

SPRING 2015
ONLINE COURSE
REL/MES/SAS 364

ENCHANTING WORDS MUSLIM POETS AND STORYTELLERS



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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Through folksongs or epics, mystical chants or ecstatic poetry, storytelling or literature, oral performances or illustrated manuscripts, *Muslims have expressed their love for words in diverse languages and cultures* around the world. This course will focus on *the power, significance and role of words in the Islam* beginning with the Qur'an – a scripture that comes alive both as an aural performance and a written text. Through literature and orateur, students will study how Muslims have creatively expressed their *ideas about God, nature, beauty, law, science, ethics, humanity, and the meaning of existence.*

Course goals:

- To understand the power of word and language in Islamic faith and cultures
- To study the role that the Qur'an has played in inspiring oral and literary forms
- To examine the development of different genres of writing in historical context
- To appreciate the diversity of themes expressed in storytelling, poetry, sermons etc.

Learning outcomes:

- Explain why the Qur'an has played a central role in the rise of Islamic literature
- Identify and analyze key themes found in both classical and folk genres
- Appreciate the influence of cultural context in shaping creative self-expression
- Know the role of oral and literary performance in the life of Islamic societies

Please Note: Your first assignment is to *go over the syllabus carefully at least twice*, and to read the section on course requirements and assignments *several times*. Your success depends on clearly understanding the detailed instructions and following them consistently. Please *review the syllabus periodically* over the semester.

COURSE FUNDAMENTALS:

*To read is to empower
To empower is to write
To write is to influence
To influence is to change
To change is to live
Jane Evershed*

Course philosophy:

The premise of this course is that *learning is a lifelong quest* and that the genuine pursuit of *knowledge is self-transformative*. The more you understand about the world, the deeper your experience of life, and the greater your *capacity to contribute to others and to fulfill your own destiny*. *Writing* is one way to find out *what you think, what you know and what you don't know*.

To learn is to think about things. Thinking begins with *curiosity*. Curiosity is expressed through *questions*. As you work through this course, constantly ask yourself: *Why does this matter? How does this knowledge extend my horizons and stretch my imagination? What are my unconscious assumptions? Is there another way of looking at things?* You can apply this attitude and approach to any subject.

Course format:

This is an online course *only in format*. In substance, it covers the *same breadth and depth* of the subject as the regular on-campus course. It has the *same expectations* from students in terms of *workload, quality and punctuality*. In fact, online courses require that you be more self-disciplined, highly motivated, and well organized. It is incumbent upon you *to create and stick to a predictable routine*. Estimate how long it will take you to do your readings and to complete your assignments and *plan accordingly*.

To enjoy, learn and succeed in this course you will need the following: knowledge of blackboard and word-processing skills; reliable internet access; time-management skills; a regular reading and writing routine; punctuality; a strong desire to improve clarity in thinking, writing and analysis; openness to new ideas and multiple viewpoints; a willingness to be challenged; and mutual respect.

Course interaction:

An essential part of the course is *interaction with other students* as described under course assignments. You will *exchange ideas and comment on each other's work*. My Teaching Assistant and I will read and give you regular feedback on your work. Periodically, *after you have done your readings and written about them*, I will give short lectures to review key points and respond to issues raised. If you have any questions, instead of e-mail, *please use the Message menu button* in Blackboard to contact the Teaching Assistant or myself.

Blackboard & Library:

Students are expected to know how to use Blackboard before taking an online course. Please take a tutorial to familiarize yourself with its features. If you have not done so, please make an appointment with a reference librarian. Ask for a tutorial on how to assess the quality and credibility of information available on the Internet. Also take some time to navigate around Syracuse University's Library home page and to learn about its book collection, electronic databases, periodicals etc. especially its digital resources on Islam and how to access these resources online.

Netiquette:

Please be courteous, concise and appropriate when posting work on Blackboard, asking questions and in exchanges with other students. Do not use slang, capitalized words, texting lingo, icons, etc. Express differences of opinion clearly but fairly and with reasoned arguments and evidence.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES:**Academic Integrity:**

Syracuse University believes that *promoting academic honesty* is the responsibility of everyone in the Syracuse University community. We expect all students enrolled in Syracuse University programs to *adhere to standards of academic integrity*. All cases of academic dishonesty will be reported to the relevant Dean in the home College or School for that given course. Penalties will be dependent upon the seriousness of the infraction, and can be appealed to the relevant College/School Academic Integrity Committee. To learn more: <http://academicintegrity.syr.edu>.

