

Spiritual & Ethical Approaches to Islam

UPADM-GP 255

Wagner School of Public Policy

Online\Remote Learning

Tuesdays; 11-12:15

Instructors

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Course Description

Spirituality & ethics is an integral segment of every religious tradition, along with sciences like that of theology and jurisprudence. In recent years Islamic spirituality has often been described as somehow separate from Islam itself. In this course, we will investigate the historical origins of Islamic spirituality and look at a sampling of the major concepts and figures from pre-modern tradition. Finally, we will turn to the continued importance that spirituality and ethics have played in the contemporary Muslim-majority world, with a special focus on Islamic tradition in North America.

Requirements

- (1.) Students will be expected to **attend** all class sessions, to be **on-time, participate**, and to **complete the assigned readings** before each class session. You must keep your cameras on during class time. **(20 points)**
- (2.) Students must also submit **3 “reflection papers”** before the final class. These reflection papers are meant to capture your thoughts and questions about the readings and classroom discussions, though in a respectful way. Personal opinions are encouraged and students should feel free to question and even criticize the readings, but provide the necessary sources. You can only turn in one paper a week, but you can do them all in the course of three consecutive weeks if you prefer. The topic addressed in each paper has to be different than in the other two papers. A mere summary of the reading will *not* count as a “reflection.” Each reflection should be at a minimum of 3 pages long (double-spaced), but there is no maximum length. This is meant to provide you 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. **(15 points each\ 45 points total)**
- (3.) There will be a final paper, that should be **8-12 pages in length**, which speak to some issue that was in the readings and discussed in class. The final topic proposal should be accepted by the instructor. The final two courses will give students an opportunity to share their thoughts and offer a brief presentation of their final paper. **(35 points)**

Syllabus

[All Course Readings available under “Resources” in NYU Classes]

February 2

Introduction to Islam; Course Objectives and break out groups on “how do you define ethics and spirituality today?”

February 9

Introduction to Islamic Spirituality (Shia)

What are the primary sources for Islamic spirituality? Theology + Ethics + Jurisprudence
Reading, NYU Classes: *Introduction to ‘The Charismatic Community,’* Maria Masse Dakake

February 16

Introduction to Islamic Spirituality (Sunni) and its primary sources

Reading, NYU Classes: *The Baghdad Sufis*

February 23

Ring The Alarm: Sheikh al-Harari on Being Woke & Negotiating The Shrinking Sacred -

Reading, NYU Classes: al-Harari’s; First Step Towards a Spiritual life

March 2

***Walayah*: Shia Spiritual Authority**

Reading, NYU Classes: *The Charismatic Community: Walayah in Islamic Tradition* by Maria Masse Dakake

March 10

A Female Jedi: Rabia al-Adawiyya On Hope and Fear (Women and Spiritual Leadership and Practice)

Reading, NYU Classes: *Female Sufis in Islam*

March 16

The Psalms of Islam

Teachings from Sahifa Sajjadiya of Zayn al-Abideen
Reading, NYU Classes: *Sahifa; Psalms of Islam*
(Pages 10-29)

March 23

Al-Ghazzali Tackles the Bling: Death and the Temporal World’s take on Opulence

Reading, NYU Classes: *Al-Ghazali’s last-poem*

March 30

Spiritual Social Justice

Imam Ali’s Letter to Malik al-Ashtar

Reading, NYU Classes: *Philanthropic Ideals in Imam Ali’s Rule*

April 6

A Battle Of Spirits: Abū Nawās' Battles With His Spirits Reading,
NYU Classes: *Revelry and Remorse: A Poem of Abu Nawas*

April 13

The Relationship Between Shi'ism and Sufism

Reading, NYU Classes: *The Prophet & Imams*

Shi'ism and Sufism: Their Relationship in Essence and in History

April 20

Sufi Resistance: On Justice and Capitulation

Reading, NYU Classes: *Sufism in History and Its Relationship With Power*

April 27

"Mindfulness" in Islamic Tradition: Spirituality is a Non-Spiritual World

Final Class Presentations

May 4

Conclusions

Final Classroom Discussion & Presentations

Final Paper Due

TBA