

ISLA 305
Topics in Islamic History: Female Hadith Scholars, 7th-17th Century
McGill University
Institute of Islamic Studies
MW 1:05-2:25PM
MOR 017

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Office location: Morrice Hall, Room 309
Office hours: Wednesdays 10:30am-12:00pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the history of female scholars of the *hadith* tradition, exploring the lives and contributions of key Muslim women in the transmission of the words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad. Through tracing developments in hadith schooling including the rise of traditionalism and modern feminist discourse, the course explores critical approaches to the history and emergence of *hadith* transmission as a foundational branch of Islamic knowledge.

EVALUATION

This course contains three main grading components:

1. **Diary of a Muhadditha (20% total)**: Choose one of the female hadith scholars we study in this course. Putting yourself in her shoes, you will need to produce a creative piece depicting a typical day in her life including the struggles she may face and some of the things she may encounter in her day-to-day activities. Some options for your creative piece include: a handwritten journal entry, a blog, a vlog, a short film project, a comic strip, or whatever else captures your fancy! **DUE WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 27TH AT 11:59PM EST**
2. **Final Research Paper (60% total = 20% Annotated Bibliography + 10% Outline and Sample Paragraph + 5% Peer Review + 25% Final Paper)**: Your final paper will begin with a specific hadith. You will need to analyze the chain of transmission as well as the content and construct an argument about women and hadith.

FORMAT GUIDELINES: 10-12 pages, 12 pt. Times New Roman font, double-space, normal margins, title page with: essay title, your name,

student number, course number, course title, professor name, date of submission.

This assignment will be scaffolded over the duration of the course and consists of four parts:

- Annotated Bibliography (20%) [DUE WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 6TH \(11:59pm EST\)](#)
- Paper Outline + Sample Paragraph (10%) [DUE WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 10TH \(11:59pm EST\)](#)
- Peer Review of Draft Paper (5%) [DUE WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 1ST \(In-Class\)](#)
- Final Paper (25%) [DUE MONDAY DECEMBER 6TH \(11:59pm EST\)](#)

Further instructions on each component will be posted on MyCourses.

3. **Class Participation (20%)**: Your attendance and participation will be graded through in-class exercises.

REQUIRED READINGS

1. Sayeed, Asma. *Women and the Transmission of Religious Knowledge in Islam*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

All other readings can be found through the MyCourses webpage or online through the McGill Library website.

CLASS SCHEDULE

WEEK 1 – INTRODUCTION TO HADITH

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 1 – INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

WEEK 2 – INTRODUCTION TO FEMALE SCHOLARS OF HADITH

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 6 – **Holiday (Labor Day)**

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 8

- Asma Sayeed, "Introduction," *Women and the Transmission of Religious Knowledge in Islam* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 1-18.

WEEK 3 – THE PROPHET’S WIVES

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 13

- Barbara Freyer Stowasser, “The Mothers of the Believers in the Hadith,” *Women in the Qur’an, traditions, and interpretations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 104-118.

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 15

- Aisha Geissinger, “A’isha bint Abu Bakr and Her Contributions to the Formation of the Islamic Tradition,” *Religion Compass* 5:1 (2011), pp. 37-49.

WEEK 4 – THE FEMALE COMPANIONS

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 20

- Sayeed, Ch. 1 - “A Tradition Invented: The Female Companions,” *Women and the Transmission of Religious Knowledge*, 19-39.

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 22

- Sayeed, Ch. 1 - “A Tradition Invented: The Female Companions,” *Women and the Transmission of Religious Knowledge*, 39-62.

WEEK 5 – THE SUCCESSORS

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 27

- Sayeed, Ch. 2 - “The Successors,” *Women and the Transmission of Religious Knowledge*, 63-86.

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 29

- Sayeed, Ch. 2 - “The Successors,” *Women and the Transmission of Religious Knowledge*, 86-107.

