

Stanford | Hamid and Christina Moghadam Program in Iranian Studies



2017 - 2018
YEAR IN REVIEW

Introduction

This past academic year has been an important and busy year for the Hamid and Christina Moghadam Program in Iranian Studies. It is increasingly necessary to study and teach a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of modern Iran, to highlight its rich cultural, political, religious, and economic relevance, its relationship with the U.S., role in the Middle East, and changing place in the world.

Throughout the year, Iranian Studies furthered a multidisciplinary approach to the study of Iran, including lectures and film screenings, plays and concerts, student research and internships, faculty teaching and research, and student support.

Collaborations this year included programming with several groups on and off campus including the Freeman Spogli Institute, Stanford Global Studies, the Persian Student Association, the American Middle Eastern Network for Dialogue at Stanford, the Iranian Stanford Alumni Association, the United Nations Association Film Festival, the Taube Center for Jewish Studies, Department of English, Creative Writing Program, and the Kronos Quartet.

Connect with us



Stanford Iranian Studies Program



@StanfordISP



<http://bit.ly/2ekeyZK>



Stanford Iranian Studies



<http://stanford.io/2eaM1lW>

Administration

Abbas Milani

Director

Roma Parhad

Program Manager

Pooya Azadi

Project Manager

Franco Errico

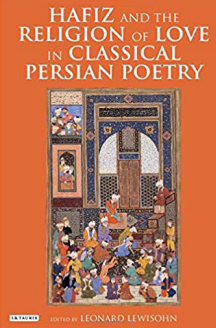
Program Assistant

Event Highlights

Iranian Studies hosted 40 events with a total attendance of more than 5,500 people. Speakers travelled from the U.S. and abroad and discussed topics ranging from art and poetry, economy and psychology, literature and music, photography and film, and to history and politics.

Lectures

“Anticlericalism in Persian Poetry” with Leonard Lewisohn



“In Search of Modern Iran” with Abbas Amanat




“The Power of Photography for Social Change” with Reza



“Reza Abdoh: Theatre Visionary” (film screening) with Adam Soch



“Eternal Magnetism of the Dictator: A Psychological Analysis” with Fathali M. Moghaddam



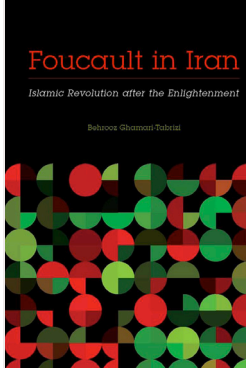
“Soundtrack of the Revolution” with Nahid Siamdoust



“Iranian Literature in French: Three Decades of History” with Sorour Kasmai



“Thinking the Unthinkable: Foucault and the Islamic Revolution” with Behrooz Ghamari-Tabrizi



Conference: Islamic Republic of Iran: Continuity or Change?



On Friday, March 2, the Hamid and Christina Moghadam Program in Iranian Studies and the Freeman Spogli Institute at Stanford University co-hosted a conference on the future of Iran. Moderated by Stanford professors (above) Abbas Milani, Larry Diamond, Francis Fukuyama, and Michael McFaul, the conference featured panels on politics and society, culture and media, the economy, and international factors. Scholars and practitioners discussed issues of succession, changing demographics, media control, women’s rights under the current regime, economic challenges, and relations with the U.S.



Ladan Boroumand on Panel 1 of the conference.

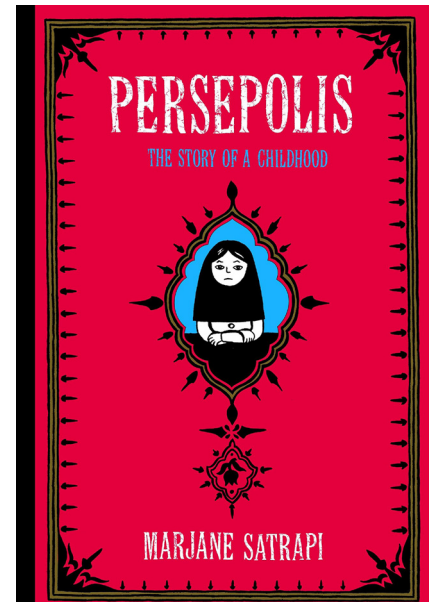
Bitá Prize for Persian Arts

Marjane Satrapi was awarded the tenth annual Bitá Prize for Persian Arts on November 17. More than 500 people attended the ceremony celebrating the writer, illustrator, and filmmaker. Of her many books and films, her most acclaimed is *Persepolis*, a graphic novel later turned into an award-winning film, about growing up in Iran after the 1979 revolution and during the Iran-Iraq war.

