

RELI 0150 Islamic Traditions

Fall 2011

MW 9:05–9:55 a.m.

JN 304

Dr. Banafsheh Madaninejad

120 Munroe Hall

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Office hours: Mondays and Thursdays 3:00–4:30 p.m., and by appointment

Discussions: Wednesdays

Section X: 12:30–1:20 p.m., FIC HAM

Section Y: 1:45–2:35 p.m., FIC HAM

Section Z: 2:50–3:40 p.m., FIC HAM

Course Description

The objective of this course is to give students an understanding of what it means to be Muslim in terms of *beliefs* (cosmology and theology), *practices* (rituals and moral teachings), and *culture*, not just classically but in the backdrop of today's world. In order to achieve this three-part objective, we will read primary and secondary materials from various perspectives and of different genres. We will devote some time to the *history* of the foundations and civilization of Islam. We will explore the meaning of Islam as a worldview and a moral system through examining its *doctrinal*, *ritual*, *philosophical*, *moral* and *spiritual* dimensions. This course is designed for students with no prior knowledge of Islam.

Course Requirements & Policies

You are expected to attend every class having done the assigned reading and to participate meaningfully in discussions.

Assignments; Expectations & Grading

Participation in Discussions: 20%

Clifford Symposium Response Paper (3 pages, double-spaced, Times, 12): 20%

Take Home Midterm Exam: 30%

Take Home Final Exam: 30%

--*Take-home midterm exam.* This is a comprehensive examination of your knowledge of key concepts, events, and persons in early Islamic history. It will require you to offer a synthetic analysis of everything covered in the course up to the time of the exam. Fair warning: Past students have reported that it takes them an entire weekend to complete the exam satisfactorily. **Take-home midterm is due at the beginning of class on Monday, 11/7.**

--*Take-home final exam.* You will be asked to synthesize the content of the course by forming a thoughtful explanation of Islam and its role in the social and personal lives of Muslims. Part of the final exam will include a critical book review of Mohammed Ayoob's *The Many Faces of*

Political Islam. **The due date for the take-home final exam is Monday, 12/12.**

NOTE 1: I make an effort to encourage and recognize improvement in performance over the course of the semester, and such improvement may be factored into the final grade.

NOTE 2: When you send me an email, please note that it might take me up to 48 hours to get the information and respond to you. Plan accordingly.

NOTE 3: Since every group of students is unique, the syllabus is subject to change depending on your needs.

Late Assignments

Papers submitted late without prior arrangement or acceptable reason will be marked down a half letter grade for each day they are late. Having too many papers due at the same time does not constitute an acceptable reason. Extensions will *only* be granted in case of serious illness or extreme emergency.

Course Objectives and Themes

We have two **principal objectives** in this course:

- 1) To cultivate your *critical thinking* skills about religion and Islam specifically. By critical thinking skills, I include the abilities to recognize, analyze, and criticize arguments in the contexts of reading, writing, thinking, news reports and discussions. I expect you to do this not only with others' positions but, more importantly, with your own positions.
- 2) To encourage you to be *active learners* about Islamic cultures. By an active learner I mean a person who has the curiosity, confidence, and passion to take the initiative to seek information that will make the recognition, analysis, and criticism of arguments—once again, both others' and your own— more poignant, penetrating, and insightful.

Three major **running themes** of the class (topics we will be coming back to throughout the semester) are:

- 1) Identity: What it means to be Muslim; monolithic or polysemic?
- 2) The difference between text and interpretations of text in a text-based religion like Islam.
- 3) Issues of representing Islam and Muslims.

Special Needs

Students with documented needs regarding accommodations for testing, writing, or oral presentations in this class should make arrangement as early in the semester as possible to ensure that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. Please contact Jodi Litchfield, the ADA Coordinator, at litchfie@middlebury.edu or 802-443-5936 for information on the proper procedures. All discussions will remain confidential.

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. In keeping with college policy, suspected cases of plagiarism will be referred to the Dean of Students' Office and can lead to suspension. Plagiarism is a violation of intellectual honesty. Plagiarism is passing off another person's work as one's own. It is taking or presenting as one's own the ideas, research, writings, creations, or inventions of another. It makes no difference whether the source is a student or a professional in some field. Paraphrasing is the close restatement of another's idea using approximately the language of the original. Paraphrasing without acknowledgement of authorship is also plagiarism and is as serious a violation as an unacknowledged quotation.

