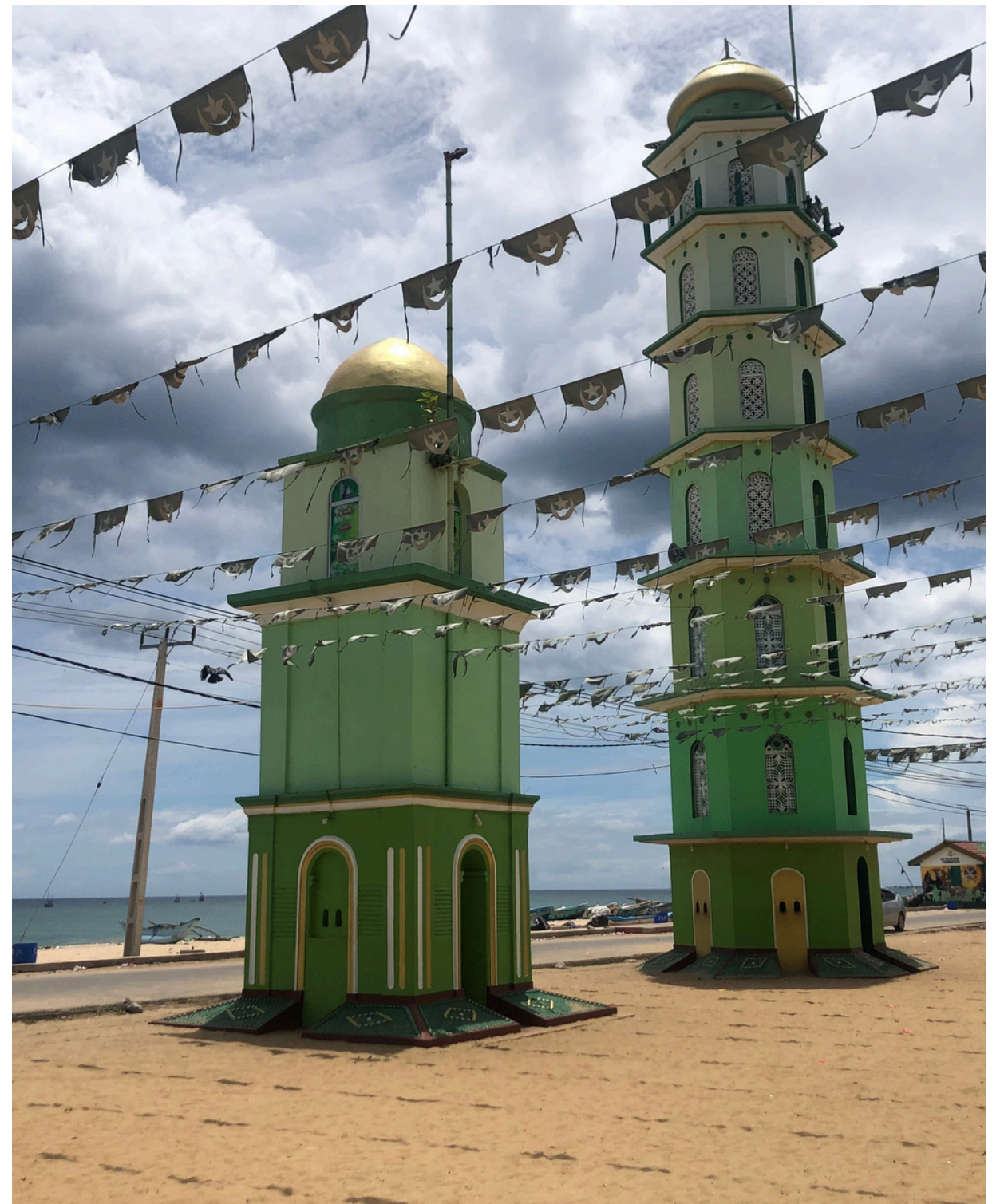
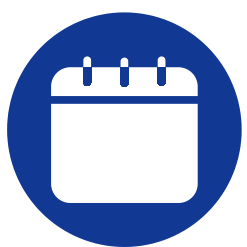


SAINTLY SHRINES AND RUPTURES OF TEMPORALITIES: SUFİ PASTS AND FUTURES IN POST-WAR SRI LANKA

The first half of this lecture will reflect on the field of Sufism in the global west, considering the current state of the field as it intersects with the studies of western esotericism, sociology of religion, popular and Islamic spirituality, and Islamic diaspora and mysticism. To do so case studies of Sufism in the global north will be considered, namely of the Bawa Muhaiyaddeen Fellowship, a transnational movement between North America and Sri Lanka, and the popularization of Jalaluddin Rumi in Canada. These case studies will showcase how ethnographic studies can capture the capacious possibility of Sufism as a category. The second half of the lecture will shift to introduce the case of Sufism in contemporary post-war Sri Lanka. The context of the Indian Ocean world of Islam and Sufi saints and their shrines provide even more generative vocabulary and context for studying Sufism. The island of Sri Lanka is especially rich with cosmological narratives of timeless prophets, such as the prophet Khidr, and tombs to 40 feet long saints, and devotion to women saints, all of which continue to define piety and faith for Muslims and non-Muslims, while offering other worldviews and futures for a minoritized community. Overall, then, this talk captures the lived realities of Sufism from a global context and maps the ebbs and flows of its categorical possibilities and limitations.



Dr. Xavier is an associate professor of Religion and Diaspora at Queen's University (Canada). She works on Islam, Sufism, and popular spirituality in the United States, Canada, and Sri Lanka. As an ethnographer, she is particularly interested in questions of migration, diaspora, gender, race, consumption, rituals, spaces, and institutions. She is the co-editor of *Sufism in Canada: Weaving Islamic Practice and Contemporary Spirituality* (University of British Columbia Press, 2025) and the author of *Dervishes of the North: Rumi, Whirling and the Making of Sufism in Canada* (University of Toronto Press, 2023), the first monograph length studies of Sufism in Canada. She is also the author of *Sacred Spaces and Transnational Networks in American Sufism: Bawa Muhaiyaddeen and Contemporary Shrine Cultures* (Bloomsbury Press, 2018) and a co-author (with Meena Sharify-Funk and William Rory Dickson) of *Contemporary Sufism: Piety, Politics, and Popular Culture* (Routledge, 2017). She is currently working on a book project on contemporary Sufi shrines in Sri Lanka.



Date:
Tuesday - 13 May, 2025



Time:
6.15 - 7.45 PM

**Location: Big Seminar room,
Hartmannstr. 14, Building D1, Erlangen**

Link for virtual attendance: <https://fau.zoom-x.de/j/62556506187>



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CAS-E

Alternative Rationalities and
Esoteric Practices from a Global Perspective

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