

# ISLAMIC STUDIES

<https://krieger.jhu.edu/islamic/>

The Islamic Studies Program meets the need for accurate and rigorous knowledge of a religious tradition that has shaped countless aspects of human history and culture, stands at the center of political and cultural debates in the United States, and yet continues to be examined reductively in the public square. The multidisciplinary minor in Islamic Studies provides the intellectual training to approach Islam - and the world - in a historically and culturally informed manner, challenging stereotypes while exploring the diversity, complexity, and creativity of Islam and Muslim communities world-wide. Special community-engaged courses also offer experiential opportunities in and around Baltimore that introduce students to lived religion and encourage self-awareness, critical consciousness, and sustained connections with organizations and communities in the city.

## Programs

- Islamic Studies, Minor (<https://e-catalogue.jhu.edu/arts-sciences/full-time-residential-programs/degree-programs/islamic-studies/islamic-studies-minor/>)

For current course information and registration go to <https://sis.jhu.edu/classes/>

## Courses

### AS.194.102. Islamic Pasts in the Contemporary World. 3 Credits.

This course will focus on the intellectual and cultural legacies of "Islamic pasts." It has been argued by scholars that Islam is not only a religion but a "civilization" with identifiable sensibilities, overlapping histories, and temporalities. This civilization once spread from the Atlantic coast of Africa to the Indian subcontinent and beyond, but regimes and dynasties have changed hands in many of these places, while remaining in place in others. What remains of Islamic pasts in places where Islam once reigned supreme but has either vanished, been reduced to minority status, or repressed in ongoing political projects? This course examines lost Islamic pasts in the contemporary world, using readings from anthropology, history, literature, and poetry. As the basis of this course, we will read four texts in their entirety focusing on four different geographic points of interest—Spain, India, the Balkans, and Palestine.

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

### AS.194.105. Islam and its Cultural and Religious Diversity, 600-1600. 3 Credits.

While media often present Islam as a fairly univocal and compact cultural and religious system, news reports about tensions, hostility and at times open conflict within the Islamic world itself are frequent. Unity and internal diversity characterize Islam nowadays and have historical roots that have deeply shaped Islam since its very inception. This course will explore the historical origins of the dynamics of unity and diversity in Islam from the predication of Muhammad and the expansion of the first caliphate, to the formation of the Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal empires. By focusing on the historical events and the cultural production of the first millennium of Islam, this course will offer a thorough historical introduction to its cultural and religious complexity.

Area: Humanities

### AS.194.201. Jews, Muslims, and Christians in the Medieval World. 3 Credits.

The three most widespread monotheisms have much more in common than is generally portrayed: a common founding figure, a partly shared succession of prophets, closely comparable ethical concerns and religious practices, a history of coexistence and of cultural, religious, social and economic interaction. This course will focus on a number of key texts and historical events that have shaped the relationships between Jews, Muslims, and Christians during the Middle Ages and contributed to their reciprocal construction of the image of the "other." The geographical center of the course will be the Mediterranean and the Near and Middle East, a true cradle of civilizations, religions, and exchange.

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

### AS.194.202. Never Forget: Muslims, Islamophobia, and Dissent after 9/11. 3 Credits.

In partnership with the social justice organization Justice for Muslims Collective, this community-engaged course and oral history project will explore how diverse Muslim communities navigated and contested belonging and political and cultural agency amidst state-sponsored violence and national debates on race, gender, citizenship and national security after 9/11 and during the ongoing War on Terror. Through history, ethnography, first-person narratives, film, fiction, and online resources, students will learn about the impact of 9/11 on American Muslim communities. This includes cultural and political resistance to imperialism, racism, and Islamophobia as well as to intersectional inequities within Muslim communities that were intensified in the context of Islamophobia. Students will learn about community activism and organizing from JMC, and complete a participatory action research project with the organization. This project is an oral history archive that will address gaps in the documentation of movement histories when it comes to early organizing against War on Terror policies by Muslim communities and communities racialized or perceived as Muslim. Students will be trained to record stories of resistance among leaders who organized and responded at the local and national-level in the Greater Washington region, to support the building of an archive that will shape a wide variety of future organizing and advocacy efforts.

