

ANTHROPOLOGY OF ISLAM AND MUSLIM SOCIETIES



Instructor: Michael Vicente Perez
Email: mvperez@uw.edu
Class Day/Time: T/Th 10:30-11:50
Class Location: THO 325
Office: Denny 239
Office Hours: Monday 1-2pm

I. Course Description:

Although the history of Islam begins in the Arabian Peninsula, the contemporary Muslim world has no geographic borders. Muslim communities today live throughout the Middle East, Asia, Africa, Europe, and North and South America. This course seeks to examine the diverse articulations and experiences of Islam from a cross-cultural anthropological perspective. Understanding Islam as a *lived* experience, this course will emphasize the everyday lives of Muslims (Islam in practice) in their specific cultural, political, and economic contexts through various ethnographic accounts. Particular attention will be paid to the different ways Muslims understand and express their faith and its implications for the meaning and practice of social life. Thematic areas covered in this course include ritual, ethics, gender, modernity, politics, and other critical themes.

II. Learning Goals:

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- Identify key concepts and approaches in the anthropological study of Islam
- Identify key theoretical and methodological debates concerning the anthropological study of Islam
- Identify and understand key ritual practices among Muslims
- Understand the relationship between ethical self-formation and Islam
- Understand the relationship between authority and Islamic practice

III. Course Requirements:

A. Course Texts:

All books will be available for purchase at the University Bookstore.

Required texts:

1. Deeb, Lara. 2006. *An Enchanted Modern: Gender and Public Piety in Shi'i Lebanon*. Princeton University Press.
2. Grewal, Zareena. 2014. *Islam is a Foreign Country: American Muslims and the Global Crisis of Authority*. New York University Press.
3. Hammoudi, Abdellah. 2006. *A Season in Mecca: Narrative of a Pilgrimage*. Hill and Wang Press.
4. Ewing, Katherine Pratt. 2006. *Arguing Sainthood: Modernity, Psychoanalysis, Islam*. Duke University Press.

*Throughout the quarter I will post supplementary articles on *catalyst* for particular topics. These readings will be posted at least one week in advance and will be available as PDF documents.

B. Class Etiquette:

It is important that we work together to establish a tolerant and respectful class environment. You are encouraged to express your ideas in class. Be confident and honest but be respectful. Disagreements are normal and expected but please refrain from disrespectful behaviors.

Etiquette: Please make sure that you turn your cell phones off before entering the classroom. No texting during class. If you have special circumstances and need your phone available, please notify me on the first day of class. **Students are not permitted to bring computers to class unless there is a verifiable need.**

C. Assignments:

All assignments must be turned in on time. **No late work will be accepted.** If you have an emergency situation, please notify immediately in writing or email. I expect documentation if you are unable to complete an assignment on time. I will not accept any assignments by email. I also expect that all of your assignments will be typed and stapled.

1. Participation (10pts.): This course is designed to critically assess some of the central issues in the study of Muslim practice. My goal as an instructor will be to facilitate productive discussions and critical thinking about the readings. Your participation is therefore essential for the success of this course. Students are expected to attend every class, arrive on time, and come prepared. **Your participation will be evaluated according to your willingness to play an active role in class discussions.** I will occasionally call on students to answer questions concerning course topics and readings so be prepared to contribute.

2. Quizzes (10pts.): Throughout the quarter, I will assign 5 in-class quizzes. The questions will be brief and relate to the course readings. You will have 15 minutes to respond to each question (no more than 1-2 paragraphs long). Each quiz is worth 2 points.

3. Short Reflection Essays (40pts.): You will prepare **8 short reflection papers** discussing in-class materials. These assignments will be **no more than one page long (1.5 spacing)** and will be due on select dates on Canvas. I will provide the writing prompts on the day of each assignment and will post it on the course website thereafter. Reflection assignments will require an analytical engagement with course materials that demonstrates your understanding of the readings. Each reflection essay is worth 5pts.

D: Critical Response Essays (40pts.): You are required to turn in 4 critical response papers. For each paper, you will select one (or more) course reading(s) and **prepare a 2-3 page critical evaluation** of a key idea, argument, or insight of the author. This assignment requires that you reflect on one or more of the course readings and write a short paper in which you either:

1. **Develop your own insights on a particular theme or issue (what new insight did you gain and why is it important)**
2. **Provide a critique of the arguments made in the readings (this argument has several problems/this argument is compelling because...)**
3. **Present a synthesis of several readings related to a particular theme (how do they relate/differ).**

Do not summarize. Although summarizing specific sections or points in the readings may be necessary for framing your paper, the bulk of the assignment should be based on your own thoughts and/or analysis. You are encouraged to think across the readings. For example, you can base your response on how several authors conceptualize *piety* in the context of *self-formation*. Your paper should offer a key thesis/claim that you develop through an argument with examples. A key bit of advice is to think about the limits and possibilities of an idea offered by an author(s). Where do their ideas take us? How? What limits does the idea have? What possibilities?

*If you have any questions about your approach to this assignment, you are strongly encouraged to discuss your paper topic with your instructor.