Stanford's Vice President of the Arts, Harry Elam, gave the keynote speech and emphasized the importance of the arts to help build a relationship between the U.S. and Iran.

"The liberating voice of Satrapi, at once profound and humble, defiant and democratic, satirical but not bitter, self-critical but never self-loathing is, more than ever, needed and appreciated" said Bitá Daryabari while presenting the award.

In accepting the award, an emotional Satrapi said, "This prize from Iranian Studies means a lot to me because no matter who I am and who I have become, I owe it all to my country, Iran." She finished the evening by engaging in a lively Q&A with the audience.



Iranian Studies students at dinner with Marjane Satrapi.

Stanford Festival of Iranian Arts

The Stanford Festival of Iranian arts had another busy year, hosting 23 events with more than 2,700 attendees. Here are some highlights.



Crossroads

Until this year, the play “Crossroads,” written and directed by professor Bahram Beyzaie, had never been published or performed. The seven sold out performances at the new Stanford Roble Theater in March received much acclaim inside and outside Iran. Brilliantly staged using a minimalist set, the play is at once poetic and personal, but poignantly political and historical. It chronicles the havoc brought in the last four decades by tyranny, crass commercialism, faux nationalism, and hypocrisy on the lives of not just two star-crossed lovers but all who pass through the crossroad, people with disrupted often disfigured lives.

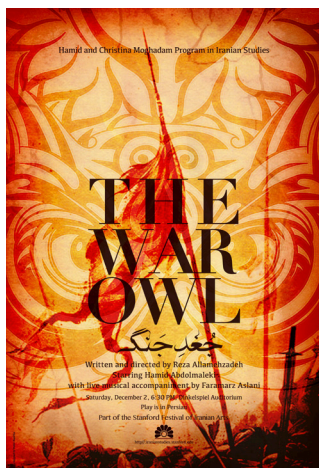
In the Mirror of the Sky

Acclaimed musicians Kayhan Kalhor and Ali Akbar Moradi performed a concert, “In the Mirror of the Sky,” on the kamancheh (Persian spiked fiddle) and tanbour (Persian lute), on December 10. The event was co-sponsored by the Persian Student Association.



Tanbours, Epics, and Mysticism

Ali Akbar Moradi returned to Stanford with his sons, Kourosh and Arash Moradi, and the percussionist Pejman Hadadi on May 5 for an evening of classical music from Iran. The event was co-sponsored by the Persian Student Association.



The War Owl

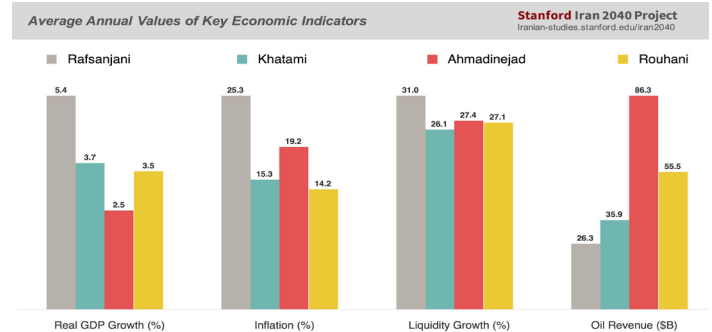
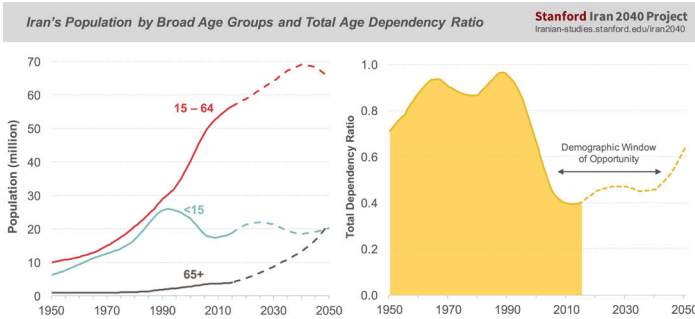
Writer and filmmaker Reza Allamehzadeh staged his new play, “The War Owl,” at Stanford on December 2 with musical accompaniment by Faramarz Aslani.



