

ANTHRO 139
Islam in America
Instructor: Hamdy
Tues, Thurs
Fall 2019 60357
9:30-10:50



(Image: calligraphy by American artist Mohamed Zakariya)

This class offers a critical academic study of Islam in America, focusing on the core tenets of belief, the diversity of practices, and historical transformations that have taken place since the arrival of Muslims in the United States.

What does the *critical* academic study of religion mean? It does NOT mean that we are criticizing it negatively. Our goal is neither to praise nor demonize the religion or Muslims, but rather to understand what Muslims believe and practice and how the experience of being Muslim in America varies among different groups, as well as over time.

In the academic context, taking a “critical” approach to social phenomena also means that we are analyzing these phenomena in terms of people’s various relations to power -- for example, how expressions and narratives of Islam are informed by people’s positionality in terms of class, race, ethnicity, historical context, and gender. A critical approach to religion means that we will attempt to see things through the perspectives of others, and learn to understand who benefits from particular narratives and why. We will also pay attention to how social context, identities, practices, and attitudes change over time. These critical and analytical skills require practice, and we will work on developing them throughout the quarter.

This class also covers: (a) the role of Muslims and Islam in U.S. history; (b) the role of Islam in wider mainstream narratives of that history, and (c) the divergence between these two.

Throughout the course we will highlight the *diversity* of Islam -- that is, the many ways that Muslims practice and embody their religion in their daily lives. For the purposes of this course, we will suspend judgment about the “the correct” practice of Islam, to focus, instead, on how particular communities come to espouse the beliefs and practices and how they are understood in the American context.

NOTE: This printed syllabus is a working document. Depending on our progress in the course, there may be changes. Always check the Canvas site for the most updated information.

The **Learning Objectives** in this course are to:

- (a) Understand the core tenets of Islam and the wide variety of Muslim beliefs and practices, engaging with institutions such as kinship, spirituality, U.S. citizenship, and family life.
- (b) Learn how to critically analyze different forms of media, including: popular culture (films, television, performances, music, visual art), news journalism, historical accounts, biographies, conversion narratives, and academic texts.
- (c) Analyze how race, class, national background, gender, and sexual orientation contribute to the construction of Muslim American identities.
- (d) Identify key events and people in the history of Islam and Muslims in the United States.
- (e) Explain how slavery, extractive labor, migration, race, nationalism, foreign policy, citizenship, and the media have shaped the lived experiences of Muslims.
- (f) Explain how historical and contemporary dominant perceptions in the U.S. toward Islam, Muslims, and other stigmatized minorities have changed over time.
- (g) Identify the resources and analytical tools necessary for educating yourself and others about the history of Islam in the U.S.
- (h) Communicate your research findings and analyses to a broader public, through the final research project.

There are three books available for purchase at the UCI Bookstore. These three books are also available on reserve at Langson Library:

- Edward E. Curtis IV, 2009 *Muslims in America: A Short History* Oxford University Press
- Malcolm X, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*
- Sheba Karim, *Mariam Sharma Hits the Road*

There are three websites that you should **bookmark** for easy access throughout your enrollment in this course. They are:

1. CANVAS

Canvas Course website: <https://canvas.eee.uci.edu/courses/18310>

- The Canvas course site is where you can access all information about the course, including the assignments, schedule, gradebook, grading rubrics, and assignment instructions

2. Perusall: [Perusall.com](https://www.perusall.com)

- Enroll in 'Islam in America' -- the course code is HAMDY-RHESJ
- The Perusall site is where all the digital readings (everything except for the three books for purchase) can be accessed and annotated. You will be randomly assigned into groups of 4 and on Perusall you will be able to read each other's notes and comments on the readings. Each reading/annotation on Perusall is automatically given credit and accounted in your overall score.
- Each Assignment is named by the author's last name, article title, and a number indicating the week and how many assignments in total are to be read/annotated that week on Perusall. So an assignment of 1.1/3 is due the first week and is the first of three assignments; an assignment labeled 7.2/2 is due in the seventh week and is the second of two assignments.

