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Fall 2019, W 3-6 pm,

HISTORY OF ISLAM IN THE UNITED STATES, HIS 350R-22, ISL 372, RS 346,
 AMS 346

Course Description

This course is intended to do three things: provide a brief introduction to Islam for those unfamiliar with the religion and its early history; define the role of Islam and early American views of Muslims in the founding history of this country; and introduce students to major issues concerning contemporary American Muslims. The course surveys the presence of Islam in the United States from the colonial era to the twenty-first century through the use of historical documents and contemporary media, with a special focus on the politics of religion and race.

The course is divided into three sections. The first explores the origins of Islam through primary textual examples. The second section focuses on early American views of Islam in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with an emphasis on the earliest Muslims in the United States. The final section of the course analyzes the diversity of the contemporary American Muslim population, together with the politics surrounding notions of race, gender, immigration, and citizenship. Special emphasis placed on the challenges faced by young American Muslims in the twenty-first century. The course interrogates the question of whether one can be both American and Muslim in the 21st-century U.S.

Objectives and Academic Flags

This course may be used to fulfill three hours of the U.S. history component of the university core curriculum. The course carries 3 University-approved “Flags”: Cultural Diversity (CD), Independent Inquiry (II), and Writing (WR). The aim of courses with a CD flag is to “increase your familiarity with the variety and richness of American cultural experience as it applies to marginalized communities, their history, beliefs, and practices.” The course is designated also as a Writing Flag, which features assignments designed to improve written communication. The Independent Inquiry Flag focuses on communication skills, critical thinking skills, personal responsibility, and social responsibility.

Required Readings

Moustafa Bayoumi, *How Does It Feel To Be a Problem? Being Young and Arab in America* (2008). **You will need a copy of this book for in-class work and an essay.**
 Jonathan Brown, *Muhammad: A Very Short Introduction* (2011) [**posted on Canvas**]
 Edward E. Curtis, IV, *Muslims in America: A Short History* (2009)
 Kambiz GhaneaBassiri, *A History of Islam in America* (2010)
 Shabana Mir, *Muslim American Women on Campus: Undergraduate Social Life and Identity* (2014). **You will need a copy of this book for in-class work and an essay.**

All other readings (including Brown book) posted on Canvas Website.

All books on sale at the University Co-op (cheaper online sellers), and all books on reserve at PCL.

Grading/Requirements: Late Assignments Will Incur Grade Penalties

Journal Entries: 10%, assigned over the semester and *due in class. No late work accepted.*

Attendance Required/Class participation -unexcused absences result in deduction of points from the final grade.

18 September: Quiz 10%

25 September, Timeline of Islam in Early America, 5%, due in class

2 October: First Essay 20% due in class

6 November: Second Essay, 20 %, due in class

13 November: First draft of biography 5%, due in class; returned 20 November

20 November and 4 December, Oral presentations of biographies, 10%

4 December, final draft of biography 10% and final essay due in class, 10%

*For this class, you **must** buy a notebook of lined paper 8 x 11 inches for taking notes.

No computers or electronic devices of any kind will be permitted in this class, *unless you are asked specifically to use them.*

Required Journal assignments to pass in in class should be typed in 12-point-font and turned in when required as per the syllabus.

***Students should also bring readings as assigned for discussion on the day specified in the syllabus.**

Final Grade Distribution (A 94-100), A-(90-93), B+ (87-89), B (83-86), B- (80-82), C+ (77-79), C (73-76), C- (70-72), D+ (67-69), D (63-66), D- (60-62), F Below 60.

Grades not posted on Canvas.

Religious observances are always understood as excused absences, but the instructor must be informed 14 days prior, as per UT policy.

Services for Students with Disabilities 471-6259

<http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/> should be contacted along with the instructor directly if special arrangements are necessary.

The UT Honor Code is enforced. Do not plagiarize. Strict UT penalties apply for academic dishonesty: <http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/gi09-10/ch01/index.html>

If you become ill or stressed, consider 24/7 Nurse Advice: 512-475-6877; the Health Center https://portal.uhs.utexas.edu/login_directory.aspx, or counseling available 24 hours: 512-471-2255.

