

Mohammad Sagha

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ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

Harvard University

2022-Present Lecturer in the Modern Middle East, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

The University of Chicago

2021-2022 The Division of the Humanities Teaching Fellow & Lecturer

Harvard University

2016-Present Instructor in the Division of Continuing Education

EDUCATION

The University of Chicago

Sept. 2014-August 2021 Doctorate of Philosophy in Islamic History and Civilization
Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations (NELC)

Dissertation Title: Hidden Empires: Revolt, Leadership, and Underground Networks
in the Emergence of Early Shi'i Muslim Sectarian Identities

Dissertation Committee: Ahmed El Shamsy (Chair, NELC), Fred Donner
(NELC), John Padgett (Political Science)

Comprehensive Exams: *Major:* Early Islamic History
Minor: Modern Middle Eastern History
Methodology: Manuscript Analysis and Islamic Philology

Harvard University

2014-2015 Visiting PhD Exchange Scholar, Center for Middle Eastern Studies

Advisor: Roy Mottahedeh Topic: Islamic dynastic politics & Persianate revival under the Buyids

The University of Chicago

2012-2014 Master of Arts, Center for Middle Eastern Studies

ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Harvard Divinity School

2022-Present *Faculty Affiliate & Research Director for History and Identity*
Project on Shi'ism and Global Affairs, Harvard Divinity School

Harvard University Faculty of Arts and Sciences

2019-2022 *Associate & Research Director for History and Identity*
Weatherhead Center for International Affairs (WCFIA), Project on Shi'ism
and Global Affairs

2020-Present *Editor, Visions: Global Shi'a Affairs at Harvard University*

Harvard Kennedy School (HKS)

2018-2019 *Associate*
Iran Project, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs

2017-2018 *Project Coordinator*
Iran Project, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs

2017-2018 *Managing Editor*
Iran Matters: A Special Initiative of the Iran Project, Belfer Center for
Science and International Affairs

2014-2017 *Graduate Student Research Assistant*
Iran Project, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs

Harvard Law School

2015-2021 *Editor for Shi'i Law*
Islamic Legal Studies Program, SHARIAsource

Harvard University Center for European Studies

2014-2016 *Graduate Student Research Assistant*
Eastern Mediterranean and Europe Study Group

The University of Chicago

2020-2021 *MA Preceptor*
The Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES)

2019 *Writing Intern*
The Writing Program

2015-Present *Co-Director*
Shi'i Studies Group (SSG)

2013-2014 *Editor-in-Chief*
Lights: The Official Middle Eastern Studies Students Association Journal

DePaul University

2011-2012 *Writing Tutor*
The Writing Center

University of Tehran

2011 (Summer) *Visiting Researcher*, College of Social Sciences

Foreign Policy Magazine, Washington, D.C.

2010 *Editorial Researcher*

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Publications

“The Iranian Intermezzo and Daylami Political Resurgence: Dynastic Family Networks and ‘Alid Army Organization in the South Caspian (3rd/9th – 5th/11th centuries),” *Under Review*.

“Conference Report: ‘Shi‘ism and Governance,’ University of Chicago, May 12-13, 2017.” *Shii Studies Review* 2, no. 1-2 (2018), 381-384.

“The Acquisition and Transmission of Knowledge: The Role of Shī‘ī Institutions of Learning in the Spread and Defense of a Tradition,’ University of Chicago, April 1-2, 2016.” With Ed Hayes. *Shii Studies Review* 1, no. 1-2 (2017), 257-258.

“Political Economy of Ingenuity: A Case Study of Turkey’s Justice and Development Party.” *Lights: The MESSA Journal* 2, no. 1 (2012), 115-125.

Edited Reports and Articles

[The Hidden Imam and the End of Time: A Primer on the Mahdi, Islamic Theology, and Global Politics](#). Co-authored with Payam Mohseni. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Weatherhead Center for International Affairs.

[Diversity and Unity in Transnational Shi‘ism Proceedings of the International Symposium on](#)

[Intra-Shi'a Dialogue and Confessional Diversity within Shi'ism at Harvard University \(April 5-8, 2021\)](#). Co-edited with Ali Asani and Payam Mohseni. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Weatherhead Center for International Affairs.

