

Global Islams

PHR-512/INT-537GI | Winter 2019-20 | Phillips Academy | Chapel 016



Instructor: Mr. Prescott
Location: Chapel 016
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

With nearly two billion adherents globally, Islam is one of the fastest growing religious traditions in the world today. Yet, with less than 1 percent of the U.S. population identifying as Muslim, it is also one of the most misunderstood. What exactly do Muslims believe? How does the enduring legacy of colonialism continue to frame the ways in which Muslim identity is negotiated in an increasingly globalized world? This course aims to introduce students to the vast internal complexities of the Islamic tradition through a combination of primary and secondary sources in history, scripture, law, art, and popular culture. In addition to exploring the origins of the tradition in the Middle East and its subsequent expansion, students will also examine a variety of contemporary issues, such as the rise of Islamophobia in West; the role of gender, jihadist, and fundamentalist movements; and Muslim immigration in the United States.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS, LEARNING GOALS, AND OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

I. Learning Goals - By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Define key terms, concepts, beliefs, and practices that inform Muslim identity
- Explain how the history of colonization shapes contemporary discourse regarding Islam
- Explain how the intersection between Muslim identity and other facets of identity (including race, gender, and sexual orientation) informs religious belief and practice
- Articulate your ideas in a clear, cogent manner (both in discussion and in writing)

II. Learning Philosophy - Let's say you want to learn how to shoot free throws. The first thing you are probably going to do is practice and you decide that, initially, the best way to shoot a free throw is to chuck the ball as hard as you can at the rim. Now, if you've ever taken a free throw before, you'll know that this strategy won't be particularly effective. And so, after a few times, you decide to change it up. Maybe you try aiming for the box on the backboard. Maybe you try utilizing a softer touch. Maybe you bend your knees a little bit more. Better yet, maybe you go find someone who already knows how to shoot a free throw and ask them to watch you and offer feedback. And, because they already know what to look for, you find that you improve at a much faster rate than you would have otherwise. Before you know it, you're regularly putting the ball in the basket.

Learning in this class is really not that different. There are standards of learning that you don't yet know how to do, you will have regular opportunities to practice hitting those standards, you will make mistakes, you will get feedback on those mistakes, and, ultimately, you will respond to those mistakes. At the end of the day, I'm not interested in how many practice shots you take or whether you make it on your first attempt so much as I'm interested in whether or not you can consistently put the ball into the basket.

So what does all that mean for this class?

It means that your final grade in this course will reflect your **understanding** of the subject matter, not how long it took you to learn it. With all that in mind, here is what you can expect of me:

- I will hold high standards. This won't be a breeze: I am going to challenge you because I believe you can meet them.
- I will give you many opportunities to meet those standards.
- I will work **with** you to help you meet those standards. My job is, first and foremost, to help you learn!
- I will be honest about where you are in relation to those standards. I'm not going to tell you that you've made a free throw if the ball isn't even hitting the rim. That helps no one!
- I will not penalize you for making mistakes, but will instead give you opportunities to respond to and learn from your mistakes.

Here is what I expect of you:

- I expect you to be honest about what you do (and don't yet) know.
- I expect you to work **intentionally**, which is not the same thing as working **harder**. Repeatedly chucking the ball at the basket as hard as you can isn't going to help you learn how to shoot a free throw. Likewise, pulling an all-nighter to complete a major assignment isn't going to yield the outcome we're aiming for. Instead, I expect you to regularly **practice**, which means keeping up with the assigned work and engaging with the subject matter on a regular basis.
- I expect you to make mistakes. And, at the same time, I expect you to reflect on and respond to those mistakes.
- I expect you to read and respond to my feedback when I give it to you.

If we both uphold our end of the bargain, I have no doubt that you **will** learn in this class!

III. Grading/Evaluation - This course utilizes a standards-based approach, which means your final grade will reflect your level of competency in relation to specific standards of learning. A breakdown of the final grade and scale are provided below:

- **Overarching Standard (60%)** - More information about learning standards (including the grading scale) are located at the end of the syllabus.
- **Argumentative Writing (30%)** - The standards for argumentative writing are broken down into four main categories: thesis/argument, evidence/analysis, organization, and mechanics. This standard will be assessed primarily through formal essays, though reading reflections and short prompts may also be used to assess your competency in these categories.
- **Class Discussion (10%)** - The standards for class discussion will be assessed throughout the term. Students will receive regular feedback on their performance in relation to this standard throughout the term.