The penalty of plagiarism is an F grade. Simply speaking: *don't cut and paste, don't switch words, and always give full credit.* Essentially, plagiarism is a combination of stealing and lying. Please read very carefully the handout that gives [Syracuse University's official description of plagiarism](#). It will also be useful for your other courses. A short handout is in the Resources folder.

Disability:

Syracuse University is committed to full compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Our community values diversity and seeks to *provide all students meaningful access to educational opportunities*. Students seeking disability-related services must contact the [Office of Disability Services](#) at Syracuse University, Room 309, 804 University Avenue, Syracuse, New York 13244-2330 for an authorization letter.

Religious Observances:

Students who cannot submit assignments, meet deadlines or take tests due to religious holidays are *required to notify the professor within two weeks* of the beginning of the semester. Please provide this request to be excused in writing so that any necessary arrangements can be made. Requests made after the two-week deadline will not be accommodated.

COURSE TEXTS

Note: The readings are *enjoyable*, *engaging* and *accessible* in both senses of the word. Plan to read at least *90-100 pages* a week. In addition to the assigned texts, you are required to watch videos, read articles and blogs, and other relevant *information on the Internet*. Most of these have been indicated in the reading schedule and additional links will be posted on Blackboard under Readings. In case a copy of an assigned reading is not in the folder or a link does not work, please inform the instructor or TA immediately.

Required texts:

- Salman Rushdie, **Haroun and the Sea of Stories** (1991: Penguin Books reprint).
- John Renard, editor, **Windows on the House of Islam: Muslim Sources on Spirituality and Religious Life** (University of California Press: 1998).
- John Renard, **Seven Doors to Islam: Spirituality and the Religious Life of Muslims** (University of California Press: 1996).
- **Animals' Lawsuit Against Humanity, The An Illustrated 10th Century Iraqi Ecological Fable**, Ikhwan al-Safa, Rabbi Dan Bridge and Rabbi Kalonymus, translated by Rabbi Laytner, illustrations by Umm Kulthum (Fons Vitae: 2005).
- Said Hamdun & Noel King, **Ibn Batuta in Black Africa**, (Marcus Weiner: 1998 rev)
- **The Conference of the Birds (Penguin Classics)** by Farid ud-Din Attar. Afkham Darbandi, Dick Davis (Penguin Classics: 1984).
- **The Gulistan Or Rose Garden Of Sa'di** (Paperback) by Muslih-Uddin Sa'di, Edward Rehatsek and David Rosenbaum. (Omphaloskepsis: 2010).
- **The Faith and Practice of Al-Ghazali** Trans. by W. Montgomery Watt (Oneworld: 2004).

COURSE EVALUATION

Summary:	<u>Reflections & Responses</u> * (10 x 14 weeks =140 points): (You will be allowed two rewrites).	70%
	<u>Final Essay</u> (20 points):	10%
	<u>Site-Visit</u> to local mosque (10 points):	5%
	<u>Audio Visual Creative Project</u> (50 points): (Outline: 10 points; Project: 40 points)	15%

* The semester has 15 weeks. The first week's papers will receive 10 bonus points if posted by **5.00 pm Friday January 16**.

WEEKLY TOPIC AND READINGS*

Textbooks are given in *italics*. BB refers to readings posted on Blackboard. A complete list of readings, weblinks and articles is on Blackboard under Readings. Note: Always check for background information that is posted on Blackboard but not listed here.

Wk 1 / Jan 12

Orientation: “Religion” and “Literature” as Concept and Context

- Streng, “Introduction: What is Religion?” 1-22 BB
 - Carmody, *The Story of World Religions*, “A Religious Story” xi – 12 BB
 - Carmody, “When Religion was Oral” 13 – 16 BB
- Exception: **Reflections & Responses due Jan 16th**

Wk 2 / Jan 19

Confusions: Islam, Islamophobia, Islamic Pluralism

- Said, “The Clash of Ignorance” 1-4 BB
- Fuller, “A World Without Islam” 1-8 BB
- Esposito, “Who Will Speak for Islam?” 47-57 BB
- Esposito, “The Many Faces of Islam” 3-7 BB
- “FBI: Bias Crimes Against Muslims” 3-4, BB
- “Islamophobia on the Hill” 12/5/2011 12-13 BB
- Brochure Islamic Society “Discover Islam: The Reader”
- Zwemer: “Why is Arabia Topsy-Turvy Land?” 1-7 BB
- PEW Infographic: Diversity World’s Muslims

Wk 3 / Jan 26

The Mysteries of Language

- Rushdie, **Haroun and the Sea of Stories**
- Aron R Aji and Salman Rushdie, “*All Names Mean Something*”: *Salman Rushdie’s “Haroun” and the Legacy of Islam*,” **Contemporary Literature**, Vol. 36. No. 1 (Spring 1995) pp. 103-129. BB

