A note from the Dean: This course will be taught by Dr. Sayed Ammar Nakhjavani, who will join the faculty this fall as the Faculty Associate in Shi’a Studies and Dialogue among Islamic Legal Schools. This course is scheduled for **Thursday, from 9:00 am to 5:30 pm**, on the following dates: September 17, October 8, October 29, November 19 and December 10.

This syllabus is posted for your review in order to give the interested students a good idea of what the course will look like. Dr. Nakhjavani will post his own syllabus soon but it will share many things with Dr. Ayoub’s syllabus.

**SHI’ITE ISLAM: Thought and History**

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Office hours will be determined by the needs and schedules of the students

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**Syllabus**

**Course DESCRIPTION**

This course will be based on the assumption that Islam is both a belief system and a world civilization. Therefore, all movements, sects and schools of thought will be treated as an integral part of Islam, broadly understood. The course will introduce Shi’ism as a general phenomenon within Muslim history, but will concentrate on Twelver Imami Shi’ism, as it is the most developed and influential Shi’ite legal school (*madhhab*). We will study Shi’ism in Muslim history from its beginning to the present. We will examine primary texts in translation, and when possible, in original languages. We will also read and discuss a good sampling of secondary literature.

This is a graduate seminar that will be based on class participation and lectures. Grading will be based on class attendance and participation, weekly readings and discussions, a class presentation of an individual research of a topic that will be developed into a 12-15 page final term paper.

**Grading**

Grades will be computed as follows: class participation, discussion and leading weekly book discussions 30 percent; class presentation of research topic 20 percent and final term paper 50 percent.
Course Outline and weekly topics

Week 1: I - Background
   A. Islam: name, concept and worldview
   B. Arabia before Islam: the place of Makkah and the impact of Judaism and Christianity.

Week 2: II - Formative History of the Muslim Ummah
A. The Prophet Muhammad and the Theocratic Community
B. The end of theocratic rule and the beginning of the Caliphate
C. The normative or “rightly guided (ra>shidu>n) first four caliphs.

Readings: Ayoub – The Crisis of Muslim History

Week 3: III - The beginnings of Shi`i history and the Umayyad caliphate
A. from the death of `Ali, the first Shi`i Imam to the tragedy of Karbala’ and martyrdom of his son H{usayn, the third Imam.
B. Protest movements: Shi’ism and Sufism.

Readings: Momen – Introduction to Shi’I Islam ch 2- 5

Week 4: IV – The tragedy of Karbala and its devotional and ritualistic aspects
A. Poetic portrayals of the Tragedy, Elegiac (mara>thi@ Literature)
B. The ziya>rah or spiritual visitation to the Imam’s tomb
C. Memorial services ((maja>lis al-‘aza<’)
D. Visual portrayals, the Persian Passion Play (The shabi@h khaneh)

A video of Shi’I rituals will be shown.

Readings: Ayoub – Redemptive Suffering Ch.4-6

Week 5: V - The Shi`ite Imams after Karbala’
E. Ali@ Zayn al-`Abidin [son of H{usayn]
B. his son Muh{ammad al-Baqir
C. al-Baqir’s son the sixth Imam Ja`far al-Sadiq, the founder of the Ja`fari madhhab, or legal school.

Readings: Kitab al Irshad Imams 4-6
Momen – ch. 7 Imamate

Week 6: VI - Penitents, avengers and rebellious mawa>li@: Early Shi`ite extremist movements
A. The Kaysan\niyyah
B. The Khat{t{a>biiyyah
C. other temporary fringe movements.


Weeks 7 and 8: VII - The Isma`i@liyah
A. rise and pre-Fatimid developments
B. the Fatimid period
C. the Duru>z (Druzes) sect
D. post Fatimid developments

Readings: Daftari, Farhad, A Short History of the Ismailis (for week 7) from pp. 21 to 114
(for week 8) pp. 120 to the end.

Weeks 9 and 10: VIII - The ithna`ashariyyah or Twelver Shi`ah
A. the period of the Imāms to the end of the minor occultation (al-ghaybah al-sughra) of the Twelfth Imām
B. Beginning of the Greater Occultation (al-ghaybah al-kubra): crisis and consolidation
C. Buwayhidd support and the crystallization of moderate Shi‘ism
D. Shi‘ism under the Seljuks and Mongols

Readings:
Modarressi, Hossein. Crisis and Consolidation in the Formative Period of Shi‘ite Islam
Tabataba’i, ‘Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husain (Seyyed Hoseyn Nasr, trans. And ed.). Shi‘ite Islam (part 2)

Week 11: XI – Development of the Religious Sciences
A. The Qur’a<n and sunnah in the view of the Shi‘ah and rise of Shi‘I h{adi@th:
   the Four Books and other sources
b. Juris Prudence (fiqh)
c. Theology (kala<m)
d. Philosophy and mysticism (‘irfa<n)

Readings: Tabataba’i, ‘Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husain (Seyyed Hoseyn Nasr, trans. And ed.). Shi‘ite Islam (part 3)
Fyzee, Asaf A. A, A Shi‘ite Creed

Week 12: XII - The Nuṣayrī - ‘Alawīs
A. Introduction to Nuṣayrī history
B. ‘Alawīs religion
C. The ‘Alawīs of Syria in modern times

Week 13: XIII - Safavid Iran [1600] to the 20th Century and Pahlavi Era
A. Consolidation of Shi‘ite power under the Safavids and the role of the ‘ulama’
B. post Safavid developments: the Religious Establishment and the authority of the supreme mujtahid, or marja`

Readings: Momen – Introduction to Shi‘I Islam Ch.6
Nasr, Vali, Reza. The Shia Revival How Conflicts Within Islam will Shape the Future

Week 14: XIV - Iranian Islamic Revolution, 1979
A. Shi‘ism in the twentieth century, before the Revolution
B. The Islamic Revolution and after: whither Shi‘ism?

Readings: Islam and Revolution 1: Islamic Government from Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini translated and edited by Hamid Algar p. 27-167 and Mavani "Ayatullah Khomeini's Concept of Governance (wilayat al-faqih) and the Classical Shi‘i Doctrine of Imamate"

Week 15: XV – Class presentations and concluding the course.
**Required Readings:**


* Denotes books you need to buy. The rest will be made available online or electronically through email.

**Recommended Readings**


For further research and additional readings, please consult the extensive library of Shi’ite sources on line: [www.al-islam.org](http://www.al-islam.org) and [http://www.noorlib.ir/View/en/Default](http://www.noorlib.ir/View/en/Default)

All required books will be assigned for weekly readings, where two students will introduce a book and lead a discussion of it. It is of course assumed that all students will also have read each book in the assigned, and not listed order. This is an important part of your class participation, which will constitute 30% of your final grade.