

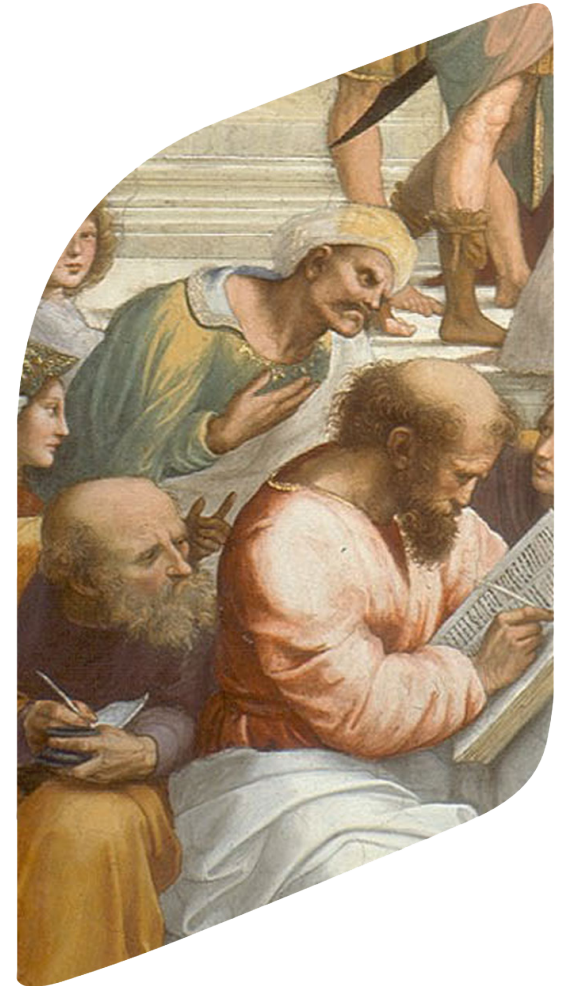
Inekas 6th Summer School | 2026

Online

September 3–5

Philosophy Beyond *Falsafa*

Reimagining the Historiography
of Islamic Philosophy



Coordinators

The Inekas Summer School | 2026

has been made possible through the enthusiasm and dedication of all the speakers and hosts who graciously accepted our invitation.

We extend our gratitude to our colleagues from Inekas, the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies at the University of Exeter, Habib University, and Hanif Center for Religious Studies for their collaborative efforts in coordinating this event.

(Names sorted alphabetically)



Fatemeh Bakhtiari

Mohammad Sajjad Entezari

Mohsen Feyzbakhsh

Mohammad Ghandehari

Farhad Ghoddoussi

Mahdi Jafari

Zahra Khatibi

MohammadReza Moini

Mohammad Mousavi

Mohammadhossein Naraghi

Razieh Sharifzadeh



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Sajjad Rizvi

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Nauman Naqvi



Hanif Center
for Religious Studies

Reza Akbari

Thursday, September 3

Nadja Germann
University of Freiburg

Ayşenur Ünügür–Tabur
University of Birmingham

Dimitri Gutas
Yale University

David Vishanoff
University of Oklahoma

Asad Q. Ahmed
UC Berkeley

Sajjad Rizvi
University of Exeter

Peter Adamson
LMU Munich

Amir Emami
University of Exeter

Hashem Morvarid
Trinity University

Felicitas Opwis
Georgetown University

Saturday, September 5

Laura Hassan
Independent Scholar

Ian R. Netton
University of Exeter

Jon Hoover
University of Nottingham

John Greco
Georgetown University

John McGinnis
University of Toronto

Friday, September 4



Nadja

Germann

University of Freiburg

Nadja Germann is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Freiburg and a leading scholar of Arabic and Islamic philosophy. Her research focuses on the history of philosophy, transcultural thought, philosophy of language, and epistemology, with particular expertise in thinkers such as al-Fārābī and Avicenna. Through her work on the transmission of knowledge across cultures and intellectual traditions, she has made significant contributions to the study of medieval and Islamic philosophy in a global context.

Thursday, September 3

9:50–11 UTC

Philosophy Beyond Falsafa

Philosophy Beyond Falsafa?

