Instructor: Ermin Sinanović
Email: ermin@iiit.org
Class sessions: Sep. 21-23; Nov. 2-4; Dec. 7-9 (Fri 5:00-8:00pm; Sat 9:00am-5:00pm; Sun 8:00am-noon)
Office Hours (applies to dates when class meets): Fri, 3:30-5:00pm; Sat 5:00-6:00pm; Sun noon-1:00pm) or via phone/Skype, by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to major concepts, trends, and issues in contemporary Islamic thought. It historicizes and analyzes the Muslim encounter with modernity and the various intellectual trends this encounter has spawned, since mid-19th century until present times. Major concepts include: tawḥīd (oneness of God), tajdid (renewal), iṣlāḥ (reform), ijtihād (intellectual effort; reasoning), khilāfah (vicegerency), shūrā (consultation), and Ummah (global Muslim community). Special attention will be given to contemporary Islamic revival and reform, rise of Islamic movements, and their impact on Islamic thought. Finally, the course will introduce and assess major intellectual, political, and religious trends in contemporary Islamic thought: traditionalism, Salafism, Islamism, and intellectual reformism.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this course, the students will be able to:

1. Identify and classify major trends in contemporary Islamic thought by understanding historical context in which these trends and ideas emerged
2. Evaluate historical trends and their impact on contemporary Islamic thought
3. Differentiate ideational and contextual influences on major Muslim thinkers in the modern era
4. Assess and critique Muslims’ encounters with modernity
5. Synthesize various ideas that emerged in contemporary Islamic thought

This course meets the MARS learning objectives #1 and #2, and IC #1.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance in class is required. If you know you will be unable to attend a class session please inform the professor in advance. Missing three hours will result in an automatic lowering of your final grade by 10%. Missing six or more hours will result in automatic failure of the course.
EMAIL POLICY

The instructor will use the email indicated on this syllabus. This will be the official email to which all student correspondence should be directed.

ONLINE RESOURCES

All course materials will be posted on Canvas. Students are required to check and use Canvas regularly for all course-related activities.

PLAGIARISM POLICY

It is vital that you document and properly reference all sources from which you gather information for your written papers. You can use any of the recognized citation rules (the Chicago Style, the APA etc.), but make sure you’re consistent throughout the paper. If you are not sure how to do this, contact me or talk to a resource person at the Library or Writing Consultant. The minimal penalty for plagiarism is an 'F' (zero) on the paper. Maximum penalty is at your professor’s discretion, depending on nature and severity of the offence. Please familiarize yourself with proper procedures on copyright by reading Student Handbook: http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/student-handbook/other-official-policies-and-procedures/.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADES

Attendance and Participation: 10%
Two analytical papers (4-5 pages each): 40% (20% each)
Class presentation: 10%
Final research paper (20 pages): 40%

Attendance and Participation: You are required to complete the day’s assigned readings prior to coming to class. You will be expected to participate in the discussion. The only way to participate in a satisfactory manner is to be familiar with assigned readings. Your participation grade is a direct consequence of both quality and frequency of your participation, with emphasis on quality. The success of this course depends on your participation in the discussions.

Analytical Papers: You are required to write two (2) analytical papers, each of about 1200-1300 words (but not longer than 5 double-spaced pages). The papers will rely on the assigned readings, but you are required to probe deeper into the meaning and implications of the questions asked. Questions will be distributed in class. They will be organized around a theme that is related to readings. Each student will be required to write an analytical paper on one of these themes only. The emphasis in these papers should be on analysis, not on summary. More information on these papers will be distributed in class. First analytical paper is due on Friday, October 19; second paper is due on Friday, November 16.

Class presentation: You are required to give a presentation where you will discuss one of the readings required for this course. The presentation will be 15-20 minutes long, after which other class members will ask questions or offer their reflections on the readings. More information on the presentation will be distributed in class.
Final research paper: You are required to write a 20-page research paper on the topic of your choice. The topic should be chosen in consultation with the instructor. Detailed instructions on the paper will be distributed in class.

