

**BENJAMIN GATLING**  
**CURRICULUM VITAE**  
bgatling@gmu.edu

4400 University Drive, MS 3E4  
Fairfax, Virginia 22030  
+1-703-993-1160

**PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS**

---

2020-	<b>Associate Professor</b> <b>George Mason University</b> , Department of English
2015-2020	<b>Assistant Professor</b> <b>George Mason University</b> , Department of English
2012-2014	<b>Lecturing Fellow</b> <b>Duke University</b> , Thompson Writing Program

**EDUCATION**

---

<b>Ph.D.</b>	<b>The Ohio State University</b> Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, 2012  Graduate Interdisciplinary Specialization: Folklore
<b>M.A.</b>	<b>The Ohio State University</b> Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, 2008
<b>B.A.</b>	<b>University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill</b> International Studies and Russian Language and Literature, 2003

**PUBLICATIONS**

---

<b>Books:</b>	
<b>In progress</b>	<i>Telling Migrants' Stories</i> , edited collection (under review, University of Illinois Press)
<b>2018</b>	<i>Expressions of Sufi Culture in Tajikistan</i> (Folklore Studies in a Multicultural World, University of Wisconsin Press)
<b>Special Journal Issue:</b>	
<b>2021</b>	with Sarah M. Gordon, "Creating from the Margins: Precarity and the Study of Folklore." Special issue, <i>Journal of Folklore Research</i> 58(3).
<b>Refereed Journal Articles:</b>	
<b>2022</b>	"Afghan Refugees' Iconic Narratives," <i>Narrative Culture</i> 9(1), 176-196.
<b>2021</b>	"How can you trust a country?": Precarity, Personal Narrative, and Occupational Folklore among Afghan Refugees in the U.S.," In "Creating from the Margins: Precarity and the Study of Folklore," eds. Sarah M. Gordon and Benjamin Gatling, Special issue, <i>Journal of Folklore Research</i> 58(3), 53-75.

- 2020** “There Isn’t Belief, Just Believing: Rethinking Belief as a Keyword of Folklore Studies,” *Journal of American Folklore* 133(529), 307-328.
- 2019** “Sufis, Shrines, and the State in Tajikistan,” in “Forum: Sacred Geographies in the Eurasian Space,” eds. Jesko Schmoller and Lili Di Puppò, *Journal of Ethnology and Folkloristics* 13(2), 155-161.
- 2019** “Islam and Cultural Heritage on Tajik Television,” *Central Asian Affairs* 6(2-3), 113-132.
- 2016** “Historical Narrative, Intertextuality, and Cultural Continuity in Post-Soviet Tajikistan,” *Journal of Folklore Research* 53(1), 41-65.
- 2013** “The Guide after Rumi: tradition and its foil in Tajik Sufism,” *Nova Religio* 17(1), 1-23.
- 2013** with Manzura Juraeva, “Traditsiya, stigma i inklyuziya: preodolenie prepyatstviy k polucheniyu obrazovaniya v Tadzhikistane,” *Journal of Social Policy Studies*, 11(4), 457-470. [In Russian]
- 2010** “Negotiations in Performance,” *Folklore Forum* 40(1).
- Book Chapters:**
- Forthcoming** “Presence in Absence: Sufi Groups and Expressive Piety in Tajikistan.” In *Sufism After the USSR*, eds. Igor Pankov and Sergei Abashin, Leiden: Brill.
- 2022** “Prisutstvie v otsutstvie: sufiiskie gruppy i ekspressivnoe blagochestie.” In *Sufizm posle CCCR*, eds. I. Pankov and S. Abashin, Moskva: Mardzhani, 52-69. [In Russian]
- 2022** “The Authority of Saintly Narrative: Stories about Abuhanifa in Tajikistan.” In *Muslim Religious Authority in Central Eurasia*, eds. Ron Sela, Paolo Sartori, and Devin DeWeese, Leiden: Brill, 99-119.
- 2022** “Central Asia as Story.” In *Central Asia: Contexts for Understanding*, ed. David W. Montgomery, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 52-64.
- 2015** “Abdulhai Mujaxarfi and the Contemporary Reception of Tajik Oral Poetry.” In *Iranian Languages and Literatures of Central Asia: From the 18th Century to the Present*, eds. Matteo De Chiara and Evelin Grassi, Paris: Association pour l’Avancement des Études Iranienes (Cahiers de Studia Iranica, 57), 207-231.
- 2013** with Manzura Juraeva, “Tradition, Stigma, and Inclusion: overcoming obstacles to educational access in Tajikistan.” In *Learning to See Invisible Children: inclusion of children with disabilities in Central Asia*, eds. Martyn Rouse and Kate Lapham, Budapest: Central European University Press, 21-34.
- Book Reviews:**
- 2022** “Unlearning: Rethinking Poetics, Pandemics, and the Politics of Knowledge,” *Journal of Folklore Research Reviews* (November)
- 2015** “Folktales and Storytellers of Iran: Culture, Ethos and Identity,” *Fabula* 56(1-2), 139-142.

