

**RUTGERS UNIVERSITY—NEWARK**  
**AFRICA, ISLAM, & THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD**  
**21:510:365**  
**Spring 2022**  
**T/R 11:30 am-12:50 pm, Conklin 302**

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### **Course Description**

Africa was the origin of the early Muslims and has one of the longest Islamic cultural traditions in the world. Islam shapes the identities of hundreds of millions of adherents, more than the combined number of adherents of other religions in contemporary Africa. The influence of Islam and Arabic in the historical development of African societies has been great. This course will explore the diverse ways in which Islam impacted African societies and how indigenous African traditions in turn impacted the way Islam was practiced from the 8<sup>th</sup> century to the present. Through lectures, weekly reading and writing assignments, midterm and final exam, we will explore such topics as Islamic law and state institutions, Islam and colonialism, Islamic revivalism and reform movements, and Islam and gender. We begin the course with a discussion of some basic concepts in the study of Islam, followed by an in-depth study of the spread of Islam to Africa and the emergence of Muslim states and cultures. We will focus on North Africa, West Africa, the Horn of Africa and East Africa.

### **Course Objectives**

- Understand the role of Islam in the historical evolution of African societies
- Acquire insights into the origins and nature of contemporary issues about Islam
- Provide the foundation for a comparative understanding of different cultures
- Learn and apply key theories and concepts in the study of Islam in African history
- Develop an awareness about past interpretations made in the secondary sources and current scholarly trends in the field of Islam in African history
- Develop interpretive thinking, research and writing skills, and the ability to write with clarity and use language appropriate for undergraduate level of study

## Course Requirements and Evaluation

Grading in the course will be based on an evaluation of student performance in participation in discussion, final paper, midterm and final exam.

Participation in Discussion (Weekly)	25%
Midterm Exam (March 11)	20%
Final Paper (April 17)	25%
Final Exam (May 10)	30%

### Participation in Discussion

Constructive and energetic participation in online discussion is required for a successful completion of this course and is worth 25% of your final grade. You are required to post discussion board responses related to weekly assigned readings. Discussion questions will be posted to the course website in advance. Each student must do a total of 2 postings per week. They are as follows:

- post a response to the instructor's question between Tuesday and Thursday before 11:59 pm
- post a response to another student's initial response to the instructor's question from Friday 12:01 am to Sunday 11:59 pm. Please note that if you reply to a post by another student before Friday, your posting will not count toward your participation.

Your answer will be evaluated for its factual accuracy, syntax, spelling, and punctuation. Of course your grade will also be based on whether or not you have answered the question. Use specific examples from the assigned readings to elaborate your point. Unless you are directly quoting your source, citation is not required in your answer. You are **STRONGLY** advised to avoid direct quotation in your answer for discussion questions unless there is a compelling reason to do so. If you directly quote from the readings, the quoted material should not be longer than a sentence and give the author's name and page number (Smith 34). You should also put the quoted sentence in quotation marks ("...").

Completion of weekly discussion postings will help you to extend and enhance your understanding of the readings and the materials delivered in lectures which in turn, will help you prepare for the midterm and final exams.

### **Term Paper**

There is one assigned paper for this course which is worth 25% of your course grade. The writing guideline will be given in the course of the semester. You have to turn in your papers by the due date. Late papers will not be accepted for full credit without any documented valid excuse. Your paper is due April 17. The term paper is a Turnitin assignment and must be turned in via Canvas. Use the correct format for submitting via Canvas. I will only grade your papers on Canvas. If you run into difficulty submitting your paper from your personal computer, take screenshot of your failed submission and reach out to me immediately via email. In addition, please note, submission of your term paper is a course requirement. Failure to submit the paper, regardless of total points accrued for other assignments, will result in failure for the entire course.

### **Late Policy**

It is your responsibility to turn in the correct and final version of your assignments by the official due date (syllabus-stated) via Canvas. Five points will be deducted for each day your term paper is late. You may only ask for an extension of your term paper at least 48 hours before the due date and only if you have a valid reason backed by documentation. You must complete the term papers by the due date in order to pass the course.

### **Midterm**

The midterm exam will be held on March 11 between 9:00am and 9:00pm on Canvas. The midterm will cover the topics that we have learned in class during the semester's first half. Students must write the midterm to pass the course.

