

The Iranian Nation-Building Projects of the 20th Century: The Place and Role of Religious Minorities

This talk analyzes the institutional history of the Jewish communities in Iran—and the pivotal role these institutions played in facilitating integration and other social developments. Examples of social developments include the politicizing of youth and participation in nation-building projects as envisaged by Mohammad Reza Shah (from the 1950s to the 1979 revolution). More recent examples point to Iran's Jewish population adjusting to a rapidly changing post-revolutionary society, especially in light of the regional conflict between their respective spiritual and national homelands of Israel and Iran.



Tuesday, May 16, 2017

7:00 - 9:00 PM

Literature Bldg. Room 155

Lior Sternfeld is an Assistant Professor of History and Jewish Studies at Penn State University. He is a social historian of the modern Middle East with particular interests in Jewish (and other minorities') histories of the region. Sternfeld's first book manuscript tentatively titled: "Integrated After All: Iranian Jews in the Twentieth Century," which examines the integration of the Jewish communities in Iran into the nation-building projects of the twentieth century, is now under review. This book examines the development of the Iranian Jewish communities vis-à-vis ideologies and institutions such as Iranian nationalism, Zionism, and constitutionalism, among others. His current research project examines the origins of "third-worldism" in the Middle East.

Sponsors: the Department of Literature, Jewish Studies Program, Third World Studies and Religion