

## MAJID DANESHGAR, PH.D.,

is a Research Associate at the Orientalisches Seminar, University of Freiburg, Germany. He is also an alumnus of the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies (FRIAS), where he worked on textual censorship in Islamic literature. He is interested in method and theory in the study of religion, critical thinking theories, and Islamic intellectual and exegetical progress, as well as Malay Islamic studies. His publications include *Islamic Studies Today* (2016), *The Qur'an in the Malay-Indonesian World* (2016), and *Tantawi Jawhari and the Qur'an* (2017).

“This provocative study combines the intellectual autobiography of a scholar schooled in Qum, Kuala Lumpur, and Otago with a close look at the culture of Qur'anic studies in Muslim universities. The author persuasively argues that entrenched Sunni-Shi'i sectarianism, Arabo-centric disregard for scholarship in other Muslim languages, and the long shadow of Edward Said's *Orientalism* have fostered an ethos of defensive 'Islamic apologetics' within the contemporary Muslim Academy.”

—JANE MCAULIFFE, *Senior Research Fellow,  
Berkley Center, Georgetown University*

“In this fascinating study, Daneshgar, trained in the traditional approach to Islamic texts, opens up before us the world of Islamic educational institutions. Familiar with literature from both the Islamic world and the West, he provides a more nuanced account of Orientalism than that supplied by Western-trained scholars who have rarely been exposed to the methods of the traditional Islamic approach.

The result is a work that deftly navigates the impasse between Western and Muslim scholarship on the Qur'an.”

—AARON W. HUGHES, *University of Rochester*

“In lively prose, Majid Daneshgar drives from Yazd to Qum, Kuala Lumpur, and Otago. He shows how the study of Islam and the Qur'an in the Muslim academy remains extremely political. The book examines how the critical methods of Western Islamic studies are dealt with, and how sectarian issues deeply pervade the field. This insightful analysis of 'Islamic apologetics,' from a first-hand witness, is an invaluable testimony on the current intellectual debates in the Islamic world, particularly in South-East Asia and Iran.”

—GUILLAUME DYE, *Free University of Brussels (ULB)*

**OXFORD**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

www.oup.com

JACKET DESIGN: JAMES R. PERALES  
JACKET IMAGE: THE COURTYARD OF THE UNIVERSITY OF AL-QARAWIYYIN,  
IN FEZ, MOROCCO. BY MARKO RUPENA/ISTOCK BY GETTY IMAGES.

ISBN 978-0-19-006754-0



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DANESHGAR

*Studying the Qur'an in the Muslim Academy*

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## Studying *the* Qur'an in *the* Muslim Academy



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*Studying the Qur'an in the Muslim Academy* examines what it is like to study and teach the Qur'an at academic institutions in the Muslim world, and how politics affect scholarly interpretations of the text. Guided by the author's own journey as a student, university lecturer, and researcher in Iran, Malaysia, and New Zealand, this book provides vivid accounts of the complex academic politics he encountered. Majid Daneshgar describes the selective translation and editing of Edward Said's classic work *Orientalism* into various Islamic languages, and the way Said's work is weaponized to question the credibility of contemporary Western-produced scholarship in Islamic studies. Daneshgar also examines networks of journals, research centers, and universities in both Sunni and Shi'i contexts, and looks at examples of Qur'anic interpretation there. Ultimately, he offers a constructive program for enriching Islamic studies by fusing the best of Western theories with the best philological practices developed in Muslim academic contexts, aimed at encouraging respectful but critical engagement with the Qur'an.