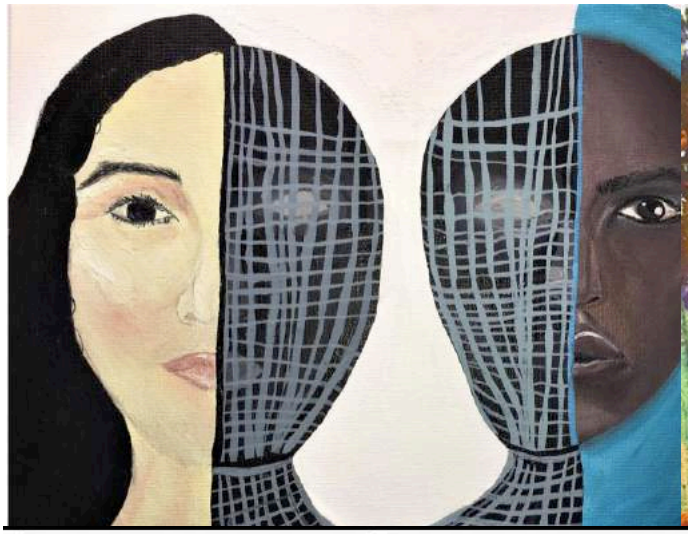
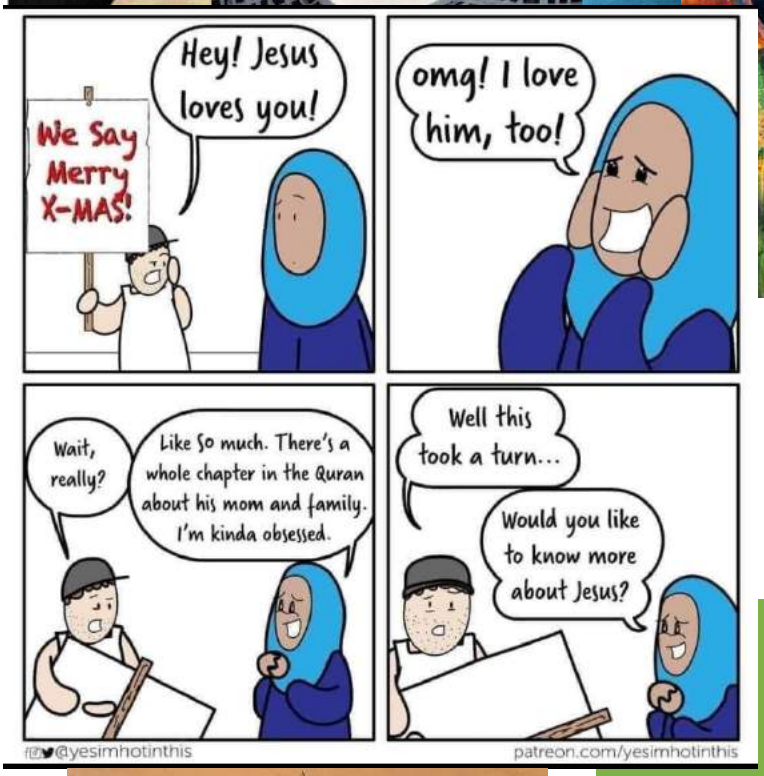






ISLAM TRS 2650

Spr 2024: MW 10:40 AM-12:05 PM
Location: Casey Center, C106



This course explores the history and theology of the Islamic traditions along with the practices of Muslim communities historically and presently. The diversity of Islamic traditions and Muslim communities will be explored. The course covers topics such as revelation, the Qur'ān, and the status of the Prophet Muhammad; Islamic law, authority, and spirituality; the relationship between Islam and Jewish and Christian traditions; colonial and postcolonial Islamic contexts; and women, gender, and Islam.

about this land

Molloy University is located on the ancestral lands of the Munsee Lenape, indigenous peoples of Turtle Island/North America)

about this instructor

dr takacs is a scholar of classical & post-classical islamic intellectual & poetic traditions, interreligious studies, and a catholic comparative theologian



by Owisokon Lahache,
a practicing Iroquois artist (Mohawk, Turtle Clan)

How do I contact dr takacs?

email
atakacs@molloy.edu

office
Siena 101 C

office hours
by appointment

via zoom
or
in-person

When the sincere disciple enters under obedience of the shaykh, keeping his company and learning his manners, a spiritual state flows from within the shaykh to within the disciple, like one lamp lighting another. The speech of the shaykh inspires the interior of the disciple, so that the shaykh's words become the treasury of spiritual states. The state is transferred from the shaykh to the disciple by keeping company and by hearing speech. This only applies to the disciple who restricts himself to the master, who sheds the desire of his soul, and who is annihilated in the shaykh by giving up his own will.

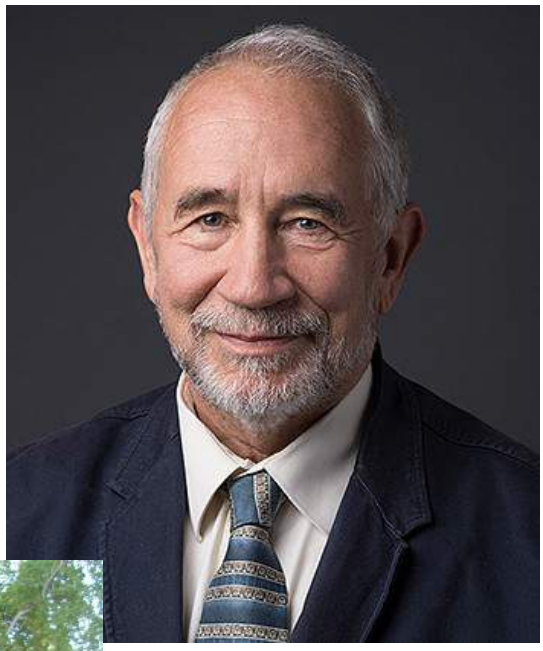
--Abu Hafs al-Suhrawardi (d. 1234)

The intelligence and proficiency required to teach the content of this course would not be possible without my mentors--too many to list.

For this class in particular, I am grateful for the knowledge imparted to me by these three "*shaykhs",* or teachers/masters, of Islamic spirituality, art, theology, philosophy, and humanities.



Ali Asani
Professor of Indo-Muslim and Islamic Religion and Cultures
Harvard



James Morris
Professor of Islamic Studies
Boston College



Luis Manuel Girón-Negrón
Professor of Comparative Literature
Harvard

May we honor them in the classroom as we continue to learn, grow, and flourish together in the Beauty of God.

HISTORY

REVELATION

PROPHECY

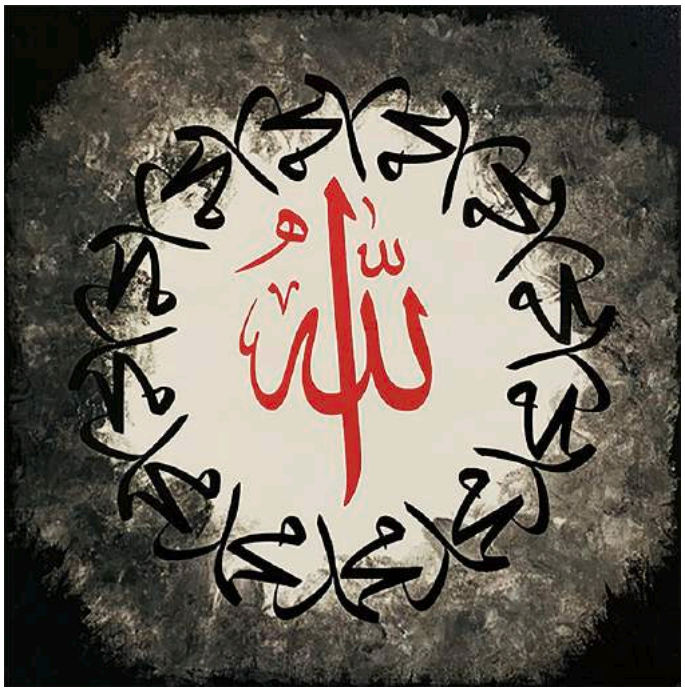
POETRY

THEOLOGY

SPIRITUALITY

LAW

AUTHORITY



Literacy, Intelligence, and Proficiency

This class is primarily about the **Islamic traditions**. However, it also contributes to Interreligious Literacy, Intelligence and Proficiency.

