

Omer Awass, Ph.D.
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EDUCATION

Ph.D., Religious Studies. Specialization: Islamic Law. 2014.

Temple University. Department of Religion.

Dissertation Title: *Fatwa: The Evolution of a Legal Practice and its Influence on Muslim Society.*

M.A., Religious Studies. Specialization: Islamic Studies. 2010.

Temple University. Department of Religion.

ED.M., Education. Specialization: TESOL. 2005

State University of New York at Buffalo. Graduate School of Education.

2002-2003 engaged in computer literacy training sessions at various private and public educational institutions.

Licence (equivalent to B.A.), Quranic Studies. Specialization: Quranic Exegesis and its Sciences. 2001.

Al-Azhar University- Cairo, Egypt. Faculty of Theology (*Usul-edin*). (Arabic).

-All requirements for this degree have been completed except for one examination that will be taken at some indefinite time in the future.

Certificate of Completion, Hadith Studies. Specialization: Hadith and its Sciences. 2000.

Al-Azhar University- Damascus Branch: Al-Fatih Islamic College. Faculty of Theology (*Usul-edin*). (Arabic).

B.A., Philosophy. 1996.

State University of New York at Buffalo. Department of Philosophy.

B.A., Political Science. 1996

State University of New York at Buffalo. Department of Political Science.

OTHER AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Asian Philosophy and Religion | Islamic Thought | Western Religion and Philosophy | Religion and Modernity/Globalization | Religion and Colonialism/Postcolonialism | Religion and Social Scientific Theory | Religion and International Affairs | Ethnography | Islamic History | Islamic Finance | Middle East and North Africa | South Asia | Southeast Asia | East Africa | Indian Ocean Studies.

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Thematic: Fatwas | Legal Reasoning | Law and Society | Discourse and Practice | Anthropology and Sociology of Religion | Global Political Economy | International Affairs.

Areas: Muslim World | Middle East | Indian Ocean Societies | West Africa | East Asia.

TEACHING INTERESTS

Anthropology/History of the Middle East | Islamic History | Islamic Law and Legal Reasoning | Islam and Modernity | Religion and Globalization | Islamic Philosophy and Theology | Islamic Spirituality | Quranic Studies | World Religions | Western Religions | Asian Religions.

FACULTY EXPERIENCE

2020-Present. **Associate Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies.** American Islamic College, Chicago, IL.

2014-2020. **Assistant Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies.** American Islamic College, Chicago, IL.

- Chairman of the Faculty Council (2015-2016) and Director of Graduate Studies MA program (2014-2021).
- Teach a variety of undergraduate and graduate courses in Islamic Studies, advise students, member of several faculty committees.

Undergraduate Courses Taught:

- Islamic Origins, History, and Civilization
- History of Islamic Civilization: 1800 to the Present
- Introduction to Quranic Sciences.
- Introduction to the Prophetic Biography and Hadith Studies
- Introduction to Hadith Science
- Islamic Legal Reasoning
- Introduction to Islamic Finance
- Great Muslim Books and Thinkers
- Textual Sources in Islamic Studies

Graduate Courses Taught:

- The Muslim World: Colonial and Postcolonial Experiences
- Contemporary Islamic Commercial Law and Ethics: Theory and Practice
- Islamic Philosophy and Theology
- Advanced Quranic Studies
- Islamic Jurisprudence
- Hadith Sciences
- Prophetic Biography and Hadith Literature
- Great Debates in Islamic Theology.

- Readings in Hadith Literature.

2013-2016. **Adjunct Professor.** Hartford Seminary, Hartford, CT.

- Contemporary Islamic Ethics
- The Life of the Prophet Muhammad (online)

2012-2013. **Visiting Professor of Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations.**

The Macdonald Center for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations.
Hartford Seminary, Hartford, CT.

- Dialog in the World of Difference
- Contemporary Islamic Ethics
- The Quran and its Place in Muslim Life
- The Life of the Prophet Muhammad (online)

2006-2012. **Instructor,** Department of Religion. Temple University. Philadelphia, PA.

- Introduction to Islam
- Religions in the World
- Asian Thought and Behavior
- Religion & Society
- Western Religions

1993-1994. **Instructor,** Cora P. Maloney College. SUNY at Buffalo, NY.

