HRS 145 – Spring 2015

Contact Info:
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Office Hours: Tuesdays 1-4PM or by appointment

Course Info:
MW: 1:30-2:45PM
Room: MND1024

Introduction to Islamic Culture

Catalogue Course Description: This course is a survey of the expression of Islamic values in religious practice, philosophy, theology, art, architecture, music, and literature in different geographic locations and historical periods.

Further Details: Islamic history spans more than 1400 years, has changed and adapted to various contexts, and now boasts over 1.6 billion followers; it is simultaneously a religion, a culture, and a civilization. Our goal is to examine what “culture” and more specifically “Islamic culture” means by understanding the diverse social, regional, and political environments in which Muslims have lived.

Class Structure:

Although this is primarily a lecture course, we will do our best to include discussion and group work. Lecture will focus on subject matter relevant to the reading, filling in gaps and adding sources as necessary. On occasion I will bring in audio or video to augment our discussion. If there are pressing questions, I encourage you to ask them, and I will do my best to address and clarify them during the course of class.

Goals of Class Discussions:

Class is an important opportunity to discuss the week’s themes and readings. It is a chance for us to think critically and question some of our own assumptions. We will aim at a thoughtful and thought-provoking discussion. As we go through the semester I want you to develop a sense of responsibility for class discussion, making sure it is robust, on-topic and well thought out. We will cover a lot of material each week and you should approach the readings with the goal of allowing certain sources to speak to you, challenge you, and inspire further reflection. Our discussions will be shaped, to a significant degree by the questions and ideas you bring to class. While we will generally stick to the course outline, I may change readings or subject matter to better address your concerns or interests.
Readings:

On average you will have 80 pages of reading per week. I have done my best to provide you with texts that tell a story, while at the same time building an understanding of Islam and the lives of Muslims. The relaying of stories is an important part of Islam, and I hope that we can replicate some of that experience through the texts I have chosen. Although a majority of our reading will be from secondary sources, we will read primary source material in translation; Qur’an, Hadith (traditions of the prophet), and stories of the prophet. Since translations are flawed recreations, especially in the case of the Qur’an, I will supply you with a variety of translation styles, so as to develop your understanding of the complexities involved.

While reading an assignment, keep asking: What does the author mean by that, Why should I believe that, so what?

These are the same questions that we will be asking in class, and that I will ask when reading your work. When you find something in the readings that seems vulnerable to criticism, try to formulate the criticism precisely, but then try to imagine how the author might want to respond to your question or objection.

** Please be aware that the reading for any given week may change, and I will inform you of these changes in advance.

Class Requirements & Grading:

Participation: Although not assigned percentage, participation is an important part of your grade. In a class this size it is difficult to evaluate participation and so your grade will only be affected by extreme absence (dropping your grade as much as a + or - ). Participation, can also positively affect your grade. In this sense participation, is actively and thoughtfully contributing to the conversation, as well as actively listening and respecting your classmates’ input. Articulating ideas through participation will also help you to formulate ideas, take exams, and write your essays; as well as reinforce the lectures and reading material.

Primary source reading group directed question (2 x 5%; 10% total): Twice during the semester each student will formulate a question based on primary source readings and write up a paragraph long explanation of the question (no need to exceed 250 words). These questions will be used to lead small group discussions. Full assignment due to me by 7PM the day before the class session, questions to be distributed to group members by 7PM as well.

Midterm 20% (February 23): This is an in-class exam consisting of 3 long essays. Questions will be provided before the exam. Green books required.
Take home Essay on *The Story of Layla & Majnun* 20% (March 15): This is a 3-4 page guided take home essay based upon your reading of *The Story of Layla & Majnun* – Prompt questions to be provided. **The review is due by the end of the day on Sunday, March 15 via email.** Late Reviews: Essays turned in after the deadline will lose 1/3 grade (A to A-; A- to B+; B+ to B, etc.) for each 24-hour period late up until the end of the second day. Papers turned in any time after the end of the second day will lose 1 full letter grade (A to B; A- to B-, etc.)

Take home Essay on *Persepolis* 20% (April 19): This is a 3-4 page guided take home essay based upon your reading of *Persepolis* – Prompt questions to be provided. **The review is due by the end of the day on Sunday, April 19 via email.** Late Reviews: Essays turned in after the deadline will lose 1/3 grade (A to A-; A- to B+; B+ to B, etc.) for each 24-hour period late up until the end of the second day. Papers turned in any time after the end of the second day will lose 1 full letter grade (A to B; A- to B-, etc.)