3. Kanopy: <https://www.kanopy.com/login>

- The kanopy website, through the University of California Irvine Library systems, gives you access to a broad range of films and documentaries. All the films assigned to watch are available on either kanopy, or youtube, as noted on the syllabus. Please watch the film with one or more classmates so that you can discuss; your reading worksheets should reflect your discussions. If you cannot coordinate with a classmate, it is better to watch it alone than to not watch it at all.

Course Assignments:

Background Quiz	*** not graded
Class Attendance and Participation:	10%
Forward Reflection:	2%
Reading Annotations (Perusall):	15%
Film/Readings Worksheets/Notes: (5)	15%

Regular Media Logs (3):	30%
Short Answer Exam	10%
Final Project:	18%

Grading:

- For every lecture (of 22) attended, you will receive 0.3 points, for a total of 6.6% of your grade. (The remaining 3.4% of the 10% Attendance/Participation will reflect the quality of your participation).
- For each annotation (of 20) you do, you will receive 0.75 points, for a total of 15% of your grade
- This means that a combined 21.6% of your grade is based on simply showing up (attendance) and reading/annotating (on Perusall).

The remaining 78.4% of your grade is based on the *quality* of your (mostly written) work. There will be grading rubrics for each assignment (Media Logs, Short Answer Exam, Final Project) that will be posted to Canvas in advance of each assignment due date.

As for the film/reading worksheets, they will be graded on whether the questions are answered correctly and demonstrate comprehension of the readings and/or films.

Note: Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any incidents of dishonest work will be reported to your academic advisor and the appropriate dean. I take all these matters seriously. If you feel that you are headed in this direction, see me immediately and we can solve this together, before it leads down the road of disciplinary action.

Note:

We all get stressed out from time to time, and there are plenty of resources around campus to help when things feel overwhelming . . . I don't want you to lose your stripes!



There are many resources on campus and staff whom you can turn to for academic guidance. If you are having a hard time managing getting through your days, please don't feel like you have to face this alone. Here are some great resources:

ACCOMMODATIONS

- ◆ The UCI **Disability Services Center** ensures access to

educational programs and resources for all students. If you need an accommodation related to a disability, please contact the DSC at **949-824-7494** or go to **dsc.uci.edu**.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

◆ The **Student Outreach and Retention Center (SOAR)** provides a variety of resources and referrals services to support students academically, financially, and personally. Visit **soar.uci.edu** or call **949-824-5762**.

◆ **Student Success Initiatives (SSI)** provides personal, academic, and professional programs for qualifying students including textbook loans, advising, peer mentoring, and resources referrals. Visit **ssi.uci.edu** or call **949-824-1142**.

◆ UCI's **Library** services include **computer loans** (3 hour maximum), research databases, and research assistance, and quiet study space. Visit in person or online at **https://www.lib.uci.edu**. For a list of campus study rooms visit: **https://www.lib.uci.edu/study-space-locator**.

◆ The **Writing Center** provides free writing tutoring, in person and online, for any stage of the writing process. Walk-ins are welcome. Visit: **writingcenter.uci.edu** for details.

MORE RESOURCES

◆ **Campus Assault Resources and Education (CARE)** provides free and confidential counseling for issues related to rape and sexual assault, intimate partner violence, relationship health, and personal safety. Visit **care.uci.edu** or call **949-824-7273**.

◆ The **Counseling Center** offers free, confidential mental health and counseling services to currently enrolled, full-time students, who have paid registration fees. Services include urgent care, crisis response, and individual and group counseling. Visit **counseling.uci.edu** or call **949-824-6547**.

◆ The **Dreamers Resource Center** provides scholarships, referrals, academic support, and legal assistance for undocumented and other immigrant students, as well as their families. Visit **dreamers.uci.edu** or call **949-824-6390**.

◆ The **FRESH Basic Needs Hub** The Basic Needs Hub provides a free, need-based food and toiletry items, as well as CalFresh enrollment, referrals, and workshops. Services are confidential and open to all students with UCI ID. There are no requirements to access the pantry. Located at Lot 5, 4079 Mesa Rd. Open M- Th, 11 am - 5 pm. Visit **basicneeds.uci.edu** or call **949-824-0607**.

◆ The **LGBT Resource Center** provides a variety of resources and services for UCI's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, and ally communities, including workshops, support groups, social activities, mentoring programs, and scholarships. Visit lgbtrc.uci.edu or call **949-824-3277**.

