

GEOG 231: Geography of Islam

Monday and Wednesday 11:00-12:15pm. Bolton B52

Fall 2009

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Department of Geography and Center for Women's Studies

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Office hours: MW 3-4 pm or by appointment

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Course description and objectives

This geography course investigates Islam, the second largest of the world's religions and the fastest growing in the United States and in Europe, as a complex and ever-changing religious system. It begins by looking at the origin and main features of the religion, introducing the students to prophet Mohammad and the religious scripture of Qur'an, as well as the historical context in which Islam developed. The course explores the diversity of Muslim cultures in different geographical, social, and political contexts and the various understandings of the religion that emerge in these. We will read about Muslims and Islamic institutions and movements (such as the global network Al Jazeera, liberal Islam, Sufism, Islamic feminism, and Islamic fundamentalism) in different parts of the world such as Southeast Asia, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Europe, and North America. Students will look at how Islam is lived, focusing on everyday practices, and prevailing ideologies. This implies the study of socio-cultural factors within various Muslim contexts and how they reflect certain collective actions as well as societal developments. Rather than approaching Islam as a static social phenomenon, emphasis is given to social and cultural change, diversity, and conflict.

The course familiarizes the students to the discourse of "Orientalism" and how their own perceptions of Islam and Muslims might be colored by it. We will look at how the media in the West has portrayed Islam and events in the "Muslim world." In the end of the course, the students will learn about Muslims in the U.S. This will expose the students to the misrepresentation of the thesis "clash of civilizations" and the "us vs. them" rhetoric. Islam is a personal faith of millions of Americans, and American Muslims express and implement this faith in various ways within an American context, resulting in what some scholars have called an "American" Islam.

Course grading and requirements

Attendance and participation 15%

Since class participation is a required component of your grade, it goes without saying that attendance is very important. I will take attendance each time we meet as a class and your attendance will count toward your participation grade. More than three absences will result in lowered final grade. That is, if you miss more than three classes, your attendance grade will be downgraded by one point/missed class (for example from A to A-, from A- to B+, from B+ to B etc.). Each student should **bring at least one question or problem-based discussion point related to the readings to each class.**

Two quizzes 10%

A couple of unannounced quizzes, or response papers, will be given out during the semester, which will cover readings due that day and/or the lecture from previous week. There will be NO make-up quizzes.

Two in-class film reviews 10%

You will write two analytical reviews of two documentaries shown in class. In your reviews you should relate your discussion to appropriate class discussions and readings. There will be NO make-up film reviews.

Midterm Exam 35%

The midterm exam will be on **October 19** and will cover readings and lecture notes from first day of classes to October 12.

Research paper 30%

You will write a research paper that examines one particular Muslim/Islamic phenomenon, organization, movement, or institution that interests you. The paper should be double spaced, 6-8 pages long and include a bibliography. You have to turn in a typed abstract (about half a page) by the latest **September 21** that address what your paper will be on, the purpose, and what main questions you are interested in exploring. This paper should synthesize and reflect upon at least four different readings from the class and, if appropriate, one documentary. Also, since it is a **research paper you are expected to research and use additional outside material**. (This does **not** include online/webpage information!) The paper will be assessed on your ability to investigate and analyze a particular phenomenon, organization, or institution, and how it relates to the societal and political context in which it works/exists. This means that the paper assignment will be assessed based on your ability to point to salient socio-cultural factors that are associated with and shape the movement or phenomenon. The paper is due **December 18** in my mailbox, Bolton 410, at 3 pm.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have problems choosing a topic, need reading suggestions, and/or have any other problems related to the paper!

Course policies

Only medical or legal emergencies and university sponsored activities are legitimate absences, all of which need written documentation. All assignments must be handed in by the date stated in class or in the syllabus. **Extensions will only be granted for emergency**. Late papers will be downgraded by one point/day (for example from A to A-, from A- to B+, from B+ to B etc.).