The Example of Adab

Nadja Germann | University of Freiburg

In my talk I will directly address the subject matter of the summer school and its basic observation that philosophy in the Islamic world is usually identified with falsafa. I will approach this topic, however, from the perspective of someone raised, trained, and active primarily in Europe and the US. This positionality, often ignored or downplayed by scholars in the field, will be critically reflected in a first step. As I intend to bring out, it is deeply rooted in modern European and North American colonialism with the effect that research pursued within this paradigm in many respects reproduces and perpetuates colonial ways of thinking. If we as scholars nowadays, regardless of where on the globe we are located, wish to decolonize academia (a vague allusion to Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's call for "decolonizing the mind"), among other things we need to overcome this myopic concentration on falsafa. With the example of adab, I will argue that philosophical practices, sources, and ideas in the Islamic world are much richer, epistemically diverse, and philosophically much more independent of ancient Greek philosophy than prevailing historiographical narratives have it.

Thursday, September 3

11-12:50 UTC

Philosophy Beyond Falsafa



Ayşenur

Ünügür-Tabur

University of Birmingham

Ayşenur Ünügür-Tabur is a postdoctoral researcher at University of Birmingham. She specializes in medieval philosophy, with a particular focus on Islamic and Christian philosophical traditions. She is the author of *Divine Free Action in Avicenna and Anselm*, a study exploring philosophical approaches to divine action and freedom in the works of two major medieval thinkers. Her research contributes to the comparative study of Avicennian and Latin medieval philosophy.

Thursday, September 3

11-12:30 UTC

Philosophy Beyond Falsafa

Al-Ghazālī, Causation, and the Epistemic Foundations of the Cosmological Argument

Ayşenur Ünügür Tabur | University of Birmingham

This session examines how Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī consistently employs a causal principle in his cosmological argument while rejecting necessary connections between created causes and effects. This stance faces a familiar dilemma: if causal knowledge derives merely from repeated observation, it cannot support a universal premise; if causation presupposes divine action from the outset, the argument risks circularity. I argue that al-Ghazālī avoids both pitfalls by treating the causal principle as a rationally basic, non-inferentially warranted truth independent of empirical generalization or prior theistic assumptions.

To frame the issue, the session introduces classical foundationalism, coherentism, and modest foundationalism, distinguishing the metaphysical nature of causation from the epistemology of causal principles. This contextualizes both Hume's skepticism regarding causal necessity and al-Ghazālī's own critique of natural necessity, demonstrating that rejecting necessitation among created things does not eliminate all causal principles. Finally, comparing al-Ghazālī with Descartes and Thomas Reid illuminates his epistemology. Rather than following Cartesian deductive certainty, al-Ghazālī's recovery from skepticism mirrors Reid's reliance on properly basic principles. The divine "light" he describes restores foundational rational trust rather than providing an argumentative premise, allowing the causal principle to ground the cosmological argument without circularity.

Thursday, September 3

11-12:30 UTC

Philosophy Beyond Falsafa



Dimitri

Gutas

Yale University

Dimitri Gutas is a prominent Arabist and Hellenist. He is Professor Emeritus of Arabic and Islamic Studies at Yale University.

He is a leading world expert on medieval Arabic philosophy, the Graeco-Arabic translation movement, and especially Avicenna.

Thursday, September 3

12:50–14 UTC

Philosophy Beyond Falsafa

What counts as Philosophy?

Beyond Words, and the Analysis of Post-Classical Islamic Intellectual Traditions

Dimitri Gutas | Yale University

In post-classical Islam, there are observed (at least) five distinct major intellectual traditions: falsafa or ḥikma, ḥikma islāmiyya, ʿilm al-kalām, taṣawwuf / ʿirfān, al-ʿulūm al-khafiyya. They are described and discriminated on the basis of what they do, how they do it, and why they do it. Final question: how to name them in English, and why this is important.

Thursday, September 3

12:50–14 UTC

Philosophy Beyond Falsafa



David

Vishanoff

University of Oklahoma Qur'anic studies, and Muslim interpretations of biblical texts.

