

SUHEIL LAHER

slaher@hartfordinternational.edu

EDUCATION

a) Academic Studies

- **Ph.D., Arabic and Islamic Studies**, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA **2014**
Concentration Areas: Arabic Language, Classical Arabic Literature, Hadith Studies, Rational Sciences (*al-‘ulūm al-‘aqliyya*)
Dissertation Title: Twisted Threads: Genesis, Development and Application of the Term and Concept of *Tawātur* in Islamic Thought
Coursework: Arabic Philology, Arabic Rhetoric, History of the Arabic Languages, Classical Arabic Literary Criticism, Classical Arabic Literature, Arabic Rhetoric (directed study), Second Language Acquisition, Persian Language, Persian Literature, Islamic Theology, Islamic Disputation Theory, Research Methods and Sources for Islamic Studies, and other subjects.
- **M.A. (Religious Studies)**, Boston University, Boston, MA **2007**
Thesis Title: A Twentieth-Century *Mujtahid*: The Life and Thought of Shaykh Abul-Fadl al-Ghumārī
Coursework: included theory of religion, sociology of religion, pre-Islamic poetry, Sufism.
- **M.S. (Physical Science)** University of West Virginia - Marshall University
- **S.B. (Electrical Engineering)**, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA

b) Islamic Traditional Studies

- Completed memorization of the Qur'an
- American Open University, Alexandria, VA **1996 - 2001**
Undergraduate Coursework: theology ('aqīda), law (*fiqh*), legal theory (*usūl al-fiqh*), Qur'anic and hadith sciences ('ulūm al-qur'ān, 'ulūm al-hadīth), prophetic biography (*sīra*), and other subjects.
- Private and non-institutional studies (mainly within the US, and some abroad) of traditional texts, on subjects including: Arabic grammar, *tajwīd* and canonical recitations (*qira'āt*), law (*fiqh*, including – to varying extents – all the major Sunni and Shi'i *madhhabs*), hadith texts and hadith sciences, theology ('aqīda).
- Specific authorizations (*ijazāt khāssa*) for texts in theology, law, hadith and other disciplines, as well as general authorizations (*ijazāt ‘āmma*), from numerous traditional scholars across the world.
- Cordoba Academy, Damascus, Syria
Samā‘ (audition certificates) for canonical works of *hadīth* and other classical texts.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Boston Islamic Seminary, Boston, MA

Lead Faculty,

Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies and Sciences

02/2022 – to date

- Teaching courses in the MIRL degree program
- Serving on Admissions Committee
- Other administrative service roles

Hartford Seminary, Hartford, CT

Faculty Associate in Quranic Studies

08/2019 – to date

- Teaching courses in Quran and Hadith studies, Islamic theology and law, Prophet Muhammad's Life, Peace Justice and Violence in Religious Texts
- Taught Arabic (MSA and Classical, from beginner through advanced levels)
- Supervising and advising on MA and PhD theses
- Administering and grading doctoral exams for proficiency in Classical Arabic
- Participating in preparing and administering comprehensive area exams for Ph.D. students
- Participating in Academic Council and Faculty meetings
- Serving as academic adviser for students assigned to me

Adjunct Professor

09/2017 – 05/2019

- Teaching graduate courses in Islamic Theology, Hadith, Classical Arabic, Quranic Analysis
- Advising Ph.D. committee on Arabic language proficiency
- Administering and grading doctoral exams for proficiency in Classical Arabic

Fawakih Institute, Herndon, VA

09/2014 – 02/2022

Dean of Academics and Senior Instructor

- Curriculum Lead and Supervisor
 - Leading and overseeing development and updates of curriculum materials and exercises for grammar, morphology, rhetoric, reading and listening skills for 6-level Classical Arabic program
- Teaching
 - beginner and intermediate courses in grammar, morphology, reading and listening skills
 - advanced reading seminars in classical Arabic, and Arabic rhetoric
 - advanced classical pedagogical texts in Arabic grammar
- Helping to oversee nationwide team of Arabic instructors (at one time extending across five states), providing academic support, and arranging instructor development and training

Director of Quran Studies

2012 – 2014

- Responsible for overseeing, guiding and participating in development of curriculum and materials.

Lecturer

Summers 2010 – 2013

- Taught Arabic and Islamic Studies courses at intensive programs in Boston, MA, Herndon, VA and Fishers, IN, and also advised on curriculum and content.

