

The University of Texas at Austin
Department of Middle Eastern Studies
Term: Spring 2024
MWF: 11:00 AM -12:00 PM (BUR 108)
Office Hours: F 2-4; or by appointment
TA: Sezer Durak
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TA Office Hours: Th 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM (CAL 3) or by appointment.

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ISLAMIC ETHICS (SPRING 2021)

This course will engage in a close consideration and reading of classical and modern works on Islamic ethics. In so doing, we will examine them in light of modern ethical and legal contexts, most notably contemporary “virtue ethics” as well as current ethical theories of action such as deontology, consequentialism, and Religiously-Based Ethics, “Divine Command Theory”. Case studies will include debates about abortion, homosexuality, fundamentalism, war, organ donations, Euthanasia, and religious pluralism.

PREREQUISITES

None

GLOBAL CULTURES FLAG

This course carries the Global Cultures flag. Global Cultures courses are designed to increase your familiarity with cultural groups outside the United States. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one non-U.S. cultural group, past or present.

LEARNING GOALS

After completing this course successfully, students should be able to:

- Map out key theories and central texts in Islamic ethical thought
- Identify theorists and practitioners who contributed to development of Islamic ethics
- Situate debates and controversies in classical and contemporary Islamic ethical thought
- Identify the basic sources, tensions, transformation of Islamic ethics
- Elaborate on five challenges among contemporary Muslim ethicists

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Ali, Kecia. *Sexual Ethics and Islam: Feminist Reflections on Qur'an, Hadith and Jurisprudence*. (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006)

Brockopp, Jonathan E. *Islamic Ethics of Life: Abortion, War, and Euthanasia*. (University of South Carolina Press, 2004)

Hamdy, Sherine. *Our Bodies Belong to God* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012)

Naguib, Nefissa. *Nurturing Masculinities: Men, Food, and Family in Contemporary Egypt* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015)

RECOMMENDED NORMATIVE ISLAMIC ETHICS WORKS:

Imam Birgivi, *The Path of Muhammad: A Book on Islamic Morals & Ethics* (World Wisdom 2005).

Al-Sulami, Muhammad. *The Book of Sufi Chivalry: Lessons to a Son of the Moment* (Inner Tradition International, 1983)

RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

Jackson, Sherman A. *Islam and the Problem of Black Suffering* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009)

Al-Attar, Mariam. *Islamic Ethics: Divine Command Theory in Arabo-Islamic Thought* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

Hourani, George F. *Reason and Tradition in Islamic Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

Fakhry, Majid. *Ethical Theories in Islam* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991).

Vasalou, Sophia. *Moral Agents and Their Deserts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

RECOMMENDED ARTICLES:

Richard M. Frank, "Moral Obligation in Classical Muslim Theology," *Journal of Religious Ethics* v. 11/2 (Fall 1983): 204 – 223.

Charles E. Butterworth, "Ethics in Medieval Philosophy," *Journal of Religious Ethics* v. 11/2 (Fall 1983): 224 – 249.

Peter J. Awn, "The Ethical Concerns of Classical Sufism" *Journal of Religious Ethics* v. 11/2 (Fall 1983): 240-263.

Jackson, Sherman A. 'The Alchemy of Domination? Some Ash'arite Responses to Mu'tazilite Ethics', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31(2) (May 1999), 185-201.

GRADING:

Required Assignments

Attendance/Participation	10%
(3) Quizzes, 10% each	30%
(4) Journal Entries, 5% each	20%
Midterm Test	20%
Final Test	20%

ONE-TIME-ONLY TRIGGER WARNING:

Over the course of the semester, you will be encountering several topics that you may find challenging or difficult. I will encourage you to carefully look at the themes and subjects of the textbook to seek potential accommodation according to UT policy or determine whether this course is suitable for you.

DOCUMENTARY FILMS:

Strictly Soulmates - Muslim (Britishdocs: February 2012)

GRADING SCHEME

Total %	Letter Grade	Total %	Letter Grade
93–100	A	72-75.9	C
90–93.9	A-	69-71.9	C-
87–89.9	B+	66-68.9	D+
84–86.9	B	63-65.9	D
80–83.9	B-	60-62.9	D-
76–79.9	C+	<60	F

Note: Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 512-471-6259, <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>

ATTENDANCE POLICY: Attendance is required. Students will be expected to ask informed questions, and to respect each other, the professor, teaching assistant and guest lecturers. Students are encouraged to visit their professor during his office hours for informal conversation and/or help with the course.

