

Short Curriculum Vitae

Personal Information

Name: SEYED-GOHRAB, Asghar
Date of birth: 1 January 1968
Nationality: Dutch / Iranian
Website: [Prof.dr. Asghar Seyed-Gohrab - Geesteswetenschappen - Universiteit Utrecht \(uu.nl\)](http://Prof.dr.AsgharSeyed-Gohrab-Geesteswetenschappen-UniversiteitUtrecht(uu.nl)https://beyondsharia.nl/)
<https://beyondsharia.nl/>

Employment

2020-present Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Utrecht University (Professor of Persian and Iranian Studies)
1997-2021 Department of Middle Eastern Studies, Leiden university, (Associate Professor of Persian and Islamic Mysticism)

Education

2001 **PhD:** Faculty of Humanities/Department of Persian Studies, Leiden University
1995 **Master I:** English language and literature / 'Vrije Universiteit' Amsterdam
1995 **Master II:** Faculty of Humanities/Department of Persian Studies, Leiden University

Awards

2023-present Elected Fellow of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW)
2021-2026 Recipient of ERC Advanced Grant (€ 2.5 million)
2009-14 Recipient, NWO VIDI grant (2009-14) (€ 700.000)
2007-2012 Elected Fellow of the Young Academy of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW), Amsterdam
2002-06 Recipient, NWO VENI grant (2002-06) (€ 200.000)
1997-2001 Recipient, four-year full-time PhD scholarship from NWO, placed at Leiden University.

Managerial Tasks and Services to the Field (A selection)

1. Member of the board Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies (Utrecht University)
2. Member of the MA and Research MA thesis prize (GW scriptieprijs) committee 2022 (Utrecht University)
3. Chairman of the programs Persian Studies (BA and MA) at Leiden University (2003 - 2020)
4. Vice-Chairman of the Young Academy of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (April 2009 - April 2011)
5. Chairman of the Faculty Council Leiden University (September 2010 to September 2011).
6. Elected member of the national Council for Humanities (Lid van Raad voor Geesteswetenschappen) at the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) (May 2011- 2019, two periods)
7. Elected Board Member to the Council of the International Society for Iranian Studies (2010-2012)
8. Chairman of the Department Middle Eastern Studies (Leiden Institute for Area Studies, Leiden U) (April 2011-2013)
9. Member of Diversity Committee (Leiden U, University level) (2013-2020)
10. Member of the Roshan Initiative in Persian Digital Humanities at UMD (PersDig@UMD) External Advisory (University of Maryland)
11. Member of the Board of Examiners of Asian Studies (2012-2014). Chairman of the same board from October 2014-2018 (Leiden U)

- **Refereed articles (28 articles)**

1. (2024) "Appropriating Hafez's ghazals for Shiite rites and rituals in the Islamic Republic of Iran," in *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, pp. 336-346. DOI: 10.1080/13530194.2024.2342179
2. (2023) "Fashioning Persian Identity: Asadī's Staged Dispute between a Zoroastrian and a Muslim," in *Journal of Persianate Studies*, 16 (1), pp. 1-24.
3. (2021) "Gambling in Taverns: Reflections on the Notion of Play in Persian Culture," in *The International Journal of Persian Literature*, Vol. 5, Penn State UP, Vol. 6, pp. 11-53.
4. (2016) "A Modern Persian Poet on Iran-Iraq War: Qayṣar Amīnpūr," in *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, No. 166, Vol. 2, 347-65.
5. (2015) "Corrections and Elaborations: A One-Night Stand in Narrations of Ferdowsi's Rostam and Sohrāb," in *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 3, pp. 443-461.
6. (2013) "The Rose and the Wine: Dispute as a Literary Device in Classical Persian Literature," in *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 47, No. 1, 69-85.
7. (2012) "Martyrdom as Piety, Mysticism and National Icon in Iran," in *Der Islam: Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kultur des islamischen Orients*, Issue 1-2, 87, 248-73.
8. (2011) "Khomeini the Poet Mystic," in *Die Welt des Islams: International Journal for the Study of Modern Islam*, 51, 438-458.

