

**EDITH A. SZANTO**  
Curriculum Vitae

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Presidents Hall 209

(480) 217-2715

**PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS**

2019 – present Assistant Professor, University of Alabama  
2019 Associate Professor, American University of Iraq, Sulaimani  
2012 – 18 Assistant Professor, American University of Iraq, Sulaimani  
2011 – 12 Lecturer, American University of Iraq, Sulaimani  
2009 – 11 Instructor, University of Toronto

**EDUCATION**

2006 – 12 **PhD**, Religious Studies, University of Toronto  
Dissertation title: “Following Sayyida Zaynab: Twelver Shi‘ism in Contemporary Syria”  
Dissertation adviser: Amira Mittermaier  
Comprehensive exam areas: Anthropology of Islam and Twelver Shi‘ism  
2004 – 05 Visiting Student, University of Damascus, Jami‘a Abu Nūr and AMIDEAST  
2002 – 04 **MA**, Middle Eastern Studies, University of Texas at Austin  
Thesis title: “Women’s Religious Groups in Cairo”  
Thesis advisor: Kamran Aghaie  
2002 Semester Abroad, American University in Cairo, Egypt  
1999 – 02 **BA**, Summa cum Laude, Religious Studies, Arizona State University

**PUBLICATIONS**

**Monographs**

Under Review “Mourning Sayyida Zaynab: Twelver Shi‘ism in Contemporary Syria,”  
Edinburgh University Press.

**Edited Volume**

In Progress “Islam in 5 Minutes,” under contract with Equinox.

**Journal Articles**

In Progress “Conversion in Iraqi Kurdistan”

- Submitted “‘Fabricating Shi’ism’: Analyzing Shi’i Studies in Light of the Work of Russell McCutcheon,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*.
- 2018 “Mourning Halabja on Screen: Or Reading Kurdish Politics Through Anfal Films,” *Review of Middle East Studies* 51 (1): 135-146.
- 2018 “‘Zoroaster was a Kurd!’: Neo-Zoroastrianism among Iraqi Kurds,” *Iran and the Caucasus* 22 (1): 96-110.  
This article was translated into Kurmanji Kurdish and published by Fahriye Adsay for the Kurdish online journal, *Zarema*.
- 2018 “Challenging Transnational Shi’i Authority in Ba’th Syria,” *British Journal of Middle East Studies* 45 (1): 95-110.
- 2016 “Depicting Victims, Heroines, and Pawns in the Syrian Uprising,” *Journal of Middle East Women’s Studies* 12 (3): 306-322.
- 2013 “Beyond the Karbala Paradigm: Rethinking Revolution and Redemption in Twelver Shi’a Mourning Rituals,” *Journal of Shi’a Islamic Studies* 6 (1): 75-91.
- 2012 “Illustrating an Islamic Childhood in Syria: Pious Subjects and Religious Authority in Twelver Shi’i Children’s Books,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 32 (2): 361-373.
- 2012 “Sayyida Zaynab in the State of Exception: Shi’i Sainthood as ‘Qualified Life’ in Contemporary Syria,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 44 (2): 285-299.
- 2009 “Pedagogies of Piety: Shi’i Children’s Books, Ethics and the Emergence of the Pious Subject,” *Symposia: The Graduate Student Journal of the Centre for the Study of Religion at the University of Toronto* 1 (1): 62-78.
- 2008 “Inter-Religious Dialogue in Syria: Politics, Ethics and Miscommunication,” *Political Theology* 9 (1): 93-113.

### Chapters in Edited Books

- In Progress “Universalizing Kawa’s Story: The Horror of Civilization in Mesopotamia,” in *Muslim Horror*, edited by Kristian Petersen.
- Forthcoming “Sayyida Zaynab and the Syrian Civil War,” in *Saints in Divided Societies*, edited by Aaron Hollander (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press).
- Forthcoming “Are Muslim theological colleges in countries such as Germany different from the academic field known as Islamic Studies in North America?” in *Religion in 5 Minutes*, edited by Aaron W. Hughes and Russell T. McCutcheon (Sheffield: Equinox).
- Submitted “Does the Hippocratic Oath Apply to Scholars of Religion?,” in *Islam in 5 Minutes*, edited by Edith Szanto (Sheffield: Equinox).
- Submitted “How is Islam defined? What is achieved by defining Islam in a certain way?,” in *Islam in 5 Minutes*, edited by Edith Szanto (Sheffield: Equinox).
- Submitted “Do Muslims believe in the God of Christianity?,” in *Islam in 5 Minutes*, edited by Edith Szanto (Sheffield: Equinox).
- Submitted “Predatory Journals and the Middle Eastern Academy: Orientalism in Disguise?”
- Submitted “Shi’i Pilgrimage in Iraq,” in *The Oxford Handbook on Shi’i Islam*, edited by Ahab Bdeawi and Sajjad Rizvi (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