**2010** “Everyday Life in Central Asia Past and Present,” *Cultural Analysis* 9.

**2009** “Down a Narrow Road: Identity and Masculinity in a Uyghur Community in Xinjiang China,” *Journal of Folklore Research Reviews* (September).

**In submission:**

“Ambivalent Heritage: Tourism, Weddings, and Pilgrimage in Hisor, Tajikistan,” under review for *Central Asian Survey*

With Nicholas Seay, “From Outsider-Intermediary to Local Knowledge Producer and Back: Soviet Folklore Studies in Tajikistan between the 1920s and 1960s,” under review for *Journal of Central Asian History*

**In progress:**

“Islamic Diaspora.” In *The World of Tradition: A Global Perspective on Folklore and Ethnology*, ed. Simon Bronner, Cambridge: Open Book Publishers.

*Afghan Stories of War, Migration, and Home*, book manuscript

## FELLOWSHIPS/GRANTS

---

<b>2021-22</b>	<b>Planning Grant</b> , Modern Endangered Archives Program, UCLA Library
<b>2020</b>	<b>Summer Stipend</b> , National Endowment for the Humanities
<b>2019</b>	<b>Faculty Research and Development Award</b> , College of Humanities and Social Sciences, George Mason University
<b>2017</b>	<b>Faculty Research and Development Award</b> , College of Humanities and Social Sciences, George Mason University, declined
<b>2014</b>	<b>Research Grant</b> , Thompson Writing Program, Duke University
<b>2014</b>	<b>Short-Term Travel Grant</b> , International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX)
<b>2011-12</b>	<b>Presidential Fellowship</b> , The Ohio State University
<b>2010-11</b>	<b>Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Award</b>
<b>2010-11</b>	<b>Individual Advanced Research Opportunities Fellowship</b> , International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), declined
<b>2010-11</b>	<b>Advanced Research Fellowship</b> , U.S. Department of State, Title VIII Program for Research and Training on Eastern Europe and Eurasia, administered by the American Councils for International Education, declined
<b>2010-11</b>	<b>Research Grant</b> , Mershon Center for International Security Studies, The Ohio State University
<b>2007-08</b>	<b>Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship</b> for Persian, The Ohio State University
<b>2006-07</b>	<b>University Fellowship</b> , The Ohio State University

## AWARDS

---

2014	<b>Folklore Studies in a Multicultural World Selection</b> , University of Wisconsin Press, University of Illinois Press, University Press of Mississippi, and Andrew W. Mellon Foundation funded initiative for exemplary first books in folklore studies
2014	<b>Thomas Robbins Award for Excellence in the Study of New Religions</b> , Second Place, Association for the Academic Study of New Religions
2012	<b>Don Yoder Prize in Folk Belief and Religious Folklife</b> , American Folklore Society
2009	<b>Dan Crowley Memorial Prize</b> , American Folklore Society
2008	<b>Honorable Mention Best Paper</b> , American Institute for Afghanistan Studies
2008	<b>Patrick B. Mullen Prize</b> , The Ohio State University

## INVITED PRESENTATIONS

---

2023	“Religion in Central Asia,” invited lecture, Foreign Service Institute, Arlington, Virginia, June 26 and August 29
2020	“Saints and Stories in Tajikistan,” invited lecture, Department of Modern and Classical Languages, Literatures and Cultures, University of Kentucky, March 3.
2017	“Heritage or Zombies: Saints and anti-Saints on Tajik Television,” invited workshop participant, <i>Islam and Media in Central Asia</i> , George Washington University, October 2.
2017	“Learning to be Sufi in Tajikistan,” invited workshop participant, <i>Islamic Education in Central Asia</i> , George Washington University, April 10.
2017	“The Authority of Saintly Narrative: Stories about Abu Hanifa in Tajikistan,” invited workshop participant, <i>Authority in Islam: Dialectics of Fragmentation &amp; Plurality in Muslim Eurasia</i> , Indiana University, March 24-25.
2014	“Abdulhai Mujaxarfi and the Afterlives of Pre-Soviet Tajik Literature,” invited workshop participant, <i>Interrogating Change: Central Asia Between Timelessness and Mutability</i> , University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, October 17
2014	“Post-Soviet Tajik Hagiography in Performance and Print,” invited workshop participant, <i>Genres of the Imaginaire: How Creativity Mediates Islam with Local Vernaculars</i> , Vanderbilt University, February 13-15
2012	“Mavlavi Jununi and new Sufi poetics in Tajikistan,” invited participant in symposium on contemporary Persian verbal culture, St. John’s College, University of Oxford, April 14-15