### 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.194.210. Race, Gender, Citizenship: Being Muslim in America. 3 Credits.**

This course explores how American Muslims navigate and contest complex notions of belonging in the context of national conversations on race, gender, citizenship, and national security. With a focus on specific case studies that range from Black Muslim movements of the early twentieth century to the ongoing War on Terror, the course adds complexity to the public conversation on what it means to be Muslim - and what it means to be American. We will draw on history, ethnography, first-person narratives, films, blogs, documentaries and fiction. As a Community Engaged course, the class will include site visits and learning with and from Muslim communities in Baltimore.

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, Online Forms.

**Cross Listed Courses****Anthropology****AS.070.267. Culture, Religion and Politics in Iran. 3 Credits.**

This is an introductory course for those interested in gaining basic knowledge about contemporary Iran. The focus will be on culture and religion and the ways they in which they become interwoven into different kinds of political stakes.

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

Writing Intensive

**AS.070.328. Ethnographies Of Iran. 3 Credits.**

We approach Iran through building layers of understanding through works of literature, cinema, ethnography, and take particular note of the recent uprising and of some of the central works that are being produced on matters of environment and climate change.

Writing Intensive

**AS.070.465. Concepts: How to Read Hindu and Islamic Texts. 3 Credits.**

What is the nature of anthropological concepts and what relations do they bear to concepts internal to a society? We invite students to think with key ideas from Hindu and Islamic traditions, asking if anthropological concepts are best seen as abstractions from the particular or as intertwined with ongoing lines of inquiry, say into the nature of the real and continual efforts to test it? Topics in ritual theory, grammar, aesthetics, translation, revelation, luminosity, figuration and the mythological among those to be considered.

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

Writing Intensive

**Center for Language Education****AS.375.115. First Year Arabic. 5 Credits.**

Introductory course in speaking, listening, reading, and writing Modern Standard Arabic. Presents basic grammatical structures and a basic vocabulary. Through oral-aural drill in classroom, tapes in Language Laboratory, and reading/writing exercises, students attain a basic level of competence on which they can build in subsequent years of study. No Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory

**AS.375.116. First Year Arabic II. 5 Credits.**

Continuation of AS.375.115. Introductory course in speaking, listening, reading, and writing Modern Standard Arabic. Presents basic grammatical structures and a basic vocabulary. Through oral-aural drill in classroom, tapes in Language Laboratory, and reading/writing exercises, students attain a basic level of competence on which they can build in subsequent years of study. May not be taken Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory

**Prerequisite(s):** AS.375.115 or instructor permission

**AS.375.215. Second Year Arabic. 4 Credits.**

Designed to bring students up to competency level required for third/fourth year Arabic. Students will consolidate and expand their mastery of the four basic skills acquired in AS.375.115-116. More authentic material—written, audio, and visual—will be used, and culture will be further expanded on as a fifth skill. Recommended Course Background: AS.375.115-116 or equivalent.

**Prerequisite(s):** AS.375.116 or equivalent

Area: Humanities

**AS.375.216. Second Year Arabic II. 4 Credits.**

Continuation of AS.375.215. Designed to bring students up to competency level required for third/fourth year Arabic. Students will consolidate and expand their mastery of the four basic skills acquired in AS.375.115-116. More authentic material—written, audio, and visual—will be used, and culture will be further expanded on as a fifth skill. Recommended Course Background: AS.375.215 or permission required.

**Prerequisite(s):** AS.375.215 or instructor permission

Area: Humanities

**AS.375.301. Third Year Arabic. 3 Credits.**

Designed to enhance students' ability to read, discuss, and write about various topics covered in traditional and contemporary Arabic texts. Recommended Course Background: AS.375.216 or equivalent.

