Names to Remember: Memory and Amnesia in Medicine's Historical Epistemology

Lecture by
Ahmed Ragab

In 1827, a new medical school was established in Cairo being the first European-style medical school in the region. The new school and the new medical paradigm it tried to propagate relied on a particular reading of the history of medicine in the region that legitimized the new practice and underwrote the reforms in the health system. This lecture explores the role that historical narratives play in the making of medical paradigms and how particular historical narratives influence debates on medical efficiency, scientificity and science and Islam.

Ahmed Ragab is The Richard T. Watson Assistant Professor of Science and Religion at Harvard Divinity School, affiliate assistant professor at the department of the History of Science, and director of the Science, Religion and Culture program at Harvard Divinity School. He received his M.D from Cairo University School of Medicine in 2005, and PhD from the Ecole Pratiques des Hautes Etudes in Paris in 2010. He is the author of The Medieval Islamic Hospital: Medicine, Religion and Charity (Cambridge University Press, 2015). Currently, Ragab is completing a book entitled “In the Name of God the Healer: Prophetic medicine in the medieval and modern Middle East” (to appear with Columbia University Press). He is an elected member of the Commission on History of Science and Technology in Islamic Societies and of the International Society for Science and Religion.