### **Final Exam**

The final will be a non-cumulative examination and will cover topics we learned during the second half of the semester. The final exam will be held on Canvas on May 10 at 9:00 am–9:00 pm. Students must write the final exam to pass the course.

### **Make-up Exam Policy**

In fairness to other students who are not given the same opportunity, make-up exams are not given as a matter of principle unless there are extenuating circumstances. Since exam schedules are given in the beginning of the semester, please plan your work and other non-academic responsibilities accordingly. Make up for missed exams will not be given especially because they are given online, and you will have ample window of time in which to take them. If you start your online exam after it was too late and your internet “goes out”, it is not a valid excuse to warrant a retake on the exam. Do not wait until it is too late.

Make up will be given if absence involved athletic event, scholastic obligations, call for military service, medical emergencies, valid personal or family emergencies, death in family, natural disasters, and jury duty. I will not reschedule midterm exams for the sake of accommodating another class. If you know you will miss the midterm for a valid reason, be sure to pre-schedule a make-up exam at least 10 days in advance. You will be given a midterm exam on a date different from the official (syllabus-stated) day only if you have a valid reason and valid documentation. Your proof should be dated and written on letterhead paper. If your absence involved death of family member, be sure to bring a document that indicates that you are related to the deceased person. If granted, I will prepare a make-up exam more difficult than the originally scheduled exam. Failure to take the scheduled make-up will result in a zero on the exam. Final exam/projects cannot be made up past the end of the semester unless you miss it for university excused reason.

## **Grading Scale**

Grading for the course will be as follows:

A = 89.5–100 (Outstanding)

B+ = 84.5–89.49 (Outstanding)

B = 79.5–84.49 (Good)

C+ = 74.5–79.49 (Good)

C = 69.5–74.49 (Satisfactory)

D = 59.5–69.49 (Poor)

F = 0–59.49 (Failure)

## **Grading Policy**

This is a course that requires serious intellectual engagement with the course material, regular participation in discussion. To successfully complete this course, a student must carefully

review the lectures, take good notes, study hard, and actively participate in discussion. Grade must be earned. Assignments not completed will result in a zero. I am a fair and ethical grader, so please do not bother asking me about your grade. If I notice an honest error, I will correct and mark a grade up.

## Weekly Schedule

Below is the course schedule that we will follow in the course of the semester. The schedule is subject to revision. We might drop, add, or exchange readings according to our specific interests.

January 18	Topic 1: Introduction to the Course; Islam: Belief and Practice (on Zoom) <b>Required Reading:</b> The Syllabus and Murata and Chittick, <i>The Vision of Islam</i> , 9–58.
January 20	Discussion on Topic 1
January 25	Topic 2: Islamization and Arabization of North Africa <b>Required:</b> Loimeier, <i>Muslim Societies in Africa</i> , 35–53.
January 27	Discussion on Topic 2
February 1	Topic 3: Caravans of Gold: Medieval Sahara, Trade, and Islam <b>Required:</b> Lydon, <i>On Trans-Saharan Trails</i> , 274–339. <b>Recommended:</b> Reading: Ross, “A Historical Geography of the Trans-Saharan Trade,” 1–34; Sanneh, <i>Beyond Jihad</i> , 21–41; and Loimeier, <i>Muslim Societies in Africa</i> , 54–76.
February 3	Discussion on Topic 3
February 8/10	Topic 4: Islam, Politics and the State in Medieval West Africa <b>Reading:</b> Hunwick, <i>Sharia in Songhay</i> , 1–28. <b>Recommended:</b> Sanneh, <i>Beyond Jihad</i> , 42–72; and Loimeier, <i>Muslim Societies in Africa</i> , 77–107.