Stanford Iran 2040 Project

In a busy year for the Iranian economy, the Stanford Iran 2040 Project worked hard to keep up with recent trends and new data. The fourth working paper, “Iran’s Population Dynamics and Demographic Window of Opportunity,” written by Farzaneh Roudi, Mohsen Mesgaran, and Pooya Azadi was published in the fall. “Central Banking in Iran,” by Pooya Azadi and Razieh

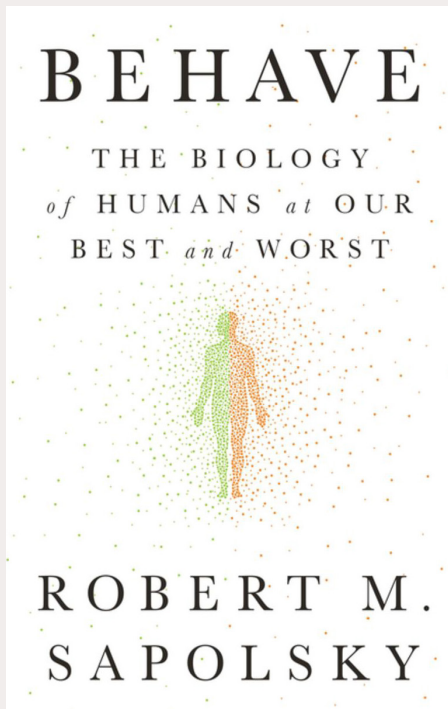
Zahedi, was published in July and “Mitigation of Water Crisis in Iran Will Cost Half of its Oil Revenue” (working title) by Mohsen Mesgaran and Pooya Azadi is forthcoming. As Iran’s economic situation continues to falter and political relations deteriorate, the Stanford Iran 2040 Project endeavors to provide a roadmap for understanding Iran’s economic trajectory.



Iran is currently in the midst of a demographic window of opportunity which will last about four decades before its working-age population starts to diminish in the mid-2040s.

Average annual values of key economic indicators by the last four presidents.

Science and Society



Acclaimed Stanford biology professor, Robert Sapolsky, delivered the second Science and Society talk on October 24. Professor Sapolsky discussed his recent book *Behave: The Biology of Humans at Our Best and Worst* to an overflowing auditorium.



“We are this phenomenally violent species. We are this phenomenally cooperative, empathic one. How do we begin to possibly get a sense of the biology of us at our best and worst?” Professor Sapolsky asked. He stressed the importance of understanding the “why” of human behavior rather than just the “how.” He discussed the many factors that go into understanding human behavior including hormones, genetics, childhood experiences, culture, evolutionary factors and more.

Public Art, Public Spaces



Artist and lecturer Ala Ebtekar coordinated a new art project, titled “Horizon to Horizon,” between East Palo Alto high school students and students in Khorramabad, Iran. A series of workshops by artist Minoosh Zomorodinia and instructor Tara Goodarzy put students in contact with each other (via Skype and Telegram) as they produced works in parallel with one another. The performative work based on this project will be displayed at the 2019 Public Art, Public Spaces symposium.



Student Highlights

This year, a record number of students participated in the Global Studies minor program with a specialization in Iranian Studies. Ten students were enrolled and six graduated with minors in Iranian Studies this year. Congratulations to Nazgol Agah, Danya Kafai, Atussa Mohtasham, Cameron Ramos, Rachel Roberts, and Rochelle Rouhani!

The graduating students came to Iranian Studies from across campus, including computer science, economics, history, comparative literature, and symbolic systems. Their capstone projects were equally diverse, including papers written on: the concept of truth in classical Persian poetry, public opinion and the Iran nuclear deal, Rumi's poetry and finding life's meaning, Iran's response to international sanctions, and Marxist schoolgirls during the Iranian revolution.

During the summer of 2018, undergraduates and graduates with funding from Iranian Studies will further their studies through advanced language study and completing research projects, including one on the Shiraz Arts Festival.



“The program was transformative for me and the classes were among the best I took at Stanford. I believe I've gained a much more nuanced understanding about how our world works which will be immensely helpful in the future.”

~ Cameron Ramos (class of 2018)



Students presented their papers to Global Studies faculty, staff, and students at the first Stanford Global Studies Capstone Seminar in the spring.





“I have learned so much about my heritage and how Iran plays a role in global politics. I developed many skills in the humanities that I was not able to utilize as much in economics such as writing and critical reading.”

~ Rochelle Rouhani (Class of 2018)



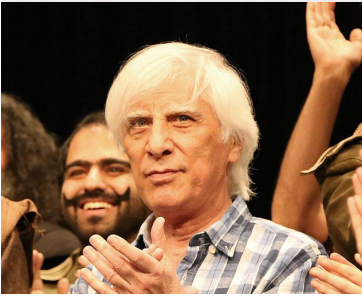
“At this time in history, especially with the increasing turmoil in the region, it is more important than ever to begin to educate oneself in an unbiased, educated manner, and the Iranian studies minor has done this for me.”

