



The UCL Mellon Programme Presents
Lecture Series: Iranian Modernity and the West
Organized by Dr Saeed Talajooy
(ADMISSION IS FREE AND ALL ARE WELCOME)

Wednesday 28th April (5.30pm)

European Liberalisms and Modern Concepts of Liberty in Iran

Dr Homa Katouzian (St. Antony's College, University of Oxford)

(Venue: Roberts G08 Sir David Davies LT, Malet Place, UCL, London, WC1E 6BT)

Abstract

One hundred years ago there was a massive revolution in Iran primarily for the establishment of law and lawful government. This may still come as a surprise to some who are nurtured and versed in the history of modern Europe. Modern European revolutions, or indeed fundamental reforms which succeeded in averting revolutions, did not aim at establishing law in society. On the contrary, they intended to replace the existing law by one which would extend the rights and freedoms of the less privileged. Apart from that, in the classical liberal age revolutions and reforms also aimed at limiting the law, that is, at drastically reducing the scale of state intervention in the private sphere. Indeed, the liberals of the 18th and 19th centuries virtually equated an increase in liberty with a decrease in legal restraints. Yet Iranian constitutionalists campaigned for law itself in order to attain freedom. My talk aims to discuss and explain this apparent dichotomy, with reference to the basic differences in the social and historical realities of Iran and Europe.

Supported by Iran Heritage Foundation



Contact: Dr Saeed Talajooy: s.talajooy@ucl.ac.uk
For full details visit: www.ucl.ac.uk/mellon-program/seminars/2009-2010