February 10	Discussion on Topic 4
February 15	<p>Topic 5: Literacy, Islamic Scholarship and Literature</p> <p><b>Readings:</b> Lydon, “Thirst for Knowledge,” 35–72; and Last, “The Book and the Nature of Knowledge in Muslim Northern Nigeria, 1457–2007,” 175–212.</p> <p><b>Recommended:</b></p> <p>Robert Launay, “The Quran School and the Trajectories of Islamic Education,” 92–105 in Terje Østebø (ed.), <i>Routledge Handbook of Islam in Africa</i>, <a href="http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/rutgers-ebooks/detail.action?docID=6789259">http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/rutgers-ebooks/detail.action?docID=6789259</a>;</p> <p><b>[Online]</b> Leo Africanus, “Description of Timbuktu”: <a href="https://web.archive.org/web/20011111125810/http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~wldciv/world_civ_reader/world_civ_reader_2/leo_africanus.html">https://web.archive.org/web/20011111125810/http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~wldciv/world_civ_reader/world_civ_reader_2/leo_africanus.html</a>.</p>
February 17	Discussion on Topic 5
February 22	<p>Topic 6: Problems of Mixed Islam in West Africa</p> <p><b>Readings:</b> Hunwick, <i>Sharia in Songhay</i>, 60–95.</p> <p><b>Recommended:</b> [Online] Ibn Battuta, “Travels in Asia and Africa 1325-1354”: <a href="https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/1354-ibnbattuta.asp">https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/1354-ibnbattuta.asp</a>.</p>
February 24	Discussion on Topic 6
March 1	<p>Topic 7: Christian-Muslim Relations and Islam in the Horn of Africa</p> <p><b>Readings:</b> Chekroun and Hirsch, “The Sultanates of Medieval Ethiopia,” 86–112.</p> <p><b>Recommended:</b> Chekroun and Hirsch, “The Muslim-Christian Wars and the Oromo Expansion,” 453–476; and Loimeier, <i>Muslim Societies in Africa</i>, 172–209.</p>
March 3	Discussion on Topic 7

March 8	Topic 8: Islam, the Western Indian Ocean and Swahili culture Reading: Loimeier, <i>Muslim Societies in Africa</i> , 210–247.
March 10	Discussion on Topic 8
March 12–20	Spring Recess: No Classes
March 22	Topic 9: Sufi Mysticism in Africa: Saints, Sufis and Brotherhoods <b>Readings:</b> Knut Vikør, “Pathways and Formation of “African” Sufism,” 50-61; and in Terje Østebø (ed.), <i>Routledge Handbook of Islam in Africa</i> , <a href="http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/rutgers-ebooks/detail.action?docID=6789259">http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/rutgers-ebooks/detail.action?docID=6789259</a> <b>Recommended:</b> Eric Ross, “Sufi Shrines as Material Spaces,” 79–91 in Terje Østebø (ed.), <i>Routledge Handbook of Islam in Africa</i> : <a href="http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/rutgers-ebooks/detail.action?docID=6789259">http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/rutgers-ebooks/detail.action?docID=6789259</a> .
March 24	Discussion on Topic 9
March 29	Topic 10: Revitalization and Jihad in Nineteenth-Century Africa <b>Readings:</b> Al-Bili, <i>Some Aspects of Islam in Africa</i> , 81–102; <b>Recommended:</b> Loimeier, <i>Muslim Societies in Africa</i> , 108-134.
March 31	Discussion on Topic 10
April 5	Topic 11: Muslim Africa, Imperial Rule, and Resistance <b>Readings:</b> Loimeier, <i>Muslim Societies in Africa</i> , 267–294.
April 7	Discussion on Topic 11
April 12	Topic 12: Islamic Modernity and Social Change <b>Reading:</b>

Ousman Kobo, "Fayda-Tijaniyya and Islamic Reform," 206–226; Abdulkader Tayob, "Reform in the Discourse of Islam and the Making of Muslim Subjects," 223–235 in Terje Østebø (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Islam in Africa*, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/rutgers-ebooks/detail.action?docID=6789259>.

**Recommended:** Seesemann and Soares, "Being As Good Muslims as Frenchmen: On Islam and Colonial Modernity in West Africa," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 39, 1 (2009): 91–120.

April 14

Discussion on Topic 12

April 19

Topic 13: Islam in African Politics

**Reading:** Ahmed Ibrahim, "Islam and Politics in Africa," 145-157; and Alexander Thurston, "Jihadism in Africa," 158-172 in Terje Østebø (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Islam in Africa*,

<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/rutgers-ebooks/detail.action?docID=6789259>.

