

Topics in Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Islam
RS/ANT788
Department of Religious Studies
McMaster University
Fall 2018
Wednesdays, 9:30-11:30, UH122
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Course description

This course examines current research in anthropological approaches to the study of Islamic beliefs, practices, and communities. Topics include the relationships of Islamic belief and practice to gender roles, economic forces, capitalist consumption, and religious conversion.

Course assignments and evaluation:

Students should come to class prepared to discuss in-depth each week's readings. Participation constitutes 50% of the course grade.

In addition, ten weekly "reading responses" are required. Reading responses should: (1) provide a concise statement summarizing that week's chapters (approximately two to three paragraphs); (2) evaluate critically the reading; and/or (3) relate points raised by the reading to other course readings. *I encourage you to find and read book reviews of the texts listed below and consider responding to and/or building upon issues raised by reviewers.* Reading response papers should be approximately three to four pages long; they constitute a total of 50% of the course mark.

Texts

Mahmood, Saba

2005 *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Deeb, Lara and Mona Harb

2013 *Leisurely Islam: Negotiating Geography and Morality in Shi'ite South Beirut*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Tobin, Sarah

2016 *Everyday Piety: Islam and Economy in Jordan*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Ahmad, Attiya

2017 *Everyday Conversions: Islam, Domestic Work, and South Asian Migrant Women in Kuwait*. Chapel Hill: Duke University Press.

Bucar, Elizabeth

2017 *Pious Fashion: How Muslim Women Dress*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Course syllabus

September 12 Course introduction

September 19 No class – Yom Kippur

Recommended reading:

September 26 *Politics of Piety*

October 3 *Politics of Piety*

October 10 No class – reading week

October 17 *Leisurely Islam*

October 24 *Leisurely Islam*

October 31 *Everyday Piety*

November 7 *Everyday Piety*

November 14 *Everyday Conversions*

November 21 *Everyday Conversions*

November 28 *Pious Fashion*

December 5 *Pious Fashion*