“Rehabilitating Ali: Historiography and The Tools of Orthodoxy”

Islam’s fourth caliph, Ali, can be considered one of the most revered figures in Islamic history. His nearly universal portrayal in Muslim literature as a pious authority obscures the views of his opponents who considered him an illegitimate ruler and a centuries-long process that entailed the rehabilitation of his character. In his new book, Opposing the Imam, Nebil Husayn considers the diverse ways in which early Muslims remembered Ali and contextualizes the rise of both Sunnism and Shi’ism. This presentation discusses key findings from this recent publication.