**Sophia R. Arjana**

**Associate Professor of Religious Studies (Tenured), Department of History**

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**EDUCATION**

Ph.D. The University of Denver, 2011

M.T.S. Emory University, 2007

M.A. Columbia University, 1998

B.A. Hawaii Pacific University, 1993

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

*Western Kentucky University*

Associate Professor of Religious Studies, Department of History (\*Department of Philosophy and Religion was absorbed), August 2021

Associate Professor of Religious Studies, August 2020, Department of Philosophy and Religion

Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, August 2017-August 2020, Department of Philosophy and Religion

Courses Offered: World Religions; Islam; World Religious Literature; Islam, Sexuality, and Gender; Islam in America: Hope to Hip-Hop; Islam, Pilgrimage, and Modernity; Saints, Monsters, and Superheroes; Popular Culture and the Religious Marketplace; Religions of Asia

Academic Coordinator, Religion and Asian Religions and Cultures Programs, July 2021 – Present

Director, Social Media Relations, August 2018 – September 2021

Faculty Sponsor, Religious Studies Club, November 2018 – August 2022

Faculty Sponsor, MSA (Muslim Student Association), Fall 2022

Member, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (DEI/JEC), August 2021-Present

Member, Ogden Scholar Committee (PCAL Representative), 2021- Present

*Iliff School of Theology*

Visiting Assistant Professor of Religion, August 2011 – May 2017

Courses Offered: Islam; Identity, Power and Difference; Sufism; Seeing and Believing: Religion and Film; Comparative Mysticism; Abrahamic Traditions: Issues in Social Justice; Pilgrimage in Comparative Perspective; Islam and the West; Interreligious Dialogue: A Critical Analysis; Social Justice in Islam

Faculty Member, Diversities Committee

**RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP**

***Books***

*Buying Buddha, Selling Rumi: Orientalism and the Mystical Marketplace* (London: Oneworld, August 2020)

Reviewed: *Religion* (2020, L. Wilson), *Politics, Religion & Ideology* (2022, Brooke Schedneck)

*Veiled Superheroes: Islam, Feminism, and Popular Culture* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2017)

Reviewed: *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* (2018, S. Shapley)

*Pilgrimage in Islam: Traditional and Modern Practices* (London: Oneworld, 2017)

Reviewed: *Library Journal* (2018, S. Collins, J. Wetherbee), *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* (2017, N. Wani), *Publishers Weekly* (2018), *Reading Religion* (2018, M. Chenganankkatti), *Maydan* (2018, Kenny Schmitt)

*Muslims in the Western Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015)

Turkish Edition, *Bati Tahayyülünde Müslümanlar* (Ketebe, 2021)

2015 American Library Association Outstanding Title

Reviewed: *Journal of Islamic Studies* (2017, K. Sisneros), *Islamic Horizons* (2017), *Re-Orient* (A. Abbasi), *Publishers Weekly* (2016, J. Reiss), *Intellectual Discourse* (2015, N. Wani)

***Current Book Projects***

*Cultural Geographies and Mystical Tourism* (New York: Routledge, Under Contract)

*The Mosque with the Thatched Roof: Religion and Memory in Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, Under Contract)

***Journal Articles***

“Islam in the Public Square: Resistances and Counter Resistances,” *Islamic Perspective: Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities* (2018): 112-130.

“Filming Iran: Argo and the 1979 Iranian Revolution in Hollywood Film,” *Islamic Perspective: Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities* (2016): 21-42.

“Glass Palaces: The Role of Aineh-Kari in Shi’a Pilgrimage,” *Shi’a Studies* 2 (2011): 6-9.

“Light Upon Light: *Aineh-Kari* in Shi’a Pilgrimage Architecture,” *Journal of the Society for Arts in Religion and Theological Studies* 22, no. 3 (2011): 44-52.

