COURSE SYLLABUS
Spring 2022

ISLAM IN THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN EXPERIENCE
21:014:390
Classes begin **Jan. 18, 2022** and end on **May 11, 2022**. The last day to drop this course without a “W” grade is **Jan. 25, 2022**.

**Academic Calendar Directory:** [https://academicaffairs.rutgers.edu/academic-calendar-directory](https://academicaffairs.rutgers.edu/academic-calendar-directory)

You are advised to retain a copy of this syllabus in your personal files for use when applying for future degrees, certifications, or transfer of credit.

**INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

**Instructor:** Wendell Marsh, Ph.D.

**Email:** wm276@rutgers.edu

**Office Hours:** Virtual Office Hours Upon Request

**Communication:**

Throughout the semester, I will communicate with you via either **Canvas Announcements** or your **Rutgers email account**. Please review the following link for **Accessing Rutgers Email**:

[https://canvas.rutgers.edu/documentation/general/accessing-rutgers-email/](https://canvas.rutgers.edu/documentation/general/accessing-rutgers-email/)

**GENERAL COURSE DESCRIPTION**

**Course Description:**

Muslims have been present in the Americas since the earliest days of European exploration. In particular, enslaved Africans, sometimes as individuals and other times as communities established Islam on American soils since the fifteenth century, thereby connecting Islam and Blackness in North and South American memory and imagination. However, these experiences have often been overshadowed with the racialization of Muslims as foreign outsiders since the beginning of the Global War on Terror in the twenty-first century. Taking a broadly African-diasporic view of the Americas and using an interdisciplinary approach, this course explores the history of Islam as both a tradition of belief and practice for Muslims and as a horizon of Black consciousness more broadly.

**Prerequisites:** None

**Course Modality:**

This course is delivered in-person. To access the companion Canvas course site, please visit Rutgers Canvas at [https://canvas.rutgers.edu/](https://canvas.rutgers.edu/) and log in using your NetID. For more information about course access and support contact Canvas Help at [https://canvas.rutgers.edu/canvas-help/](https://canvas.rutgers.edu/canvas-help/), via email at help@canvas.rutgers.edu, or call 877-361-1134.

**Purpose of the Course:**

This course satisfies the liberal arts elective for the Core Curriculum. Through deep reading, reflective writing, and creative projects, students will sharpen their thinking about fundamental questions of the human experience. In particular, students can expect to develop a religious literacy for African Diasporic traditions of Islam.

**MATERIALS**

**Required Texts:**

**Additional Course Resources:**

A variety of digital content will be provided during the course. Digital content will be found within the Canvas course site. There may be additional reading assignments as student interests dictate.

**Technology Requirements:**

This course may require that you access online resources in the University’s Canvas site. Please review the following link for Canvas Student Resources for assistance on getting started in Canvas:

https://canvas.rutgers.edu/students/

**Additional Technical Requirements:**

Review Rutgers’ Tech Guides at: https://it.rutgers.edu/technology-guide/

**STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

By fully participating in this course, you should be able to:

1. Discern accurate and credible knowledge about African Diasporic expressions of Islam
2. Demonstrate a familiarity with the key texts and notable cultural artifacts that have resulted from African Diasporic engagements with Islam
3. Recognize the internal diversity among African Diasporic Muslims
4. Explain how Islam has shaped—and is shaped by—the historical intersections of race, class, and gender throughout the African Diaspora of the Americas
5. Distinguish confessional or prescriptive statements about Islam from descriptive or analytical statements
6. Employ informed analysis and moral reasoning to identify and address contemporary anti-Black racism and Islamophobia.

**TEACHING PROCEDURES**

Student engagement is a vital part of this course. It will be run as a deeply interactive and collaborative seminar. Accordingly, students should come to class having thoroughly read, viewed, and/or listened to all required material. Furthermore, they should have formulated some initial thoughts and/or questions about the material that they post on the discussion board. This engagement by students will define the seminar. There will be little by way of lecture.

**Teaching Philosophy:**

In my classrooms, we approach the teaching and learning process by starting where we stand, suspending what we think we know, and carefully interrogating the meaning of our language to highlight its use in constructing our world. This teaching philosophy requires that the classroom become a dynamic space of
pedagogical encounter, which not only enables the acquisition of information and the cultivation of critical thinking, but also produces unexpected insights that emerge from interacting with others. By encouraging collaboration and a sense of community whenever possible, I maintain a space in which students can develop interpersonal skills and learn how to use difference as a resource for thought and action. I view the pedagogical encounter and the spaces and moments it produces as charged with possibility. It is a space of suspension in which we pause to interrogate and question in the spirit of community and process. It necessarily starts where the student is, but facilitates a deeply interactive and inclusive process from which something new can emerge to take us where we need to go.

**Instructor Responsibilities:**

Students can expect that I am fully prepared for class, that I have read their weekly discussion board posts comments, that I give them feedback on assignments, and that I respond to their emails within three business days.

**COURSE COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS**

Your success in this course depends on the following:

**Attendance and Participation**

As a seminar, student attendance and participation are mandatory. Please show up prepared to participate. I will take roll and keep track of participation every session. Please note that reading notes constitute participation.

**Presentations**

Students are required to present on at least one module. In a ten-minute presentation, they should summarize the reading and pose critical questions for the class. Ideally, they would have also consulted the suggested readings for that module when available. The idea is to start an interesting conversation on the topic.

**Reading Notes**

With each reading or class activity, students will compose a brief note of no more than 300 words based on something that they noticed in the text or at the event. By the end of the semester, they should have collected a note-book of at least 20 entries.