- **Books (7 monographs)**

9. (2024) *Of Piety and Heresy: Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad Ghazzālī's Persian Treatises on Antinomians*, Berlin: De Gruyter.
10. (2021) *Martyrdom, Mysticism and Dissent: The Poetry of the 1979 Iranian Revolution and the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988)*, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021.
11. (2015, third edition September 2015) *Soefisme: een levende traditie*, Amsterdam: Prometheus / Bert Bakker.
12. (2014) *Mirror of Dew: The Poetry of Ālam-Tāj Zhāle Qā'em-Maqāmi*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, ILEX Foundation Series 14).
13. (2003) *Laylī and Majnūn: Love, Madness and Mystic Longing in Niẓāmī's Epic Romance*, Leiden / Boston: E.J. Brill

- **Books edited (14)**

14. (2025) *Dancing before God's Beauty: Exploring Rūmī's Poetic Universe, Mystical Philosophy and Reception History*, Berlin: De Gruyter.
15. (2024) *Sufi Non-Conformism: Antinomian Trends in the Persianate Traditions*, Leiden: Leiden University Press.
16. (2020) *Pearls of Meanings: Studies on Persian Art, Poetry, Sufism and History of Iranian Studies in Europe by J.T.P. de Bruijn*, Leiden: Leiden UP.
17. (2019) *The Layered Heart: Essays on Persian Poetry, A Celebration in Honor of Dick Davis*, Washington DC: Mage Publishers
18. (2015) *Literature of the Early Twentieth Century from the Constitutional Period to Reza Shah*, Iranian Studies, London / New York: I.B. Tauris.
19. (2013) *Conflict and Development in Iranian Film*, ed. A. Seyed-Gohrab & Kamran Talattof, Leiden: Leiden University Press.
20. (2012) *Metaphor and Imagery in Persian Poetry*, Leiden/Boston: Brill.
21. (2012) *The Great Umar Khayyam: A Global Reception of the Rubā'iyat*, Leiden: Leiden University Press.

- **Book chapters (59)**

22. (2025 Forthcoming) "Sufi Poetry in Persian: An Analytic Overview," in *Handbook of Sufi Studies*, Leiden: Brill.
23. (2025 forthcoming) "Centring Motherhood: Depictions of Mothers and Motherhood in Modern Persian Women's Poetry," in *Modern Iranian Women's Literature: Writing across Borders and Genres*, (Studies in Global Women's Writing Series), London: Bloomsbury, edited by Nasrin Rahimieh and Farshad Sonboldel.
24. (2024) "The Science of Rhetoric and Persian Literary Riddles, the Case of Majd al-Dīn Hamgar," in *Arabic, Persian, and Turkic Poetics: Towards a Post-Eurocentric Literary Theory*, eds., Hany Rashwan, Rebecca Ruth Gould, and Nasrin Askari, (Proceedings of the British Academy 266), Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 141-157.
25. (2019) "The Flourishing of Persian Quatrains," in *A History of Persian Literature: Persian Lyric Poetry in the Classical Era 800-1500: Ghazals. Panegyrics and Quatrains*, Vol. II, ed. E. Yarshater, London: I.B. Tauris, pp. 488-568.
26. (2017) "Satan as the Lover of God in Islamic Mystical Writings," in *The Beloved in Middle East Literature: The Culture of Love and Languishing*, edited by Alireza Korangy, Hanadi Al-Samman, Michael Beard, London / New York: I.B. Tauris, pp. 85-101
27. (2015) "Stylistic Continuities in Classical Persian Poetry: Reflections on Manuchehri from Dāmghān and Amir Mo'ezzi," in *The Age of the Seljuqs*, ed. Edmund Herzig & Sarah Stewart, London / New York: I.B. Tauris, 131-47.
28. (2010) "The Erotic Spirit: Love, Man and Satan in Hafez's Poetry," in *Hafiz and The School of Love in Classical Persian Poetry*, ed. L. Lewisohn, London: I.B. Tauris, 107-21.

Translations: Poetry (8 volumes, 3 of which together with Professor J.T.P. de Bruijn)

29. (2010) *Iemand die op niemand lijkt: gedichten van Forugh Farrokhzād*, Leidschendam: Quist.
30. (2010) *Spiegel voor geluid: Mohammad-Rezā Shafīi Kadkani*, Leidschendam: Quist.
31. (2007) *Raana aan de vijver: gedichten van Sohrab Sepehri*, Leidschendam: Quist.