David R. Vishanoff is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Oklahoma, specializing in Islamic intellectual history, Qur'anic interpretation, and Islamic legal theory. He holds a PhD in West and South Asian Religions from Emory University and has conducted extensive research on hermeneutics, revelation, and the development of Islamic jurisprudence. His work explores the relationship between language, scripture, and meaning in Islamic traditions, with a particular focus on classical legal theorists,

Thursday, September 3

14:50–16 UTC

Philosophy Beyond Falsafa

Informative and Performative Theories of Divine Speech in Classical Islamic Legal Theory

David Vishanoff | University of Oklahoma

This presentation examines performative speech in classical Islamic legal theory, focusing on the debate over whether God's speech is informative or performative. The Qur'ān's creative command "Be!" exemplifies performative language—speech that creates new realities rather than merely describing them. The paper situates this concept within broader arguments concerning the nature of law and divine speech.

Following a brief discussion of al-Shāfiʿī, the presentation analyzes four contrasting 4th–5th/10th–11th century thinkers. ʿAbd al-Jabbār views divine speech as informative descriptions from which humans deduce obligations via an objective moral order. Conversely, Abū Yaʿlā Ibn al-Farrāʾ treats God's commands as directly performative speech acts that generate immediate obligations. Occupying middle positions, al-Bāqillānī and al-Dabūsī argue that divine speech institutes obligations while treating revelation as indicative evidence requiring human interpretation. Notably, al-Dabūsī likely introduced the term *inshāʾ* (performative utterance) into Sunnī jurisprudence.

Ultimately, this debate reflects fundamental tensions in Islamic legal epistemology regarding divine agency, human moral responsibility, and the relationship between revelation and rational inquiry.

Thursday, September 3

14:50–16 UTC

Philosophy Beyond Falsafa



Asad

Ahmed

UC Berkeley

Asad Q. Ahmed is Magistretti Distinguished Professor of Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures and Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, with an affiliation in Philosophy. He specializes in early and post-classical Islamic intellectual history, focusing on philosophy, logic, legal theory, astronomy, and the development of rationalist disciplines in Islamic societies. His research explores the transmission and transformation of knowledge across the Islamic world, particularly from the classical period to the intellectual traditions of the Indian subcontinent.

Thursday, September 3

16–17:30 UTC

Philosophy Beyond Falsafa

What Was Philosophy in Late Pre-modern Muslim South Asia?

Asad Q. Ahmed | UC Berkeley

This presentation examines the historiographical challenges of applying the category "philosophy" to intellectual traditions with different disciplinary boundaries, focusing on late pre-modern Muslim South Asia. It challenges the simplistic translation of falsafa or ḥikma as "philosophy," arguing that neither rational argument nor systematicity provides adequate transhistorical criteria. Instead, it reconstructs indigenous classifications—particularly Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān's Abjad al-ʿulūm—which distinguish ḥikma from scriptural disciplines by source, premises, and claims to universality, though boundaries remain permeable. These ambiguities reveal that "philosophy" is not a neutral descriptive category but a historically situated one requiring justification. Thus, the history of philosophy demands not only reconstructing past arguments but also critically examining the framework by which historians decide what counts as philosophy.

Thursday, September 3

16–17:30 UTC

Philosophy Beyond Falsafa



Sajjad

Rizvi

University of Exeter

Sajjad Rizvi is Director of the Centre for the Study of Islam and Associate Professor at the University of Exeter. He teaches Islamic intellectual history, focusing on philosophy, theology, and Qur'anic exegesis. He studied modern history at Oxford and completed his PhD at Cambridge on Mulla Sadra's philosophy. His research explores post-Avicennan traditions in the Persianate world through decolonial and global philosophical approaches. Since 2004, he has taught at the University of Bristol and the Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies (IAIS). He co-edits *The Oxford Handbook of Shī'ī Islam* and a translation series for Hackett Publishing.

