

CURRICULUM VITAE

ALIREZA DOOSTDAR

The University of Chicago

Swift Hall; 1025 E. 58th St

Chicago, IL 60637

(617) 755-1568

doostdar@uchicago.edu

<http://divinity.uchicago.edu/faculty/doostdar.shtml>**ACADEMIC POSITIONS**

- 2021- Associate Professor of Islamic Studies and the Anthropology of Religion
Divinity School and the College, The University of Chicago
Faculty affiliate, Anthropology Department, Center for Middle Eastern Studies, and Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality
- 2012-21 Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies and the Anthropology of Religion
Divinity School and the College, The University of Chicago
- 2012, spr Lecturer in Iranian Studies
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS (SELECTION)

- 2023- Director, Center for Middle Eastern Studies, The University of Chicago
- 2021- Faculty Co-Director, Martin Marty Center for the Public Understanding of Religion, The University of Chicago
- 2021- Chair, "Religion" sequence in the Social Sciences Core, The University of Chicago

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. *Facing Satan: 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* ([Kutluğhan Soyubol](#)), *International Journal of Middle East Studies* ([Niloofer Haeri](#)), *Iranian Studies* ([Arash Ghajarjazi](#)), *Nova Religio* ([Mark Sedgwick](#)), *Aries* ([Francesco Piraino](#)), *Correspondences* ([Liana Saif](#)), *Political Theology* ([Emad Mortazavi](#)), *International Dialogue* ([Elise K. Burton](#)), *Reading Religion* ([Dan Varisco](#)), *New Arab* ([Usman Butt](#)), *Review of Metaphysics* ([Jude Dougherty](#)), *Religious Studies Review* ([Delbar Khakzad](#)), *The Suryakanta* ([Sawyer French](#))

ARTICLES & BOOK CHAPTERS

- n.d. Reason
Critical Terms for Religious Studies, 2d Edition
- n.d. God and Revolution in Iran
Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East
- 2022 Sensing Jinn
Critical Muslim 43: 75-89
- 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, INTERVIEWS, & ENCYCLOPEDIA ENTRIES

- 2021 Review of *Politics of Rightful Killing: Civil Society, Gender, and Sexuality in Weblogistan* (Sima Shakhsari)
International Journal of Middle East Studies 53(1): 155-57
- 2020 Response: Moral Authority, Epistemic Authority, and Gender Justice
Multi-Religious Perspectives on a ‘Global Ethic’: In Search of a Common Morality, edited by Myriam Renaud & William Schweiker, Routledge
- 2020 Horror Refigured: A Conversation with Morehshin Allahyari
Portable Gray 3(2): 173-80
- 2020 [Review of Persianate Selves: Memories of Place and Origin Before Nationalism \(Mana Kia\)](#)
Critical Inquiry
- 2019 Afterword: Orienting Evidence
Comparative Studies of 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 Tellieli)
Special section of *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 39(3): 495-545

PUBLIC-FACING SCHOLARSHIP

- 2024 [Witnessing Genocide](#)
Sightings. Reprinted in *United Methodist Insight*.
- 2024 [Shirazeh: The Alchemist](#)
Featured guest on episode on Paulo Coelho's bestseller, *BBC Persian*
- 2021 [Islamic Republic of Rock](#)
Jadaliyya
- 2021 [Examining Feminist Edges of the Qur'an by Aysha Hidayatullah](#)
Conversation with Fateme Moslehziade, *Radio Doornama Podcast*
- 2020 [The Strange Tale of Occultism in the Islamic Republic of Iran](#)
Interview with Nile Green, *Akbar's Chamber*
- 2020 [Metaphysics and the Occult in Iran](#)
Interview with Rustin Zarkar and Ali Karjoo-Ravary, *Ajam Podcast*
- 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 [Anthropology of the Occult](#)
Interview with Rachel Carbonara, University of Chicago CMES, *Ventures Podcast*
- 2018 [New Books in Islamic Studies: The Iranian Metaphysicals](#)
Interview with SherAli Tareen, *New Books Network Podcast*
- 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: The Iranian Metaphysicals](#)
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*
- 2016 [Are Palestinian Scholars Our Colleagues? Boycott and the Material Limits of Friendship](#)
Savage Minds
- 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 Damn Blog

TRANSLATIONS

- 2022 [Figuring a Women's Revolution: Bodies Interacting with their Images](#)
Jadaliyya. Translated from a Persian essay by "L" in *Harasswatch.com*

CREATIVE WORK

- 2023 [Interview with a Guitar](#)
Machines in Between podcast, episode 8.
- 2020 [Lessons From the Qur'an as the Bombs Fell on Tehran](#)
Literary Hub. Translated to Arabic (*Oman Daily*)

FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS (SELECTION)