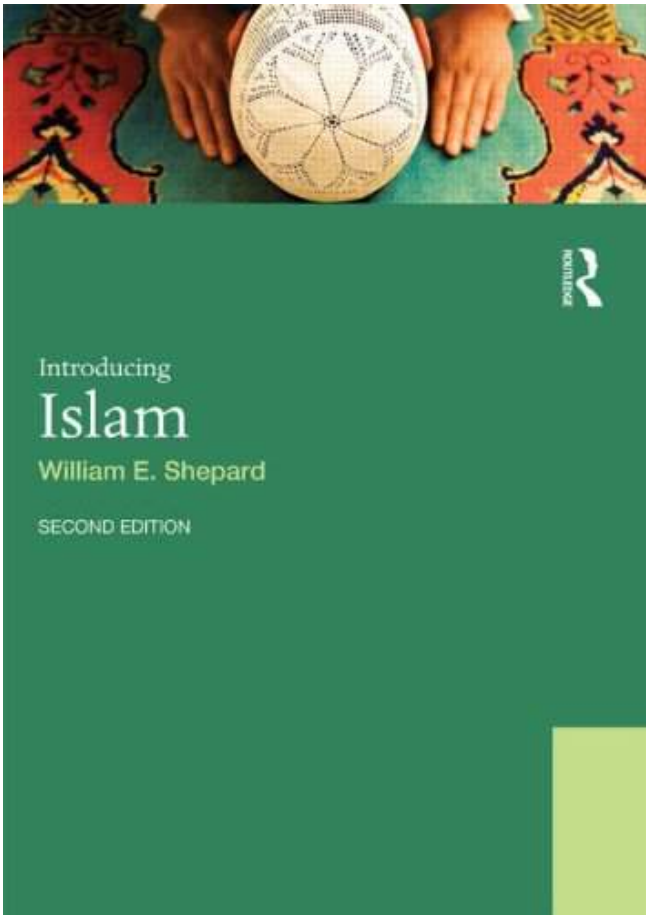
Interreligious Literacy provides students with the basic building blocks for understanding inter- and intra-religious **diversity**. It enables us to identify and explain various religious and interreligious histories, contexts, traditions, theologies, practices, ethics, and values. It **comprehends the present in light of the past**.

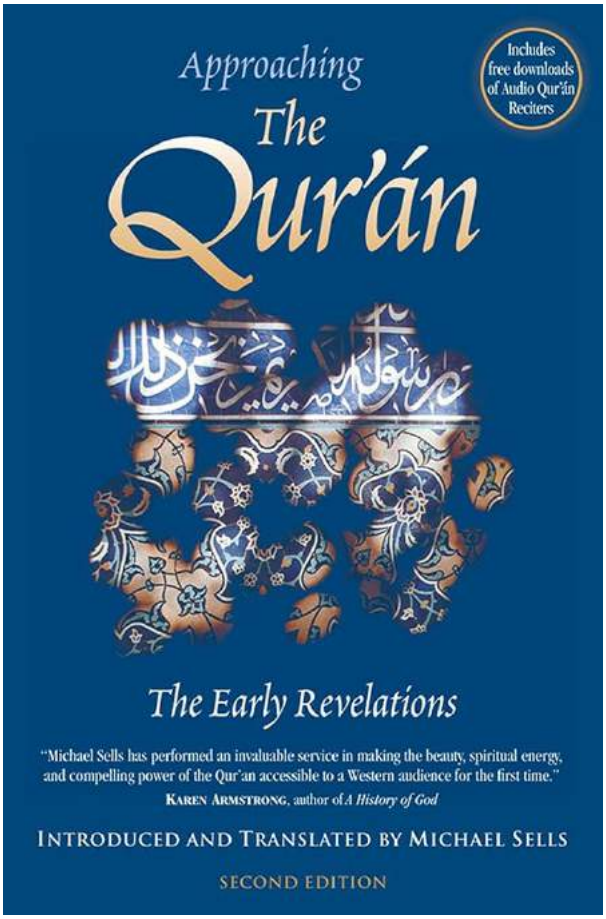
Interreligious intelligence is the intellectual, social, and imaginative capacity to apply interreligious literacy to various contexts in one's future. It enables us to employ interreligious knowledge in making judgments about the best course of action in any given diverse context. It is not neutral but grounded in **justice-oriented critical thinking** that seeks to construct a world in which religious pluralism and diversity is affirmed. It **imagines a future yet unknown**.

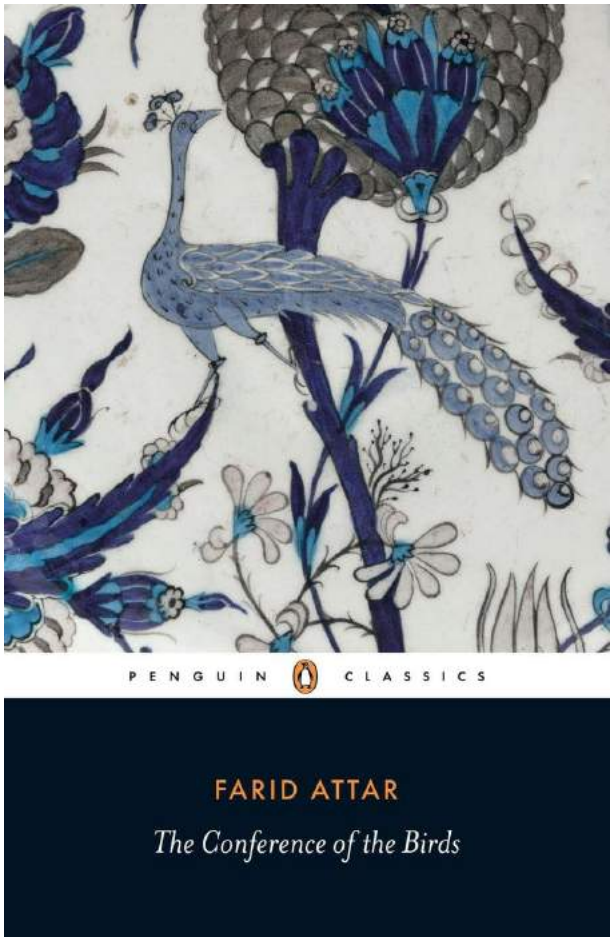
Interreligious proficiency is the practice of executing those judgments in the real world. Students develop **habits of mind**, **inquiry**, and **action** that shape how they relate to self and others in the context of a religiously diverse world. It is **embodied practice** of interreligious intelligence and **constructs a future to be known.**

-Adapted from Christine Hong, *Decolonial Futures: Intercultural and Interreligious Intelligence for Theological Education* (Lexington Books, 2021)

required books







There are three required books. Not only will you have assigned readings from these books, but you will need them for in-class discussion, assignments, and written assessments. So they are very **much required.**

Introducing Islam (2nd Edition), by William E. Shepard (Routledge, 2014)

Approaching the Qur'án: The Early Revelations, by Michael Sells (White Cloud Press, 2007)

