



IRANIAN AND PERSIAN GULF STUDIES

School of Global Studies

A Note from the Outgoing Director

As many of you will by now have heard, this will be my final note as the Director of the Iranian and Persian Gulf Studies (IPGS) program at OSU. It has been an honor to serve in this role and to steward a program committed to fostering multidisciplinary collaboration, research, and public dialogue on Iran and the Persian Gulf region.

Over the past year, the Program continued to thrive thanks to the enthusiasm and engagement of our students, faculty, and partners. One of my primary goals with IPGS has been to establish OSU as a cutting-edge site for research with an expansive view of Iranian Studies, bringing top scholars from around the world to share their insights, with a particular focus on Iran's natural environment. To this end, in February 2025, we convened the **IPGS Symposium on Natural Resources & Development in Iran**, examining the history of oil, gas, minerals, and water in Iran's development trajectory. I hope you'll read more about the international scholars who joined us for the event in this newsletter.

IPGS was also thrilled to support two Faculty Grant recipients in 2024-2025, **Dr. Laleh Tahsini** and **Dr. Sara Alian**, each conducting innovative research and pedagogical projects in chemistry and engineering, highlighting the many ways in which Iranian and Persian Gulf studies intersect with scientific inquiry. Our four IPGS Professorship holders continued their groundbreaking research, and the ongoing IPGS Lecture Series featured a multidisciplinary range of speakers, including historian **Dr. Tonia Sharlach** (OSU), diaspora literature scholar **Dr. Persis Karim** (SFSU), comparative literature scholar **Dr. Amir Moosavi** (Rutgers University), and sociologist **Dr. Elham Hoominfar** (Northwestern University). Each sparked timely conversations that underscored the value of regionally grounded, globally relevant scholarship.

Finally, IPGS has sought to create welcoming spaces for all those at OSU interested in Iran & the Persian Gulf, to connect, share, and learn from one another. In addition to our annual **Nowruz Eid Didani**, we hosted several **Chai Chats** over the past year—informal gatherings where students, faculty, and community members came together over Iranian tea and sweets. These events became a meaningful way to build relationships across campus, and they were also among my favorite moments at OSU. Over tea, I was repeatedly reminded of how our treasured Iranian hospitality is not only about offering friends and newcomers a warm welcome, but also about building community and support in times of abundance as much as in times of uncertainty. I hope these moments have been just as meaningful for you, and that you'll continue to lean on one another in these increasingly challenging times.

As I transition out of this position, I do so with deep appreciation for all those who have contributed to the growth of IPGS. I'm proud of what we've accomplished together and while I will miss sharing chai and conversations with you, I leave OSU with the confidence that IPGS is on strong ground and will continue to grow in the years ahead.

With all best wishes and *be omid-e didar*,

Dr. Amy Malek
Outgoing Director, Iranian and Persian Gulf Studies
Oklahoma State University



Updates in this Newsletter

Symposium on
Natural Resources
& Development in
Iran

Announcing the
2025-2026 IPGS
Faculty Grantee

2024-2025 IPGS
Faculty Grant
Reports

2024-2025
Events Highlights

Symposium on Natural Resources & Development in Iran

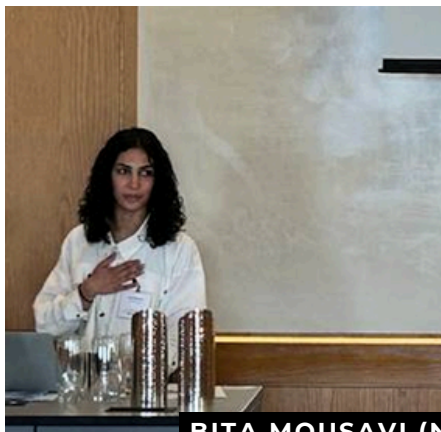
February 25, 2025



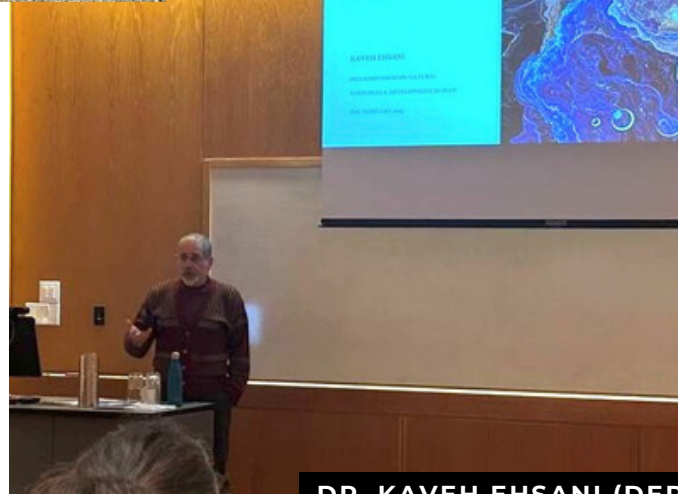
2025 IPGS SYMPOSIUM PARTICIPANTS



**DR. NARIMAN MASSOUMI
(UNIV. OF BRISTOL)**



BITA MOUSAVI (NYU)



DR. KAVEH EHSANI (DEPAUL)