- Topics in Islamic Civilization
- Islam in America

RELEVANT TEACHING EXPERIENCE

6/11-8/11. **Instructor,** ISM Institute, Istanbul, Turkey.

- Taught English and World Religions courses to students from the Faculty of Theology at Marmara University.

9/04-8/05. **Instructor,** Adult Learning Center, Buffalo, NY.

- Taught English as a second language.

7/03-8/03 **Instructor,** Educational Opportunity Program. SUNY at Buffalo, NY.

- Taught a college preparation English composition course to incoming freshman students.

7/99-8/99. **Instructor,** USEV Educational and Cultural Foundation; Istanbul, Turkey.

- Taught Arabic as a second language to university students.

PUBLICATIONS

Forthcoming. "The New Shape of the Global Power-Field (GPF) After the Transformation of the Modern World-System Post-WWII: Further Outlines in the Evolution of the Field and its Impact on the Global South." *Journal of World-Systems Research*. Winter/Spring 2022.

“Outlines of a Global Power-Field (GPF) Theory: Mapping the Dynamics of the Modern World-System and its Penetration in the Middle East c. 1850-1950” *The Journal of World-System Research*. Summer 2021: Vol. 27 Issue 2.

"The Challenge of Religious Governance in the Secular International Political Order: Negotiating Islamic Law in Post-Revolutionary Iran." *Sociology of Islam* journal. 2021, 9:18-41.

"Fatwa, Discursivity, and the Art of Ethical Embedding." *The Journal of the American Academy of Religion*. September 2019, Vol. 87, No. 3, pp. 765–790.

“Authenticating Sirah Literature: A Case Study of Ibn Ishaq’s Ifk Report.” *The Muslim World* Vol.109, No. 3, pp. 327-342, July 2019.

"Contending with Capitalism: Fatwas and Neoliberal Ideology." *The Journal of World-System Research*. Winter 2019, Vol. 25 Issue 1.

“Fatwa, Discursivity, and the Production of Shari‘a.” In *Sharia Dynamics: Islamic Law and Sociopolitical Processes*, ed. Timothy P. Daniels, 31-61. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan, 2017.

“Secular Nationalism and Islam in the Twentieth Century Muslim World." *Hamdard Islamicus*. Winter 1996, Vol. XIX No.4.

“The Representation of Islam in the American Media." *Hamdard Islamicus*. Autumn 1996, Vol. XIX No.3.

Articles and Books Under Review:

Fatwa and the Making and Remaking of Islamic Law.

Book manuscript under review by Cambridge University Press.

“Reconceptualizing Secularization and Secularism: The Value-Inversion Theory.” Under review by the *Critical Historical Studies* journal.

“Modalities of Argumentation, Scriptural Reasoning, and the Structural Characteristics of Early Islamic Theological Discourse.” Under review by *Methodos* journal for a special volume on *Argumentation and Arabic Philosophy of Language*.

Articles, Book Chapters, and Conference Paper Proposals in Progress:

“Attaining Nationhood: Historical Antecedents to the Emergence of the Nation-State in the Middle East.” Article currently being written. To be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal.

CONFERENCE PAPERS/PRESENTATIONS

4/13-16/2022. "Spontaneity: An Enduring Principle in the Chinese Theory of Action." Accepted paper proposal for The Association of Chinese Philosophers in America (ACPA) Group Sessions at the 2022 Pacific Division Meeting of the American Philosophical Association (APA): Vancouver, Canada.

3/9-3/12, 2022 "Knowledge Without Borders: Epistemic Communities, Discursive Tradition, and the Contemporary Transmission of Islamic Scholarship in the Western Indian Ocean." Accepted paper proposal for the German University of Technology Research Centre Indian Ocean's conference on "Silk Roads by Land and Sea." Muscat, Oman.

12/1/2020. "The Quran and Its Structural Influence on Early Islamic Theological Discourse." Paper delivered (online) at the American Academy of Religion annual conference.

3/30/2019. "Re-Embedding the Economy: Fatwas, Islamic Finance, and Neoliberal Capitalism." Paper delivered at the International Studies Association annual conference. Toronto, CA.

11/18/2018. "Fatwa and the Art of Ethical Embedding." Paper delivered at the American Academy of Religion annual conference. Denver, CO.