Friday, September 4

9:50–11 UTC

Philosophy Beyond Falsafa

Rational Metaphysics Deployed for Theology: The Cases of Mīr Zāhid and Nizām al-Dīn Gīlānī

Sajjad Rizvi | University of Exeter

A central problematic of Islamic intellectual history concerns the nature of the ‘postclassical’ and the relationship between philosophy and theology. While much attention has been drawn to the ubiquity of Avicenna alongside the seeming disappearance of philosophy as such in the later period, we should look more closely at our notions of philosophy and theology and avoid projecting modern prejudices on the nature of science and inquiry unfettered by theological or ethical commitments. In this chapter, I take two case studies from 17th century India to demonstrate the way in which metaphysics is deployed as a principle for arguing and defending theological postulations. By taking these, I wish to inscribe further the important place of scholarship from South Asia in the development and dissemination of the disciplines of the mind in Islamic intellectual history including (philosophical) theology.

Friday, September 4

9:50–11 UTC

Philosophy Beyond Falsafa



Peter
Adamson
LMU Munich

Peter Adamson is a leading historian of philosophy specializing in Late Antique philosophy, Arabic philosophy, and the intellectual traditions of the Islamic world. He is Professor of Philosophy at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich, and is widely known for his research on thinkers such as Plotinus, al-Kindī, al-Rāzī, al-Fārābī, and Avicenna. His extensive publications include works on Islamic philosophy, medieval intellectual history, and the acclaimed *History of Philosophy Without Any Gaps* series, which has brought the history of philosophy to a global audience.

Friday, September 4

11–12:30 UTC

Philosophy Beyond Falsafa

Was Kalām Philosophy?

Peter Adamson | LMU Munich

It is commonly assumed that philosophy in the Islamic world was more or less identical to "falsafa," the tradition of thought that emerged from the Greek-Arabic translation movement in the 9-10th centuries CE.

Indeed, still today the word "falsafa" is the Arabic word for "philosophy." However, modern scholars are increasingly appreciating the philosophical significance of "kalām," which is more typically translated as "theology." This presentation will consider the hypothesis that kalām is really a second philosophical tradition that ran alongside, and competed, with falsafa. After a general orientation the lecture looks at three topics in particular: proofs of God's existence, theories of place and space, and the status of non-existent objects.

Friday, September 4

11-12:30 UTC

Philosophy Beyond Falsafa



Amir

Emami

University of Exeter

Amir Mohammad Emami is a PhD candidate in Arab and Islamic Studies at the University of Exeter. He holds a BA in Philosophy and an MA in Philosophy of Religion from the University of Tehran. His research interests include the intellectual history of the Islamic world, particularly within the landscapes of Iran since the 17th century, and the intersections of Islamic scholarly disciplines of falsafa, kalām, and usūl al-fiqh with contemporary philosophy. His first publication in the field is “Tajarrī as Religious Luck,” published in *Philosophy and Jurisprudence in the Islamic World* (ed. Peter Adamson, De Gruyter, 2019).

Friday, September 4

12:50–14 UTC

Philosophy Beyond Falsafa

Opposition to Philosophy or Falsafa?

Mīrzā Mahdī Iṣfahānī's (d. 1365/1946)

Philosophical Criticism of Falsafa

Amir Emami | University of Exeter

The modern historiography of Islamic thought remains largely constrained by a colonial epistemic framework that universalises the Eurocentric concept of Philosophia. Within this framework, Islamic philosophy is frequently reduced to falsafa—a Hellenised tradition viewed as a derivative of Greek thought—while alternative intellectual projects are dismissed, stripping them of their status as autonomous philosophical inquiry. These exclusions underscore the need for a decolonial approach that critically revisits the assumptions underlying dominant historical narratives and acknowledges the ongoing impact of colonialism on intellectual production and transmission. A decolonial turn questions the assumed universality and superiority of Western philosophical traditions, opening up space for the recovery and affirmation of non-Western traditions. As an instance, I discuss the case of Mīrzā Mahdī Iṣfahānī (d. 1365/1946), the founder of Maktab-i Talfīk (the School of Separation), which is often characterised as an anti-philosophical school due to its hostility toward falsafa. I argue that this classification is misleading because it relies on the false equivalence of falsafa with the broader human enterprise of philosophy. By examining two central aspects of Iṣfahānī's thought, namely, his religious epistemology and his account of free will, I demonstrate the deeply philosophical character of his critique. Ultimately, I suggest that moving beyond the narrow confines of falsafa enables a genuinely global history of philosophy that recognises the pluriversal nature of philosophy and accommodates Islamic intellectual traditions long excluded from the canon.