Boston Islamic Seminary, Boston, MA

09/2015 – 02/2022

Adjunct Faculty

Designed and taught courses in Islamic Law (*fiqh*), Legal Methodology (*usul al-fiqh*), Quranic Sciences ('*ulum al-qur'an*), Hadith Sciences ('*ulum al-hadith*), Development and Principles of the Schools of Islamic Law (*madhhabs*), Higher Objectives of Sacred Law (*maqasid al-shari'ah*), and Islamic Theology ('*aqida*)

Member of Curriculum Committee**Madina Institute Seminary**, Duluth, GA

09/2015 – to date

Lecturer in Islamic Law and Hadith Studies

Teaching classical texts (during intensive sessions of 3-6 days two to three times per year) in Islamic law, legal theory, Quran and hadith studies.

Brandeis University, Waltham, MA***Visiting Professor***

01/2016– 05/2017

- Taught courses on *Introduction to the Qur'an*, and *Muhammad: Life Teachings and Legacy*
- Planned and supervised doctoral-level Directed Study courses
- Supervised doctoral Qualifying Comprehensive Area Examination (written and oral) in *Formative Sources in Islamic Thought*

Lecturer in Arabic

Spring 2011, 09/2012 - 05/2013

- Taught 3rd-year and 1st- year Modern Standard Arabic

Harvard University, Cambridge, MA***Lecturer on Arabic***

09/2015 – 05/2016

- Developed and taught advanced Arabic reading seminar, in which students read both Arabic texts and secondary academic literature
- Developed and taught advanced classical Arabic reading class designed to introduce students to major genres of the Islamic Sciences and their texts
- Supervised senior thesis, and served as one of the examiners on the oral defense

Doctoral Research Fellow

08/2013 – 06/2014

Lecturer in Persian (Elementary Persian)

Spring 2011

Teaching Fellow (Dept of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) for:

Elementary Modern Standard Arabic (2011-12), Advanced Classical Arabic (2010-11), Intermediate Modern Standard Arabic (2009-11), Elementary Persian (Fall 2011), Al-Ghazālī: Theologian and Mystic (Fall 2010)

Boston University, Boston, MA

2005 - 2006

Lecturer in Arabic: Taught 2nd-year Modern Standard Arabic**Massachusetts Institute of Technology**, Cambridge, MA

1998 - 2014

Associate Chaplain

- Provided religious guidance and pastoral support to students.
- Delivered sermons, led prayers, and trained students to do so.
- Worked with university administration and board of chaplains.
- Assisted with and gave presentations for Addir Interfaith Fellowship program

- Assisted with curricular freshman seminar on Abrahamic religions
- Taught non-curricular classes on Islam

PUBLICATIONS

Book

- Laher, Suheil. *Tawātur in Islamic Thought: Transmission, Certitude And Orthodoxy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, December 2024).

Journal Articles:

- "Between Dogmatism and Speculation: A Critical Assessment of Qirā'āt Studies." *Journal of College of Sharia & Islamic Studies (Qatar University)*, 38.1 (2020) 176-190.
- "Re-Forming the Knot: Abul-Fadl al-Ghumari's (d. 1993 CE) Iconoclastic Neo-Traditionalism," *Journal of College of Sharia and Islamic Studies (Qatar University)*, 36.1 (2018). 203-218.

Conference Proceedings:

- Laher, Suheil. "Arabic Prayer, or Persian or both? Abū Ḥanīfa's view and its Legal Reception," in *Pre-modern comparative literary practice in the multilingual Islamic world(s)*, Proceedings of the British Academy, ed. Hany Rashwan, Huda J. Fakhreddine, and David Larsen, (Oxford University Press, 2024).
- (Co-Author), Hasnain, R., Queijo, J., Laher, S., & Sandahl, C. "Islam, Leprosy, and Disability: How Religion, History, Art, and Storytelling Can Yield New Insights and Acceptance." *Societies* 10.1 (2020): 6.
- "Through a Glass Darkly? Sea-Water, Bequests, and the Textualism-Tradition Tension in Islamic Law," in *What Difference Does Time Make?* special 100th-anniversary volume of American Oriental Society Midwest, Oxford: Archaeopress, 2019.
- (In Arabic): "The Fourth Hijri Century as a Pivotal Link in the History of the 'ulūm al-Qur'ān genre", in *Proceedings of International Symposium on the Quranic Sciences: Problems of Conception, Methodology and Function*, Rabat, Morocco: Dar al-Hadith al-Hasaniyya, 2019.

