

تصوف

Islamic Mysticism: Sufism

Fall 2021

Course Code: ISLA 330
Hours: TR 11:35pm-12:55pm
Classroom: Morrice Hall 017

Instructor: Prof. Pasha M. Khan
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Office: Morrice Hall Rm. 312

Office Hours: TR 3:30-4:30pm **by appointment only**
(please [schedule an appointment online](#))

This class will introduce students to the theory, practice, and history of Sufism, often referred to as "mystical" Islam. We will consider the emergence and efflorescence of Sufi orders throughout the world, from the Middle East and Iran to South Asia, China, and South-East Asia, and from Africa to Europe and North America. Poetry by Jalaluddin Rumi, Yunus Emre, Bullhe Shah and Muhammad Iqbal will be read as well as experienced in the form of qawwali and other musical genres. The underpinnings of metaphysics and ontology will be represented by theoretical works on the unity of being and divine self-manifestations by the Andalusian thinker Muhyiuddin Ibn 'Arabi, known as the "Greatest Master" (Shaikh al-Akbar). We will look at distinctive ways of reading the Quran, at divine love, infidelity, and the social deviancy of dervish orders. The perceived danger of Sufi beliefs and practices and the consequences of such antipathies will be discussed and debated, from the martyrdom of Al-Hallaj for his scandalous announcement, "I am the Real," to the bombings of Sufi shrines by militant groups in the present.

Required Texts:

Ernst, Carl W. *Sufism: An Introduction to the Mystical Tradition of Islam*. Boston: Shambhala, 1997.

Schimmel, Annemarie. *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011.

These texts are available at The Word Bookstore (469 Milton Street between Aylmer and Durocher). Please note that the page numbers of the Schimmel and Ernst readings are provided on myCourses just to remind you where to look in your book; I have not made these two texts available online!

All other readings (listed in the class schedule) will be made available to you via myCourses. If you do NOT have access to the myCourses page for this class, please notify me A.S.A.P.! Note as well that the list of readings is tentative, and texts may be added or subtracted according to the needs of the course as it develops. Please pay attention to class announcements.

Announcements

While some announcements will be made in class or via email, the most important announcements will be made on myCourses. Announcements on myCourses can be viewed on the home page for the course. You should please [subscribe to the myCourses announcements](#) to make sure that you are receiving all announcements via email. I recommend that you also [sign up for notifications](#) of approaching assignment due dates and changes or additions to course content.

Electronic Devices Policy

Laptops and tablets (iPads, etc.) are allowed in class, but solely for the purpose of referring to the readings for the day. The use of laptops and tablets should not interfere with your participation in the class discussion; this will obviously cause your participation mark to take a nosedive. Make eye contact and stay away from email, social media, and so on—stick to the readings. Students are discouraged from using mobile phones in class. Fixating on your phone, surreptitious texting and so on will result in a lowered participation mark.

Accommodations

To request **temporary** accommodations, for instance if you need to be absent from or late to class for a legitimate reason like the flu or a family emergency, you may use the online Authorized Absence Request form on myCourses under Content – Course Outline & Resources. Documentation is normally required. You do not have to use the form before the class in

question; you may use it afterwards as well. Note that I may need to share your accommodation requests with teaching assistants or others in order to evaluate or implement them, so if you wish for any part of your request to remain confidential, please state that explicitly in the request.

If you have a **disability, whether physical or mental** (anxiety, depression, etc.) please do not hesitate to let me know in person or via email as soon as you can, at any time during the course, and we will plan a course of action. I recommend getting in touch with the [Office of Students with Disabilities](#). Please note that mark-based accommodations can only be made if they are requested via email by you (or via the OSD). Do speak to me in person if you need to, but a follow-up via email will be necessary in order for accommodations to be made. I will also make note of any reasons for accommodation that you disclose via the Student Questionnaire. I will keep the *reasons* for the accommodation confidential and will ask you before reporting these reasons to the teaching assistants. I may however share information on the *kind* of accommodation requested with the TAs and, with your permission, possibly with others.

Students affected by **sexual violence, harassment, or misconduct** may obtain accommodations via several routes, depending upon their situation. Survivors are not required to make an official report if they do not wish to do so. However, they are encouraged to consult the resources provided by the [Students' Society of McGill University](#), the [Sexual Assault Centre of the McGill Students' Society](#), and the [McGill Office for Sexual Violence Response, Support and Education](#). They may also directly contact the [Dean of Students](#), the [Director of the Institute of Islamic Studies](#), or me. Students who make a disclosure to me should know that I will not report their disclosure unless they explicitly ask me to do so.

