

CURRICULUM VITAE

ALIREZA DOOSTDAR

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ACADEMIC POSITIONS

- 2012- Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies and the Anthropology of Religion
Divinity School, Center for Middle Eastern Studies, and the College
University of Chicago
- 2012, spr Lecturer in Iranian Studies
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

EDUCATION

- 2012 Ph.D., Anthropology and Middle Eastern Studies
Harvard University
- 2009 A.M., Social Anthropology
Harvard University
- 2007 Advanced Arabic Certificate
Sana'a Institute for Arabic Language, Yemen
- 2004 Ed.M., Technology in Education
Harvard University
- 2000 B.Sc., Electrical Engineering
University of Tehran

BOOKS

- n.d. *Satan Conquered: The Iranian Revolution and its Demons*
Under advance contract with Princeton University Press
- 2018 *The Iranian Metaphysicals: Explorations in Science, Islam, and the Uncanny*
Princeton University Press

Winner of the Albert Hourani [Book Award](#), Middle East Studies Association (2018)

Winner of the Vinson Sutlive [Book Prize](#), William & Mary Anthropology Department (2020)

Reviewed in *Los Angeles Review of Books* ([Nile Green](#)), *History of Religions* ([John L. Modern](#)), *Immanent Frame* ([Charles Hirschkind](#) and [Kabir Tambar](#)), *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* ([Kathleen Foody](#)), *Psychoanalysis and History* ([Kutlughan Soyubol](#)), *International Journal of Middle East Studies* ([Niloofar Haeri](#)), *Iranian Studies* ([Arash Ghajarjazi](#)), *Nova Religio* ([Mark Sedgwick](#)), *Aries* ([Francesco Piraino](#)), *Political Theology* ([Emad Mortazavi](#)), *International Dialogue* ([Elise K. Burton](#)), *Reading Religion* ([Dan Varisco](#)), *New Arab* ([Usman Butt](#)), *Review of Metaphysics* ([Jude Dougherty](#))

PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES

- 2019 Impossible Occultists: Practice and Participation in an Islamic Tradition
American Ethnologist, 46(2): 176-89
- 2019 Hollywood Cosmopolitanisms and the Occult Resonance of Cinema
Journal of Comparative Islamic Studies, 13(1-2): 121-49
- 2018 Varieties of Islamic Social Science
KNOW: A Journal on the Formation of Knowledge, 2(2): 229-47
- 2016 Empirical Spirits: Islam, Spiritism, and the Virtues of Science in Iran
Comparative Studies in Society and History, 58(2): 322-49
- 2004 “The Vulgar Spirit of Blogging”: On Language, Culture, and Power in Persian Weblogistan
American Anthropologist, 106(4): 651-62

COMMENTS, REVIEWS, & ENCYCLOPEDIA ENTRIES

- n.d. Moral Authority, Epistemic Authority, and Gender Justice
Forthcoming in *Multi-Religious Perspectives on a ‘Global Ethic’: In Search of a Common Morality*, edited by Myriam Renaud, Routledge
- 2019 Afterword: Orienting Evidence
Comparative Studies in South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, special section on “Islam and Regimes of Evidence,” 39(3): 543-45
- 2017 Review of *What is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic* (Shahab Ahmed)
Shi'i Studies Review, 1(1-2): 277-82
- 2010 [Weblogs](#)
Encyclopedia Iranica
- 2007 Review of *Warring Souls: Youth, Media, and Martyrdom in Post-Revolution Iran* (Roxanne Varzi)
American Ethnologist, 34(4): 4001-3
- 2007 Internet
Encyclopedia of Islam in the United States, edited by Jocelyne Cesari, Greenwood

EDITING PROJECTS

- 2019 Islam and Regimes of Evidence (with Yunus Doğan Telliel)
Special section of *Comparative Studies in South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East*, 39(3): 495-545