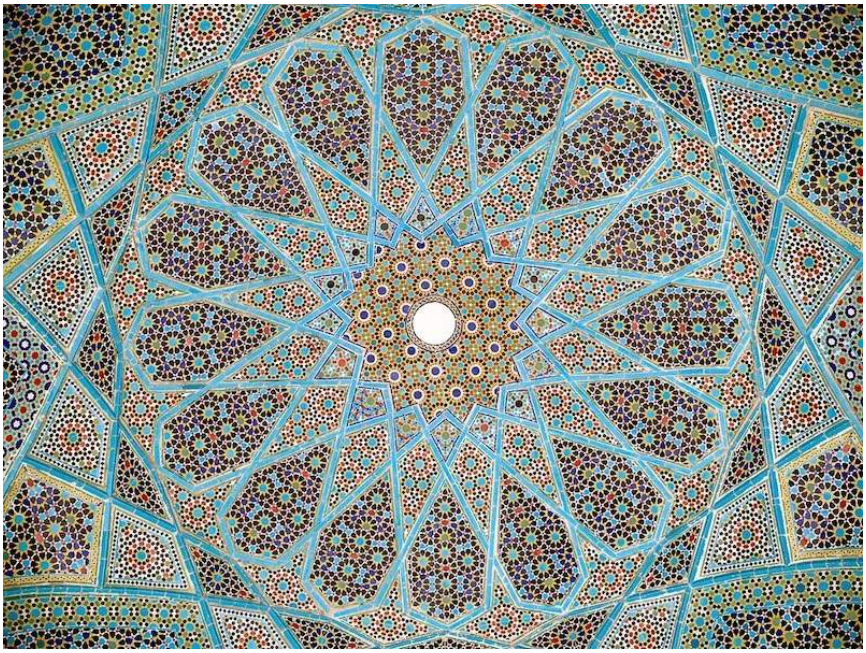
The Conference of the Birds, by Farid Attar, tr. Dick Davis (Penguin, 1984)

I suggest renting Shephard's textbook ($30) and buying the other two (total: $30) = $60

What are we doing?

- Class Attendance and Participation (20%)
- Pre-Class Discussion Posts (10%)
- Module Tests (15%)
- Calligraphic Design Assignment (10%)
- Creative Art Assignment (15%)
- American Muslim Futures Project (15%)
- Final Exam (15%)

Dome of the tomb-shrine of Ḥāfiẓ of Shīrāz (d. 1389), famous Persian poet from the Islamic School of Love



What are the

The student will be able to:

- identify the key figures, concepts, terms, and themes in the Islamic traditions and in varying socio-historical contexts, including but not limited to:
    - Prophet Muhammad; revelation; Qur'ān; ḥadīth; *sharīʿa*, *fiqh*, and other forms of law and authority; Sufism; Islamic spirituality and poetry (in Sunni and Shiʿa contexts)
- comprehend the relationship between Islamic theology and philosophy within Islamic traditions and in historical conversation with Jewish, Greek philosophical, and Christian traditions
- explain and apply key teachings from Islamic spirituality (Sufism)
- recognize and explain the development of the Islamic traditions in pre-colonial, colonial, and postcolonial contexts
- explain the relationship between Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions
- explore varying Muslim feminist approaches to women and gender in Islamic traditions

Program Learning Outcomes - Students will demonstrate the ability to:

- Engage the search for meaning as encountered in human religious experience, and as examined in the disciplines of theology and religious studies;
- Analyze and interpret primary and secondary sources from a variety of religious traditions, in their socio-historical contexts;



General Education Learning Outcomes - Students will demonstrate the ability to:

- Respect and critically consider diverse viewpoints;
- Integrate knowledge across disciplines;
- Use diverse sources of evidence to support an idea or argument.

Humanities courses are not merely about names, places, and dates, they are about **critical thinking and the conceptualization of ideas**. Most importantly, humanities courses train an individual to **entertain an idea other than one's own**. They exercise the **imagination** in an attempt to enter into the ways in which **various human cultures** from different times and places have understood **what it means to be human**. Additionally, humanities classes explore questions of **power, inequality, inequity, justice, truth, beauty, goodness, and human flourishing**.

late policy

if you want feedback, then assignments need to be submitted w/in 24 hours of due date. No late penalty for 10 days, after which the highest possible grade is 70%

be a luddite

cell phones prohibited
laptops prohibited
take notes by hand
hold a physical book
gaze into the eyes of your neighbor
technology will always be with us, let's take a break from it in this classroom
(aside from digital images, video, podcasts, Online Modules, etc.)

DSS

Molloy University has a commitment to providing reasonable accommodations for any student with a documented disability or chronic illness. Students who may need accommodations in order to fully participate in this class are urged to contact The Center for Access and Disability at access@molloy.edu. You may also go to Casey 017 or call 516-323-3316.

just don't cheat

Cheating of any kind, but plagiarism in particular, destroys trust, disrespects the learning process, and mocks genuine intellectual engagement. The Theology and Religious Studies Department considers all cheating and plagiarism serious breaches of academic integrity, including use of ChatGPT and other AI text-generation systems.

If you cheat, you will be required to resubmit the work for 70% credit. In addition, you will write a 4-page reflective essay explaining why you cheated, what you could have done instead, and what strategies you will employ in the future to choose not to cheat.

Do you feel the need to cheat?



email me instead and let's work together to figure out why!

How many of you can't even? I am stressed, you are stressed. *The world doesn't have to be this way!* Think of this classroom as imagining a future free of anxiety while preparing you for the reality that the world remains colonized by a hyper-competitive work-work-work mentality.

AI

There has been a significant increase in the popularity and availability of a variety of generative artificial intelligence (AI). These tools are shaping the future of work, research, and technology. Used in the wrong way, they stand in conflict with academic integrity guidelines at Molloy University. To maintain a culture of integrity and respect, these generative AI tools should not be used in the completion of course assignments unless a faculty member for a given course specifically authorizes their use. Faculty use Turnitin.com to monitor unauthorized use of AI tools (Please refer to the Student Handbook for additional information.).

grading scale

A	93-100	C	< 78
A-	< 93	C-	< 73
B+	< 90	D+	< 70
B	< 88	D	< 67
B-	< 83	F	< 60
C+	< 80		

health & wellness

Molloy University is committed to maintaining a healthy environment. Therefore, students are urged to monitor the website and all health and safety updates for any health-related changes in campus procedures. If you suspect contracting a contagious disease you are encouraged to use good judgment, monitor your symptoms, consult a medical professional, and remain home if needed. At the present time, masks are not required while on campus. However, we respect individual preferences and encourage members of the community to support the individual right to determine their need to wear a face covering. If you have health questions or concerns the Student Health Services can be reached by email at healthservices@molloy.edu or by phone at 516-323-3467. The Student Personal Counseling Center (SPCC) is a confidential and free service available to all currently enrolled Molloy University students. If you are interested in scheduling an appointment, please call 516-323-3484 Monday-Friday, scan the adjacent QR code using the camera on your phone, or walk in to request a time and day to meet.

To schedule an appointment with the Student Personal Counseling Center (SPCC) scan QR Code

