

**Mag. Dr. Rahel Fischbach (Ph.D.)**  
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## *Curriculum Vitae*

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**Current Status:** Postdoc in the Department of Islamic Theology and Religious Pedagogy, Innsbruck University (UIBK), AT

### **EDUCATION**

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- 09/2009 – 2017      Theology and Religious Studies at **Georgetown University**, Washington DC.  
• **Ph.D.** (Dissertation defended: 12/13/2016)  
Thesis: *Politics of Scripture. Discussions of the Historical-Critical Approach to the Qur'ān*
- 10/2001 – 03/2009      Islamic Studies and History at the **Free University**, Berlin.  
• Magistra Artium  
Thesis: *Shifts in Contemporary Shi'ite Jurisprudence in View of Women*
- 09/2006 – 05/2007      Reid Hall Visiting Scholar at **Columbia University**, NY
- 09/2004 – 07/2005      “Stage de Langue d’Arabe en Vue de la Recherche”/Arabic Studies at **Institut Français du Proche Orient**, Damascus, Syria

### **RESEARCH & TEACHING INTERESTS**

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Qur'ān Hermeneutics, Interfaith Relations, Secularism, Post-colonialism, Gender, Islamic Legal Cultures

### **RESEARCH & WORK EXPERIENCE**

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- Since October 2020      **Postdoc at University of Innsbruck** (UIBK), AT, Department of Islamic Theology and Religious Pedagogy
- 08/2017 – 08/2020      **Assistant Professor** (tenure-track) of Islamic Studies at **James Madison University**, VA, Department of Philosophy and Religion
- 08/2015 – 06/2016      **Post-Doctoral Teaching Fellow** for Islam in Religious Studies at **Millsaps College**
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- Summer 2019      Field Research for current Book, Lebanon
- 09/2014 – 08/2015      RA of John Esposito, Prince Alwaleed Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding
- 06/2014 – 10/2014      Field Research, Lebanon (Affiliation: Sapiential Knowledge Institute)
- 01/2013 – 09/2013      RA of Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, **Center for Muslim-Christian Relations** (GU)
- 06/2012 – 01/2013      Field Research, Germany/Lebanon (archives and *hawza*)
- 06/2011 – 05/2012      RA of Barbara Stowasser
- 09/2010 – 05/2011      RA of José Casanova, **Berkley Center for World and Peace Affairs**
- 06/2010 – 08/2010      Muslim-Christian studies, **Muhammad V University**, Rabat, Morocco

12/2008 – 08/2009	International Projects Coordinator at Documentary and iTV Production Nature, Science, and Living History, Berlin, Germany (focus: Saudi Arabia)
02/2008 – 06/2008	Field Research for MA thesis, Lebanon, (Muḥammad Ḥusayn Faḍlallāh's <i>ḥawza</i> )
03/2008	Study excursion to Saudi Arabia
04/2007 – 06/2007	Internship at the <b>United Nations, DPKO</b> , East Africa Division, New York
09/2005 – 10/2005	Internship at the <b>Orient Institute Beirut (OIB)</b> , Lebanon
02/2004 – 04/2004	Internship at <b>Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation</b> , Lebanon

## SELLECTED FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS

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06/2019 – 08/2019	JMU Faculty Summer Research Grant
05/2017 – 08/2017	ASMEA Research Grant (Association for the Study of the Middle East and Africa)
10/30/2015	Award for “Best conference Paper in the student category” by <i>ASMEA</i>
08/2015 – 08/2017	<b>Millsaps Post-doctoral Fellowship</b>
09/2014 – 08/2015	<b>Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Stipend Award</b>
08/2014 – 10/2014	DMG Travel Grant (Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft)
07/2014 – 10/2014	ASMEA Travel Grant (Association for the Study of the Middle East and Africa)
09/2009 – 08/2014	<b>Georgetown Graduate School Tuition Scholarship &amp; Fellowship Stipend</b>
02/2004 – 01/2009	<b>Stipend of Excellency</b> for outstanding academic performance by the Evangelisches Studienwerk e.V. Villigst
04/2008 – 05/2008	<b>DAAD-Stipend</b> (German Academic Exchange Service)
08/2006 – 05/2007	Stipend of Columbia University in the City of New York
08/2006 – 06/2007	<b>Fulbright-Fellowship</b>

