

William E. B. Sherman

Curriculum Vitae

Assistant Professor
Department of Religious Studies
University of North Carolina at Charlotte
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EDUCATION

- Ph.D. Stanford University, Religious Studies — 2017
Concentration in Islamic Studies
Dissertation: “Mountains and Messiahs: The Roshaniyya, Revelation, and Afghan Becoming”
- M.A. University of California at Los Angeles, Near Eastern Languages and Cultures — 2011
Concentration in Arabic Language and Literature
- B.A.H. Stanford University, Religious Studies with Honors and Distinction — 2009

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

2017 - present Assistant Professor, Department of Religious Studies
University of North Carolina at Charlotte

RESEARCH

Research Languages

Reading proficiency in Persian, Arabic, Urdu, and French.

Reading ability in Pashto and Spanish.

Research Interests

Islamic literary cultures, especially Persianate hagiographies, romances, and revelatory texts

Central and South Asia, especially late medieval and early modern period

History of religion in Afghanistan

Philosophy of language, narrative, and aesthetics

Eschatology, especially messianic and millenarian movements emerging from the Islamic tradition

Publications

Singing with the Mountains: The Language of God in the Afghan Highlands. Monograph manuscript.
Currently under review.

“Romance on the Afghan Frontier: Desire in the Literature of the Church Missionary Society in Peshawar.” Article accepted by *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, publication scheduled for late 2021.

“Arzani’s Divine Songs: Pashto, Religion, and Vernacularization.” Article submitted to *Afghanistan* in March 2021.

“Qur’ānic Imaginations in the Making: New Religious Movements in Mughal-Era Islam.” *Religion Compass*. Vol. 15 #1 (January 2021): 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1111/rec3.12384>. Peer-reviewed article.

“The Lost Tribes of the Afghans: Religious Mobility and Entanglement in Narratives of Afghan Origins.” In *American and Muslims Worlds before 1900*, edited by John Ghazvinian and A. Mitchell Fraas, pp. 85-97. London: Bloomsbury, 2020. ISBN 9781350109520. Peer-reviewed chapter.

“The Roshaniyya.” In *Database of Religious History*, Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia, 2020. <<https://religiondatabase.org/browse/624/>> Encyclopedia entry.

“Finding *filmfārsī*: Re-evaluations of Pre-Revolutionary Iranian Cinema.” *Journal of Religion and Film*. Vol. 23 #2 (October 2019): 1-12. Review essay.

“Apocalypse, Again: Language, Temporality, and Repetition in an Afghan Apocalypse.” *CrossCurrents* vol. 68, no. 2 (June 2018): 260-282. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cros.12311>. Peer-reviewed article.

“Race, Religion, and Reinscription: The Paradoxes and Potentials of the Study of Islam in America.” *Mashriq & Mahjar: Journal of Middle East and North Africa Migration Studies* vol. 5, no. 2 (2018): 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.24847/55i2018.173>. Peer-reviewed review essay.

Reviews

Review of Claudia Yaghoobi, *Subjectivity in Attar, Persian Sufism, and European Mysticism* (Purdue University Press 2017) in *Reading Religion*, January 2021, <https://readingreligion.org/books/subjectivity-attar-persian-sufism-and-european-mysticism>.

Review of Christian Lee Novetzke, *The Quotidian Revolution: Vernacularization, Religion, and the Premodern Public Sphere in India* (Columbia University Press 2017) in *Marginalia*, online edition, March 2018, <https://marginalia.lareviewofbooks.org/karma-public-sphere-habermas-ancient-india/>.

Review of Jamel A. Velji, *An Apocalyptic History of the Early Fatimid Empire* (Edinburgh University Press 2016) in *Religion*, vol. 48 #2, 2018, pp. 307-310.

Review of Francis R. Bradley, *Forging Islamic Power and Place: The Legacy of Shaykh Da’ud bin ‘Abd Allah al-Fatani in Mecca and Southeast Asia* (University of Hawai’i Press 2016) in *Religion*, vol. 47 #2, 2017, pp. 301-304.

Invited Lectures and Colloquia

'Jesuits Missionaries, Mughal Emperors, and the Words that Make the World End,' University of Münster's Institute of Missiology, Germany. Invited lecture as part of *From Cultural Translation to Interreligious Controversy* conference, October 2019.

'Did God Speak Pashto? Vernacular Language and Religion in the Afghan Highlands,' Carleton College, February 2019.

'Doubling Bayazid: Hagiography, History, and the Study of Religion in Afghanistan,' Carleton College, February, 2019.

'The Poetic and Polemical Emergence of Pashto Literature,' *The North Carolina Consortium for South Asia Studies Colloquium*, Sponsored by North Carolina State University, Durham, November 2018.

'A Practice of Revelation: Apocalypse, Vernacular, and Identity along the Afghan Frontier,' *The Pirzada Lecture*, Institute for South Asia Studies, UC-Berkeley, April 2018.

'Revelation through Repetition: Qur'anic Imitation and Apocalypse in the Afghan Highlands,' Stanford University, May 2017.

'Key Concepts in the Study of Islam,' *Stanford Institute on Islam* (workshop for high school teachers), April 2017.

'The Unpredictable Pasts and Apocalyptic Futures of Afghan Genealogies: The Entangled History of Christian and Muslim Approaches to the Mythical Origins of Afghan Tribes,' University of North Carolina-Charlotte, April 2016.

'Clarifying Questions and Answers about Islam in Turbulent Times,' with Ahoon Najafian, part of *Religion, Violence, Nonviolence* series, Stanford University, February 2016.

'A Practice of Revelation: Sainthood, Qur'anic Imitation, and the Apocalypse,' Sewanee: The University of the South, January 2016.