Pop-up QUIZZES: will usually be on *Mondays*. These quizzes will be based on both class notes and readings. A failure to stay on top of course readings will result in poor grades. I will offer make- up quizzes and tests only for extenuating circumstances, at my discretion, if the reason is compelling and documented according to UT policy.

JOURNALS: Over the course of the semester, you must write *4 journal entries* (each entry is 5% of the overall 20% assigned to Journals). The entries are based on the readings assigned on the due date. Please upload your journal to canvas. Entries must be submitted by 11:59 PM on the due dates given in the syllabus. Late entries will be marked *2 points* down for *each* late submission.

In each entry, you must do the following:

- Summary of the reading's key issues and arguments
- Relate this reading to other conversations in class or approaches discussed in the reading.
- Offer your own reflections upon the reading.
- Entries should be 250-300 words in length.
- Style: Font: Times New Roman, 11pt; Margins: 1 inch; Line Spacing: Double.
- Each journal entry will be assigned *5 points*, equally distributed between the categories in the rubric below:

Deadlines for Journal Entries:

- § Journal Entry # 1 — January 29, 2024 @ 11:59 PM
- § Journal Entry # 2 — February 26, 2024 @ 11:59 PM
- § Journal Entry # 3 — March 25, 2024 @ 11:59 PM
- § Journal Entry # 4 — April 15, 2024 @ 11:59 PM

Generative AI

In this class, you may not use generative AI for any writing task, including without limitation for generating text or images, outlining, grammar checks, revision to achieve a certain word count, or revision of organization.

Rubric for Journals:

	A-B range (4-2)	C-D range (2-1)	F range (1-0)
Content (3 points)	Journal entry focuses on the important information in the reading. It details key issues and arguments of the readings	Journal entry provides a general idea about the reading but it does not address the arguments or the issue of the reading. It offers some summary of the readings	Journal entry does not engage with the reading and offers no relevant information
Reflection (1 points)	Journal entry offers a reflection on, and personalization of, the theories, concepts, and/or strategies presented in the reading materials to date. Viewpoints and interpretations are insightful and supported.	Journal entry offers a minimal reflection on, and personalization of, the theories, concepts, and/or strategies presented in the course materials to date. Viewpoints and interpretations are unsupported or supported with flawed arguments	Journal entry offers no reflection on, or personalization of, the theories, concepts, and/or strategies presented in the course materials to date. Viewpoints and interpretations are missing, inappropriate, and/or unsupported.
Grammar, Mechanics, Spelling, and Sentence Structure (1 points)	Journal is polished; maximum of <i>one</i> grammar or spelling error	Journal is adequate; maximum of <i>three</i> grammar or spelling errors.	Inadequate discussion; more than <i>five</i> spelling or grammar errors.

MID-TERM TEST – The format of this test will consist of identifications (terms and passages), and short essays. This will be administered on **Friday, March 1, 2024**.

FINAL TEST – The final test is accumulative. It will be on the last day of classes **Monday, April 29, 2024**.

COURSE WEBSITES

In this class I use Canvas – a Web-based course management system with password-protected access at <http://canvas.utexas.edu>– to distribute course materials, to communicate and collaborate online, etc. You can find support in using Canvas at the ITS Help Desk at (512) 475-9400, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., so plan accordingly.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

WEEK ONE

Wednesday, January 17

Introductions + Syllabus

Friday, January 19

A Kevin Reinhart, "Islamic Law as Islamic Ethics," 186-203. [CANVAS]

WEEK TWO

Monday, January 22

Al Khatib, M. (2018). "The Emerging Field of Ethics in the Context of Modern Egypt," *Ways of Knowing Muslim Cultures and Societies: Studies in Honour of Gudrun Krämer*. Gräf, B., Krawietz, B., & Amir-Moazami, S. (Eds.). Leiden: Brill. [CANVAS]

Wednesday, January 24

Ebrahim Moosa, "Muslim Ethics." In *Blackwell Companion to Religious Ethics*, ed. William Schweiker. Malden, MA: Blackwell 2005. [CANVAS]

Friday, January 26

Kecia Ali, *Sexual Ethics & Islam*, Marriage, Money, and Sex, 1-21.