- 2022-25 Interdisciplinary Innovation Grant for project on "Gaming Islam" (with Ghenwa Hayek)
Martin Marty Center for the Public Understanding of Religion, University of Chicago
- 2020 Vinson Sutlive [Book Prize](#) for *The Iranian Metaphysicals*
William & Mary Anthropology Department
- 2018 Albert Hourani [Book Award](#) for *The Iranian Metaphysicals*
Middle East Studies Association
- 2016-18 Faculty Research Grant for project on "Islamic social science"
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 & WORKSHOPS (SELECTION)

- 2024 Facing Satan: The Iranian Revolution and Its Demons
Sharmin and Bijan Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Iran and Persian Gulf Studies, Princeton University (February 14)
- 2023 God and Revolution in Iran
Sociology Talks Series, Boğaziçi University (April 6)
- 2022 A Satanic Inheritance: Theological Sources for Iranian Revolutionary Thought
Theorizing the Present, 3CT, University of Chicago (March 1)

- 2022 God and Satan in Modern Shi'i Thought
Third Annual Kazimi Lecture, Rice University School of Humanities (February 17)
- 2020 Satan Conquered: The Iranian Revolution and Its Demons
Iran Colloquium, Yale MacMillan Center (October 16)
- 2020 The Iranian Metaphysicals
Sutlive Book Prize Lecture, William & Mary (October 1)
- 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
Brown University (September 19), "New Directions in Middle East and North African Studies" series, Northwestern University (November 6)
- 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
NYU (April 19), UCLA (May 14)
- 2018 The Intimate Republic: Piety and Objectification in an Islamic State
UC Davis (February 26), Stanford University (March 2), UC Santa Cruz (March 14), Columbia University (April 20)
- 2017 Islam, Spiritual Empiricism, and the Gender of Reason in Iran
Stanford University (January 23), Northwestern University (February 27)
- 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

- 2023 Science and Religion: From Conflict to Celebration (with Willemien Otten)
University of Chicago, April 25
- 2021 Beyond the Occult and Theological Settlement (with Hussein Agrama and William Mazzarella)
University of Chicago, October 8-11
- 2016 Islam and Regimes of Evidence (with Yunus Doğan Telliel)
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 (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)
 Religion: Cosmos, Conscience, and Community II and III (Winter and Spring sections of College Social Sciences Core 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)
 Religion and Revolution (with Angie Heo)
 Religion, Reason, and the State
 Islam Beyond the Human (with Hoda El Shakry)
 Islam and Modern Science
 Science/Fiction/Theory (with Hussein Ali Agrama)
 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)*PhD Dissertations*

2023 Authority, Astrology, and Alphanumericism in Fatimid Thought: Kitab al-Fatarat wa-l-Qiranat
 Alexandra Matthews, Divinity School

2023* American Muslim *Tarbiya*: Parents, Experts, 'Ulama, and Debates about Mothering
 Nadia Inji Khan, Divinity School

2023 Constructing Islamic Modernity: Power, Religion and Masculinity in Post-Revolutionary Iran
 Alex Shams, Anthropology Department

2022 Formations of Tamil Islam: Belonging, Place, and Historical Consciousness in South India
 Harini Kumar, Anthropology Department

2021 Contested authority of a Tibetan Goddess: Re-centering the Unspeakable and Non-traditional Life
 Story of the Reincarnate and Lay Mother Kelzang Drölma
 Peter Faggen, Divinity School

2021* Transnational Svaminarayan Hinduism: Mass Mediation and the Rise of BAPS
 Andrew Kunze, Divinity School

2021 Quantum Regimes: Genealogies of Virtual Matter and Healing the New Age Body
 Torang Asadi, Department of Religious Studies, Duke University

2020 Visions of Military Authority: Sacred Servants in Post-Revolutionary Egypt
 Menna Khalil, Anthropology Department

2018 The Networks of a Thai Buddhist Monastery: Communities, Material Culture, and Contemporary
 Practice
 Kelly Meister Brawn, Divinity School

- 2018 Cartography of Courtship: Space, Community, and Self in Amman, Jordan
Lindsey Conklin, Department of Comparative Human Development
- 2017 Thinking Through Translation: Translators, Publishers, and the Formation of Publics in Contemporary Iran.”
Hosna Sheikholeslami, Department of Anthropology, Yale University

