

**Hartford International University  
for Religion and Peace**

**Muslims in American Religious History:  
Comparative Perspectives on Race, Gender, and Politics\* (HI-628)**

Fall 2022

Timur R. Yuskaev, PhD

Office: Budd Building, Room 5

E-mail: [tyuskaev@hartfordinternational.edu](mailto:tyuskaev@hartfordinternational.edu)

Phone: 860-509-9554

Class Sessions: Asynchronous Online

Office hours: Mondays and Tuesdays from 12:00 pm to 2:30 pm

**Course Description**

What makes Muslims an American religious minority? How have they shaped American religious history together with other groups? And what can they learn from each other's experiences? This course is an exploration into the history and contemporary life of a particular religious minority in conversation with parallel stories of other groups. Spanning the period from the late 18th to the early 21st century, the course will examine Muslim engagements with such quintessential themes of American life as race, freedom, justice (specifically, gender justice), and politics. Each of these themes will be examined through comparative lenses, reflecting in particular on African-American, Jewish, Catholic and Buddhist experiences.

This course fulfills the following curricular requirements:

MAIRS - Islamic Studies: Religious Pluralism

MAIRS - Interreligious Studies: Elective

MAIRS - Ministerial Studies: Beliefs and Practices

Learning Outcomes:

- To demonstrate foundational and critical knowledge of one's own religion
- To demonstrate the knowledge, capacities, and willingness to respectfully engage other religions and world views
- To demonstrate knowledge and skills for dialogical and constructive engagement with diversity
- To demonstrate the ability to relate theory and practice in the social contexts in which a religion's communities exist
- To demonstrate foundational and critical knowledge of the Islamic tradition as relevant to Muslim chaplains

- To develop an appreciation of living in a pluralistic world and dialogical skills needed to work in multi-faith and diverse settings
- To acquire a comprehensive knowledge in Islamic Studies, Christian-Muslim Relations, and Interreligious Engagement/Interfaith Dialogue
- To develop the competence to produce original research and written works to advance the scholarship on Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations for the benefit of religious communities, academy, and society

**Plagiarism policy – plagiarism is not tolerated**, see: <https://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/policies/>

### Evaluation

1. Class participation (20%)
2. Weekly reflections/"talking points" (35%)
3. Mid-term essay (20%) – **due November 2, 2022**
4. Final essay (25%) – **due date January 11, 2023**

### Logistics

#### 1) Weekly Reflections and Discussion Forum:

You will need to participate in the class discussion forum **each week**. In an online course, the discussion forum functions in the same way that classroom discussions do in a face-to-face setting. These are your opportunities to engage with other students and the instructor. This is your chance to share and test your ideas.

**Your participation in the discussion forum is mandatory.** It should take place in three ways:

- Your reflections on the assigned material
- One question about the readings
- Your short answers to fellow classmates and respectful comments on their ideas.

Your weekly reflections should respond to the guidelines I will post at each week. These assignments are designed to help you analyze the material and generate class discussion.

The reflections should be **around 300 words** in length. (Please don't make them too long, but also please do not worry about reaching 300 words. If what you post is brilliant, let it be brief – of course, pay attention to the "if" clause.)

Each reflection should end with a question that relates to the assigned text. Your question may or may not relate to the subject of your reflection. It is just an opportunity for you to engage in a conversation with your colleagues about something that stirred your interest. Please keep up this

routine of asking questions throughout the semester. We will use them to jump start our discussions.

In most cases, you will be expected to complete the readings and post your reflections by **Wednesday**. By **Thursday**, you will have to read other students' reflections, find a question that they ask that intrigues you most, and answer it in the discussion forum. If someone answers your question, try to respond to their answer. If nobody answers your question, try to engage in a discussion that addresses another student's inquiry. You must post all of your consequent responses (ongoing discussion, as in when you would like to respond to more than one reflection, or respond to somebody's comments on your reflection) by 11:59 pm on **Friday** each week.

Your reflections will be graded as either acceptable (plus) or unacceptable (minus). All you have to do to receive a plus is to briefly but substantively engage with the week's readings. This means that you will have to

- Formulate a question and/or hunch (there are times when a good question is enough, but one needs to explain it)
- Provide brief reference to something in the texts that supports your question and hunch.
- Make sure that your reflection is around 300 words in length (brilliant brevity is encouraged)
- **Make sure to submit your reflection on time.**

**The grading scale for the reflections is:**

A = 12 acceptable entries

B = 11 acceptable entries

C = 10 acceptable entries

F = fewer than 10 acceptable entries

Once you post your reflections on the discussion forum, I will comment on it on Canvas. In some cases, I will e-mail my response to you directly. This will be in cases where your reflection is going off track or if I have some further suggestions.