In our personal interactions, I value your comfort, and appreciate open communication. During any meeting in my office, all students have the right to leave the door open. If a student feels uneasy meeting in my office, they may specify an alternative location with which they would be more comfortable, or request to schedule a Zoom meeting or a telephone conversation instead. Should any student ever feel that I have made them uncomfortable by my words or actions, even without intention, I ask that they please notify me as soon as possible. I wish to create a learning environment in which students feel comfortable speaking their minds regarding any matter, so that they can be confident and successful in their interactions with me.

Grading Scheme:

Note that the professor or your TA will subtract marks for time management on any assignment that you submit late without an accommodation. Unless otherwise specified, assignments are due by 11:59 PM on the due date.

In order to ensure timely grading, assignments handed in late or under an extension will not receive comments.

Class Participation	25%	<p>Attendance and participation in class discussions makes up a significant portion of your grade. Please do the readings for each class carefully, come to class (on time), and engage in the discussion. For a better understanding of how participation is graded, see the Participation Rubric below. While you will be expected to demonstrate familiarity with the readings, there is no such thing as a "stupid question." Please make a habit of raising your hand.</p> <p>Presence in class is very important. If you have a legitimate, documented reason for absence you may request an authorized absence using the online form (a doctor's note is usually required).</p>
Questionnaire	2%	<p>Due: September 15</p> <p>Please complete the Student Questionnaire, which you can find on myCourses as a link. You may use this confidential form to specify your preferred pronouns, disclose any disabilities, and tell me something about yourself.</p>
Course Evaluation	1%	<p>Due: December 17</p> <p>Please complete or opt out of the course evaluation for the course on Minerva. Using the Course Evaluation activity in myCourses under the Assignments module under Content (unfortunately not listed under assignments in the top navigation bar, as it is technically a "quiz") you may specify whether you prefer to complete the evaluation or opt out. There is absolutely no penalty for opting out of the course evaluation.</p>
Discussion Forum	20%	<p>Students should post their brief thoughts on the readings for each class on the myCourses discussion forum. They should be posted by 12:00 PM at noon the day before each class.</p>

		<p>(However, late posts will be marked as well!) These posts are a crucial part of the course, and will form some of the basis of the class discussion.</p> <p>Full marks will be given to an exceptionally well-articulated and insightful comment showing critical meditation on at least two of the days' readings (if there is more than one reading for the day). Although there is no strict length for posts, around 150 words is a guideline length you may keep in mind. Unlike the other class assignments, I am not grading discussion posts for grammar, spelling, or style, but for grasp of the readings, insight, and contribution to the discussion. You may certainly pose your post as a response to a classmate's post—respectful interaction is encouraged!</p> <p>At the top of the discussion topic for the day (available via the Discussions tool as well as under Content), you will find my own thoughts on and questions for the upcoming class. You should read these before each class in order to be prepared to participate.</p>
Book Review	15%	<p>Due: October 22</p> <p>You will write a review of 3-5 pages of a scholarly book of your choice on Sufism. See the grading rubric on myCourses for details of how you will be graded. Guidelines, a sample review, a list of possible books to review, and a link to submit the book review are available on myCourses under Assignments.</p>
Research Question	7%	<p>Due: November 12</p> <p>Students must email me a preliminary question that they hope to answer in their research paper. It must be well-conceived and feasible. You may submit the research question directly on myCourses under Assignments.</p>

Research Paper	20%	<p>Due: December 10</p> <p>You will write a 10-12-page research paper on some aspect of Sufism. See the grading rubric on myCourses for details of how you will be graded. Because this is due after classes end, McGill treats it as a take-home examination. Don't be alarmed, therefore, if you see ISLA 330 on the central exam schedule—there is no sit-down exam. You may submit the research paper directly on myCourses under Assignments.</p>
Creative Assignment	10%	<p>Due: December 2</p> <p>You will write a short poem or prose-work of around 100-250 words, possibly in the style of one of the poets on the syllabus. You will be graded on the basis of your project's creativity and its relation to Sufism. You are encouraged to present it on the last day of class! You may submit the research paper directly on myCourses under Assignments.</p>

Participation Rubric:

For each class, students receive a participation mark of 0 to 5 on the basis of the following rubric. Note that sitting in my range of vision is an easy way of showing involvement, whereas sitting too far to the side or to the back lessens your engagement and is likely to result in a poor participation grade. Also see the electronic devices policy above.

