

# Middle East Studies Arabic Lecture Winter 2008

## Democracy and the Middle East: A View from Damascus

### Sadik J. Al-Azm

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**Wednesday, 9 April**  
**3:00 P.M.**  
**238 HRCB**



Sadik J. Al-Azm, emeritus professor of modern European philosophy at the University of Damascus, is currently a visiting lecturer at Princeton University. Al-Azm's research specialty is the Islamic world and its relationship to the West, and he is known as a human rights advocate and a champion of intellectual freedom. He became well known with his book *Self-criticism after the Defeat* (1968), in which he gave an analysis of the Arab disillusionment after the Six Days War. Many of his books are banned in the Arab world, and he was jailed by the Lebanese government after publishing his book *Critique of Religious Thought* (1970). During his career, he taught not only in Damascus and Beirut but also at Harvard, Princeton, and the University of Hamburg. In 2005, he became a Dr. *Honoris Causa* at Hamburg University. In 2004, he won the Erasmus Prize, with Fatema Mernissi and Abdulkarim Soroush, and he also received the Dr. Leopold-Lucas-Preis of the Evangelical-Theological Faculty of the University of Tübingen. Al-Azm is a member of the Committee for the Prizes of the Prince Claus Fund. Apart from publications in Arabic, some of his books appeared in English translation and his books have been published in German, Dutch, English, Norwegian, and Italian. Al-Azm was born in Damascus to a well known Sunni family.