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Al-Azm was educated at the American University Beirut, and at Yale in modern European philosophy and has taught at Damascus, Harvard, Princeton, Williams, Brandeis, Oslo, Sendai, Leiden, Antwerp, Hamburg, Bonn, and Berlin, his academic specialization being Immanuel Kant and the critique of religious thought.

Professor Al-Azm was the recipient of the Dr. Leopold-Lucas Prize 2004, the Erasmus Prize 2004, the Mahmoud Darwish Award for Freedom and Creativity 2013, and the Goethe Medal 2015.

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