PUBLIC-FACING SCHOLARSHIP

- 2019 [Haunted Ramadan: Ghosts, Devils, and the Soul of Iranian Television](#)
Ajam Media Collective
- 2019 Invited twitter threads on Iran and Global Spirituality ([Iranian Spiritism 1](#), [2](#), and [3](#); [Rise of a global faith healer](#); [“The Secret” & New Age self-help](#); [Iranian anti-Satanism & American Evangelicalism](#))
Historians of Iran twitter collective
- 2019 [Ventures Podcast](#)
Interview with Rachel Carbonara, University of Chicago Center for Middle Eastern Studies
- 2018 [Islamic Studies Podcast](#)
Interview with SherAli Tareen, New Books Network
- 2018 [Remote Sensing](#)
CSSH *In Dialogue* forum on “new approaches to occult and magical things,” with Graham Jones, Larisa Jasarevic, Alaina Lemon, and Andrew Shryock
- 2018 [Book Talk](#)
Interview with Micah Hughes, The Maydan

- 2018 [On Epistemic Possibility: A Reply to Hirschkind and Tambar](#)
The Immanent Frame. Book forum on *The Iranian Metaphysicals*, part of a series on “Science and the soul: New inquiries into Islamic ethics”
- 2017 [Occultism and New Age Take Off in Iran](#)
Interview with Religion Dispatches
- 2014 [How Not to Understand ISIS](#)
Sightings. Reprinted in *openDemocracy*, *Jadaliyya*, *History News Network*, *Aftenposten Innsikt*, and *Sightings: Reflections on Religion in Public Life* (2019, edited by Brett Colasacco). Translated to Dutch (*De Wereld Morgen*), Japanese (*Gendai Shiso*), Persian (*Shargh*), and Turkish (*Zaman*)
- 2013 [Portrait of an Iranian Witch](#)
The New Inquiry, 21: 36-43
- 2009 A Nation Divided
Al-Abram Weekly
- 2009 Cheeseburgers and Sharks: Iran’s Election Campaigns in Full Swing
The Dawn Blog

CREATIVE WRITING

- 2020 [Lessons From the Qur’an as the Bombs Fell on Tehran](#)
Literary Hub

FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS (SELECTION)

- 2020 Vinson Sutlive [Book Prize](#)
William & Mary Anthropology Department
- 2018 Albert Hourani [Book Award](#)
Middle East Studies Association
- 2016-18 Faculty Research Grant
Stevanovich Institute on the Formation of Knowledge, University of Chicago
- 2011 Presidential Dissertation Completion Fellowship
Harvard University
- 2009 Dissertation Fieldwork Grant
Wenner-Gren Foundation
- 2008 Dissertation Fieldwork Grant
Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard University
- 2007 Certificate of Distinction in Teaching
Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning, Harvard University
- 2007 Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Summer Grant for advanced Arabic study in Yemen
- 2006 Graduate Society Fellowship for Summer Pre-dissertation Research
Harvard University
- 2005 Presidential Fellowship
Harvard University

INVITED LECTURES

- 2019 God, Revolution, and the Unthinkable
Workshop on “The Iranian Revolution and its Disciplinary Aftereffects,” University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (February 15)

- 2018 Signs of Satan in Iran: Hollywood, Cosmopolitanism, Paranoia
“New Directions in Middle East and North African Studies” series, Northwestern University (November 6), and Brown University (September 19)
- 2018 Islam, Science, and the Gender of Reason
Inaugural lecture in the “Islamic Encounters” series, McGill University (October 9)
- 2018 The Iranian Metaphysicals: Spiritual Empiricism and the Gender of Reason
UCLA (May 14), and NYU (April 19)
- 2018 The Intimate Republic: Piety and Objectification in an Islamic State
Columbia University (April 20), UC Santa Cruz (March 14), Stanford University (March 2), and UC Davis (February 26)
- 2017 Islam, Spiritual Empiricism, and the Gender of Reason in Iran
Northwestern University (February 27), and Stanford University (January 23)
- 2016 Moral Reform and Scientific Virtue: Spiritism in Twentieth Century Iran
Duke University (March 23)
- 2014 Shi'i Hagiography, Moral Anxiety, and Worldly Desire in Iran
Friday Lecture Series, Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Chicago (February 14)
- 2013 Islam, Science, and the Empirical Spirit in Iran
Zygon Center for Religion and Science, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (September 23)
- 2013 Islam, Authenticity, and the Vicissitudes of Abstraction
Keynote Address, 10th Annual Duke-UNC Islamic Studies Graduate Conference (February 16)
- 2011 Iman va ‘eyniyat (Faith and Objectivity)
University of Religions and Denominations, Qom, Iran (June 24) (in Persian)

