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UCT professor to explore “Radical Critical Fidelity” in inaugural lecture on Islamic Feminism

Muslim ethics have always been influenced by multiple and cosmopolitan intellectual heritages. Islamic feminism is one such contemporary development that makes a significant contribution to debates in Muslim ethics. Professor of religious studies at the University of Cape Town (UCT), Sa'diyya Shaikh will delve deep into this during her inaugural lecture titled “Radical Critical Fidelity: *Barzakhi* Journeys in Islamic Feminism” on Friday, 23 August 2024.

Committed to developing ever-more comprehensive forms of gender and social justice, Islamic feminism expands the ethical and intellectual archive within Muslim communities. Professor Shaikh specialises in the study of Islam, gender ethics, and feminist theory, with a special interest in Sufism. Her study of Islam began with an abiding interest in existential questions as well as a commitment to social justice – much of her work is animated by an interest and curiosity about the relationship between the realms of the spiritual and the political.

Professor Shaikh is the director of the Centre for Contemporary Islam at UCT. She has held research fellowships at Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin: Institute for Advanced Study (2016-2017) and at the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Studies (2020); and was a Fulbright PhD scholar. She is involved in a number of socially engaged networks and is a scholar-activist invested in ways to promote gender justice and social transformation.

In this lecture, she will trace key sources, epistemological concerns and theoretical explorations that have influenced her scholarship in Islamic feminism over the last two decades. Embracing metaphors of journeying and of in-betweenness (*the barzakhi*), she theorises Islamic feminism as a friendship with/in tradition characterised by a stance of ‘radical critical fidelity.’ This theorisation enables an understanding of Islamic feminism that is simultaneously defined by a radical love and commitment to the Islamic tradition as well as a radical critique of injustice in Muslim communities. Professor Shaikh argues that such a radical politics must engage evolving notions of gender justice while emphasising increasingly inclusive understandings of God, human beings, and community.

Date: Friday, 23 August 2024

Time: 17:30 for 18:00

Venue: Archie Mafeje Room, Bremner Building, Lower Campus

Please [RSVP](#) to attend the lecture in-person or request the link to watch the lecture online

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