Note that your reflections and participation in discussions amount to 35% of the overall grade. So, please, make sure to post your reflections on time (even if they are imperfect). Just move along with the course.

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2) Midterm and Final Essays:

You will have to submit two essays during the semester. The midterm essay should be 5-7 pages in length. The final essay should be 10-12 pages. I will assign the topic for the midterm paper. However, you will be responsible for selecting the subject of your final essay. Please feel free to contact me with your ideas for both papers at any stage of preparation.

Grading standards for the essays will be:

A = Excellent. Excellent presentation and analysis that demonstrates original interpretation.

B = Good. Solid command of facts and good attempt at analysis.

C+ = Adequate in the sense of doing minimal compliance with the assignment.

C = Poor; did not complete the assignment adequately but shows some effort.

F = Failing; did not complete the assignment.

### **Required Texts\***

- 1) Moustafa Bayoumi, *How Does It Feel To Be A Problem: Being Young and Arab in America* (Penguin Books, 2009)
- 2) Kambiz GhaneaBassiri, *A History of Islam in America: From the New World to the New World Order* (Cambridge University Press, 2010)
- 3) Edward Curtis, editor, *The Columbia Sourcebook of Muslims in the United States* (Columbia University Press, 2008)
- 4) Shuly Schwartz, *The Rabbi's Wife: The Rebbetzin in American Jewish Life* (New York University Press, 2006)
- 5) Amina Wadud, *Inside the Gender Jihad: Women's Reform in Islam* (Oneworld Publications, 2006)
- 6) John T. McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom: A History* (W.W. Norton & Company, 2003)
- 7) Wendy Cadge, *Heartwood: The First Generation of Theravada Buddhism in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004)

\*All the assigned readings are available via Digital Theological Library or posted in CANVAS

Additional required material will be assigned for some sessions and posted on class website.

## Schedule

### Week 1 (September 12): Introduction 1

Introductions and initial light discussion. See instructions in CANVAS.

### Week 2 (Week of September 19): Introduction 2

- Moustafa Bayoumi, "Preface," (pp. 1-12) "Akram," (pp. 115-148) and "Afterword," (pp. 259-270) from *How Does It Feel To Be A Problem*.

### Week 3 (Week of September 26):

- GhaneaBassiri, Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2
- *Columbia Sourcebook*, the Autobiography of Omar Ibn Sayyid (pp. 5-8) (Also, find images of the text online; it is available at the UNC library website, for example.)
- Michael Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Masks*, "Vessey's Challenge" and "Turning Down the Pot" (PDF on class website)
- Yuskaev, Introduction to *Speaking Qur'an* (PDF on class website)

### Week 4 (Week of October 3):

- GhaneaBassiri, Chapters 3 and 4 (pp. 95-164)
- *Columbia Sourcebook*:
  - Webb, pp. 9-17
  - Blyden, pp. 18-21
  - Root, pp. 22-28
  - WPA Interviews, pp.29-40
- Susan Nance, "Mystery of the Moorish Science Temple: Southern Blacks and American Alternative Spirituality in 1920s Chicago," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* (2002) 2:124

### Week 5 (Week of October 10):

- GhaneaBassiri, Chapters 5 and 6 (pp. 165-271)
- *Columbia Sourcebook*:
  - a) Pir Inayat Khan, pp. 46-52
  - b) Moslem Sunrise, pp. 53-58
  - c) Noble Drew Ali, pp. 59-63
  - d) Elijah Muhammad, pp. 92-95

### Week 6 (Week of October 17):

- GhaneaBassiri, Chapter 7 (pp. 272-326)
- Timur Yuskaev, Chapter 3 from *Speaking Qur'an* (PDF on class website)
- Listen to:

Audio recording of Imam W.D. Mohammed, "Live in Harlem, NY. New Africa: A New Mind, A New Life, A New Beginning for Black People in America." (Posted on class site)

(Those who may not be able to listen to the recording, can instead find a transcript of one of W.D. Mohammed's speeches on [www.newafricaradio.com](http://www.newafricaradio.com). Please look into the speeches from 2008, which can be located here:

<http://www.newafricaradio.com/articles/index.html>, select one, and read it.)

