

# UNIVERSITY LECTURE SEASON 2025-2026

In Partnership with the  
**Dow Visiting Scholars Lecture Series**

## **DR. RAANA AKBAR MEMORIAL LECTURE SERIES ON ISLAM & CULTURE**

### **Literary Culture and a Shared Ethical Tradition in Late-Colonial India**

Farina Mir, PhD., Arthur F. Thurnau  
Professor of History and Honors  
University of Michigan

Dr. Mir will speak about the late-colonial literature of Urdu akhlaq, or Islamic philosophical ethics, circa 1850-1947. She argues that it was a shared literary tradition, with Hindu, Muslim and other faiths participating simultaneously. Previous interpretive strategies have tended to favor one of two paths — to emphasize Urdu as a shared tradition and source of cosmopolitanism, or to describe it as source for a modern Muslim identity in South Asia and contentious religious debate. Mir synthesizes the two interpretive strategies to argue that a literary tradition can be Islamic and not just Islamicate. The implications are broad for our understanding of modern South Asian historiography and as a window into South Asian ethics.

Farina Mir is the Arthur F. Thurnau professor of history and honors at the University of Michigan. She is a historian of colonial and postcolonial South Asia, with particular interest in the religious, cultural and social history of late-colonial north India. Mir is the co-editor of "Punjab Reconsidered: History, Culture, and Practice" (2012). She is the author of "The Social Space of Language: Vernacular Culture in British Colonial Punjab" (2010), which won her the 2011 John F. Richards Prize in South Asian History from the American Historical Association and the 2012 Bernard Cohn Prize from the Association of Asian Studies. She is currently completing another book, "Genres of Muslim Modernity: Being Muslim in Late-Colonial India, 1858-1947", which examines Urdu-language akhlaq and how these ethics texts reveal an important history of Muslims in South Asia.

*The Raana Akbar Memorial Lecture on Islam and Culture was established in 2011 by Dr. Waheed Akbar in memory of his wife, Raana, a former member of the SVSU Board of Control, physician and community leader.*



**SAGINAW VALLEY  
STATE UNIVERSITY**



**WED | SEPT. 10**

**6:00-7:30 P.M.**

**RHEA MILLER RECITAL HALL**

Entrance inside Curtiss Hall

**5:30 P.M. RECEPTION OUTSIDE THE THEATER**

To watch online, or for more information,  
please visit [svsu.edu/abkarlecture](https://svsu.edu/abkarlecture) or email  
[raanaakbar.memorial@gmail.com](mailto:raanaakbar.memorial@gmail.com)

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**STAND OUT**

**SPEAKER**