Shah Mahmoud Hanifi is a Professor of History at James Madison University where he teaches courses on the Middle East and South Asia. Hanifi’s research and publications have addressed subjects including colonial political economy, the Pashto language, photography, cartography, animal and environmental studies, and Orientalism in Afghanistan. His dissertation formed the basis of a Gutenberg-e Prize from the American Historical Association that resulted in his first book, Connecting Histories in Afghanistan (Stanford University Press, 2009, 2011).

This talk is organized as a critical self-reflection on Connecting Histories in Afghanistan, and secondarily as an attempt to locate the book in the relatively fast-changing field of Afghanistan Studies. In this conjoined way, the origins, structure and principal themes of the book and the larger field of Afghanistan Studies can be identified and interrogated, however unevenly. Revisiting how and why the book positioned Afghanistan in relation to British Indian colonialism, global capitalism and the power of writing will demonstrate this combination of concerns remains insufficient for generating a comprehensive understanding of far more complex historical terrain.

February 1. 12:00pm. 203 Luce Hall. 34 Hillhouse Avenue.