Review Essays:

- Laher, Suheil. "The Partial Eclipse of Seven Full Moons." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 142, no. 3 (2022). (Review Essay of Shady Nasser's *The Second Canonization of the Qur'ān*, Brill, 2020)
- Laher, Suheil. Review of *Salafism and Traditionalism: Scholarly Authority in Modern Islam*, by Emad Hamdeh" Cambridge University Press, 2021, 256 pages." *American Journal of Islam and Society* 39, no. 1-2 (2022): 148-161. (Review Essay)

Book Reviews:

- Laher, Suheil. Review of *Quranic Arabic: From Its Hijazi Origins to Its Classical Reading Traditions*, by Marijn van Putten" *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 144, no. 3 (2024): 696-699.
- Laher, Suheil. Review of *Al-Kashshaf: Al-Zamakhshari's Mu'tazilite Exegesis of the Qur'an*, by Kifayat Ullah. *Journal of the American Oriental Society*; Ann Arbor Vol. 141, Iss. 2,

(Apr-Jun 2021): 489-491.

- Laher, Suheil. Review of *The Emergence of Early Sufi Piety and Sunni Scholasticism: 'Abdallāh b. al-Mubārak and the Formation of Sunni Identity in the Second Islamic Century*, by Feryal Salem. *American Journal of Islam and Society* 35, no. 3 (2018): 68-72.

Translations:

- Book: "Islamic Medical Jurisprudence (by Saudi Society for Studies in Medical Jurisprudence): Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University, 2023, 236 pages." (Arabic to English)
- Poem: Ahmed Shawqi's *Poem on Teachers and Education*, with brief introduction and notes, published on my blog, 2018.
- Article: "Tawarruq: The Practical Scenario in which it is implemented," by Mufti Taqi Usmani, in *The Tawarruq Debate in Islamic Finance*. ed. Frank E. Vogel, S. Nazim Ali, Umar Oseni. Edward Elgar, 2017. (Arabic to English)
- Poems: Translations of Medieval and Modern Arabic Poetry, in literary journal *Metamorphoses* (pub. Smith College, Northampton, MA), Vol. 15, Iss 1-2, Spring - Fall 2007.

Other:

- Foreword to Brendan Newlon (ed.), *The Islamic Studies Notebook: A Student Manual of Islamic Traditions*. CreateSpace Publishing, 2018.
- *The History of Arabic Rhetoric*, 5500-word essay tracing the historical development of the field of Arabic rhetoric, published on my blog, 2017
- Encyclopedia article on "Mu'amalat" in *Oxford Encyclopedia of Islam and Law* (pub. Oxford University Press, 2012)
- Encyclopedia articles (4) on:
 - "Ad (ancient Arabian tribe)," "Advice (*Nasiha*)," "Demanding Credit (*al-mann*)," "Blessings,"in *Integrated Encyclopedia of the Qur'an* (pub. Center for Islam and Science, Canada), vol I 2013, vol II 2024.
- "Indiscriminate Killing in the Light of Islamic Sacred Texts," article in collaborative volume: *The State We Are In: Identity, Terror and the Law of Jihad*. ed. Aftab Malik. Bristol: Amal Press, 2006.

In Process:

- "Phonological Flux: The Qurra' and the Ḥijāzī-Tamīmī Cleavage," journal article, to potentially be submitted to the Journal of Quranic Studies by June 2025.
- "Imagination in Exegesis - Zamakhsharian *Takhyil* and its Sunni Reception," journal article **draft in progress**, projected submission for review to *Middle Eastern Literatures* journal by 12/31/2025
- Book: Introduction to Arabic Rhetoric, Volume I: Figurative Language, draft completed and used several times for teaching.
- (Co-author) Book: Quranic Arabic, 4-volume series, working draft completed and used several times for teaching.
- Translations into English of classical Islamic texts

- A 3rd-century text on hadith transmission, history and criticism: *Muqaddimat Sahih Muslim*, with selections of Imam al-Nawawi's commentary, unpublished draft
- A 3rd/4th-century Hanafi Sunni legal manual: *Mukhtasar al-Quṣūrī*, translations of sections on worship, marriage & divorce, and commercial transactions, with annotations from other Hanafi sources, first draft
- A 3rd/4th-century Hanafi Sunni Creed: *al-`Aqīda al-Tahāwiyya*, first draft
- The Direction Debate: Razi vs Ibn Taymiyyah, an annotated translation, draft

