

***Sholawat*: Tradition for Modern Life**

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ABSTRACT

Sholawat has been performed all over Indonesia for the past two hundred years. There are written manuals such as the Qasidah Burah and the Rotib Al-Athos, but in the last ten years, the performances of *sholawat* by Habib Syech bin Abdul Qadir Assegaf have gathered tens of thousands of people across Indonesia, Malaysia, Taiwan, and China. He performs popular *sholawat* songs praising the virtue of Prophet Muhammad, but he also performs songs such as Padang Bulang and Ya lah Wahton. This tradition of *sholawat* has become an art form that appeals to modern sensibilities. This paper will explore how and why *sholawat* has begun to sooth the hearts and souls of those struggling with modern life.

Key Words: *sholawat*, Habib Syech, Moslem, tradition

BIODATA

EDUCATION

Arizona State University (ASU)

PhD, Religious Studies
Expected: May 2020

University of California Riverside (UCR)

MA, Religious Studies
Honors Pass
June 2012

College of Charleston (CofC)

BA, Major: Religious Studies, Minor: Asian Studies
May 2010

FIELDWORK

Summer 2016: Solo, Indonesia

I received a grant from the Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict and the International Institute for Islamic Thought to travel for two months with Habib Syech across Java, Kalimantan, and Malaysia to get an initial sense of what makes him so popular. I spent the majority of my time travelling and attending Habib Syech's events

where I was able to interview a multitude of people and complete participant observation essential to moving forward with the project.

Summer 2015: Salatiga and Solo, Indonesia

Through the assistance of a Fulbright-Hays, I was able to participate in an Advanced Indonesian Language Training Program and find a permanent research site for my dissertation research on the contemporary Indonesian Islamic landscape. Through this fieldwork and the previous two summers, I was able to connect with Habib Syech bin Abdul Qadir Assegaf who brings tens of thousands of Muslims together across Java, Malaysia, and parts of China at his performances. His performances and the rationality that makes him popular are my primary sites of investigation.

Summer 2011 and 2012: Yogyakarta, Indonesia

In preparation for my national American Associate of Religious Studies presentation, I spent time in the villages surrounding Yogyakarta with Sufi leaders building from my previous experiences with Sufi leaders around Salatiga, Indonesia.

Spring 2012: Los Angeles, California, under the direction of the Institute for the Study of Immigrant Religions

I spent four months in downtown Los Angeles in the Indonesian Consulate observing and taking interviews in the basement where the consulate mosque was located. My field notes and research write-up are in the Institute's archives.

Summer 2011: Salatiga, Indonesia, under the direction of Dr. Muhamad Ali

The University of California, Riverside, funded this research. I spent two months in a Muslim orphanage, took intensive Indonesian classes, and researched networks of rural Sufi movements for my Master's thesis.

Spring 2010: Charleston, South Carolina, under the direction of Dr. Elijah Siegler

For my senior College research project, I completed participant-observation in a Soto Zen meditation group next to a Whole Foods trying to see if the meditation center and Whole Foods were connected through 'spiritual capitalism.'

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Arizona State University

Course Development

Lead designer and collaborator for the creation of the future large enrollment online and in-person class: "Islam, Terrorism, and Global Islamic Futures." The class facilitates frank, open, and respectful exchange that helps students cultivate a nuanced view of the relations between Euro-American and Muslim majority nations.

Instructor

Summer Session 2017
Islam in the Modern World
REL 366
Summer Session 2015
Comparative Mysticism

REL 301

Teaching Assistant

Spring 2016 - Spring 2017
Religion in America

Fall 2014 - Spring 2015
Introduction to Religion

University of California, Riverside

Teaching Assistant

Winter 2011-Spring 2012
Myth and Ritual

Research Assistant

Fall 2011
Sexuality and Culture

International Teaching

Summer 2012: Ten English seminars for Indonesian English Teachers across Java, Indonesia
Summer 2011: English in Middle and High School English in Central Java

HONORS, GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS

Exterior Awards

Semi-Finalist for U.S. Student Fulbright to Indonesia
HASTAC Scholar 2016 – 2018
International Institute for Islamic Thought Summer Research Grant 2016
Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict Friends of the Center Fellowship 2016
Middlebury Arabic School at Mills College 2016 – Accepted (declined)
Critical Language Scholarship in Arabic 2016 – Alternate
American Institute for Pakistan Studies Research Award 2015 (declined)
Fulbright-Hays 2015
Honorable Mention Pre-Dissertation Ford Fellowship 2015
Institute for the Study of Immigrant Religions Research Grant 2012
S. C. Palmetto Fellows 2006-2009
President's Award for Community Service, Office of the President, Washington, DC, 2006