***Book Chapters***

“The Veil in Popular Culture: Colonialism and Commodification,” *Gender and Postsecularity: Tensions and Transformations in Knowledge Production and Popular Culture,* Sternberg Press (Berlin), *Under Review.*

“Revisiting Borobudur: Pilgrimage, National Identity, and Constituting the Sacred in Java” (co-authored with Blayne Harcey), *Writing the Auto-ethnographic Self in Pilgrimage: Stories of Quest, Movement, and the Search for Transformational Identity*, ed. Elizabeth Lloyd-Parkes (New York: Routledge), *Accepted/Going to Press.*

“Paying Respects to The Greatest: Ziyarat in Louisville, Kentucky,” in *Writing the Autoethnographic Self in Pilgrimage: Stories of Quest, Movement, and the Search for Transformational Identity*, ed. Elizabeth Lloyd-Parkes (New York: Routledge), *In Process.*

“The Qur’an and Ms. Marvel’s Superheroes,” in *The Qur’an: Literary Dimensions*, ed. Shawkat Toorawa (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press), *Under Review.*

“Saints Among the Ricefields,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Islam in Asia*, ed. Chiara Formichi (New York: Routledge, 2022), 196-208.

“#VoiceOut: Sufi Hardcore Activism in the Lion City,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Islam and Gender*, ed. Justine Howe (New York: Routledge, 2021), 390-403.

“Red, White, and Blue: American Muslims and the Politics of Pilgrimage,” co-authored with Rose Aslan, in *Muslim Pilgrimage in the Modern World*, eds. Babak Rahimi and Peyman Eshaghi (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, June 2019), 112-130.

“The New Islamism: Remembrance and Liberation,” in *Ali Shariati and the Future of Social Theory: Religion, Revolution, and the Role of the Intellectual*, eds. Eyed Javad and Dustin Byrd (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 181-211.

“Monstrous Muslims: Historical Anxieties and Future Trends,” in *Religion and Popular Culture in America* (Third Edition), eds. David Forbes and Jeffrey Mahan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017), 85-100.

“Returning to the One: Postcolonial Muslim Liturgy,” in Only One Is Holy: Liturgy in Postcolonial Perspectives, ed. Claudio Carvalhaes (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015), 23-32.

“Jewish and Islamic Liberation Theologies,” in *Introducing Liberative Theologies*, ed. Miguel de la Torre (Ossining: Orbis Books, 2015), 67-85.

“Reflection: Muslim Monsters,” in *Media, Religion, and Culture*, ed. Jeffrey Mahan (New York: Routledge, 2014).

“Turning Turk: Anxieties Surrounding Bodily Difference in Orientalist Discourse,” in *Orientalism: A Eurocentric Vision of the ‘Other,’* ed. Seyed Javad (London: International Peace Studies Center, 2014), 105-128.

***Encyclopedia Articles***

“Islam and Pop Culture in North America,” *The Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*, July 2023.

“Muhammad in Modern Europe and North America,” *The Bible and Its Reception*, ed. David Kling. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020.

“Islam and Popular Culture.” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. John Barton. New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming.

“Fana/Baqa” and “Dreams.” *Islam: A Worldwide Encyclopedia*, ed. Cenap Cakmak. London: SAGE Reference, 2017.

“Islam.” (Co-authored with Laurens de Rooj). Encyclopedia of Economics and Society, eds. Frederick F. Wherry and J. Geoffrey Golson. London: SAGE Reference, 2015.

“The Monsters of Islamophobia: The Medieval Period (1700-1450) and “The Monsters of Islamophobia: Early Modernity (1550-1920).” *Muhammad in History, Thought, and Culture: An Encyclopedia of the Prophet of God*, eds. Coeli Fitzpatrick and Adam Hani Walker. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2013.

***Review Essays***

Review of Liz Bucar, *Stealing My Religion: Not Just Any Cultural Appropriation*. Harvard University Press, 2022, in *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, Vol. 38, no. 1 (2023): 187-189.

Review of Patricia Spyer, *Orphaned Landscapes: Violence, Visuality, and Appearance in Indonesia*. Fordham University Press, 2022, in *Politics, Religion & Ideology*, Vol. 23, no. 1 (2022): 1-2.

Review of Kristian Petersen, ed. *New Approaches to Islam in Film* (Routledge Series in Religion and Film). New York: Routledge, 2021, in *The Journal of Religion and Film*, Vol. 26, no. 1, Article 61 (2022): 1-5.

Review of Sylvia Chan-Malik, *Being Muslim: A Cultural History of Women of Color in American Islam*. New York: NYU Press, 2018, in *The* *Journal of Asian American Studies*, Vol 23, no. 2 (2020): 297-299.