Selected Conference and Workshop Presentations (Refereed)

'A Saint Dismembered: Creating the Social by Decreasing the Saint in Sufi Hagiography,' *The Hagiology Seminar*, American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, San Antonio, November 2021.

'In the Name of the Name of God: Oaths, Rhymes, and Repetitions in Examples of Qur'anic Imitation,' *Qur'anic Studies Symposium*, Princeton University, April 2021.

'The Imitable Qur'an,' *The Primacy of Form Workshop*, part of "Islam and the Humanities" initiative, Brown University, October 2019.

'Romance, Religion, and Race: Novel Questions for the Missionary Encounter of 19th Century Peshawar,' *Converting Citizens: Religious Nationalism and Religious Globalism in Missionary Projects*, American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Denver, November 2018.

'Messianic Misdeeds: Sin and Heresiography in Mughal India,' *At the Edges of Religions in India Panel*, Annual Conference on South Asia, UW-Madison, Madison, WI, October 2018.

‘Of Dreams and Doppelgangers: Hagiography, Power, and the Life of an Afghan Saint,’ *Gestures of Power: An Interdisciplinary Asian Studies Workshop*, UNC-Charlotte, May 2018.

‘On the Precipice of Disbelief: Heresy, Religion, and Ethnic Afghan Identity in the Works of Akhund Darweza,’ *Islamic Movements in Central Asia*, Southern Conference on Slavic Studies, Charlotte, NC, March 2018.

‘The Lost Tribes of the Afghans: Mobility and Apocalypse in the Entangled History of Christians and Muslims in 19th Century South Asia,’ *American and Muslim Worlds 1500-1900*, McNeil Center for Early American Studies, University of Pennsylvania, March - April 2017.

‘Apocalypse, Again: Language and Repetition in a Qur’anic Imitation,’ *On the Edge of Apocalypse Symposium*, Elon University Center for the Study of Religion, Culture and Society, February 2017

‘Why Did Bayazid Go to War? Rethinking a Mughal-Afghan Borderland,’ *Boundaries, Borders, Crossings*, Study of Islam Section, American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Atlanta, November 2015.

‘Rituals of Revelation,’ *Walls and Bridges: Situating the “Islamic” in Islamic Mysticism*, Islamic Mysticism Group, American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Atlanta, November 2015.

‘Dhikr on the Frontier: Rawshaniyya Literature and a Sufi Imagination of Language,’ *Sufism, Folk Literature, and Music*, International Conference on South Asian Literary Traditions, Lahore University of Management Sciences, April 2015.

‘A City between the Pen and the Grave: The Geographical Imagination of Ibn Tulun’s History of al-Salihyya,’ *Iran and Syria through the Lens of Local History*, Middle Eastern Studies Association Annual Meeting, New Orleans, October 2013.

TEACHING

Introductory: World Religions in London (Spring break study abroad); The Qur’an; Islam Around the Globe // *Advanced*: Muslims and the Making of America (Writing Intensive); Senior Seminar in Theories and Methods // *Graduate*: Annihilation of the Self: The Literature of Sufi Islam; Religious Experience

Charlotte Teachers Institute: 2020 Seminar Leader of “Narratives of Muslim Life in America,” a seminar for Charlotte-area K-12 teachers.

GRANTS

Humanities Initiative Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities: Applied in January 2021 for community-engaged curricular and research project entitled *Landscapes of Religion in Charlotte*, \$107,000. Pending.

UNC-Charlotte Faculty Research Grant, *Imagining Islamic History in Charlotte*, \$7500, 2019-2020..

SELECTED AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Charlotte Teachers Institute Seminar Leader, 2020

Pirzada Dissertation Prize from the Institute for South Asia Studies, UC-Berkeley, \$2500, 2018

Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Completion Fellowship, \$35,000, 2016-2017
American Institute of Pakistan Studies, Short-Term Fellowship, April 2015
Stanford University Center for South Asia, Research Grant, June 2014
Stanford University Abbasi Program for Islamic Studies, Research Grant, June 2014
Critical Language Scholar, Urdu Language Program in Lucknow, India, Summer 2013
FLAS Fellowship for the study of Persian at APTLII Program, UW-Madison, Summer 2012
Edward Lamont, Jr. and Annie Huntress Lamont Graduate Fellow, Stanford, 2011-2016
FLAS Fellowship for the study of Arabic at Qasid Institute in Amman, Jordan, Summer 2010
UCLA Regents Scholarship, 2009-2010
UCLA Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures Tuition Fellowship, 2009-2010
Phi Beta Kappa Membership
Robert M. Golden Award for Excellence in Humanities and Creative Arts, 2009

SERVICE

Departmental

Member of Honors Studies Committee, 2020-2022.
Member of Graduate Studies Committee, 2018-2020.
Secretary for Department Faculty Meetings, 2018-2019.
Alternate, University Faculty Council, 2019-2020.
Member of Department Colloquia and Special Events Committee, 2017-2018.
Member of Department Assessment Committee, 2018-2019.
Participant in Religious Literacy Working Group, 2017-2018.

Guild

Facilitator for ACLS “Job Workshop” for Mellon/ACLS Fellows, 2020.
Reviewer for *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*.
Reviewer for *Journal of Sufi Studies*.
Reviewer for *Religion Compass*.

REFEREES

Dr. Shahzad Bashir

Aga Khan Professor of Islamic Humanities, Department of Religious Studies
Brown University
Email: shahzad_bashir@brown.edu

Dr. Kathryn Gin Lum

Associate Professor, Department of Religious Studies
Stanford University

Email: kgin@stanford.edu

Dr. Robert C. Gregg

Teresa Hihn Moore Professor, Emeritus, Department of Religious Studies
Stanford University

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Dr. Joanne Maguire Robinson

Professor and Department Chair, Department of Religious Studies
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