AS.194.205. Islamic Mysticism: Traditions, Legacies, Politics. 3 Credits.
For over a thousand years, the Sufi tradition has been a dynamic force in Islamic social, political and spiritual life. The tradition offers a treasure trove of devotional literature and music, philosophical treatises, contemplative practices, and institutions of social and political organization. After unpacking the politics of the term “Sufi,” we will trace the historical development of the tradition from the early ascetics in Iraq and Syria to the age of trans-national Sufi orders, with case studies from South Asia, Turkey, and the United States. We will then move into some of the key constructs of the tradition of spiritual growth and character formation: the divine-human relationship, the stages of the spiritual path, contemplative and practical disciplines, ideas of sainthood, discipleship and ethical perfection, and the psychology of love. Throughout the class, we will explore the nature of experiential language and interrogate the tradition through the lens of gender. We will also experience Sufism through ritual and music.
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS.194.220. The Qur’an: Text and Context. 3 Credits.
For 1400 years, the Qur’an has played a central role in Muslim intellectual, spiritual, artistic and ritual life. This course will explore the sacred scripture of Islam through its foundational ideas, history of the text and thematic development, literary style, history and methods of interpretation, and role in Muslim spiritual and ritual life. We will also explore how the Qur’an weaves through literature, music and the visual arts.
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS.194.230. African-Americans and the Development of Islam in America. 3 Credits.
Muslims have been a part of the American fabric since its inception. A key thread in that fabric has been the experiences of enslaved Africans and their descendants, some of whom were Muslims, and who not only added to the dynamism of the American environment, but eventually helped shape American culture, religion, and politics. The history of Islam in America is intertwined with the creation and evolution of African American identity. Contemporary Islam in America cannot be understood without this framing. This course will provide a historical lens for understanding Islam, not as an external faith to the country, but as an internal development of American religion. This course will explicate the history of early Islamic movements in the United States and the subsequent experiences of African-Americans who converted to Islam during the first half of the twentieth century. We will cover the spiritual growth of African American Muslims, their institutional presence, and their enduring impact on American culture writ large and African-American religion and culture more specifically.
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences
AS.194.305. Cultures of Pilgrimage in Islam. 3 Credits.
The hajj pilgrimage to Mecca is one of the pillars of Islam. But Muslims
around the world also take part in many other pilgrimages, from the
massive annual Shi'a pilgrimage to Karbala to the smaller ziyarat “visits”
to Sufi saint shrines, to travel to centers of Islamic learning, to pilgrimage
to isolated natural features like mountains, trees, valleys. What are
the theologies that propel the act of travel in Islam? How are cities,
architectures, economies shaped by these cultures? And how are these
traditions affected by the wars and colonial projects that plague many
Muslim-majority countries in the contemporary world? Readings in this
course will draw from anthropology, philosophy, Islamic interpretive texts
(tafsir), and travelogues.
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences
Writing Intensive

AS.194.401. Themes in Medieval Islamic Thought. 3 Credits.
This seminar examines medieval Muslim thinkers who addressed
themes at the intersection of theology, philosophy, science, and
ethics: the definition of the nature of God’s attributes, His uniqueness,
transcendence and omnipotence; human freewill and the limits of
human knowledge; the nature of the world; and the relationship among
reason, religion, and science. The course will look at how these and
other crucial themes were addressed by major medieval philosophers
and philosophical schools not only in Islam, but also in Judaism and
Christianity, and highlight similarities and differences among the three
major monotheistic faiths.
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS.194.502. Independent Study. 3 Credits.
Approval Required
Prerequisite(s): You must request Independent Academic Work using
the Independent Academic Work form found in Student Self-Service:
Registration &gt; Online Forms.