- 2012** “Reading Poetry: Sufi textualities in post-Soviet Tajikistan,” invited lecture  
Department of Anthropology, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, March  
19

## CONFERENCE ACTIVITY

- 
- 2023** “Everyday Life in Central Asia through Soviet Folklore Archives,” paper presented at the annual convention of the Association for the Study of Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies, November 30-December 1
- 2023** Forum organizer and panelist, “Supporting At-Risk Folklore Archives,” American Folklore Society annual meeting, November 1-5
- 2021** “Entangled Heritage: Tourism, Vernacular Religion, and Wedding Rituals in Hisor, Tajikistan,” paper presented at American Folklore Society annual meeting, October 18-23 (postponed from October 2020 due to COVID)
- 2019** “Afghan Refugees’ Double Precarity,” paper presented at American Folklore Society annual meeting, October 16-19
- 2019** “Sufis, Shrines, and the State in Tajikistan,” paper presented at Central Eurasian Studies Society annual meeting, October 10-13
- 2018** “Author Meets Critics: Expressions of Sufi Culture in Tajikistan,” panelist presentation and response at American Folklore Society annual meeting, October 17-21
- 2018** Panel discussant, “Exploring Self, Homeland, and Nation through the Medium of Art and Language,” Association for the Study of Nationalities Convention, May 3-5
- 2017** “War Stories: Afghan Memories of Migration and Home,” paper presented at American Folklore Society annual meeting, October 18-21
- 2016** “Abu Hanifa in Tajikistan: Contrasting Visions of the Islamic Future,” paper presented at Central Eurasian Studies Society annual meeting, November 3-6
- 2016** Panel organizer, “Islam and the Tajik State,” Central Eurasian Studies Society annual meeting, November 3-6
- 2016** “The Politics of Sainly Narrative: Stories about Abu Hanifa in Central Asia ” paper presented at American Folklore Society annual meeting, October 19-22
- 2016** Panel organizer, “Narrative and Agency in Muslim Traditions,” American Folklore Society annual meeting, October 19-22
- 2015** “The Poetics and Performance of Reading or How to Read Religious Literature in Central Asia,” paper presented at American Folklore Society annual meeting, October 14-17
- 2014** “Narrative Nostalgia, Folkloristics, and Post-Socialist Studies,” paper presented at American Folklore Society annual meeting, November 5-8

- 2014** Panel organizer, "Tajik Literature in Transmission and Social Life," International Society for Iranian Studies biennial conference, August 1-5
- 2013** "Adapting to the State in Tajikistan: Muslims and the 'political' since 2010," paper presented at Central Eurasian Studies Society annual meeting, October 3-6
- 2013** Invited workshop participant, "Image as Animation: Mysticism, Magic, and Poetry in Byzantine Christian and Islamic Religious Experience," Stanford University, May 10
- 2013** Panel organizer, "Post-Soviet History, Memory, and Identity: Perspectives from the Baltic, Caucasus, and Central Asia," Association for the Study of Nationalities Convention, April 18-20
- 2013** "Islamic devotion beyond 'the hidden veil': Soviet memories and post-Soviet identities in Tajik Sufism," paper presented at Association for the Study of Nationalities Convention, April 18-20
- 2012** "Historical narrative and re-imagining the Islamic past in Tajikistan," paper presented at American Folklore Society annual meeting, October 24-27
- 2012** "Folk Hagiography and Islamic Revivalism in Tajikistan," invited participant, Tales of Trickery and Endurance: Gender, Performance, and Politics in the Islamic World and Beyond, The Merishon Center for International Security Studies, The Ohio State University, May 18-19
- 2011** "Tradition in Tajik Sufi Ritual Performance," paper presented at American Folklore Society annual meeting, October 12-15
- 2011** Panelist in "Islamic literature in Central Asia" roundtable at Central Eurasian Studies Society annual meeting, September 15-18
- 2011** "The Guide after Rumi: Discourses of Tradition in Tajik Sufism," paper presented at Central Eurasian Studies Society annual meeting, September 15-18
- 2010** "Traditionalized Poetry," paper presented at ACES annual conference, March 6
- 2009** "Negotiations in Performance," paper presented at Public/Private: Graduate Folklore Conference, Indiana University, March 28