- 2023 “Wilfred C. Smith on Religion,” in *Field Notes: Revisiting the Classics in the Study of Religion*, edited by Vaia Touna and Richard Newton (London: Bloomsbury), 59-68.
- 2022 “Claiming Agency in the Iraqi State of Exception,” in *States of Exception or Exceptional States: Law, Politics and Giorgio Agamben in the Middle East*, edited by Simon Mabon, Sana Alsarghali, and Adel Ruished (London: Bloomsbury), 53-74.
- 2021 “The ‘Alimahs of Sayyida Zaynab: Female Shi‘i Authority in a Syrian Sanctuary,” in *Female Religious Authority in Shi‘i Islam: A Comparative History*, edited by Mirjam Künkler and Devin Steward (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press), 307-322.
- 2021 “Battered Love in Contemporary Syria: Shi‘i Spiritual Healing with Abu Ahmad,” in *Islam, Migration and Jinn: Spiritual Medicine in Muslim Health Management*, edited by Annabelle Böttcher and Birgit Krawietz (London: Palgrave Macmillan), 77-97.
- 2020 “The Widows of Karbala: On Studying Women in Contemporary Shi‘ism,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Islam and Gender*, edited Justine Howe (New York: Routledge), 180-192.
- 2020 “Islam in Kurdistan: Religious Communities and Their Practices in Contemporary Northern Iraq,” in *Handbook of Contemporary Islam and Muslim Lives*, edited by Mark Woodward and Ronald Lukens-Bull (New York: Springer).
- 2019 “Economies of Piety at the Syrian Shrine of Sayyida Zaynab,” in *Muslim Pilgrimage in the Modern World*, edited by Babak Rahimi and Peyman Eshaghi (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 172-182.
- 2018 “Shi‘a Islam,” in *Handbook of Contemporary Islam and Muslim Lives*, edited by Mark Woodward and Ronald Lukens-Bull (New York: Springer), 1-15.
- 2013 “Contesting Fragile Sainthood Traditions: Miraculous Healing among Twelver Shi‘is in Contemporary Syria,” in *Politics of Worship in the Contemporary Middle East: Sainthood in Fragile States*, edited by Andreas Bandak and Mikkel Bille (Leiden: Brill), 33-52.

## Book Reviews

- 2024 *Review of Yafa Shanneik, “The Art of Resistance in Islam,” Journal of the American Academy of Religion*. 91 (1).
- 2021 *Review of J. Andrew Bush, “Between Muslims,” Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 89 (3).
- 2015 *Review of Abbas Kadhim, “Reclaiming Iraq: The 1920 Revolution and the Foundation of the Modern State,” Arab Studies Journal* 23 (1): 368-372.
- 2015 *Review of Faedah Totah, “Preserving the Old City of Damascus,” International Journal of Middle East Studies* 47 (3): 632-634.
- 2014 *Review of Thomas Pierret, “Religion and State in Syria: The Sunni Ulama from Coup to Revolution,” Politics and Religion* 7 (2): 1-3.

- 2013 *Review of Sally K. Gallagher, "Making Do in Damascus: Navigating a Generation of Change in Family and Work," The Middle East Journal 67 (2): 323-324.*
- 2012 *Review of Liyakat Takim, "Shi'ism in America," Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses 41 (2): 327-329.*
- 2011 *Review of Ingvild Flaskerud, "Visualizing Belief and Piety in Iranian Shi'ism," The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences 28 (4): 136-139.*
- 2010 *Review of Diane King, ed., "Middle Eastern Belongings," The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences 27 (3): 121-123.*

### **Film Reviews**

- 2017 *Film review of Julia Meltzer and Mustafa Rony Zeno, "Dalya's Other Country," Anthropology Review Database.*
- 2013 *Film review of Julia Meltzer and Laura Nix, "Light in Her Eyes," Anthropology Review Database.*

