

# Afsane Rezaei

## Curriculum Vitae

Department of English  
3200 Old Main Hill  
Logan, UT 84322

Email: [a.rezaei@usu.edu](mailto:a.rezaei@usu.edu)  
Phone: (270) 901-9080

## BIOGRAPHY

---

Dr. Rezaei is an assistant professor of English at Utah State University. Her research focuses on the intersections of gender, folklife, religion, and politics, particularly in the Middle East and its diaspora in the US. Her research interests include folklore and new media, vernacular religion, and feminist folklore/anthropology.

## ACADEMIC POSITIONS

---

August 2020—                      Assistant Professor  
Department of English, Utah State University

## EDUCATION

---

2020                      **Ph.D. in Comparative Studies**  
Department of Comparative Studies, The Ohio State University.  
Dissertation Title: “Agency Between Narratives: Women, Faith, and Sociability in Irangeles”

2014                      **M.A in Folk Studies**  
Department of Folk Studies and Anthropology, Western Kentucky University.  
Thesis Title: “Political Jokes in the Iranian Social Media”

2010                      **B.A in English Language and Literature**  
Department of English, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Iran

## PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

---

Forthcoming                      “The Ritual Fusion: Individuality, Tradition, and Sensory Memory in Iranian Women’s Islamic Gatherings in Los Angeles.” *Journal of Middle East Women’s Studies*.  
(Double-blind peer-reviewed; 10-15% acceptance rate)

2017 "The Superman in a Turban: Political Jokes in the Iranian Social Media," *New Directions in Folklore* 14 (1/2): 89-132, 2017.  
(Double-blind peer-reviewed)

**In Progress:**

"The Halfie Predicament in the Ethnography of Faith: Reflections on Fieldwork with Iranian Faith Communities in the U.S.," in preparation for submission to *Ethnography*.  
(Double-blind peer-reviewed)

"Conspiracy Thinking as Political Boundary-Work: COVID-19 Rumors and Conspiracy Narratives in Iran," in preparation for the edited volume *Conspiracy Thinking: Folklore and the Role of Conspiracy Theory in Contemporary Society*, ed. Andrea Kitta and Jesse Fivecoate. University of Wisconsin Press  
(Invited Peer-reviewed contribution)

---

**MULTIMEDIA/CREATIVE PROJECTS**

---

2019 **Photo Exhibit: "Irangeles Close-up: What Does it Mean to Be Iranian in the US?"**  
*Explores Iranian immigrants' (re)negotiation of their cultural and religious practices in the US.* [Read more](#)

Co-Curated with Ehsan Estiri for the Ohio State Global Gallery, Columbus, OH  
August 20-November 1, 2019.

2018 **Ethnographic Film: *The Taste of Samanu* (45 minutes)**, with Ehsan Estiri.  
*Explores the dynamics of Iranian immigrants' folklife through the lens of a New Year's charity bazaar in Palos Verdes, CA.* [Read more](#)

Screenings:

- Center for Folklore Studies Ethnographic Film and Discussion Series, Columbus, OH, November 9, 2018.
- American Folklore Society Annual Meeting, Buffalo, NY, October 19, 2018.

---

**SELECTED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS (Double-blind refereed)**

---

2020 **"Intersectional Marginalities: Iranian-American Women's Vernacular Islam"**  
Middle East Studies Association, Washington, DC, October 10-13.

2020 **"New Directions Forum: Opportunities and Challenges in Digital Folklore Research"**  
American Folklore Society, Tulsa, OK, October 14-17.

2019 **"Framing and Affect in Faith-Based Gatherings of Iranian Women in Southern California"**  
Middle East Studies Association, New Orleans, LA, November 14-17.

- 2019      **“Enacting Dreams: Exploring the Concept of ‘Dream Ostension’”** American Folklore society Annual Meeting, Baltimore, MD, October 16-19
- 2018      **“Navigating the Halfie Position: Fieldwork with Muslim and Christian Iranian Communities in the US”** Middle East Studies Association, San Antonio, TX, November 14-17.
- 2018      **“The Ritual Fusion: Iranian-American Women’s Faith-based Gatherings in Los Angeles”** Western States Folklore Society Meeting, Los Angeles, CA, April 12-14.
- 2017      **Invited Presidential Panel: “Her-Story II: A Feminism and Folklore Retrospective”** (discussant), and **“Teaching Folklore in the Age of Trump”** (forum member) American Folklore Society Annual Meeting, Minneapolis, MN, October 18-21.
- 2016      **“Codes of Conduct and Negotiation of Community in the Iranian Domestic Rowze”** Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, November 17-20.
- 2016      **“The Iranian Domestic Rowze: Negotiated Community and Competitive Reputation”** (paper presentation), and **Invited Presidential Panel: “Her-Story: A Feminism and Folklore Retrospective”** (discussant), American Folklore Society Annual Meeting, Miami, FL, October 19-22.
- 2016      **“Sepandar-what?” The Reinvention of the Ancient Persian Celebration of the Day of Love”** OSU/IU Student Conference in Folklore and Ethnomusicology, Columbus, OH, April 22-23.
- 2016      **“Beyond Religious Devotion: The Complexities of Women's Rituals in Iran”** OSU Department of Comparative Studies Lecture Series, April 11.
- 2015      **“‘My Stealthy Freedom’: Gender, Power, and Repositioning of the Self in Women’s Narratives of Public Unveiling in Iran”** American Folklore Society Annual Meeting, Long Beach, CA, October 14-17.
- 2014      **“Political Humor in Trying Times: The ‘Thanks Rouhani’ Joke Cycle and Its Conflicting Interpretations”** American Folklore Society Annual Meeting, Santa Fe, NM, November 5-8.
- 2014      **“When Superman Comes in a Turban: Examining the ‘Thanks Rouhani’ Post-Election Joke Cycle in Iranian Social Media”** OSU/IU Student Conference in Folklore and Ethnomusicology, Columbus, OH, April 4-5.
- 2013      **“Inverted Religious Orders and Hierarchies in Two Iranian Muslim Women's Rituals”** American Folklore Society Annual Meeting, Providence, RI, October 16-19.