0	0%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Absent.
1	35%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Present but disruptive.
2	55%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Present, not disruptive. ● Tries to respond when called on but does not offer much. ● Demonstrates very infrequent involvement in discussion.

3	70%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demonstrates adequate preparation: knows the readings and the issues, but does not show evidence of trying to interpret or analyse them. ● Offers straightforward information (e.g. straight from the readings), without elaboration, or does so very infrequently (perhaps once a class). ● Does not offer to contribute to discussion, but contributes to a moderate degree when called on. ● Demonstrates sporadic involvement.
4	85%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demonstrates good preparation: knows reading well, has thought through implications. ● Offers interpretations and analysis of readings (more than just facts) to class. ● Contributes well to discussion in an ongoing way: responds to other students' points, thinks through own points, questions others in a constructive way, links own opinions to others', offers and supports suggestions that may be counter to the majority opinion. ● Demonstrates consistent ongoing involvement.
5	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demonstrates excellent preparation: has analysed readings exceptionally well, relating it to other readings for the class and other material (e.g., discussions, experiences etc.). ● Offers analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of readings; for example, puts together pieces of the discussion to develop new approaches that take the class further. ● Contributes in a very significant way to ongoing discussion: keeps analysis focused, responds very thoughtfully to other students' comments, contributes to the cooperative argument-building, suggests alternative ways of approaching material and helps class analyse which approaches are appropriate etc. ● Demonstrates very active involvement that is ongoing.

Class Schedule:

Sep 2	<p>بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ</p> <p>Introduction</p>
Sep 7	<p>حلاج</p> <p>Beginnings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schimmel. 23-91. • ‘Attār, Farīduddin. The Conference of the Birds. 114-115.
Sep 9	<p>شيوخ</p> <p>"Classical" Sufism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schimmel. 91-97, 294-301, 259-274, 279-286. • Ghazzālī, Abū Hāmid. “Deliverance from Error” in The Faith and Practice of Al-Ghazālī. 54-63.
Sep 14	<p>مغرب</p> <p>Sufism West I (Iran, Africa)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schimmel. 287-343. • Moin, Azfar. The Millennial Sovereign. 74-84. • Knysh, Alexander. Islamic Mysticism: A Short History. 251-264. • Hill, Joseph. "Baay Is the Spiritual Leader of the Rappers."
Sep 16	<p>مشرق</p> <p>Sufism East I (South Asia)</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schimmel. 344-363, 383-402. • Eaton, Richard. The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier. 71-82, 268-290, 301-303. • Ernst, Carl and Tony Stewart. "Syncretism."
Sep 21	<p>Sufism East II (Southeast Asia & China)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Murata, Sachiko. Chinese Gleams of Sufi Light. 13-42. • Riddell, Peter G. Islam and the Malay-Indonesian World. 101-125.
Sep 23	<p>Sufism West II (Turkey, Europe, North America)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schimmel 328-343. • Norris, H. T. "Popular Sufism in Bulgaria and Macedonia." • Hermansen, Marcia. "South Asian Sufism in America." • Mercier-Dalphon, Geneviève. "Local Tales of Sufis in Quebec."
Sep 28	Library Session
Sep 30	*TBA*
Oct 5	<p>وجود</p> <p>Being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shāh Husain. "Lord, Only You Know My State." • Chittick, William. "A History of the Term Wahdat al-Wujūd" in In Search of the Lost Heart. 71-77, 83-85. • Jalāluddīn Rūmī. The Masnavi: Book One. 188-190. • Jāmī, ‘Abdur-Rahmān and Liu Chih. Gleams. 152-155.
Oct 7	<p>ذات و تجليات</p> <p>Essence & Manifestation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wang Tai-yü. Great Learning. 89-91.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Izutsu, Toshihiko. Sufism and Taoism. Ch. 2-3. 48-65. • Shabistarī, Mahmūd. Garden of Mystery. 32-39. • Shaikh, Sadiyya. Sufi Narratives of Intimacy. 173-175.
Oct 12	*READING BREAK*
Oct 14	<p>تنزيه و تشبيه</p> <p>Comparability/Incomparability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Khwāja Ghulām Farīd. "Real Beauty, Endless Light." • Izutsu, Toshihiko. Sufism and Taoism. Ch. 4. 23-47. • Rūmī, Jalāluddīn. The Masnavi: Book Two. 101-107.
Oct 19	<p>اسماء</p> <p>Names</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ernst. 81-98. • Chittick, William. The Self-Disclosure of God. xxxii-xxxv. • ‘Irāqī, Fakhruddīn. Divine Flashes XIII [and commentary]. 95-98, 146-147. • Jāmī, ‘Abdur-Rahmān. Gleams. 210-211.
Oct 21	<p>تعبير</p> <p>Interpretation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Izutsu, Toshihiko. Sufism and Taoism. Ch. 1. 7-20. • Recommended: Ibn ‘Arabi, Muhyīuddīn. "Ringstone of Joseph." The Ringstones of Wisdom. 95-104.
Oct 26	<p>حقيقت و مجاز</p> <p>Reality & Figuration</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ghazzālī, Abū Hāmid. The Niche of Lights. 3-24. • Suhrawardī, Abū Hafs ‘Umar. The Language of the Ants. 88-89.
Oct 28	<p>نفس</p> <p>The Self</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Attār, Farīduddīn. The Conference of the Birds. 149-153. • Jalāluddīn Rūmī. The Masnavi: Book One. 86-87. • Mānerī, Sharafuddīn. The Hundred Letters. 330-347. • Bullhe Shāh. "You've Studied the Wisdom of Thousands of Books."
Nov 2	<p>فنا و بقا</p> <p>Annihilation/Subsistence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullhe Shah. "Bullha, What Do I Know Who I Am?" • Schimmel. 142-148. • ‘Attār, Farīduddīn. The Conference of the Birds. 216-222. • Shehi Atiku. "Delirium of a Drunkard." 209-211. • Hujwerī, ‘Alī bin ‘Usmān. Revealing the Veiled. 242-245.
Nov 4	<p>انسان</p> <p>Man</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schimmel. 187-199, (optional: 213-227). • Kugle, Scott. Sufis and Saints Bodies. Ch. 2 • ‘Attār, Farīduddīn. "Rābi‘a: Her Words and Life in ‘Attar’s Memorial of the Friends of God." • Chittick, William. "The Perfect Man as Prototype of the Self in Jāmī." 135-157.
Nov 9	<p>ولایت</p>

