

MAP, SPRING 2008 ISLAMIC SOCIETIES Prof. GILSENAN
V55.0502.001
Recitation Sections: 002,003,004,005

Teaching Assistants: Leili Kashani (lk518@nyu.edu) and Ali Aktar (aha232@nyu.edu)

Lectures: Tuesday/Thursday 9.30-10.45 a.m.

Location: Silver 408

Office Hours: Michael Gilsenan. By appointment (Rm.404, Kevorkian Building, 50 Washington Sq. South, entrance on Sullivan Street.)

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course explores the anthropology and modern history of 'Islamic societies'. For our initial purposes, 'Islamic societies' will be understood simply as those in which practices, beliefs, discourses and institutions regarded as Islamic play and have historically played significant and changing roles in ordinary people's lives.

We will focus on the varying ways in which Islam practiced, performed, transmitted, negotiated and debated in the world from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. We will also critically examine the ways in which Islam is studied and represented by non-Muslims as well as by Muslims.

The required readings have been chosen to give you a range of voices and approaches, periods and places, cultures and persons. We will look at specific societies, institutions and movements in different historical periods in the Middle East (Egypt and Lebanon), West Africa (Mali, Senegal and Nigeria), East Africa (Tanzania), Pakistan and India, Indonesia and Southeast Asia (Singapore and Malaysia), Europe (England, France and Germany), and America.

The aim is to develop a deeper, critical understanding of contemporary ways of thinking and writing about aspects of 'Islam' and of our own unquestioned assumptions about 'it'. It is intended to illuminate aspects of Islamic practices and beliefs in ordinary life and among ordinary people as well as studying variations in those practices and beliefs in the very different cultures of our complex, globalizing world. We have to learn how to identify and understand our own and others' stereotypes and assumptions about 'Islam' and 'Muslims' at an extremely challenging historical moment. Such a process involves critical self-awareness. These are immensely complex subjects and the contemporary world political situation makes them even more relevant and hotly debated.

Major topics and themes include:

1. The varying importance for Islamic religious formations of the powers, policies and understandings of colonial and post-colonial states; their unintended as well as intended consequences for forms of Islam in societies.
2. Education systems and their transformations, the transmission of learning, the nature of pedagogical authority (Quran schools, madrasas, state schooling).
3. Sacred and vernacular languages in changing worlds.

4. Ritual occasions of the Islamic tradition, such as prayer, the Pilgrimage and pilgrimages, and sacrifice in different social and historical contexts.
5. Law and society; what the *shari'a* (Islamic law) and calls for its application entail for religious movements, authority and states.
6. Gender, private and public spaces, concealment and revealing, morality and sexuality in social life and political ideologies.
7. The varying nature of authorities and polities legitimated as Islamic; institutions such as Sufi Orders; forms of association, cultural, political and economic activity that have been crucial in Islamic networks of teaching, blessing, authority and social organization.
8. Debates between 'modernist' and 'traditionalist' Islamic movements in the twentieth century.
9. The roles of media, from the manuscript and the book to radio, films, videos, dvd's, in the world flows of persons, images and meanings; the place of musical forms in those flows.
10. Migration patterns and the shifting boundaries of Muslim communities in the age of transnationalism.

COURSE WEBSITE:

We will be using NYU Blackboard for the course. Copies of the syllabus and readings will be posted as will general announcements (including any changes, so please check this regularly).

To access an NYU Blackboard Course Site:

1. Log in to NYUHome with a valid NYU NetID and password.
2. Click on the 'Academics' tab and look under the 'Classes channel for the course name.
3. Click on the course name to enter the NYU Blackboard course site.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance: **Timely** attendance at all lectures and recitations is **mandatory**.

Attendance will be taken at **every** session.

A **failing grade** may be assigned to any student with three absences from lecture and/or recitation - **no** exceptions save for documented medical emergency or other comparably grave circumstances. Should such circumstances arise you should contact me or a TA as soon as possible by phone or e-mail.