**Prerequisite(s):** AS.375.216 or Instructor Permission

Area: Humanities

**AS.375.401. Fourth Year Arabic. 2 Credits.**

This is an introductory course to different periods of the Arabic literature. Selections of famous Arabic poetry and short prose works are the substance of the course.

**Prerequisite(s):** AS.375.302 or equivalent

Area: Humanities

**AS.375.402. Fourth Year Arabic II. 2 Credits.**

This is an introductory course to different periods of the Arabic literature. Selections of famous Arabic poetry and short prose works are the substance of the course. Continuation of AS.375.401. Recommended

Course Background: AS.375.302 or equivalent.

**Prerequisite(s):** AS.375.401 or equivalent.

Area: Humanities

Area: Humanities

**First Year Seminars****AS.001.183. FYS: What Does It Mean to Be Religious? Creativity, Experience, and the Individual. 3 Credits.**

What do we mean when we say that something or someone is “religious?” Our First-Year Seminar unpacks this question through a comparative approach, and pays special attention to the ways in which this term has been applied to the study of Islamic cultures and Muslim experience. Through an exploration of the categories of experience, creativity and the individual, we offer a less presumptuous and more open-ended way of

imagining the many things it may mean to be religious. Through an exploration of the categories of experience, creativity and the individual, we offer a less presumptuous and more open-ended way of

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

**AS.001.215. FYS: Mosques, Museums, and the Mind's Eye: Discovering Islamic Art in Person. 3 Credits.**

Despite its association with distant regions and time periods, Islamic art has a flourishing presence in today's America, represented by rich museum collections, modern buildings designed in historical styles, and vibrant scholarly networks. This seminar explores how we, from the vantage point of twenty-first-century Baltimore, might experience works of Islamic art in ways that are informed by their own cultural contexts while also acknowledging the challenges involved in bridging this gap. We will spend much of the course engaging with objects and architecture in person, with visits planned to the recently reinstalled Islamic galleries at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, the Islamic Center of Washington, DC, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. You will be invited to handle artifacts in person and to try your hand at calligraphy, one of the most distinctive and esteemed Islamic artforms. In the classroom setting, we will read and discuss translations of primary sources written by historical practitioners and consumers of Islamic art, along with examples of modern scholarship that seek to understand the Islamic tradition from a variety of perspectives. As well as learning about such perspectives, you will be encouraged to develop and share—in presentations and written assignments—your own ideas about Islamic art, building on the close, firsthand encounters that run throughout the seminar.

Area: Humanities

**History****AS.100.245. Islam East of the Middle East: The Interconnected Histories of Islam in Asia. 3 Credits.**

Challenging the conception that Islam is synonymous with the Middle East, this course considers Muslim populations across Asia and interrogates how Islam and these regions have shaped one another.

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

**AS.100.262. Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the medieval Middle East. 3 Credits.**

The course examines religious difference in the medieval Middle East, including everyday encounters and relations between members of different communities; the policies of some Islamic states towards non-Muslims; conversion to Islam and the Islamization of society and space.

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

**AS.100.327. The Islamic Age of Empires: The Ottomans, the Mughals, and the Safavids. 3 Credits.**

“In the sixteenth century of our era”, wrote the eminent historian of Muslim societies Marshall Hodgson, “a visitor from Mars might well have supposed that the human world was on the verge of becoming Muslim”. They would have based this assertion, continues Hodgson, on the political, cultural, and economic vitality of the empires of the Ottomans, the Mughals, and the Safavids. This survey course will introduce students to the history, culture, institutions, and socio-religious makeup of these three early modern polities that ranged from the Balkans to Bengal, paying particular attention on issues of dynastic and religious law, cultural, religious, and military-diplomatic exchanges with the world and with each another, and their impact on the social, religious, and ethnic makeup of modern Europe and Asia.