PRESENTATIONS

- "Interfaith Marriage in Islamic Law," *Assembly of Muslim Jurists of America* annual conference, September 2024.
- "Science, Philosophy and Miracles: Muslim Responses to Hume" at the conference *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwah (Proofs of Prophethood) and their significance for Contemporary Times*, Hammad Bin Khalifah University, Doha, Qatar, September 2024.
- "Gender Identity Issues, Transgenderism, Sex-Change Treatment in Islamic Law" *Assembly of Muslim Jurists of America* annual conference, September 2023.
- "Arabic Prayer, or Persian or both? Abū Ḥanīfa's view and its Legal Reception", Oxford Comparative Criticism and Translation conference on *Pre-modern comparative literary practice in the multilingual Islamic world(s)*, July 2021.
- "Recurring Narratives in the Qur'ān: Exegetical Analyses of The Story of Moses," at *American Comparative Literature Association* annual conference 2021, (held online).
- (In Arabic): "The Fourth Hijri Century as a Pivotal Link in the History of the 'ulūm al-Qur'an genre", at *International Symposium on the Quranic Sciences: Problems of Conception, Methodology and Function*, Dar al-Hadith al-Hasaniyya, Rabat, Morocco, April 2019.
- (In Arabic): "Between Dogmatism and Speculation: A Critical Assessment of *Qira'at* Studies," paper at *Contemporary Western Trends in Quranic Studies*, Qatar University, May 2018.
- "Phonological Flux: The Hijazi-Tamimi Linguistic Dichotomy in Nafi's *Qira'ah*," paper at *American Oriental Society* annual (national) conference, Pittsburgh, PA; March 2018.
- *Co-Author*, "Listening to the Muslim Voice: How Islamic Values and Place Provide New Insights into Leprosy-Related Disability," paper presented at *Sense of Place in Leprosy & other Segregation Settlements* conference, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium, Nov 2017.
- "Defeating you on Your Terms: Traditionalist Islamic Theologians' Harnessing of a Rationalist Tool," paper at *American Oriental Society* annual (national) conference, Los Angeles, CA; March 2017.
- "Through a Glass Darkly? Sea-Water, Bequests, and the Textualism-Tradition Tension in Islamic Law," paper at *American Oriental Society Midwest* (regional) Conference; St Mary's College, South Bend, IN; Feb 2017.
- Sharia Respondent to academic papers on "Takaful", at *Harvard University Islamic Finance Forum*, 2014.
- "Re-Forming the Knot - The Iconoclastic Traditionalism of Abul-Fadl al-Ghumari," at *Contours of Late Sunni Traditionalism*, invitation conference, Duke University, NC, 2010.
- "Imagination in Exegesis - Zamakhsharian *Takhyil* and its Sunni Reception," paper, as part of a panel entitled *Science, Culture and Society Part II: The Secrets of Eloquence*:

Linguistic Expression in Medieval Arabic Thought and Practice at Middle Eastern Studies Association, Annual Conference, Boston 2009.

- Co-presenter on "Islam and Disability: Theory and Practice," at
 - *Ruderman Foundation Summit on Inclusion*, Boston, MA, 12/2019
 - *Collaborative on Faith and Disability, Webinar Series*, Spring 2019, 1/23/2019
 - *Summer Institute for Theology and Disability*, Duke University Divinity School, Raleigh, NC, 06/2018.
- Presenter on panel entitled, "Religious Leadership in the 21st Century - How to Avoid a Clash of Civilizations," at the *MIT Chaplain's Seminar*, Cambridge, MA, 10/2007.
- Presenter on panel, "The Changing Face of College Chaplaincy," at *NASPA Annual Conference (Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education)*, Boston, MA, 2002.
- Guest Lecturer on Islam, Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, MA, 01/17/2012

AWARDS

Harvard University Certificate of Distinction in Teaching: Fall 2015, Spring 2016

- Outstanding performance as Lecturer in Advanced Classical Arabic. Fall 2015, Spring 2016
- Outstanding performance as Teaching Fellow in Intermediate Modern Standard and Advanced Classical Arabic. Fall '10, Fall '11, Spring '11

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- Member of the *American Oriental Society*
- Member of the *American Comparative Literature Association*
- Member of the *American Society of Philosophy and Theology*
- Peer reviewer for the following academic journals:
 - *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, *(Routledge) Journal of Disability and Religion*, *HTS Theological Studies*, *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, *Journal of College of Sharia and Islamic Studies* (Qatar University), *Journal of Semitic Studies*
- Book peer reviewer for Cambridge University Press.
- Senior Curriculum Advisor, Fawakih Institute for Arabic
- Doctoral dissertation examiner, *Islamic University of Minnesota*

LANGUAGES (according to CEFR achievement guideline)

- English: Mother Tongue
- Arabic (Classical): Mastery; Arabic (Modern Standard): Advanced
- French: Reading: Advanced Intermediate, Speaking: Elementary
- Urdu: Reading: Intermediate, Speaking: Elementary
- Persian: Reading: Threshold/Intermediate, Speaking: Elementary
- German: Reading: Elementary, Speaking: Beginner
- Hindi: Reading: Beginner, Speaking: Elementary
- Gujarati: Reading: Beginner, Speaking: Elementary
- Judaeo-Arabic: Reading: Beginner/ Elementary
- Hebrew (Classical): Reading: Beginner