Readings: It is crucial to your participation in recitations and to the success of your participation in the course as a whole that you do the weekly readings with critical attention, reading twice and taking notes as necessary.

Grading: Your final grade will result from the following components:

1. **Regular and timely attendance** at all lectures and recitations + class participation - **15%**

2. **Weekly 1-page response papers** on assigned readings - **18%**. These papers should be received by your TA **not later than 6 pm the day before your recitation. NO late papers are admitted, no excuses accepted.**

3. **TWO short (7 page) papers** during the course of the semester - **16% each**. Topics will be assigned in the recitations.

4. **Final exam covering all course topics - 35%.**

Plagiarism: Do not plagiarize. It is unethical, a terrible waste of your intelligence and time. The penalty is to be **failed** in the course.

Required Readings (in bookstore and on reserve):

Magnus Marsden Living Islam: Muslim Religious Experience in Pakistan's North-West Frontier. Cambridge University Press, 2005.
Michael Gilson Recognizing Islam. I.B.Tauris, 2005 (to be xeroxed)
D.Eickelman New Media in the Muslim World: the emerging Public Sphere.
J. Anderson (eds.) Indiana UP, 1999. (Chaps.1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9)
Malise Ruthven Islam: A Very Short Introduction. Oxford UP: reissued 2000.

Readings on Library Reserve (see separate sheet)

Lecture Schedule

Week 1 Two introductory lectures, discussion of syllabus

Jan.22/24

Readings: Ruthven. *Islam: A Very Short Introduction* (pp.1-73; 143-48)

Marsden. *Living Islam*, Intro. and Chap.2 (pp.1-50)

Week 2 Debating Islam

Jan.29/31

Readings: Marsden. Chaps. 4 and 6. (Pp.85-121; 157-192)

Gilson. *Recognizing Islam* Chaps. 1 & 2 (pp.9-54)

Week 3 Educating Muslims 1

Feb.5/7

Readings: Michael Fischer. 'Madrasa: Style and Substance.' Chapter 3 of *Iran: From Religious Dispute to Revolution*. Harvard University Press, 1980, **61-103**

Roy Mottahedeh. Chap. 1 and the first part of Chapt. 2. *The Mantle of the Prophet*.

London: Chatto and Windus, 1986, **18-50**

Muhammad Qasim Zaman. 'Tradition and Authority in Deobandi Madrasas of South Asia' in Robert Hefner and M.Q.Zaman (eds.), *Schooling Islam: The culture and politics of modern Muslim education*. Princeton UP, 2007, pp.61-86.

Week 4: Educating Muslims 2

Feb.12/14

Readings: Gregory Starrett. *Putting Islam to Work*. Chap.3 'Learning About God' pp.89-125
Clifford Geertz. *After the Facts*, Harvard University Press, 1995. **143-151**
Azra, Afrianty and Hefner 'Pesantren and Madrasa: Muslim Schools and National Ideals in Indonesia', in Hefner and Zaman (eds.) *Schooling Islam*, pp.172-198

Week 5 Muslim Networks

Feb.19/21

Film: On aspects of Islam and social life in Mali and Senegal

Readings: Monika Salzrunn. 'The occupation of public space through religious and political events'. *Jrnl of Religion in Africa*, 34, 4, **468-492**

Mamadou Diouf. 'The Senegalese Murid Trade Diaspora and the Making of a Vernacular Cosmopolitanism.' *Public Culture*, vol.12, no. 3, **679-702**

Victoria Ebin. 'Making room versus creating space: the construction of spatial categories by itinerant Mouride traders' in Barbara Daly Metcalf (ed.), *Making Muslim Space in North America and Europe*. U.California Press, 1996, pp.92-109

*****NOTE: First of short papers due at the beginning of the Feb.21st (Th.) Class*****

Week 6 Forms of Religious Association and Practice

Feb.26/28

Readings: Gilsenan. *Recognizing Islam* Chaps. 4 'The Operations of Grace', 7 'Everywhere and Nowhere' and 10 'The World Turned Inside Out'.

