

## **AIPS Fellowship- Brannon Ingram**

**2023-2024**

Brannon D. Ingram AIPS Abstract 'Religion' in Muslim South Asia: On the Colonial Pathways of a Modern Category My second book project examines debates among Muslims about the very notion of 'religion' in late colonial India and mid-twentieth century Pakistan. The book argues that a distinctly 'Protestant' idea of religion – that religion should be private, apolitical, and a matter of internal experience largely set off from public life – shaped South Asian Islam under British hegemony, especially after the end of Company rule and beginning of direct rule after 1858. I also argue that it was a tool of imperial control, applying far more to colonial subjects than to the British themselves. In the immediate aftermath of 1857-58, I examine the ways that representative figures within the emergent Deoband and Aligarh movements shaped their understandings of Islam variously through and against this notion of Protestant normativity. I then show how representative figures from Muslim modernist and Islamist movements, respectively, in the early history of Pakistan rejected the category of 'religion' outright, even arguing that Islam was not a 'religion' at all. This curious overlap between Muslim modernism and Islamism, I argue, prompts a revision of dominant scholarly approaches to those categories. The book closes with an exploration of the many trajectories in the contemporary world of the idea that Islam is not a religion, and their social, political, and legal implications