Review of Amira Mittermaier, *Giving to God: Islamic Charity in Revolutionary Times*. Omaha: University of Nebraska Press, 2019, in *The Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol 88, no. 1 (2020): 284-287.

Review of Sarah Eltantawi, *Shari’ah on Trial: Northern Nigeria’s Islamic Revolution*. Oakland: University of California, 2017, in *Reading Religion* (online)

Review of Matthew Pierce, *Twelve Infallible Men: The Imams and the Making of Shi’ism*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016, in *Reading Religion* (online)

Review of Faegheh Shirazi, *Brand Islam: The Marketing and Commodification of Piety*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013, in the *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, Vol 35, no. 1 (2018): 103-108.

Review of Emma Tarlo and Annelies Moors, eds. *Islamic Fashion and Anti-Fashion: New Perspectives from Europe and North America*. City: Publisher, year, in the *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* Vol. 32, no. 2 (2015): 104-107.

Review of Reza Shah-Kazemi, *The Spirit of Tolerance in Islam*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2012, in the *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* Vol. 31, no. 3 (2014): 129-133.

Review of John Renard, *Islam and Christianity: Theological Themes in Comparative Perspective*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011, in the *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* Vol. 30, no. 3 (2013): 113-116.

Review of Ceri Oeppen and Angela Schlenkoff, eds. *Beyond the Wild Tribes: Understanding Modern Afghanistan and Its Diaspora*. City: Publisher, year, in the *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* Vol. 30 no. 2 (2013): 105-109.

***Digital Scholarship***

“Rejecting the Mara of Marketing,” *Sakyadhita*: *International Association of Buddhist Women*, Volume 30 (Winter 2021)

“Crafting the Syllabus: Representation, Expertise, and Student Learning,” *Hazine.info* [For Researchers of Diverse Islamic Worlds], October 8, 2021

“Enchantment, Orientalism, and Modern Mysticism,” *themaydan.com*, August 6, 2020.

“Hajj 2020: There Is Much More to Pilgrimage than the Journey to Mecca.” *Inews.com*, July 29, 2020.

“Islamic Pilgrimages and Sacred Space,” Discovering Sacred Texts, *The British Library*, 2020.

“From Moorish-Indios to Park 51: A Brief History of Islamophobia in the United States,” Karamah: Muslim Women Lawyers for Human Rights, *Online Symposium on Shari’ah and Religious Freedom*, 2011.

***Newspaper Articles and Editorials***

“Virtual Hajj in Progress for Pilgrims,” *INewspaper* (London), July 30, 2020, page 22.

***Refereed Conference Papers***

“Buddhism, Feminism, and the Commodification of the Female Body,” Author Meets Critics: Sharon A. Suh’s ‘Occupy This Body; A Buddhist Memoir,’ Buddhism in the West Unit and Buddhist-Critical Constructive Unit, American Academy of Religion Annual Conference, November 2021.

“A Thousand Hajjs: Reconsidering Text and Body in the Study of Islamic Pilgrimage.” American Academy of Religion Rocky Mountain-Great Plains Regional Meeting, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO, November 2017.

“Islamic Pilgrimage Reconsidered: Sunni, Shi’i, and the Other in Definitions of *Ziyarat*.” American Academy of Religion Rocky Mountain-Great Plains Regional Meeting, University of Denver, Denver CO, November 2016.

“Postcolonial Muslim Cool: Dismantling Orientalism through New Media.” International Conference on Media, Gender, and Religion, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO, 2016.

“The Colonial Imaginary vs. Postcolonial Feminist Texts: Muslim Lolitas, Superheroes, and Anti-Heroes.” International Conference on Media, Gender, and Religion, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO, 2016.

“Dracula’s Wives: The Female Muslim Monster in Modernity.” Study of Islam Unit. American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA, 2015.

“Islamic Reform: Challenging the Myth of Progress.” Society of Race, Ethnicity, and Religion Biennial Conference, Iliff School of Theology, Denver, CO, 2015.

“A Monster Returns Home: The Trope of Turning Turk in Showtime’s Homeland.” International Conference on Media and Religion: The Global View, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO. 2014.

“Every Piece of Land is Karbala: Souvenirs and Permanent Mementos.” Study of Islam Unit. American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Baltimore, MD, 2013.

