)

Global Religion Research Initiative Grant Selection Committee

Organizer (with SherAli Tareen), International Conference on *Muslim Thought and Practice in South Asia: New Practices and Directions*, 2016

Languages

Reading proficiency in Greek, Latin, Sanskrit.

Reading and speaking proficiency in Hindi/Urdu, Gujarati, and French.

Professional Societies

American Academy of Religion, American Historical Association, Association for Asian Studies