This course content may provoke heated disagreement. Students are required to display respect for the views of their classmates during class discussion. One of the aims of this course is to foster open, civil, and scholarly exchange, despite differences. In other words, we will work on skills that employ listening and foster the exchange of ideas, striving for dialog in most instances, not debate.

I. ISLAM: ORIGINS

Week 1 August 28: Class Objectives/Assignments

Handout: “Comparison of dialogue and debate.” Professor’s expectations for students and their responsibilities.

Week 2 September 4: Sources of the Faith: The Prophet and His Family

Readings

Handout: Verses of the Qur’an.

Canvas: Brown, *Muhammad*. (all).

Canvas: McAuliffe, “Fatima,” Spellberg, “‘A’isha,” and Stowasser, “Khadija.”

Canvas: Amartya Sen, “Civilizational Imprisonments,” and Williams, *Word of Islam*, 1-35 (internal 13-39).

***Journal Assignment #1 due in class:** In two paragraphs, describe the main argument of “Civilizational Imprisonments” and explain how it might apply to this course. From the Williams reading, in one paragraph, describe the importance of prophets in Islam. Select one quotation from Brown’s book and be prepared to explain why you think it worthy of class discussion.

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Week 3 September 11: Conquest and the People of the Book, Muslim Women in History, Then and Now; 9/11 American Muslim Responses

Bring your computers to class

Readings/Books: Curtis, “Muslims after 9/11,” 97-118, pay attention to 117-118, “Fatwa against Terrorism.” Xerox and bring to class.

GhaneaBassiri, 1-8.

Canvas: Stowasser, “Khadija,” and Khan, “Of Cyber Muslimahs: Wives of the Prophet and Muslim Women in the Digital Age,” from Khan, *Muhammad in the Digital Age* (2015), 108-128.

Canvas: Hadia Mubarak, “Crossroads,” 65-70; Naheed Hamid, “Hyphenated Identity,” 126-130; Zainab Alwan, “Shock and Awe,” 184-189, from Maria M. Ebrahimji & Zahra T. Suratwala, *I Speak for Myself: American Women on Being Muslim* (2011).

****Journal Assignment #2 due in class:** Read about the Prophet’s wife Khadija in Stowasser, then explain in a paragraph how she is depicted on the Web by the anonymous “Cyber Muslimahs,” (female Muslims) featured in Khan’s article.

Briefly (one paragraph each), describe how the essays by Mubarak, Hamid, and Alwan (above on Canvas) offer insight into American Muslim reaction to the tragic attacks of 9/11/2001.

On your computers, in class, we will explore this Web Site, Women’s Islamic Initiative in Spirituality and Equality: <https://www.wisemuslimwomen.org/>

Look for mention of historical Muslim women (Khadija or ‘A’isha or Fatima) on https://twitter.com/WISE_Leaders How are these historical figures described? Find and compare the objectives of the group’s “Congressional Briefing.” Who was there? What were the objectives? <https://www.wisemuslimwomen.org/>

Week 4 September 18: Muslim Views of Non-Muslims, the Crusades, and European Depictions of Muslims

Quiz

Canvas: Usamah ibn Munqidh, “An Appreciation of the Frankish Character,” excerpt from his autobiography, *An Arab-Syrian Gentleman and Warrior in the Era of the Crusades*, trans. Hitti (1929).

Canvas: Williams, *Word of Islam*, marked for this date, pp. 36 to end.

Canvas: “Pact of Umar,” and “How the Jizya Is To Be Collected”

*****Journal Assignment # 3 due in class:** Explain in two paragraphs the importance of the “Pact” and the “Jizya” as historical documents. What do they reveal about Muslim interactions with non-Muslims? Then, from the perspective of the Muslim author, describe who the “Franks” are and what he defines as “the Frankish Character.” Two paragraphs.

Canvas: Images of the “Pope and Turk” and “Mahomet.” Prepare to discuss in class.

In addition, in class we will consider other European visual depictions of Muslims from the medieval and early modern era.

