

ISLA 788: Special Topics in Islamic Thought

Winter, 2015
Morrice Hall 328
Wednesdays, 1:35-3:25

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Description

ISLA 788 is a graduate seminar on Islamic thought understood broadly, i.e., so as to include the exact sciences, philosophy and theology. The topic for Winter 2015 is the scientific, philosophical and theological thought of ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Qūshjī (d. 879/1474). We will focus on Qūshjī’s *Sharḥ* (Commentary) on Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī’s *Tajrīd al-‘aqā’id* [alt. *al-i’tiqād*] (*Abstract of Dogma*). The text we will use is a transcription of the Tehran (1301/1884) lithograph; in addition, we will consult two manuscripts, Laleli 2275 (which is fully vocalized) and Corlulu Ali Pasa 305. We may also get access to a brand new edition, the first part of which has just appeared: *Sharḥ Tajrīd al-‘aqā’id li-Naṣīr al-millah wa-al-dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī. al-Juz’ al-awwal, yashtamilu ‘alā al-maqṣad al-awwal fī al-umūr al-‘āmmah*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Zārī‘ī al-Riḍāyī (Qom: Rā’id, [2014-]). Text readings will be supplemented by secondary materials, such as scholarly articles and encyclopedia entries. Prof. İhsan Fazlıoğlu (İstanbul Medeniyet University) will also join the seminar by Skype.

Requirements

Each student is required to prepare all the assignments for every class, and to participate actively in reading, translation and discussion during class. In addition, each student is required to select one week in which she or he will share responsibility with the instructor(s) for selecting and presenting the week’s assigned readings to the class. (Auditors are also encouraged to select one week for presentation.) This involves helping to prepare a handout that outlines the key technical terms, positions and arguments in the assigned reading, and which also flags the crucial passages to be translated and analyzed in the class that she or he is introducing. Finally, each student is required to submit a 20-page (minimum) paper on a topic related to one or more of the issues discussed in the seminar. The grade will be calculated according to the following criteria: class participation and presentation = 60%; paper = 40%.

Jan 7. Logistics. Introduction: Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's life and works. [JR]

Jan 14. Aim and scope of Ṭūsī's *Tajrīd al-ʿaqā'id*. Commentaries on the *Tajrīd*. [RW]

Tajrīd al-ʿaqā'id, entire (skim; plus English translation of *Maqṣads* I-III)

Jan 21. ʿAlī Qūshjī's life and works. [IF]

Sharḥ al-Tajrīd. Preface. 2,1-4,17

Jan 28. Metaphysics 1: Existence. [RW]

Sharḥ al-Tajrīd. *Maqṣad I: Fī l-umūr al-ʿāmmah*. *Faṣl 1: Fī l-wujūd wa-l-ʿadam*. 4,18-82,16 [excerpts]

Feb 4. Metaphysics 2: Essence. [RW]

Sharḥ al-Tajrīd. *Maqṣad I: Fī l-umūr al-ʿāmmah*. *Faṣl 2: Fī l-māhiyyah wa-lawāḥiqihi*. 82,16-125,10 [excerpts]

Feb 11. Metaphysics and epistemology: Mental existence, the qualities of the soul, and the acquisition of knowledge [IF]

Sharḥ al-Tajrīd. *Maqṣad I: Fī l-umūr al-ʿāmmah*. *Faṣl 1: Fī l-wujūd wa-l-ʿadam*. 4,18-82,16 [excerpts];
Maqṣad II: Fī l-jawāhir wa-l-aʿrād. *Faṣl 5: Fī l-aʿrād*. 247,2-347,16 [excerpts]

Feb 18. Natural Philosophy 1: Substance. [IF]

Sharḥ al-Tajrīd. *Maqṣad II: Fī l-jawāhir wa-l-aʿrād*. *Faṣl 1: Fī l-jawāhir*. 152,1-185,20 [excerpts]

Feb 25. Natural Philosophy 2a: Body. [JR]

Sharḥ al-Tajrīd. *Maqṣad II: Fī l-jawāhir wa-l-aʿrād*. *Faṣl 2: Fī l-aḥsām*. 185,20-203,7 [excerpts]

Mar 4. NO CLASS: STUDY BREAK

Mar 11. Natural Philosophy 2b: Body. [JR]

Sharḥ al-Tajrīd. *Maqṣad II: Fī l-jawāhir wa-l-aʿrād*. *Faṣl 3: Fī baqiyyat aḥkām al-aḥsām*. 203,7-212,17 [excerpts]

Mar 18. Discussion of seminar-paper proposals. [RW]

Mar 25. Natural Philosophy 3: Separate substances. [JR]

Sharḥ al-Tajrīd. *Maqṣad II: Fī l-jawāhir wa-l-aʿrād*. *Faṣl 4: Fī l-jawāhir al-mujarradah*. 212,17-247,2 [excerpts]

Apr 1. Theology: God's existence and attributes. [RW]

Sharḥ al-Tajrīd. *Maqṣad III: Fī ithbāt al-ṣāniʿ wa-ṣifātihi wa-āthārihi*. *Faṣl 1: Fī wujūdihi*. 348,1-5; *Faṣl 2: Fī ṣifātihi*. 348,5- 373,11 [excerpts]

Apr 8. Concluding discussion. The aim and scope of Qūshjī's *Sharḥ al-Tajrīd*. Glosses on the *Sharḥ*.