## PUBLICATIONS

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- “Der diskrete Charme des Ayatollah. Warum Scheich Fadlallah im Libanon wie ein Star gefeiert wird.” *Zenith* 3 (2008): 30 – 34.
- “Review of Martyrium und Messianismus. Die Geburtsstunde des Bahā'ītums by Sasha Dehghani.” *Journal of Arabic Literature* 44.1 (2013): 113-118.
- “Review of Zeitgenössische islamische Positionen zu Koexistenz und Gewalt, ed. by Tilman Seidensticker.” *Journal of Arabic Literature* 44.2 (2013): 397 – 400.
- “Interfaith Dialogue in Lebanon: Between a Power Balancing Act and Theological Encounters” (co-authored with Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad), *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 26 (2015): 1 – 20.
- “Enlightening Engagement” (co-authored with Rachel Friedman), *Critical Muslim* 14 (2015): 87 – 103.
- “Contesting Method. Muslim Responses to the Application of the Historical-Critical Approach to the Qur'ān.” *Journal of the Middle East and Africa* 7.1 (2016): 39 – 59.
- “Rereading the Qur'ān – Challenging traditional authority: Political implications of contemporary Qur'ān scholarship,” *Journal of the Middle East and Africa* 8.1 (2017): 1 – 20.
- “Politics of Scripture: Discussions of the Historical-Critical Approach to the Qur'ān” (Dissertation, defended at Georgetown University, Washington, DC 12/13/2016, published 10/19/2017)
- “Review of *The Silent Qur'an and the Speaking Qur'an: Scriptural Sources between History and Fervor* by Mohammed Ali Amir-Moezzi, Etan Kohlberg, Hasan Ansari and Eric Ormsby,” *BUSTAN: The*

*Middle East Book Review* 9.2. (2018): 179 – 187.

“Beyond Normative Secularity: Politics of Interreligious dialogue in Lebanon,” in *The Interfaith Movement: Mobilising Religious Diversity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Edited by John Fahy and Jan-Jonathan Bock, 158 – 178. New York/London: Routledge 2019.

“More Than a Feminist Hobby: Gender as an Analytical Category in Qur’anic Studies,” *Journal of Feminist Studies* 37.2 (Fall 2021): 207 – 212.

“Überlegungen zur Ästhetik der Gewalt im Qur’ān,” in *Diversität im Islam*. Edited by Zekirija Sejdini (in print, Springer Verlag)

“Qur’ān Hermeneutics as Political Action in *Wissenschaft des Judentums*,” in *The Handbook of the Qur’ān*. Edited by Georges Tamer (forthcoming, DeGruyter).

“History and Transcendence in Recent Muslim Qur’ān Hermeneutics,” in *The Handbook of the Qur’ān*. Edited by Georges Tamer (forthcoming, DeGruyter).

## CONFERENCE PAPERS & MEDIA CONTRIBUTION

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“Changes in Islamic Law concerning Women,” (Video-interview with Muḥammad Ḥusayn Faḍlallāh), *al-Bayyināt*, 05/13/2008.

“Da‘wa and Testimony – A Muslim Vision for Europe” (conference paper). *Engaging Particularities VIII: New Directions in Comparative Theology, Theology of Religions, Interreligious Dialogue, and Missiology* at Boston College, 03/26-28/2010.

“Al-‘alāqa al-masīhīya al-islāmīya fī al-rā’y al-masīhī al-lāhūtī al-lūthirī - “Dietrich Bonhoeffer” [Muslim-Christian relations from a theological Christian Lutheran perspective]” (conference paper). *Religious Pluralism in the Modern World* at Muhammad V University in Rabat, Morocco, 07/19/2010.

“Making Religious Pluralism More Uncomfortable” (conference paper). *Understanding Religious Pluralism. Perspectives from Religious Studies and Theology* at Georgetown University, 05/23 – 25/2012.

“Politics of Scripture: The (Un)making of a European Qur’ān” (conference paper). *AAR Annual Meeting in Baltimore*, 11/22 – 25/2013.

“Ta‘addud al-qir’āt fī tafsīr al-qur’ān. Munāqashat kitāb Tūmās Bāwr” [Ambiguity in the interpretation of the Qur’ān. Discussion of Thomas Bauer's book] (conference paper). *Summer School: Arabic Philology and Cultural Studies*, Berlin, 03/12 – 17/2014.

