

Prof. Kecia Ali

Fall 2016

Islam – Religion 214

MWF 10-11, 147 Bay State Rd. (Judaic Studies Center) #201

This course will cover the core beliefs, texts, rituals, and history of Islam, with special attention to the diversity of ways in which Muslims have organized their religious lives. We will address early Muslim history including Muhammad's life, explore the Qur'an, then turn to Islamic ritual, theology, and law, with attention to Sunni/Shi'i distinctions and the Sufi tradition. We will then turn to questions of violence, specifically jihad, and divergent conceptions of legitimate political and theological authority touching on the role of religion in politics. We address diverse historical and contemporary manifestations of Islam in the Middle East, Africa, and the United States, across boundaries of ethnicity, sect, and political and cultural orientation. We pay particular attention to how authority is asserted, constructed, and contested. By the end of the semester, students should be able to effectively engage with news about Muslims in the world, and supply background context for it, as well as relate information about Muslim belief and practice to other forms of religion.

Contact details and office hour policies

Office: 145 Bay State Rd #402; phone: 617-353-4465; email: ka@bu.edu

Email is generally the best way to reach me outside of class. I typically respond within 24-48 hours. Before emailing with a question:

- 1) check the syllabus and course website to see if the information is already there
- 2) consult Laura Portwood-Stacer's basic [guide](#) "How to email your professor"
- 3) for significant substantive queries, plan to come to office hours

Office hours: Monday 8:15-9:45 by appointment
Wednesday 1-2:30 drop-in

Wednesday office hours are first-come, first served. They are suitable for general queries and short discussions. If you think you will require more than fifteen minutes, please make an appointment. You are welcome to call in during this period. I will answer the phone if I am not with another student. If I do not answer you may leave a message or, better yet, email me giving your name and number and stating that you just tried to call. (This sort of message is an exception to the second and third email protocols described above, though a respectful salutation never goes amiss.) I will return calls if and when there is a break in the action.

Monday appointments must be requested by 3 pm the previous Friday, but can be scheduled weeks in advance. There is no appointment until you have received confirmation. Please indicate how long you think you will need. Phone appointments can be scheduled just like in-person appointments.

I will likely add additional drop-in office hours as appropriate during the semester and announce them in class and on the course Blackboard site.

If you cannot make regular office hour times, we can find another mutually agreeable time.

Accessibility: My fourth-floor office can be reached through an elevator in 143 Bay State Rd., which has a wheelchair ramp entrance on Bay State Rd. Take the elevator to the fourth floor and come through the door separating 143/145 BSR. There is a smaller, non-wheelchair accessible elevator from 147 Bay State Rd (which is where our second floor classroom is); getting between 145/147 BSR requires navigating a few steps. If you require other accommodations, please let me know.

Readings

It is vital that you come to class having read the assigned texts, as classroom lectures and discussions will build on this material, not repeat it.

The following books are available for purchase *and* on reserve in print at Mugar or available as electronic resources through BU libraries:

Ernst - Following Muhammad, (Longleaf), ISBN 9780807855775 (Mugar reserves)

Abdul Haleem - Qur'an English Translation w/Parallel Arabic Text, (Oxf), ISBN 9780199570713 or Abdul-Haleem, Qur'an English Translation (Oxf) (English version at BU Library Online)

Mack - One Woman's Jihad, (Ingram Pub), ISBN 9780253213983 (Mugar reserves)

Wilson - Butterfly Mosque, (Perseus D), ISBN 9780802145338 (Mugar reserves)

Curtis - Muslims in America, (Oxf), ISBN 9780195367560 (Mugar reserves)

Kelsay - Arguing the Just War in Islam, (Triliteral), ISBN 9780674032347 (Mugar reserves)

Al-Bauniyyah - Principles of Sufism, (NYU), ISBN 9781479829248 (BU Library Online)

For assigned books, you may seek out used editions (several of these titles should be widely available), purchase them from alternate sources, or use library reserves/online resources.

Whether you work from your own copy or a library copy, be sure to take good notes.

Supplementary readings are available on Blackboard or through BU Library's electronic

resources. If you find that the cost of texts and/or printing is prohibitive for you, please let me know.

Assignments and grading:

There are five components to your grade: attendance/participation (10%), ten reading responses (20%), two quizzes (10% each), a five-page paper (20%), and a final exam (30%).

