Historians have observed that although references to male same-sex desires are not difficult to find in medieval Muslim texts, they typically have comparatively little to say about female homoeroticism. This lecture takes as its point of departure an anecdote in an eleventh century CE Muslim admonitory text, which features two women who are specifically identified as reciters of the Qur’an, who come to a male religious authority and ask him if the Qur’an prohibits sex between women. This anecdote, raises a number of questions about the relationship among texts, gender and religious authority, and communal constructions of memory, and their impact on the visibility of female homoeroticism in classical Muslim sources.

Aisha Geissinger is an associate professor in the Religion Program at Carleton University, Ottawa (Canada). Recent publications include: Gender and Muslim Constructions of Exegetical Authority: A Rereading of the Classical Genre of Qur’an Commentary (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015).

This event is sponsored by Bonnie Zimmerman, Professor Emerita in the Department of Women’s Studies. Our co-sponsors include the SDSU Library, the Department of Religious Studies, The Pride Center, and LGBT Studies.