II. ISLAM IN FOUNDING AMERICAN HISTORY

Week 5 September 25: The Qur’an in America

Field Trip to the Harry Ransom Center at 3:30. We leave from class.

Timeline of Islam in early America due, along with Journal assignment

Canvas: Spellberg, “What Thomas Jefferson Learned from His Qur’an – and Didn’t, [1765-1786],” 81-123, from *Thomas Jefferson’s Qur’an: Islam and the Founders* (2013).

Read online, excerpts from the first English Qur’an of 1649, *The Alcoran of Mahomet*: <https://archive.org/stream/alcoranofmahomet00dury#page/n3/mode/2up> Read these sections: “The Translator to the Christian Reader,” “A Summary of the Religion of the Turks,” (both before the Qur’an translation), and on p. 395, after the translation at the very end of the text, “The Life and Death of Mahomet,” and “A Needful Caveat or Admonition to the Reader.

******Journal Assignment #4 due in class.** Based on Spellberg’s book, create a typed timeline of 20 important events/documents/actions concerning Islam and Muslims in the U.S. Of these, list and be prepared to defend what you consider to be the top 3 dates/events in the chapter. Second, from the online 1649 Qur’an translation, consider what 3 factual errors exist in the presentation of the Prophet’s life and Islam. Why is there a “caveat” needed by the translator for the reader? (Two paragraphs)

First Essay Assigned

Week 6 October 2: Early American Debates about a “Religious Test” in the Constitution - and Muslims as Future Federal Office Holders, President Included

First Essay Due. Bring these documents on Canvas to class.

Canvas: Documents for essay: U.S. Constitution Article 6, clause 3; and Elliot’s *Debates*, North Carolina state constitutional ratification convention. Reading begins on Wednesday July 30, 1788, pp. 191-215.

Week 7 October 9: Islam, Race, and Slavery

Readings/Books: Curtis, ix-24; GhaneaBassiri, 9-94

BRING YOUR COMPUTR TO CLASS.

Canvas: “Slaves and Slavery,” [in Islam], Brockopp, *Encyclopaedia of the Qur’an*, vol. 5: 56-60; Benjamin Franklin, “Islamic Parody on Slavery,” (1790).

Canvas: “The Life of Omar ibn Said, Written by Himself (1831)” from *The Life of Omar ibn Said*, trans. Alrries (2011), roughly 18 pages.

******* Journal Assignment # 5 due in class:** Write a brief life story, based on Omar ibn Said’s autobiography. Explain why you think this account should be included in an American history class, or not. Why do you think there are no biographies of African Muslim slave women? Three paragraphs total.

Analyze how Benjamin Franklin uses Islam to push for the abolition of slavery in the U.S. in 1790. Provide in your journal examples of what Franklin correctly understood about Islam and what, if anything, he got wrong. What is the difference, if any, between slavery in the Islamic world (refer to Brockopp article above) and the U.S. in 1790?

Omar ibn Said’s life and papers were put online at the Library of Congress this year. They include other accounts by Muslim slaves:

<https://www.loc.gov/item/prn-19-004/only-known-surviving-muslim-american-slave-autobiography-goes-online-at-the-library-of-congress/2019-01-15/> The slave narratives and writings are at: [loc.gov/collections/omar-ibn-said-collection/about-this-collection/](https://www.loc.gov/collections/omar-ibn-said-collection/about-this-collection/).

We will attempt to find evidence for the lives of female Muslims enslaved in North America through online database searches in class.

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III. ISLAM IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICA

Week 8 October 16: Race, Religion, and Immigration to the U.S.

Readings: Curtis : “The First American Converts to Islam,” 25-46; “Twentieth-Century Muslim Immigrants; From the Melting Pot to the Cold War,” 47-71. GhaneaBassiri, 95-271.

CANVAS: Helen Samhan, “Not Quite White: Race Classification and the Arab-American Experience,” *Arabs in America: Building a New Future*, ed. Michael Suleiman (1999), 209-226.

CANVAS: “Eligibility of Arabs to Naturalization,” *Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), Monthly*, October 1943, pp. 12-16.

