

Philosophy of Language in the Islamicate World

New Directions and Perspectives

22-24 MAY 2026

ST JOHN'S COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

Asad Q. Ahmed is Magistretti Distinguished Professor of Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures; Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies; and Director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. He specializes in early Islamic social history and pre-modern Islamic intellectual history, with a special focus on the rationalist disciplines, such as philosophy, logic, legal theories, and astronomy. His books include *Palimpsests of Themselves: Logic and Commentary in Postclassical Muslim South Asia* (UCP 2022).

Wahid Amin is Lecturer in Islamic Philosophy and Research Lead for Islamic Philosophy and Theology at the Al-Mahdi Institute in Birmingham. His main interests revolve around post-classical Islamic philosophy and theology. Among his edited books is *The Collected Writings of al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī* (AMI Press 2020).

Rosabel Ansari is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Stony Brook University in New York. Her research involves the transmission of Ancient Greek philosophy into Arabic, Arabic and Islamic metaphysics in both the classical and post-classical periods, the philosophy of language, and the relationship between rational and supra-rational forms of knowledge in Islamic philosophy. She is the author of *Language and Being in al-Fārābī: The Philosophy of Taškik* (OUP 2026).

Giovanni Carrera is a Postdoctoral Researcher at Ca' Foscari University in Venice, Italy. His research focuses on semantic theory and philosophy of language in Islamic intellectual history with a particular interest in the tradition of *ʿilm al-waḍʿ*.

Silvia Di Vincenzo is Associate Professor of History of Medieval Philosophy at Ca' Foscari University in Venice and Principal Investigator of the ERC Starting Grant 2024 project, "The Uncharted Margins of Philosophy: An AI-Enhanced Material History of Arabic Logic Across Time (12th-19th c.) and Frontiers (from Spain to India)" (UnMaP). Her books include *Avicenna, ›The Healing, Logic: Isagoge‹ - A New Edition, English Translation and Commentary of the Kitāb al-Madḥal of Avicenna's Kitāb al-Šifāʾ* (De Gruyter 2021).

Nadja Germann is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Freiburg, specializing in medieval philosophy, philosophy of language, and logic in the Arabic-Islamic and Latin medieval traditions. Among others, she is the co-editor of *Philosophy and Language in the Islamic World* (De Gruyter 2021).

Dustin Klinger is a British Academy International Fellow at the University of Cambridge. His research focuses on Graeco-Arabic philosophy and postclassical Islamic intellectual history, with a particular interest in logic and philosophy of language. His books include *Being Another Way: The Copula and Arabic Philosophy of Language, 900-1500* (UCP 2024).

John Marenbon is a Fellow of the British Academy, Honorary Professor of Medieval Philosophy at the University of Cambridge, and Senior Research Fellow at Trinity College. His books include *Pagans and Philosophers: The Problem of Paganism from Augustine to Leibniz* (PUP 2015).

Tareq Moqbel is Research Fellow in the Study of Love in Religion at Regent's Park College at the University of Oxford. His research focuses on Qurʾān studies and *tafsīr*. His books include *Ethics in the Qurʾān and the Tafsīr Tradition: From the Polynoia of Scripture to the Homonoia of Exegesis* (Brill 2024).

Mostafa Najafi is Oberassistent at the Chair of Philosophy in the University of Lucerne. His research focuses on ontology in the Graeco-Arabic tradition, and on philosophy of language in Islamic philosophy. He is the author of *Language and Reason in Islamic Thought: Fahr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's Reconciliation of Manṭiq and Bayān* (De Gruyter 2025).

Cornelia Schöck is Professor of Islamic Studies at the Ruhr-Universität Bochum. Her research focusses on the history of ideas in the Islamic tradition, with particular interest in language, reasoning, and logic. Her books include *Koranexegese, Grammatik und Logik: zum Verhältnis von arabischer und aristotelischer Urteils-, Konsequenz- und Schlußlehre* (Brill 2005).

Tony Street is Professor of Medieval Arabic Philosophy at the University of Notre Dame in Sidney. His research focusses on the intellectual history of the Islamic world, particularly logic in the 12th and 13th centuries. He is Team Leader for the ERC Synergy Grant project *Logic in Reverse Redux*, a historical and analytical study of argumentative practices in the medieval Arabic, Greek East, Hebrew, and Latin West traditions. His books include *The Rules of Logic by Najm al-Dīn al-Kātibī* (NYU Press 2024).

Programme

Thursday 21/5

19.00 Welcome Reception & Dinner Outer Parlor, Pembroke College

Friday 22/5

9.30 Breakfast Trinity Hall/St John's College
10.30 Morning Coffee Castlereagh Room, St John's College
11.00 Welcome & Introduction (Klinger) Castlereagh Room, St John's College

Session 1: Beginnings and the Classical Period (Chair: Najafi)

11.30 Saying and Being: On the Beginnings of Arabic Philosophy of Language (Germann)
12.30 Lunch
13.30 Imitation (*muḥāka*/mimesis) in al-Fārābī's Philosophy of Language (Ansari)
14.30 A God-inspired Yet Human Language? Avicenna on *lafz* and *ma'nā* (Di Vincenzo)
15.30 Afternoon Tea
16.00 Composition and Division in Avicenna's *Safsafa* (Street)
17.00 Key Remark: Language and the Search for Truth in the Early Medieval World (Marenbon)
19.00 Formal Dinner Parsons Room, St John's College

Saturday 23/5

9.30 Breakfast Trinity Hall/St John's College
10.00 Morning Coffee Castlereagh Room, St John's College

Session 2: Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and Philosophy of Language (Chair: Carrera)

10.30 Linguistic and Natural Signs in Avicenna, al-Rāzī, and al-Sakkākī (Schöck)
11.30 *Bayān* Between Language and Logic: Notes on al-Rāzī's Project (Najafi)
12.30 Lunch
13.30 Signification in Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's Qur'ānic Exegesis (Moqbel)
14.30 Afternoon Tea

Session 3: Post-Classical Developments: *‘ilm al-waḍ‘* and *uṣūl al-fiqh* (Chair: Moqbel)

15.00 Inside the Lions' Den: On the Semantics of Generic Nouns (Carrera)
16.00 Between What is Said and What is Meant: Apparent Meaning (Amin)
17.00 Signification in Islamic Legal Theories: Case Studies from South Asia (Ahmed)
19.00 Formal Dinner Parsons Room, St John's College

Sunday 24/5

9.30 Breakfast Trinity Hall/St John's College
10.30 Morning Coffee Castlereagh Room, St John's College
11.00 Roundtable Discussion
12.30 Lunch

Directions

Check-In St John's College Guest Rooms: St John's College Northampton Porter's Lodge

Check-In Trinity Hall Guest Rooms: Trinity Hall Porter's Lodge

Welcome Reception and Dinner: Pembroke College Outer Parlor (ask at the Lodge)

Conference Venue: St John's College Castlereagh Room (ask at the Lodge)

Dinners: St John's College Parsons Room (ask at the Lodge)

Convener: Dustin Klinger. For questions and inquiries email dk733@cam.ac.uk.

