

The Center for Middle East Studies presents

## Was the Rise of Islam a Black Swan Event?

**Michael Cook**

(Professor of Near Eastern Studies Princeton University)

2016 R. Stephen Humphreys Distinguished Visiting Scholar



**Monday, May 2nd**

**5:00 PM**

**IHC McCune Conference Room  
Humanities and Social Sciences Building  
Room 6020**

A Black Swan Event is by definition a highly improbable happening with a massive impact. No one questions the impact of rise of Islam, but just how improbable was it? Two of its central features look very unlikely against the background of earlier history: the appearance among the Arabs of a new monotheistic religion, and the formation of a powerful state in Arabia. Does that add up to two Black Swans, or do they cancel out?

**Michael Cook** is the Class of 1943 University Professor of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University. He is the author of *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought* and *A Brief History of the Human Race*, among other books, and he is also the general editor of *The New Cambridge History of Islam*.

*Sponsored by the Center for Middle East Studies, R. Stephen Humphreys Distinguished Lecture Series*