

**21:920:393:18899**  
**Topics in Sociology: Contemporary Islam**  
**Spring 2018**  
**Monday 4.00-5.20 and Wednesday 4.00-5.20**  
**Room CPS-104**

**Zahra Ali**

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**Office hours:** Wednesday 10.30-12.00 in 614 Hill Hall

**Course description**

This course explores contemporary Islam(s) and Muslim communities from a sociological perspective providing a critical understanding and analysis of Muslim intellectual, religious, and cultural productions and traditions. The course will look at social, economic and political realities and experiences related to Islam(s) and Muslims. It will further analyse the imbrication of Islam and 'Muslimness' with race, ethnicity, class, gender etc. The course will provide contextual, multilayered and complex understanding of social, political and intellectual movements related to Islam and Muslims such as Muslim reformisms, Islamisms, Islamic feminisms etc. in Muslim majority contexts such as in Arab countries, in the Middle East, parts of Asia and the African continent as well as in contexts where Muslims are a minority such as in North America, Europe and Latin America. The course encourages students to investigate central questions in sociology in relation to contemporary Islam(s) and Muslims such as the relationship between religion and secularism, postcolonialism and orientalism.

The course will consist of lectures, seminars and workshops using texts, images and videos. Most Monday session will begin with a lecture providing the essential theoretical and conceptual material followed by a class discussion, while most Wednesday session will be a seminar consisting in student-led discussions often starting with group work around several research questions, texts, images or videos. We will be using Blackboard (BB) to access course documents, and the power-point of the course will be accessible after the session. We will also use BB for occasional online discussions on specific topics as well as to exchange relevant information, resources and links.

**Course goals**

The general aim of this course is to contextualize, historicize, and approach through a complex and multi-layered lens contemporary Islam(s) and Muslim communities. At the end of the term, students should be able to:

- demonstrate essential knowledge and understanding of Muslim intellectual, religious, and cultural productions and traditions, and how experiences of Islam(s) are thought, built and shaped through social, political, economic realities and their imbricated dynamics.
- understand essential conceptual ideas and theories related to Islam(s) and Muslims.
- be equipped with a sociological approach of contemporary Islam(s) and Muslim communities that can be used to broaden understanding of the world from everyday interactions to transnational realities.
- be able to identify and explain several main theoretical perspectives about Islam(s) and Muslim communities and their interactions with concepts of race, class, gender, ethnicity, etc.

- discuss different ways to think about Islam and Muslims and formulate theoretical questions.
- begin exploring research horizons and relating research questions to broader sociological concerns.

### **Course Requirements**

Learning is a collaborative experience of mutual sharing and learning. It is important to read all assignments before class in order to be able to benefit from the lecture, discussion and seminar fully. **The weekly lecture and seminar readings will be posted on Blackboard. No need to buy the books, all the course material will be made available on Blackboard. You must check it regularly since readings on the syllabus are subject to change.** This course will test students on material presented in lectures, class discussions, texts, images and films. Again, you are expected to read the weekly assignments carefully and to come to class prepared to discuss the readings.

### **Academic integrity**

Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. The Rutgers Academic Integrity Policy will apply to all course work. If you have any doubt about what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, ask me and/or consult the Rutgers Academic Integrity Policy: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml>. Take precautions by always referencing the materials you have read by adding a footnote, endnote, or citing your source text in parenthesis. Referencing shows you have done serious research, and that you have acknowledged the work of other scholars and engage critically with their work and ideas. It is important not to rely on one or two sources exclusively, and diversify your sources that can include books, academic articles, newspaper articles, online or printed magazines, internet websites, films etc.

### **Grading**

**15 % class participation:** your active presence and your participation to the class dynamic and discussion.

**15 % oral presentation:** in a group of 2 or 3 students you will give a 10 mn max. presentation on one session topic (based on a lecture, seminar, text, class discussion or film).

**20% reaction paper:** you will write a short paper of around 250 words reflecting on a text, research questions, video of the lecture or seminar of the week. The deadline will be Friday 11.59pm of the same week.

**50% essay:** you will write an essay of around 600 words answering one question in the list of that will be available on BB. Deadline: Friday 20 April, 11.59pm.

### **Grading scale**

A : 100-90

B+ :89.9 – 84.5

B : 84.49-79.5

C+ : 79.49-74.5

C : 74.49-69.5

D :69.49-59.5

F : 59.49-0

### **Policy on late submission of course work**

Papers submitted late will be marked down 3% percent for each day past the deadline, and will not be accepted after ten days past the deadline. Please contact me in advance if you have difficulty meeting a deadline for health or personal reasons.