### **Academic News Articles and Field Reports**

- 2020 "The largest contemporary Muslim pilgrimage isn't the hajj to Mecca, it's the Shiite pilgrimage to Karbala in Iraq," *The Conversation News Source* (9 September 2020).  
This article was translated into Spanish and into Malay and published.
- 2014 "Sex and the Cemetery: Iranian Pilgrims, Shrine Visitation, and Consumer Piety in Damascus," *Syrian Studies Association Bulletin* 19 (2): 1-5.  
This article was translated into Arabic and published by the World Institute, Istanbul.
- 2012 "'Syria Love': Watching Syrian Propaganda in Iraq," *Syrian Studies Association Bulletin* 17 (2): 19-21.  
This article was translated into Arabic and published by the World Institute, Istanbul.
- 2008 "A Scholar of Popular Contemporary Islam on the Quest for 'Truth' in Damascus," *Syrian Studies Association Bulletin* 13 (2): 8-9, 15.
- 2008 "Performance, Power and the Possibility for Change: Shi'i Muharram Practices and the 1979 Iranian Revolution," *Centre for the Study of Religion Graduate Student Journal* 1: 42-48.
- 2007 "Muharram in and around Sayyeda Zaynab," *Syrian Studies Association Bulletin* 13 (1): 4-5.

### **AWARDS AND GRANTS**

- 2024 ORED (summer research funding), University of Alabama
- 2022 ASPIRE (course release for research), University of Alabama
- 2018 AUIS Faculty Research Award
- 2014 AUIS Scholar (course load reduction and research funding)

- 2011 – 13 Faculty Development Grant, American University of Iraq, Sulaimani  
 2008 – 10 Ontario Graduate Scholarship, University of Toronto  
 2009 School of Graduate Studies Travel Grant, University of Toronto  
 2008 Hartcourt Brown Fellowship, University of Toronto  
 2007 – 08 Less Commonly Taught Languages Study Elsewhere Award, University of Toronto  
 2004 – 05 US Fulbright Fellow, Syria  
 2003 – 04 Burton Continuing Fellowship, University of Texas at Austin  
 2003 – 04 Foreign Language Area Studies Fellowship for Arabic, University of Texas at Austin  
 2000 – 02 Dean’s Honor Roll, Arizona State University  
 1999 – 00 Freshman Achievement Scholarship, Arizona State University

## INVITED TALKS

- 2023 “Healing Hearts and Minds: Visiting the Shi‘i Spiritual Doctor Abu Ahmad in Sayyida Zaynab,” a paper presented at *The Supernatural, Healing, and Mental Health in Contemporary Middle East*, a workshop held at the Institute of Oriental Studies at University Bamberg
- 2022 “Critical Approaches to the Study of Islam,” lecture held at Georgia Southern University
- 2020 “Redefining Religion: Development and Voluntourism in Iraqi Kurdistan,” presented and discussed a pre-circulated paper on the Zoom Workshop for Authors: Muslim World Special Issue on Development sponsored by Butler University
- 2018 “The Widows of Karbala: Studying Women in Contemporary Shi‘ism,” presented at *LUCIS Annual Conference 2018: Approaching Shi‘i Islam in the Academy*, held at Leiden University, the Netherlands
- 2018 “Iraqi Necropolitics,” a paper presented as part of a speaker series at the Department of Religious Studies at St. Mary’s University in Halifax, Canada
- 2017 “Iraqi Necropolitics: Sovereignty, War Machines, and the Question of Agency,” a paper presented at *The Middle East in Danger: The State of Exception*, a workshop held at Lancaster University
- 2017 “Hiding the Truth in Plain Sight: Spiritual Healing and Jinn in Contemporary Syria,” a paper presented at *The Islamic Multiverse*, a conference held at New York University Abu Dhabi
- 2017 “Mourning Halabja – or the Kurdish Holocaust Industry,” a paper presented at *History and Society on TV in the Middle East*, a conference held at the University of Maryland
- 2016 “When Kurds doubt Islam,” a paper presented at *Doubt and Certitude in Islam*, an international research seminar held at Aarhus University, Denmark
- 2016 “The Widows of Karbala,” a paper presented at the *Mainstream Muharram: Exploring Political, Religious, and Cultural Expressions of Shi‘a Islam* series at the University of Houston