	<p>Sainthood</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ernst. 120-146. • Schimmel. 199-213. • Pemberton, Kelly and Frederick M. Denny. "Women Mystics and Sufi Shrines in India." • Recommended: Ernst, Carl. Teachings of Sufism. 179-199.
Nov 11	<p>ملامت</p> <p>Blame</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Karamustafa, Ahmet. God's Unruly Friends. 13-84. • Hujwari. Kashf al-Mahjub. 242-245. • Yunus Emre. "O God, If You Would Ever Question Me."
Nov 16	<p>كفر</p> <p>Infidelity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lewisohn, Leonard. Beyond Faith and Infidelity. 268-308. • Shabistarī, Mahmūd. Garden of Mystery. 154-159. • Iqbal, Muhammad. "The Infidel and the Believer."
Nov 18	<p>عشق</p> <p>Love</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ahmad Ghazzālī, Savanih. 44-63. • 'Ā'ishah al-Bā'ūniyyah. "The Fourth Principle: Love" in The Principles of Sufism. 68-84. • 'Irāqī, Fakhruddīn. Divine Flashes. 77-84. • Yunus Emre. "My Heart Burned."
Nov 23	<p>ناز و نیاز</p>

	<p>Need/Independence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ‘Irāqī, Fakhruddīn. Divine Flashes XX-XXV. 111-120. ● Ahmad Ghazzālī, Savanih. 44-63. ● Yunus Emre. "Your Love Has Wrested Me Away from Me."
Nov 25	<p>Sufis and Anti-Sufis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Schimmel. 363-373, 403-408. ● Ernst. 199-228. ● Muedini, Fait. "The Promotion of Sufism in the Politics of Algeria and Morroco." ● Phillipon, Alix. "Sunnis Against Sunnis."
Nov 30	<p>Sufism Today</p>
Dec 2	<p>Creative Assignment Performances</p>

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded. / Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l'un des objets est la maîtrise d'une langue).

Instructor generated course materials (e.g., handouts, notes, summaries, exam questions, etc.) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor. Note that infringements of copyright can be subject to follow up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

If you have a disability please contact the instructor to arrange a time to discuss your situation. It would be helpful if you contact the [Office for Students with Disabilities](#) at 514-398-6009 before you do this.