[Legacies of Islamic Ecumenicism: Taqrib, Shi'a-Sunni Relations, and Globalized Politics in the Middle East](#). Editor. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Weatherhead Center for International Affairs. May, 2021.

“From Cairo to Samarra: The Transnational Scholarly Reception of the Taqrib Project,” in *Legacies of Islamic Ecumenicism: Taqrib, Shi'a-Sunni Relations, and Globalized Politics in the Middle East*.

“[Five Myths of Sectarian De-Escalation](#).” With Payam Mohseni. *Engaging Sectarian De-Escalation Proceedings of the Symposium on Islam and Sectarian De-Escalation at Harvard Kennedy School*. Cambridge, MA: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, August 2019.

Public Scholarship

“[The Bektashi Shi'as of Michigan: Pluralism and Orthodoxy within Twelver Shi'ism](#).” *Visions: Harvard WCFIA Project on Shi'ism and Global Affairs*, 15 February 2020.

“[Al-Ghadir: The Fountainhead of Shi'ism](#).” *Visions: Harvard WCFIA Project on Shi'ism and Global Affairs*, 20 August 2019.

“Religio-cultural cosmopolitanism in the Middle East.” *Your Middle East*, 11 July 2013.

“Sectarian Shadows in Bahrain.” *Chicago Monitor*. 14 Sept. 2012.

Interviews:

“[Pope Francis Meets Ayatollah Sistani, Iraq's Globally Revered Shi'ite Leader](#).” *The Media Line*, 08 March 2021.

BOOK MANUSCRIPTS

Power and Belonging: Shi'a Religious Nationalism, Sacred Space, and Hybrid Politics in the Middle East (*co-authored; in progress*)

Hidden Empires: The Politics of Underground Shi'i Revolutionary Networks and Sectarian Emergence in Early Islam (*in progress*)

WORKING PAPERS

From Cairo to Samarra: The Transnational Muslim Scholarly Reception of the *Taqrib* Project in the Contemporary Middle East

The Marja'iyya City-States of Nineteenth Century Iraq: Sacred Space and Imperial Mobilization in the Ottoman-Wahhabi-Qajar Persian Gulf Triangle

Narratives, Networks and the Pro-Occultation Faction of the Early Shi'a: Applying Social Network Analysis in the Minor Occultation Period (260/874 – 329/941)

Rebellion and Resistance in Early Islam: A Quantitative Study of Revolts and Sectarian Identity in the Early Islamic Period

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Lecturer

- 2022 University of Chicago
HUMA 14100. Reading Cultures: Collection, Travel, Exchange II
- 2021 University of Chicago
NEHC 20601/2: Islamic Thought and Literature I
- 2021 University of Chicago
HUMA 14000: Reading Cultures: Collection, Travel, Exchange I
- 2020 Harvard University - WCFIA Project on Shi'ism and Global Affairs
Summer Workshop on Shi'a Islam and Politics
- 2020 University of Chicago
NEHC 20344: Modern Shi'a Thought and Identity
- 2018 - 2022 Harvard Division of Continuing Education
GOVT E-1979: Shi'a Islam and Politics in the Middle East
- 2016 Harvard Division of Continuing Education
GOVT E-1978: The Politics and Ideology of Post-Revolutionary Iran

Teaching Assistant

- 2020 University of Chicago
NEHC 20201: Islamic Civilization I: 600-950
With Ahmed El Shamsy
- 2020 University of Chicago
NEHC 10101: Introduction to the Middle East
With Fred Donner
- 2019 University of Chicago
Humanities 11500: Philosophical Perspectives [Intro Greek Philosophy]
With Mark Miller

- 2016 University of Chicago
NEHC 30601: Islamic Thought and Literature (ca. 600-950)
With Ahmed El Shamsy
- 2017-2020 Harvard Division of Continuing Education
GOVT E-1978: Politics and Ideology of Post-Revolutionary Iran
With Payam Mohseni

SYMPOSIA AND CONFERENCES ORGANIZED

“Historiography and Memory: Interpretation and Meaning-Making in Sources on Imam Hussain,” Harvard Divinity School. Cambridge, MA. September 2022.