Final 30% (May 18): The final exam will be cumulative and include short and long essays. Study guide will be provided. The exam date is **Monday, May 18 from 12:45-2:45 (Green Books Required).**

**Explanation of Grading:** All assignments and exams will be given letter grades. The following, partially taken from the CSUS website ([http://catalog.csus.edu/12-14/first%20100%20pages/academicpolicies.html](http://catalog.csus.edu/12-14/first%20100%20pages/academicpolicies.html)), helps to define what each letter means:

- **A - Excellent** achievement of the course objectives. In addition to being clearly and significantly above the requirements, work exhibited is of an independent, creative, and contributory nature.
- **B – Very Good** achievement of the course objectives. The performance is clearly and significantly above the satisfactory fulfillment of course requirements.
- **C - Satisfactory** achievement of the course objectives. A C shows evidence of effort, but only modest success in meeting the course expectations.
- **D - Unsatisfactory** achievement of course objectives, yet achievement of a sufficient proportion of the objectives so that it is not necessary to repeat the course unless required to do so by the academic department. A D is minimally acceptable in the sense that it barely counts as a completion
- **F - Unsatisfactory** achievement of course objectives to an extent that the student must repeat the course to receive credit.
- **Plus** - Shows effort and achievement that goes somewhat beyond the standards expressed above for each letter category.
- **Minus** - Shows effort and achievement that is somewhat below the standards expressed for each letter category.

**Statement on Academic Integrity**
Plagiarism and academic dishonesty constitute serious offenses that undermine your education and violate Sacramento State’s policy on academic integrity and may result in
penalties ranging from a lowered grade to course failure. All work submitted in this class must be your own, and must be completed specifically for this class. You may not turn in work previously written for another class. Any use of another’s work without proper attribution constitutes plagiarism. Plagiarism ranges from copying someone else’s work word for word, to rewriting someone else’s work with only minor word changes (mosaic plagiarism), to summarizing work without acknowledging the source. For more information see the library’s page on plagiarism: (http://library.csus.edu/content2.asp?pageID=353)

**Expectations:**

**Attendance:** I will not be taking attendance, but excessive lateness and/or absence will negatively affect your performance on exams as well as the participation component of your grade.

**Preparation:** Being prepared means you have read and taken notes on all of the week’s required reading assignments, have arrived to class with all of the relevant texts, and have brought questions and ideas to class that are important to you, prepared to discuss a range of issues. On occasion I will give you a list of “terms to define/identify” before a week’s readings. You should come to class aware of these definitions, having used your class texts and outside materials if necessary.

**Laptops & Cell Phones:** Laptops and cell phones are not allowed during class. We should be listening and commenting, keeping a good focus on the direction of the conversation. As we all know, laptops and cell phones can be a serious means of distraction for you and those around you.

**Office Hours:** Outside of our weekly class sessions, I will be available to address any questions, concerns or suggestions you have by e-mail and during office hours (it is best to make an appointment). I will do my best to respond to your e-mails within 24 hours on weekdays. I will typically respond to weekend emails on Mondays. I encourage you to meet with me to discuss questions you might have about the course material or your broader interests.

**Accommodations for Recognized Disabilities:** I will make every effort to accommodate your needs as they apply to the above policies. Please come see me in the event that you will need special accommodation so that we can figure out an acceptable solution.

I’m looking forward to a rich and exciting semester!
Books:


Through short chapters this text will provide explanation and elaboration on the themes we will deal with throughout the semester. About the editors: **Roger Allen** (top) was Professor of Arabic and Comparative Literature in the Department of Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations at the University of Pennsylvania for 43 years. From 2009-2010 he served as president of the Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA). **Shawkat M. Toorawa** (bottom) is Associate Professor of Arabic Literature and Islamic Studies at Cornell University.


*Layla wa Majnun* written in the twelfth century by the Persian poet and thinker Nizami is a Persian adaptation of an short poem of Arabic origin. Nizami’s version consists of 4,600 distiches (a pair of verse lines) and retells the story of two ill-fated lovers, Layla and Majnun. For Sufis the story is an allegory of mystical love. **Nizami Ganjavi** (1141 to 1209), top, is formally known as *Jamal ad-Dīn Abū Muhammad Ilyās ibn-Yūsuf ibn-Zakkī*. Nizami was primarily a poet, but was also well versed in mysticism and scholarship, including Qur’an, philosophy, law, medicine, and Iranian and Islamic history, which he bridged culturally and civilizationally. **Rudolf Gelpke** (bottom) (1928-1972) was an Islamic scholar of Swiss nationality. After receiving his doctorate in Islamic studies from the University of Basel in 1957, Gelpke held positions at the University of Teheran and the University of Bern, and was for a year (September 1962 to May 1963) an Associate Professor at UCLA.

This is a collection of primary source materials from subjects as varied as the Qur’an, Hadith, ritual, and law. Although not comprehensive it serves as a useful complement to secondary sources. Jan Knappert (1927-2005), not pictured here, was lecturer of Bantu Languages at the School of Oriental and African Studies and University of Louvain, Belgium, specializing in Swahili traditional and religious literature. He also held a degree in Sanskrit with Indian history, Hinduism and Buddhism, a degree in Semitic languages with Hebrew, Arabic and Islam, and a Master in Austronesian studies, with Malay, Tagalog, Hawaiian and Malagasy. Andrew Rippin is a Professor Emeritus of History at the University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada and Senior Research Fellow - Qur’anic Studies, Institute of Ismaili Studies, London. He is the author of many works on the Qur’an and its interpretation, as well as *Muslims - Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*.