CONFERENCES, PANELS, & EVENTS ORGANIZED

- 2016 Islam and Regimes of Evidence
University of Chicago, April 28-30
- 2015 Studying Religion in Iran: Between University and Seminary
University of Chicago, November 12
- 2011 Leaks, Lies, and Red Tape: State Secrecy and its Discontents
Co-organized with Darryl Li, Invited Session of the American Ethnological Society and the Association of Political and Legal Anthropology, Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Montreal, November 18

COURSES TAUGHT

- Problems in the Anthropology of Religion (two-quarter sequence)
Power, Identity, and Resistance II (Winter section of College Social Science Core sequence)
Ethnographic Methods
Theories and Methods in the Study of Religion (with Dan Arnold)
Islam and Modern Science
Ethnographies of the Muslim World
Sovereignty, Intimacy, and the Body
Feminism and Islamic Studies
Witchcraft
Islam, Media, and Mediation
Moral Geographies
Shi'ism and Modernity
Is Modernity Disenchanted?
Magic, Science, and Religion
The Occult in the Islamic World (with James Robinson)

Readings in Al-Mizan, Allameh Tabataba'i's Qur'anic Exegesis
 Walter Benjamin (with Bruce Lincoln)
 Iran After the 1979 Revolution
 The History of Shi'ism: Drama, Ritual, and Memory

DISSERTATION & THESIS ADVISING (COMPLETED, * = PRIMARY ADVISOR)

- 2019 Mohammad Mojtahed Shabestari: The Search for New Modes of Being Muslim
 Saman Fazeli, MA Thesis, Department of Religious Studies, University of Colorado Boulder
- 2019 New Analyses of Iranian Revolutionary Art*
 Daniel Morrison, BA Thesis, Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations
- 2018 The Networks of a Thai Buddhist Monastery: Communities, Material Culture, and Contemporary Practice
 Kelly Meister Brawn, PhD Diss., Divinity School
- 2018 Cartography of Courtship: Space, Community, and Self in Amman, Jordan
 Lindsey Conklin, PhD Diss., Department of Comparative Human Development
- 2018 Higher Education for Women from the Late Qajar Dynasty to the Islamic Republic of Iran: Changes and Aspirations*
 Tang Tian, MA Thesis, Center for Middle Eastern Studies
- 2018 Shahrzad and a Woman's Struggle Against Patriarchy*
 Nilofar Mehdizadeh Saraj, MA Thesis, Center for Middle Eastern Studies
- 2017 Thinking Through Translation: Translators, Publishers, and the Formation of Publics in Contemporary Iran."
 Hosna Sheikholeslami, PhD Diss., Department of Anthropology, Yale University
- 2017 The Horror of Ayotzinapa: Occult Violence and Epistemic Conditions of Governance*
 Samuel Law, MA Thesis, Master of Arts Program in the Social Sciences (MAPSS)
- 2017 *Sanguma* Talk: Catholic and Lutheran Sorcery-Related Violence Discourse in Papua New Guinea*
 Rachel Apone, MA Thesis, Master of Arts Program in the Social Sciences (MAPSS)
- 2017 Thinking About Reason in Religious Traditions: Tradition and the Hermeneutics of Suspicion*
 Salman Ahmad Hayat, MA Thesis, Master of Arts Program in the Humanities (MAPH)
- 2017 Reform, Islam, and Secularity in Pakistan: Genealogies of the New "Civilizing" Mission*
 Maham Mansoor, MA Thesis, Master of Arts Program in the Social Sciences (MAPSS)
- 2016 On the Edge: Memory, Trauma, and Resilience among Afghanistan's Hazaras*
 Rachel J. Farrell, MA Thesis, Center for Middle Eastern Studies
- 2016 Now Trending: The Politics of Fashion in Modern-Day Iran*
 Hoda Katebi, BA Thesis, Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations
- 2015 Power of Secularism and Limits of Ambiguity: Understanding the Gülen Movement and its Criticisms*
 Ryan Fordice, MDiv Thesis, Divinity School
- 2015 The Hajj: Power, Politics, and Pilgrimage*
 Abbas Chinoy, MDiv Thesis, Divinity School
- 2015 Deconstructing the Paradox City: Tehran between Islam and Modernity*
 Xin Tian Yong, MA Thesis, Center for Middle Eastern Studies
- 2014 Vocabularies of the Self: Neopagan Magic, New Age Spirituality, and the Multiplicity of Postmodern Selves*
 Russell Burk, MA Thesis, Divinity School
- 2014 Mothers of the Nation: The Intersection of Nationalism and Feminism in Twentieth Century Iran*
 Brittany Baron, MA Thesis, Committee on International Relations