WEEK THREE

Monday, January 29

Kecia Ali, *Sexual Ethics & Islam*, Lesser Evils: Divorce in Islamic Ethics, 24-36.

Journal Entry # 1

Wednesday, January 31

Kecia Ali, *Sexual Ethics & Islam*, "What your right hands possess": Slave Concubinage in Muslim Texts and Discourses, 39-52.

Friday, February 2

Kecia Ali, *Sexual Ethics & Islam*, Prohibited Acts and Forbidden Partners: Illicit Sex in Islamic Jurisprudence, 56-72.

WEEK FOUR

Monday, February 5

Kecia Ali, *Sexual Ethics & Islam* “Reduce but do not destroy”: Female “Circumcision” in Islamic Sources, 97-109.

Wednesday, February 7

Kecia Ali, *Sexual Ethics & Islam* “If you have touched women”: Female Bodies and Male Agency in the Qur’an, 112-131.

Friday, February 9

Kecia Ali, *Sexual Ethics & Islam*, The Prophet Muhammad, his Beloved Aishah, and Modern Muslim Sensibilities, 135-147.

Toward an Islamic Ethics of Sex, 151-158.

WEEK FIVE

Monday, February 12

Jonathan Brockopp, *Islamic Ethics of Life: Abortion, War, and Euthanasia*

Introduction: Taking Life and Saving Life (1-20)

Wednesday, February 14

Jonathan Brockopp, *Islamic Ethics of Life: Abortion, War, and Euthanasia*
Abortion (21-50)

Recommended* Al Khatib, M. “Abortion in the *Hanbali* School of Jurisprudence: A Systematic Ethical Approach,” in *Abortion Global Positions and Practices, Religious and Legal Perspectives*. Alireza Bagheri (ed.) (Springer, 2021)

Friday, February 16

Jonathan Brockopp, *Islamic Ethics of Life: Abortion, War, and Euthanasia* *Abortion* (51-96)

WEEK SIX

Monday, February 19

Jonathan Brockopp, *Islamic Ethics of Life: Abortion, War, and Euthanasia War* (103-128)

Wednesday, February 21

Jonathan Brockopp, *Islamic Ethics of Life: Abortion, War, and Euthanasia War* (129- 172)

Friday, February 23

Jonathan Brockopp, *Islamic Ethics of Life: Abortion, War, and Euthanasia Euthanasia* (173-213)

WEEK SEVEN

Monday, February 26

Jonathan Brockopp, *Islamic Ethics of Life: Abortion, War, and Euthanasia Afterword* (214-220)

Journal Entry # 2

Wednesday, February 28

Documentary: Strictly Soulmates - Muslim (Britishdocs: February 2012)

Friday, March 1

Midterm Test

WEEK EIGHT

Monday, March 4

Celene Ibrahim, *Women and Gender in the Qur'an*, Introduction, 1-10.

Wednesday, March 6

Celene Ibrahim, *Women and Gender in the Qur'an*, Female Sex and Sexuality, 19-33.

Friday, March 8

Celene Ibrahim, *Women and Gender in the Qur'an*, Female Sex and Sexuality, 34-46.

SPRING BREAK:

MARCH 11-16

WEEK NINE

Monday, March 18

Sherine Hamdy, *Our Bodies Belong to God*.

Read: Bioethics Rebound

Wednesday, March 20

Sherine Hamdy, *Our Bodies Belong to God*.

Read: Egypt's Crisis of Authority

Friday, March 22

Sherine Hamdy, *Our Bodies Belong to God*

Read: Defining Death: When the Experts Disagree

WEEK TEN

Monday March 25

Sherine Hamdy, *Our Bodies Belong to God*

Read: From Secret to Scandal; Shaykh of the People

Journal Entry # 3

Wednesday, March 27

Sherine Hamdy, *Our Bodies Belong to God*

Read: Shaykh of the People: Genealogy of an Utterance

Friday, March 29

Sherine Hamdy, *Our Bodies Belong to God*

Read: Transplanting God's Property; Only One Kidney to Give

WEEK ELEVEN

Monday, April 1

Sherine Hamdy, *Our Bodies Belong to God*

Read: Only One Kidney to Give: Ethics and Risk

Wednesday, April 3

Sherine Hamdy, *Our Bodies Belong to God*

Read: Principles We Can't Afford? Ethics and Pragmatism in Kidney Sales

Friday, April 5

Sherine Hamdy, *Our Bodies Belong to God*

Read: Conclusions: Where Cyborgs Meet God

WEEK TWELVE

Monday, April 8

Asad, Talal. *On Suicide Bombing* (Columbia University Press)
Introduction + Terrorism (1-38)