Book reviews (53)

32. (2025) Austin O'Malley, *The Poetics of Spiritual Instruction: Farid al-Din 'Attār and Persian Sufi Didacticism*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2023, in *The Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Issue 145, No. 3, pp. 653-656.
33. (2023) Ingenito, Domenico Arturo, *Beholding Beauty: Sa'di of Shiraz and the Aesthetics of Desire in Medieval Persian Poetry*, Leiden: Brill, 2020, in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 55, Issue 1, 2023, pp. 171-173.
34. (2020) Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b ʿĪl-Tughān Bardasīrī, *The Lantern of Spirits (Miṣbāḥ al-arvāḥ)*, ed. B. Utas, Wiesbaden, Dr Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2019, in *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, LXXVII, No. 1-2, pp. 399-401.
35. (2020) Golbarg Rekabtalaei, *Iranian Cosmopolitanism: A Cinematic History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019, in *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 135, Issue 576, October 2020, pp. 1371-1373.
36. (2020) Wood, B. (ed.), *The Adventures of Shāh Esmā'il. A Seventeenth-Century Persian Popular Romance*, Leiden: Brill, 2019, in *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, LXXVII, No. 1-2, pp. 179-180
37. (2014) Katouzian, H., *Sa'di: The Poet of Life, Love and Compassion*, Oxford: Oneworld, Makers of the Muslim World Series, 2006, in *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 47, No. 3, 479-501.
38. (2013) Papin-Matin, F., *Beyond Death: The Mystical Teachings of 'Ayn al-Qudāt al-Hamadhānī*, Leiden: Brill, 2010, in *Journal of American Oriental Society*, 63-4.
39. (2010) Karamustafa, A.T., *Sufism. The Formative Period*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007, in *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, No. LXXVII ½, 237-40.

National Journals, Popular Articles

40. (2023) “Rumi in de Woman, Life, Freedom beweging in Iran,” in *ZemZem: Tijdschrift over het Midden-Oosten, Noord-Afrika en islam*, 2, pp. 84-90.
41. (2021) “Met modder gooien. Perzische strijdgedichten over etniciteit van de elfde tot de twintigste eeuw,” in *Madoc: Tijdschrift over de Middeleeuwen*, Jaargang 35, nummer 2, zomer 2021, pp. 66-75.
42. (2018) “Bedevaart voor liefdeswensen” and “Zegening bij Soefigraf,” in the catalogue *Relieken, Museum Catharijne Convent Utrecht*, eds., Inge Schriemer & Loes Visch, Zwolle: WBooks, pp 126 and 131 respectively.

Organisation of International conferences, workshops and lectures (A short selection)

1. “Mystieke vrouwen in Christendom en Islam,” Workshop at Domkerk (Sacristie) in Utrecht, 22 augustus 2025;
2. “Reason and Religion in Iran 1925-2025” at the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Utrecht University, 27 September 2024;
3. International Conference “Limits, Boundaries, and Transgression in Literatures and Languages of the Persianate World” at the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Utrecht University, 5-6 September 2024;
4. International Conference “Femininity and Masculinity in Persian Culture and Literature,” 11-12 April 2024 at the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Utrecht University;
5. International Conference: “A Boundless Ocean: Rumi’s Thought and Reception” at the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Utrecht University, 23-24 November 2023;
6. The symposium “Rumi en de religie van de liefde” together with the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) in Amsterdam (20 December 2023);
7. Workshop “Islam, Gender and Society in Contemporary Iran” at Utrecht University, (8 November 2022);
8. International Conference “Faces of Islam: Of Tolerance and Coercion” at the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Utrecht University (13-14 Oct 2022);
9. International Conference “Rumi on Faith, Piety and Religious Philosophy,” July 1, 2022, at the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Utrecht University.