**Panels Organized:**

- 2018      **“Irangeles Close-up: Iranian-American Networks, Communities and Traditions in Southern California”** American Folklore Society (Media Session), American Folklore Society, Buffalo, NY, October 17-20.
- 2016      **“Networks, Cooperation, and Competition in Women’s Ritual: An International Comparison”** Sponsored by the British Folklore Section, American Folklore Society, October 19-22.

## SELECTED AWARDS AND HONORS

---

- 2020      **Faculty Research Innovations Grant**  
Center for Intersectional Gender Studies and Research, Utah State University
- 2019      **Don Yoder Prize for Best Graduate Essay in Folk Belief and Religious Folklife**  
American Folklore Society Folk Belief and Religious Folklife Section
- 2019      **Graduate Fellowship**  
Center for Humanities in Practice (CHiP), Ohio State University
- 2018-19   **Career Development Grant**  
Council of Graduate Students, Ohio State University
- 2017      **Post-Candidacy Fellowship for Dissertation Fieldwork**  
Center for Folklore Studies, Ohio State University
- 2017      **Coca-Cola Critical Difference for Women Dissertation Research Grant**  
Department of Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Ohio State University
- 2016      **Polly Stewart Travel Award for Emerging Scholars of Gender and Folklife**  
American Folklore Society Women’s Section
- 2014      **Bill Ellis Prize for Best Graduate Student Essay in Folklore and New Media**  
American Folklore Society New Directions in Folklore Section
- 2014-19   **Arts and Humanities Small Research Grant**  
Ohio State University College of Arts and Sciences

## SELECTED SERVICE TO PROFESSION

---

### Inter/national

- 2020—      Editor-in-chief, H-Folk (H-Net Network on Folklore and Ethnology)
- 2019      Panel chair, “The Supernatural Driving Belief,” American Folklore Society Annual Meeting.

- 2018-19 Ohio Field Schools Advisory Committee Member, Ohio State University Center for Folklore Studies.
- 2018 Translator, “Tajik Folk Theater” by Roshan Rahmoni, in Regina F. Bendix and Dorothy Noyes, eds. *Terra Ridens, Terra Narrans: Festschrift zum 65. Geburtstag von Ulrich Marzolph*. Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte des islamischen Orients. Band 44.2. 2 vols, 649 pp 25-32. Dortmund: Verlag für Orientkunde. 2018. ISBN 978-3-936687-44-6.
- 2017-18 Award Committee member, Polly Stewart Student Travel Award, Women’s Section of the American Folklore Society (two-year term).
- 2017 Reviewer, *Ethnologies* (Journal of Folklore Studies Association of Canada).
- 2016-20 Co-founder and coordinator, “Columbus Folklorists’ Circle” Professional group for Folklore (affiliated) students and scholars based in the greater Columbus area
- 2016 Organizer and panel chair, 9thIU/OSU Student Conference in Folklore and Ethnomusicology

### **Department/University**

- 2020— Member, Graduate Advisory Committee, Department of English, Utah State University.
- 2020— Member, Postdoctoral Mentoring Committee, Department of English, Utah State University.
- 2020— Member, Folklore Program Committee, Department of English, Utah State University.
- 2020— Member, The Digital Folklore Project, Department of English, Utah State University.

### **STUDENT ADVISING**

---

#### Graduate Student Committees:

- 2020— Member, Thesis Committee, Alex Bullock (History)
- 2020— Member, Thesis Committee, Victoria Jaye (English)
- 2020— Member, Thesis Committee, Maygan Barker (English)
- 2020— Member, Thesis Committee, Alex Ziegler (English)

### **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

---

#### **Utah State University, Logan, UT**

- Introduction to Folklore Studies (Theory and Method)—Graduate
- Folk Art and Material Culture—Graduate/Undergraduate
- Introduction to Folklore—Undergraduate

**The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH**

Introduction to the Humanities: Cross-Cultural Perspectives (Spring 2020, Spring 2017, Fall 2015)—Undergraduate

Introduction to Folklore (Fall 2016)—Undergraduate

**Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, KY**

Urban Folklore, Teaching Assistant (Fall 2012 to Spring 2014)—Undergraduate

**PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

---

2012— American Folklore Society  
2016— Middle East Studies Association  
2017— Western States Folklore Society  
2020— Association for Middle East Women’s Studies  
2020— Folklore Society of Utah

**LANGUAGES**

---

**English:** Fluent

**Persian (Farsi):** Native

**Arabic:** Advanced reading and writing, intermediate speaking and listening proficiency

**German:** Intermediate reading proficiency