Also, you have to cite all sources used in written assignments. **Plagiarism is a serious violation and will result in a failing grade in the course as well as a written report, following the university policies, UWS 14.**

In the event of disruption of normal classroom activities due to an **H1N1 swine flu outbreak**, the format for this course may be modified to enable completion of the course. In that event, you will be provided an addendum to this syllabus that will supersede this version.

Academic Misconduct

Make sure you properly cite all sources used in a written assignment. Plagiarism is a serious violation of academic integrity and will be prosecuted in accordance with university policies and procedures as set out in UWS Chapter 14 and UWM Faculty Document #1686. The standard penalty for plagiarism in this course will be a failing grade in the course and a written report to be placed in your file.

Disability Information

If you will need accommodations in order to meet any of the requirements of this course, please contact me as soon as possible. If you have not already done so, you should also contact the Student Accessibility Center at 229-6287.

Accommodation for Religious Observances

Students will be allowed to complete examinations or other requirements that are missed because of a religious observance.

For further information on university policies, refer to <http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/SyllabusLinks.pdf>

Grades and Assessment

For more information on University Policies see: www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/SyllabusLinks.pdf

Your research paper as well as in-class assignments will be graded on:

- the complexity, strength, originality, and clarity of your ideas;
- how well you substantiate your claims with carefully selected evidence;
- the skills and interest with which you approach the issues you address;
- the general competence of your writing

A/A- Your work demonstrates very thoughtful, sustained engagement with the ideas articulated in the readings. Your response is insightful, strong, convincing, well-argued, and your writing is free of technical errors (i.e., free of syntax, punctuation, and grammatical errors).

B/B- Your work demonstrates that you are relatively engaged with the readings and that you are tempting to think about and respond critically (i.e. thoughtfully and analytically) to what you have read. Your work is relatively coherent and your writing is relatively free of technical errors (i.e., relatively free of syntax, punctuation, and grammatical errors).

C/C- Your work is adequate, but not exceptional in any way. Your work may be relatively coherent but lacks a critical (i.e., thoughtful and analytical) component. Your writing contains several technical errors.

D/D- You submitted work, but it's too short to develop ideas, or way off the point, or technically so sloppy as to interfere with my ability to understand what you have to say.

F You failed to submit the required work.

Grade distribution

A (100-95%)	B- (80-83%)	D+ (67-69%)
A- (90-94%)	C+ (77-79%)	D (64-66%)
B+ (87-89%)	C (74-76%)	D- (60-63%)
B (84-86%)	C- (70-73%)	F (<60%)

Textbooks (available at People's Books)

People's Books Cooperative

2122 E Locust St

Phone: (414) 962-0575, webpage: <http://www.peoplesbookscoop.org/Main/HomePage>

Abdo, Genevie. 2006. *Mecca and Main Street. Muslim Life in America after 9/11.*

Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press. (MMS)

Ernst, Carl W. 2003. *Following Mubammad: Rethinking Islam in the Contemporary World.* University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill & London.

Mansson McGinty, Anna. 2006. *Becoming Muslim. Western Women's Conversions to Islam.* New York: Palgrave/Macmillan.

Articles and chapters from books (available on e-reserve*)

Ahmed, Leila. 1992. *Women and Gender in Islam.* New Haven & London: Yale University Press. (Chapter 3 and 4)

Badran, Margot. 2000. "Competing Agenda. Feminist, Islam, and the state in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Egypt" In Bonnie Smith, ed. *Global Feminisms Since 1945.* London & New York: Routledge.

Brenner, Suzanne. 2005. "Islam and Gender Politics in Late New Order Indonesia." In *Spirited Politics: Religion and Public Life in Contemporary Southeast Asia*, edited by Andrew C. Willford and Kenneth M. George. Ithaca, NY: Cornell Southeast Asia Program.

El Guindi, Fadwa. 1999. "Ideological Roots to Ethnocentrism." In *The Veil: Modesty, Privacy, and Resistance.* Oxford and New York: Berg.

