

ISLAM IN ISRAEL: RELIGIOUS AND SOCIO-CULTURAL IDENTITY DILEMMAS OF THE ARAB-MUSLIM MINORITY IN ISRAEL



**A lecture by Muhammad al-Atawneh
2024 Greenberg Middle East Scholar-in-Residence**

Wednesday, September 25, 2024

7:30 PM, Davis Auditorium, Palamountain Hall, Skidmore College

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Science Department

ABOUT THE LECTURE

Islam is the religion of the majority of the Arab citizens in Israel. Since the late 1970s, Islam has become an important factor in the political and socio-cultural identity of the Arab minority in Israel; thus, the number of Muslims in Israel who define their identity first and foremost in relation to their religious affiliation has steadily grown. Because Islam is a religious code covering all aspects of life, devout Muslims in Israel seek religious guidance from Islamic legal doctrines and other Shari'a (Islamic law) tenets, not only in spiritual matters but also in matters relating to

temporal, social conduct. These Islamic legal norms are, however, at odds with both Israeli secular law and the sociocultural norms of the Jewish majority in Israel. The intent of this lecture is to explore the local nature of Islam by the discussion of the evolving religious identity and its impact on the religious and socio-cultural aspects of Muslim life in Israel. Special emphasis will be placed on the dilemmas and tensions that stem from the encounter between the Muslim religious norms and the Israeli socio-cultural and legal norms in various areas, including Jewish/Muslim relations.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Muhammad al-Atawneh is the 2024 Greenberg Middle East Scholar-in-Residence at Skidmore College and an associate professor in the Department of Middle East Studies at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel. He has published extensively on Islamic law and society in contemporary Arab and Islamic worlds. Research interests focus on the study of Islam in modern times, mainly in three concurrent areas: (1) Islamic law and modernity; (2) state and governance in contemporary Islamic thought and practice; and (3) Islam in Israel which covers significant issues regarding Muslim daily life, attitudes, beliefs, levels of (dis)satisfaction, and attitudes towards the Israeli establishment and Israeli society.

About the Greenberg Middle East Scholar Residency: The Greenberg Middle East Scholar Residency has brought scholars of the Middle East to Skidmore College since 2003. Greenberg Scholars – by virtue of both their positionality within the Middle East and as scholars of that region – help unpack the complexities of the Middle East through teaching and lecturing in their area of disciplinary expertise. Collectively, the scholars represent many perspectives and over the years have shared their knowledge on a broad range of topics with the Skidmore community. Past scholars have focused on Ottoman history, Medieval and modern Islam, economic history, modern Egypt, globalization in the Middle East, Arabic literature, Christianity in Ethiopia and Eastern Africa, anthropology, public health, and many other subject areas. The residency is made possible by a gift from Jane Greenberg '81.