~ Danya Kafai
(Class of 2018)

In March, Iranian studies students and faculty celebrated Norooz (Persian New Year) over a traditional Persian dinner.



Faculty News & Recent Publications



Professor **Bahram Beyzaie** received an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters from the University of St. Andrews in Scotland.



Director **Abbas Milani** received the 2017 Lyman Award from the Stanford Alumni Association.

The **Zahedi Family Fellowship** launched this year. The fellowship supports a visiting scholar to work on the recently acquired Zahedi Archive at the Hoover Institution and give a public talk on their research. The archive contains the rare papers, diplomatic correspondence, and photos of Ardeshir Zahedi, the former Foreign Minister under the Shah, Iran's ambassador to the U.S. from 1971-1979, and a pivotal figure in modern Iranian politics.

Artist and lecturer **Ala Ebtekar** taught a new class, *Revolutionary Practices: Space and Public Discourse in Iran*. The course examined the mediums of public art that have been voices of social change, protest and expressions of community desire in Iran. It offered a unique glimpse into Iran's contemporary art and visual culture through the investigation of public art practices such as graffiti and street art, as well as older traditions of Naghali and Iranian Coffeehouse Painting.

Students view Iranian posters from the Hoover Archives led by visiting guest Nasser Rahmaninejad (right).



Publications

"Iran's Population Dynamics and Demographic Window of Opportunity," by Farzaneh Roudi, Mohsen Mesgaran, and Pooya Azadi, *Stanford Iran 2040 Project*, October 2017.

"Don't Expect Iran and the U.S. to Solve the Iraq Crisis Together," by Abbas Milani, *The New Republic*, November 2017.

"Don't Oversimplify the Protests in Iran," by Abbas Milani, *NPR Parallels*, January 2018.

"How to Support Iran's Protesters," by Abbas Milani, *NY Daily News*, January 2018.

"Stanford Scholars Weigh in on Withdrawal from the Iran Nuclear Deal," interviews with Stanford scholars Siegfried Hecker, Abbas Milani, and Allen Weiner, *Stanford News*, May 2018.

"Why Trump's Plans for Regime Change in Iran Will Have the Opposite Effect," by Abbas Milani and Michael McFaul, *The Washington Post*, May 2018.

"Iran: A Troubled Economy on the Verge of New Sanctions," by Pooya Azadi, *Stanford Iran 2040 Project*, May 2018.

"Central Banking in Iran," by Razieh Zahedi and Pooya Azadi, *Stanford Iran 2040 Project*, July 2018.

Crossroads, by Bahram Beyzaie, forthcoming 2018.

Stay Tuned!

Music for Change: The Banned Countries

October 20, 2018, 7:30 p.m., Bing Concert Hall

We are pleased to announce a concert collaboration with Stanford Live and the Kronos Quartet!

As a direct protest to the 2017 Executive Orders limiting travel to the United States from largely Muslim-majority countries, San Francisco's Grammy Award-winning Kronos Quartet premieres a new program featuring music from the original seven "banned" countries. The concert highlights a rich diversity of artistic voices, including works composed specifically for the performance, new collaborations, and signature works from Kronos' extensive repertoire.

Tickets: <https://bit.ly/2LafOAw>

Thank you for your continued support of the Hamid and Christina Moghadam Program in Iranian Studies. Looking ahead to another busy year at Stanford, the Program is planning for the 11th annual Bitá Prize for Persian Arts, a new Science and Society lecture, the second Public Art, Public Spaces symposium, and the continuation of the lecture series, among other events.

If you missed any lectures or events, join our [email list](#); follow us on [Facebook](#); subscribe to our [YouTube](#) channel; keep touch in with us on [Instagram](#), [Telegram](#), or [Twitter](#); download audio from our new [SoundCloud](#) account; or explore our newly-designed [website](#).

Iranian Studies students celebrate graduation with Iranian Studies faculty and staff. Left to right: Atussa Mohtasham, Nazgol Agah, Danya Kafai, Rachel Roberts, Rochelle Rouhani, Matin Mirramezani, Director Abbas Milani, Cameron Ramos, Professor Shervin Emami.



Stanford | Hamid and Christina Moghadam
Program in Iranian Studies

iranian-studies.stanford.edu

417 Galvez Mall, Encina Hall West, Room 211
Stanford, CA 94305-6045