4/14/2018. "Ibn Taymiyya's Fatwas on the Mongol Incursions c. 1300." Paper delivered at Midwest Association for the Middle East and Islamic Studies annual conference. Romeoville, IL.

4/7/2018. "Fatwa, Islamic Law, and Contemporary Governance in Iran: A Conversation with the Rafsanjanis." Paper delivered at International Studies Association annual conference. San Francisco, CA.

4/5/2018. "Fatwas and Capitalism: Discursive Responses to Neoliberal Economic Practices." Paper delivered at International Studies Association annual conference. San Francisco, CA.

2/8/2018. "Negotiating Islamic Law in Post-Revolutionary Iran." Presentation: Invited faculty to the Islamic Studies Workshop in conjunction with the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Chicago. Chicago, IL.

12/14-16/2017. "Normative Responses to Neoliberal Globalization: Fatwas and the Capitalist Economy." Paper to be delivered at the Association of Global South Studies annual conference. Marrakesh, Morocco.

3/21/2017. "Politicizing Religion and the Politics of Religion." Panel discussion: Invited faculty to the Center for Global Islamic Studies and Bob Graham Center for Public Speaking at the University of Florida. Gainesville, FL.

2/22/2017. "Contending with Capitalism: Postcolonial Fatwas on Islamic Economics and Finance." Paper delivered at International Studies Association annual conference. Baltimore, ME.

1/4/2017. "Fatwa, Shari'a, and the Postcolonial Condition." Presentation: Invited faculty to Misbah University. Qom, Iran

5/7/2016. "Fatwa, Islamic Law, and Modernity." Paper delivered at the Middle East History and Theory Conference at the University of Chicago. Chicago, IL.

4/7/2016. "Monotheism and Prophecy in Sunni Theology." Presentation: Invited faculty to *Sunnis and Shi'ites in Historical Perspective: Differences and Commonalities*. A symposium sponsored by the Department of Religion at George Washington University. Washington, D.C.

12/16/2015. "Transformation in Islamic Law through the Lens of the Postcolonial Fatwa." Paper delivered at the International Conference for Legal Pluralism for the Commission on Legal Pluralism in collaboration with the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology. Mumbai, India.

12/3/2014. "Fatwa, Discursivity, and the Production of Shari'a." Paper delivered at the American Anthropological Association annual conference. Washington, D.C.

RESEARCH/FELLOWSHIPS

1/2021- 2/2021. **Muhammadiyah** and **Nahdhatul Ulema (NU)**, Jakarta and Yogyakarta, Indonesia. [Research interviews conducted via Zoom].

- Conducting research interviews with members of national fatwa councils of these three major Indonesian Islamic organizations on contemporary approaches to fatwa production in Indonesia and the impact of these fatwas on Indonesian society and policies of the state.

12/2019-1/2020. **Research on Contemporary Tran-Saharan Transmission of Knowledge**. Dakar, Senegal.

- Interviewed Senegalese educators regarding their motivations, modalities, and experiences of studying Arabic and Islamic Studies in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) to explore the changes and continuities in the transmission of religious knowledge across the Sahara region.
- Interviewed the pioneering founders of Islamic finance in Senegal regarding the birth and growth of the Islamic finance industry in West Africa and its links to global Islamic finance.

12/2018-1/2019. **Al-Azhar's Islamic Research Academy (AIRA)**. Cairo, Egypt.

- Interviewed the Secretary-General of the Islamic Research Academy Dr. Mohey El-Din Afifi on the changing role of the Academy's fatwas in Egyptian society and the coordination of fatwa production between the Academy and other national fatwa issuing

bodies like Egypt's Dar al-Ifta and Al-Azhar's Council of Supreme Scholars (Hay'at Kibar al-Ulema).

- Interviewed the President of the AIRA's Fatwa Commission (Lajnat al-Fatwa) Dr. Sa'id Amer and members of the Council's fatwa issuing committee on how realities in contemporary Egyptian society influence the conclusions reached in their fatwas.

12/2017-1/2018. **Al-Majlis al-Ilmi al-Ala (Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs)**. Rabat, Morocco.