DR. CIRUCE MOVAHEDI-LANKARANI (USC)



**DR. PEYMAN JAFARI
(WILLIAM & MARY)**

Symposium on Natural Resources & Development in Iran

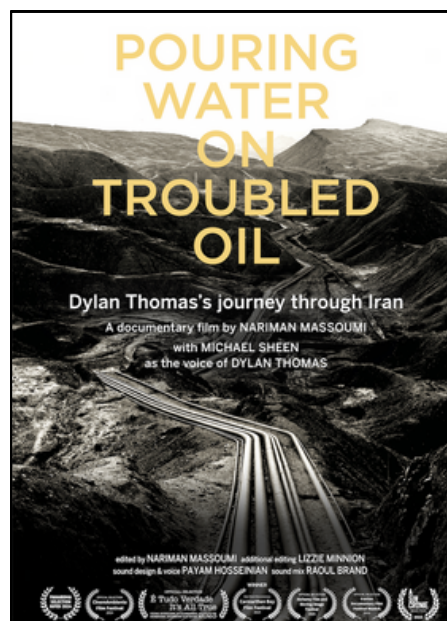
What is the history of development in Iran? How have Iran's natural resources, economy, and society been impacted by development projects?

The Iranian & Persian Gulf Studies Program at Oklahoma State University was pleased to host a symposium addressing these questions on February 25, 2025. Bringing together five historians and social scientists working at the cross-sections of development, environment, political economy, culture, and society in Iran, the symposium examined how Iran's resources—especially water, oil, and natural gas—have been targets of national and international development projects from the mid-20th century to today, with far-reaching impacts.

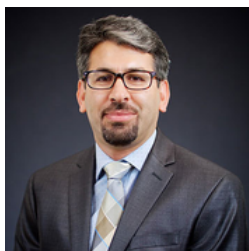
The first session, *Infrastructure Politics*, focused on the early and mid-20th century, opening with research presentations from historians **Bitā Mousavi** ("Iran's Living Pyramid: The Dez Dam Project and the Promise of Development") and **Dr. Ciruce Movahedi-Lankarani** ("Precarious Petroleum: Volatile Reservoirs, Varied Natural Gas Compositions, and Development in 1960s Iran").

The second session moved into the second half of the 20th century, with the theme of *Narratives and Representations of Development*. After a presentation from **Dr. Peyman Jafari** ("Missionaries of Oil Modernity: Culture and Corporate Oil Publications in 20th Century Iran"), the audience was treated to the U.S. debut of the award-winning documentary film, ***Pouring Water on Troubled Oil: Dylan Thomas's Journey through Iran*** (2023, 26 min.) by director **Nariman Massoumi** (Univ. of Bristol). The following discussion brought together Dr. Massoumi's insights during the film's production and Dr. Jafari's research to consider the ways Iranian development has been represented by and to non-Iranian audiences.

The symposium closed with a final research presentation from **Dr. Kaveh Ehsani** ("The Making of Toxic Ecologies: Legacies of Warfare and Authoritarian Modernization in Southern Iran & Iraq"), which focused on the late 20th century to today and the intertwined roles of war, modernization, and climate change on the region. Together, these sessions offered OSU audiences a rich collection of research to advance our understanding of the histories of natural resources development and modernity in Iran.



2025-2026 IPGS Faculty Grant Recipient



Dr. Reza Latifi
Chemistry
IPGS Faculty Course
Development Grant

Launching a crystallography course aimed at empowering OSU and international researchers, enhancing professional growth, and igniting innovation.

2024-2025 IPGS Faculty Grant Reports



Dr. Laleh Tahsini
Chemistry
IPGS Faculty Research Grant

Tackling air pollution and global warming through CO₂ reduction and transformation using synthetic molecular catalysts

Climate change due to irresponsible carbon dioxide emission is a globally outstanding challenge. However, this issue is more prominent in certain parts of the world including the Middle East and Central Asia. We aim to design molecules that can absorb atmospheric CO₂ and develop methods to convert CO₂ into fuels and other value-added commodities.



Dr. Sara Alian
Biosystems and Agricultural
Engineering
IPGS Course Development Grant

Geospatial Technologies for Agriculture

To tackle agricultural management problems and associated environmental issues, Geospatial Technologies for Agriculture offered training to agricultural technologists in the application of geospatial tools and resources to improve agricultural management and document soil, water, and crop problems for better communication with decision makers and agricultural resource managers.



DR. LALEH TAHSINI'S LAB AT OSU

2024-2025 IPGS Event Highlights



**IPGS LECTURE:
DR. TONIA SHARLACH (OSU)**



**IPGS LECTURE:
DR. PERSIS KARIM (SFSU) WITH DR. POUYA JAHANSHAHI
(OSU), DR. KAVEH BASSIRI (TU), & DR. MALEK**



IPGS LECTURE: DR. AMIR MOOSAVI (RUTGERS)



**IPGS LECTURE: DR. ELHAM HOOMINFAR
(NORTHWESTERN) WITH OSU PHD STUDENT KASRA
KHODKAR & DR. MALEK**



NOWRUZ EID DIDANI, HAFT SEEN BY LILI BADIAN



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