attendance

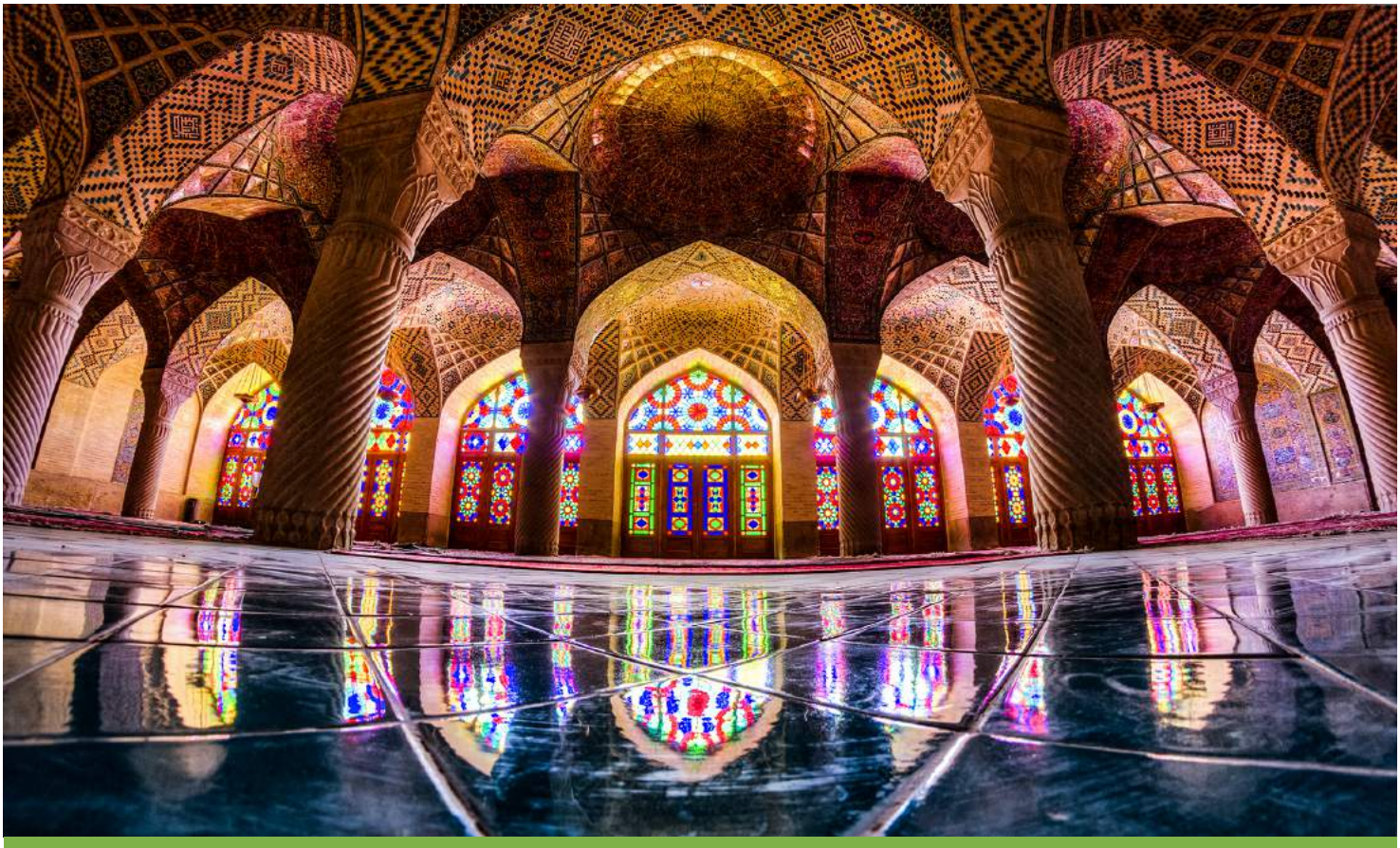
It is the accepted practice at Molloy University that faculty take attendance in all courses. Students should notify faculty if an absence is necessary as the result of a serious situation. **Failure to attend class for two (2) consecutive weeks at any point in the semester, without notification of extenuating circumstances, will result in an administrative withdrawal from the course.** In the case of an online or hybrid course, attendance is considered similarly important. Therefore, failure to participate in academic activities in any given week is considered an absence. Examples of participation in academic activities representing attendance would be participation in a class chat or discussion board on an academic topic, submissions of a required assignment, digital interaction with the professor on an academic topic, and completion of a quiz or exam. Administrative withdrawal results in removal from the course with a grade of "WA" or WF" determined by the point in the term and the academic performance. Students should consult the University catalog for complete details regarding withdrawals and the potential financial implications of a withdrawal.



Bism-illah ar-raḥmān ar-raḥīm - In the name of God,
the most merciful, the most compassionate

recording

As a student enrolled in courses offered by Molloy University, Rockville Centre, New York, I understand that classes may sometimes be audio or digitally captured for instructional purposes. THESE RECORDINGS ARE INTENDED ONLY FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES AND WILL BE USED ONLY BY THE FACULTY AND STUDENTS ENROLLED IN THE COURSE. PLEASE NOTIFY YOUR INSTRUCTOR BY EMAIL IF YOU DO NOT CONSENT TO PARTICIPATION IN A DIGITAL RECORDING OF YOUR COURSE. If no student elects to withhold his/her consent prior to **1/16/24**, digital recording of the class may begin on **1/16/24**. Any student who has not contacted the professor prior to that date will be deemed to have consented to the recording. You may notify your professor by email at any time if you choose to revoke your consent.



Nasir-i Milk Mosque, Shiraz, Iran

inclusive learning environment

“Don’t talk about money, religion, or politics.”

In humanities classes we often talk about all these things, in addition to race, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality, in various ways. That being the case, in this course all viewpoints are welcomed from all students, no matter your race, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, country of origin, native language, immigration status, political party, or socioeconomic status.

However, as we’ll learn, our reception, perception, and conception of the world are all shaped by our experiences, histories, and identities. How a Muslim, heterosexual woman of color experiences and interprets the world is different from how a Christian, queer Asian man experiences and interprets the world, both of which are different from how an atheist, heterosexual white man experiences and interprets the world.

An inclusive learning environment does not only mean being open to challenges from other viewpoints, being receptive to critique, and being civil in our discussion; it also means recognizing that some positions may more negatively impact one community over another in a disproportionate way.

A good first step is always to challenge ideas and positions rather than persons. However, it also means recognizing that some ideas and positions are inextricably bound to the embodied experiences of persons.

Discussion, debate, and conversation are messy; but we’ll all deal with its messiness together, humbly and with compassionate understanding.

We must recognize that no one is perfect and we all make mistakes that may offend someone when discussing religion, politics, and culture—even your professor!

But as a learning community, this is a space for growing and not for shaming or shutting people down.

inclusive learning environment

Adapted from Columbia Center for Teaching and Learning

- Allow everyone a chance to speak
- Listen respectfully and actively
- Criticize ideas, not individuals
- Commit to learning, not debating
- Avoid blame, speculation, inflammatory language
- Avoid assumptions about others, especially based on their perceived social group
- Be careful about putting other participants on the spot. *Do not demand that others speak for a group that you perceive them to represent*.

- Some sample statements:
    - It seems like what you're saying is…
    - "I wonder if…
    - "I think that…"
    - "How did you come to that position…"
    - "Given your position, it follows that…Is that what you intended?"
    - "I don't get it. Can you help me understand what you're saying…"

- Be comfortable with silence, quiet reflection
- Do not interrupt or engage in private conversations while others are speaking
- Raise your hand
- What is shared in the classroom or small-group discussion is confidential. Trust is key. Keep confidential any personal information that comes up in the conversation.

Listening

- Listen carefully and respectfully, without interrupting.
- Be aware that tone and body language are powerful communicators. Show respectful listening by facing and looking at the speaker, making eye contact, staying quiet, nodding, etc.

inclusive learning environment

Speaking

- Share briefly from your own experiences.
- Use "I" statements to state your views.
- Build on others' comments. Acknowledge them, even if you disagree.
- Be careful not to generalize about people and/or experiences.

Be Courageous

- If you think something is missing from the conversation, do not wait for someone else to say it; say it yourself.
- If you find another's statement to be problematic, do speak up.
- Try not to silence yourself out of concern for what others will think about what you say.



A painting by Hassan Massoudy of a phrase by Khalil Gibran which says:
"Will my heart become a tree laden heavily with fruit that I can pick and give

contacting the professor

My preferred communication method is via Canvas's messaging/email system. I will respond to students' messages sent M-F within 24 hours. I will respond to students' messages sent on the weekends within 48 hours. I will send regular email updates via Canvas Announcement system.

UNDOCUALLY

DIVERSE
INCLUSIVE
ACCEPTING
WELCOMING
SAFE SPACE
FOR EVERYONE



"Another World IS Possible," by Ricardo Levins Morales

Whatever your race, (ir)religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender identity or expression, trauma-informed knowledge and experience, neurology, country of origin, native language, immigration status, English-speaking capacities, socioeconomic status, dis/abilities—you, your views, your knowledge, and your experiences are valued and affirmed.

-alternative assignments and assessments are always possible-



Updated 2020 Design of CoResist by Abigail Clauhs is licensed under CC BY 4.0

Assignment and Assessment Details

Attendance and Class Participation

This is straightforward. This class meets **26** times. If you show up to all the classes, you get **26/32** points; that's a **81.25% or low B-** (weighted 20% of your total grade).

Every class you miss, you lose a point. Excused absences require documentation.

