

ANTH 1737 Special Topics in Cultural Anthropology Anthropology of Islam

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Spring 2013

Course Meetings: Mondays & Wednesdays, 3:00 – 4:15
Location: 363 Cathedral of Learning

Office Hours: Wed. 10:00-12:00, & by appointment Email Address: dwm@pitt.edu
Office Address: 3113 W.W. Posvar Hall Office Telephone: 412.624.3243

Course Description:

Islam has had a profound influence on a broad array of nations, ethnic groups, and local expressions of culture. It has played a role in shaping societies, politics, economics, and law. Taking a broad, anthropological perspective on the study of religion, this course examines the many different ways in which culture and society have been influenced by Islam in different parts of the world. The objective of this course is to move beyond simplistic stereotypes in order to appreciate the lived complexities of Islam and the utility of anthropology for understanding Islam.

There are no pre-requisites for this course.

Office Hours:

In addition to the regularly scheduled office hours, I will be available by appointment.

Readings:

You are expected to undertake the readings for each session and encouraged (though not required) to prepare an outline of the material contained in the readings in a way that aids you in gaining an understanding of the topic. All readings are available on CourseWeb.

Required Texts:

Bowen, John R. 2012. *A New Anthropology of Islam*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Ghodsee, Kristen. 2010. *Muslim Lives in Eastern Europe: Gender, Ethnicity, and the Transformation of Islam in Postsocialist Bulgaria*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Kreinath, Jens. 2012. *The Anthropology of Islam Reader*. New York: Routledge.
Rasanayagam, Johan. 2011. *Islam in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan: The Morality of Experience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Ruthven, Malise. 2012. *Islam: A Very Short Introduction*. Second ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Recommended:

Strunk, William, Jr., and E.B. White. 2000. *The Elements of Style*. 4 ed. New York: Longman.
Shepard, William. 2009. *Introducing Islam*. London: Routledge.
Silverstein, Adam J. 2010. *Islamic History: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

GRADUATE STUDENTS

In addition to the above texts, students taking the course for graduate credit will be required to read the following books which will be discussed outside of class time on a fortnightly basis. Furthermore, they will be required to write an annotated bibliography of the course materials, focusing on how they relate to their own research.

Barth, Fredrik. 1993. *Balinese Worlds*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Fischer, Johan. 2011. *The Halal Frontier: Muslim Consumers in a Globalized Market*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Marsden, Magnus. 2005. *Living Islam: Muslim Religious Experience in Pakistan's North-West Frontier*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Masquelier, Adeline. 2001. *Prayer has Spoiled Everything: Possession, Power, and Identity in an Islamic Town of Niger*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- McIntosh, Janet. 2009. *The Edge of Islam: Power, Personhood, and Ethnoreligious Boundaries on the Kenya Coast*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Verkaaik, Oskar. 2004. *Migrants and Militants: Fun and Urban Violence in Pakistan*. Princeton: University of Princeton Press.
- Barfield, Thomas. 2010. *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Louw, Maria Elisabeth. 2007. *Everyday Islam in Post-Soviet Central Asia*. London: Routledge.

Optional Texts:

These books are not required for purchase, but any of the below may be useful background / introductions for those less familiar with Islam:

- Esposito, John L. 2005. *Islam: The Straight Path*. 3rd, revised ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Murata, Sachiko, and William C. Chittick. 1994. *The Vision of Islam*. St. Paul, MN: Paragon House.
- Rahman, Fazlur. 1979. *Islam*. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Turner, Colin. 2006. *Islam: The Basics*. New York: Routledge.
- Waines, David. 2003. *An Introduction to Islam*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Grades:

Participation	30%
Islam in Contemporary Events paper	20%
Short ethnographic paper	20%
Final project paper	30%

Course Requirements and Evaluation:

1. Participation:

Given the seminar nature of the course, regular attendance and active and appropriate participation in the class by every student is imperative. Attendance is expected and absences will adversely affect your class participation grade, which constitutes 30% of your grade. Participation will be evaluated by:

- Attendance
- Class discussion
- Engagement with the material
- Blackboard contributions

Each student will be responsible for presenting a 400-500 word overview/discussion of the readings on a weekly basis. This should focus on the major issues addressed by the readings and prompted by the discussion questions. It should be posted on CourseWeb by the class meeting for the week (usually Wednesday.)

Note: *Late postings will receive, at best, only partial credit. Furthermore, single lines of commentary (e.g. "the readings made me think of this post which you guys might find interesting") or off-hand remarks (e.g. "wow, that's cool.") will not count towards your participation score. Any commentary that shows some reflection, insight, or poses interesting questions will count, no matter how brief.*

2. Islam in Contemporary Events:

Islam is in the news daily, yet much of what is reported fails to take an anthropological perspective into consideration. Each student is expected to write a 750-1000 word analysis on Islam in the news/contemporary events, contextualizing the significance of the event and the anthropological contribution to understanding it. This is not merely a summary of news events, but rather the opportunity to explore an issue related to Islam and critique media coverage of the issue. Furthermore, the student will give a short in-class presentation on the paper. This will comprise 20% of your grade.