“Variations on the Un-Dead: Muslim Monsters from Dracula to Post-9/11 Zombies.” Study of Islam Unit. American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL, 2012.

“‘When the Mirror Shatters It Becomes a House of Mirrors’: *Aineh-Kari* in Religious Contemplation at *Imamzadeh* and *Ziyarah Gah Moghadas*.” 40th Annual Medieval Studies Workshop at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, 2012.

“Virtual Horrors: Racial and Sexual Monstrosity in *300*’s ‘Persians.’” The International Conference on Digital Religion, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO, 2012.

“The Function of *Aineh-Kari* in Imamzadeh: Mirror-Work in Pilgrimage Shrine Traditions.” Mutual Perceptions: The 26th Annual Middle East History and Theory Conference at the University of Chicago, Chicago, IL, 2011.

“Saracens, Giants, Dog-Headed Men and Other Medieval Fantasies of the Muslim.” University of Pennsylvania Middle East Center Graduate Student Conference on the Non-Human, the Sub-Human, and the Superhuman: Exploring Nature(s) in the Middle East, Philadelphia, PA, 2011.

“When Did Muslims Become Monsters? Islam in the Medieval Imagination.” University of Arizona 11th Annual Conference in Middle Eastern Studies, Tucson, AZ, 2011.

“Race, Islam, and Three Gothic Monsters: Vathek, Zofloya, and Dracula.” AAR/SBL Regional Meeting, Iliff School of Theology, Denver, CO, 2011.

Panelist, “Islam in the Public Square.” AAR/SBL Regional Meeting, Iliff School of Theology, Denver, CO, 2011.

“Light Upon Light: Aineh-Kari in Shi’a Shrine Architecture.” Society for Arts in Religion and Theological Studies Unit. American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA, 2011.

“The Turk’s Head: European Constructions of the Ottoman Turk as Imaginary Monster.” The Turks and Islam: An International Conference, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, 2010.

“Old and New Sufism: Postmodernism and Islam.” AAR/SBL Regional Meeting, Creighton University, Omaha, NE, 2010.

Panelist, “Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?” AAR/SBL Regional Meeting, Creighton University, Omaha, NE, 2010.

“Shish Mahal: The Question of Mirror Mosaics in Shi’a Shrines.” AAR/SBL Regional Meeting, Regis University, Denver, CO, 2009.

***Invited Lectures and Presentations***

“Buddha Bodywear and Rumi Restaurants: Orientalism and the Search for Enchantment,” Arizona State University, March 22, 2022

“Islam, Commodification, and Cultural Colonialism,” John Hopkins University, February 15, 2022.

“Modern Mysticism and Cultural Appropriation,” Keynote Lecture, Conference on Western Buddhism, INDICA, September 25, 2021.

“Muslim Superheroes and the Role of Feminism in Postcolonial Narratives,” Washington University, April 22, 2021.

“Islamic Feminism and Graphic Narratives,” Minnesota State University, March 24, 2021.

“Islam, Sufism, and Modern Mysticism,” John Hopkins University, September 28, 2020.

“Muslim Monsters in History,” New College of Florida, September 9, 2020.

“Pilgrimage, Technology, and Ritual in the Age of COVID,” Islamic Responses to COVID: Authority and Religiosity in #Islamic Communities and Digital Worlds Conference, July 1, 2021.

“Buying Buddha, Selling Rumi: Orientalism and the Mystical Marketplace,” Center for Islam in the Contemporary World Summer Book Talk, June 23, 2021.

“Muslim Superheroines and the Role of Feminism in Postcolonial Narratives,” Washington University, April 22, 2021.

“Islamic Feminism and Graphic Narratives,” The Islamic Feminism Book Club, Minnesota State University, March 24, 2021.

“Islam, Sufism, and Modern Mysticism,” John Hopkins University, September 28, 2020.

“Muslim Monsters in History,” New College of Florida, September 9, 2020.

“Ms. Marvel and Feminist Superheroes in Islamic Graphic Texts.” Department of Religion, Vanderbilt University, April 2019.

“Islam in America.” Madrasah Mu’Allimat Muhammadiyah, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, December 2018.

Workshop panelist, “Scholarly Writing and Publishing.” Study of Islam Unit. American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Denver, CO, November 2018.

Respondent, “Islam and Gender: The State of the Field.” Islam, Gender, and Women Unit. American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Denver, CO, November 2018.

