

Legal and Ethical Approaches to Islam

UPADM-GP 251/252

Fall 2021

Meeting Time: Thursdays 12:30-1:45 pm

Professors: Faiyaz Jaffer & Suhaib Webb

TA: Kumail Raza

Office Hours: By appointment (email: fj490@nyu.edu/wdw2@nyu.edu)

Location: 60 5th Avenue, Room 261

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.) **Paper/Presentation:** 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 10 pages in length, double spaced, and be submitted via Brightspace by 11:55 pm on December 17th. **(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

Class 1 (Thursday, Sept. 2nd)

Introduction (General Overview of Islam & Its Components)

Read before class: Kristin Johnston Largen's A Brief Introduction to Islam

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/j.ctt22nm9cb.8.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A7a45ea4baaed8627268d50f49dce7a9a>

Class 2 (Sept. 9th)

The Framework of Islamic Law Part I (Shia)

- Momen, Shia Jurisprudence (NYU Classes, Resources)

Class 3 (Sept. 16th)

The Framework of Islam Law Part II (Sunni)

Deina Ali Abdelkader's Al-Shattibi's Rudiments of Islamic law

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/j.ctt183p1xz.5.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A9dad6e6e77e9837bbf43ffa7473e778e>

Class 4 (Sept. 23rd)

Potential & Application of Islamic Law I (Shia)

- Read before class: al-Modarrisi, pages 1-41 (NYU Classes, Resources)
 - Maqasid in Shia Law by Liyakat Takim (NYU Classes, Resources)

Class 5 (Sept. 30th)

Potential & Application of Islamic Law II (Sunni)

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 6 (Oct.7th)

Islam in America- Shia Muslims in a Diaspora

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

First Reflection Paper Due on October 8th

Class 7 (Oct.14th)

Islams in America - From Imam Khalid Latif To Dj Khaled: 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 8 (Oct. 21st)

Islam & Social Justice- Between Karbala & Black Lives Matter

- Seeing Myself in “Ya Husayn” and the Resonance of Ancestral Familiarity
<https://sapelesquare.com/2017/10/03/seeing-myself-in-ya-husayn-and-the-resonance-of-ancestral-familiarity/>
- Read before class: Ayatollah Sistani's rules of war against ISIS:
<http://www.sistani.org/english/archive/25036/>

Second Reflection Paper Due on October 22nd

Class 9 (Oct. 28th)

Islamic & Social Justice - Early Slave Uprisings, Malcolm's Shadow and Sunni Quietism

Stijn's "Pray with Your Leader": A Proto-Sunni Quietist Tradition

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/10.7817/jameroriesoci.136.1.29.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3Ad4d3f4618dbc2064b176a99ab0ceb364>

Class 9 (Nov. 4th)

Contemporary Issues: Islam and Bio Ethics

Biomedical ethics [Guest Lecture]

Class 10 (Nov.11th)

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>

Third Reflection Paper Due on November 12th

Class 11 (Nov. 18th)

Contemporary Issues: From Nās to Nas - Hip Hop & Islam's Interesting Marriage

Read before class: Dr. Su'ad Abdul al-Khabeer's *Islam and Hip-Hop*
<http://www.suadabulkhabeer.com/islam-and-hiphop/>

Final Research Paper Proposal Due on November 19th

*****NO CLASS on Nov. 25th – Thanksgiving Break*****

Class 12 (Dec. 2nd)

Presentation of Final Paper and Group Discussion

Class 13 (Dec. 9th)

Presentation of Final Papers and Group Discussion

*****Final Paper Due Friday December 17th by 11:55pm*****