Friday, September 4

12:50–14 UTC

Philosophy Beyond Falsafa



Hashem
Morvarid
Trinity University

Hashem Morvarid is an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Trinity University. His work bridges Islamic philosophy and contemporary analytic philosophy, grounded in both traditional Islamic training and modern philosophical education. He studied Islamic sciences at the Seminary of Qom and holds two PhDs in philosophy—one in analytic philosophy from the Institute for Research in Fundamental Sciences (IPM) in Tehran, and another from the University of Illinois at Chicago. Prior to joining Trinity, he was the William H. Miller Postdoctoral Fellow at Johns Hopkins University. His research focuses on analytic metaphysics, Islamic philosophy, and Shī'ī theology. His work has appeared in leading journals including *Synthese* and *the British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, with forthcoming work in *Oxford Studies in Philosophy of Religion*, and *the Blackwell Companion to Ibn Sīnā*.

Friday, September 4

14:30–16 UTC

Philosophy Beyond Falsafa

The Problem of Ghayba in Twelver Shī'ism: A Case Study in Islamic Analytic Theology

Hashem Morvarid | Trinity University

This paper addresses a tension in Twelver Shī'ī theology arising from the occultation (ghayba) of the Twelfth Imam: while Imamate is classically defined in terms of political and religious leadership requiring public presence, a hidden imam appears unable to perform these roles. The paper first formulates the problem by analyzing the traditional roles attributed to the imams and showing why they cannot be fulfilled under occultation. It then critically evaluates the major proposed responses. It subsequently draws on the Qur'ān's treatment of moral evil in Q 2:30–33 to advance an understudied account in which the imam functions as God's moral reason for preserving humankind in existence. On this view, the Twelfth Imam can fulfill this role even while in occultation. Methodologically, the study exemplifies an underrepresented genre in Islamic studies—Islamic analytic theology—employing tools from contemporary analytic philosophy to subject doctrinal claims to conceptual clarification, logical analysis, and rational assessment.

Friday, September 4

14:50–16 UTC

Philosophy Beyond Falsafa



Felicitas

Opwis

Georgetown University

Felicitas Opwis is a scholar of Islamic intellectual history specializing in Islamic jurisprudence, legal theory, and the development of legal concepts in Muslim societies. Her research examines the relationship between Islamic law, intellectual traditions, and historical, social, and political contexts, with particular focus on concepts such as *maṣlaḥa* (public interest) and *maqāṣid al-sharīʿa* (the objectives of Islamic law). Through comparative historical studies, she explores how Muslim jurists have negotiated legal change while maintaining connections to foundational religious texts.

Friday, September 4

16–17:30 UTC

Philosophy Beyond Falsafa

The Legal Philosophy of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī: Balancing Law Between Certainty and Probability

Felicitas Opwis | Georgetown University

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī held that revelation's validity must be verified by non-revelatory, rational investigation (*baḥṭh*) and demonstrative proof (*burhān*). Skeptical of transmitted linguistic evidence (*adilla lafẓiyya*), he classified the textual sources of Islamic law—the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth—as yielding only probabilistic knowledge (*ẓann*). This presumptive basis posed a serious challenge: a purely probabilistic foundation risks compromising the law's ability to secure a stable societal order and guide believers toward salvation, while an entirely demonstrative legal system would be too rigid to accommodate changing human circumstances.

To resolve this tension, al-Rāzī designed a framework in *al-Maḥṣūl fī uṣūl al-fiqh* that systematically balances epistemic certainty (*qaṭʿ*) with probabilistic flexibility. While grounding the core sources and methodologies of law-finding in certainty to ensure systemic stability, he relegated practical legal interpretation to the domain of probabilistic reasoning to maintain adaptability. This paper examines how al-Rāzī achieves this balance across three key areas: his overarching epistemological framework, his theory of legal analogy (*qiyās*), and his analysis of divine commands (*amr*). Through these domains, al-Rāzī harmonizes the demand for stability with the need for flexibility by strategically navigating categories of certainty and probability, employing probabilistic preponderance (*tarjīḥ*) to accommodate nuance, and interpreting revelatory language in line with practical, common-sense understandings of legal obligation.