Persepolis is a graphic novel-autobiography that tells the story of Satrapi’s life as a young girl living in Iran at the time of the Iranian revolution. The novel chronicles the struggles of her family and their relationship to the religious changes taking place in Iran in the late 1970’s and the 1980’s. Marjane Satrapi is an Iranian-born French graphic novelist, illustrator, film director, and children's book author. She grew up in Tehran in a middle-class Iranian family. She is related to the Qajar Dynasty through her maternal grandfather, a prince of the dynasty who was imprisoned for a time after his family was overthrown. Prior to the revolution her parents were both politically active and supported Marxist causes against the monarchy of the last Shah.
Course Outline

Week 1: Introduction
Jan. 26
Introductions

Jan. 28 Reading:
Allen, Roger, and Shawkat M. Toorawa, ed. Islam: A Short Guide to the Faith, 3-17


Week 2: Qur’an
Feb. 2 Readings
- Rippin, Andrew and Jan Knappert, ed. Textual Sources for the Study of Islam, Section 1.1 & 2.1.1 – 2.1.4, 2.1.6-2.1.7, 2.2.1, 2.3

See Blackboard for: Rosen, Lawrence, Varieties of Muslim Experience, 75-92.

Feb. 4 Readings
Rippin, Andrew and Jan Knappert, ed. Textual Sources for the Study of Islam, 4.3

See Blackboard for:
- Sardar, Ziauddin, Reading the Qur’an, 363-374.

Week 3: Qur’an & Muhammad
Feb. 9 Readings

See Blackboard for:
Readings from Surah al-Kahf (The Cave), commentaries
Brown, Norman O., Apocalypse and/or Metamorphosis, 69-93.

Feb. 11 Readings
Rippin, Andrew and Jan Knappert, ed. Textual Sources for the Study of Islam, Sections 1.2, 3.1 (entire), 3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.2.3.1, 3.2.5, 3.3.

Week 4: Education and Knowledge

Feb. 16 Reading


Feb. 18 Reading


Week 5: Sufism & Literature

Feb. 23
In-class Midterm Exam (Green Books Required)

Feb. 25 Reading
- Rippin, Andrew and Jan Knappert, ed. Textual Sources for the Study of Islam, Sections, 1.7, 8.1, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6.


Week 6: Sufism Continued
Mar. 2 Reading

Mar. 4 Reading
Nizami Ganjavi, The Story of Layla & Majnun, 110-177
Week 7: Art & Architecture

**Mar. 9 Reading**

See Blackboard for:
- Rosen, Lawrence, *Varieties of Muslim Experience*, 93-104.

**Mar. 11 Reading**


See Blackboard for: Kahera, Akel Ismail, “Muslim Spaces and Mosque Architecture” in the *Cambridge Companion to American Islam*, 228-245.

**March 15:** Take Home Essay on Layla and Majnun Due

**Week 8: Gender**

**Mar. 16 Reading**

Rippin, Andrew and Jan Knappert, ed. *Textual Sources for the Study of Islam*, Sections 1.4, 5.2 & 5.4

See Blackboard for:
Film: Divorce Iranian Style

**Mar. 18 Reading**

Rippin, Andrew and Jan Knappert, ed. *Textual Sources for the Study of Islam*, Section 9.3

See Blackboard for:
Intersections International’s: *Muslim LGBT Inclusion Project*, i-16.

**Spring Break (No Class March 23 & 25)**
Week 9: Sectarianism

Mar. 30 Reading
- Rippin, Andrew and Jan Knappert, ed. Textual Sources for the Study of Islam, Sections 1.6, 7.1 (complete) & 9.4 (complete)

Apr. 1 Reading
Rippin, Andrew and Jan Knappert, ed. Textual Sources for the Study of Islam, Sections 7.2, 7.3, & 7.4


Week 10: Contemporary Issues: The Iranian Revolution as a Case Study

Apr. 6 Reading
Satrapi, Marjane, Persepolis, 3-86.

Apr. 8 Reading
Satrapi, Marjane, Persepolis, 87-153.

Week 11: Philosophy & Thought

Apr. 13 Reading

See Blackboard for: Aslan, Reza, No God But God, Chapter 6.

Apr. 15 Reading
Rippin, Andrew and Jan Knappert, ed. Textual Sources for the Study of Islam, Section 1.8 & 9.1

April 19: Take Home Essay on Persepolis Due

Week 12: Ritual

Apr. 20 Reading
Rippin, Andrew and Jan Knappert, ed. Textual Sources for the Study of Islam, Section 1.3, 4.1 & 4.2 (complete)

Apr. 22 Reading

See Blackboard for:
Hammoudi, Abdellah, A Season in Mecca, 1-38 & Readings on Hajj in Indonesia
Week 13: Minorities in Islam

Apr. 27 Reading

See Blackboard for: Cuffel, Alexandra, “From Practice to Polemic,” 401-415.

April 29 Reading

See Blackboard for:
- Peter Gottschalk, “The Problem of Defining Islam in Arampur”

Week 14: Music

May 4 Reading

See Blackboard for:

May 6 Reading
In-class film: *New Muslim Cool*

May 11
Review and wrap-up

May 13
Review and wrap-up

Final Exam: Monday, May 18 from 12:45-2:45 (Green Books Required)