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Conference



Georges Tamer

M.S. Sofia Chair in Arabic
Studies
Near Eastern Languages
and Cultures

Islam and Rationality: The Impact of al-Ghazali

Thursday-Saturday, November 10-12, 2011
Mershon Center for International Security Studies
1501 Neil Ave., Columbus, OH 43201

For more information, please visit the [official conference webpage](#)

Organizer

[Georges Tamer](#), M.S. Sofia Chair in Arabic Studies, The Ohio State University

Keynote: [Eric Ormsby](#), The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London
"The Comedy of Reason: Strategies of Humor in al-Ghazali"

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Overview

Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (1058-1111) is a central figure in the history of Islamic theology, jurisprudence, philosophy and Sufism. Of Persian origin, he lived and worked in Baghdad and in other intellectual centers

of the Muslim world of the 11th and 12th century.

Besides his teaching activity in Baghdad and Tus (in Iran), al-Ghazali wrote in Arabic and Persian on an enormous variety of subjects, which primarily include theology, Islamic law, logic, philosophy, mysticism, and epistemology. A major concern in his works involves the development of an approach to God which is both Islamic and rational; he also strove to integrate religious rationality in the worship of God and in spiritual life. His [eminent works](#) on this topic have been widely influential.

Indeed, in general, the discourse on rationality, as accepted by orthodox Islam, was largely established, articulated, and solidified by al-Ghazali. Al-Ghazali's influence was so widespread that he earned, in the medieval period, the unique title "The Proof of Islam" (*Hujjat al-Islam*); this honorific, merited by his preeminent scholarship, acknowledged the illustrious way in which he combined logic and ethics, knowledge and action, rationality and spirituality, orthodoxy and renewal of religious thought.

To commemorate the 900 year-long legacy of al-Ghazali, an international and interdisciplinary conference will take place on November 10-12, 2011. Leading scholars in intellectual history, philosophy, Islamic law and theology, and medieval Christian and Jewish thought will convene to discuss vital aspects of al-Ghazali's work.

Dealing with the increasingly important topic of Islam and rationality, and raising relevant questions related to the inter-religious exchange of ideas, the conference will aim to invigorate discourses between philosophy, religious studies, cultural history, and Islamic studies. The goals of this dialogue are to enhance research of and initiate new studies into the impact of al-Ghazali's vast work and to create continuing forums for international conversation between scholars and the public on the topics of Islam, reason, and cross-cultural exchange.

Presenting Scholars

[Binyamin Abrahamov](#), Bar-Ilan University in Israel

[Ahmad Ahmad](#), University of California-Santa Barbara

[Charles Butterworth](#), Maryland University

Hans Daiber, Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt

[Threse-Anne Druart](#), Catholic University of America

[Avner Giladi](#), Haifa University in Israel

Scott Girdner, Western Kentucky University

[Frank Griffel](#), Yale University

[Steven Harvey](#), Bar-Ilan University in Israel

[Alfred L. Ivry](#), New York University

[Birgit Krawietz](#), Freie Universität Berlin

[Taneli Kukkonen](#), Canada Research Chair in the Aristotelian Tradition

[Luis Xavier Lopez-Farjeat](#), Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico (UNAM) and Universidad Panamericana

[Wilferd Madelung](#), Institute of Islamic Studies

[Yahya Michot](#), Hartford Seminary

[Yasien Mohamed](#), University of the Western Cape

[Eric Omsby](#), McGill University

M. Sait Ozervarli, Center for Islamic Studies in Istanbul
Sobhi Rayan, Al-Qasemi Academy College in Israel
[Tamar Rudavsky](#), The Ohio State University
Bilal Sambur, Yildirim Beyazit University Ankara-Turkey
[Hidemi Takahashi](#), University of Tokyo
[Richard C. Taylor](#), Marquette University

Panel Chairs

[Stephen Dale](#), The Ohio State University
[Richard Davis](#), The Ohio State University
[Daniel Frank](#), The Ohio State University
[Bruce Fudge](#), The Ohio State University
[Jane Hathaway](#), The Ohio State University
[Parvaneh Pourshariati](#), The Ohio State University

Welcoming Addresses

[E. Gordon Gee](#), President, The Ohio State University
[Craig Jenkins](#), Director, Mershon Center for International Security
Studies
[Alam Payind](#), Director, Middle East Studies Center
[Mark Shanda](#), Dean of Arts and Humanities
[Dieter Wanner](#), Associate Provost for Global Strategies and
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