◆ **Veteran Services** assists veterans, reservists, and their dependents with entitlement requests, educational benefits, housing and course registration, and social and academic support. Visit veteran.uci.edu or call **949-824-3500**.

A note on **email: I get crazy amounts of emails! Please email a class "buddy" for logistical questions, or about something you missed – if this is a question a classmate could easily answer, please do not address it to me. If you have a question that requires further discussion/understanding of the class material or about an assignment, I am happy to discuss during office hours.

Forward Reflection

This is 1-2 paged, double spaced, reflection on your goals for the class. Please reflect on what specifically you would like to devote your energies and time learning, within the parameters of the course assignments, and on what skills you want to develop. Explain how these goals will fit into the framework for the course. Your writing should reflect an understanding of the course syllabus, and include a realistic timeline outlining how you will accomplish your goals.

Media Logs (There are three of these)

Throughout the class, we will develop critical media literacy skills; learning how to assess and analyze the content of different media. We will regularly analyze media sources as a group, and in the media logs, you will put these skills to practice.

There will be three logs to be turned in and graded throughout the quarter. Each should be 3-4 pages, double-spaced. The purpose of this assignment is not to simply summarize content, but to practice critical analysis with the opportunity for feedback on your writing.

The media item can be a news article from a mainstream source, an item of popular culture, including a song, movie, TV series episode, comic book, or podcast with content about Islam/Muslims in America, historical or contemporary. Write a brief explanation of 1-2 paragraphs explaining why you have chosen the media example. Then put the piece in context; explaining how it presents the producer's perspective, who the intended audience is, and what the argument, or element of persuasion is. How do you evaluate the piece? What are the limitations if any? Finally, tie it into an aspect of the course readings or lectures.

The second (*Due 10/25*) and third (*Due 11/15*) can either follow the above format, or you may also choose instead to write a short biography of a Muslim artist/cultural producer, or to create or improve upon a Wikipedia entry of a topic pertaining to a Muslim American figure or topic we have touched on in class. If you choose to edit an existing Wiki entry, please screenshot the entry before and after you have edited it, to turn in.

Examples of model essays are available on the Canvas site.

FINAL PROJECT:

The final project allows you the opportunity to explore more in depth a topic of interest that you have developed that pertains to the course theme and in which you can demonstrate applying the analytical skills that we have developed throughout the course. **It should demonstrate your own original research or framing of a topic, relying on 5-8 academic sources.**

The format can be of your own choosing. You may submit a standard academic paper (6-8 pp); edited video; podcast; slide presentation; illustrated feature; or other creative assignment. More details will be given closer to the assignment date. You must have your topic and format approved ahead of time by the instructor.

To help you prepare a successful final project, note the following strict deadlines (noted below):

- Proposal describing your final project plan.
- Update on your final project progress.
- Annotated bibliography
- Final Project

Readings and Film-Watching are DUE on the date that they will be discussed in lecture, as indicated in the syllabus.

Film-Watching: Please watch the film with one or more classmates, if you can, so that you can discuss; your reading worksheets should reflect your discussions.

Thursday 9/26: First Day of Class: Overview of Islam in America

Week 1: Orientalism and the Basic Tenets of Islam

Tuesday 10/1:

- READ: Syllabus, carefully
 - Contribute to Perusall

- Edward Said, 1980 “Islam Through Western Eyes” *The Nation*
 - Contribute to Perusall
- **WATCH** with classmate(s): (on Kanopy) Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People (51 minutes)
 - Complete worksheet #1 and bring to class

Thursday 10/3:

- Jamal Elias, 2011, *This is Islam: From Muhammad and the Community of Believers to Islam in the Global Community*, pp. 1-28, 63-77
 - Contribute to Perusall
- **WATCH** with classmate(s): (on Kanopy) The Life of Muhammad Part 1: “The Seeker” (60 minutes)
 - Complete worksheet #2 and bring to class

Guest Lecture: Shaykh Jamal Diwali (The Majlis Institute) on the Basic Tenets of Islam as a Faith

Bilal Nasir (Ph.D. Candidate, Dept. Anthropology, Northwestern University) “Muslims in Southern California”

