Legal opinions issued by Muslim scholars relate to all individual and collective aspects of the material and spiritual life of the believers who ask for them. When used with an appropriate methodology, they offer great avenues, sometimes even amazing ones, to explore the everyday realities and interrogations of Muslim societies, past and present. Coffee, tobacco, cannabis, opium and other drugs, music, dance, trance and sex, marginality, extremism and violence, pious practices and social conventions, relations with non-Muslims and *jihād* are among the topics considered in this course. Mamlûk, Ottoman and modern sources (both from books and the internet) will be read and commented on. A basic knowledge of Arabic, Islam, and the history of Muslim societies would be useful.

**Class will meet:** ten weekdays, from Tuesday May 26th to Friday June 5th, 9 am - 1:30 pm.

**Course Objectives**
1) Students should be able to find their way around in the major reference works on fatwā jurisprudence.
2) They are expected to gain an acquaintance with some major social-cultural debates in classical and modern Islamic societies.
3) They should also be able to have an informed opinion on some modern religious controversies.
4) They should be able to benefit from the methodological approach adopted in these classes and apply it for their own studies and/or research projects.

**Course Requirements**
1) It is strongly recommended that the student arrive at the first class already having a general knowledge of the Arabic language, about the religion of Islam, and about the history and geography of Muslim peoples. They should also be able to find their way around in the major reference tools for Islamic Studies (*Encyclopaedia of Islam, Index Islamicus*…).
2) Daily preparations and readings (**THE ASSIGNMENTS ARE ESSENTIAL**), class participation, final presentation.
3) Attendance in class is required. If you know that you will be unable to attend a class please inform the professor in advance. Missing two classes will result in an automatic lowering of your final grade by 30%. Missing three or more classes will result in automatic failure of the course.

The final grade will be based upon the following:

1) Active class participation (60%).

2) The presentations during Class IX-X (June 5-6). Each student will be responsible for the oral presentation, commentary on, and discussion of one or two fatwās, past or present, and their social-cultural context. This oral presentation (20%) will be based on an original written research paper (10 pages maximum, 20%), to be submitted to the teacher, and circulated on paper in the class, before the presentation. The topic should be chosen by the end of class V in consultation with the professor.

* All written work is to conform to the seminary writing guidelines, which can be found online at: http://www.hartsem.edu/student/forms/researchpaper.pdf. The Hartford Seminary Grading Guidelines will be the standard of evaluation for work in the course.

IMPORTANT: Plagiarism, the failure to give proper credit for the words and ideas of another person, whether published or unpublished, is strictly prohibited. All written material submitted by students must be their own original work; where the words and ideas of others are used they must be acknowledged. Credit will not be given for work containing plagiarism, and plagiarism can lead to failure of a course. Please see the Hartford Seminary Catalogue for the full plagiarism policy.

GENERAL REFERENCES

ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF ISLAM, INDEX ISLAMICUS…

Class Schedule

I. TUESDAY, MAY 26. INTRODUCTION. MUFTĪS, THEIR FATWĀS, AND MUSLIM SOCIETIES

   General references:

   EI2 (= Encyclopedia of Islam), art. Fatwā.
II. WEDNESDAY, MAY 27. MUSIC, DANCE AND TRANCE

General references:

EII, art. Samâ’, Râks, Wadjd.


Assignments:

BAIG, Khalid, Slippery Stone. An inquiry into Islam’s stance on music (Garden Grove, CA: Openmind Press,
III. THURSDAY, MAY 28. CANNABIS, OPIUM, ETC.

General references:

EI2, art. Afyūn, Bandj.


Assignments:


Choose from books, the press, journals, or the internet, for presentation and discussion in class, a fatwa, article or video relating to this class’ topics.

IV. FRIDAY, MAY 29. COFFEE AND TOBACCO

General references:

EI2, art. Kahwa, Tutun.


Assignments:


Choose from books, the press, journals, or the internet, for presentation and discussion in class, a fatwa, article or video relating to this class’ topics.
V. SATURDAY, MAY 30. MARRIAGE, LOVE AND SEXUALITY

General references:


Assignments:


Choose from books, the press, journals, or the internet, for presentation and discussion in class, a fatwa, article or video relating to this class’ topics.

VI. MONDAY, JUNE 1. ASTROLOGY, CHARLATANRY, AND MEDICINE

General references:


Assignments:


Choose from books, the press, journals, or the internet, for presentation and discussion in class, a fatwa, article or video relating to this class’ topics.

VII. TUESDAY, JUNE 2. THE CITY, THE MARKET, THE COUNTRYSIDE

General references:


Assignments:


Choose from books, the press, journals, or the internet, for presentation and discussion in class, a fatwa, article or video relating to this class’ topics.

VIII. WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3. TYRANNY, JIHĀD, MUSLIMS AND NON-MUSLIMS

General references:


Assignments:


IX. THURSDAY, JUNE 4. *BE YOUR OWN MUFTI, Individual presentations I*

Fatwâ Banks & Collections:

ISLAMONLINE.NET: http://www.islamonline.net/completesearch/english/CounsellorSearch.asp?hID=0.

ISLAM TODAY: http://en.islamtoday.net/Fatwa-Archive.


Assignment: On the basis of your research paper, present and discuss with the class, in their societal context, one or two ancient or modern fatwâs concerning one of the topics NOT explored during these two weeks.

X. FRIDAY, JUNE 5. *BE YOUR OWN MUFTI, Individual presentations II*

Fatwâ Banks & Collections:

ISLAMONLINE.NET: http://www.islamonline.net/completesearch/english/CounsellorSearch.asp?hID=0.

ISLAM TODAY: http://en.islamtoday.net/Fatwa-Archive.


Assignment: On the basis of your research paper, present and discuss with the class, in their societal context, one or two ancient or modern fatwâs concerning one of the topics NOT explored during these two weeks.