Attendance at all class sessions is necessary, because lectures will cover materials not in the class readings. Course texts have been chosen largely because of their thought-provoking nature; this means, however, that a good deal of historical and background information will be conveyed in lectures. Come prepared to take good notes. Some classes will be mostly lecture while others will be discussion-based and still others will be devoted to small group work. *Participation* in discussions and occasional in-class exercises is also an important element in this course. Together, attendance and participation will account for 10% of your grade, although if you miss a substantial number of classes your grade is subject to further deduction. Even if you miss a class session for a valid reason you will still be responsible for any material covered or announcements given. I encourage you to exchange contact information with one or more of your classmates so that you can borrow notes or ask for course updates if you are absent. I will usually post relevant updates or announcements to Blackboard, with emails sent to your official BU addresses. Check your email and/or the Blackboard site regularly.

Reading responses: Ten one-page, single-spaced response papers commenting on, analyzing, or questioning (*not* merely summarizing) the week's readings are due over the course of the semester. You may choose which weeks to hand in papers. It is **your responsibility to keep track** of how many papers you have handed in and how many more weeks are left in the semester. They are due at the beginning of Monday's class. They will not be accepted late nor on other days (except when we do not have Monday class, when they are due at the beginning of the first class of the week) *even if you have a legitimate excuse for your absence* from Monday's class. (If you are going to be absent for, e.g., a religious holiday, you can give a classmate your paper or turn it in in advance.) They will not be accepted electronically. Response papers will neither be extensively commented-upon nor given letter grades. Rather, they will be marked (check), for solid, good work; (check -) for acceptable work; or (0) for work that does not meet the basic criteria. These papers together are worth 20% of your grade. If you get less than full credit (check) on any paper, you may submit another. I will take the ten highest marks.

Quizzes: Quizzes will be held in class on October 7 and November 4. Each is worth 10% of your grade.

Paper: A five-page paper on a topic to be assigned in October. This assignment is worth 20% of your grade.

Final exam: Worth 30% of your grade, this cumulative exam will be held according to University schedule.

Policies on religious accommodations, missed exams, late work, and incompletes

Several religious holidays fall on scheduled class days this term. If you need accommodations for a religious observance, please notify me as soon as possible, preferably by email, so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

Quizzes are scheduled for 10/7 and 11/4. If you require alternate arrangements for a legitimate reason, please contact me in writing at least two weeks in advance. **Missing the quizzes without adequate prior notice due to anything other than a documented medical emergency or something equally urgent and unforeseeable will result in a grade of zero for the test. The same rules apply for scheduled presentations.**

I will allow a grace period of two days for the five-page paper, no questions asked; just let me know—preferably by email—by the time the original paper is due that you are taking this extra time. If you require more than two additional days, you will need to meet with me in person to discuss the paper and how you will complete it. As noted above, *late weekly response papers will not be accepted for credit.*

Course incompletes are never desirable but sometimes necessary. Speak to me as early as possible if you think you may need to take an incomplete.

Disabilities:

In accordance with University policy (see <http://www.bu.edu/disability/policies/index.html>), a student who requires accommodation for a documented disability of any type should meet with me as soon as possible to discuss appropriate modifications to course requirements or procedures. I strive to make my classroom disability-friendly. The more clearly I understand what will be helpful, the better I can do that.

If you do not have a documented disability but know that some approaches to learning work well, or poorly, for you, please feel free to discuss with me in person, by email, or over the phone. There may be easy, reasonable modifications to activities or requirements that will enhance both your learning and the class's overall shape.

Note: If you wish to use a laptop to take notes during class, please see me to discuss it.

Academic Integrity:

Every student is expected to be familiar with and comply with the BU policy on academic integrity, which can be found at: <http://www.bu.edu/cas/undergraduate/conductcode.html>. I will refer any suspected case of academic misconduct to the Dean's Office. Any assignment judged, after a hearing by the Academic Conduct panel, to be plagiarized will receive a grade of "0."

We will discuss plagiarism and independent work in class.

Helpful resources about proper use of sources can be found many places online. About using sources responsibly (and avoiding plagiarism), see the “Harvard Guide to Using Sources” (<http://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do>) and Dartmouth’s RWIT page (<http://writing-speech.dartmouth.edu/learning/materials/sources-and-citations-dartmouth>). The Purdue University Online Writing Lab (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>), contains excellent advice on research and citation but also on broader topics including “Conducting Research” (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/8/>).