“What’s All the Fuss About This Naṣṣ? Debating the Historical-Critical Approach to the Qur’ān in Lebanon” (conference paper). *History of Religions II*. Columbia University Dep. of Religion, 03/28/2014.

*Developments in the Women’s Hawza in Qum*, (organizer). Georgetown University, 05/14/2014.

“Developments and Background of Contemporary Western Qur’ānic Studies,” (Video-interview with Mahmoud Youness, editor of *al-Maḥajja*), *al-Ittijah*, 09/27/2014.

“Contesting Method: Muslim Responses to the Application of the Historical-Critical Approach to the Qur’ān” (conference paper), *Seventh Annual ASMEA Conference*, Washington DC, 10/30-11/1, 2014.

“Rereading the Qur’ān: Challenging Traditional Authority: Political Implications of Contemporary Qur’ān Scholarship” (conference paper), *AAR Annual Meeting*, Atlanta, 11/21-24 2014.

“Battling Extremism with the Qur’ān: New Pluralist Qur’ān Hermeneutics in Lebanon,” (conference paper) Washington DC, 10/19-21, 2017.

“Boundaries Revised: Debating Religion in Lebanon,” (conference paper), ESITIS Conference in Sarajevo, Bosnia, 04/24-27, 2019.

“Embracing Pluralism: The Challenge of History for Qur’ānic Multivalence,” (conference paper & panel organizer: “Reading the Qur’ān: Between Certainty and Ambiguity,”), *Twelfth Annual ASMEA Conference*, Washington DC, 10/31-11/02, 2019.

“Review of Celene Ibrahim’s, *Women and Gender in the Qur’an*, New York: Oxford University Press 2020,” (conference paper, panel discussion), *AAR Annual Meeting*, Online, 11/29-12/10, 2020.

## INVITED TALKS

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- “Umgang mit Vielfalt am Lebensende” (Public Talk), Haus der Kulturen der Welt, 10/29/2021.
- “Gewalt im Koran: Hermeneutische, poetische und theologische Betrachtungen” (Public Talk), Lecture series Islam Portal, Innsbruck University, 10/14/2021.
- “Prophethood and Mission in Christianity and Islam” (Public Lecture), Gesprächsreihe “Miteinander Zukunft gestalten,” Innsbruck University, 10/12/2021.
- “Contesting Texts. The Politics of Qur’ān scholarship in the modern Middle East” (Public Lecture), University of Toronto Department for the Study of Religion, 3/11/2016.
- “Qur’ān and the Politics of Revelation: Text. History. Ontology” (Public Lecture), Yale University Department of Religion, 02/08/2016.

## TEACHING

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| Winter 2021/22 | Postdoc at UIBK: “The Biography of the Prophet” (Prophetenbiographie), “Islamic Anthropology” (Islamische Anthropologie), “History of the Islamic Legal Schools ( <i>madhāhib</i> )” (Madhhab-Geschichte)     |
| Summer 2022    | Postdoc at UIBK: “Prophetenbiographie” (The Biography of the Prophet, Lecture for BA students), “Islamische Kulturgeschichte in Europa” (Islamic-cultural History in Europe, Lecture for MA students)         |
| Winter 2020/21 | Postdoc at UIBK: “The Biography of the Prophet” (Prophetenbiographie), “Islamic Anthropology” (Islamische Anthropologie), Lectures for BA students  |
| Spring 2020    | Assistant professor at JMU: “Theories and Methods in the Study of Religion” (Seminar, 20 students); “Religions of the World” (Lecture, 80 students)   |
| Fall 2019      | Assistant professor at JMU: “Women, Gender and Islam” (Seminar, 25 students); “Religions of the World” (Lecture, 80 students)   |
| Fall 2018      | Assistant professor at JMU: “Introduction to Islamic Traditions” (Seminar, 20 students); “Religions of the World” (Lecture, two sections with each 40 students)   |
| Spring 2018    | Assistant professor at JMU: “Religions of the World” (lecture, two sections x 40 students); “Special Topics in Religion: The Qur’ān” (Seminar, 20 students)   |
| Fall 2017      | Assistant professor at JMU: “Introduction to Islamic Traditions” (Seminar, 20 students); “Religions of the World” (Lecture, two sections with each 40 students)   |
| Spring 2017    | Post-doctoral teaching fellow at Millsaps: “Introduction to Islam” (Seminar, 9 students); “Jesus, Mary and Muhammad: Christianity in the Qur’ān” (Seminar, two sections with each 25 students)                |
| Fall 2016      | Post-doctoral teaching fellow at Millsaps: “Religion, Culture, and Society” (Seminar, 15 students)  |
| Spring 2016    | Post-doctoral teaching fellow at Millsaps: “Islamism, Imperialism and Violence,” (Seminar, 14 students); “The Qur’ān Comes West: European Receptions of Islam during the Enlightenment” (Seminar, 9 students) |
| Fall 2015      | Post-doctoral teaching fellow at Millsaps: “Facing Modernity: Approaches to the Qur’ān” (Seminar), Arabic Tutorial (one on one)   |
| Spring 2015    | Lecturer at Georgetown University: “Problem of God” (Seminar, 35 students)  |