Excused absences:

- sickness or surgery
- mental health issues
- disability accommodation
- religious observances
- pregnancy-related events
- childcare responsibilities
- family emergencies (caregiving, funerals, etc.)
- volunteering to register voters or volunteering for a political campaign or ballot issue initiative (you are allowed one absence on this account)
- voting in local, state, or national elections, or volunteering to assist others to vote

This class also requires active engagement and participation (six additional points). The more you participate, the closer to 32/32.

How to do this?

1. **Come to class with three questions or comments from the readings/ podcast/video assigned.** Just write down THREE points about the assignment that intrigued you, puzzled you, illuminated you, confused you, etc. **DO THIS! I will ask you to share often.**
2. When we break into **small-group discussion**, **participate**.
3. Work on your **active listening skills** (eye contact and/or nodding and/or writing to take notes and/or doodling on a paper—NOT emailing, NOT social media-ing, etc.)
4. **IMPORTANT:** Students attending class **without the book** from which the assigned reading was taken will be considered **ABSENT**.
5. Raise your hand and ask a question whenever you want about anything. This is open season on "what the hell does this mean" and "I've always wondered why" type of questions.

0/6 points = you never said a word; 1 = you participated (on average) at least once a week; 2 = twice a week; 3 = three times a week; 4 = four times a week (twice a class, for instance); 5 = five times a week; 6 = six times a week (three times a class, for instance).

Pre-Class Discussion Posts

Before every class, each student must submit a discussion post on Canvas that responds to three prompts. You must engage, with citation, the required reading at least once. 4 points = 1 point / question + 1 point for citing

1. What are **three** questions or comments you have from the readings or other assigned material (video, for instance)?
2. What do you consider **two** of the most important points from the readings or other assigned material **and why?**
3. Personally, what piece of information do you find the most challenging or insightful? Or, what piece of information made you rethink a previous assumption about Islam and Muslims? Or, if you are Muslim, what piece of information shaped how you relate to your own faith?

Module Tests

Excluding the first module ("Introducing the Course and the Subject: Islam"), this class has **eight modules**.

- History of Islam
- Revelation and the Qur'an
- Revelation and the Prophet Muhammad
- Islamic Authority: Sunni Law (*Sharīʿa*, *Fiqh*) and Shiʿī Imāms
- Islamic Theology and Philosophy
- Islamic Spirituality: Early Piety Movement to Later Sufism
- Colonial, Postcolonial, & Diasporic Islam: Reform & Revival
- Women, Gender, and Islam

Each module will have a "test" in the form of a Canvas Quiz with multiple choice, True/False, Fill in the Blank, and Short Answer questions.

Your lowest module test grade will automatically be dropped.



Hassan Fathy Dar-Ul-Islam Mosque – New Mexico

Create a Calligraphic Design of *Allāh* with Self-Commentary & -Analysis

Design and create a calligram of the Arabic word for God — Allāh — If you feel inspired and you are proficient in Arabic, you may run other words or phrases by me.

The calligram assignment is intended to introduce you to an important Islamic religious art form; it is a simple exercise and has proved to be quite enjoyable even for those who think they have no artistic talent.

The project consists of learning to write "Allāh," the Arabic word for God, in the Arabic script (there will be a brief tutorial in class). We will also explore examples in class, though you are encouraged to explore other examples online.

Having familiarized yourself with this art form, you should choose a concept or symbol associated with God in the Islamic tradition (for example, God as Compassionate, Merciful or the Light of the Heavens and the Earth etc) that you have encountered in the course readings over the last few weeks and attempt to represent it through a calligram design using the word Allah (or otherwise)

You are free to choose any medium for your design – in the past, students have used media as varied as montage, stain glass, water colors, photography and knitting. Your calligraphy should be accompanied by a short explanation of your design (between 250-300 words).

Rubric



A range grade:

The student has a thorough and comprehensive grasp of the relevant course material. The write-up makes reference to at least one reading and applies the reading thoughtfully and creatively to the main idea behind the project. The write-up has one key theme that draws upon the course readings and lectures. The student does not merely replicate the calligraphy displayed on the course website or in a book or other source. The project instead displays a creative and personal interpretation of a key concept. While the project is not going to be graded on its artistic merit, it should be evident that the student has put effort into and engaged with the project.

B range grade:

The write-up does not have a clear theme, or its connection to the design of the calligram is not immediately clear. The write-up does not generate a creative, deep reflection on the course material or lectures. The student put minimum effort into the project.

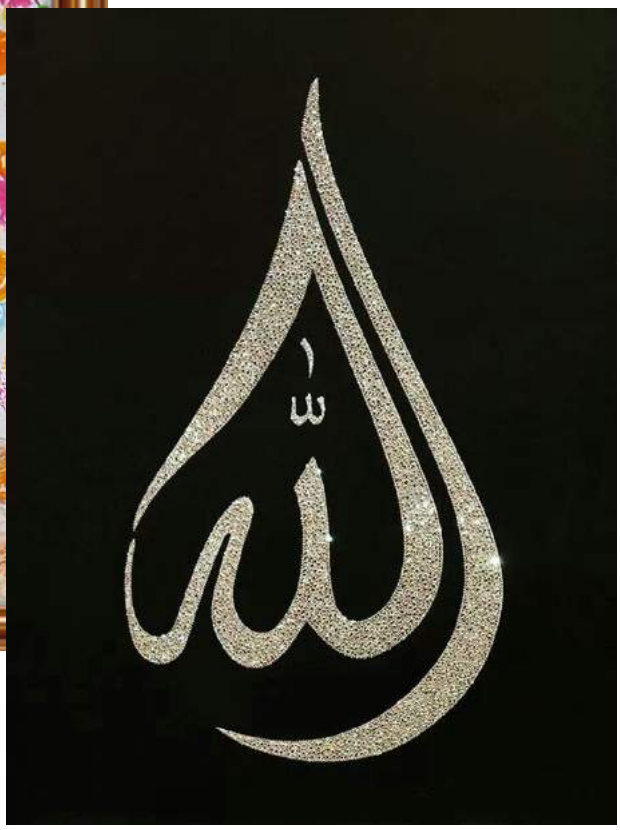
C range grade:

The write-up is significantly short, and it has no connection to the course material or explain the design of the calligram. The project merely replicates the calligraphy displayed on the course website or other source. The student clearly put no effort into the project.


Allah











جمال

the beautiful



الودود

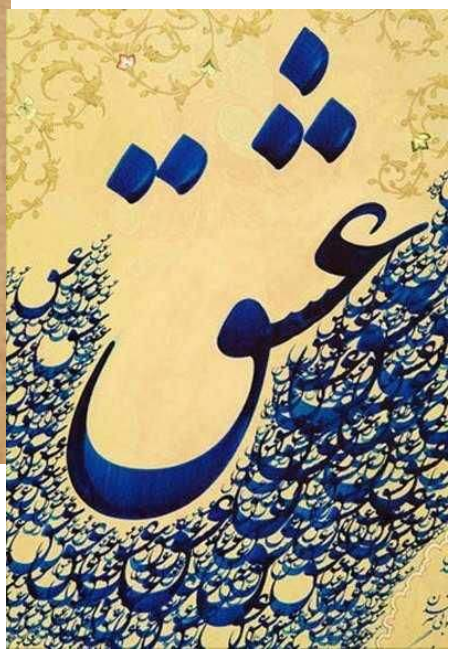
the affectionately loving



الرحيم

the compassionate





الرحمان

the merciful

عشق

passionate love

Creative Art Assignment Responding to *Conference of the Birds*

In this class we are going to read a classic of Islamic spirituality and didactic poetry, the *Conference of the Birds*, from cover to cover.

Students will create an art project that creatively responds to this work of literature. The artwork may respond to a theme, story, lesson, or spiritual topic taken from the *Conference of the Birds*, my in-class lectures, and/or our in-class discussions.

You will be required to submit the art project and a 300-word-minimum analysis of the artwork explaining how the piece connects, responds, and engages some theme, subject, or lesson from the class. **You must cite from three different assigned readings**. Theme, subject, or lesson in question need not be restricted to the Islamic Spirituality Module.

Art may be in any media—though an image file will have to be uploaded. Digital art, photography, poetry, DALL-E open ai art, short story, TikTok, drawing, painting, textile arts, comic strip, fan fiction (like, extend the *Conference* story in some direction, giving an inner monologue or conversation of one of the characters), and so on.