### Week 7 (Week of October 24):

- Julianne Hammer, "Studying American Muslim Women," from *The Cambridge Companion to American Islam* (pp. 330-344; PDF on class website)
- Schwarz, *The Rabbi's Wife* (the whole book)
- Yuskaev, Chapter 2 from *Speaking Qur'an* (PDF on class website)

### Week 8 (Week of October 31): Midterm week.

Read:

- Wadud, *Inside the Gender Jihad* (the whole book)
- Sourcebook, Section 4 (pp. 179-263)
- Two or three poems by Mohja Kahf (posted on class site)
- Marwa Aly, A 9/11 anniversary sermon (posted on class site)

Instead of a weekly reflection, please submit your **midterm** by the end of the day on **Wednesday**. Go to Assignments and submit the paper through the Midterm Essay link.

The midterm should be 5-7 pages in length. It should be an extended reflection on one of the texts assigned this week with the help of texts you have read until this point in the course.

In addition, by the end of the day on **Thursday** post a short summary of your midterm in Discussion Board (this mimics what one would normally do as they present their paper in a live class session).

That summary should be just one paragraph in length. Include in it: 1) your title; 2) the central question you ask in your paper; 3) indication of the material you investigate as you answer that question; 4) your thesis statement (the answer to your question).

This week's discussion will be based on these midterm presentations. Each student should read other students presentations and then comment and pose one follow up question to one presentation by the end of the day on **Thursday**.

### **Week 9 (Week of November 7):**

- GhaneaBassiri, Chapter 8 and Epilogue (pp. 327-382)
- Sourcebook, Section 5 (pp. 264-335)
- McGreevy, Introduction and Chapters 1-3 (pp. 1-90)

### **Week 10 (Week of November 14):**

- McGreevy, the rest of the book: Chapters 4-10 (pp. 91-296)
- Read one of the two texts (the first option is shorter):
  - Option 1: Yuskaev, "Muslim Public Intellectuals and Global Muslim Thought," from *The Cambridge Companion to American Islam* (pp. 226-278; PDF on class website)
  - Option 2: Yuskaev, Chapter 1 from *Speaking Qur'an* (posted on class website)

### **Week 11 (Week of November 21): THANKSGIVING BREAK**

### **Week 12: (Week of November 28):**

- Jose Casanova, "Civil Society and Religion: Retrospective Reflections on Catholicism and Prospective Reflections on Islam." (PDF on class website)
- Amaney Jamal and Liali Albana, "Demographics, Political Participation, and Representation," from *The Cambridge Companion to American Islam* (pp. 98-118; PDF on class website)
- Bayoumi, "Yasmin," (pp. 81-114) from *How Does It Feel to be a Problem?*

### **Week 13 (Week of December 5):**

- Wendy Cadge, *Heartwood* (the whole book)
- Sourcebook, Section 6 (pp. 336-412)

### **Week 14 (Week of December 12):**

- Yuskaev, Chapter 4 and Afterword from *Speaking Qur'an*, “Qur'an and Politics” (PDF on class website)
- View two online videos by Hamza Yusuf
  - a) “Making Sense of Our Past” (There are many places one can find it. One of them is on <http://www.aswatalislam.net/FilesList.aspx?T=Video&C=Lectures&T1=Hamza%20Yusuf>)
  - b) “Give and Take for God’s Sake” (you can find this one easily on YouTube and elsewhere)

### **Week 15 (Week of December 19): concluding discussion**

Instead a reflection each student must prepare and present their final paper proposal. Proposals must be submitted on **Wednesday**. They should include:

- a) preliminary title (include subtitle);
- b) indication of the material/case study the paper will analyze (2-5 sentences);
- c) central analytical question (1 sentence);
- d) thesis statement (answer to the analytical question; 1-3 sentences);
- e) brief outline of your analysis (3-10 sentences)
- f) annotated bibliography (under each title, provide a brief, one sentence explanation of how that material will be used in the paper).

Subsequent class discussion should proceed with the aim of helping other students as they are preparing to write their final papers. So, in your responses to your colleagues, ask for clarifications, offer suggestions, etc.

**Final Papers: deadline January 11**  
(submit via email: [tyuskaev@hartfordinternational.edu](mailto:tyuskaev@hartfordinternational.edu))