“The 2nd International Symposium on Diversity and Unity in Transnational Shi’ism.” Harvard University Project on Shi’ism and Global Affairs, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs. May 9-13, 2022. [Website](#).

“Diversity and Unity in Transnational Shi’ism.” An International Symposium on Intra-Shi’a Dialogue & Confessional Diversity within Shi’ism at Harvard University. Project on Shi’ism and Global Affairs, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs. April 5-8, 2021. [Website](#).

“But by the love you bear my kin”: Devotion (*Walāya*) and Shī‘ī Islam.” University of Chicago Shi‘i Studies Symposium. Postponed (originally scheduled April 2020).

“Symposium on Islam and Sectarian De-Escalation.” Harvard University. Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs. April 14-15, 2018. [Website](#).

“Sectarian Identity and Community Formation in Islam.” University of Chicago Shi‘i Studies Symposium. October 2018.

“Shi’ism and Governance.” University of Chicago Shi‘i Studies Symposium. May 2017.

“The Acquisition and Transmission of Knowledge.” The Role of Shi‘i Institutions of Learning in the Spread and Defense of a Tradition. University of Chicago Shi‘i Studies Symposium. April 2016.

“The Practical Authority of the Imams and their Representatives: Law, Theology, History, Politics, Anthropology.” University of Chicago Shi‘i Studies Symposium. April 2015.

ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS & INVITED TALKS

“Redemptive Eschatology and the Mahdi across Shi‘a Confessions in the Early Islamic Period,” Harvard University Weatherhead Center for International Affairs. Cambridge, MA. May 2022.

“Late Antique Eschatology and Salvific Leadership in Islam,” University of Chicago Persian Circle. Chicago, IL. May 2022.

“Hidden Empires and Muslim Sectarian Identities: The Emergence of Shi’a Sects in Early Islam (7th - 10th Centuries CE),” Harvard University Weatherhead Center for International Affairs. Cambridge, MA. November 2021.

“Sectarian Identity and Orthodoxy in Islam: History and Contemporary Realities.” Hartford Seminary. Hartford, CT. April 2019. Job Talk.

“Apocalypticism and the Mahdi in Early Islam: Between Sectarian Identity and Political Thought.” Hartford Seminary, Imam Ali Chair for Shi’i Studies and Dialogue Among Islamic Legal Schools. Hartford, CT. December 2018.

“Shi’a Islam and Politics: State of the Field.” University of Chicago Shi’i Studies Symposium: Sectarian Identity and Community Formation in Islam. Chicago, IL. October 2018.

“Iran and the Emergence of the *Taqrib* Movement in the Islamic World.” Explaining Sectarianism: Community, Competition, and Conflict. Tufts University, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. Medford, MA. October 2018.

“The ‘Alid Imams of Ṭabaristān.” The Zaydi Manuscript Tradition Workshop. Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, NJ. June 2018.

“Civil Society and Shi’ism in Global History.” The Conference of Imam Redha. United Muslim Association of America (UMAA). July 2018.

“Apocalypticism and the Mahdi in Early Islam.” Islamic Legal Studies Program Lecture, Harvard University Law School. May 2018.

“The Legacy of *Taqrib* in the Muslim World.” First Annual Symposium on Islam, Dialogue, and Sectarian De-Escalation, Harvard Kennedy School of Government. April 2018.

“Early Shī’ī Discourse on Religious Leadership: Penitence, Revolution and Eschatology after Imam Ḥusayn.” Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, NJ. December 2017.

“Daylami Dynastic Formations, Military-Factionary Politics, and the Zaydi Imamate of the South Caspian.” University of Chicago Shi’i Studies Group Symposium. May 2017.

“Narrators, Narratives, and Biographies: Using Hadith Literature for Reconstructing Early Islamic History.” University of Chicago New Archival Knowledges Conference, Macroanalysis in the Humanities Working Group. May 2016.

“The Shī’ī Underground: Early Imāmī Formal and Informal Institutions.” University of Chicago Shi’i Studies Group Symposium. April 2016.

