

SUFISM

Religious Studies 3371
Dr. Diana Steigerwald

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Fall 2007 Tu 6:00PM-8:45

Office: MHB 612

Office Hours: M 11:00-12:00 W 11:00-11:30 Tu 5:00-5:30

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Course Description: The course is first of all a course in human thought and the history of ideas. It covers mainly Sufism and Shîism and their intimate relationship. It also examines the contribution of some great Sûfis and Shîite thinkers to the development of the inner dimensions of Islam i.e. mysticism, esoterism, and spirituality. The course provides mainly an analysis of different extracts from primary sources.

Course Objectives: This course aim is interdisciplinary, focusing the perspectives of Religious Studies, Philosophy, and Comparative Cultures in the development of the medieval worldview. The objectives of the course are: This course aims at transmitting the religion, philosophy, and intellectual outlook of some Sufis. The course also provides an increased awareness of diverse ways of living and develops respect for multiple viewpoints (“diversity” “difference”). The objectives of the course are: 1) to develop familiarity with the thought, outlook, and culture of some thinkers, 2) apply the parameters of modern academic perspective to this heritage: students will be initiated to the use of the historical and phenomenological approaches to the study of Sufism. They will be encouraged to think critically about religion. 3) to be able to approach one or more aspects of philosophy, thought, and culture in depth. 4) learn about different viewpoints from diverse thinkers. In doing so, students become aware that no single perspective has an absolute claim to validity.

Course Requirements:

25% **(Participation in class discussions** related to the reading of the week or to complementary topics). Students have to do all the scheduled readings. Students are expected to complete assigned readings prior to each class meeting and to come prepared to discuss the topic.

5% Before starting their paper, the student must submit a **proposal of three hundred words explaining the purpose and scope of his or her paper**. The proposal must be submitted on **September 18** and must contain a bibliography of a minimum of **seven books or articles of specialized Journals** which the student intend to read for his paper. **The bibliography must be approved by the Professor**. The Professor might give suggestions to the students to read other books more appropriate to their topics.

10% Students have to do all the scheduled readings. They have to do **one synthesis** of a 30 pages text chosen from the schedule of reading assignments prior to October 16. **The Deadline for the synthesis is October 9**. Students are expected to complete assigned reading prior to each section and to give a short synthesis (5 pages typed double space Times New Roman point size 12) of each reading assignment on the day indicated on the schedule. The students must give a complete summary of the text and **each paragraph must have at least one reference indicating the pages summarized** (ex. B1, B2 or B3 pp. 54-89). The students must write *their personal comments in italics assessing critically the text in half a page*. The synthesis must be submitted on time. Missed due dates will result in grade penalties. All written assignments must be done individually. You are evaluated on the quality of your arguments, your critical thinking, and your capacity to summarize essentials ideas.

20% **Term Paper of 10-13 pages** (typed double space Times New Roman point size 12) on a Medieval thinker either Jew, Christian or Muslim) should have a clear introduction in which an outline of the purpose and scope of the paper is given; it is important to define clearly the objectives of the paper. Students should refer to a minimum of **seven books or articles of specialized Journals and each paragraph must have a note or a footnote**. **All their references must be complete** (including author, title, city, publisher, date,

pages or author, title, journal, volume, date, pages). The deadline for submission is **November 13**. The term paper is due on the date announced. A missed due date will result in grade penalties unless properly excused. Each term paper must be done individually. The Professor will give 70% for the structure, the clarity and the quality of arguments and 30% for the mechanical elements of the paper (bibliographical style, diction, grammar, etc.).

10% **ten-minute class presentation of the term paper**, on a date, which will be determined by the Professor after **November 13**.

10% The **Quiz on November 20** will contain a question general and broad, designed to test the students' overall grasp of ideas, rather than specific facts. Good style and the ability to think critically are essential and students should develop their thoughts in an in-depth manner.

20% The Final Exam on **December 18 at 7:15pm** will contain an introductory section of identifications to be answered in five sentences or more. These are aimed at testing students' direct knowledge of material covered in lectures and readings. The essay questions to be answered in minimum one page or more, will be weighted more strongly. Essay questions will be general and broad, designed to test the students' overall grasp of ideas and religious, philosophical, and cultural processes, rather than specific facts. Good style and the ability to think critically are essential and students should develop their thoughts in an in-depth manner. Individual and creative thinking will be encouraged, but these should be tied to a realistic appraisal of the results of scholarly research on the subject. Students must write the exam with their best handwriting in square letters, if their handwriting is unreadable they might lose many points.

