

**The University of Chicago Shi'i Studies Group Symposium
Call for Papers (CFP):**

“Shi'ism and Governance”

Abstract submission deadline: February 24th, 2017

Symposium Date: May 12-13, 2017

The relationship between Shi'ism and governance—whether through doctrinal beliefs, political movements and ideologies, or practical exigencies—constitutes a highly relevant area of study within Islamic history and modern life. From the earliest disagreements over the succession to the Prophet Muhammad to current debates over Islamism and the modern state, various thinkers and movements within Shi'ism formulated original and innovative answers to the question of how Shi'i communities should approach governance, politics, and communal relations in the larger societies within which they lived.

Given its historic minority status, how have Shi'is theorized their position vis-à-vis caliphates they intrinsically rejected? How have Shi'is legitimized or contested the rhetoric and practice of Shi'i dynasties and governments once they came into power? How can we theorize Shi'i pre-modern and modern notions of “governance” and the “political,” and is this a useful metric for understanding the relationship between Shi'ism and power? Finally, how have other schools of thought approached and responded to Shi'i notions of governance or politics? We welcome contributions from scholars and graduate students working on these questions from any relevant scholarly perspective, including social, intellectual and political history, anthropology, sociology, political science, area studies, literature, and religious studies.

Papers may focus on both modern and pre-modern subject areas and might address—although by no means are limited to—such topics as the following:

- Historic Shi'i notions of leadership and what constituted the authority of the Islamic ruler;
- Shi'i beliefs of the Imamate and the Caliphate regarding governance and political responsibilities;
- Modern Shi'i scholarly thought and the various political positions of Twelver Grand Ayatollahs towards governance;
- Polemic debates between Shi'is and other thought schools on the theory of proper Islamic rule;
- Political Islam, mass movements, and the modern state;
- Sectarianism, communal relations, and the state in the modern Middle East;
- Comparative studies on approaches towards governance between different Shi'i groups such as the Zaydis, Twelvers, Isma'ilis and Alawis in historical and modern contexts.

Format of the Symposium

Presenters will be requested to present for 15-20 minutes followed by additional time for moderated discussion between panelists and the audience. Abstracts of around **300 words along with a CV** should be submitted by **February 24, 2017**. Send abstracts to Mohammad Sagha at msagha@uchicago.edu, with the words “UChicago Shi‘i Studies Symposium Application” in the subject line.

About the Symposium

The University of Chicago Shi‘i Studies Symposium is an endeavor of the [Shi‘i Studies Group](#), established in 2010, to provide an interdisciplinary, non-area-specific forum for the discussion of research on Shi‘ism by faculty and graduate students at the University and beyond. The annual symposium aims to strengthen the field of Shi‘i Studies by bringing together a group of both senior and early-career scholars to present research and to cultivate an environment for intellectual discussion and collaboration. At each symposium we aim to address a focused set of questions with cross-cutting relevance to scholars working on various periods and from various disciplinary perspectives.

See <https://shii-studies.sites.uchicago.edu/> for more details on our past and future events.

