Description:

The seminar will focus on the diversity of ritual and performance traditions found in the Islamic world. As a category of analysis, both academics and Muslims have contrasted normative Islamic rituals with folk, local and culturally specific Islamic performances and rituals. We will discuss the political underpinnings of these discursive practices through a study of the historical development of normative, pan-Islamic rites such as salah, hajj and the fast of Ramadan, as well as the locally and culturally specific ritual practices found in different parts of the Muslim world. Students will probe the usefulness of categories such as local and universal and pay attention to the politics of gender, religious hierarchy, and sectarianism in the representation and study of Islamic rituals and practices.

Texts

- Von Grunebaum, Gustav, Muhammedan Festivals (Curzon Press: 1992 reprint) *
- Pinault, David, The Shi'ites: Ritual and Popular Piety in a Muslim Community (Saint Martin's Press: 1992)
- Kugle, Scott, Sufis and Saints' Bodies (UNC Press: 2007)

- Bell, Catherine, Ritual Theory Ritual Practice (Oxford University Press: 1992)**
- Shemeem Abbas, The Female Voice in Sufi Ritual (University of Texas Press)**

* Out of print. Will be on Blackboard
** Tentative (Don't purchase yet. I might put selections on BB)

Note: The full syllabus will be distributed the first week of class. This is a graduate course and will be run as a seminar with the usual format of weekly writing, class presentations, and a final paper. If you want to make a head start, read Martin's Islamic Studies.