Week 7 Pilgrimages

Mar.4/6

Readings: Michael B. Miller. 'Pilgrims' Progress: The Business of the Hajj'. *Past and Present*, no.191, May 2006, pp.189-228

Malcolm X. *The autobiography of Malcolm X*. Ballantine Books, Chap.17. 'Mecca' and Chap.18 'El-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz'

Michael Gilsenan. *London Review of Books*

Robert R. Bianchi. *Guests of God: Pilgrimage and Politics in the Islamic World*, Oxford UP, 2004. Chap. 4 'The Growth of the Hajj', pp.49-76

(Note: S. Hurgronje. *Mekka in the latter part of the nineteenth century*. Pp.215-292 will also be available on Blackboard and the lecture will draw on it.)

Week 8 Aspects of Islam in Southeast Asia

Mar.11/13

Readings: Gilsenan. 'Out of the Hadhramaut'. *London Review of Books*, 25, 6, 2003

U. Freitag et al.(eds.) *Hadrami traders, scholars, and statesmen in the Indian Ocean*. Brill, 1997:

S. Mandel. 'Natural leaders of native Muslims', pp.185-198

Engseng Ho. 'Hadramis abroad in Hadhramaut', pp.131-146

N. Kesheh. 'Islamic modernism in colonial Java', pp.231-248

Spring Recess: Week beginning March 17

Week 9 Religious Law and Modernity 1

Mar. 25/27

Readings: B.Messick. Chap.1 'Genealogies of the text' and Chap.2 'The pen and the sword' of *The Calligraphic State*, U.of California Press, 1993

B. Cohn. Chap.3 'Law and the Colonial State in India' in *Colonialism and its forms of knowledge*. Princeton UP, 1996

Week 10 Religious Law and Modernity 2

April 1/3

Readings: M.K.Masud et al. *Islamic Legal Interpretation: Muftis and their fatwas* Harvard UP, 1996.

Chap.15. Barbara Metcalf. 'Two fatwas on hajj in British India'

Chap.19. W. Roff. 'An argument about how to argue'

Chap.20. M. Mudzhar 'The Council of Indonesian Ulema on Muslims attendance at Christmas celebrations'

Chap.28. B.Messick. 'Media muftis'

*****NOTE: Second short paper due at beginning of April 3rd. (Th.) Class*****

Week 11 The Discourse of the Veil

April 8/10

Film: *Boys, Girls and the Veil*

Readings: Malek Alloula. *The Colonial Harem*. Chap.2 'Women from the outside' U.of Minnesota Press.

Franz Fanon. *The Wretched of the Earth*, pp.

Leila Ahmed. *Women, Gender and Islam*. Chaps. 'The Discourse of the Veil' And 'The First Feminists'.

Leila Ahmed. 'Western ethnocentrism and perceptions of the harem'. In *Feminist Studies*, vol.8, no.3, Fall 1982, pp.521-534.

Week 12 Questions of Gender

April 15/17

Film: *Divorce Iranian Style*

Readings:

Week 13 New Media

April 22/24

Readings: Brian Larkin. 'Indian Films and Nigerian lovers'. *Africa*, 67, 3, 1997, 406-440
Eickelman and Anderson. *New Media in the Muslim World*. Chap.1 'Redefining Muslim Publics', pp.1-18; Chap. 4 'The Internet and Islam's New Interpreters', pp.41-56; Chap. 5 'Muslim Identities and the Great Chain of Buying', pp.57-79.

R. Launay. 'Spirit media: the electronic media and Islam among the Dyula of northern Cote d'Ivoire'. *Africa*, 67, 3, 1997, pp.441-453.

Week 14 Revision Lectures April29/May 1