- Conducted research interviews with members of the Moroccan government's official fatwa issuing body (Hay'at al-Ifta) of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs about its fatwa production process and their responses to the challenges posed by modernity. Obtained the officially sanctioned contemporary fatwas of the Moroccan state for future analysis.
- Interviewed the directors of the Local Councils for Islamic Affairs (Al-Majalis al-Ilmiah al-Mahaliah) in the cities of Fes, Marrakech, and Tangiers regarding the role of such Councils in Moroccan society.

12/2016-1/2017. **Researched Fatwas of Iranian-based Twelver Shiite Jurists**, Qom, Iran.

- Interviewed the late Ayatollah Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, former President of the Islamic Republic of Iran and President of the Expediency Council (Majma Tashkhis Maslahat) and Mr. Muhammad Rafsanjani, former Minister of Television and Radio for Iran and current member of the Expediency Council, about the role of fatwa in the policies of the Iranian government.
- Interviewed major Iranian and Iranian-based scholars, jurists (mujtahids), and master-jurists (marja's) in several Iranian cities (Isfahan, Mashhad, Qom, and Tehran) on contemporary approaches to fatwa production in the Twelver Shiite school of law. Among these informants: Ayatollah Jawad Fadil Lankarani, Ayatollah Mahdi Hadawi, Ayatollah Alawi Bourjourdi, Ayatollah Riyadh Al-Hakim, Ayatollah Kamal Haidari, etc.
- Interviewed students who were training to be Twelver Shiite jurists (*dars al-kharij*) on their process of instruction.

12/2015-1/2016. **Islamic Fiqh Academy (India)**, New Delhi, India.

- Carried out field research on the fatwa production processes of the organization through the agencies of its Secretary-General Shaikh Khalid Saifullah Rahmani and obtained the collection of fatwas of the Academy for future analysis.

12/2015-1/2016 **Al Mahadul Aali Al Islami**, Hyderabad, India.

- Researched and documented the contemporary fatwa training program at this Indian Islamic institute that grants mufti diplomas to those who undergo this preparation.

8/2015 **Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs of Oman**, Muscat, Oman.

- Carried out research interviews with several of the Ministry's muftis including the Deputy Grand Mufti Kahlan Al-Kharusi on its fatwa production process and obtained the collections of fatwas of the Ministry for future analysis.
- Researched Ibadi Islam with the assistance of professors from Sultan Qaboos University and The College of Shariah in Muscat, Oman.

1/12/2015-1/23/2015 **International Islamic Fiqh Academy** (An organ of the Organization for Islamic Cooperation), Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

- Conducted research interviews with the Director of its Fatwa Department Dr. Abdulqahir Qamar and members of the fatwa committee about its fatwa production process and obtained the collection of fatwas of the Academy for future analysis.

1/1/2015-1/11/2015 **Presidency of Religious Affairs, Republic of Turkey**, Ankara, Turkey.

- Conducted research interviews with the president of the High Board of Religious Affairs and members of the Department of Legal Consultancy on the process of fatwa production in the Presidency (Turkey's highest governing religious body) and obtained the collection of fatwas of the Presidency for future analysis.

6/2011-8/2011 **ISM Institute**, Istanbul, Turkey.

- Performed independent research on historical Ottoman fatwas and traditional fatwa procedures under the supervision of Murteza Bedir, Professor of Islamic Law at Istanbul University.

8/14/08-9/7/08 **International Institute of Islamic Thought**. Herndon, VA.

- Scholars Research Grant. Carried out research in Zanzibar, Tanzania and Mombasa and Lamu, Kenya. Conducted interviews in these three regions with East African scholars/teachers who studied traditional Islam in the Middle East to document the existing scholarly networks across Indian Ocean societies.

7/14/08-8/14/08 **International Institute of Islamic Thought**. Herndon, VA.

- Scholars Research Program. Selected to participate in a five-week research seminar exploring the intersections of Muslim scripture and modern life. Wrote a paper entitled: "Authenticating the Sunnah" which applies modern historical and textual methods to authenticate Islamic sacred texts. Presented paper in program conference.

7/07-9/07 **Henry Luce Foundation**. New York, NY.

- Indonesian Fellowship. Completed a course in religion and modernity at the Center for Religious and Cross-Cultural Studies at Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Conducted interviews in Yogyakarta with Indonesian scholars/teachers who studied traditional Islam in the Middle East to document the existing scholarly networks across Indian Ocean societies.

LANGUAGES

English, Arabic, Mandarin (beginners).