**Recommended:** Terje Østebø, "African Salafism," 173–187 in Terje Østebø (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Islam in Africa*, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/rutgers-ebooks/detail.action?docID=6789259>.

April 21

Discussion on Topic 13

April 26

Topic 14: Gender and Islam; African Muslim Diaspora in the West

**Readings:** Kane, "Beyond the Invisible Muslims Label," 308-320; and Joseph Hill, "Islam and the Question of Gender," 123–142 in Terje Østebø (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Islam in Africa*,

<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/rutgers-ebooks/detail.action?docID=6789259>.

April 28

Discussion on Topic 14

Regular Classes            End on May 2, 2022  
Reading Days             May 3-4, 2022  
Exam Period:              May 5–11, 2022  
The final will be held on May 10 on Canvas between  
9:00am and 9:00pm (tentative)

## **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](https://ods.rutgers.edu). Contact ODS at (973)353-5375 or via email at [ods@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto: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](mailto:TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu).

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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu). Incidents may also be reported by using the following link: [tinyurl.com/RUNReportingForm](http://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](mailto: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](http://tinyurl.com/RUNCARE) or emailing [careteam@rutgers.edu](mailto: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](mailto: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.

- Link to “Technology Resources for Students” page:  
<https://coronavirus.rutgers.edu/technology-resources-for-students/>.
- Contact information for OIT-Newark Help Desk: <https://runit.rutgers.edu/hd/>.

## **Course Website**

Canvas is our best means of communication. Be sure to check Canvas and your university email account on a regular basis. You will need access to the Canvas course site in order to know your grade, complete some of the readings, to get paper topics, exams, announcements, and other information of interest and importance. You will need to be able to access the course site at least three times a week; on the evenings before TTR and on Saturdays in order to download the weekly assignments, lectures, and other relevant files.

## **Copyright Statement**

Lecture notes, slides, handout materials, examinations and assignments developed for this course are the intellectual property of the course instructor. These materials have been developed for student use only and they are not intended for wider dissemination outside of the course. Posting, selling and providing course material to third-party websites violates an instructor’s intellectual property rights, and the American Copyright Law. Failure to follow these instructions violates the university’s Code of Student Conduct, and will result in disciplinary measures.

## **Decorum**

Course decorum is a university requirement every student must fulfil. As university students you are expected to behave as adults and act with courtesy and professionalism at all times. Express your thought and opinion in a way which is professional and does not offend anyone. Avoid any inappropriate comments. Here is the link to the student code of conduct:  
<http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/disciplinary-processes/university-code-of-student-conduct/>.

## **Academic Misconduct**

You are expected to follow the student guideline concerning academic honesty and conduct. All work must be your own. If you have questions about plagiarism, you can see me. Plagiarism is a serious offence and is punishable, under the university code of conduct. Any instance of plagiarism will result in a zero grade in the assignment and will be reported to the Dean's Office

for disciplinary hearing. For a full discussion of Rutgers University's policies regarding academic integrity consult the following website: <http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/oas/ai>.

According to the RU Academic integrity policy:

- "Plagiarism is the use of another person's words, ideas, or results without giving that person appropriate credit. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or appropriate indentation and both direct quotation and paraphrasing must be cited properly according to the accepted format for the particular discipline or as required by the instructor in a course."

As stated in the academic integrity policy, some common instances of plagiarism are:

- Copying word for word (i.e. quoting directly) from an oral, printed, or electronic source without proper attribution.
- Paraphrasing without proper attribution, i.e., presenting in one's own words another person's written words or ideas as if they were one's own.
- Submitting a purchased or downloaded term paper or other materials to satisfy a course requirement.
- Incorporating into one's work graphs, drawings, photographs, diagrams, tables, spreadsheets, computer programs, or other non-textual material from other sources without proper attribution.

## **Integrity Pledge**

All students are required to adhere to the Rutgers Honor Code Pledge. The following pledge must be listed on every assignment or exam you submit. "On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination/assignment."

See: <https://www.sashonors.rutgers.edu/academics/integrity-pledge>.

## **Disclaimer**

Should the need arise I reserve the right to amend this syllabus. The assignments and deadlines are subject to changes due to situations such as weather emergency.