- 2016 “On the Trail of Tears: Pious Bodies, Affective Economies, and Sacred Space in Contemporary Iraqi Arba’in Practices,” a paper presented at *Lamenting Karbala*, a conference held at the Warburg Institute by the Shi‘ah Institute
- 2016 “Victims, Hero(in)es, and Pawns: Imagining the Syrian Uprising,” a paper presented as part of a lecture series entitled *The Crisis in Syria: Past, Present, and Future* held at NYU Abu Dhabi and sponsored by the Arab Crossroads Program
- 2016 “The Never Ending Tragedy: Appropriations of Karbala Among Iraqi Shi‘is in Prerevolutionary Syria,” a paper presented at *Reimagining Muslim Pasts*, a workshop held at Sabanci University in Istanbul and sponsored by the Aga Khan University
- 2015 “From Faith to Family: Religion and Tribes in Modern Kurdistan,” paper presented at *The Middle East and its Tribes: A useful resource or a troubling legacy?*, a workshop held at the Institut français du Proche-Orient in Erbil
- 2015 “The Kurdish View of Shi‘i Politics in Iraq,” paper presented at *Shi‘i Political Theology and Mobilisation in Contemporary Iraq*, a workshop held at the University of Exeter
- 2015 “Provincializing Shi‘ism in Modern Syria,” paper presented at *Arab Shi‘ism vs. Wilayat al-Faqih*, a workshop held at Oxford University
- 2014 “Challenging Transnational Shi‘i Authority in Ba‘th Syria,” paper presented at *Center and Periphery in the Muslim World: De-Centering Traditional Religious Authority*, a workshop held at the Qatar Faculty of Islamic Studies
- 2012 “Affecting ‘Ashura: Rethinking Revolution and Redemption in Contemporary Syrian Twelver Shi‘i Mourning Rituals,” paper presented at *The Shrines of the Ahl al-Bayt Conference*, NYU Abu Dhabi
- 2011 “Mourning Hussayn in Contemporary Syria,” paper presented at the Max Planck Institut für Bildungsforschung in Berlin
- 2005 “Material Culture around Damascene Mosques,” paper presented at the CEMAT Fulbright Conference, Tunisia

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- 2023 “Conversion as Class Mobility in Iraqi Kurdistan,” paper presented at the Middle East Studies Association annual meeting
- 2023 “Predatory Journals and the Middle Eastern Academy: Orientalism in Disguise?” paper presented at the North American Association for the Study of Religion annual meeting
- 2023 “Roundtable on the Conversion Caucus,” participated in a roundtable discussion on conversion to Zoroastrianism, First Association for Iranian Studies Online Symposium
- 2023 “Leaving Islam in Iraqi Kurdistan,” paper presented at the biannual meeting of the Association for the Study of Persianate Societies
- 2023 “Muslim Women in the Syrian Uprising,” paper presented at the Southwest Commission on Religious Studies annual meeting
- 2022 “Healing in Contemporary Arab Twelver Shi‘ism,” paper presented at the Middle East Studies Association annual meeting

- 2022 “Joining the Kasnazani Order: The Politics of Initiation and Conversion in Iraqi Kurdistan,” paper presented at the American Academy of Religion annual meeting
- 2022 “Fabricating Shi‘ism”: Analyzing Shi‘i Studies in Light of the Work of Russell McCutcheon,” paper presented at the Deutscher Orientalistentag annual meeting hosted by the Freie Universität Berlin
- 2022 “Pilgrims and Voluntourists in Iraq,” paper presented at The Southeast Regional Middle East and Islamic Studies Society (SERMEISS) Spring 2022 Workshop, “Travel, Mobility, and Cultural Conflict in the Middle East and North Africa” hosted by the University of Alabama
- 2022 “The Ethics of Mourning Anfal in Film: Depicting the Kurdish Genocide,” paper presented at the Society for the Study of Muslim Ethics annual meeting
- 2021 “Leaving Islam for Greener Pastures?: Conversion and/as Class Mobility in Iraqi Kurdistan,” paper presented at the American Academy of Religion annual meeting
- 2021 “The Making of Shi‘ite Sacred Space in Syria,” paper presented at a Zoom conference, “Religious Minorities, Sacred Space and Heritage in Transition in the Middle East” hosted by the Central European University
- 2021 “Iraq and a Secular Age Beyond the West,” paper presented as part of a panel of “A Secular Age Beyond the West” at the Association for Asian Studies Virtual annual meeting
- 2020 “Sayyida Zaynab: From dolorosa to rebel and back,” paper presented at the American Academy of Religion annual meeting
- 2019 “Voluntourism in Iraq: Saving Refugees during Vacation,” paper presented at the American Academy of Religion annual meeting
- 2019 “The ‘Alimat of Sayyida Zaynab: Female Shi‘i Religious Authority in a Syrian Seminary,” paper presented at the Middle East Studies Association annual meeting
- 2019 “Marriages in/as Safe Havens for Syrian Refugees: Muslim Marital Practices in Refugee Camps in Iraqi Kurdistan,” paper presented with Yalda Razmahang at “Different Worlds? Ethnography, Religion and Traveling Critique Between Europe and the MENA,” a workshop hosted by the Netherlands-Flemish Institute in Cairo
- 2018 “Zoroaster was a Kurd!”: Neo-Zoroastrianism in Contemporary Iraqi Kurdistan,” paper presented at the American Academy of Religion annual meeting
- 2017 “Peons, FOBs, and Fat Cats: Class and the Study of Contemporary Islam,” paper presented at the American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting
- 2017 “On the Path of Sorrow: Materiality in Contemporary Iraqi Arba’īn Practices,” paper presented at the Deutsche Vereinigung der Religionswissenschaft annual meeting
- 2016 “Learning Islam in Kurdistan,” paper presented at the American Academy of Religion annual meeting
- 2016 “Patronizing Shi‘i ‘Ulama in Contemporary Syria,” a paper presented at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Congress of DAVO held at the University of Tübingen