Interior Awards

ASU Graduate College Fellowship 2017
ASU College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Graduate Excellence Award 2017
ASU School of Historical, Philosophical, and Religious Studies Spring Research Grant 2017
ASU College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Student Leaders 2016
ASU Graduate Education Travel Award 2016
ASU Graduate and Professional Student Association Travel Grant Spring 2016
ASU College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Graduate Excellence Award 2015

ASU Graduate and Professional Student Association Travel Grant 2015
ASU Graduate Education Travel Award 2015
ASU School of Historical, Philosophical, and Religious Studies Travel Grant 2015
UCR Department of Religious Studies Travel Grant 2011
UCR Dean's Distinguished Fellowship Award 2010-2012
CofC Department of Asian Studies Travel Award 2009
CofC Department of Religious Studies Study Abroad Scholarship 2009
CofC Presidential Scholarship 2006-2009

PUBLICATIONS

Edmonds, James and Terry Shoemaker. "The Limits of Interfaith? Interfaith Identities, Emerging Potentialities, and Exclusivity." *Culture and Religion*, vol. 17, no. 2, 2016.

Newspaper Articles, Blog Posts, and

"Listening to 'sholawat' to combat radical Islam," *Jakarta Post*. Published: June 2, 2017. <<http://www.thejakartapost.com/academia/2017/06/02/listening-to-sholawat-to-combat-radical-islam.html>>

"Introducing Asia Mediated: Interdisciplinary Curriculum Innovation at Arizona State University" #AsiaNow. April 19, 2017 < <http://www.asian-studies.org/asia-now/entryid/44/introducing-asia-mediated-interdisciplinary-curriculum-innovation-at-arizona-state-university>>

Book Review

Islam in Indonesia: The Contest for Society, Ideas and Values by Carool Kersten, in *Reading Religion*, < <http://readingreligion.org/books/islam-indonesia>>

Practicing Islam: Knowledge, Experience, and Social Navigation in Kyrgyzstan by David Montgomery forthcoming in *Reading Religion*

Islam and Democracy in Indonesia: Tolerance without Liberalism by Jeremy Menchik forthcoming in *Reading Religion* <http://readingreligion.org/books/islam-and-democracy-indonesia>

Spirits and Ships: Cultural Transfers in Early Monsoon Asia, edited by Andea Acri, Roger Blench and Alexandra Landmann, ISEAS Publishing. Forthcoming in *ASEASUK News*.

PRESENTATIONS

"Secularism's Ambiguity: Listening to the Streets of Jakarta," Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict; April 7, 2017

"Smelling Arab: The Possession at Solo, Indonesia," American Academy of Religion in the Critical Theory and Discourse section; November 19-22, 2016

"The Circulation of Islamic Ethics in Indonesia," Asian Studies Research Center at Arizona State University; October 27, 2015

"Popular De-Islamization of Yogyakarta's Kraton," Western American Academy of Religion Conference, Santa Clara; March 20-22, 2015

Invited Respondent to *The Act of Killing*, Western Association for Asian Studies Conference, Arizona State University; October 8-10, 2014

"Tasauf's Transformation through Political Practice," National American Academy of Religion; Chicago, Illinois; November 17-20, 2013

"The Indonesian Muslims' Experience in America," Launch of the Institute for the Study of Immigrant Religions, University of California Riverside; June 1st 2012

"The Revitalization of Islam through Dzikir in Indonesia: From Naqshbundi to Hamka," Western American Academy of Religion Conference; Santa Clara, March 24-26, 2012

LINGUISTIC FLUENCY

English- Native

Indonesian- Full Professional Proficiency

Arabic- Limited Working Proficiency

Javanese- Elementary Proficiency

SERVICE

Associate Editor and Website Developer for *Ta'seel Commons*:
<http://www.taseelcommons.com/>

Associate Editor for the Southeast Asian section of #AsiaNow, a blog for the Association of Asian Studies

Reviewer for Teaching Excellence Award at Arizona State University 2016

Organizer and Lead Collaborator Graduate Student and Professor Reading Group
The "Post-Secular" in the Anthropology of Religion Spring 2016

Event volunteer for recruiting: School of Historical, Philosophical, and Religious Studies majors/minors, Fall 2015

Centennial Professor Award Reviewer, Spring 2015

Co-Organizer for the Western Association for Asian Studies, Fall 2014

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

American Academy of Religion (AAR)

American Anthropological Association (AAA)

American Institute of Indonesian Studies (AIFIS)

Association of Asian Studies (AAS)
The Indonesia and Timor Leste Studies Committee (ITLSC)

REFERENCES

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Dr. Gaymon Bennett
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