



NYU

**ROBERT F. WAGNER GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE**

UPADM-GP 251

Legal and Ethical Approaches to Islam Fall 2022

Meeting Time: Thursdays 2:00-3:15pm

Professor: Faiyaz Jaffer, Ed.D.

Office Hours: By appointment (email: fj490@nyu.edu)

Location: Tisch Hall, Room LC11

Course Description

In this course, we will study “shari’ah,” the primary legal and ethical tradition of Islam as well as its applications for today. First, we will briefly cover the historical development of fiqh and shari’ah. Then we will turn to the contemporary era, and examine the articulation of shari’ah in regards to a variety of political, social, cultural and religious issues. By the end of the course, the student will have a greater appreciation for the complexity of shari’ah, and its continued relevance in today’s legal and ethical debates both nationally and internationally.

There are no prerequisites for this course.

Requirements

(1.) **Attendance:** Students will be expected to **attend** all class sessions, to be **on-time**, **participate**, and to **complete the assigned readings** before each class session. **(10 points)**

(2.) **Reflections:** Students must also submit **3 “reflection papers”** on the assigned dates below. These reflection papers are meant to capture your thoughts and questions about the readings and classroom discussion. Personal opinions are encouraged and students should feel free to question and even criticize the readings, but provide sources to back up your claims. You decide what you want to write about and when you want to do them. A mere summary of the reading will *not* count as a “reflection.” Each reflection should be at minimum 4 pages long (double spaced), but there is no maximum length. This is meant to provide you a space to freely express yourself in writing. You will receive a full grade by turning them in, and demonstrating engagement with the ideas under discussion. **(20 points)**

(3.) **Final Paper:** Students will complete a **final paper** on any topic related to the course that is of interest to them. The topic should be discussed with and approved by the instructor in advance. Students must submit a paper 8 pages in length, double spaced, and be submitted via Brightspace by 11:55 pm on December 14th. **(20 points)**

Grading

Students of the class will be graded on a scale of 50 points (10 for coming to class, and 20 for writing the three reflection papers and 20 for the final paper\presentation).

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory except in documented cases of illness or family emergency. Any students with an unexcused absence or who are consistently late to class will receive a drop in their attendance grade. Students are expected to notify the professor of any absence in advance as early as possible.

Texts

There is no core textbook, please follow assigned weekly readings listed below.

COURSE CONTENT

PART I: Introduction to Islamic Law

Class 1 (Thursday, Sept. 1st)

Introduction: General Overview of Islam & Its Components

Class 2 (Sept. 8th)

Introduction: The Prophet Muhammad

Reccomended reading: [Muhammad: Man of God](#)

Class 3 (Sept. 15th)

The Sources of Islamic Law, Part I: Quran

Reading: Introduction to [The Study Quran](#)

Class 4 (Sept. 22nd)

The Sources of Islamic Law, Part II: Hadith Literature\Sunnah

Class 5 (Sept. 29th)

Sunnah & Hadith: Discussions on authenticity, and the authoritative nature of hadith

Class 6 (Oct. 6th)

Non-Textual Sources of Law

L. Ali Khan Hisham M. Ramadan's Classical Era of Ijtihad

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/10.3366/j.ctt1r23xt.5.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3Afe76f0a5e9ac22d8f21f41b0181e9f00>

Class 7 (Oct. 13th)

Worship, Communal & Societal Laws

PART II: Legal & Ethical Considerations in America

Class 8 (Oct. 20th)

Islams in America: Is Islam a Religious and Social Monolith?

Tahir Mahmood's Custom as a Source of Islamic Law

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/43949882.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A6ff54dcc8749576787cfef3df42ee9f>

Class 9 (Oct. 27th)

Islam in America: Minority Muslim Demographics

- Black Shias in America by Liyakat Takim (NYU Classes, Resources)
- Shiism in the West by Liyakat Takim (NYU Classes, Resources)

Class 9 (Nov. 3th)

Islam, Community & Social Justice

- Seeing Myself in “Ya Husayn” and the Resonance of Ancestral Familiarity

<https://sapeლოსquare.com/2017/10/03/seeing-myself-in-ya-husayn-and-the-resonance-of-ancestral-familiarity/>

Class 10 (Nov. 10th)

Contemporary Issues: Religion Under Siege: Practicing Islam Under the Gaze of Islamophobia

- Sana Tayyen's *From Orientalist Sexual Object to Burkini Terrorist Threat: Muslim Women through Evolving Lens*

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/10.13169/islastudj.4.1.0101.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3Acef89fc4804f86c175c586cbfe5f281e>

PART III: Islam & Ethics

Class 11 (Nov. 17th)

Contemporary Issues: Islam and Bio-Ethics

[Guest Lecture]

*****NO CLASS on Nov. 24th – Thanksgiving Break*****

Class 12 (Dec. 1st)

Jihad & Just War Theory in Islam

•Ayatollah Sistani's rules of war against ISIS:

<http://www.sistani.org/english/archive/25036/>

Class 13 (Dec. 8th)

The Future, Navigating Islamic Law in America & Conclusions

*****Final Paper Due Thursday December 15th by 11:55pm*****

Brightspace

All announcements, resources, and assignments will be delivered through the Brightspace site. I may modify assignments, due dates, and other aspects of the course as we go through the term with advance notice provided as soon as possible through the course website.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a vital component of Wagner and NYU. All students enrolled in this class are required to read and abide by [Wagner's Academic Code](#). All Wagner students have already read and signed the [Wagner Academic Oath](#). Plagiarism of any form will not be tolerated and students in this class are expected to report violations to me. If any student in this class is unsure about what is expected of you and how to abide by the academic code, you should consult with me.

Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Student Accessibility

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please visit the [Moses Center for Students with Disabilities \(CSD\) website](#) and click the "Get Started" button. You can also call or email CSD (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are strongly advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

NYU's Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays

[NYU's Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays](#) states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, absent themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Please notify me in advance of religious holidays that might coincide with exams to schedule mutually acceptable alternatives.

NYU's Wellness Exchange

[NYU's Wellness Exchange](#) has extensive student health and mental health resources. A private hotline (212-443-9999) is available 24/7 that connects students with a professional who can help them address day-to-day challenges as well as other health-related concerns.