- 2016 “The Final Tear: Pious Bodies, Affective Economies, and Sacred Space in Contemporary Iraqi Arbaeen Practices,” a paper presented at *Migration, Change and Continuity: Kinship, Religion, Politics, Visual, in Retrospect and Beyond*, a conference held by the IUAES Commission of Anthropology of the Middle East at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland
- 2016 “Zoroaster was a Kurd!”: On the Rise of Neo-Zoroastrianism in Contemporary Kurdistan,” paper presented at *Conflict and Living Heritage in the Middle East: Researching the Politics of Cultural Heritage and Identities in Times of War and Displacement*, a conference held at AUIS and sponsored by the Institut Français du Proche-Orient in Erbil
- 2016 “Learning Piety in Sayyida Zaynab: Women’s Hawza Education in Syria,” a paper presented at *The Acquisition and Transmission of Knowledge: The Role of Shi‘i Institutions of Learning in the Spread and Defense of a Tradition*, a conference held at the University of Chicago
- 2015 “Beyond Victims and Heroines: Gender, Religion, and the Syrian Conflict,” paper presented at the American Academy of Religion annual meeting
- 2015 “Depicting Gender in the Syrian Conflict,” paper presented at *Syria: Moving Beyond the Stalemate*, a conference held at St Andrews University
- 2014 “Contesting Charismatic Authority: Qadiri Sufism in Iraqi Kurdistan,” paper presented at the Middle East Studies Association annual meeting
- 2014 “Women and the Anthropology of Islam: The State of the Field,” round table discussion at the American Academy of Religion annual meeting
- 2014 “The End of Mourning: Pious Bodies, Affective Economies, and Sacred Space in Contemporary Iraqi Arbaeen Practices,” paper presented at the Fourth World Congress for Middle East Studies
- 2014 “Sex and the Cemetery: Iranian Pilgrims, Shrine Visitation, and Consumer Piety in Damascus,” paper presented at the Tenth Biennial Iranian Studies Conference
- 2014 “Being an ‘Ālima in Sayyida Zaynab: Female Shi‘i Religious Authority in a Syrian Seminary,” paper presented at *Of ‘Ālimahs, Muhaddithahs, and Mujtahidahs: The Past and Present of Female Religious Authority in Shi‘i Islam*, a workshop held at Princeton University
- 2013 “Qadiri Sufism in Kurdistan: Ritual Transgressions and Gendered Norms,” paper presented at the American Academy of Religion annual meeting
- 2013 “Economies of Piety,” paper presented at the Middle East Studies Association annual meeting
- 2013 “Challenging Transnational Shi‘i Authority in Ba‘th Syria,” paper presented at *De-Centering Shi‘ism*, a workshop held at Princeton University
- 2013 “Preaching Piety in Sulaimani,” paper presented at *Kurdistan – Between Past and Future*, a conference sponsored by Soran University and Lund University
- 2012 “Discourses on Barbarism in the Contemporary Middle East,” paper presented at the American Academy of Religion annual meeting
- 2012 “Preaching Piety in Sulaimani,” poster presentation at 2nd World Kurdish Scientific Congress
- 2011 “‘That Which Your Right Hands Possess’: Liberation, Otherness, and Religion in a Syrian Soap Opera,” paper presented (in absentia) at the Middle East Studies Association annual meeting