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- 
- 2015-** **George Mason University**, Department of English
- Advanced Introduction to Folklore and Folklife
  - Folklore History and Theory
  - The Ethnography of Communication
  - Folklore in the Middle East and Central Asia
  - Folklore and the Supernatural
  - Personal Experience Narrative
  - Writing Ethnography
  - Introduction to Folklore and Folklife

- Advanced Composition
- Humanities College to Career
- Contemporary Central Asia (Honors College)
- Proseminar (Interdisciplinary Studies Program)

- 2012-14**      **Duke University,** Thompson Writing Program
- Writing about Belief: narratives of religious experience and the supernatural
  - Introduction to Critical Reading and Writing—Workshop Leader
  - Debating Islam: intra-Muslim debates and U.S. public discourse on Islam (Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies)
- 2008-10**      **The Ohio State University,** Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures
- Persian Folklore and Mythology
  - Persian Culture
  - Introduction to Islam
  - Islam in the United States

## SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION

---

Editor, *Folklorica: Journal of the Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Folklore Association*, 2023-  
Board Member, Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Folklore Association, 2023-  
Associate Editor, *Journal of American Folklore*, 2020-  
Book Reviews Editor, *Journal of American Folklore*, 2015-20  
Reviewer, U.S. Department of Education, Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Program, 2017, 2018, 2020  
Lead Editor, Advisory Board Member, and American Folklore Society Representative, H-Folk on H-Net, 2013-20  
Proposal Reviewer, American Folklore Society Annual Meeting, 2019  
Central Eurasian Studies Society Book Award Committee, 2018  
Manuscript Reviewer, University of Wisconsin Press, *Journal of Folklore Research*, *Western Folklore*, *Asian Studies Review*, *Contemporary Legend*, *Journal of Ethnology and Folkloristics*, *Cultural Analysis*, *Journal of Central Asian History*, *Humanities*

## UNIVERSITY/DEPARTMENTAL SERVICE

---

Interim Director, Interdisciplinary Studies (MAIS), 2020-  
Graduate Council Representative, 2023-  
Steering Committee, Institute for Immigration Research, 2022-  
Steering Committee, AbuSulayman Center for Global Islamic Studies, 2020-  
Steering Committee, Middle East and Islamic Studies, 2020-  
Awards Committee, AbuSulayman Center for Global Islamic Studies, 2023-  
Director, Folklore Program, 2019-2023  
Advisory Committee, Department of English, 2015-17, 21-23  
NEH Summer Stipend Nomination Committee, 2021, 2022, 2023  
Concentration Head, MAIS in Folklore Studies, 2017-22  
Salary Committee, Department of English, 2021-2022  
Ad Hoc Afghan Student Working Group, 2022  
Concentration Head, MAIS in Individualized Studies, 2020-21  
Folklore and Mythology Minor Coordinator, 2017-21  
Institute of Respect Leadership Development Program, 2020  
MAIS Director Reappointment Committee, 2020  
Adjunct Committee, Department of English, 2019-20

Chair, Folklore and Narrative Search Committee, 2018-19  
Associate Director, Folklore Program, 2017-19  
Undergraduate Committee, Department of English, 2017-19  
Folklore and Public Humanities Search Committee, 2017-18  
Interdisciplinary Discussion Course Coordinator, Duke FOCUS Program, 2014  
*Deliberations* Editorial Board, Thompson Writing Program, 2014  
Assistant Director of Writing in the Disciplines, Duke University, 2013-2014  
Assessment Committee, Thompson Writing Program, 2013-14  
MOOC Assessment Committee, Thompson Writing Program, 2013  
Course Curriculum Committee, Thompson Writing Program, 2012-14  
WID Gallery Consultant, Thompson Writing Program, 2012-13  
Critical Ink Conference Committee, Thompson Writing Program, 2012-13

## PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

---

American Folklore Society  
Central Eurasian Studies Society  
Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Folklore Association  
Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies

## LANGUAGES

---

**Persian** - Oral fluency and advanced reading and writing  
**Russian** - Conversational proficiency and basic reading and writing  
**Uzbek** - Conversational proficiency and basic reading and writing  
**German** - Reading knowledge