<<Forward Reflection Due: Friday 10/4>>

Week 2: First American Converts

Tuesday 10/8:

- Edward E. Curtis IV, 2009 “Across the Black Atlantic: The First Muslims in North America” in *Muslims in America: A Short History*, pp. 1-24
 - Come prepared to discuss Reading Questions on Canvas
- <https://religionnews.com/2019/01/17/rare-autobiography-of-muslim-slave-goes-online-via-library-of-congress/>

- **WATCH:** with classmate(s): Marcus Garvey: A Giant of Black Politics, on Kanopy, (52 minutes)
 - Complete worksheet #3 and bring to class

Thursday 10/10:

- Edward E. Curtis IV, 2009 *Muslims in America: A Short History*, pp. 25-46
 - Come prepared to discuss Reading Questions on Canvas
- Alexander Russell Webb: “Webb Interview in *The Mohamman Observer*” pp. 265-271 and “Fundraising Letter from Webb” p. 280 in *Yankee Muslim: Mohammed Alexander Russell Webb*, Edited by Brent D. Singleton
 - Contribute to Perusall
- Sylvia Chan-Malik, 2018 “Four American Moslem Ladies” in *Being Muslim: A Cultural History of Women of Color in American Islam*, pp. 39-75
 - Contribute to Perusall

<<Media Log #1 DUE: Friday 10/11>>

Week 3: Malcolm X, Black Power, and the Embrace of Sunni Islam

Tuesday 10/15:

- *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, pp. 1-270
 - Come Prepared to discuss Reading Questions on Canvas

Thursday 10/17:

- *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, pp. 271-389
 - Come Prepared to discuss Reading Questions on Canvas

Week 4: Rise of the Cold War

Guest Lecture: Sohail Daulatzai (*Associate Professor Film and Media Studies, UCI*): “The Cold War and the Muslim International”

Tuesday 10/22:

- Sohail Daulatzai, “You Remember Dien Bien Phu!’: Malcolm X and the Third World Rising” in *Black Star, Crescent Moon*, pp. 1-44
 - Contribute to Perusall
- WATCH: The Lost Found Nation of Islam
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G5GhOYQALY4> (1 hr 39 min)
 - Complete worksheet #4 and bring to class

Thursday 10/24:

- Firoozeh Dumas, 2003 *Funny in Farsi: A Memoir of Growing Up Iranian in America*, pp. 3-16, 24-41, 62-67, 82-121, 188-198
 - Contribute to Perusall
- WATCH: “Becoming Iranian-American”, Part 1
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VuauCZzKSpq> (9 min)

<<Media Log #2 DUE: Friday 10/25>>

<< 5 complete film/reading worksheets due>>

Week 5: Goodbye Racial Quotas, Hello Immigrant Islam

Tuesday 10/29:

- Edward E. Curtis IV, 2009 *Muslims in America: A Short History*, pp. 47-96
 - Come prepared to discuss Reading Questions on Canvas
- Amina Wadud “American Muslim Identity: Race and Ethnicity in Progressive Islam” in *Progressive Muslims*, ed. Omid Safi pp. 270-285.
 - Contribute to Perusall

Thursday 10/31:

- Shabana Mir, “Muslim American Women in Campus Culture” pp. 30-46
 - Contribute to Perusall
- Vijay Prashad, 2000 “Genteel Racism” *Amerasia Journal*, 26:3, pp. 21-33
 - Contribute to Perusall

- In-class viewing: “By the Dawn’s Early Light,” Directed by Zareena Grewal (52 min)
Complete worksheet #5 in class (Class discussion: tensions between “immigrant” and “indigenous” American muslims)

Week 6: 9/11 and the War on Terror: Bush, Obama, Trump

Tuesday 11/5:

- WATCH Suheir Hammad spoken word:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3LxKItHJ06E> (text of poem available on Canvas: Suheir Hammad 2001 “First Writing Since (Poem on Crisis and Terror)” *Motion Magazine* (3 pp))
 - Contribute to Perusall
- Naber, N., 2008 “Look, Mohammed the terrorist is coming!: Cultural racism, nation-based racism, and the intersectionality of oppressions after 9/11,” in *Race and Arab Americans before and after 9/11*, pp.276-304.
 - Contribute to Perusall
- IN CLASS VIEWING: “Strawberries” (Ramy, episode 4)
 - Contribute to class discussion