- 2011 “Healing Shi‘i Bodies: Cupping, Flagellation and Sainly Intercession in Contemporary Syria,” paper presented at the American Academy of Religion annual meeting
- 2011 “Beyond the Karbala Paradigm: Affect in Syrian Twelver Shi‘i Mourning Rituals,” paper presented at the Middle East History and Theory Conference, University of Chicago
- 2010 “Heterodoxy on the Periphery: Magic and Twelver Shi‘ism in Contemporary Syria,” paper presented at the Middle East Studies Association annual meeting
- 2010 “Beyond Carnival and Spectacle: Contemporary Twelver Shi‘i Muharram Rituals in Syria,” paper presented at the American Academy of Religion annual meeting
- 2010 “Sayyida Zaynab: A Saint and Her Followers in States of Exception,” paper presented at *Sainthood in Fragile States*, a conference sponsored by the Danish Institute of Damascus and the University of Copenhagen.
- 2008 “Pious Sensations in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Basim al-Karbala’i and Mourning Rituals among Twelver Shi‘is,” paper present at the American Anthropological Association annual meeting
- 2008 “Self-Flagellation and the Cultivation of Piety: Tradition, Connection and Ethics,” paper presented at the American Academy of Religion Eastern International Regional annual meeting
- 2007 “Shi‘i Children’s Books: The Formation of Twelver Shi‘i Identity, Community and Practice,” paper presented at the Middle East Studies Association annual meeting
- 2007 “Performance, Power and the Possibilities of Change in Islamic Practice,” paper presented at *Evolution Devolution Revolution*, the Graduate Symposium of the Centre for the Study of Religion, University of Toronto
- 2006 “Muslim/Christian Dialogue in Syria,” paper presented at the American Academy of Religion annual meeting
- 2005 “Fulla: An Arab Muslim Doll for Arab Muslim Girls,” paper presented at the Middle East Studies Association annual meeting
- 2004 “Sacred Space and Privacy: Sufi Orders and Questions of Control,” paper presented at the American Research Center for Egypt conference

## CAMPUS TALKS AND INTERVIEWS

- 2024 “Syrian Women and the Civil War,” presented to a class at Texas Christian University via Zoom.
- 2020 “#ExeterConvos 7 May with Professor Edith Szanto on Islam and Development,” participated in a thematic conversation with Prof. Sajjad Rizvi for a Video Blog posted by the Exeter Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies
- 2020 “SEPADPod with Edith Szanto,” participated in a thematic conversation with Prof. Simon Mabon for the Sectarianism, Proxies & De-sectarianisation podcast series published by the Richardson Institute, University of Lancaster

- 2020 “REL 590 Guest Lecture on the State of the Field in Islamic Studies,” participated as a guest lecturer in the capstone course REL 590, University of Alabama
- 2019 “Women, Gender, and Early Islam,” participated in a thematic conversation with Prof. Lynn Rose for a podcast series by the Center for Gender and Development Studies, the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani
- 2013 “Sectarianism and the Syrian Uprising,” paper presented at the Sulaimani Forum, American University of Iraq, Sulaimani
- 2012 “Material Piety in Syria and Iraq,” paper presented at the Second Annual AUIS Conference on the Middle East, American University of Iraq, Sulaimani
- 2012 “Rethinking Revolution and Redemption in Contemporary Syrian Twelver Shi‘i Mourning Rituals,” Brown Bag Lecture, American University of Iraq, Sulaimani
- 2012 “Iraq,” participated in a thematic conversation on CIUT, the University of Toronto radio station
- 2012 “History of Tattooing in the Middle East,” guest lecture, American University of Iraq, Sulaimani
- 2011 “Religion and Refugees,” participated in a thematic conversation on CIUT, the University of Toronto radio station
- 2011 “El-Tawhid Juma Circle,” participated in a thematic conversation on CIUT, the University of Toronto radio station
- 2011 “Following Sayyida Zaynab: Shi‘i Female Sainthood, Contested Authority and Possibilities for Healing in States of Exception,” paper presented at the JHI Islamic Studies Workshop, University of Toronto
- 2010 “Carnivalizing Piety: ‘Ashura in Sayyida Zaynab,” paper presented as part of the Centre and Department for the Study of Religion’s *Colloquia* series.
- 2007 “Women in Islam,” guest lecture, University of Toronto Mississauga
- 2004 “Women’s Religious Groups in Cairo,” paper presented at the Graduate Student Symposium, Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Texas at Austin

## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

### **At the University of Alabama**

- REL 100 “Introduction to the Study of Religion”
- REL 236 “Islam”
- REL 336 “Islam and the West”
- REL 436 “Making Islam”
- REL 523 “Discourse and Practice”
- REL 525 “Identity and Place”

### **At the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani**

- REL 202 “Comparative World Religions”
- REL 422 “Gender in Islam”

CIV 101 “Civilization 1 – Ancient World”  
CIV 102 “Civilization 2 – Medieval World”  
CIV 203 “Civilization 3 – Humanities of the Ancient World”  
CIV 204 “Civilization 4 – Modern World”  
HST 101 “World and European History I”  
HST 202 “History of the Middle East”  
HST 321 “Islamic Religious Traditions”  
HST 421 “Religion in Iraq”  
POL 400 “Independent Study: The History of Islamic Political Thought”  
BUS 401 “Business Ethics”

