

Islam in the Modern World
Religious Studies 3C03
Winter 2019
McMaster University

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays: 4pm - 5pm
or by appointment

THE COURSE

The course will begin with a brief overview of the formation of Islam until its encounter with modernity and the “West.” It will then examine the impact of modernization on the Muslim world. More particularly, we will survey the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, theocracies, and terrorism by reading a diverse range of book chapters and articles written by prominent scholars of Islam.

The course will also survey the ways in which Sufism (Islamic mysticism) has been influenced by modernity over the last century. Lastly, we will explore other important topics related to contemporary Islamic belief and practices, including pluralism, interfaith dialogue, gender, sexuality, pilgrimage, and Islamic art and architecture. The aim of this course is to provide students with a wide breadth of knowledge pertaining to Islam in the modern world, as well as an insightful perspective on how Muslims balance modernization and faith. No prior knowledge of Islam is required.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Regular attendance and active participation in the class and tutorials are mandatory. Please ensure that the readings assigned for each week are done before each class.

Required Texts (Available at the Campus Store)

Nasr, Seyyed Hossein, *Islam in the Modern World: Challenged by the West, Threatened by Fundamentalism, Keeping Faith with Tradition*. New York: HarperOne, 2010.

Safi, Omid, *Progressive Muslims: On Justice, Gender, and Pluralism*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2011.

Arjana, Sophia Rose, *Pilgrimage in Islam: Traditional and Modern Practices*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2017. (On Reserve)

Evaluation

Tutorial Attendance and Participation	(15%)
4 Quizzes	(30%)
Midterm	(20%)
Final Paper	(35%)

Course Schedule

Week 1:

Tuesday January 8: Course Introduction and Orientation

Readings: No Readings

Thursday January 10: Introduction to Islam

Readings: Safi: Progressive Muslims Chapter 3 “Islam: A Civilizational Project in Progress”

Safi: Progressive Muslims Chapter 5 “On Being a Scholar of Islam: Risks and Responsibilities”

Week 2:

Tuesday January 15: Islam, Modernity, and Rise of Fundamentalism

Readings: Safi: Progressive Muslims Chapter 1 “The Ugly Modern and the Modern Ugly”

Thursday January 17: Islam, Modernity, and Rise of Fundamentalism

Readings: Nasr: Islam in the Modern World Chapter 1 “Islam in the Present-Day Islamic World”

Week 4:

Tuesday January 22: Terrorism in the Twenty-first Century

Readings: Nasr: Islam in the Modern World Chapter 2 “Jihad”

Safi: Progressive Muslims Chapter 2 “In Search of Progressive Islam Beyond 9/11”

Thursday January 24: Terrorism in the Twenty-first Century (Quiz 1)

Readings: Robert Duran: “Introduction: Terrorism and Cultural Theory: The Singularity of 9/11” (On Avenue)

Graeme Wood: “What ISIS Really Wants” (On Avenue)

Week 3:

Tuesday January 29: Shia Islam and Politics

Readings: Nasr: Islam in the Modern World Chapter 5 “Traditional Twelve-Imam

Shi'ism and the Reality of Shi'ism Today"

Thursday January 31: Shia Islam and Politics

Readings: Judith Harik: *Hezbollah: The Changing Faith of Terrorism*, Chapter 1
"Hezbollah's Version of Political Islam" (On Avenue)
Yvette Hovsepian-Bearce: *The Political Ideology of Ayatollah Khamenei: Out of the Mouth of the Supreme Leader of Iran*, Chapter 1
"The Rise of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini: The Islamic Revolution and the Establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran" (On Avenue)

Week 5:

Tuesday February 5: Sufism in the Modern World

Readings: Nasr: Islam in the Modern World Chapter 6 "Islamic Spirituality"

Thursday February 7: Sufism in the Modern World

Readings: Joseph Politella: "Sufism as a Bridge Between Eastern and Western Religious Thought" (On Avenue)
Poems of Rumi "Mystical Poems" and Poems of "Divani Shams":
<http://www.rumi.org.uk/poetry/>

Week 6:

Tuesday February 12: Gender and Sexuality in Islam

Readings: Safi: Progressive Muslims Chapter 6 "Transforming Feminism: Islam, Women, and Gender Justice"

