

SYED RAZA

Department of Sociology | Kenyon College | raza1@kenyon.edu

APPOINTMENT

Visiting Assistant Professor of Sociology (2026 – present)
Kenyon College, OH

EDUCATION

PhD, Sociology (2026)
University of Texas at Austin, TX

MPH, Sociomedical Sciences (2017)
Columbia University, NY

BS, Kinesiology (2013)
University of Kentucky, KY

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Social theory; mixed methods; cultural political economy; religious and secular formations; inequality and stratification; race, ethnicity, and diaspora; science and technology studies; ethics, capitalism, and social responsibility; economic sociology; political sociology; South Asian Studies

TEACHING INTERESTS

Introduction to Sociology; Social Problems; Inequality and Stratification; Race and Ethnicity; Religion and Society; Economic Sociology; Political Sociology; Social Theory; Global Sociology

PUBLICATIONS & MANUSCRIPTS

Manuscripts under review and in revision

- “Halal Enough? Authority, Authenticity, and Accountability in American Islamic Finance.” Revise and resubmit, *Contemporary Islam*.
- “Calibrated Worldliness: Islamic Finance and the Weberian Problem of the Economic Sphere.” Under review at *Theory and Society*.

Book Review Publications

- Raza, S. (2019). "Science as Social Struggle", Science for the People, Volume 22, No. 1
 - Raza, S. (2015). Fossil Fuels: Manna from heaven or magma from hell? Journal of International Affairs, 69(1), 217-219.
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DISSERTATION

Divine Dollars: Classificatory Struggles of Islamic Finance in Chicago

A theoretically informed ethnography of how Muslims in the greater Chicago area negotiate Islamic ethics, authority, and financial practice. The project examines how Islamic finance is interpreted, institutionalized, and contested across mosques, financial organizations, and everyday economic life, showing how moral categories are reworked under modern capitalist conditions.

TEACHING & MENTORING EXPERIENCE

Adjunct Lecturer

Huston–Tillotson University

- *Economy, Technology, and Faith in Modern India (Sp 2026)*
- *Introduction to Urdu Language (Fa 2024 and Sp 2025)*
- *Religions of South Asia (Sp 2025)*
- *Heritage and History through Humanities (Sp 2024)*

Instructor of record for undergraduate courses; responsible for syllabus design, assessment, and instruction. Designed and taught undergraduate courses emphasizing theory, interpretation, and writing at a historically Black liberal arts institution. Worked closely with first-generation and multilingual students, providing intensive mentoring in reading, writing, and research skills.

Assistant Instructor

The University of Texas at Austin

- *Rich and Poor in America (Sp 2024 and Fa 2025)*

Sole instructor responsible for syllabus design, course delivery, assessment, and weekly office hours. Designed and taught an introductory sociology course on inequality and public policy; supervised a teaching assistant, coordinated course logistics, evaluated student work, and mentored students in sociological research and analytical writing.

Lead Teaching Assistant

University of Texas at Austin

- *Introduction to the Study of Society (Fa 2019, Sp 2023, Fa 2023, Fa 2024, Sp 2025, and Sp 2026)*
- *Sociology of Criminal Justice-Web Based (Su 2025)*

Led weekly discussion sections; mentored students on sociological reasoning and writing; provided academic advising and instructional support, graded exams and assignments, recorded lecture videos.

Lead Teaching Assistant

Columbia University

- *Core Foundations of Public Health (Fa 2016)*

Facilitated discussion sections, graded analytical writing, and mentored students.

RESEARCH & PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Graduate Research Assistant

Moody Center, University of Texas at Austin (Spring 2020-Spring 2021)

Project on economic transformations and moral regulation at coworking spaces across the U.S.

Ethnographic Researcher

SHIFT Initiative, UT Austin (Spring 2020)

Provided methodological training in ethnographic research and analysis to undergraduate researchers studying substance use and antisocial behavior, including alcohol consumption and harassment.

Research Scientist – Special Assistant to Assistant Commissioner

Bureau of Early Intervention, New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (2017-2019)

Coordinated cross-borough early-intervention services for children with developmental delays and conducted qualitative research, including focus group interviews with parents and service coordinators, to evaluate program implementation, access, and equity across New York City.

Associate Fellow – Precision Medicine Initiative

Center for the Study of Social Difference, Columbia University (2016-2017)

Participated in an interdisciplinary research initiative on the ethical, political, and cultural dimensions of precision medicine, contributing to working groups and public programming on race, inequality, disability, genomics, and health disparities.

INVITED TALKS & CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- “Secularism and Sociological Theory” (Accepted), American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, 2024, Montreal, Quebec
- “Divine Dollars: The Dynamics of Islamic Finance in the United States” WISLI Student Conference, 2024, Madison, Wisconsin
- “Narratives of Indianness: What Does it Mean to be Indian?” The University of Texas Education Learning Community, 2024, Austin, TX
- GIS Poster Presentation on “The Opioid Epidemic in Central Appalachia” Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, 2017, New York, New York

HONORS & FELLOWSHIPS

- Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship (2023-2025)
 - Robert L. Hardgrave Jr. Fellowship for Outstanding Graduate Student in the Social Science, South Asian Institute, University of Texas at Austin (2025-2026)
 - Comprehensive Exam, Pass with Honors, Specialization: *Political Sociology* and *Science and Technology Studies*, Sociology Department, The University of Texas at Austin (2021)
 - Scholarship: \$35,000, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University (2015)
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LANGUAGES, METHODS, & SKILLS

Languages:

English (native); Hindi (native); Urdu (advanced proficiency), Arabic (beginner)

Research Methods:

Qualitative interviewing; ethnography; participant observation; archival research; textual analysis

Software:

ATLAS.ti; Dedoose; Stata; R

SERVICE & ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP

Organizer, South Asia Institute Graduate Conference, University of Texas at Austin (2025-2026). Organized an interdisciplinary graduate conference bringing together scholars and graduate students across South Asian studies, social theory, religion, politics, history, and culture. Helped develop the conference theme, coordinate panels and logistics, and support invited speaker programming, including events connected to Akeel Bilgrami's visit.