Teaching (BA/MA/Research MA: a selection)

The courses I have taught at BA, MA and Res-MA level include:

- Iran and the Modern Middle East: Regional and International Politics
- Shiism and Islamic Mysticism (Sufism)
- Literature and Politics in the Persian-speaking World
- Introduction to Area Studies (with Ethan Mark)
- Classical Persian Poetry as a Living Tradition
- Seminar Iranian film and Persian visual culture

In cooperation with the department of medieval Dutch Studies at Leiden University, together with Dr. Geert Warnar, I taught the course *Things to do with Texts* in Honours program from 2013-2015, each year on different subjects such love, body and soul, Mirror-for-Princes (*Fürstenspiegel*) genre, and narratives East-West. Till 2020, I participated in several courses such as *Panorama of the Middle Ages* (Dr. Geert Warnar), *Great Books* (Dr. Thijs Porck), *Rhetoric and Social Media*, and *Arts and Media in Society*, both coordinated by Professor Antje Wessels.

Supervision of BA/MA/Research-MA Theses (2005-present, 82 students)

1. (2025) Bregtje van der Zaag, *Protest en Poëzie: Ferdowsi's Shah-nama in de Vrouw, Leven, Vrijheid beweging van 2022* (BA)
2. (2024) Annelotte RC Willemsen, *Poëzie als wapen: De mobilisatie van jonge Iraanse soldaten tijdens de Iran-Irakoorklog (1980-1988)* (BA)
3. (2023) Niek Engelhart, *Please don't shoot the President, he is only doing his best! William J. Oudendyk's report on the political situation in Persia during the last years of the Constitutional Revolution (1906-1911), and his portrayal of Persians.* (BA)
4. (2022) Babette Kuijpers, *Ali Shari'ati, Red Shi'ism and the Iranian Revolution of 1979*, Utrecht University (BA)
5. (2022) Maarten Holtzapffel, *Rumi in Post-Revolutionary Iran: Abdolkarim Soroush's Appropriation of Islamic Mystic Poetry in Political Theories*, Leiden University, started in 2021. (ResMA)

Supervision PhDs (a selection)

1. Ghodrätzadeh, Amin, *Wise Fools and the Interrogation of God* (started 2022)
2. Holtzapffel, Maarten, *Of Love and Wisdom: Rūmī's Transgressive Ideas and the Rise of Humanism* (started 2022)
3. Noorian, Zhinia, *Sapling of Hope: Parvīn I'tiṣāmī (1907-1941) and Her Poetry in the Literary, Religious and Cultural Context of Early 20th Century Iran* (defended on 7th November 2022)
4. Farhosh-van Loon, Diede, *Ayatollah Khomeini's integration of mysticism and poetry in his politics* (started December 2010, defended on 18 October 2016)
5. Alsulami, Mohammad, *Iranian Orientalism: Notions of the Other in Modern Iranian Thoughts* (Sept 2009 - Sept 2013) (defended on 5 February 2014)
6. Nematollahi Mahani, ('Do Not Say They Are Dead': *The Political Use of Mystical and Religious Concepts in the Poetry of the Iran-Iraq War* (Sept 2009 - Sept 2013) (defended 15 May 2014)

Three main editorial activities (membership of editorial board not included)

- **Founding editor-in-chief of *Sufism Studies: The Mystical Philosophy of Islam* (Berlin: De Gruyter)**, established in 2023. 5 books have been published so far, among which.
 - Eliza Tasbihi, *Hidden in Plain Sight: Īsmā'īl Anḳaravī's commentary on 'Book Seven' of Rūmī's Mathnawī* (2025)
 - Arash Ghajarjazi, *Remembering 'Umar Khayyām: Episodes of Unbelief in the Reception Histories of Persian Quatrains* (2025)
 - Sheridan Polinsky, *Sufism in Late Mamlūk Cairo: The Life and Thought of Ibn Mughayzil (fl. 895/1490)* (2025)
- **Founding editor-in-chief of the *Iranian Studies Series*** (Leiden University Press / Chicago University Press), established in 2010. 34 books have been published so far, among which.
 - Siavash Rafiee-Rad, *Expeditions in Persia: Exploring Qajar Persia in two 19th-Century Diaries* (2025)
 - Hadi Baghaei-Abchooyeh, *Beyond Orientalism: Sir William Jones (1746-1794), A Journey of Understanding* (2025)
- *Persica: International Journal of Persian and Iranian Studies* (Leuven: Peeters)