In this course, Islam will be considered as a religion, culture, and civilization. The society of Shi'i Muslims in particular will be the focus of the course. During the last 200 years of Western study of Islam, Shi'ism has been neglected. It is only since the Islamic Revolution in Iran 1978-79 that Shi'ism received attention. Now with American forces in Iraq, Shi'ism is suddenly one of the main topics of interest for the news media. The Shi'is of Iraq are the majority -- some 60% -- of the population. But historically, Shi'is have been deprived of power in the government and of access to the political and economic life of the country. The most holy places of the Shi'is — Karbala and Najaf — are located south of Baghdad.

An Iranian pilgrim heads for the holy city of Karbala in Iraq after crossing the border illegally.

The image above is from the front page of The New York Times of October 7, 2003. It shows a silhouette of a woman wearing a black veil against the wasteland of the Iraqi desert. The only possession that she carries is a walking stick. No provisions, no clothing. She may be at least 100 miles from home and a long way from her destination: the tomb shrine of the grandson of the Prophet — Hussein, the martyr of Karbala. Since the official defeat of Saddam Hussein, thousands of pilgrims like this woman, have crossed daily into Iraq from Iran. The American soldiers are awe-stricken by the tenacity and endurance of these pilgrims, who suffer dehydration and malnutrition and the constant threat of landmines, but, nevertheless, continue on their quest.

There will be two examinations: a midterm and a final.
Each student is expected to visit the Islamic Galleries at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, (200 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn), and to write a short essay about the visit. The essay may be descriptive or impressionistic. The hours for the museum are:

- Monday, Tues. closed
- Wed., Thurs. 10:00 AM-5:00 PM
- Saturday 11:00 AM-6:00 PM
- Sunday 11:00 AM-6:00 PM

Course Materials: Four books: John L. Esposito, Islam: the Straight Path, hereinafter referred to as Esposito; Roy Mottahedeh, The Mantle of the Prophet, hereinafter referred to as Mottahedeh, (This is a novel set against the background of Islam. Every week we will read one chapter. Each Monday, there will be a 15 minute class discussion on the assigned chapter); Heinz Halm, Shi'a Islam, hereinafter referred to as Halm; and Peter Chelkowski and Hamid Dabashi, Staging a Revolution: The Art of Persuasion in the Islamic Republic of Iran, herein after referred to as Chelkowski/Dabashi, (This is a very expensive book, but I, as an author, have arranged a 50% discount at the NYU bookstore. It is not available at a reduced price anywhere else). The books are to be found at the NYU bookstore.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Wednesday, January 21 Course Introduction

Monday, January 26 Muhammad and the Early Muslim Community; Esposito: Chapter 1, pp. 1-31; Mottahedeh: Note to the Reader and Prologue, pp. 7-17.

Wednesday, January 28 Muhammad and the Early Muslim Community; Esposito: Chapter 1, pp. 1-31.

Monday, February 2 The Muslim Community in History; Esposito: Chapter 2, pp.32-67; Mottahedeh: Chapter 1, pp. 18-37.

Wednesday, February 4 The Muslim Community in History; Esposito: Chapter 2, pp. 32-67.

Monday, February 9 Beliefs and Practices; Esposito, Chapter 3, pp. 68-114; Mottahedeh, Chapter 2, pp. 38-68.

Wednesday, February 11 Beliefs and Practices; Esposito, Chapter 3, pp. 68-114.

Wednesday, February 18 The Story of Layla and Majnun: The Sufi Quest; PHOTOCOPY.
Monday, February 23
Mottahedeh, Chapter 3; pp. 69-109.
Visit to the Sufi House, First Group;

Wednesday, February 25
Visit to the Sufi House, Second Group

Monday, March 1
Concert of Sufi Music; Mottahedeh, Chapter 4,
pp. 110-33.

Wednesday, March 3
Classical Islamic Lands

Monday, March 8
Arabs and Islam; Mottahedeh, Chapter 5, pp.
134-85.

Wednesday, March 10
MIDTERM EXAMINATION

Monday, March 15
SPRING BREAK!!! ENJOY!

Monday, March 22
Islam in Spain; Mottahedeh, Chapter 6, pp. 186-
247.

Wednesday, March 24
Iranians and Islam

Monday, March 29
Turks and Islam; Mottahedeh, Chapter 7, pp.
248-68.

Wednesday, March 31
Shi'i Islam; Halm, Part 1, pp. 3-37.

Monday, April 5
Shi'i Islam; Halm, Part 2, pp. 41-85;
Mottahedeh, Chapter 8, pp. 269-336.

Wednesday, April 7
Play-reading: the ta'ziyeh of the Martyrdom of
the Luminous Leader of the Bani Hashim, Hazrat, Abu'l-Fazl Al-Abbas;
PHOTOCOPY.

Monday, April 12
Shi'i Islam; Halm, Part 3, pp. 88-161;
Mottahedeh, Chapter 9, pp. 337-356.

Wednesday, April 14
Staging a Shi'i Revolution; Chelkowski/Dabashi,
pp. 6-67. PLEASE BRING THE BOOK TO CLASS.

Monday, April 19
Staging a Shi'i Revolution; Chelkowski/Dabashi,
pp. 68-125. PLEASE BRING THE BOOK TO CLASS; Mottahedeh, Chapter
10, pp. 357-377.

Wednesday, April 21
Staging a Shi'i Revolution; Chelkowski/Dabashi,
pp. 126-191. PLEASE BRING THE BOOK TO CLASS
Monday, April 26
Staging a Shi'i Revolution; Chelkowski/Dabashi, pp. 192-267. PLEASE BRING THE BOOK TO CLASS; Mottahedeh, Epilogue, pp. 378-90.

Wednesday, April 28
Staging a Shi'i Revolution; Chelkowski/Dabashi, pp. 268-307. PLEASE BRING THE BOOK TO CLASS

Monday, May 3
REVIEW OF THE COURSE

Final Examination: Date to be announced