



DĀNESH INSTITUTE



2016 Annual Conference

Iranians in Diaspora: Ethnic and Religious Diversity

Friday, October 21, 2016 - 8:15 am to 4:15 pm

**Indiana University - Indianapolis
301 University Blvd., Indianapolis, IN 46202
AD Bldg. 2nd Floor - Room 2043 and 2041**

Hosted by Indiana University School of Social Work

Preliminary Program

Welcome Remarks

Nasser H. Paydar, IUPUI Chancellor and Executive Vice President, Indiana University.

Michael A. Patchner, Dean, IU School of Social Work.

John Walbridge, Board President. Indiana University-Bloomington.

Presentations

Mahnia Nematollahi Mahani, Independent Scholar. *Vatan Band: Bridging Iranian and American Cultural Identities.*

This presentation aims to delve into an Iranian music band called Vatan Band, formed in the last decade in the U.S., to illustrate how the band attempts to bridge gaps between two cultural identities: Iranian and American. The author uses the concept of liminality and in-betweenness to explain how the band's members are producing their works in a liminal period although they are born in the U.S. The presentation also looks into the works of Max Amini, a famous Iranian comedian, who grows up and lives in the United States, to illustrate how he is using comedy as a tool to introduce the culture of Iranians to American population.

Nahid Shahnavaaz (Chair), Ivy Tech State College. Panel presentation: *Literature of Iranians in Diaspora*.

Panelists: Farzaneh Dickens, Ebrahim Fakouri; Manucher Rangbar; Homayoon Shidnia

The panel will discuss the rich literature written by Iranians in the Diaspora, particularly after the 1979 Iranian Revolution that produced a huge exodus from Iran to Europe and United States. The panelists will present and discuss the literature written by Iranians in the Diaspora that reflects the struggles, courage, nostalgia, family dislocation, alienation, as well as Iranians' negotiation of their identities, joy, prosperity, and success in the new land.

Reza Varjavand, Saint Xavier University. *The Iranian-Americans' Struggle to Build an Identity in the Diaspora*.

Numerous books have been written by Iranian-Americans as well as those Iranians living in Europe, the majority authored by women who left Iran, primarily to escape what they considered to be the unbearable restrictions imposed on women by the Islamic Republic government. They have written mindboggling accounts about the unjust treatment of women and voiced their concerns regarding human rights abuses in Iran. This presentation will be primarily grounded in the presenter's review of books written by well-known Iranian writers living abroad who describe their struggle to build an identity by reflecting on their own personal life and other experiences, through the art of storytelling.

Abdollah Zahiri, Seneca College, Toronto. *Diaspora and the Law: The Legal Challenges Facing Iranian Immigrants in Toronto*.

This presentation attempts to shed light on the legal challenges that new Canadians, in this case Iranian immigrants, face upon arrival in Toronto pursuing the Canadian dream. A number of them unwittingly get caught in the legal machine, and the legal process could have lasting effects as they try to establish themselves and reterritorialize in the great white North. The presentation will address how unfortunate legal encounters could potentially thwart immigrants' goals and dreams for themselves and their children's future. The Canadian dream could go awry.

FOR REGISTRATION, SEE THE REGISTRATION FORM ON THIS SITE

The conference is co-sponsored by the Society for Promotion of Persian Culture