Pasha Khan is an Assistant Professor at the Institute of Islamic Studies working on South Asian literatures, including literature in Urdu-Hindi, Persian, Punjabi, and Arabic. He received his PhD at Columbia University where he held fellowships from the SSHRC and the ACLS. His dissertation, completed in 2012 under the supervision of Prof. Frances Pritchett, was entitled “The Broken Spell: The Romance Genre in Late Mughal India,” and dealt with romances (dastans/qissahs) and storytelling (dastangoi), mainly in Urdu and Persian. As holder of the Chair in Urdu Language and Culture at McGill University, he is responsible for teaching Urdu language courses, and performing research in the history and literature of the Urdu-speaking peoples of South Asia, and other areas, including Canada.

The Shahnamah in India, between History and Romance

This talk will consider the reception and genre of the Shahnamah in India. It will take as its starting-point comments made by the poet Mirza Asad Allah Khan Ghalib of Delhi in 1866, moving on to look at a Mughal Shahnamah adaptation, the Tarikh-i dil-gusha-i Shamsher-Khani, and its Urdu translations, as well as other Persian, Urdu and Arabic texts. It will investigate the (mis)identification of the Shahnamah's genre, looking at cases in which it was understood as historiographical rather than as a romance, and seeking an explanation for this 'contamination' of the 'sincere' genre of history by the 'mendacious' romance genre.

Tuesday, February 3, 11:30 - 12:50 pm
Luce 202, 34 Hillhouse Ave.

Light lunch will be provided

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