Online: Reports of the Immigration Commission (1911), *Dictionary of Races or Peoples* (1911): <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.b3425502&view=1up&seq=17>

*******Journal Assignment #6 due in class:** What is the *Dictionary of Races or Peoples*? Who are its authors? Who paid for its creation? What is its aim? (The link will take you to a table on p. 5 that classifies hierarchies of “races and peoples.”) What can be learned about the number of racial systems extant for ordering people in the U.S. from this chart? How might this aid in determining policies for U.S. immigration – in 1911? Read the introduction through page 5. Answer the previous questions in two paragraphs.

Then try typing in the search box the words: “Arab,” “Arabian,” “Moslem,” and “Jew,” or “Hebrew.” How many references are there for each term – and which has the most numerous descriptions? How are Arab/Arabian and Hebrew/Jew related, if at all? In

the Samhan article, why and when are Arabs [are all Arabs Muslim?] described as not “white”?

Read the Immigration and Naturalization Service statement of 1943 on “Eligibility of Arabs to Naturalization.” **XEROX and bring to class.** Why are Arabs/Muslims eligible for citizenship? In two paragraphs, what is the argument made by the INS for their new policy of inclusion as future citizens?

Week 9 October 23: Anti-Mosque, Anti-Sharia Resistance to the Practice of Islam
Assignment of Second Essay.

BRING YOUR COMPUTER/Bring the Bayoumi book to class.

Reading: Curtis: 72-96; GhaneaBassiri, 272-326. Bayoumi, *How Does It Feel to Be a Problem?* All.

Canvas: Marzouki, Mosque Controversies: Moral Offense and Religious Liberty,”69-105, and “The Anti-Sharia Movment,” 106-137,” chapters from *Islam, An American Religion* (2017), esp 120-123 on “Save our State [Oklahoma state constitutional amendment banning “Sharia.”].

Canvas: “Oklahoma Sharia Law Save our State Amendment_Federal Court Ruling against the State of Oklahoma,” January 10, 2012.”

Be prepared to write a response to questions about individuals in Bayoumi’s book to be discussed in groups.

Week 10 October 30: To Be Young and Muslim in 21st-Century America

BRING YOUR COMPUTER/Bayoumi book to class. Group work on this book continues.

Biography essay assigned; individuals meet with Dr. Spellberg to discuss topics.

Readings: Curtis, “Chronology,” 119-122.

Group work on Bayoumi continues and reports by groups given.

*******Journal assignment #7 due in class:** Find short films by “Muslim Youth Voices,” at link: <https://worldchannel.org/show/muslim-youth-voices/>

Watch and write 2-3 sentences about your reaction/feeling/questions about the following films: “Wings of Freedom”(5:20), by Jannah Sellers, Sumaya Mahmoud (Fremont, CA); “Screened,” (2:36) by Iqbal Maxamed (Minneapolis); “BFF?” (1:41), by Aisha Aden (Minneapolis); “Black Muslim Woman,” (1:48), by Mikel Aki’leh (New York); “Fair and Lovely,” (2:53), Jensine Raihan (New York); “Identity Crisis,” (3:14), Abdirahman Aden and Yousif Ibrahim (Portland, OR); “Graduation,” (2:43) by Mahya Shakibnia-Shirazi (Portland,OR); “Comfort-Ability,” (6:05), by Primi Akhtar (New York); “Long Live the Queen,” (3:39), by Aaishah Ale-rasool (Plano, Texas); “The Apple,” (2:36), by Zara Shah (Plano, Texas); “Syrian Plight,” (3:43) by Dunya Khalil (New York). **Total/viewing listening c. 30 minutes.**

Once you’ve seen all of these, choose one additional film not on the list above. Why do you think it’s worth sharing with the class – and explain why in a paragraph. What is the benefit of these films to our class – and to our understanding of American Muslim youth?

Week 11 November 6: What is Islamophobia? Incidents in the Nation and Texas

Second Essay Due

Readings: GhaneaBassiri, 327-381.

Canvas: Marzouki, “The Face of Anti-Muslim Populism,” 138-167.