Please consult me if you have any questions or concerns.

Required Texts

Leila Ahmed	<i>Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate</i>
Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazzali	<i>The Alchemy of Happiness</i>
Mohammed Ayoub	<i>The Many Faces of Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Muslim World</i>
Jonathan Berkey	<i>The Formation of Islam: Religion and Society in the Near East 600-1800</i>
Tayeb Saleh	<i>Season of Migration to the North</i>
Sayyid Qutb	<i>Milestones</i>
Roy Mottahedeh	<i>Mantle of the Prophet: Religion and Politics in Iran</i> (autobiography of a cleric during the 1979 revolution) -- This is a thick book and at times very detailed; start early.

The Bible, any edition – this has not been ordered – students may use their own editions; searchable online versions can be found at www.biblegateway.com

The Qur'an, any edition, -- this has not been ordered – students may use their own editions; searchable online versions can be found at

<http://www.quranexplorer.com> or <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/k/koran>

Additional Material on Moodle

All additional reading and visual material will be posted on Moodle. The Moodle site will be up by

9/13. I will be adding materials to the site as we progress through the semester.

Course Schedule

I. Representing Islam

Week 1

M 9/12—Introduction to the class

9/11 Assignment

You will be asked to write a one-page exploratory/personal essay on one of the three 9/11-related questions below **during class**. Although required and read for content, this essay **will nevertheless not be graded**. You will be asked to write another one-page follow-up to these same questions during week 10 (which will also be read but not graded):

Questions

- 1) How has the world/US changed in the last ten years?
- 2) What have you as a citizen of the world learned about yourself and or Islam as a result of 9/11?
- 3) How is the West, or your area of the world, better integrated or more divided, now, than before 9/11?

W 9/14—Dilemmas in Representing Islam

-Edward Said, *Orientalism*, 1-28 and 314-321.

-Bernard Lewis, "The Question of Orientalism" in *Islam and the West*, 99-118.

-Recommended: -Carl Ernst, "Islam in the Eyes of the West" and "Approaching Islam in Terms of Religion" in *Following Muhammad*, 2-69. (A thoughtful response to popular and media misrepresentations of Islam in the US, written for the general public.)

II. Foundations of Islam

Week 2

M 9/19—The World into Which Islam Emerged

-Berkey, *Formation of Islam*, 3-53.

-Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*, 11-37.

W 9/21—Muhammad and the Qur'an

-Sura 12 of the Qur'an

-Genesis 37-50.

- Berkey, *Formation of Islam*, 57-69.
- Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*, 41-57.

The Clifford Symposium

The Clifford Symposium will be taking place on campus between September 22-24. You are expected to attend at least one panel and write a three-page response paper (the response can be about one panel or more, or your impressions of the symposium). I advise you to write down your reflections on the panels you attend on that same day. Let this be an exercise in stream of consciousness writing at first. In fact, you can start the writing process while taking notes during the panels. Make sure to jot down quotes you want to use. Sleep on what you have written, and then come back to it when you are done with attending the symposium.

Week 3

M 9/26—Muhammad as Exemplar

- Berkey, *Formation of Islam*, 70-75.
- Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*, 57-63.
- Hadith Selections.
- Süleymān Celebī, "The Mevlidi Sherif," 17-39.

W 9/28— Individual Worship and Personal Piety

- Vincent Cornell, "Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge: The Relationship between Faith and Practice in Islam" in *The Oxford History of Islam*, 63-105.

Clifford Symposium Response
Paper

Paper hardcopy due (no email attachments accepted) by 4 pm, Tuesday, 9/27 (day before class) in the box outside my office.

III. Formative Historical Experiences in Faith and Community

Week 4

M 10/3— Communal Worship and Religious Public Space

- Malcolm X (or Malik el-Shabazz), "Mecca," chapter 17 of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*.
- Farid Esack, "Pepsi Shows the Way" in *On Being a Muslim*, 12-17.

W 10/5—Birth Pangs: Factionalism and Religious Authority

- Berkey, *Formation of Islam*, 130-151 and 159-175.
- Muhammad b. Jarīr al-Tabarī, "The Account of the Murder [of 'Uthmān]" in *The History of al-Tabarī*, vol. 15, 181-223.
- Lewis Pelly, *The Miracle Play of Hasan and Husain*, vol. 2, 81-103.