10% Students may voluntarily choose to do **one synthesis** to increase their average and to gain **10% extra points**. Students who wish to do a synthesis should select a text of 30 pages derived from the reading schedule after October 16. **The deadline for the extra credit synthesis is December 11th**.

Academic Integrity: The University expects that students will submit their own original work and properly cite sources for their ideas, including the Bible, handouts, class notes, and ideas from other students. **Plagiarism is a serious matter. Students found to be cheating on any exam, papers, attendance or other course element will be failed for the course and may be reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs for possible suspension or expulsion.**

Attendance: Student presence is important. Class work comprises a substantial component of the course grade, and one must be present to participate. However, for serious reasons (e.g., illness, death in the family, see campus policies), a student will receive an excused absence. In such a case, it is the student's responsibility to provide documentation and find out what he or she missed.

N.B. POLICY ON LATE PAPERS: I will not accept any proposal, term paper, or synthesis later than the following class. Unless you have a serious reason as defined in campus policies. In such a case, it is the student's responsibility to provide documentation (for example a doctor's note) with their late assignment. I do not accept assignments by email you must bring a hard copy in class.

Grading scale: A= 90-100; B = 80-89; C= 70-79; D= 55-69; F= 0-55

Required Books:

B1 Schimmel, Annemarie, Mystical Dimensions of Islam, Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1975. (512 p.)

B2 Momen, Moojan, An Introduction to Shi'i Islam. The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985. (397 p.)

Schedule of reading assignments

September 4	Course outline
September 11	B1 What is Sufism? p. 3-7; p. 14-19 Historical Outlines of Classical Sufism p. 23-41
September 18	B1 Historical Outlines of Classical Sufism p. 42-69 Deadline Proposal
September 25	B1 Historical Outlines of Classical Sufism p.70-97
October 2	B1 The Path, p. 98-127
October 9	.B1 The Path, p. 126-155 Deadline Synthesis
October 16	B1 Man and His Perfection, p. 187-214
October 23	B1 Man and His Perfection, p. 215-227 B2 An Outline of the Life of Muhammad, p.1-10 B2 The Question of Succession to Muhammad p. 11-22
October 30	B2 The Lives of the Imams and Early Divisions among the Shi'is, p. 23-45 B2 The Imamate, p. 147-153
November 6	B2 The Imamate, p. 154-160 B1 Theosophical Sufism, p. 259-279
November 13	B1 Theosophical Sufism, p. 279-286 B1 The Rose and the Nightingale, p. 287-301 Deadline Term Paper
November 20	<i>Quizz</i>
November 27	B1 The Rose and the Nightingale, p. 301-318
December 4	B1 The Rose and the Nightingale, p. 319-331
December 11	B1 The Rose and the Nightingale, p. 332-343 Extra credit synthesis

Please observe ordinary classroom decorum. For example: Be on time and don't leave early. Don't distract the class with ongoing conversations. Turn off beepers and cell phones, etc.

Regarding your final exams and papers you must come to pick them up during the first week of the spring semester otherwise they will be thrown in the garbage can.

List of Term Paper Topics

1. Mystical elements in the life of Muhammad
2. Growth of a cult of the Prophet
3. The doctrine of the "impeccability" of the Prophet: its origin, growth, and significance
4. The doctrine of the "impeccability" of the Shî'î Imam: its origin, growth, and significance
5. The *Mi'râj* (spiritual ascent) of the Prophet: its nature and its significance
6. Eschatology in the writings of the Sufis
7. The structure and organization of a Sûfî Tarîqa
8. The doctrine of the Perfect Man in Sûfism
9. The nature and significant of *hajj* (pilgrimage) in Sufism
10. The Shî'î doctrine of the *Imâma*
11. The mystical thought of Ibn Sînâ
12. The relationship between God and the world in Sufi thought
13. The idea of saint ship in the Islamic tradition
14. The doctrine of the Mahdî
15. The nature and significance of prayers for Sufis
16. The nature and significance of *zakât* (alms) for Sufis
17. The concept of Love in Sufism
18. The concept of Destiny in Sufism
19. The concept of brotherhood in Sufism
20. The concept of faith in Sufism
21. The practice and significance of the cosmic dance (*samâ'*)
22. The meaning of the wine in Sufi poetry
23. Sufism in Spain during the Middle Age
24. Sufism in Africa
25. Sufism in India/Pakistan
26. Sufism in Indonesia
27. Sufism in Iran
28. Life and doctrine of a specific Sufi (Ibn 'Arabi, Rûmî, al-Hallaj, etc)