

ASU Council of Arabic and Islamic Studies presents

Muslim Modernities, Pop Culture, and Politics: Religion and Politics in the Post-Secular Age

Annual Lecture Series featuring

Dr. John O. Voll

Professor Emeritus of Islamic History at Georgetown University.

Organized and moderated by Dr. Souad T. Ali, CAIS Founding Chair

October 17, 2018, 6:30 – 8:00 PM

ASU Tempe Campus. Location MU 228

Free & open to all ASU students, faculty, staff

The popularity of heavy metal music and hip hop in the contemporary Muslim world does not reflect a decline of religion in Muslim life. Contrary to many expectations, secular modernity did not displace religion. Contemporary Muslim culture does, however, reflect continuing transformations of the relationships between religion and politics, and between tradition and modernity. Although analysts sometimes use “religion-politics,” “tradition-modernity,” and “religious-secular” as labels for describing separate, contrasting, and competing elements in society, most parts of contemporary Muslim communities are not either religious or secular (or traditional or modern), they are both. One can be both modern and religious.

In the 21st century, although Islamist militants get the most attention for combining religion and politics, hip hop hijabis along with Muslim democrats are both important examples of basically non-violent syntheses of the religious and the secular. In the early 20th century, religion was seen as the enemy of modernity and secularism, and by mid-century, modernity and secularism (and associated movements like secular nationalism) were viewed as the successful alternatives to religion. However, the transformations of modernity itself by the 21st century mean that in the 21st century, relations between religion and politics have changed from old-style secularist competitions to new syntheses of religion and the secular, reflected in both Muslim politics and pop culture. This evolution is not distinctively Islamic but rather is also part of the global development of multiple modernities and post-secular religion.



Dr. John O. Voll is Professor Emeritus of Islamic History and past Associate Director of the Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University in Washington, DC. He graduated from Dartmouth College and received his M.A. degree in Middle Eastern Studies and his Ph.D. degree in History and Middle Eastern Studies from Harvard. He taught Middle Eastern and world history for thirty years at the University of New Hampshire before moving to Georgetown University. He is a specialist in modern Islamic history and the author of *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World*, co-editor of *Asian Islam in the 21st Century*, co-author of *Islam and Democracy After The Arab Spring* (Oxford University Press, 2015), and author, co-author, or editor of ten other books as well as numerous articles. He is a past president of the Middle East Studies Association and of the New England Historical Association, has served on the Boards of Directors of the American Council of Learned Societies, the Sudan Studies Association, the World History Association, the New Hampshire Humanities Council, and the New Hampshire Council on World Affairs, and was program chair for the 1999 annual meeting of the American Historical Association.

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