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

Writing Intensive

**AS.100.338. Islam and Dune. 3 Credits.**

In this course we will explore how religion in general and Islam in particular informs the world of Frank Herbert's sci-fi novel *Dune*, laying particular emphasis on how the messianic and mystical tradition within Islam pervades the first novel. We will also watch excerpts from the film adaptation by Denis Villeneuve, and the forthcoming second part in its entirety together in a local theater. As we do so, we will also discuss questions of Orientalism, representation, adaptation, and appropriation in both the books and the films.

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

**AS.100.374. Conquest, Conversion, and Language Change in the Middle Ages. 3 Credits.**

Examines case-studies of imperial conquests (Islamic, Mongol, reconquista, early colonialism) and attendant changes in religion (Christianization; Islamization) and in language (Arabization; transition from Latin to European vernaculars) across medieval Eurasia.

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

**AS.100.383. Conversion and Apostasy in the Middle Ages. 3 Credits.**

Compares religious transformation in medieval Europe and the Middle East (ca. 600-1500), including conquest and conversion; conversion narratives; apostasy, martyrdom and other encounters between medieval Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Pre-requisite for enrollment: Students must have taken one history course.

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

**AS.100.387. Everyday Life in the Medieval Middle East. 3 Credits.**

Explores the daily lives of non-elites in the medieval Middle East—including food; housing; clothes; marriage and divorce; poverty and charity; urban festivals. Half of our meetings devoted to close readings of primary documents (e.g. private letters, court records).

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

**AS.100.438. The City Victorious: Medieval Cairo. 3 Credits.**

What was medieval Cairo like? Students explore urban life in this imperial capital (969-1517), including food and market habits; relations between Jews, Christians, and Muslims; patronage; plague, drought, and famine. Pre-requisite for enrollment: Students must have taken two history courses.

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

**History of Art****AS.010.110. Art of the Islamic World. 4 Credits.**

This course is an introduction to the art of the Islamic world, covering a geography that stretches from Spain to India and a chronology that extends from the seventh century into our own time. Within this rich and varied continuum, we will look at a range of art forms—including architecture, painting, sculpture, ceramics, and calligraphy—in relation to such themes as patronage, production, function, and audience. A number of the artworks will be viewed firsthand in local collections. We will also explore the intersection of Islamic art with today's political realities.

Area: Humanities

**AS.010.319. Medieval Art and Architecture of the Holy Land. 3 Credits.**

The course focuses on art and architecture in the political and religious contexts of the Middle East, from the 4th to the 14th c. The three monotheistic religions all claimed specific territories – in particular the city of Jerusalem – for cult practices. This situation resulted in military conflicts that had an impact of Jewish, Medieval, Byzantine, and Islamic art in the Holy Land. The political conflicts, which still plague the region today, are rooted in the complex situation of the medieval period. The Roman, Arab, Byzantine, and crusader invasions resulted however in exciting eclectic styles that characterize the art and architecture of the region. We will discuss concepts behind political and religious leadership, as they intersect with the power of the arts.

Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive

**AS.010.329. Building an Empire: Architecture of the Ottoman Capitals, c. 1300–1600. 3 Credits.**

Centered on modern-day Turkey and encompassing vast territories in Asia, Africa, and Europe, the Ottoman Empire (1299 – 1923) was the longest lived and among the most powerful Islamic states in history, with an artistic tradition to match. This course explores the functional and symbolic role that architecture played during the empire's formative centuries, when three successive capitals – Bursa, Edirne, and Istanbul – served to visualize the sultans' growing claims to universal authority. With reference to mosques, palaces, tombs, and other categories of architecture, the course will examine the buildings in their artistic, social, and political contexts. Themes to be addressed include patronage and audience, architectural practice and the building trade, ceremonial and ritual, topography and urban planning, and the relationship of Ottoman architecture to other traditions.