3. Ethnographic Paper:

One argument made in the course is that Islam is anthropologically most rich in its lived setting. Books help us understand events, but the experience itself is of significant importance. As such, each student is expected to visit a local Islamic environment. This could be a mosque, regular Muslim meeting group, or social activity where Muslim identity plays a defining role. The student is to go as an ethnographic observer and write a 1000-1250 word ethnographic piece focusing on a particular aspect of the experience. This piece should engage with the material discussed in class and be both descriptive and analytical. It will comprise 20% of your grade.

4. Final Project:

In lieu of a final research paper, for the final project each student will collect the 14 weeks of reading reviews/discussions in one paper. Removing the questions, though you may keep headings, you should rework the pieces to connect them, adding an introduction and conclusion to put forth an argument from the material in class. You may add outside research and other topics not covered in class, but that is not necessary. The piece should be between 5500-7000 words. This will comprise 30% of your grade.

NOTE: All written work must be submitted electronically via “Turnitin.” Hard copies are to be handed in as well. Failure to do both will result in your grade being lowered by a letter. Also, currently, no quizzes or exams are scheduled. This may change on short notice if it appears that students are not keeping up with the work.

Student Conduct:

At all times students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the norms of the University of Pittsburgh’s academic standards. This includes responding and behaving respectfully and civilly to all in the class. Students are expected to follow all formal university policies. In addition, by the act of submitting individual work for evaluation, students assert that the work is their own. Neither plagiarism nor dishonesty will be tolerated. With this publication students are on notice, both actual and constructive, that all University policies apply to every component of this course, including but not limited to those relating to academic misconduct.

Furthermore, although computers can be used for note-taking purposes, web surfing, emailing, chatting, texting and other forms of communication that distract from participation in the class will not be tolerated. Students who do this will be asked to leave the class.

Academic Integrity

All students are expected to adhere to the standards of academic honesty. Any work submitted by a student must represent his/her own intellectual contribution and efforts. Any student found to be engaged in cheating, plagiarism, or any other acts of academic dishonesty will be subject to a failing grade in the assignment and/or the course and to further disciplinary action.

Special Accommodations

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting accommodations, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and Disability Resources and Services at www.drs.pitt.edu or call 648-7890 or 412-383-7355 (TTY) as early as possible in the term. The DRS office is located in 140 William Pitt Union.

Schedule:

Introduction and Overview of Islam in Practice

(Week 1)

M—7 Jan Introduction and Overview of Class

Readings:

Harper's Index Islam

Ruthven, Malise. 2012. *Islam: A Very Short Introduction*. Second ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

W—9 Jan Overview of Islam in Practice

Readings:

Kreinath, Toward the Anthropology of Islam

Fluehr-Lobban, Carolyn. 2004. *Islamic Societies in Practice*. Second ed. Gainesville: University of Florida Press. pp. xi-59.

Exploring an Anthropology of Islam

(Week 2)

M—14 Jan Conceptualizing Islam

Readings:

Bowen, How to think about religions—Islam, for example

Gilsenan, Michael. *Recognizing Islam*. (in Kreinath)

Geertz, Clifford. *Islam Observed* (in Kreinath)

W—16 Jan Approaching Islam

Readings:

El-Zein, Abdul Hamid. Beyond ideology and theology (in Kreinath)

Asad, Talal. The idea of an anthropology of Islam (in Kreinath)

(Week 3)

M—21 Jan *No class; holiday schedule*

W—23 Jan Islam in Practice

Readings:

Bowen, Learning

Loeffler, Reinhold. 1988. *Islam in Practice: Religious Beliefs in a Persian Village*. Albany: SUNY Press. pp. 1-36, 71-117.

Film: An Oral History of Islam in Pittsburgh

(Week 4)

M—28 Jan Prayer

Readings:

Bowen, Healing and praying

Mahmood, Saba. Rehearsed spontaneity and the conventionality of ritual (in Kreinath)

Henkel, Heiko. Between belief and unbelief lies the performance of *salat* (in Kreinath)

W—30 Jan Islam in Pittsburgh

Visit, The Islamic Center of Pittsburgh

(Week 5)

M—4 Feb Ramadan

(select ethnographic site)

Readings:

Bowen, Reshaping sacrifice

Frankl, P.J.L. The observance of Ramadan in Swahili-Land (in Kreinath)

Schielke, Samuli. Being good in Ramadan (in Kreinath)

W—6 Feb Hajj

Readings:

Scupin, Raymond. The social significance of the *hajj* for Thai Muslims (in Kreinath)