Thursday February 14: Gender and Sexuality in Islam (Quiz 2)

Readings: Safi: Progressive Muslims Chapter 8 "Sexuality, Diversity, and Ethics in the Agenda of Progressive Muslims"

Week 7: Reading Week

Tuesday February 19: No Class

Thursday February 21: No Class

Week 8:

Tuesday February 26: Gender and Sexuality in Islam

Readings: Nasr: Islam in the Modern World Chapter 4 "The Male and the Female in the Islamic Perspective"

Thursday February 28: Midterm Exam (During Class)

Week 9:

Tuesday March 5: Pluralism and Interfaith Dialogue

Readings: Safi: Progressive Muslims Chapter 10 “Muslims, Pluralism, and Interfaith Dialogue”

Thursday March 7: Pluralism and Interfaith Dialogue (Guest Lecture)

Readings: Safi: Progressive Muslims Chapter 12 “Islamic Democracy and Pluralism”

Week 10:

Tuesday March 12: Islam in America

Readings: Safi: Progressive Muslims Chapter 11 “American Muslim Identity: Race and Ethnicity in Progressive Islam”

Safi: Progressive Muslims Chapter 13 “How to Put the Genie Back in the Bottle? ‘Identity’ Islam and Muslim Youth Cultures in America”

Thursday March 14: Islam in America (Quiz 3)

Readings: Liyakat Takim: *Shi'ism in America*, Chapter 2 “The American Shia Community: Ethnicity and Identity”

Week 11:

Tuesday March 19: Pilgrimage and Modern Practices in Islam

Readings: Arjana: Pilgrimage in Islam Chapter 2 “Nascent Pilgrimage Centers: Jerusalem, Mecca, and Medina”

Thursday March 21: Pilgrimage and Modern Practices in Islam

Readings: Arjana: Chapter 5 Pilgrimage in Islam “Modern Muslim Pilgrims: Tourism, Space, and Technology”

Krystina Derrickson: “Second Life and the Sacred: Islamic Space in a Virtual World” (On Avenue)

Week 12:

Tuesday March 26: Islamic Art and Architecture

Readings: Nasr: Islam in the Modern World Chapter 12 “Islamic Art and its Spiritual Significance in the Contemporary World”

Thursday March 28: Islamic Art and Architecture

Readings: Nasr: Islam in the Modern World Chapter 13 “The Architectural Transformation of the Urban Environment in the Islamic World”

Nasr: Islam in the Modern World Chapter 14 “The Principles of Islamic Architecture and Urban Design, and Contemporary Urban Problems”

Week 13:

Tuesday April 2: The Future of Islam in the Modern World

Readings: Safi: Progressive Muslims Chapter 14 “What is the Victory of Islam? Towards a Different Understanding of the Ummah and Political Success in the Contemporary World”

Thursday April 4: The Future of Islam in the Modern World (Quiz 4)

Readings: Nasr Islam in the Modern World Chapter 15 “The Islamic World”

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments

[Insert policy on format of assignments and how to be submitted]

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

Late Assignments

Translation Assignments handed in late will be penalized at a rate of 3% per day unless documentation can be provided.

Absences, Missed Work, Illness

The McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF) (<http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/>) is a self-reporting tool for Undergraduate Students to report MEDICAL absences that last up to 3 days and provides the ability to request accommodation for any missed academic work (that is less than 25% of the course grade). Please note, this tool cannot be used during any final examination period. You may submit a maximum of ONE Academic Work Missed request per term. It is YOUR responsibility to follow up with your instructor immediately regarding the nature of the accommodation. If you are absent for more than 3 days, exceed one request per term, are absent for a reason other than medical, or have missed work worth 25% or more of the final grade, you MUST visit your Faculty Office. You may be required to provide supporting documentation. This form should be filled out when you are about to return to class after your absence.

Avenue to Learn

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Turnitin.com

In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically to Turnitin.com and in hard copy so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work to Turnitin.com must still submit a copy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please to go www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

University Policies

Academic Integrity Statement

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behavior in all aspects of the learning process.

Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behavior can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at

www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University’s Policy for [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#).

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student’s own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Course Modification

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.