POLICY ON LATE OR MISSED ASSIGNMENTS: Assignments need to be submitted in-class, on the date specified on the syllabus. Late assignments will be assessed one letter-grade lower for each day the assignment is late. Submitting the assignment on the due date, but after class time, is considered one day late. Failure to submit an assignment four days after the deadline will result in a zero grade for that assignment. Please do not schedule your medical examination or travel on the days the assignments are due. These will not be considered a valid excuse.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

A 95-100
A-90-94
B+87-89
B 84-86
B-80-83
C+75-79
D 70-74
F <70

REQUIRED BOOKS


***NOTE ON READINGS: This is a reading-intensive course. Your success in the course will depend, to a large extent, on your willingness and seriousness in tackling reading materials. A good amount of thinking has gone into creating this syllabus, organizing various readings into interconnected topics, and making the course flow logically. You will do yourself great service if you complete all the assigned readings on time, and do not fall behind on reading assignments. Some of the readings will be posted on Canvas. These are indicated on the syllabus.
COURSE OUTLINE

PART I: HISTORICAL TRAJECTORIES AND DIVERSITY IN CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC THOUGHT

Friday, 9/21: Emergence of Modern Islamic Thought

Required readings:

*Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century* (Taji-Farouki and Nafi), pg.1-16.


Saturday, 9/22: Questions of revival and reform; 20th-century trajectories; the Qur’anic/Tawhidic Worldview and Intellectual Reform

Required readings:

*Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century* (Taji-Farouki and Nafi), Chapters 2 and 3.

Daniel W. Brown, *Rethinking Traditions in Modern Islamic Thought*, ch.2 (pg.21-42) (CANVAS)


Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, *Al Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life* (Herndon, VA: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1992), chapter 1, 4 and 6. (CANVAS)


Sunday, 9/23: Student Presentations (all presentation materials are available on Canvas)
PART II: RETHINKING THE QUR’AN AND THE SUNNAH – (RE)OPENING OF IJTIHAD

Friday, 11/2: (Re)thinking Islam in Modern Age

M.A. Draz, *The Moral World of the Qur’an* (excerpts) (CANVAS)

Muhammad Iqbal, “The Principle of Movement in the Structure of Islam” (CANVAS)

Mohamed Arkoun, “Rethinking Islam Today” (CANVAS)

Nurcholish Madjid, “The Necessity of Renewing Islamic Thought and Reinvigorating Religious Understanding” (CANVAS)

Fazlur Rahman, “Islam and Modernity” (CANVAS)

Shabbir Akhtar, “Islam and the Challenge of the Modern World” (CANVAS)

Saturday, 11/3: Tradition and Scriptures Reinterpreted

Daniel W. Brown, *Rethinking Traditions in Modern Islamic Thought*, chapters 3-7 (pg.43-141) (CANVAS)


Student Presentations (2-5 p.m.)

Sunday, 11/4: Ijtihad in Politics, Economics, and Society; *Maqasid al-Shari’ah* as an Emerging Discourse

*Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century* (Taji-Farouki and Nafi), chapters 6-8.


PART III: MAJOR ISSUES AND TRENDS IN CONTEMPORARY
ISLAMIC THOUGHT

Friday, 12/7: Democracy, Pluralism, and Human Rights

Abdulaziz Sachedina, *Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), chapters 2-3 (pp.22-101) (CANVAS)


Recommended:

Taji-Farouki and Nafi, chapters 10-11.

Saturday, 12/8: Islam and Politics; Salafism; Religious Violence and the Rise of ISIS

Hasan al-Banna, “Toward the Light” (CANVAS)

Sayyid Abu’l-A’la Mawdudi, “The Islamic Law” (CANVAS)


Student Presentations (2-5 p.m.)

Sunday, 10/30: Sexuality; Contemporary Trends in Islamic Thought

Scott Kugle, “Sexuality, Diversity, and Ethics in the Agenda of Progressive Muslims” (CANVAS)

Mobeen Vaid, “Can Islam Accommodate Homosexual Acts? Qur’anic Revisionism and the Case of Scott Kugle” (CANVAS)


FINAL PAPER DUE ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2018