### **Important semester dates**

Please check these important dates (last day to drop a class, last day to add class etc.) to avoid any penalty: <https://registrar.newark.rutgers.edu/office-registrar-academic-calendar>

### **Learning resources available**

Rutgers Learning Center (tutoring services)

Room 140, Bradley Hall

973 353 5608

<http://ncas.rutgers.edu/rlc>

Writing Center (tutoring and writing workshop)

Room 126, Conklin Hall

973 353 5847

[nwc@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:nwc@newark.rutgers.edu)

<http://ncas.rutgers.edu/writingcenter>

### **Disability services**

We welcome students with disabilities, in order to receive consideration you can complete and submit the Registration Form, schedule and complete an intake meeting. If you request for reasonable accommodations is approved, you will receive a Letter of Accommodations (LOA), which you should present privately to me as early in the semester as possible. You can begin the process through the following links:

**Applying for Services:** <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/applying-for-services>

**Documentation Guidelines:** <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>

**Letter of Accommodations (LOA) :** <https://webapps.rutgers.edu/student-ods/Forms/LOA>

**Office of Disability services (ODS):**

Suite 219, Paul Robeson Campus Center

973 353 5375

[odsnewark@rutgers.edu](mailto:odsnewark@rutgers.edu)

### **Schedule Spring 2018**

**Important note: Readings are subject to change, please rely mainly on Blackboard postings and not only on the hard copy of syllabus. No need to buy the books, the readings will all be made available on Blackboard.**

**Selected list of readings, all the books are available at Rutgers Dana Library:**

Abdullah, Zain. 2010. *Black Mecca: The African Muslims of Harlem* (Oxford University Press).

Abou El Fadl, Khaled. 2001. *Speaking in God's Name: Islamic Law, Authority and Women* (Oneworld).

- Abu-Rabi', Ibrahim. 2006. *The Blackwell companion to contemporary Islamic thought* (Blackwell).
- Ahmed, Leila. 2012. *A Quiet Revolution. The Veil's Resurgence, from the Middle East to America*, New Haven (Yale University Press).
- Ahmed Leila. 1993. *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate* (Yale University Press).
- Arjoman Said, Amir. 2016. *Sociology of Shi'ite Islam: Collected Essays*. (Brill).
- Asad, Talal.1986. The idea of an anthropology of Islam. In *Occasional Paper Series*. (Center for Contemporary Arab Studies Georgetown University) pp.1-23.
- Aydin, Cemil. 2017. *The Idea of the Muslim World. A Global Intellectual History* (Harvard University Press).
- Bayat, Asef. 2005. Islamism and Social Movement Theory. *Third World Quarterly*, 26, (6: 891-908).
- Bilici, Mucahit. 2012. *Finding Mecca in America: How Islam Is Becoming an American Religion* (University Of Chicago Press).
- Brown, Daniel. 2017. *A New Introduction to Islam* (Wiley-Blackwell).
- Chan-Malik, Sylvia. 2011. Common Cause: On the Black-Immigrant Debate and Constructing the Muslim American." *The Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Religion*, 2 (8:1-39).
- Burgat, Francois. 2003. *Face to Face with Political Islam* (I.B.Tauris).
- Burgat, Francois, Esposito, John Louis. (eds.)2003. *Modernizing Islam: Religion in the Public Sphere in Europe and the Middle East* (Rutgers University Press).
- Haddad, Yvonne, Smith, Jane and Moore, Kathleen, Muslim. 2006. *Women in America: The Challenge of Islamic Identity Today* (Oxford University Press).
- Göle, Nilüfer. 2012. Decentring Europe. Recentring Islam. *New Literary History* (43: 665–685).
- Hallaq, Wael. 2005. *The Origins and Evolution of Islamic Law* (Cambridge University Press).
- Salvatore, Armando. 2016. *The Sociology of Islam: Knowledge, Power and Civility*. (Wiley-Blackwell).
- Jackson, Sherman A. 2011. *Islam and the Blackamerican: Looking Toward the Third Resurrection* (Oxford University Press).
- Karim, Jamillah. 2008. *American Muslim Women: Negotiating Race, Class, and Gender Within the Ummah* (New York University Press).
- Rahman, Fazlur. 1996. *Islam* (University of Chicago Press).
- Roy, Olivier. 2006. *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah* (CERI Series in Comparative Politics and International Studies).
- Salvatore, Armando. 2016. *The Sociology of Islam: Knowledge, Power and Civility*. (Wiley-Blackwell)
- Sonn, Tamara. 2010. *Islam: History, Religion and Politics* (Wiley-Blackwell).
- Said, Edward. 1980. *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World* (Vintage).
- Wadud, Amina. 1999. *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* (Oxford University Press).

Zubaida, Sami. 1995. Is there a Muslim Society? Ernest Gellner's sociology of Islam. *Economy and Society*, 24 (2: 151-188)

Zubaida, Sami. 1993. *Islam, the People and the State: Political Ideas and Movements in the Middle East* (IB Tauris).

**WEEK 1: Wednesday 17 January**

**General introduction to the course**

No readings or preparation required.

**WEEK 2: Monday 22 January & Wednesday 24 January**

**What is Islam? What is Sociology? What is Sociology of Islam?**

-Salvatore, Armando. 2016. Introduction. Knowledge and Power in the Sociology of Islam. *The Sociology of Islam: Knowledge, Power and Civility*. (Wiley-Blackwell) pp 1-17.

-Sonn, Tamara. 2010. Chapter 1: Many Paths to One God: Establishing the Ideals. *Islam: History, Religion and Politics* (Wiley-Blackwell) pp. 1-38.