- **6:** 5.5 to 6 **5:** 4.5 to 5.5 **4:** 3.5 to 4.5 **3:** 2.5 to 3.5 **2:** 1.5 to 2.5 **1:** 1 to 1.5

III. Revisions - As noted above, making mistakes is a **necessary** part of the learning process. With that in mind, you may revise any essay in the course within two weeks of the essay's return. When completing a revision, you **must** do the following:

- Use the "track changes" feature on Word or Google Docs and submit the revised draft **with the tracked changes visible** (this helps me see what changes you are making)
- Complete and submit responses to the revision reflection questions (posted on Canvas) with the revised draft (these ensure you are using my feedback *and* gives me insight into how you are doing so)

Revisions that do not meet the above criteria will not be re-assessed!

IV. Reflective Writing – In addition to formal essays, your work in this class will include a fair amount of reflective writing both in and outside of class. This includes short writing prompts at the beginning and/or end of class, along with occasional homework assignments. In order to centralize this work, you should keep all reflection entries in a notebook, which I will occasionally collect and offer feedback on.

V. E-mail/Technology – Three notes on technology:

- Upon arriving to class, I ask that you drop your phone off at "**Cell Phone Daycare**". There is good research showing that even the presence of a turned-off cell phone on a person's desk reduces their cognitive functioning. Take some time to talk to others in the room!
- No laptops in class. While taking notes on computers can be helpful, the distractions of other programs is all too real. Let's talk to each other face-to-face.
- Please limit e-mail use to requests for in-person meetings or to communicate emergencies. I will respond to these e-mails within 24 hours, though please note that any e-mail sent after 8:00 PM will not receive a response until the following morning. Plan ahead!

VI. Absences - There are many legitimate reasons why you may need to miss class. Andover is a busy place! I first and foremost ask that you communicate with me if you aren't going to be present. For absences related to religious observances, please contact Ms. Ralston (gralston@andover.edu) to have the absence excused. In the event of illness, please coordinate with Skyes. For college visits, please coordinate with the Dean of Students Office.

VII. Accommodations – I am available to discuss academic accommodations that may be required for students with disabilities. If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact Laura Warner, Director of Student Accessibility Services. Her office is located in Pearson, on the first floor. You may email her at lwarn@andover.edu for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. If you are already approved for official accommodations, please communicate with me during the first week of class, whether in person or via email.

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

(SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

Unit 1: Islam, Orientalism, and the Colonial Legacy

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5 – INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

- No assigned readings

WEEK 1 – APPROACHING ISLAM FROM “THE WEST”

MONDAY, DECEMBER 9 – No CLASS

- Note: Class will not meet

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11 – RELIGION, ISLAM, AND COLONIALISM

- Read: Carl W. Ernst, “Islam and the Historical Study of Religion,” *Following Muhammad: Rethinking Islam in the Contemporary World* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), pp. 47-57.
- Supplemental Materials: Stefani Ruper, “[Religion isn’t Real: The Invention and Toxicity of a Colonial Idea](#),” (October 31, 2018).

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13 – THE LEGACY OF COLONIALISM

- Read: Carl W. Ernst, “Preface” and “Islam as Part of the Contemporary World,” *Following Muhammad: Rethinking Islam in the Contemporary World* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), pp. xiii-xxv, 2-11.

WEEK 2 – MUSLIMS AND THE MEDIA

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17 – MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS OF MUSLIMS

- Read: Evelyn Alsultany, “Introduction,” in *Arabs and Muslims in the Media: Race and Representation After 9/11* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 1-13.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19 – WRITING WORKSHOP

- Due: In-Class Essay

ENJOY THE BREAK!

Unit 2: Muslim American History

WEEK 3 – MUSLIM BELIEF AND PRACTICE

TUESDAY, JANUARY 7 – TBD

- No assigned readings

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8 – MUSLIM BELIEF AND PRACTICE

- Read: Jane I. Smith, “Muslim Faith and Practice,” *Islam in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), pp. 1-22.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 10 – No CLASS

- Note: Mr. Prescott away at Dartmouth Relays

WEEK 4 – MUSLIM AMERICAN HISTORY: IMMIGRANTS AND CONVERTS

MONDAY, JANUARY 13 – OMAR IBN SAYYID & ANTEBELLUM AMERICA

- Read: Edward Curtis, "'Whispers and Echoes: American Muslims Before World War I" and Omar ibn Sayyid, *The Autobiography of Omar Ibn Sayyid (1831)*, in *The Columbia Sourcebook of Muslims in the United States*, ed. Edward E. Curtis IV (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), pp. 1-9.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15 – MUSLIM IMMIGRANTS IN AMERICA

- Read: Mohammed Alexander Russell Webb, "Islam in America" (1893), in *The Columbia Sourcebook of Muslims in the United States*, ed. Edward E. Curtis IV (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), pp. 9-18.
- Read: WPA Interviews with Mary Juma and Mike Abdullah (1939), in *The Columbia Sourcebook of Muslims in the United States*, ed. Edward E. Curtis IV (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), pp. 29-39.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 17 – MUSLIM CONVERTS IN AMERICA