Panelist, “Monsters, Monster Theory, and Religion: Lords of the Underworld Session.” American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Denver, CO, November 2018.

Workshop leader, “Using Infographs as Pedagogical Tools.” Technology and Humanities Camp. American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Denver, CO, November 2018.

“Veiled Superheroes.” Centre College, Danville, KY, April 2018.

Workshop leader, “Challenging Textualism, Patriarchy, and Orientalism: Teaching about Muslim Bodies and Materiality in the Academy and the Classroom.” Society of Race, Ethnicity, and Religion Biennial Conference, Vanderbilt School of Divinity, Nashville, TN, 2017.

Presider, “Devotion to the Family of the Prophet in the Islamic Hagiographical Tradition.” Study of Islam Unit. American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, San Antonio, TX, November 2016.

“Muslim Monsters: Pre-Modern and Modern Imaginings of Islam.” Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, March 2015.

“Muslims in the Western Imagination.” Universitas Islam Negeri, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, March 2015.

“Anti-Muslim Rhetoric, Islamophobia, and the Western Imagination.” Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, March 2015.

“Religion, Media, and Politics.” Department of Religious Studies, University of Denver, Denver, CO, 2012.

Panelist, “Storytelling, Media & Muslims in America.” Conference on Muslims in the Heartland, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO, October 2012.

“Representations of Muslim Men in Islamophobic Discourse: Monsters, Terrorists, and Others.” Department of Religion, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO, October 2011.

“Vampires, Aliens, and Zombies: Muslim Monsters in Hollywood Film.” Department of Religious Studies, University of Denver, Denver, CO, 2011.

**GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS**

Grant Recipient, “Islam on the Edges” Program, Center for Islam in the Contemporary World, Fall 2019.

Recipient, QTAG (Quick Turn Around Grant), Potter College of Arts and Letters, December 2018.

AAR Travel Award, American Academy of Religion, November 2017.

Dissertation Fellowship, University of Denver, Denver, CO, 2010-2011.

Luce Fellowship, Society for Arts in Religion and Theological Studies, 2009-2010.

School of Theological Studies Scholarship, Candler School of Theology, Emory University, 1995-1997.

John and Marcia Friede Fellowship in Oceanic Art, Department of Art History, Columbia University, New York, NY, 1993-1994.

National Dean’s List, Hawaii Pacific University, 1992-1993.

Recipient, Castle-Cooke Asian-Pacific Scholarship for Study Abroad, Hawaii Pacific University, 1992-1993.

**HONORS AND RECOGNITION**

Recipient, RCAP (Research and Creative Activities Program) Award for Sabbatical Research ($7,290), 2023-2024.

Nominee, Spring 2022 Teaching Award, Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning, Potter College of Arts and Letters, Western Kentucky University, May 2022.

Nominee, 2021 Faculty Award in Research & Creativity, Potter College of Arts and Letters, Western Kentucky University, December 2021.

Nominee, Fall 2021 Teaching Award, Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning, Potter College of Arts and Letters, Western Kentucky University, December 2021.

Nominee, Fall 2020 Teaching Award, Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning, Potter College of Arts and Letters, Western Kentucky University, December 2020.

Recipient, 2019 Faculty Award in Research & Creativity, Potter College of Arts and Letters, Western Kentucky University, April 2019.

Nominee, 2019 Faculty Award in Advising, Potter College of Arts and Letters, Western Kentucky University, April 2019.

Certificate of Achievement, 2018 WKU Chinese Spring Symposium, Western Kentucky University, April 2018.

**SERVICE**

***Western Kentucky University***

Jewish Studies Visiting Professor Search Committee, Member, AY 2021 - 2022

Justice and Equity Committee (History Department), Member, August 2021 – present

Ogden Scholar Committee, Member, August 2021 – present

Social Media Director, Author, Editor for Departmental Twitter @WKUPhilReligion, Manager of Department Facebook Account, Department of Philosophy and Religion, August 2018 – present

Faculty Advisor, Religious Studies Club, 2018 – present

Member, Potter College Curriculum Committee (PCCC), AY 2017 – 2018

**RELEVANT LANGUAGES**

Japanese, Persian, Arabic, Bahasa

**PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

American Academy of Religion

Society for Arts in Religion and Theology