Spring 2013	Teaching Assistant of Daniel Madigan: “Islamic Religious Thought and Practice” (Georgetown University)
Spring 2012	Teaching Assistant of Barbara Stowasser: “Introduction into Arabic Culture” (Georgetown University)
Fall 2011	Teaching Assistant of José Casanova: “Religion and Politics. Global Comparative Survey” (Georgetown University)

## **PEDAGOGICAL TRAINING**

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03/05-03/07, 2020	Top Hat Engage Conference in New Orleans, LA. Focus: Using technology in the classroom efficiently and ethically.
01/11-01/12, 2019	Participant in “Pluralism Project: A Convening of the Case Study Method,” Harvard University, Boston.
2017/18	New Faculty Development Program (monthly workshops)
Fall 2015	“Salon: Workshop for Teaching ‘Connections’” (Teaching Students how to write and present efficiently”), Millsaps College.
Spring 2015	Apprenticeship in Teaching Program (Georgetown University)

## **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

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Since 10/2021	Co-Organizer of Lecture Series, “Islamisch-Theologische Studien in Europa – Ein neues Fach zwischen Selbstreflexion und gesellschaftlichen Herausforderungen,” at Innsbruck University Summer Semester 2022.
Since 10/2020	Departmental coordinator for International Affairs, University of Innsbruck
07/23-24, 2021	Participants in Online Manuscript Workshop with Dr. Nadia Oweidat, <i>THEIHS</i> , Washington DC.
Spring 2020	President of the CAL Diversity Council (College of Arts and Letters)
10/3 – 10/4, 2019	Co-chair/presenter with Christy Kilby, workshop on “Teaching Religious Literacy with the Case Study Method,” <i>Religion and Migration: A Colloquium for Engaged Teaching and Learning</i> , Harrisonburg, VA.
Since Fall 2017/18	Departmental Representative for the CAL Diversity Council, Member of the Religion Committee on Majors Recruitment and Career Mentorship, Member of Hobbie Scholarship Committee, Religion Majors Club Coordinator, Affiliate of the Mahatma Gandhi Global Center for Non-Violence
09/2013 – 05/2015	Founder and President of the Georgetown Graduate Association for Islamic Studies
03/2014	Workshop “Philologies in Changing Perspectives. Initiative for a New Form of Teaching and Research” – a cooperation between the Free University Berlin, American University in Beirut, and Cairo University.
10/2012	“Manuscripta Coranica. Contribution à l'histoire du Coran,” Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Inalco, Paris.
09/2005 – 05/2006	Committee Member for organizing the “Villigst Summer University”
2002 - 2007	Founding Member of “Interfaith Discussion Group Neukölln,” Berlin, Germany

## **MEMBERSHIPS**

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American Academy of Religion (AAR), Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft (DMG), International Qur'anic Association (IQSA), European Society for Intercultural Theology and Interreligious Studies (ESITIS)

## **LANGUAGES**

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German (native speaker), English (full professional proficiency), Classical Arabic (professional proficiency), Syrian dialect (profound knowledge), French (professional reading proficiency), Persian (basic knowledge), Latin (basic knowledge), Spanish (decent reading proficiency).

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Innsbruck, Austria, 06/10/2022