Assessment

You will be assessed on your 300-word analysis more than your artistic talent. Do you engage the concepts, theories, and questions from the unit? Do you cite three times from three different assigned readings? Is your analysis clear, cogent, and coherent? Does your explanation connect to parts of your artwork—directly and coherently?



American Muslim Futures Project

American Muslim Futures is an online exhibit of art that imagines a future free of hate and oppression. From 350 entries, AMF selected 23 Muslim and allied artists to showcase their visions for a truly beautiful future.

In this assignment, you are to explore the exhibit, which is divided into four galleries:

LIBERATION

POWER

BELONGING

FUTURE

You are to complete the CREATE, RESPOND, and CONNECT exercises and questions for ONE of the galleries.



Saba Taj | Durham, NC
Borders/Portals (are so Gay)
Oil paint, acrylic paint, spray paint, glitter and gold leaf
72" x 72" (2020)

Exhibit: https://www.americanmuslimfutures.com

CREATE, RESPOND, CONNECT Questions: https://www.americanmuslimfutures.com/classroom

You will submit your CREATE (artwork and response to questions), RESPOND (which artwork and why), and CONNECT (response to reflections questions) via Canvas.

For an 'A-' or higher, you must connect your responses to the material covered in class in some way.

Final Exam

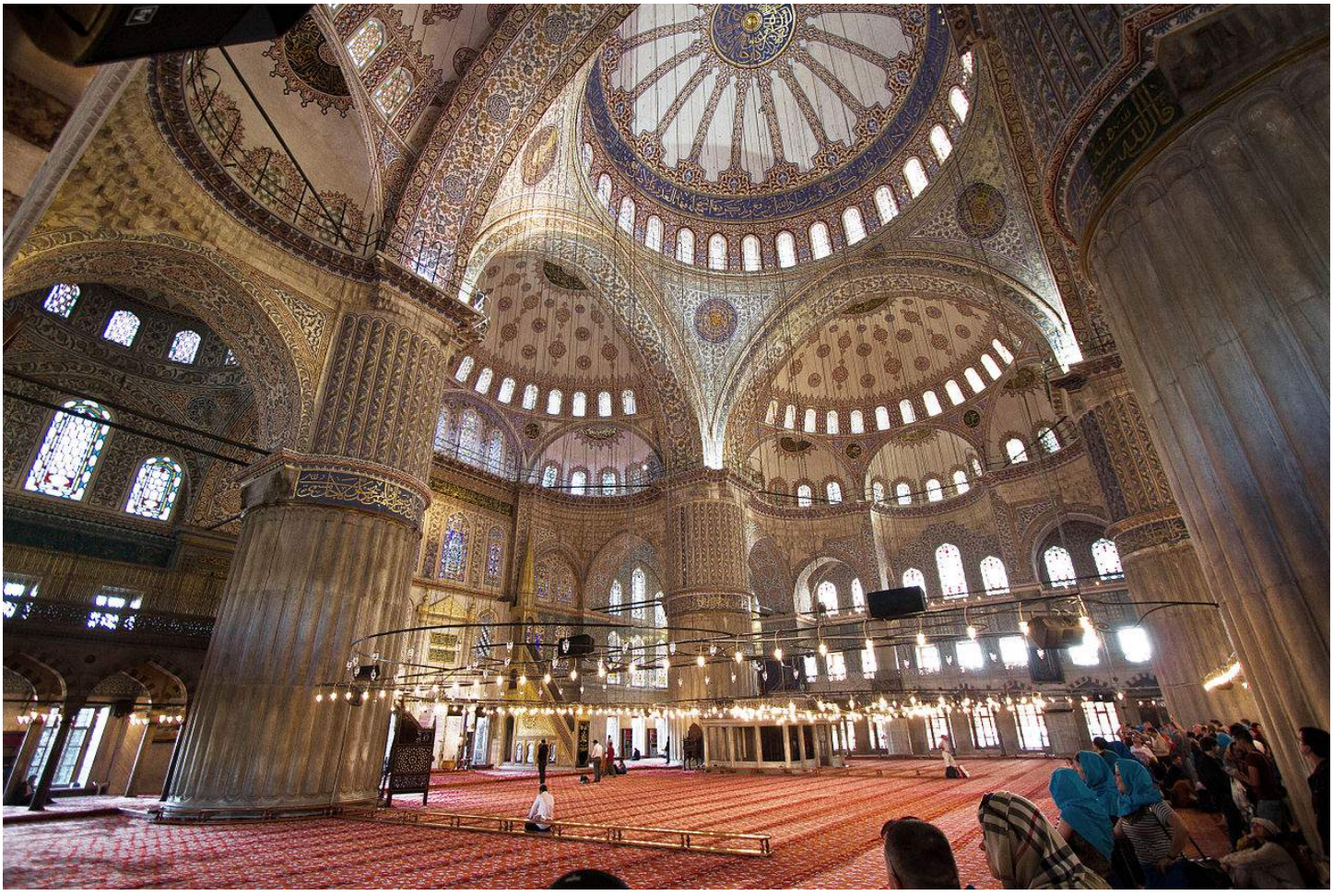
There will be final exam in this class. It will either be an in-class written exam (at the scheduled exam time) or an oral exam (also at the scheduled exam time).

However, in both cases you will be assessed on **significant terms, major ideas, broad themes,** and **critical questions** covered in each module. During classes, I will be sure to indicate what terms, ideas, themes, and questions are important to recall and recognize for the final exam.

The details of the final exam will be decided at least four weeks before the end of the semester.

If you do the reading, take reading and in-class notes, and participate in discussion, you will basically be ready for any final exam.

Stay tuned!



General view of the interior of the Blue Mosque, Istanbul, Turkey, also known as Sultan Ahmed Mosque, constructed between 1609 and 1617.

Schedule of Classes and Assigned Readings

Schedule of Classes | Module | Assignment Due Date | No Class

Day	Required Readings and/or Assignments
Module 1: Introducing the Course and the Subject: Islam	
Wednesday 1/17	**Before Class** • **Review the Syllabus** **In Class** • **Review of Syllabus** • **Methodology of the Class: Study of Religion vs. Theology** • **Survey and Discussion: What do you know about Islam and how do you know it?**
Monday 1/22	**Before Class** • **Watch: Intro to Islam - ft. Dr. Hussein Rashid, by Religion for Breakfast (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qtz4NGzpOco)** • **Read: "1 Introduction: Approaching the Subject," in *Introducing Islam* (pp. 1-11)** **In Class** • **Power, Politics, and Representation: From Orientalism to Islamic Studies** • **Who speaks for Islam?** • **Who represents Islam and Muslims?** • **Will the real Islam please stand up! (No.)** • **What are critical questions?**

Schedule of Classes and Assigned Readings

Schedule of Classes	Module	Assignment Due Date	No Class

Day	Required Readings and/or Assignments
Module 2: History of Islam	
Wednesday 1/24	**Before Class** • **Watch: "Beginnings of Islam: The life of Muhammad," Khan Academy (https://youtu.be/4NT_btkLlho)** • **Read: "3 The beginnings of Islam: Muslim history to 700CE," *Introducing Islam* (pp. 31-44)** • **Watch: "Beginnings of Islam: The Hijra to Medina and the conversion of Mecca," Khan Academy (https://youtu.be/avbWgpRLoP0)** • **Watch: "Contextualization of the development of Islam," Khan Academy (https://youtu.be/gB7ya6386iA)** **In Class** • ***dīn, islām, imān, iḥsān*: Is Islam a "religion"? and the Ḥadīth of Gabriel** • **Relationship of Islamic to Christian and Jewish Traditions** • **Religion and Empire: The Cases of Christianity and Islam**
Monday 1/29	**Before Class** • **Read: "4 Expansion and flowering: The history of Islam from abut 700 to 1700 CE," *Introducing Islam* (pp. 47-61)** • **Watch: "The Spread of Islam," Khan Academy (https://youtu.be/ojSkGvxFi4M)** • **Watch: "Spread of Islamic Culture," Khan Academy (https://youtu.be/sDSTgKIQAzE)** **In Class** • **From persecuted failure (Mecca) to Social and Political Success (Medina and beyond)** • **"Conversion by the sword?" Not so much. An overview of conversion rates across historical contexts** • **The Diversity of Islamic Art/Culture: The Case of Mosque Design**