Esack, Farid. 2003. "In Search of Progressive Islam Beyond 9/11" In *Progressive Muslims. On Justice, Gender, and Pluralism.* Oxford, England: Oneworld Publication.

Esposito, John. 2003. *Islam. The Straight Path.* 3rd edition (Chapter 5)

Falah, Ghazi-Walid. 2005. "The Visual Representation of Muslim/Arab Women in Daily Newspapers in the United States" In *Geographies of Muslim Women: Gender, Religion, and Space.* The Guilford Press: New York.

Haddad, Yvonne Y (ed.). 2002. *Muslims in the West. From Sojourners to Citizens.* Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. (Chapter 1, 2, 6, and 10)

Hefner, Robert W. 2005. Muslim Democrats and Islamist Violence in Post-Soeharto Indonesia. In *Remaking Muslim Politics. Pluralism, Contestation, Democratization*, ed. By Robert W. Hefner. Princeton University press.

- Hermansen, Marcia. 2003. "How to Put the Genie Back in the Bottle? "Identity" Islam and the Muslim Youth Cultures in America" In *Progressive Muslims. On Justice, Gender, and Pluralism*. Oxford, England: Oneworld Publication.
- Lawrence, Bruce B. 1989. Fundamentalism as a Religious Ideology in Multiple Contexts. In *Defenders of God. The Fundamentalist Revolt against the Modern Age*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Lawrence, Bruce B. 1989. Fundamentalists in Pursuit of an Islamic State. In *Defenders of God. The Fundamentalist Revolt against the Modern Age*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Mansson McGinty, Anna. 2007. Formation of alternative femininities through Islam: Feminist approaches among Muslim converts in Sweden, *Women's Studies International Forum* Vol. 30/6 pp 474-485.
- Mernissi, Fatima. 1987. *The Veil and the Male Elite. A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*. New York: Basic Books. (Chapter 5 and 7)
- Najmabadi, Afsaneh. 1998. Feminism in an Islamic Republic: "Years of Hardship, Years of Growth" In *Islam, Gender, and Social Change*, ed. by Yvonne Y. Haddad and John L. Esposito. Oxford and New York: Oxford Press. pp. 59-84.
- Okruhlik, Gwenn. 2005. Empowering Civility through Nationalism. Reformist Islam and Belonging in Saudi Arabia. In *Remaking Muslim Politics. Pluralism, Contestation, Democratization*, ed. By Robert W. Hefner. Princeton University Press.
- Said, Edward W. 1978. "Introduction" In *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Schimmel, Annemarie. 1983. Sufism and the Islamic Tradition. In *Mysticism and Religious Traditions*. (ed. by Steven T. Katz) New York. pp. 130-47
- Woodward, Mark. "Talking across Paradigms: Indonesia, Islam and Orientalism" In *Toward a New Paradigm: Recent Developments in Indonesian Islam Thought*, pp.1-45. Tempe: Arizona State University.

Class schedule

Islam in the eyes of the West, Orientalism, and Representations.

September 2	Introduction, <i>Following Muhammad</i> , Chapter 1
September 9	Said, "Introduction" in <i>Orientalism</i> ,* Falah, "The Visual Representation of Muslim/Arab Women in Daily Newspapers in the United States"
September 14	Video: <i>Hollywood Harems</i>

Approaching Islam in Terms of Religion

September 16	<i>Following Muhammad</i> , Chapter 2
September 21	Documentary: <i>Islam and its Five Pillars</i> Submit abstract of research paper in class!