- Due: Reading Response

WEEK 5 – THE NATION OF ISLAM

MONDAY, JANUARY 20 – MLK DAY (NO CLASS)

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22 – MUSLIM CONVERTS IN AMERICA

- Read: *Moslem Sunrise* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), pp. 53-58
- Read: Noble Drew Ali, *The Holy Koran of the Moorish Science Temple (1927)*, in *The Columbia Sourcebook of Muslims in the United States*, ed. Edward E. Curtis IV (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), pp. 59-64.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 24 – THE NATION OF ISLAM

- Read: Elijah Muhammad, "What the Muslims Want" and "What the Muslims Believe," in *The Columbia Sourcebook of Muslims in the United States*, ed. Edward E. Curtis IV (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), pp. 92-96.
- Read: Malcolm X, Interview with *Al-Muslimoon* (1965), in *The Columbia Sourcebook of Muslims in the United States*, ed. Edward E. Curtis IV (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), pp. 96-104.

WEEK 6 – HISTORY AND RELIGIOUS IDENTITY

MONDAY, JANUARY 27 – WRITING WORKSHOP

- Due: Essay Outline

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29 – WRITING WORKSHOP

- Due: Essay #1 Rough Draft

FRIDAY, JANUARY 31 – DUE: ESSAY #1

- Due: Essay #1

Unit 3: Gender, Sexuality, and Islam

WEEK 7 – GENDER AND MUSLIM IDENTITY

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3 – NO CLASS (MID-WINTER LONG WEEKEND)

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5 – MUSLIM WOMEN AND THE QUR'AN

- Read: Amina Wadud, Interview with Frontline, March 2002.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7 – VOICES OF MUSLIMS WOMEN

- Read (Group 1): Tarajee Abdur-Rahim, "Interview in *American Jihad: Islam After Malcolm X*," in *The Columbia Sourcebook of Muslims in the United States*, ed. Edward E. Curtis IV (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), pp. 198-207.
- Read (Group 2): Asma Gull Hasan, "American Muslims: The New Generation," in *The Columbia Sourcebook of Muslims in the United States*, ed. Edward E. Curtis IV (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), pp. 207-215.
- Read (Group 3): Azizah al-Hibri, "An Introduction to Muslim Women's Rights," in *The Columbia Sourcebook of Muslims in the United States*, ed. Edward E. Curtis IV (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), pp. 215-223.
- Read (Group 4): Laury Silvers, "Islamic Jurisprudence, 'Civil' Disobedience, and Woman Led Prayer," in *The Columbia Sourcebook of Muslims in the United States*, ed. Edward E. Curtis IV (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), pp. 246-252.
- Read (Group 5): Leila Ahmed, "From Abu Dhabi to America," in *The Columbia Sourcebook of Muslims in the United States*, ed. Edward E. Curtis IV (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), pp. 183-188

WEEK 8 – HOMOSEXUALITY AND MUSLIM IDENTITY

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10 – SEXUALITY AND COLONIALISM

- Read: Ali Olomi, "The Roots of Homophobia and Anti-Gay Sentiment in the Muslim World," *ISLAMiCommentary*

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12 – QUEER MUSLIM VOICES

- Read: Khalida Saed, "On the Edge of Belonging," in *The Columbia Sourcebook of Muslims in the United States*, ed. Edward E. Curtis IV (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), pp. 231-238.
- Read: Pepe Hendricks, "Snippets of Confusion"

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14 – PROGRESSIVE MUSLIM INTERPRETATIONS

- Read: Mushin Hendricks, "Islamic Texts: A Source for Acceptance of Queer Individuals into Mainstream Muslim Society," *The Equal Rights Review*, vol. 5 (2010): pp. 31-48 (sections 1, 2, 6-9, and conclusion)

Unit 4: Contemporary Issues in Muslim America

WEEK 9 – MUSLIM AMERICAN POLITICS & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT POST-9/11

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17 – HEAD OF SCHOOL DAY!

- No assigned readings

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19 – MUSLIM-AMERICAN REACTIONS TO PULSE

- Read: Bilal Quershi, "The Muslim Silence on Gay Rights," *The New York Times* (June 13, 2016).
- Read: "A Joint Muslim Statement on the Carnage in Orlando," June 13, 2016.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21 – WRITING WORKSHOP

- Due: Essay Outline

WEEK 10 – INDEPENDENT RESEARCH

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24 – RESEARCH WORKSHOP

- Due: Annotated Bibliography

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26 – DUE: ESSAY #2

- Due: Essay #2

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28 – WRITING WORKSHOP

- Due: Final Project Outline

WEEK 11 – FINALS WEEKS

MONDAY, MARCH 2 – CONFERENCE PERIOD DAY

- Note: Mr. Prescott will be available to meet during normal class time

TUESDAY, MARCH 3 – FINAL PROJECT SHOWCASE

- Due: Final Project