This course historicizes the evolving relationship between Islam and racial blackness from a global perspective, while emphasizing textual and cultural expressions. Starting with the geographical imaginaries that defined the pre-Islamic Red Sea world, this course will work through the moral, epistemological, and social orders established by the Prophet Muhammad and then continue with critical moments in the development of racial thinking on a global scale. These moments will include the ninth century Zanj Rebellion of the Abbasid Caliphate; the global reputation of the 14th century emperor Mansa Musa of Mali; 18th century transformations in slavery associated with the development of the modern economy in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans; the West African Age of Jihad of the 19th century; racial and religious governance of 20th century colonialism; religious developments in post-independent Africa; and the racial and religious dynamics that define the post 9/11 world. Key questions that we will consider include: When did blackness emerge as an important category of difference among Muslims? How have discourses about blackness developed throughout Islamic history? To what extent have ideas about Islam and Blackness interacted to frame the idea of modernity? By the end of the course, students will be able to analyze the articulation of racial and religious difference in their historical specificity.
Guiding question: To what extent can we speak of blackness in Islam? If there is, how does it, and under what conditions does it appear? How has blackness in Islam changed over time? Are there other ways of thinking of social difference?

**Required Texts:**

**Resources:**

*Sapelo Square*: “In the spirit of ‘do for self,’ Sapelo Square intervenes in the marginalization and erasure of Black Muslims in the public square by building an online forum that places Black Muslims at the center. Our mission is to celebrate and analyze the experiences of Black Muslims in the United States to create new understandings of who they are, what they have done, and why that matters... We take the name “Sapelo” from one of the first communities of African Muslims in the United States founded in the early 1800s.”

#BlackIslamSyllabus: “This project is curated by Dr. Kayla Renée Wheeler and was inspired by Prof. Najeeba Syeed, #BlackInMSA, and Muslim ARC. The goal of this project is to provide teachers, professors, researchers, journalists, and people interested in learning more about Islam with resources on Black Muslims to promote a more inclusive approach to the study of Islam.”

#IslamaphobiasRacism syllabus: “Inspired by the #FergusonSyllabus, the #StandingRockSyllabus, the #BlackIslamSyllabus and others, this reading list provides resources for teaching and learning about anti-Muslim racism in the United States.” Developed by Su’ad Abdul Khabeer, Arshad Ali, Evelyn Alsultany, Sohail Daulatzai, Lara Dee, Carol Fadda, Zareena Grewal, Juliane Hammer, Nadine Naber, and Junaid Rana.

**Course Requirements**
This course is a participatory seminar. It requires that all students arrived prepared, having both done the reading and formulated some provisional thoughts or questions for our discussion. It is also a collaborative seminar, which means that students will be expected to work together in and out of the
classroom to explore the course material. For that reason, participation will be assessed on the basis of the extent to which the student contributed to the overall learning environment of the classroom.

**Participation** 25%

Two Descriptions of Primary Source (2-3 pages each) 15%

One Interpretative Essay (4-6 pages) 25%

Final project (8-10 pages) 35%

**Note on academic integrity:**

As an academic community dedicated to the creation, dissemination, and application of knowledge, Rutgers University is committed to fostering an intellectual and ethical environment based on the principles of academic integrity. Academic integrity is essential to the success of the University’s educational, research, and clinical missions, and violations of academic integrity constitute serious offenses against the entire academic community.

The principles of academic integrity require that a student:

- make sure that all work submitted in a course, academic research, or other activity is the student’s own and created without the aid of impermissible technologies, materials, or collaborations.
- properly acknowledge and cite all use of the ideas, results, images, or words of others.
- properly acknowledge all contributors to a given piece of work.
- obtain all data or results by ethical means and report them accurately without suppressing any results inconsistent with the student’s interpretation or conclusions.
- treat all other students ethically, respecting their integrity and right to pursue their educational goals without interference. This principle requires that a student neither facilitate academic dishonesty by others nor obstruct their academic progress.
- uphold the ethical standards and professional code of conduct in the field for which the student is preparing.

To create a strong culture that promotes academic integrity, Rutgers has adopted the following honor pledge to be written and signed on examinations and major course assignments submitted for grading: “On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination (assignment).”

Please visit [http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu) to view the full policy on academic integrity.

**Accommodation and Support Statement**

Rutgers University Newark (RU-N) is committed to the creation of an inclusive and safe learning environment for all students and the University as a whole. RU-N has identified the following resources to further the mission of access and support:

**For Individuals with Disabilities:** The Office of Disability Services (ODS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter barriers due to disability. Once a student has completed the ODS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and reasonable accommodations are determined to be necessary and appropriate, a
Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be provided. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at ods.rutgers.edu. Contact ODS at (973)353-5375 or via email at ods@newark.rutgers.edu.

**For Individuals who are Pregnant:** The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance is available to assist with any concerns or potential accommodations related to pregnancy. Students may contact the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance at (973) 353-1906 or via email at TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu.

**For support in writing:** Please take advantage of resources and tutoring offered by the Writing Center, specifically their remote tutoring available at http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/writingcenter.