Muhammad and the Qur'an

September 23	<i>Following Muhammad</i> , Chapter 3
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Islam and Gender

September 28	<i>Following Muhammad</i> , pp. 142-51 Ahmed, Chapter 3 and 4*
September 30	Mernissi, Parts from <i>The Veil and the Male Elite</i> * Documentary: <i>They Call Me Muslim</i>

Spirituality - Sufism

October 5	<i>Following Muhammad</i> , Chapter 5, Schimmel* Documentary: <i>Islamic mysticism: the Sufi way</i>
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Islamic Fundamentalism

October 7	Lawrence, "Fundamentalism as a Religious Ideology in Multiple Contexts" and "Fundamentalists in Pursuit of an Islamic State"*
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Islamic global network

October 12	Documentary: <i>Al Jazeera Voice of Arabia</i>
October 14	Preparation for midterm exam

October 19

MIDTERM EXAM

Islam in Different Parts of the World

Indonesia: religious violence, liberal Islam, and gender politics

October 21 Hefner, “Muslim Democrats and Islamist Violence in Post-Soeharto Indonesia”*
Brenner, “Islam and Gender Politics in Late New Order Indonesia”*

October 26 Documentary: *Struggle for the Soul of Islam: Inside Indonesia*

Saudi-Arabia: Wahhabism and Civil Islamists

October 28 Esposito, Ch. 5 (pp. 191-195)*
Okruhlik, Empowering Civility through Nationalism*

Egypt: Re-veiling movement

November 2 Esposito, pp. 158-175*, Badran “Competing Agenda. Feminist, Islam, and the state in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Egypt”*

November 4 Documentary: *Veiled Revolution*

Iran

November 9 Esposito, pp. 179-186 (Ch. 5)*

November 11 BBC Documentary: *Iran and the West*

**Islam in Europe – European Islam, Controversies, and Islamic feminism
Britain and France**

November 16 Esposito, pp. 204-207*,
Haddad, Chapter 1, 2, 10*

Sweden and Denmark

November 18 Haddad, Chapter 6*
The controversy of the Danish cartoons of Muhammad

Conversions to Islam

November 23 Parts of *Becoming Muslim*, Chapter 1, 4, 5

Thanksgiving recess

November 30 Parts of *Becoming Muslim*, Chapter 6-9

Islam in the United States

December 2	Esposito, pp. 208-222* Prologue and chapter 3 in MMS
December 7	The younger generation Muslims in the U.S. Chapter 1, 2 and 4 in MMS, (Hermansen*)
December 9	Field trip to the Islamic Center? Chapter 5 and 6 in MMS
December 14	Chapter 7 and 8 in MMS Documentary: <i>Under One Sky</i>

Research paper due Friday, December 18, at 3pm in my mailbox, Bolton 410.

Supplement to UWM FACULTY DOCUMENT NO. 1895, October 21, 1993
Revised March 16, 2006

C. University Policies

1. *Students with disabilities.* Verification of disability, class standards, the policy on the use of alternate materials and test accommodations can be found at the following:
<http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/DSAD/SAC/SACtr.pdf>
2. *Religious observances.* Policies regarding accommodations for absences due to religious observance are found at the following: http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S1.5.htm
3. *Students called to active military duty.* Accommodations for absences due to call-up of reserves to active military duty should be noted.
<http://www3.uwm.edu/des/web/registration/militarycallup.cfm>
4. *Incompletes.* The conditions for awarding an incomplete to graduate and undergraduate students can be found at the following:
http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S31.pdf
5. *Discriminatory conduct (such as sexual harassment).* Definitions of discrimination. Harassment, abuse of power, and the reporting requirements of discriminatory conduct are found at the following: http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S47.pdf
6. *Academic misconduct.* Policies for addressing students cheating on exams or plagiarism can be found at the following: <http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/OSL/DOS/conduct.html>
7. *Complaint procedures.* Students may direct complaints to the head of the academic unit or department in which the complaint occurs. If the complaint allegedly violates a specific university policy, it may be directed to the head of the department or academic unit in which the complaint occurred or to the appropriate university office responsible for enforcing the policy. http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S49.7.htm
8. *Grade appeal procedures.* Procedures for student grade appeal appear at the following: http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S28.htm
9. *Final examination policy.* Policies regarding final examinations can be found at the following: http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S22.htm