IV. Intellectual Traditions and Islamic Praxis

Week 5

M 10/10—Islamic Philosophy and Theology: *Falsafa* and *Kalām*

- Majid Fakhry, "Philosophy and Theology: From the Eighth Century C.E. to the Present" in *The Oxford History of Islam*, 269-303.

W 10/12— Islamic Law: *sharī'a*, *usūl al-fiqh*, and *fiqh*

- Mohammad Hashim Kamali, "Law and Society: The Interplay of Revelation and Reason in the Shariah" in *The Oxford History of Islam*, 107-153.
- Berkey, *The Formation of Islam*, 179-223.

Week 6

M 10/17— Debating Epistemology: Reason, Revelation, and Religious Experience

- Abū Hāmid al-Ghazzālī, selections from *Deliverance from Error*.
- Averrōes (Ibn Rushd), *The Decisive Treatise*.

W 10/19—An Overview of Sufism: A Reality without a Name or a Name Devoid of Reality?

- Berkey, *Formation of Islam*, 152-158 and 231-257.
- Qur'an 18:59-82.

Week 7

Mid-term Recess

No class on 10/24 but have *Alchemy of Happiness* read by Wednesday 10/26

W 10/26—Journey through the Stations and States of the Sufi Path; Edifying the Masses and Disciplining Initiates through Aesthetic and Devotional Practices: Signs and Symbols on the Path

- The Alchemy of Happiness*
- A Selection of Sufi Poetry

Week 8

V. Tradition, Colonialism, and Modernity

M 10/31— Transmission of Knowledge as Religious Work: A View of Islamic Education, Past and Present I

- Berkey, *Formation of Islam*, 224-230.
- Mottahedeh, *Mantle of the Prophet*, 1st half

Take-home midterm handed out. Covers material to end of week 8.

W 11/2— Transmission of Knowledge as Religious Work: A View of Islamic Education, Past and Present II

- Mottahedeh, *Mantle of the Prophet*, 2nd half

Week 9

M 11/7— Participating in Modernity through Islam: A View from African America

- Curtis, *Black Muslim Religion in the Nation of Islam*, 1-34 and 68-93

Paper copy of Take-home midterm due “at the beginning” of class on Monday morning of 11/7.

W 11/9—Colonialism and the Emergence of Modern Muslim Societies

- S.V.R. Nasr, "European Colonialism and the Emergence of Modern Muslim States" in *The Oxford History of Islam*, 549-599.
- Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* (Note: This novel took me less than three hours to read as an undergraduate).

Week 10

M 11/14—Reforming Muslims and Renewing Islam for the Modern Era

- Andrew Rippin, "Describing Modernity" in *Muslims: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, 167-188.
- Selections from the writings of al-Tahtawi, al-Afghani, ‘Abduh, Gökalp, Ahmad Khan, and Iqbal in *Modernist Islam, 1840-1940: A Sourcebook*, ed. Charles Kurzman, 31-39, 103-110, 50-60, 192-197, and 291-313.

W 11/16—Participating in Modernity through Islam: An Islamist View

- Shepard, "Sayyid Qutb" in *The Islamic World*, ed. Andrew Rippin, 403-408.
- Qutb, *Milestones*.

Take-home final prompt handed out. Covers material from all 11 weeks of class.

VI. Post-Modernity, Feminism, and Islam

Thanksgiving Break Week

No class on 11/21 or 11/23

Week 11

M 11/28— Postmodern Approaches to Islam: Progressive Islamic Identity and Practice

-Farid Esack, "In Search of Progressive Islam beyond 9/11" in *Progressive Muslims*, 78-97.

-Ebrahim Moosa, "The Debts and Burdens of Critical Islam" in *Progressive Muslims*, 111-127.

M 11/30— Modern and Postmodern Issues in Feminism, Colonialism, and Islam

-Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*, 127-248.

Recommended: Sayyida Shaikh, "Transforming Feminism: Islam, Women and Gender Justice" in *Progressive Muslims*, 147-162.

Week 12

M 12/5—Reflection and Q&A; peer review of final papers

W 12/7—Reflection and Q&A; peer review of final papers

Week 12 Discussion Sections: Revisiting the Dilemma of Representing Islam: A Discussion

-Recommended: Talal Asad, *The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam*, 1-17

Take-home final, to be handed to me on 12/12, 9am-4pm, in my office.