**Short Paper or Project**

Students will submit a mid-term paper of 3-5 pages or a project requiring similar effort as determined by the instructor. The paper or project might be an expansion of a given module or a synthesis of themes from throughout the course.

**Final Paper or Project**

Students will submit a final paper of 7-10 pages or a project of similar work as determined by instructor. The paper or project essay might be a written expansion of a given module or a synthesis of themes from throughout the course.

**GRADING**

**Final Course Grade:**

Grades in this course are weighted according to the table below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity or Major Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Points or Grade %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation (In-class, Reading Notes, etc)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Paper</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper or Project</td>
<td>May 6, 2022</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grading Scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100 - 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89 - 87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>86 - 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>79 - 77</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>76 - 70</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>69 - 67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>66 - 61</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>60 and Below</td>
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</tbody>
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ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Attendance Policy:
You are responsible for material covered in any class that you do not attend. If you miss a class, you must contact a classmate or me for the missed information. If you have a situation that might cause you to miss an entire week of class, discuss it with me as soon as possible.

Submission Policy:
Submit all work through Canvas.

Late Work:
Work should be submitted on time as they are a necessary part of the course experience. A grace period of two days will be allowed for assignments. After that, a penalty will be applied to the assignment.

Coursework Difficulties:
Please discuss any issues that you are having in completing the coursework on time with me. I am available to talk this over with you by appointment.

Incomplete Policy:
If you are unable to complete the coursework during the semester due to some catastrophic issue, you must contact me immediately to discuss your alternatives.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism:
Our purpose in the classroom is to seek the truth; this work requires trust and honesty between teacher and student. If we are not honest about what we know and do not know, our learning will always be impaired. Because our teaching and learning depends on this honest communication, we expect all students to understand what plagiarism is and why it is unacceptable.
Any student considering plagiarism should recognize the consequences and consider alternatives. Students uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism may request help from faculty or from appropriate University services. For information on using sources in writing, see the Identifying and Avoiding Academic Dishonesty section of the Rutgers Academic Integrity web site:

http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/resources-for-students/

### STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Students are required to adhere to the University Student Code of Conduct delineated in the Rutgers Student Affairs website Student Conduct page:

http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/student-conduct-processes/university-code-of-student-conduct/#1495568095620-2f5ce77d-17dd

### ACCOMMODATIONS

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University’s educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus’s disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form (https://webapps.rutgers.edu/student-ods/forms/registration).

### STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

#### Academic Services:

- For academic support visit Rutgers Academics Student Support at https://www.rutgers.edu/academics/student-support
- Any student can obtain tutoring and other help at the Learning Centers on each campus. Check the website at https://rlc.rutgers.edu/
- For coaching help with writing skills and assignments visit the Writing Coaching webpage at https://rlc.rutgers.edu/student-services/writing-coaching
- Many library resources are available online. Assistance is available through phone, email, and chat. For information, check the Rutgers Libraries website at https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/

#### Rutgers Student Health Services:

Rutgers Student Health Services is dedicated to health for the whole student body, mind and spirit. It accomplishes this through a staff of qualified clinicians and support staff. Services are available at several locations throughout the New Brunswick-Piscataway area. For more information visit: http://health.rutgers.edu/

#### Veteran Services:

Rutgers is proud to support veterans. If you are a veteran of the armed forces, please visit the Office of Veteran and Military Programs and Services website for more information: https://veterans.rutgers.edu/
TOPICS SCHEDULE

Week 1: Orientations

Studying Religion: An Introduction Through Cases: "Thinking about being a student of religion" and "On Defining and Studying Religion"


Richard Eaton, "Islamic history as global history"

Week 2: The Muslim Discovery of the Americas

Laila Lalami’s The Moor’s Account, 1-164.


Week 3: The Muslim Discovery of Americas

Laila Lalami’s The Moor’s Account, 164-321.

Week 4: The Muslim Discovery of Americas

Laila Lalami’s The Moor’s Account, 164-321.

Su’ad Abdul Khabeer, Hazel Gómez, and Siddeeqah Sharif Fichman “Being Muslim on Turtle Island” On the Square Podcast

Optional:


Week 5: Islam in West Africa and the Racialization of Slavery

Sylviane Diouf, "African Muslims, Christian Europeans, and the Transatlantic Slave Trade” Servants of Allah

Episode 1 of Roots (2016)
Week 6: Islam as Religion and Culture in the community of the enslaved

Diouf, “Upholding the five pillars of Islam in a Hostile World” Servants of Allah
Diouf, “The Muslim Community” Servants of Allah
Baghdadi, The Amusement of the Foreigner

Week 7: Arabic Literacy; Muslim Insurgency and Fugitivity

Diouf, “Literacy: A Distinction and a Danger” Servants of Allah


Diouf, “Resistance, Revolts, and Returns to Africa” Servants of Allah

Prince Among Slaves

***SHORT PAPER OR PROJECT DUE***

Week 8: On Malcolm

Manning Marable, Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention

Week 9: On Malcolm

Manning Marable, Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention

Week 10: On Malcolm

Manning Marable, Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention

Week 11: On Malcolm

Manning Marable, Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention
**Week 12:** On Malcolm

Spike Lee (Dir.), *Malcolm X*, 1992

**Week 13:** On Malcolm

Richard Brent Turner, “Malcolm X and his Successors” *Islam in the African American Experience*

**Week 13:** On Malcolm


**Week 14:** Conclusion

***FINAL PAPER OR PROJECT DUE***