Wk 4 / Feb 2

Revelation: Scripture as Performance

- Renard, **Seven Doors to Islam**, 1-34
- Renard, **Windows on the House of Islam**, 1-57
- > Listen to recitations of the Qur’an from different parts of the Islamic world. Take note of the variety of styles.
 - Ethiopia: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pt0uoRoUEIk>
 - Lahore, Pakistan: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oyebP9D3xqg>
 - Indonesia: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Poz9I15fP8>
 - Iran: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llWrlqQGWrU>
 - Istanbul, Turkey: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8eq3UAapk-w>

Wk 5 / Feb 9 Devotion through Soundscapes

- Renard, **Seven Doors** 35-74
- Renard, **Windows** 59-84; 92-107

Wk 6 / Feb 16 Inspiration: Paradigms of Piety

- Renard, **Seven Doors** 75-104, 259-272
- Renard, **Windows** 119-166

Wk 7 / Feb 23 Creativity: the Search for Beauty

- Renard, **Seven Doors** 107-142
- Renard, **Windows** 169-215

Wk 8 / Mar 2 Teachers / Thinkers: Intellect in Faith

- Renard, **Seven Doors** 183-218
- Renard, **Windows** 269-322

Project Outline due**Wk 9 / Mar 9 Spring Break****Wk 10 / Mar 16 Beyond Words: the Limits of Language**

- Renard, **Seven Doors** 221-257
- Renard, **Windows** 325-383

Wk 11 / Mar 23 Ethics as Practice: Nature's Lessons

- **Animals' Lawsuit Against Humanity**
- See background readings posted on BB

Wk 12 / Mar 30 Traveling to Learn: World as Book

- **Ibn Batuta in Black Africa**
- See background readings posted on BB

Wk 13 / Apr 6 The Ultimate Voyage: Finding Oneself

- **The Conference of the Birds**
- See background readings posted on BB

Wk 14 / Apr 13 Spiritual Autobiography: Intellectual Search

- **The Faith and Practice of Al-Ghazali**

See background readings posted on BB

Creative Project due

Wk 15 / Apr 20	Moral Edification: The Art of Storytelling
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- **Gulistan Or Rose Garden Of Sa'di**
- See background readings posted on BB

April 29th	Last day of Classes
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Final Essay due

SUMMARY: ASSIGNMENTS & DUE DATES

Reflections and Responses	Wednesday & Friday 9.00 pm	140 points	70%
Site Visit Report:	tba	10 points	5%
Outline of Project:	Monday Mar 2nd 9.00 pm	10 points	
Creative Project:	April Friday 17th 9.00 pm	40 points	15%
Final Essay Paper:	Wednesday April 29th 5.00 pm	20 points	10%

Academic Integrity Policy at Syracuse University

University-Wide Policy – Administered Locally

Syracuse University adopted a university-wide academic integrity policy in 2006 and revised the policy in 2011. The policy sets general guidelines. Individual cases are brought by faculty members and instructors working with the *Academic Integrity Coordinator* appointed by their school or college.

The Academic Integrity Office works with faculty, instructors, staff, and students to broaden understanding of SU's academic integrity policy and to coordinate its administration. The office maintains records of all academic integrity cases.

Key Elements of the Policy Every SU Undergraduate Should Know

- ❖ The policy covers a range of academic integrity matters, including: citation of sources in course work and research; unauthorized collaboration on assignments and examinations; misrepresentation of authorship/identity; and *submitting the same work in two courses without written permission from both instructors.*
- ❖ Instructors are responsible for communicating course-specific academic integrity expectations, including policies regarding student collaboration. Students are responsible for consulting instructors for clarification of university or course-specific academic integrity policies.
- ❖ The policy distinguishes between academic *negligence* and academic *dishonesty*. *Negligence* occurs when a student violates academic integrity policy unintentionally. *Dishonesty* occurs when a student violates the policy intentionally.
- ❖ Students are accountable for academic negligence even if they did not intend to violate the policy. Negligence results in a written warning that cannot be appealed.
- ❖ **The presumptive penalty for a first act of academic dishonesty by an undergraduate is a failing grade marked on your transcript to indicate that the F resulted from a violation of SU's academic integrity policy. The presumptive penalty for a second violation is suspension or expulsion.**
- ❖ Students have the right to appeal academic dishonesty charges and penalties to the hearing panel.

For More Information

To read the full policy, view frequently asked questions, or find other resources, visit <http://academicintegrity.syr.edu>. For additional information, email or call:

Margaret Usdansky, Director

Janine Jarvis, Program Coordinator

aio@syr.edu

443-5412

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