Thursday 11/7:

- Thea Abu El-Haj and Sally Bonet, 2011 “Education, Citizenship, and the Politics of Belonging: From Muslim Transnational Communities to the ‘War on Terror’” *Review of Research in Education* Vol. 35: 29-59
 - Contribute to Perusall
- Edward E. Curtis IV, 2009 *Muslims in America: A Short History*, pp. 97-116
 - Complete Reading Questionnaire on Canvas

Week 7: Feminist/Queer Voices and Inter-Generational Encounters

Tuesday 11/12:

- Chaudhry, Ayesha, 2015. “Does the Koran allow wife-beating? Not if Muslims don’t want it to.” *The Globe and Mail*

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/its-muslims-who-give-voice-to-verse/article17684163/>

- Contribute to Perusall
- Al-Farqui, Maysam, “Women’s Self-Identity in the Qur’an and Islamic Law” In *Windows of Faith: Muslim Women Scholar-Activists in North America*, pp. 72-101
 - Contribute to Perusall
- Grewal, Z.A., 2014. Marriage in colour: race, religion and spouse selection in four American mosques. In *Gender, Race and Religion* (pp. 119-141). Routledge.
 - Contribute to Perusall

<< Topic Approval Due >>

Thursday 11/14:

- Jonathan AC Brown. 2015 “Muslim Scholar on how Islam really views Homosexuality.” *Variety Magazine*
 - Contribute to Perusall
- Al-Haqq Kugle, S.S., 2003. Sexuality, diversity, and ethics in the agenda of progressive Muslims. *Progressive Muslims: On justice, gender, and pluralism*, pp.190-234.
 - Contribute to Perusall

[Short Answer Exam]

<<Media Log #3 Due Friday 11/15 >>

Week 8: Muslim Identity Crisis?

Tuesday 11/19:

- Sheba Karim, *Mariam Sharma Hits the Road*, pp.
 - Come prepared to discuss Reading Questions on Canvas

Thursday 11/21:

- Sheba Karim, *Mariam Sharma Hits the Road*, pp.

- Come prepared to discuss Reading Questions on Canvas

Week 9: Latinx Muslims and Inter-Ethnic Alliances

Tuesday 11/26:

- Harold D. Morales, “Reversion Stories: The Form, Content, and Dissemination of a Logic of Return” in *Latino and Muslim in America*, pp. 75-104
 - Contribute to Perusall
- Hisham Aidi, “Sugar’s Secrets” in *Rebel Music: Race, Empire, and the New Muslim Youth Culture*, pp. 24-43
 - Contribute to Perusall

<< Update on Final Project Due >>

Thursday 11/29:

- NO CLASS: HAPPY NOVEMBER WEEKEND!

Week 10: Where we stand today: contemporary debates among Muslim American scholars/activists/community leaders

Tuesday 12/3:

- Essa, Azad, 2019 “Hamza Yusuf and the Struggle for the Soul of Western Islam,” *Middle East Eye*
<https://www.middleeasteye.net/big-story/hamza-yusuf-and-struggle-soul-western-islam>
 - Contribute to Perusall
- Evans, Ubaydullah 2016, “Discussing Controversy: Hamza Yusuf at RIS Convention” lamppostedu.org
<https://lamppostedu.org/discussing-controversy-hamza-yusuf-at-ris-convention-ustadh-ubaydullah-evans/>
 - Contribute to Perusall
- Al-Arian, Ali 2019, “The Political Impotence of the Muslim American Community” *Al Jazeera Opinion*

<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/political-impotence-muslim-american-community-190820151839919.html>

- Contribute to Perusall

- Jackson, Sherman 2019, "From Demagoguery to the Lizard's Hole: A Response to Ali Al-Arian" *American Learning Institute for Muslims*
<https://www.alimprogram.org/articles/from-demagoguery-into-the-lizards-hole/>
- Contribute to Perusall

<<Annotated bibliographies due Friday, December 6>>

Thursday 12/5:

- Final project PRESENTATIONS

Tuesday 12/10: Final Projects Due