

Courts, Religion, and Politics in Contemporary Muslim States

November 4-5, 2016

School for International Studies

Simon Fraser University

Vancouver, British Columbia

The School for International Studies at Simon Fraser University welcomes applications to participate in a two-day interdisciplinary workshop on **Courts, Religion, and Politics in Contemporary Muslim States**. Bringing together scholars working in the fields of Islamic studies, law and society, and judicial politics, this workshop will explore the interaction of state judiciaries and religious politics in contemporary Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.

At a time when politics throughout the world is increasingly judicialized, courts in many Muslim-majority states are being tasked with resolving questions of central political consequence: the role of religion in public life, the relationship between Islamic and secular law, and the rights of religious minorities, amongst other examples. This makes them important sites of contestation for a range of actors, including governing elites, opposition parties, and Islamist activists, all of whom have grown adept at pursuing their projects through judicial means. Yet despite their importance, this nexus of courts, Islam, and politics remains poorly understood. How does participation in the legal process affect Islamist movements? How do they press their claims within an institution that is often ostensibly secular and, in many cases, dominated by an authoritarian regime? How does that regime respond? And what sort of response in turn does this elicit from the judiciary, especially when it is called upon to negotiate the relationship between vastly competing notions of law, citizenship, and political order?

These are some of the questions that this workshop is designed to address. We invite paper proposals on courts, Islam, and politics from throughout the contemporary Middle East, Africa, and Asia. Scholars from a range of disciplines are encouraged to apply, including (but not limited to) political science, religious studies, anthropology, history, women and gender studies, area studies, and legal studies. All theoretical and methodological approaches are welcome.

Interested parties should submit abstracts of **no more than 250 words** to jsachs@sfu.ca, with the words "Courts, Religion, and Politics Workshop" in the subject line. Please include your institutional affiliation, as well as a mailing address and telephone number where you may be reached. The deadline for submissions is **July 20th, 2016**.

Any questions may be directed to Jeffrey Sachs at jsachs@sfu.ca.