**WEEK 3: Monday 29 January & Wednesday 31 January**

**How to study Islam?**

-Brown, Daniel. 2017. Islam in Global Perspectives. *A New Introduction to Islam*. (Wiley-Blackwell) pp3-17.

-Asad, Talal. 1986. The idea of an anthropology of Islam. In *Occasional Paper Series*. (Center for Contemporary Arab Studies Georgetown University) pp.1-23.

**WEEK 4: Monday 5 February & Wednesday 7 February**

**Is there a “Muslim Society”, a “Muslim thought”?**

-Zubaida, Sami. 1995. Is there a Muslim Society? Ernest Gellner's sociology of Islam. *Economy and Society*, 24 (2) pp.151-188.

-Abu-Rabi', Ibrahim. 2006. Contemporary Islamic Thought: One or Many?. *The Blackwell companion to contemporary Islamic thought*.(Blackwell) pp1-20.

**WEEK 5: Monday 12 February & Wednesday 14 February**

**Islamic Law and the relationship between the religious and the secular**

-Hallaq, Wael. 2011. Islamic law: history and transformation. *The New Cambridge History of Islam*. pp142-183.

-Abou El Fadl, Khaled. What is Shariah? *Search For Beauty*.

**WEEK 6: Monday 19 February & Wednesday 21 February**

**Islam(s) and Muslims in the contemporary world : Africa and the Middle East**

-Mazrui, Ali. 1988. African Islam and Competitive Religion: Between Revivalism and Expansion. *Third World Quarterly*, 10 (2) pp.499-518.

-Ghamari-Tabrizi, Behrooz. 2004. Contentious Public Religion: Two Conceptions of Islam in Revolutionary Iran Ali Shari'ati and Abdolkarim Soroush. *International Sociology*, 19 (4) pp. 504-523.

**WEEK 7: Monday 26 February & Wednesday 28 February**

**Islam(s) and Muslims in the contemporary world : Europe and Latin America**

-Göle, Nilüfer. 2012. Decentring Europe. Recentering Islam. *New Literary History*, 43, pp. 665–685.

-Peres de Oliveira, Vitorio. 2006. Islam in Brazil or the Islam of Brazil? *Relig. Soc.*, 2, pp. 1-23.

**WEEK 8: Monday 5 March & Wednesday 7 March**

**Islam and Race, Muslims and Racism**

-Said, Edward. 1980. Islam through Western Eyes. *The Nation*.

-Aydin, Cemil. 2017. Introduction. *The Idea of the Muslim World. A Global Intellectual History* (Harvard University Press) pp1-13

-Aydin, Cemil. 2017. Conclusion. Recovering History and Revitalizing the Pursuit of Justice *The Idea of the Muslim World. A Global Intellectual History* (Harvard University Press) pp227-237.

**Spring Break: Monday 12 March & Wednesday 14 March**

**WEEK 9: Monday 19 March & Wednesday 21 March**

**Intersectionality and Islamophobia in the US**

-Zaal, Mayida. 2011. Islamophobia in Classrooms, Media, and Politics. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 55 (6), pp.555-558.

-Al-Faham Hajar, 2016. Between society and the state: Gendered Racialization and Muslim Americans. *Studies in Law, Politics, and Society*, 70, pp.125-148.

**WEEK 10: Monday 26 March & Wednesday 28 March**

**Americans Muslims**

-Chan-Malik, Sylvia. 2011. Common Cause: On the Black-Immigrant Debate and Constructing the Muslim American.” *The Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Religion*, 2 (8) pp. 1-39.

-Houston, Sam. 2013. Sherman A. Jackson and the Possibility of a “Blackamerican Muslim” Prophetic Pragmatism. *Journal of Africana Religions*, 1 (4) pp.488-512.

**WEEK 11: Monday 2 April & Wednesday 4 April**

**Islam and Gender**

-Amina Wadud. 2009. Islam Beyond Patriarchy Through Gender Inclusive Qur’anic Analysis, In *Wanted. Equality and Justice in the Muslim Family*. (Musawah) pp 95-112.

-Lila Abu-Lughod, 2002. Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others, *American Anthropologist* 104 (3) pp. 783-790.

**WEEK 12: Monday 9 April & Wednesday 11 April**

**Islamic/Muslim Feminisms**

-Badran, Margot. 2002. Islamic Feminism: What’s in a name? Cairo.

-Mir-Hosseini, Ziba. 2011. Beyond ‘Islam’ vs ‘Feminism’, *IDS Bulletin*, 42 (1) pp 67-77.

**WEEK 13: Monday 16 April & Wednesday 18 April**

**Islamisms: Religious, Social or Political Movements?**

-Salvatore, Armando. 2016. Introduction. Knowledge/Charisma versus Power/Wealth. The Challenge of Religious Movement. *The Sociology of Islam: Knowledge, Power and Civility*. (Wiley-Blackwell) pp 18-23

-Bayat, Asef. 2005. Islamism and Social Movement Theory. *Third World Quarterly*, 26, (6) pp.891-908.

**WEEK 14:** Monday 23 April & Wednesday 25 April

Film, wrap-up and review.