Online: Leila Fadel, May 15, 2019, “American Muslims in Public Life Say They Face Outsize Scrutiny,” “<https://www.npr.org/2019/05/15/722158148/american-muslims-in-public-life-say-they-face-outsized-scrutiny>

<https://diversityandcivillife.org/research/islamophobia-in-texas/>; (access and read this report); and this article: <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2016/08/texas-muslims-threatened-increasing-islamophobia-160819195741303.html>

*******Journal Assignment #8 due in class.**

Define what “populism” is as an anti-Muslim political force, according to Marzouki in one paragraph. Then, focus on GhaneaBassiri’s “Epilogue,” 379-381. Do you agree with the author that “. . . Muslims in America occupy some sort of liminal space as semi-civilized, not-quite-black, not-quite-white, not-quite-American, not-quite-Muslim individuals”? (380). What does “liminal” mean, according to GhaneaBassiri? Where does this concept come from? Do you agree with this conclusion to his study: “In their history, American Muslims repeatedly, and under varying circumstances, have related Islam and America to one another successfully. And they have done so because both Islam and America (as a national identity) have been diverse and polysemous. American Muslim experiences have spoken out of a poly-ethnic world in a polysemous tongue, one which we have yet to comprehend.” (380-381) Respond in two paragraphs.

Then, define “Islamophobia” in one paragraph, based on the online readings above. Search the Web for one Texas incident in 2018-2019 which might be defined as Islamophobic. It should be found in a reputable news source. Bring that example in to share with the class.

Week 12 November 13: Muslim Life on Campus and Islam in Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Comics

First draft of biography essay due

BRING YOUR COMPUTER AND THE MIR BOOK TO CLASS

Reading: Mir, *Muslim Women on Campus: Undergraduate Social Life and Identity* (all).

Canvas: “The Influence of Muslims and Islam in Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Comics,” pp. 323-348. (Recommended, not required. Music fans may wish to explore the impact of Islam on Hip Hop in America, for example in Su’ad Abdul Khabeer, *Muslim Cool: Race, Religion and Hip Hop in the United States* (2016), a study based in Chicago, Illinois; or Hisham Aidi, *Rebel Music: Race, Empire and the New Muslim Youth Culture* (2014).)

*******Journal Assignment #9 due in class: Based on the**

Hankins/Thornton article, which aspect of Muslim/Islamic influence in popular literature surprised you the most? Two sentences. Is there such a thing as a female and Muslim superhero in comics? Search the Web to find the answer and record your findings briefly.

Second, from the Mir book, focus on one named interview subject and find out what she says in each of the 3 core chapters: chapter 3 (alcohol); chapter 4 (dress); chapter 5 (dating). Link up the quotations of this female figure in each of the three sections. Be prepared to discuss variations of these women’s views among those interviewed in the book in groups. (The list of those college women interviewed with

their names is in the Appendix 187-188.) Are they real names? What does the author say about her methodology/choices of interviewees? What is “Orientalism”? What is “stigma”? Why are these terms methodologically important to the author, Dr. Mir?

In class group work on final essay, focused on *Muslim American Women on Campus*.

Finally, let’s not forget the American Muslim men. Explore this link:
<https://www.patheos.com/blogs/loveinshallah/2014/01/23/what-do-you-think-of-when-you-hear-the-words-muslim-man/>

Please comment on Mohammed Shamma’s description of growing up in Houston, Texas, in 2 sentences... He’s written an article for this important collection about American Muslim men, titled: *Salaam, Love! American Muslim Men on Love, Sex & Intimacy* (2014). Read his 2014 interview, “Salaam, Mohammed Shamma!” here:

<https://www.patheos.com/blogs/loveinshallah/2014/01/27/salaam-mohammed-shamma/>

See his vimeo promo for this collection of essays here:

<https://www.patheos.com/blogs/loveinshallah/2014/01/23/what-do-you-think-of-when-you-hear-the-words-muslim-man/>

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Week 13 November 20: Student Presentations of Biographies

Drafts of biography essay returned to students with comments

Week 14 November 27 NO CLASS THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Week 15: December 4: Last Class Day: Student Presentations of Biographies Continue

Final Biography Essay and Final Essay on “Muslim American Women on Campus” due in class