IV. Important Dates:

Short Reflection Paper Due Dates

#1 April 8
 #2 April 15
 #3 April 24
 #4 May 1
 #5 May 6
 #6 May 13

Critical Response Paper Due Dates

#1 April 22
 #2 May 8
 #3 May 20
 #4 June 9

#7 May 27
#8 June 5

V. Course Evaluation:

Your grade is cumulative and will reflect the total amount of points received from all assignments on a 100-point scale. The chart below indicates how to convert from the 100-point scale to the 4.0 scale.

100-99	4.0	A	74	2.4	C+
98-97	3.9		73	2.3	
96-95	3.8	A-	72	2.2	
94-93	3.7		71	2.1	C
92-91	3.6		70	2.0	
90-89	3.5		69	1.9	
88-87	3.4	B+	68	1.8	C-
86-85	3.3		67	1.7	
84	3.2		66	1.6	
83-82	3.1	B	65	1.5	
81-80	3.0		64	1.4	D+
79	2.9		63	1.3	
78	2.8	B-	62	1.2	
77	2.7		61	1.1	D
76	2.6		60	1.0	
75	2.5		59	0.9	

VII. Course Schedule:

WEEK 1: Introduction to Islam **March 31-April 4**

Tuesday:

* Geertz: Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia (pgs. 65-74)

Thursday:

*Gilsenan: Recognizing Islam: Religion and Society in the Modern Arab World (pgs. 51-63)

*Asad: The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam (pgs. 1-17)

WEEK 2: An Anthropology of Islam **April 7-11**

Tuesday:

Hammoudi: Chapter 1 Departures, Chapter 2 Governing Religion & Chapter 3 In Training, and Ghosts of the Self (pgs. 3-66)

Short Reflection Paper #1 Due

Thursday:

Hammoudi: Chapter 4 Praying and Shopping, Chapter 5 Dead Ends, & Chapter 6 Denying the Self to the Self, or The Road to Mecca (pgs. 67-141)

Film: Inside Mecca

WEEK 3: Islam as Ritual (Hajj)

April 14-18

Tuesday:

Hammoudi: Chapter 7 Untitled & Chapter 8 The Unwelcome Archive (pgs. 142-189)

Short Reflection Paper #2 Due

Thursday:

Hammoudi: Chapter 9 Resurrection Before Death, Chapter 10 Memory of Finitude, & Chapter 11 Memory of Violence (pgs. 190-262)

Film: Quran by Heart

WEEK 4: Islam, Piety, and Modernity

April 21-25

Tuesday:

Deeb: Introduction (pgs. 3-41)

Critical Response Paper #1 Due

Thursday:

Deeb: Chapter 1 Al Dahiyya: Sight Sound, Season & Chapter 2 From Marginalization to Institutionalization (pgs. 42-98)

Short Reflection Paper #3 Due

WEEK 5: Islam, Piety, and Modernity

April 28 – May 2

Tuesday:

Deeb: Chapter 3 The Visibility of Religion in Daily Life (pgs. 99-128)

Thursday:

Deeb: Chapter 4 Ashura: Authentication and Sacrifice & Chapter 5 Community Commitment (pgs. 129-203)

Short Reflection Paper #4 Due

WEEK 6: Islam, Piety, Modernity

May 5-9

Tuesday:

Deeb: Chapter 6 Public Piety as Women's Jihad & Chapter 7 The Pious Modern Ideal and Its Gaps (pgs. 204-232)

Short Reflection Paper #5 Due

Thursday:

Grewal: Introduction: Unmapping the Muslim World & Chapter 1 Islam Is a Foreign Country: Mapping the Global Crisis of Authority (pgs. 1-78)

Critical Response Paper #2 Due

WEEK 7: American Muslims and Authority

May 12-16

Tuesday:

Grewal: Chapter 2 Islamic Utopias, American Dystopia: Muslim Moral Geographies after the Great Migration (pgs. 79-124)

Short Reflection Paper #6 Due

Film: The Muslim Americans

Thursday:

Grewal: Chapter 4 Retrieving Tradition: Pedagogical Forms and Secular Reforms & Chapter 6 Transmitting Tradition: The Constraints of Crisis (pgs. 177-218 & pgs. 253-291)

WEEK 8: Anthropology of Sufism

May 19-23

Tuesday:

Ewing: Preface (pgs. xi-xiii) & Chapter 1 Hegemony, Consciousness, and the Postcolonial Subject (pgs. 1-37)

Critical Response Paper #3 Due

Film: For Those Who Sail to Heaven or Sufi Soul or I Am Sufi, I Am Muslim

Thursday:

Ewing: PART I: Chapter 2 Sadhus and Faqirs: The Sufi Pir as a Colonial Construct & Chapter 3 The Pir, the State, and the Modern Subject (pgs. 41-90)

WEEK 9: An Anthropology of Sufism

May 26-30

Tuesday:

Ewing: PART II: Chapter 4 Everyday Arguments (pgs. 65-127)

Short Reflection Paper # 7 Due

Thursday:

Ewing: Chapter 5 A Pir's Life Story (pgs. 128-162)

WEEK 10: An Anthropology of Sufism

June 2-6

Tuesday:

Ewing: Chapter 6 Stories of Desire: Reclaiming the Forgotten Pir (pgs. 163-197)

Thursday:

Short Reflection Paper #8 Due

Critical Response Paper #4 Due Monday, June 9 at 10:30 am on Canvas