Wednesday, April 10

Asad, Talal. *On Suicide Bombing* (Columbia University Press)
Suicide Terrorism (39- 64)

Friday, April 12

Asad, Talal. *On Suicide Bombing* (Columbia University Press)
Horror at Suicide Terrorism (65-92)

WEEK THIRTEEN

Monday, April 15

Gade, Anna. *Muslim Environmentalisms: Religious and Social Foundations* (selections):

Read: Islam and the Environment: Pluralism and Development (Ch. 2, p. 37-77)

Journal Entry # 4

Wednesday, April 17

Gade, Anna. *Muslim Environmentalisms: Religious and Social Foundations*

Read: A Qur'anic Environment: Relating Creatures and Resources (Ch. 3, p. 78-117)

Friday, April 19

Gade, Anna. *Muslim Environmentalisms: Religious and Social Foundations*

Read: Roots and Branches of Islamic Environmental Justice, Law, and Ethics (Ch. 4, p. 118-157)

WEEK FOURTEEN

Monday, April 22

Gade, Anna. *Muslim Environmentalisms: Religious and Social Foundations*

Read: Islamic Humanities: Apprehending Symbol, Expression, and Natural Science (Ch. 5, p. 158-198)

Wednesday, April 24

Gade, Anna. *Muslim Environmentalisms: Religious and Social Foundations*

Read: Muslim Environmentalism as Religious Practice: Accounts of the Unseen (Ch. 6, p.199-242)

Friday, April 26

Negotiating Islamic Ethics: Class Activity

Monday, April 29

LAST DAY OF CLASS

FINAL TEST



COURSE POLICIES

Use of Class Materials:

The materials used in this class are copyright protected works. Any unauthorized copying of the class materials is a violation of federal law and may result in disciplinary actions being taken against the student. Additionally, the sharing of class materials without the specific, express approval of the instructor may be a violation of the University's Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty, which could result in further disciplinary action. Such violations include, among other things, uploading class materials to websites for the purpose of sharing those materials with other current or future students.

University Policy on Religious Holidays:

A student who misses classes or other required assignment for the observance of a religious holy day should inform the instructor as far in advance of the absence as possible (at least **fourteen days** in advance), so that arrangements can be made to complete an assignment within a reasonable time after the absence.

Extension Policy:

Extensions on papers will only be granted for documented, exigent circumstances.

Accessible Education:

The University of Texas at Austin provides, upon request, appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. You will need to provide documentation to the Dean of Student's Office so that the most appropriate accommodations can be determined. Specialized services are available on campus through Services for Students with Disabilities (SSB 4.104, 512-471-6259). Any student who requires special accommodations must obtain a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (512-471-6259 voice or 512-471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). Present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed. The student should remind the

professor of any testing accommodations no later than five business days before an exam. For more information, visit <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>

Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty:

“The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community” (University Honor Code). “As a student of The University of Texas at Austin, I shall abide by the core values of the University and uphold academic integrity” (New Student Honor Code). Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty of plagiarism are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information please visit the Student Judicial Services Web site: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs>.

E-mail and this Course:

Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, you are responsible for reading your email for university and course-related information and announcements. You are responsible for keeping the university informed about changes to your e-mail address. You should check your e-mail regularly and frequently to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-critical. University policy suggests that students should check e-mail at a minimum of twice per week. You can find UT Austin’s policies and instructions for updating your e-mail address at www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php.

Drop Dates:

Please consult the registrar’s website for important information on drop dates.

Resources for Life and Learning at UT Austin:

The University of Texas has numerous resources for students to provide assistance and support for your learning. They include:

- Sanger Learning and Career Center: <http://lifelearning.utexas.edu/>
- Undergraduate Writing Center: <http://uwc.utexas.edu/>
- Counseling & Mental Health Center: <http://cmhc.utexas.edu/>