How do Iranian citizens, ruling elite and political groups think of themselves as a nation?

The three competing narratives of romantic nationalist, modernist and post-modernist have been shaping various perspectives on Iranian identity. While the first views nations as natural and essential elements in history since “times immemorial”, the two others reject the romantic, primordial idea of the origins of nations and view the concepts of ‘nation’ and ‘national identity’ as a modern construct with no relation to pre-modern collective identities. The post-modern narrative goes even further to deconstruct the very notion of ‘national identity’ in multi-ethnic countries such as Iran.

This talk proposes a fourth narrative: this recognizes a “civic nation” as a product of modernity that cannot be applied retrospectively to pre-modern times. It rejects, however, the modernist and post-modernist contention of a radical rupture between a modern nation and its historical past in all cases.

April 17, 2018 | 12:00 – 1:20 p.m.
Green Hall, Room 1-N-5

Light lunch served | Please RSVP by 4/13 to iran@princeton.edu