ABSTRACT | Sufi tomb shrines in India are well-known for their multi-religious constituencies. Yet the status of these sites is contested and ambivalent, with some groups lauding and celebrating them while others seek to undermine their diverse appeal. This presentation will compare cases of cooperation and conflict at two sites in Karnataka to explore the pragmatics of state secularism as well as local strategies of accommodation and competition.

BIO | Anna Bigelow is Associate Professor of Islamic Studies in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at NC State University. She received her MA from Columbia University (1995) and PhD in Religious Studies from UC Santa Barbara (2004) with a focus on South Asian Islam. Her book, Sharing the Sacred: Practicing Pluralism in Muslim North India (Oxford University Press, 2010) is a study of a Muslim majority community in Indian Punjab and the shared sacred and civic spaces in that community. Bigelow’s current research involves further study of contested and cooperatively patronized multi-religious sacred sites in South Asia and the Middle East, focusing on the inter-religious dynamics that complicate or ameliorate these relations in plural communities around the globe. She speaks and writes frequently on religious extremism, religion and conflict, and the role of Islam in the world today.

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