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Understanding Iranian freedom and revolution

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Vancouver's Iranian community will have a chance to meet Simon Fraser University's new president and an internationally well-known specialist on modern Iranian socio-economic history at an upcoming annual lecture.

It is part of the Drs. Fereidoun and Katharine Mirhady Endowed Lecture Series in Iranian Studies, now in its 9th season.

SFU's Centre for the Comparative Study of Muslim Societies and Cultures (CCSMSC) and the history department will host a lecture by Homa Katouzian on Iranian Concepts of Liberty and Law in Comparative Perspective on Nov. 18.

SFU President Andrew Petter will deliver opening remarks before Katouzian begins his lecture at 7 p.m., downtown, in the SFU Vancouver campus' Fletcher Challenge Canada Theatre at 515 Hastings Street.

Katouzian, who is closely connected to prominent Iranians in B.C., is an Iran Heritage Research Fellow at St. Antony's College and a history professor in the Faculty of Oriental Studies at England's University of Oxford.

Book reviewers call the prolific writer's latest book, *The Persians*, 'awe-inspiring in its scope and scholarly reach.'

In his upcoming free public lecture, Katouzian - also a social scientist, literary critic and poet - will explore stark differences in the way Iranians and Europeans historically perceive the aim of massive revolutions.

'Almost a century ago there was a massive revolution in Iran primarily for the establishment of law and lawful government,' says Katouzian. 'This may still come as a surprise to some who are nurtured and versed in the history of 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 with one that would extend the rights and freedoms of the less privileged.'

'Indeed, the liberals of the 18th and 19th centuries virtually equated an increase in liberty with a decrease in legal constraints. Yet Iranian constitutionalists campaigned for law itself in order to attain freedom.'

Derryl MacLean, CCSMSC director and associate history professor, says Katouzian's lecture will be of wide interest because it provides a context for understanding how polarized views of revolution affect relations between Iranians and Europeans today.

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Comments

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