Cooper, Barbara M. The strength in the song (in Kreinath)

(Week 6)

M—11 Feb Sacrifice

Readings:

Bowen, Pious organizing

Bowen, John R. On scriptural essentialism and ritual variation (in Kreinath)

Werbner, Pnina. Sealing the Koran (in Kreinath)

W—13 Feb Almsgiving

Readings:

Weiss, Holger. Reorganizing social welfare among Muslims (in Kreinath)

Benthall, Jonathan. Financial worship (in Kreinath)

*(Week 7)**(1st ethnographic visit)*

M—18 Feb Situating Anthropology of Islam

Readings:

Bowen, Judging

Ahmed, Akbar S. Toward Islamic anthropology (in Kreinath)

Tapper, Richard. Islamic anthropology and anthropology of Islam (in Kreinath)

W—20 Feb Representing Islam

Readings:

Said, Edward. *Covering Islam* (in Kreinath)Varisco, Daniel. *Islam Obscured* (in Kreinath)**Islamic Variations and Ethnographic Encounters***(Week 8)**(2nd ethnographic visit)*

M—25 Feb Sects

Readings:

Bowen, Migrating and adapting

Zubaida, Sami. 2009. Sects in Islam. In *Oxford Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, edited by P.B. Clarke. New York: Oxford University Press. 545-561.Marsden, Magnus. 2005. To Eat or Not To Eat? Ismai'lis and Sunnis in Rowshan. In *Living Islam: Muslim Religious Experience in Pakistan's North-West Frontier*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 193-238

W—27 Feb Sufism

Readings:

Heck, Paul L. 2007. Sufism--What Is It Exactly? *Religion Compass* 1 (1):148-164.Yukleyen, Ahmet. 2010. "Production of Mystical Islam in Europe: Religious Authorization in the Süleymanli Sufi Community." *Contemporary Islam: Dynamics of Muslim Life* no. 4:269-288.Attar, Farid Ud-Din. 1984. *The Conference of the Birds*. Translated by A. Darbandi and D. Davis. New York: Penguin. Pp. 9-45.Rumi, Jelaluddin. 2001. *The Soul of Rumi: A New Collection of Ecstatic Poems*. Translated by C. Barks, J. Moyne, N. Ergin, A. J. Arberry, R. Nicholson and M. G. Gupta. San Francisco: Harper Collins. Pp. 3-14, 19-27.

Film: Habiba: A Sufi Saint from Uzbekistan

(Week 9)

M—4 Mar Missionaries and Converts

Readings:

Bowen, Mobilization

Balci, Bayram. 2003. Fethullah Gülen's Missionary Schools in Central Asia and their Role in the Spreading of Turkism and Islam. *Religion, State & Society* 31 (2):151-177.

Janson, Marloes. 2005. "Roaming about for God's Sake: The Upsurge of the *Tabligh Jama'at* in the Gambia." *Journal of Religion in Africa* 35(4):450-481

W—6 Mar Gender

****Ethnographic Paper DUE****

Readings:

Abu-Lughod, Lila. 2002. Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? *American Anthropologist*. 104(3): 783-790.

Snajdr, Edward. 2005. Gender, power, and the performance of justice: Muslim women's responses to domestic violence in Kazakhstan. *American Ethnologist*. 32(2):294-311

Film: (Un)Veiled: Muslim Women Talk About Hijab

6-13 Mar *No class; holiday schedule*

(Week 10)

M—18 Mar Negotiating Muslimness

Readings:

Knight, Michael Muhammad. 2004. *The Taqwacores*. Brooklyn: Soft Skull Press. pp. 5-45.

Saleh, Nabil A. 2008. *The Qadi and the Fortune Teller*. Northampton, MA: Interlink Publishing. pp. 1-53.

Film: New Muslim Cool

W—20 Mar Seeing the Everyday of Islam

Readings:

Schielke, Samuli. 2010. Second Thoughts about the Anthropology of Islam, or How to Make Sense of Grand Schemes in Everyday Life. In *Working Papers*. Berlin: Zentrum Moderner Orient.

Montgomery, David W. Anthropology, Islam, and the Navigation of Religiosity.

(Week 11)

M—25 Mar Politics and Islam

Readings:

Soares, Benjamin, and Filippo Osella. 2010. Islam, Politics, Anthropology. In *Islam, Politics, Anthropology*, edited by F. Osella and B. Soares. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. 1-22.

Devji, Faisal. 2008. *The Terrorist in Search of Humanity: Militant Islam and Global Politics*. New York: Columbia University Press. pp. viii-23.

Kurzman, Charles. 2011. *The Missing Martyrs: Why There Are So Few Muslim Terrorists*. New York: Oxford University Press. 3-24

W—27 Mar Globalization and Modernity

Readings:

Lawrence, Bruce. 2008. Islam in the Age of Globalization. *Religion Compass*. 2(3): 331-339.