Friday, September 4

16–17:30 UTC

Philosophy Beyond Falsafa



Laura
Hassan
Independent Scholar

Laura Hassan is an independent scholar. She has been previously a Faculty Member at the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Oxford. Her research focuses on Islamic intellectual history, particularly post-classical Islamic theology and philosophy, with special emphasis on the Ashʿarī tradition and its engagement with Avicennan philosophy. Her work explores questions of divine speech, language, knowledge, creation, and the relationship between religion and science in Islamic thought. She is the author of *Ashʿarism Encounters Avicennism: Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī on Creation*.

Saturday, September 5

9:50–11 UTC

Philosophy Beyond Falsafa

Language and Human Uniqueness: An Exploration of Abu Muhammad Ibn Mattawayh's Discussions of Speech and Language

Laura Hassan | Independent Scholar

Scholars of the Mu'tazilī school of Islamic rational theology (*ʿilm al-kalām*) entertained extensive discussions of the ontology of human speech and language. This presentation shows a case for the interest of these discussions for contemporary scholars involved in constructing theological anthropologies. Despite their remote historical and intellectual context, the ideas of the Mu'tazila—in particular concerning the ontological continuity between human speech acts and other types of sound, the uniqueness of speech as a co-creation of God and man, and the profound blessing constituted in our capacity for speech—all have important resonances with the concerns of modern theologians.

Saturday, September 5

9:50–11 UTC

Philosophy Beyond Falsafa



Ian Richard

Netton

University of Exeter

Prof. Ian Richard Netton is Emeritus Professor of Islamic Studies at the University of Exeter and a leading scholar of Islamic theology, philosophy, Sufism, and comparative religion. His research explores medieval Islamic thought, religious anthropology, comparative textuality, semiotics, and encounters between Islamic and other religious traditions. He is the author and editor of more than twenty books, including *Islam, Christianity and the Realms of the Miraculous: A Comparative Exploration* (Edinburgh University Press, 2019), and has made significant contributions to the study of Islamic intellectual and religious history.

Saturday, September 5

11-12:30 UTC

Philosophy Beyond Falsafa

Paradise Paths: Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (450-505/1058-1111) and Teresa of Ávila (1515-1582) in Context and Conversation

Ian R. Netton | University of Exeter

Where do philosophical or purely human knowledge end and another type of knowledge, ma‘rifa or dhawq begin? In order to explore this eternal conundrum, Professor Netton places two very different kinds of thinker in juxtaposition to demonstrate an intertextual link: Al-Ghazālī and Teresa of Ávila in Spain. The first will inveigh against the deficiencies of the philosophers, ultimately preferring a mystic path, the preliminary to which for all is the proper and full practice of the five arkān. He himself will move from diligent praxis to occasional ecstasy. Teresa embraces a philosophy of prayer, beautifully illustrated in her great garden image of the soul and her major text *The Interior Castle* which several scholars believe had antecedents in a previous sufi text. She too undergoes a profound mystical experience. This essay rotates round four major topoi of Text, Authority, Philosophy and Mysticism.

Saturday, September 5

11-12:30 UTC

Philosophy Beyond Falsafa



Jon
Hoover

University of Nottingham

Prof. Jon Hoover is Professor of Islamic Studies at the University of Nottingham. His research focuses on medieval Islamic intellectual history, especially Islamic theology (*kalām*), philosophy, and the thought of Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya. His work explores debates on divine attributes, reason and revelation, ethics, human freedom, and Christian-Muslim theological interaction. He is the author of numerous studies on Islamic theology and intellectual history, with particular contributions to the understanding of medieval theological debates.