Schedule of Classes and Assigned Readings

Schedule of Classes	Module	Assignment Due Date	No Class

Day	Required Readings and/or Assignments
Wednesday 1/31	**Before Class** • **Read: "8 Divisions in the umma: Sects and political theory," *Introducing Islam* (pp. 120-132)** • **Watch: "Sunni and Shia: Part 1," Khan Academy (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iMbAu2Oh7PA)** • **Watch: "Sunni and Shia: Part 2," Khan Academy (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FygpbbwsSGg)** **In Class** • **Sunni and Shi'i Authority (I): Who is to lead the community of believers after the death of the Prophet Muhammad?** • **Which Authority? Spiritual, Legal, Political, and/or Military**
Friday 2/2	**Module 2 Test: History of Islam - Due on Canvas**
Module 3: Revelation and the Qur'ān	
Monday 2/5	**Before Class** • **Read: "5 The Qur'an: God speaks," *Introducing Islam*, pp. 65-79** • **Read: pp. 1-22 (only) of "Introduction," *Approaching the Qur'an*, by M. Sells** **In Class** • **We will read together the closing pages of the Introduction (pp. 23-28) and then listen to, read, and discuss some Early Meccan Suras**
Wednesday 2/7	**Before Class** • **Read: "Annotated Glossary of Key Concepts," in *Approaching the Qur'an* (pp. 35-40)** • **Read: "The Sura of the Compassionate, An Introduction," *Approaching the Qur'an* (pp. 145-151)** **In Class** • **We will listen to, read, and discuss some Early Meccan Suras.**

Schedule of Classes and Assigned Readings

Schedule of Classes	Module	Assignment Due Date	No Class

Day	Required Readings and/or Assignments
Monday 2/12	**Before Class** • **Read: Genesis, Chapters 37, 39-45** • **Read: Sura Yusuf, Qur'ān 12 (from *The Study Qur'an*)** **In Class** • **Comparative reflections on the two versions of the story; the role of Yusuf in Islamic spirituality, ethics, and literary arts**
Wednesday 2/14	**Before Class** • **Read: "Signifying Revelation in Islam," by Tazim R. Kassam (pp. 29-40). *This is a dense read. You will not understand all of it. Do not worry.*** • **Read: "The Language of Theology," Chapter 1 of *Modern Muslim Theology: Engaging God and the World with Faith and Imagination*, by Martin Nguyen (pp. 17-26)** **In Class** • **Explanation and discussion on the implications of Kassam's article. Kassam writes as a Muslim scholar-practitioner; she is Shi'a Isma'ili Muslim.** • **Nguyen is a Vietnamese-American Muslim Convert and scholar of Islam**
Friday 2/16	**Module 3 Test: Revelation and the Qur'ān - Due on Canvas**

Monday 2/19 NO CLASS, Presidents' Day

Schedule of Classes and Assigned Readings

Schedule of Classes	Module	Assignment Due Date	No Class

Day	Required Readings and/or Assignments
Module 4: Revelation and the Prophet Muhammad	
Wednesday 2/21	**Before Class** • **Read: "6 The Prophet Muhammad: 'the best of all creatures,'" *Introducing Islam*, pp. 84-96** **In Class** • **Will the real Muhammad please stand up? (No. Or yes, they are all real.)** • **Review of ḥadīth: What are they? Why are they important, or not?**
Monday 2/26	**Before Class** • **Read: "The Seal of the Prophets: The Prophet Muhammad," excerpt from *Following Muhammad: Rethinking Islam in the Contemporary World*, by Carl W. Ernst (pp. 73-92)** **In Class** • **Art in devotion to the Prophet Muhammad**

Wednesday 2/28	**Before Class**
	• **Read: Excerpts of poetry in praise of the Prophet Muhammad. Selections from the following (PDF on Canvas):**
	  • **Ogunnaike, Oludamini. *Poetry in Praise of Prophetic Perfection: A Study of West African Arabic Madīḥ Poetry and Its Precedents*. Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 2020.**
	
	In Class
	• **Praise poetry from South Asia to the United States, such as**
	  • **Sulaiman, Amir. 'The Lover, the Love, and the Beloved'.**
	  • **Atif Salam's performance of Tajdar-e-haram, by Mirza Hakim, a 16th-century Mughal prince, brother to Emperor Akbar**

Friday 3/1	**Module 4 Test: Revelation and the Prophet Muhammad - Due on Canvas**

Schedule of Classes and Assigned Readings

Schedule of Classes	Module	Assignment Due Date	No Class

Day	Required Readings and/or Assignments
Module 5: Islamic Authority: Sunni Law (*Sharīʿa, Fiqh*) and Shiʿī Imāms	
Monday 3/4	**Before Class** • **Read: "10 To Know God's Will: Islamic Law," in *Introducing Islam*, pp. 146-160** • **Chapter 57, "Corrupting God's Book" in *Conference of the Books: The Search for Beauty in Islam*, by Khaled M. Abou El Fadl (pp. 301)** **In Class** • **The formation of *madhhabs*, *taqlīd*, and *ijtihād*** • **How to trust *ḥadīths*** • **Intra-Muslim Debates: following established schools of law vs. following the Qur'ān and (truly verified) ḥadīth?**

Wednesday 3/6	**Before Class**
	• **Read: "Chapter 4: Heirs of the Prophet: Authority in Post-Prophetic Muslim Communities," by Ali Asani (pp. 1-24)**
	• **Read: "[Naṣr al-Dīn] Ṭūsī's Ismāʿīlī Views on Postprophetic Authority," in *Islamic Theological Themes: A Primary Source Reader*, ed. J. Renard (pp. 175-180)**
	
	Optional
	• **The below are from an Ismaili Shi'i Perspective:**
	  • **Read: "Imam Ali Declared The Successor of Prophet Muhammad in Sunni Hadith Literature"**
	  • **Read: "The Concept of Imamat in the Qur'an"**
	
	In Class
	• **Wrap-up previous class before moving to Shi'i Authority**
	• **Explore the various histories, ideas, and theologies of Shi'i Islam and Shi'i Authority**
	• **Ismaili Devotional Literature**

Friday 3/8	**Module 5 Test: Islamic Authority - Sunni Law (*Sharīʿa*, *Fiqh*) and Shiʿī Imāms - Due on Canvas**

Schedule of Classes and Assigned Readings

Schedule of Classes	Module	Assignment Due Date	No Class

Day	Required Readings and/or Assignments
3/11 – 3/17: SPRING RECESS - NO CLASSES	
Module 6: Islamic Theology and Philosophy	
Monday 3/18	**Before Class** • **Read: "11 Theology and Philosophy: 'God talk', Muslim Style," in *Introducing Islam*, pp. 163-172** • **Read: "17 By the Time I Get to Phoenix: Avicenna on Existence," in *Philosophy in the Islamic World*, by Peter Adamson (pp. 120-125)** **Optional** • **Read: "18 By All Means Necessary: Avicenna on God," in *Philosophy in the Islamic World*, by Peter Adamson (pp. 126-132)** **In Class** • **"It's all Greek to me!"** • **What is there something rather than nothing? Creatio ex nihilo** • **Proving God's Existence…or merely that the world is intelligible? (In class, I will present Avicenna's proof for God's existence, which is also what the optional reading does).**

