HARTFORD SEMINARY, Fall 2017

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

ONLINE FORMAT

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Class Sessions are held online: reflections are due Wednesdays, subsequent participation – Thursday through Friday

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.

Evaluation

Grading will be based on

1. Weekly reflections/ “talking points” (25%)
2. Other class participation (15%)
3. Mid-term essay (25%) – due on Tuesday, October 24
4. Final essay (35%) – due date Thursday, December 21
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. And, it should consist of three components:

- 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 address one of the discussion questions I will post at the end of each lesson. These assignments are designed to help you analyze the material and generate class discussion.

The reflections should be at least 300 words in length, but don’t make them too long either – at most around 600 words!

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 talk with other students, as well as your instructor, about something that stirred your interest. It is very important that you keep up this routine of asking questions. 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 answer one of the discussion questions. This means that you will have to

- Formulate your answer
- Provide brief reference to something in the texts that supports your answer.
- Make sure that your reflection is at least 300 words in length
- 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 for your personal progress in the course.

Note that your reflections by themselves will amount to 25% of the overall grade. Your participation in the general discussion (answers and comments) will count toward 15%.

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


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

Additional recommended text: Juliane Hammer and Omid Safi, *The Cambridge Companion to American Islam* (Cambridge University Press, 2013). Note: Purchasing this text is not required. I will post 3 excerpts from it on our class website. However, those who would like to purchase it, will find it useful as a supplementary resource for midterm and final papers, and beyond.

**Schedule**

**Week of September 5 – Introduction**

- 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 of September 11**

- 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 of September 18**

- 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


**Week of September 25**

• 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 of October 2**

• GhaneaBassiri, Chapter 7 (pp. 272-326)

• Timur Yuskaev, Chapter 3 from *Speaking Qur’an* (PDF on class website)

• Listen to:


  (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.newafricanradio.com. Please look into the speeches from 2008, which can be located here: [http://www.newafricanradio.com/articles/index.html](http://www.newafricanradio.com/articles/index.html), select one, and read it.)

**Week of October 9**

• 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 of October 16**

• Wadud, *Inside the Gender Jihad* (the whole book)

• *Sourcebook*, Section 4 (pp. 179-263)

• Two or three poems by Mohja Kahf (posted on class website)


**Week of October 23**

**Midterm Papers Due on Tuesday, October 24**

(go to Assignments and submit the paper through the Midterm Essay link)

Instead of a regular reflection, post a short teaser/summary of your midterm in Discussion Board (this mimics what one would normally do as they present their paper in a live class session).

Post your presentation/teaser/summary on **Wednesday, March 16**. 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.

**Week of March 30**

• GhaneaBassiri, Chapter 8 and Epilogue (pp. 327-382)

• *Sourcebook*, Section 5 (pp. 264-335)

• McGreevy, Introduction and Chapters 1-3 (pp. 1-90)

**Week of November 6**

• 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 of November 13**

• 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 of November 20 – no classes; seminary closed**

**Week of November 27**

• Wendy Cadge, *Heartwood* (the whole book)

• Sourcebook, Section 6 (pp. 336-412)

**Week of December 4**

• 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](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 of December 11: concluding discussion

Instead, each student must prepare and present their final paper proposal. Proposals must be submitted on Wednesday, December 13. 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 Due: December 21
(submit through Final Essay link)