Course schedule

Week 1 Introduction

W 9/7 Islam in the World

F 9/9 Islam and the West

Week 1 reading: Ernst, *Following Muhammad*, pp. 1-69

I. Texts, Ethics, Worship

Week 2 Muhammad and Islamic Origins

M 9/12 Pre-Islamic Arabia/”Believers” in Context

W 9/14 Muhammad’s Life

F 9/16 Muhammad’s “Sirah” and the Prophetic norm

Week 2 reading: Ernst, *Following Muhammad*, pp. 72-105; Kelsay, *Arguing the Just War in Islam*, 1-42.

Week 3 The Qur’ān

M 9/19 Historical context – the Qur’ān

W 9/21 *Tafsir* - interpretation

F 9/23 Recitation: *Iqra’*

Week 3 reading: M Abdul-Haleem Surahs 1, 96-114; Anna M. Gade, “Recitation” in A. Rippin, ed., *The Blackwell Companion to the Qur’ān* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 481-93

Week 4 Islamic Law

M 9/26 Hadith

- W 9/28 Method
- F 9/30 Ablution – Qur'an and Hadith
- Quiz review sheet handed out*

Week 4 reading: Ernst, *Following Muhammad*, 108-62; Kelsay, *Arguing the Just War in Islam*, 43-96, Qur'an, Selections.

Week 5 Rituals and beliefs

- T 10/3 Creed (*tawhid*)
- W 10/5 Alms, Pilgrimage
- F 10/7 QUIZ 1

Week 5 reading: Selections from Qur'an and commentaries.

Week 6 Sufism

- M 10/11 Mysticism and observance
- W 10/12 The *shaykh*
- F 10/14 Repentance and Sincerity

Week 6 reading: Ernst, *Following Muhammad*, 164-97, Al-Ba'uniyyah, *Principles of Sufism*: Introduction (xiii-xix), and chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 3-61 - note that this is half as much reading as it seems like, as every other page contains the original Arabic text).

Week 7 Sufism II

- M 10/17 Remembrance
- W 10/19 Love
- F 10/21 Poetry

Guidelines for paper handed out

Week 7 reading: Al-Ba'uniyyah, *Principles of Sufism*: Chapters 3 and 4 plus epilogue (65-165)

Week 8 Shi'ism

- M 10/24 Revisiting Early Islamic history
- W 10/26 Imamate: from Ali to the Ayatollahs

F 10/28 *The Peak of Eloquence*

Quiz review sheet handed out

Week 8 reading: Andrew Rippin, “The Shi ‘a,” from *Muslims: Their Beliefs and Practices* (3rd edition, New York: Routledge, 2005), pp. 121-35; Selections from F.E. Peters, *A Reader on Classical Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 112-3, 122-42; “Creativity, Innovation and Heresy in Islam” by Umar F. Abd-Allah in Volume 5, Voices of Change (Omid Safi volume editor), in the set *Voices of Islam*, Vincent J. Cornell General Editor (Westport Connecticut and London: Praeger, 2007), vol. 5, 1-22.

Week 9 Jihad and Law

M 10/31 Classical tradition

W 11/2 Classical tradition 2 (legal reasoning)

F 11/4 QUIZ 2

Week 9 reading: Kelsay, *Arguing the Just War*, 97-127; selections from primary texts.

Week 10 The West African Caliphate

M 11/7 Modernity and Muslim revival

W 11/9 Usman dan Fodio, Nana Asma’u

F 11/11 Poetry (elegies, praise of the prophet, and more)

Paper due in Religion Dep’t– Prof. Ali’s box on the second floor by 5 p.m. DO NOT put the paper in the lobby box where I had back your graded work.

Week 10 reading: Mack and Boyd, *One Woman’s Jihad*, 1-91 plus selections from Nana Asma’u’s poetry.

Week 11 Salafism, jihadism, and resurgent traditionalism

M 11/14 Fatwas and formalism

W 11/16 Neo-traditionalists

F 11/18 Group fatwa exercise

Week 11 reading: Kelsay, *Arguing the Just War*, 127-224.

Week 12 TBD

M 11/21 Guest Lecture: TBD

Week 13 Muslims in America

M 11/28 Antebellum Americas

W 11/30 Twentieth century movements

F 12/2 Post 9/11

Week 13 Reading: Curtis, *Muslims in America*, entire book

Week 14 Conversion, diversity,

M 12/5 Conversion

W 12/7 Diversity

F 12/9 The world

Week 14 reading: Wilson, *Butterfly Mosque*, entire book

Week 15

12/12 Final exam review

Final exam held according to university schedule December 16, 9-11 am