WEEK 6 – THE SIX CANONICAL BOOKS

MONDAY OCTOBER 4TH

- Jonathan A.C. Brown, Ch. 2 - “The Transmission and Collection of Prophetic Traditions,” *Hadith: Muhammad’s Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World* (London: Oneworld, 2018), 25-46.

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 6TH **[ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE AT 11:59PM]**

- Sayeed, Ch. 3 - "Classical Revival," *Women and the Transmission of Religious Knowledge*, 108-126.

WEEK 7 – HADITH CERTIFICATION

MONDAY OCTOBER 11 – **Holiday (Thanksgiving)**

THURSDAY OCTOBER 14TH – **MONDAY MAKEUP**

- Sayeed, Ch. 3 - "Classical Revival," *Women and the Transmission of Religious Knowledge*, 126-143.

WEEK 8 – MADRASA EDUCATION

MONDAY OCTOBER 18

- George Makdisi, "Muslim Institutions of Learning in Eleventh-Century Baghdad," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 24:1 (1961), 4-17.

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 20

- Asma Sayeed, "Muslim Women's Religious Education in Early and Classical Islam." *Religion Compass* 5:3 (2011), pp. 94–103.

WEEK 9 – SHI'I HADITH

MONDAY OCTOBER 25

- Brown, "Prophetic Traditions in Shi'ite Islam," *Hadith*, 123-149.

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 27 **[CREATIVE PROJECT DUE AT 11:59PM]**

- Mirjam Künkler and Rosa Fazaeli, "The Life of Two *Mujtahidahs*: Female Religious Authority in Twentieth-Century Iran," *Women, Leadership, and Mosques* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2012), 127-160.

WEEK 10 – TRADITIONALISM

MONDAY NOVEMBER 1

- Sayeed, Ch. 4 – "A Culmination in Traditionalism," *Women and the Transmission of Knowledge*, 144-159.

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 3

- Sayeed, Ch. 4 – “A Culmination in Traditionalism,” *Women and the Transmission of Knowledge*, 159-185.

WEEK 11 – GENDER-BASED HADITH CRITICISM

MONDAY NOVEMBER 8

- Fatima Mernissi, “The Prophet and Hadith,” *The Veil and the Male Elite* (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1991), 42-48.

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 10 **[OUTLINE AND SAMPLE PARAGRAPH DUE AT 11:59PM]**

- Hatoon Ajwad Al Fassi, “Challenging the Authority of Religious Interpretation in Saudi Arabia: The Transformation of Suhaila Zain al-Abedin Hammad,” *Muslim Women and Gender Justice* (London: Routledge, 2019), 221-236.

WEEK 12 – EARLY MODERN HADITH SCHOLARS

MONDAY NOVEMBER 15

- Omaima Abou-Bakr, “Articulating Gender: Muslim Female Intellectuals in the Pre-Modern Period,” *Arab Studies Quarterly* 32:3 (Summer 2010), pp. 127-144.

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 17

- **ESSAY WORKSHOP**

WEEK 13 – STUDYING MUHADDITHAT

MONDAY NOVEMBER 22

- Sa’diyya Shaikh, “Knowledge, Women and Gender in the Hadith: A Feminist Interpretation,” *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 15.1 (Jan. 2004), pp. 99-108.

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 24

- Ruqayya Y. Khan, “Did a Woman Edit the Qur’an? Hafsa and Her Famed ‘Codex,’” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 82:1 (2014), pp. 174-216.

- Aisha Geissinger, “No, A Woman Did Not Edit the Qur’an: Towards a Methodologically Coherent Approach to a Tradition Portraying a Woman and Written Quranic Materials,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 85.2 (June 2017), pp. 416-445.

WEEK 14 – PEER REVIEW

MONDAY NOVEMBER 29 and WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 1

- Peer Review and Essay Clinic

WEEK 15 – CONCLUSION

MONDAY DECEMBER 6 – **[FINAL PAPER DUE at 11:59pm EST]**

- Sayeed, “Conclusions,” *Women and the Transmission of Knowledge*, 186-198.