While the Soviets branded Sufis as radical extremists, Central Asian Republics since the fall of the Soviet Union have reversed course, and embraced certain cultural, historical, and spiritual aspects of Sufism and local traditions as integral to national identities and state security. This talk will discuss how Sufism in Central Asia has been re-configured through Islamic law, literature, material culture, and politics from an “enemy of the state” to an indispensable ally of the state in combating the ideology of Islamic “extremism.” Drawing upon her own experience of preserving Sufi shrines on the Silk Road and excavating Islamic archaeology in Turkmenistan, Dr. O’Dell will unearth and map geographies of mysticism and syncretism in the wake of communism in post-Soviet Central Asia.