Masters Theses

- 2022* Islamism, Political Islam, and Extremism under Secular-Liberal Conditions: An analysis of European discourses on religious violence
Iman Al Nassre, Master of Arts Program in the Social Sciences (MAPSS)
- 2021* How South Asian Muslim Women Negotiate During Arranged Marriage Processes
Syeda Zaynab Mahmood, Master of Arts Program in the Social Sciences (MAPSS)
- 2021* Tea as Mentor: A Conversation on Spiritual Care and Beyond
Lixin Zheng, Divinity School (MDiv)
- 2019 Mohammad Mojtahed Shabestari: The Search for New Modes of Being Muslim
Saman Fazeli, Department of Religious Studies, University of Colorado Boulder
- 2018* Higher Education for Women from the Late Qajar Dynasty to the Islamic Republic of Iran: Changes and Aspirations
Tang Tian, Center for Middle Eastern Studies
- 2018* Shahrzad and a Woman’s Struggle Against Patriarchy
Nilofar Mehdizadeh Saraj, Center for Middle Eastern Studies
- 2017* The Horror of Ayotzinapa: Occult Violence and Epistemic Conditions of Governance
Samuel Law, 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, 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, Master of Arts Program in the Humanities (MAPH)
- 2017* Reform, Islam, and Secularity in Pakistan: Genealogies of the New “Civilizing” Mission
Maham Mansoor, Master of Arts Program in the Social Sciences (MAPSS)
- 2016* On the Edge: Memory, Trauma, and Resilience among Afghanistan’s Hazaras
Rachel J. Farrell, Center for Middle Eastern Studies
- 2015* Power of Secularism & Limits of Ambiguity: Understanding the Gülen Movement & its Criticisms
Ryan Fordice, Divinity School (MDiv)
- 2015* The Hajj: Power, Politics, and Pilgrimage
Abbas Chinoy, Divinity School (MDiv)
- 2015* Deconstructing the Paradox City: Tehran between Islam and Modernity
Xin Tian Yong, Center for Middle Eastern Studies
- 2014* Vocabularies of the Self: Neopagan Magic, New Age Spirituality, and the Multiplicity of Postmodern Selves
Russell Burk, Divinity School (MA)
- 2014* Mothers of the Nation: The Intersection of Nationalism and Feminism in Twentieth Century Iran
Brittany Baron, Committee on International Relations
- 2014* Apocalypse, Now? Contemporary Mahdist Trends in Post-Invasion Iraq
Patrick Zemanek, Center for Middle Eastern Studies
- 2014* Imagining the Lebanese Nation
Emily Mitchell, Center for Middle Eastern Studies
- 2014* Iranian Media Presentations of Secular Third-Worldism
Brian Keenan, 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, Master of Arts Program in the Social Sciences (MAPSS)

BA Theses

- 2019* New Analyses of Iranian Revolutionary Art
Daniel Morrison, Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations
- 2016* Now Trending: The Politics of Fashion in Modern-Day Iran
Hoda Katebi, Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

PHD DISSERTATION ADVISING (ONGOING, * = PRIMARY ADVISOR)

- Miriam Attia, PhD candidate, Divinity School
- Parnia Vafaekia, PhD candidate, Department for the Study of Religion, University of Toronto
- Rachel Carbonara, PhD candidate, Divinity School*
- Andrew Atwell, PhD candidate, Anthropology Department
- Azadeh Vatanpour, PhD candidate, Department of Religion, Emory University
- Kristina Del Vecchio, PhD candidate, Divinity School
- Claire Hautot, PhD candidate, Divinity School
- Kellan Klaus, PhD student, Divinity School*
- Sarah Levenstam, PhD student, Divinity School*
- Nick Lorenz, PhD student, Divinity School and Anthropology Department*
- Sawyer French, PhD student, Divinity School and Anthropology Department*
- Saman Fazeli, PhD student, Divinity School*
- Morgan Kincade, PhD student, Divinity School*

EXTERNAL DISSERTATION & THESIS EXAMINATION

- 2021 Arash Ghajarjazi, PhD, Philosophy and Religious Studies, Utrecht University
- 2019 Simon Theobald, PhD, Arts and Social Sciences, Australian National University

QUALIFYING EXAMS ADMINISTERED

- 2024 Nick Lorenz (Divinity), Rationalization and Disenchantment
- 2023 Rana Ghuloom (Comp Lit), Anthropology of Prayer
- 2022 Lien Fina (Divinity), Anthropology of Religion
- 2022 Kellan Klaus (Divinity), Anthropology of Religion
- 2022 Nick Lorenz (Anthropology/Div), Anthropology
- 2022 Claire Hautot (Divinity), Anthropology of Religion
- 2021 Kristina Del Vecchio (Divinity), Anthropology, Ethics, and the Environment
- 2020 Andrew Atwell (Anthropology), Anthropology
- 2020 Samantha Pellegrino (Divinity), Gender and Sexuality in Islam
- 2020 Rachel Carbonara (Divinity), Anthropology of Religion
- 2019 Marielle Harrison (Divinity), Anthropology of Religion
- 2019 Alexandra Matthews (Divinity), The Occult in the Islamic World
- 2018 Myriam Sabbaghi (Divinity), Gender and Sexuality in Islam
- 2018 Paride Stortini (Divinity), From Colonialism to Globalization

- 2018 Alex Shams (Anthropology), Anthropology
2017 Elizabeth Sartell (Divinity), Magic, Science, and Religion
2017 Francesca Chubb-Confer (Divinity), From Colonialism to Globalization
2017 Andrew Kunze (Divinity), Anthropology of Religion
2017 Michele Ferris (Divinity), Anthropology of Religion
2016 Kelly Meister (Divinity), Anthropology of Religion
2014 Nadia Inji Khan (Divinity), Anthropology of Religion
2014 Timothy Gutmann (Divinity), Anthropology of Religion
2014 Randy Gunn (Divinity), 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: *Cornell University Press, I.B. Tauris*