Saturday, September 5

12:50–14 UTC

Philosophy Beyond Falsafa

God as an Empirical Entity: The Expanded Scope of Sense Perception in Sunnī Traditionalist Spatialism

Jon Hoover | University of Nottingham

This presentation examines a Sunnī traditionalist "spatialism" in al-Dārimī, pseudo-Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, and Ibn Taymiyya, who hold that God is a sensible, spatially located being above the Throne. This view opposes kalām and Avicennan claims that God is imperceptible. Beyond attribute debate, it entails a distinct epistemology: sense perception can grasp God directly. The paper traces this position, contrasts it with rationalist theology, and compares Ibn Taymiyya's fiṭra-based empiricism with Avicenna's psychology. The dispute over divine perceptibility reveals deeper conflicts over reality, cognition, and theological knowledge.

Saturday, September 5

12:50–14 UTC

Philosophy Beyond Falsafa



John
Greco
Georgetown University

Prof. John Greco is the Robert L. McDevitt and Catherine H. McDevitt Professor of Philosophy at Georgetown University. His research focuses on epistemology and metaphysics, with particular contributions to virtue epistemology, intellectual humility, epistemic normativity, skepticism, and the philosophy of Thomas Reid. He is the author of several influential works, including *Achieving Knowledge: A Virtue-Theoretic Account of Epistemic Normativity* and *The Transmission of Knowledge*, and has made significant contributions to contemporary discussions on knowledge and rational inquiry.

Saturday, September 5

14:50–16 UTC

Philosophy Beyond Falsafa

Individualism and Anti-individualism in Islamic Epistemology

John Greco | Georgetown University

This presentation applies contemporary social epistemology—specifically "vulnerable dependence" on others—to Islamic religious belief. It asks whether Islamic epistemology is individualist or anti-individualist, focusing on prophetic testimony (Qur'ān and Ḥadīth) and the possibility of an epistemic division of labour, whereby believers may rely on experts rather than fulfilling all evidential duties themselves. Rather than offering a definitive classification, the paper proposes questions for productive engagement between social epistemology and Islamic traditions. It also considers whether Islamic communities function as "epistemically engineered" environments that distribute cognitive burdens among members, opening broader inquiry into religious authority, testimony, expertise, and communal knowledge.

Saturday, September 5

14:50–16 UTC

Philosophy Beyond Falsafa



John

McGinnis

University of Toronto

Prof. Jon McGinnis is a leading scholar of ancient and medieval philosophy, specializing in the history of natural philosophy and physics across Greek, Arabic, Judeo-Arabic, and Latin traditions. His research focuses particularly on Avicenna, medieval Islamic philosophy, philosophy of religion, and theories of science and medicine. He is the author of *Avicenna* (Oxford University Press) and has translated and edited major works of Avicenna, making significant contributions to the study of Islamic philosophy and its connections with the broader history of philosophy.

Saturday, September 5

16-17:30 UTC

Philosophy Beyond Falsafa

Three Responses to Classical Foundationalism in Medieval Islam

John McGinnis | University of Toronto

This presentation examines three distinct responses to Classical Foundationalism within medieval Islamic thought, tracing how epistemological frameworks evolved across the falsafa and kalām traditions. Focusing on the contributions of Ibn Sīnā, al-Juwaynī, and al-Ghazālī, the talk explores how medieval thinkers grappled with the acquisition of first principles, epistemic justification, and rationality.

First, the presentation investigates Ibn Sīnā's account of taqrīr for securing the foundational claims and first principles of a science, briefly integrating "Knowledge First" perspectives to frame his approach. Second, it turns to al-Juwaynī, demonstrating how he utilizes Ibn Sīnā's material to launch a critique of strict foundationalism in favor of a coherentist theory of justification and rationality. Finally, the talk analyzes al-Ghazālī's synthesis of both Ibn Sīnā and al-Juwaynī, showing how his work prefigures elements of what can be termed a "Reformed (Islamic) Epistemology."

By mapping these interconnected developments, the presentation broadens the scope of medieval Islamic philosophy beyond the traditional boundaries of Peripatetic falsafa, showcasing a vibrant cross-tradition dialogue on the nature of knowledge and justification.

Saturday, September 5

16–17:30 UTC

Philosophy Beyond Falsafa

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