### **At the University of Toronto**

RLG 204 “Introduction to Islam”  
RLG 251 “Women in Islam”  
RLG 355 “Anthropology of Islam”

### **RESEARCH AND FIELDWORK EXPERIENCE**

2016 – 19      Fieldwork on Evangelical Christians, Sulaimani, Iraq  
2014 – 17      Fieldwork on Zoroastrianism, Sulaimani, Iraq  
2011 – 19      Fieldwork on Qadiri Sufism, Sulaimani governorate, Iraq  
2011 – 19      Fieldwork on Shi‘ism, Sulaimani, Iraq  
2006 – 10      Fieldwork on Shi‘ism, Sayyida Zaynab, Syria  
2006 – 11      Research Assistant to Prof. Mohammed Fadel, University of Toronto

### **CONSULTANCY EXPERIENCE**

2022 – 23      Expert Witness, Islamic Divorce Report for an Alabama Court  
2015 – 16      Co-Investigator, Female Genital Mutilation Baseline Survey for Heartland Alliance and UNICEF, Iraq  
2012            Co-Principal Investigator, Social Impact Assessment Project for Western Zagros (Oil Company), Iraq (17,000 USD)  
2006            UNV Human Development Advocate at UNDP Damascus  
2006            Intern at UNHCR Damascus

### **SERVICE**

#### **To the University of Alabama**

2023            Member, Asian Studies Rewards Committee  
2022 – present    Student Advisor, Departmental Undergraduate Committee  
2022 – present    Member, Strategic Planning Committee  
2022            Member (Curriculum Committee), Review of Approved Programs Workgroup

2021 – present Member (Faculty Senate Delegate), Curriculum Committee  
 2021 – present Member (Faculty Senate Delegate), Undergraduate Council  
 2021 Member (Alternate), Curriculum Committee  
 2021 Member (Alternate), Undergraduate Council  
 2021 Events Coordinator  
 2021 – present Member, Religious Studies Rewards Committee  
 2021 – present Member, Religious Studies Scholarships Committee  
 2021 Member, Day Lecture Series Speakers Committee  
 2020 – present Member, Faculty and Senate Governance Committee  
 2020 – present Member, Faculty Senate (about to begin the 3<sup>rd</sup> term)  
 2020 Member, Aronov Lecture Series Speakers Committee  
 2019 – present Member, Religious Studies Undergraduate Committee  
 2019 – 2021 Faculty Adviser, Religious Studies Student Association

### **To the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani**

2017 – 18 Chair, Faculty Handbook Committee  
 2016 Chair, Hiring Committee for the Social Sciences Department  
 2015 – 16 Faculty Adviser, German Club  
 2014 – 17 Chair, Curriculum Review Committee  
 2013 Member, Curriculum Review Committee  
 2013 – 14 Member, Provost Search Committee  
 2013 – 16 Faculty Advisor, Manga Club  
 2012 – 16 Organiser, Brown Bag Lecture Series  
 2012 – 13 Faculty Advisor, FirstStage (volunteer teachers for children from the Qalawa Refugee Camp)  
 2012 Organiser, the Second Annual AUIS Conference on the Middle East  
 2012 Member, Core Review Committee  
 2012 Faculty Volunteer, Film Club

### **To academia at large**

2024 Peer Reviewer, Routledge.  
 2023 – present Past President and Board Member, *Syrian Studies Association*  
 2023 Peer Reviewer, Routledge.  
 2023 Peer Reviewer, *Cogent Arts & Humanities*  
 2023 Peer Reviewer, *Religions*  
 2022 Peer Reviewer, *British Journal of Middle East Studies*  
 2022 Peer Reviewer, *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*  
 2022 – present Co-Chair, Religious Conversions Unit Steering Committee, American Academy of Religion  
 2021 – 2023 President, *Syrian Studies Association*  
 2021 Peer Reviewer, *British Journal of Middle East Studies*  
 2021 Peer Reviewer, *Journal of Religious History*  
 2021 Peer Reviewer, *Islamic Inquiry*  
 2021 Peer Reviewer, *International Feminist Journal of Politics*