“Early Shi’i Socio-political Organization: An Exploration of Twelve Shi’i Underground Networks in the 9th-11th Centuries,” Macroanalysis in the Humanities Working Group. March, 2016.

“Daylami Dynastic Formations, Military-Factionary Politics, and the Zaydi Imamate of the South Caspian.” American Oriental Society 226th Annual Meeting, Boston, MA. March 2016.

“Juristic Innovation and Emulation in the Production of Shī‘ī Scholarly Thought: the Contributions of al-Shaykh al-Mufid.” Ways of Knowing Annual Conference on Religion, Harvard Divinity School. October 2015.

“Buyids and Beyond: Shi’ism, Power, and Military Organization in the Southern Caspian.” Arabic and Islamic Studies Workshop, Islamic Studies Program, Harvard University. April 2015.

“Early Shi’i Discourse on Religious Leadership: Penitence, Revolution and Eschatology after Imam Husayn.” Hartford Seminary, Hartford Connecticut. Sponsored by the Imam Ali Chair for Shi’i Studies and Dialogue Among Islamic Legal Schools. April 2015.

“Political Legitimacy, Religious Doctrine, and Sectarian Identity: Applying Social Network Analysis to Buyid Baghdad.” Middle East Studies Association (MESA) Annual Conference, Washington DC. November 2014.

“From Mercenaries to Amirs: The Politics of Military Rule under the Buyids in Baghdad.” Middle East History and Theory Conference (MEHAT), University of Chicago. May 2014.

“In the Shadow of the 12th Imam: Contestation in the Lesser Occultation; a Network Analysis Approach.” Middle East History and Theory Conference, University of Chicago (MEHAT). May 2013.

PUBLIC TALKS AND STUDENT OUTREACH

“Iran: Culture, Power & Civilization.” Naperville Central High School (Illinois). March 2021.

“Engage: Self-Discovery & American Pop-Culture.” Ma’rifa Conference. Harvard University. February 2021.

“Fireside Chat: Approaching Sectarianism and Geopolitics.” Ma’rifa Conference. Harvard University. February 2020.

“Pluralism and Islam in the United States.” With Payam Mohseni. Youth Workshops for High School and University Students. Masjid al-Hayy. Sanford, FL.

“Shi’ism in America.” With Payam Mohseni. Youth Workshops for High School and University Students. Islamic Center of America (largest mosque in North America). Dearborn, MI. September 2019.

“Shi’ism in Academia.” Conference of The Mahdi. United Muslim Association of America (UMAA). May 2016.

“Iranian Society: Paradoxical or Misunderstood?” At DePaul University for the Model United Nations Club and the Society for International Affairs. Chicago, IL. November 2009.

AWARDS & SCHOLARSHIPS

2021-2023	University of Chicago The Division of the Humanities Teaching Fellowship
2020	Islamic Scholarship Foundation ISF public policy scholarship recipient
2019	Hub Foundation Scholar Recipient of Hub Foundation scholarship for distinguished academic excellence and community service
2014-2020	University of Chicago Division of Humanities Fellowship
2013-2014	University of Chicago Foreign Language Acquisition Fellowship (FLAS)
2011	Georgetown University Awarded as top student in political journalism class
2010	DePaul University Pi Sigma Alpha (Political Science Honors Society)
2008-2012	DePaul University Dean’s List

LANGUAGES AND SKILLS

Languages	Persian (fluent) Arabic (advanced all levels) Mazandarani (fluent) French (reading ability) German (reading ability) Middle Persian (Pahlavi - beginning reading ability)
Software Skills	Islamic Digital Humanities software packages, Gephi social networking software, STATA statistical software

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Peer reviewer for publications, including for British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies (BJMES), Routledge

ACADEMIC MEMBERSHIPS

Middle East Studies Association (MESA)
American Oriental Society (AOS)

REFERENCES

Ahmed El Shamsy

*Associate Professor of Islamic Thought
Department of Near Eastern Languages and
Civilizations
The University of Chicago
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John Padgett

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Fred Donner

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History, Department of Near Eastern
Languages and Civilizations
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Payam Mohseni

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Director, Project on Shi'ism and Global Affairs
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