**For Absence Verification:** The Office of the Dean of Students can provide assistance for absences related to religious observance, emergency or unavoidable conflict (e.g., illness, personal or family emergency, etc.). Students should refer to University Policy 10.2.7 for information about expectations and responsibilities. The Office of the Dean of Students can be contacted by calling (973) 353-5063 or emailing deanofstudents@newark.rutgers.edu.

**For Individuals with temporary conditions/injuries:** The Office of the Dean of Students can assist students who are experiencing a temporary condition or injury (e.g., broken or sprained limbs, concussions, or recovery from surgery). Students experiencing a temporary condition or injury should submit a request using the following link: https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu.

**For English as a Second Language (ESL):** The Program in American Language Studies (PALS) can support students experiencing difficulty in courses due to English as a Second Language (ESL) and can be reached by emailing PALS@newark.rutgers.edu to discuss potential supports.

**For Gender or Sex-Based Discrimination or Harassment:** The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance can assist students who are experiencing any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking. Students can report an incident to the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance by calling (973) 353-1906 or emailing TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu. Incidents may also be reported by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNReportingForm. For more information, students should refer to the University’s Student Policy Prohibiting Sexual Harassment, Sexual Violence, Relationship Violence, Stalking and Related Misconduct located at http://compliance.rutgers.edu/title-ix/about-title-ix/title-ix-policies/.

**For support related to interpersonal violence:** The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance can provide any student with confidential support. The office is a confidential resource and does not have an obligation to report information to the University’s Title IX Coordinator. Students can contact the office by calling (973) 353-1918 or emailing run.vpva@rutgers.edu. There is also a confidential text-based line available to students; students can text (973) 339-0734 for support.

**For Crisis and Concerns:** The Campus Awareness Response and Education (CARE) Team works with students in crisis to develop a support plan to address personal situations that might impact their academic performance. Students, faculty and staff may contact the CARE Team by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNCARE or emailing careteam@rutgers.edu.
For Stress, Worry, or Concerns about Well-being: The Counseling Center has confidential therapists available to support students. Students should reach out to the Counseling Center to schedule an appointment: counseling@newark.rutgers.edu or (973) 353-5805. If you are not quite ready to make an appointment with a therapist but are interested in self-help, check out TAO at Rutgers-Newark for an easy, web-based approach to self-care and support: https://tinyurl.com/RUN-TAO.

For emergencies, call 911 or contact Rutgers University Police Department (RUPD) by calling (973) 353-5111.

Course Schedule

Re-Orienting Islam and Blackness

Week 1
1) Sept. 2 - Introduction to the course; Key terms and Caveats; Agreements

Week 2
2) Sept. 7 – What is Islam? Or, Beyond enmity
   a. Shahab Ahmed, What is Islam?: The Importance of Being Islamic. Selections
3) Sept. 9 – The Fact of Blackness? Towards the Human
   a. Frantz Fanon, “The fact of Blackness”

Interpreting Difference in Late Antiquity and Classical Islam

Week 3
4) Sept. 14 - Cartographies of difference in Late Antiquity, Part 1
   a. Antarah ibn Shaddad, War Songs. xxiv-lv; 151-166
5) Sept. 16 - Cartographies of difference in Late Antiquity, Part 2
   a. Antara Bin Shadad, War Poems. 3-69

Week 4
6) Sept. 21 - The emergence of Islam and social revolution
   a. Selections on social difference in Qur’an and Hadith
   b. The Prophet’s Last Sermon
   c. OPTIONAL: The Message (1976)
7) Sept. 23 – Black companions of the Prophet?

Week 5
8) Sept. 28 – Slavery and the Abrahamic Religions
Week 6

10) Oct. 5 – The Zanj Rebellion, Part 1

11) Oct. 7 – The Zanj Rebellion, Part 2

Week 7

12) Oct 12- Arabo-Islamic geo-ethnic imaginaries

13) Oct. 15 - An African-Islamic Critique of Race at the cusp of modernity
   a. Ahmed Baba, Mi 'raj al-su'ud,

Week 8


15) Oct. 21 - An Enslaved Muslim explorer of the Americas

Week 9

16) Oct. 26 – The Racialization of Slavery, Part 1

17) Oct. 28 -- The Racialization of Slavery, Part 2

Week 10

18) Nov. 2 – Anti-Slave Insurgency
   a. Joao Reis, Slave Rebellion in Brazil
   b. Rudolph Ware, Walking Qur’an Chap 3

19) Nov. 4 - Islam and the horizons of Abolition
   c. Description of Primary Source due by Nov. 6, 5:00 pm.

The Reason and Rhyme of Islam in America

Week 11

20) Nov. 9 - Legacies of Islam in America, part 1

21) Nov. 11 – Legacies of Islam in America, part 2

Week 12

22) Nov. 16 – A history of Islam in America, part 1

23) Nov. 18 - A history of Islam in America, part 2
Week 13
24) Nov. 23 - Islam as a horizon for Black Liberation
25) Nov. 25 – Thanksgiving (NO CLASS)

**Interpretive Essay due by Nov. 30, 5:00 pm.

Week 14
26) Nov. 30 –
27) Dec. 2 –

Week 15
28) Dec. 7 – A Native din and the Limits of Solidarity

29) Dec. 9 – Rap up –

**Final Project due by Dec. 21, 5:00 pm.