- 2021 Grant Reviewer, Israeli Science Foundation
- 2020 Peer Reviewer, *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*
- 2020 Peer Reviewer, *International Feminist Journal of Politics*
- 2020 Book Manuscript Reviewer, Oxford University Press
- 2020 Peer Reviewer, *British Journal of Middle East Studies*
- 2020 Peer Reviewer, *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*
- 2020 Peer Reviewer, *Kurdish Studies*
- 2020 External Doctoral Committee Member for a PhD student at the University of Pittsburgh working on Syrian refugees in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq
- 2019 – 2021 Member, Religious Conversions Unit Steering Committee, American Academy of Religion
- 2019 Peer Reviewer, *Critical Research on Religion*
- 2019 Peer Reviewer, *Kurdish Studies*
- 2019 Peer Reviewer, *British Journal of Sociology*
- 2018 – 2023 External Doctoral Committee Member for a PhD student at Arizona State University working on female Syrian refugees in Michigan
- 2018 Peer Reviewer, *Review of International Studies*
- 2017 – 2021 Editor, *Syrian Studies Association Bulletin*
- 2017 Peer Reviewer, *Ethos: Journal for the Society of Psychological Anthropology*
- 2016 Peer Reviewer, *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*
- 2016 Panel Organizer, “Patronizing Twelver Shi‘ism: Religious Authority and Worldly Powers,” at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Congress of DAVO held at the University of Tübingen
- 2015 – present Member, Class, Theology and Religion Group Steering Committee, American Academy of Religion
- 2015 Peer Reviewer, *Middle East Critique*
- 2015 Peer Reviewer, *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*
- 2015 Peer Reviewer, *Critical Research on Religion*
- 2014 – 18 Field Adviser and External Doctoral Committee Member for a PhD student at Kennesaw State University working on art and identity in Kurdistan
- 2013 Peer Reviewer, *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*
- 2010 – 16 Member, Contemporary Islam Group Steering Committee, American Academy of Religion
- 2008 – 11 Review Editor for *Symposia*, University of Toronto

## **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENTS**

- 2018 “Islamic Law: What is it?” lecture given at the Prescott Public Library in Arizona
- 2018 “Religious and Social Change in the Middle East,” participated in a panel organized by the Center for Religion and Conflict, Arizona State University
- 2018 “Making a Difference in Iraqi Kurdistan,” presentation at Pecha Kucha Night organized by Women4Women Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Prescott

- 2014 “Context of IS Attack on Yazidis,” Episode 1 of the Podcast Series: Engaging the World, Multi-Faith Centre, University of Toronto  
(<https://multifaith.utoronto.ca/Engaging-the-World-Podcast.htm>)
- 2014 “Displacement and Suffering: From Anfal to ISIS,” organized and participated in a public panel held at the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani
- 2012 “Iraq,” participated in a thematic conversation on CIUT, the University of Toronto’s radio station
- 2011 “Religion and Refugees,” participated in a thematic conversation on CIUT, the University of Toronto’s radio station
- 2011 “El-Tawhid Juma Circle,” participated in a thematic conversation on CIUT, the University of Toronto’s radio station
- 2002 – 04 Individually led outreach events by visiting Middle Schools and High Schools in Austin, TX as part of the K-12 Outreach Program, University of Texas at Austin

## LANGUAGES

Native speaker of English, German, and Hungarian

Fluent in reading, writing and speaking in Arabic (Modern Standard Arabic, Syrian and Iraqi dialects)

Advanced reading ability in French and Spanish

Basic knowledge of Hindi, Farsi, and Sorani Kurdish

## PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Academy of Religion

Middle East Studies Association

Shi’ah Institute

Southeast Regional Middle East and Islamic Studies Society

Syrian Studies Association

Association for the Study of Persianate Societies

Association for Iranian Studies

## REFERENCES

Prof. Lynn Rose, Chair of the Promotion Committee, the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani, [lynn.rose@auis.edu.krd](mailto:lynn.rose@auis.edu.krd)

Prof. Elizabeth Campbell, former Chair of the Social Science Department, the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani, [ecampbell@daemen.edu](mailto:ecampbell@daemen.edu)

Prof. Amira Mittermaier, Associate Professor at the Centre for the Study of Religion, University of Toronto, [amira.mittermaier@utoronto.ca](mailto:amira.mittermaier@utoronto.ca)

Prof. Walid Saleh, Associate Professor at the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations, University of Toronto, [walid.saleh@utoronto.ca](mailto:walid.saleh@utoronto.ca)

Prof. Karen Ruffle, Assistant Professor at the Centre for the Study of Religion, University of Toronto, [karen.ruffle@utoronto.ca](mailto:karen.ruffle@utoronto.ca)

Prof. Juan Cole, Professor at the Department of History and Director of the Center for Middle Eastern and North African Studies, University of Michigan, [jrcole@umich.edu](mailto:jrcole@umich.edu)