- 2014 Apocalypse, Now? Contemporary Mahdist Trends in Post-Invasion Iraq*
Patrick Zemanek, MA Thesis, Center for Middle Eastern Studies
- 2014 Imagining the Lebanese Nation*
Emily Mitchell, MA Thesis, Center for Middle Eastern Studies
- 2014 Iranian Media Presentations of Secular Third-Worldism*
Brian Keenan, MA Thesis, Center for Middle Eastern Studies
- 2013 Lady of Light, Lady of Darkness: Money, Witchcraft, and Community around the Santa Muerte
Cult in Mexico City*
Agnes Mondragón Celis Ochoa, MA Thesis, Master of Arts Program in the Social Sciences
(MAPSS)

DISSERTATION & THESIS ADVISING (ONGOING, * = PRIMARY ADVISOR)

- Nadia Khan, PhD candidate, Divinity School*
- Andrew Kunze, PhD candidate, Divinity School*
- Menna Khalil, PhD candidate, Anthropology Department
- Torang Asadi, PhD candidate, Religious Studies Department, Duke University
- Peter Faggen, PhD candidate, Divinity School
- Alex Shams, PhD candidate, Anthropology Department
- Harini Kumar, PhD candidate, Anthropology Department
- Alexandra Matthews, PhD candidate, Divinity School
- Miriam Attia, PhD candidate, Divinity School
- Parnia Vafaikia, PhD candidate, Department for the Study of Religion, University of Toronto
- Rachel Carbonara, PhD student, Divinity School*

QUALIFYING EXAMS ADMINISTERED

- 2020 Andrew Atwell, Anthropology
- 2020 Samantha Pellegrino, Gender and Sexuality in Islam
- 2020 Rachel Carbonara, Anthropology of Religion
- 2019 Marielle Harrison, Anthropology of Religion
- 2019 Alexandra Matthews, The Occult in the Islamic World
- 2018 Myriam Sabbaghi, Gender and Sexuality in Islam
- 2018 Paride Stortini, From Colonialism to Globalization
- 2018 Alex Shams, Anthropology
- 2017 Elizabeth Sartell, Magic, Science, and Religion
- 2017 Francesca Chubb-Confer, From Colonialism to Globalization
- 2017 Andrew Kunze, Anthropology of Religion
- 2017 Michele Ferris, Anthropology of Religion
- 2016 Kelly Meister, Anthropology of Religion
- 2014 Nadia Inji Khan, Anthropology of Religion
- 2014 Timothy Gutmann, Anthropology of Religion
- 2014 Randy Gunn, AMRS exam

ACADEMIC PUBLISHING SERVICE

Editorial Committee Member: *Journal of Religion*

Advisory Board Member: *Critical Terms for Religious Studies* (2d edition)

Journal Reviewer: *Journal of the American Academy of Religion, American Ethnologist, Comparative Studies in Society and History, Cultural Anthropology, History of Religions, Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, Current Anthropology, Journal of Religion, British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, Journal of Persian Studies, Journal of Computer Mediated Communication, Journal of Contemporary Ethnography.*

Book Manuscript Reviewer: *I.B. Tauris*