Schedule of Classes and Assigned Readings

Schedule of Classes	Module	Assignment Due Date	No Class

Day	Required Readings and/or Assignments
Wednesday 3/20	**Before Class** • **Read: "13 A Philosopher, a scholar-mystic, and a refomer," in *Introducing Islam*, pp. 194-206** • **Read: "21 Miracle Worker—Al-Ghazāli Against the Philosophers," in *Philosophy in the Islamic World*, by P. Adamson (pp. 147-153)** • **Read: "27 A Matter of Taste—Ibn 'Arabī and Sufism," in ibid. (pp. 194-200)** • **Read: "Ibn 'Arabī on Divine Majesty and Beauty," in *Islamic Theological Themes: A Primary Source Reader*, ed. J. Renard (pp. 181-186)** **In Class** • **Free Will: Does God have it and do we? Did God have a choice to create the world?** • **Who causes what in the world? How does an uncreated God (unchanging, absolute, perfect) relate to creation (changing, relative, imperfect)?** • **Can we even *know* God?**
Friday 3/22	**Module 6 Test: Islamic Theology and Philosophy - Due on Canvas**

Module 7: Islamic Spirituality: Early Piety Movement to Later Sufism

Monday 3/25	**Before Class**
	• **Read: "1 The Sufis of Baghdad," in *Sufism: The Formative Period*, by Ahmet Karamustafa (pp. 1-26)**
	
	Optional:
	• **Read: "Early, Pious Mystic Sufi Women," by Laury Silvers**
	
	In Class
	• **Primary sources: "the early piety movement"**
	  • **Al-Muḥāsibī's "Book on the Observance of the Rights of God" (from *Early Islamic Mysticism*, ed. Michael Sells)**
	  • **Al-Sarrāj's "Book of Flashes" (from ibid.)**

Schedule of Classes and Assigned Readings

Schedule of Classes	Module	Assignment Due Date	No Class

Day	Required Readings and/or Assignments

Wednesday 3/27	**Before Class**
	• **Read: "12 The Sufi Path to God: Spiritual dimensions of Islam," in *Introducing Islam*, pp. 174-191**
	
	In Class
	• **Primary source: Sufism historically and today.**
	  • **Al-Qushayrī's "Treatise" [on Sufi Expressions] (from *Early Islamic Mysticism*, ed. Michael Sells)**
	  • **Junayd on *tawḥīd* (unity) and *fanā'* (annihilation) (from *Early Islamic Mysticism*, ed. Michael Sells)**
	  • **Ibn 'Arabī on "What is Indispensable for the Spiritual Seeker"**
	  • **Kemas Fakhr ad-Dīn (fl. ca. 1750) on "Quest for the Self and God's Oneness"**
	• **We will view some *dhikr* and *samā'* ceremonies**

3/28 – 4/1: EASTER RECESS - NO CLASSES	
Wednesday 4/3	**Before Class** • **Read: "Chapter 6: Sufi Poetry," in *Sufism: An Introduction to the Mystical Tradition of Islam*** **Optional** • **Read: "Chap. 7: Sufi Music and Dance," in ibid.** **In Class** • **I will explain various types of Sufi poetry and we will experience oral recitations and performances of them in class.** • **Selection from Rūmī's Mathnawī (video)** • **Ghazals: Selections from 'Aṭṭār's and Ḥāfiẓ's love lyrics** • **I will also prepare you and give you the necessary background for the following three classes in which we read a Sufi poetic classic, *The Conference of the Birds*.**
Friday 4/5	**Due: Create a Calligraphic Design of Allāh with Self-Commentary & -Analysis**

Schedule of Classes and Assigned Readings

Schedule of Classes	Module	Assignment Due Date	No Class

Day	Required Readings and/or Assignments
Monday 4/8	**Before Class** • Read: ʿAṭṭār, *Conference of the Birds*, pp. 29-75 (original edition) or pp. 39-86 (revised edition) **In Class** • Discussion questions provided in advance and covered in class
Wednesday 4/10	**Before Class** • Read: ʿAṭṭār, *Conference of the Birds*, pp. 75-166 (original edition) or pp. 86-180 (revised edition) **In Class** • Discussion questions provided in advance and covered in class
Monday 4/15	**Before Class** • Read: ʿAṭṭār, *Conference of the Birds*, pp. 166-229/End (original edition) or pp. 180-245/End (revised edition) **In Class** • Discussion questions provided in advance and covered in class
Module 8: Colonial, Postcolonial, and Diasporic Islam: Reform and Revival	
Wednesday 4/17	**Before Class** • Read: "15 Modern Challenges: Western Imperialism and Muslim Response," in *Introducing Islam*, pp. 229-253 **In Class** • We will review a few examples of reform and revival movements, possibilities include Turkey, Iran, Egypt, Pakistan, Indonesia, or others. TBD.
Friday 4/19	Module 7 Test: Islamic Spirituality: Early Piety Movement to Later Sufism - Due on Canvas
Sunday 4/21	Due: Creative Art Assignment Responding to Conference of the Birds

Schedule of Classes and Assigned Readings

Schedule of Classes | **Module** | **Assignment Due Date** | **No Class**

Day	Required Readings and/or Assignments

Monday 4/22	**Before Class**
	• **Read: "20 Globalization: Challenge and Opportunity," in *Introducing Islam*, pp. 322-338**
	• **Read: Three options (TBD how we will deal with this)**
	  • **"Conquest and Conversion, War and Peace in the Quran," by Caner Dagli, in *The Study Quran***
	  • **"War and Peace in the Foundational Texts of Islam," in *Jihad, Radicalism and the New Atheism*, by Mohammad Hassan Khalil, pp. 7-21**
	  • **"From the Spirituality of Jihad to the Ideology of Jihadism," by Reza Shah-Kazemi, in *Islam, Fundamentalism, and the Betrayal of Tradition*, edited by Joseph Lumbard, pp. 119-148**
	
	In Class
	• **Will the REAL ISLAM please stand up? Is there a real Islam?**
	• Where does the concept of *jihād* come from? How is it discussed in the Islamic tradition? Yes, just like there are ingredients for violence in the Christian tradition, there are ingredients for violence in the Islamic tradition (just as there are ingredients for violence in the secular nation-state system…). In this session, we will read how Muslims today discuss *jihād* in more non-violent terms—without denying the historical fact that Islamic empires—like all empires—expanded, waged war, and acted violently, and that there are contemporary Muslims—as there are contemporary Christians—who call for violence in the name of religion.

Schedule of Classes and Assigned Readings

Schedule of Classes	Module	Assignment Due Date	No Class

Day	Required Readings and/or Assignments
Module 9: Women, Gender, and Islam	
Wednesday 4/24	**Before Class** • Read: "Gender" section of "21 Three Cultural Flashpoints: Gender, Democracy, and Human Rights, in *Introducing Islam*, pp. 342-352 • Read: "Do Muslim Women (Still) Need Saving?," in *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?*, by Lila Abu-Lughod (pp. 27-53) **In Class** • What are the differences between cultural-religious explanations for society and its actions, values, and norms and historico-political explanations? • Feminism, Feminisms, Feminists—between West, East, and the Rest • Also: "War, huh, yeah / What is it good for? / Absolutely nothing, uhh / War, huh, yeah / What is it good for? / Absolutely nothing / Say it again, y'all / War, huh (good God) / What is it good for / Absolutely nothing, listen to me, oh"
Friday 4/26	Module 8 Test: Colonial, Postcolonial, & Diasporic Islam: Reform & Revival - Due on Canvas
Monday 4/29	**Before Class** • Read: pp. 1-18 (only) of "Introduction: Reimagining the US Mosque," in *The Women's Mosque of America: Authority and Community in US Islam*, by Tazeen M. Ali • Read: The following *khutbahs* from *The Women's Khutbah Book* • "Engaged Surrender," by amina wadud (pp. 20-24); "*An-Nur* (Divine Light)," by Shaykha Oumou Malik Gueye (pp. 31-36); "*Khutbah al-Muwaddah lil Ghuraba*—For the Love of the Queer Strangers," by Ghazala Anwar (pp. 38-44; "Ethics of Gender Justice," by Omaima Abou Bakr (pp. 46-50) **In Class** • Embodied Knowledge and Female Authority

Schedule of Classes and Assigned Readings

Schedule of Classes | Module | Assignment Due Date | No Class

Day	Required Readings and/or Assignments
Wednesday 5/1	Due: American Muslim Futures Project
Friday 5/3	Module 9 Test: Women, Gender, and Islam - Due on Canvas