Hefner, Robert W. 2005. Modernity and the Remaking of Muslim Politics. In *Remaking Muslim Politics: Pluralism, Contestation, Democratization*, edited by R.W. Hefner. Princeton: Princeton University Press. pp. 1-36.

(Week 12)

M—1 Apr Secularism and the State

Readings:

- An-Na'im, Abdullahi Ahmed. 2008. Introduction: Why Muslims Need a Secular State. In *Islam and the Secular State: Negotiating the Future of Shari'a*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. pp. 1-44.
- Barfield, Thomas. 2005. An Islamic State Is a State Run by Good Muslims: Religion as a Way of Life and Not an Ideology in Afghanistan. In *Remaking Muslim Politics: Pluralism, Contestation, Democratization*, edited by R.W. Hefner. Princeton: Princeton University Press. pp. 213-239.

Case Studies: Ethnographies

W—3 Apr Islam in the Balkans

Reading:

Ghodsee, Kristen. 2010. *Muslim Lives in Eastern Europe: Gender, Ethnicity, and the Transformation of Islam in Postsocialist Bulgaria*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

(Week 13)

M—8 Apr Islam in the Balkans, continued

Reading:

Ghodsee, *Muslim Lives in Eastern Europe* (continued)

W—10 Apr Islam in Central Asia

Reading:

Rasanayagam, Johan. 2011. *Islam in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan: The Morality of Experience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

(Week 14)

M—15 Apr Islam in Central Asia, continued

Reading:

Rasanayagam, *Islam in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan* (continued)

Summary

W—17 Apr Summary, Wrap Up

****FINAL PAPER DUE****

ASSIGNMENTS & SEQUENCING

Readings & Online Postings:

Timeline: weekly

Goal: to demonstrate engagement with the reading material, i.e. that you are both doing the readings and thinking about the issues presented in them in a broader context.

n.b.

1. Each week you will be given a discussion question that will assist in guiding your readings. You should consider these questions in relating how the various readings might fit together.
2. READINGS: For some, the course will seem like it has a lot of reading. One reason behind this is to encourage students to read for ideas and to develop the skill of reading within the time they have rather than merely the time it takes. It is expected that you are spending between 2-3 hours preparing for each class meeting (for a 3 credit course it is expected that you spend between 2-3 hours per unit of credit, thus between 6-9 hours/week). Force yourself to get through the assigned readings in that time frame, reading quickly and strategically rather than reading for every word.

Thus, it is expected that you will spend 6-8 hours reading and 1-3 hours writing/preparing for assignments.

3. ONLINE POSTINGS: For the online postings, you are expected to summarize the main ideas in the readings, making the connections between the ideas in the readings and responding to them in ways that highlight these connections and emphasize the broader significance of the readings (in relation to the weekly discussion question.)

Analytical Summary of Islam in Contemporary Events:

Timeline: once during semester

Goal: to explore a theme of interest in Islam and see how it relates to the contemporary world and is discussed in the media

n.b.

1. Taking a topic of interest, you should research the issues as it relates to Islam and look at how it is discussed in contemporary media, paying attention to the role anthropology has in understanding the issue. The paper should have the following sections:
 - a. summary of issue
 - b. role of Islam in the issue
 - c. how it is discussed in the media
 - d. future of issue
2. The in-class presentation should differ from the paper, focusing instead on an audience whose attention you will have for 15 minutes.

Ethnographic Paper:

Timeline: mtg 17 (wk 9)

- by wk 5 select your ethnographic site
- by wk 7 have 1st visit
- by wk 8 have 2nd visit

Goal: see Islam outside of the classroom; to see how Islam as lived differs from assumptions about Islam and textual generalizations; and to have an experience of ethnographic observation.

n.b.

1. In going to the ethnographic site you should contact the group or organization first to inquire a good time to visit. This will likely provide an opportunity to talk with members of the community, where you should engage in a normal conversation, exploring the role(s) Islam and community play for them. Immediately after the meeting, write down all of the details of what took place, as this will be useful material for the writing of your ethnographic paper.
2. The ethnographic paper is not merely a recounting of the experience but should have some level of analysis wherein you explore a particular aspect of the experience in relation to what members of the community remark as being important.

Final Project:

Timeline: mtg 27 (wk 14)

Goal: synthesize what we have learned in the course by demonstrating the ability to think critically about Islam and anthropology.

n.b.

1. In lieu of a final paper, the final project will afford the opportunity to review the materials covered in class and to analytical synthesize them into a single narrative. This will resemble an annotated bibliography. To do this, collect each of your weekly summaries, and reread them to make any changes to them you want, based on information you may have learned since you first wrote the review. Add an analytical introduction and conclusion and rework the flow of the paper so the narrative is consistent. Headings may help with how you structure the paper.