

RELG 444 *Global Islam***Fall 2022**

Mondays, 08:35 – 10:25, Birks 017

Beginning: Monday, September 12

Office hours: by appointment, Birks 102

Instructor: Armando Salvatore

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Western scholarship on Islam has oscillated between orientalizing it and co-opting it into the Western (Abrahamic) fold of religious traditions. The course will challenge both perspectives by exploring Islam's dynamic unfolding across a variety of civilizational regions and during subsequent epochs. Its patterns of premodern globalization are nowadays retrieved, sometimes by fitting Islamic cultures into neoliberal patterns of globalization, more often by sidelining or overlaying the Westphalian system of sovereign nation-states.

The course will examine how in the 19th and 20th centuries Western scholarship played a role in theorizing the ways through which Islam had supposedly lagged post-Christian, secular Europe or the wider 'West.' Included in this study will be an exploration of how Muslim leaders and thinkers responded to such Western claims. We will explore the core issue at stake in their interventions, namely the capacity of Islamic traditions to resist or integrate within the new global order hegemonized by the West. This order has been notably centered on a modern type of nation-states and on concepts of autonomous subjectivity and rights-based citizenship.

The course investigates continuities and discontinuities between precolonial patterns of Islamic political modernity and the adoption (or response to) Western norms during the colonial and postcolonial periods. While dealing with broad themes such as colonialism, nationalism, and globalization, the course will also evaluate the social and political significance of theological debates and normative change in Islam.

The course's objectives are:

- a) to demonstrate that alternate sovereignties persist in variable shapes in postcolonial, Muslim-majority societies via participations of individual and groups within civic and public spaces;
- b) to address the original contribution of Muslim scholars and thinkers in designing spaces of socio-political autonomy where issues of justice are contentiously debated;
- c) to recalibrate the extant critique of the Eurocentric notions of religion and politics by showing the prevalence in the Islamosphere of a cosmopolitan spirit and a transregional civility.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will have acquired knowledge of

- a) major developments in Muslim-majority societies and Muslim-minority contexts and intellectual reflections on such developments from several angles;
- b) methods, strategies, and ethics for the interdisciplinary study of Islam in an increasingly globalized world.

Instructional approach

The course consists in lectures/presentations and discussions of the assigned texts. Reading assignments average 20-30 pages per week. The sessions will consist of two parts of around one hour each. The first part will be introduced by a presentation delineating the key questions addressed by the assigned reading. A first discussion will ensue. The second part will be introduced by a shorter presentation, critically assessing the knowledge gained and the points of attritions that emerged in the first part. A further discussion of the assigned reading will follow.

Evaluation

Regular and active participation will provide 10 % of the final grade, 20 % will be given by a short essay (providing an outline of the final paper, on a topic of your choice), 20 % by the bibliography to the same topic, and 50 % by your final paper. The outline and bibliography are due by the end of October, while the final paper is due a week after the last seminar session; materials submitted after the due date, without either prior arrangement with the instructor or a documented excuse, will receive a 3% reduced grade per day late.

Readings

Readings will be drawn from two recently published books, one authored by a prominent Western scholar, Bruce B. Lawrence, *The Bruce B. Lawrence Reader: Islam beyond Borders* (Duke UP, 2021) available at our library as an ebook <https://muse-jhu-edu.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/book/80991> (tagged as BBL in the Calendar below), and the other by a leading Muslim scholar, Louay M. Safi, *Islam and the Trajectory of Globalization* (Routledge, 2022), available under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial-No Derivatives 4.0 license at <http://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/e/9781003203360> (LMS in the Calendar).

Disabilities

If you have a documented disabilities of either a permanent, temporary, or episodic nature, please contact Student Accessibility and Achievement <https://www.mcgill.ca/access-achieve/contact-us> After that, if they recommend doing so, you are welcome to contact the instructor to discuss your situation. It is our common goal to make sure that all your learning needs will be accommodated, while the matter will be treated with the necessary degree of confidentiality.

Some key McGill regulations

1) Languages: 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

2) Academic Integrity Statement [approved by Senate on 29 January 2003]:

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 - Senate resolution, January 29, 2003 (see <https://www.mcgill.ca/deanofstudents/students/student-rights-responsibilities/integrity>).

3) In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

CALENDAR

N.B.: Adjustments to this schedule and the readings may be suggested if they can improve our learning path and are approved by all participants.

September 12

BBL *Islam in Afro-Eurasia: A Bridge Civilization* pp. 54-77.

September 19

LMS *Islamic Law and Spheres of Freedom* pp. 133-160.

September 26

BBL *Introduction to Shattering the Myth: Islam beyond Violence* pp. 25-53.

October 3

BBL *Muslim Cosmopolitanism* pp. 78-89 and *Genius Denied and Reclaimed: Hodgson's The Venture of Islam* pp. 90-98.

October 13¹

BBL *Sufism and Neo-Sufism* pp. 191-217.

October 17

LMS *Globalization Facts and Faults* pp. 21-51.

October 24

LMS *Reformation and the Rise of the Modern West* pp. 166-189.

¹ Thanksgiving week: "Lectures/activities that would normally have occurred on *Monday Oct. 10* (Thanksgiving Monday) will be held on *Thursday Oct. 13* instead." <https://www.mcgill.ca/importantdates/key-dates>

October 31

LMS *Colonialism and the Remaking of Muslim Society* pp. 190-220.

November 7

LMS *Islam and the Liberal Tradition* pp. 221-249.

November 14

BBL *Muslim Engagement with Injustice and Violence* pp. 274-304.

November 21

LMS *Globalization and its Discontents* pp. 250-276.

November 24

BBL *A Metaphysical Secularist? Decoding M. F. Husain as a Muslim Painter in Exile* pp. 374-394.

December 1st

LMS *The Future of Globalization* pp. 277-300.