Area: Humanities

**AS.010.330. Art of the Caliphates: Visual Culture and Competition in the Medieval Islamic World. 3 Credits.**

Despite its modern-day association with a fringe extremist movement, the term "caliphate" was traditionally used to describe the Muslim world at large, the political and spiritual ruler of which bore the title of caliph. The original Islamic caliphate was established in the seventh century as a vast empire centered on the Middle East and extending deep into Africa, Asia, and Europe. It soon broke apart into a series of competing powers, until in the tenth century, three rival dynasties—the Baghdad-based Abbasids, the Spanish Umayyads, and the Fatimids of North Africa—each claimed to be the rightful caliphate. This course will examine how these fascinating political developments and conflicts played out in the realm of art and architecture between the seventh and thirteenth centuries. As well as palaces, mosques, and commemorative buildings, the course will look at media ranging from ceramics and metalwork to textiles and illustrated manuscripts, with many of the artifacts being viewed firsthand in local museum collections. These works will be considered in relation to such themes as patronage, audience, ceremony, and meaning. Particular attention will be paid to how the various caliphates—both in emulation of and competition with one another—used visual culture as a powerful tool to assert their legitimacy.

Area: Humanities

**AS.010.338. Art and the Harem: Women's Spaces, Patronage, and (Self-)Representation in Islamic Empires. 3 Credits.**

Long characterized in the Western imagination as exotic realms of fantasy, harems in Islamic tradition served as private domestic quarters for the women of elite households. This course explores the harem—as an institution, a physical space, and a community of women—from various art-historical perspectives, considering such topics as the harem's architecture, the agency of its inhabitants as patrons and collectors, the mediating role of eunuchs in the harem's visual and material culture, and the ability of harem women to make their mark through public artistic commissions. Our case studies will address a range of Islamic geographical and chronological contexts, though we will focus on the empires of the early modern period and, above all, the famous harem of the Ottoman sultans at the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul. In challenging popular misconceptions, the course will also look at the wealth of exoticizing imagery that the harem inspired in Western art, which we will consider through Orientalist paintings at the Walters Art Museum and illustrated rare books at Hopkins itself.

Area: Humanities

**AS.010.352. Modern and Contemporary Art: Middle East and South Asia. 3 Credits.**

This course will explore modern and contemporary art in colonial and postcolonial contexts from Bangladesh to northern Africa. How do artists negotiate demands to support their national and local identities while participating in modernism across borders? What role do secularism and spirituality have in modern art? How do anticolonial, Marxist, and feminist politics shape art in these regions? How do global economic forces and the rise of powerful collectors, private museums, and international art fairs shape art and artists working across this geographic area? We will foreground the role of women as artists, collectors, patrons, and scholars throughout.

Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive

**AS.010.421. An Empire's Diversity: Ottoman Art and Architecture beyond the Imperial Court. 3 Credits.**

The established historiography of Ottoman architecture is dominated by the patronage of the sultans and their elites, particularly as it shaped the empire's third and final capital, Istanbul. While this focus on the "center" and its leadership reflects the Ottoman state's own hierarchical structure, it also obscures the larger network of places and people that enabled the imperial system to develop and acquire meaning in the first place. This course will explore Ottoman architecture and its patronage from the perspective of these neglected regions and actors, covering such examples as Christian vassal states along the empire's European borders, Arab lands with existing traditions of Islamic art, the curious persistence of Gothic models in the former Crusader kingdom of Cyprus, and the distinctive architectural practices of non-Muslim minorities within Istanbul itself. Drawn primarily from the early modern and modern periods, our case studies will be treated not as imitations of or deviations from the metropolitan mainstream, but as vital expressions of Ottoman culture that assertively engaged with, and themselves contributed to, the better-known strategies of the sultan's court. We will also go beyond issues of architecture and patronage and consider these buildings as lived spaces whose associated objects, furnishings, and social and ceremonial activities were no less constitutive of the empire's diverse architectural landscape.

Area: Humanities

**AS.010.440. Power Dressing: The Politics of Costume between the Ottoman Empire and the West. 3 Credits.**

In the Ottoman Empire—a vast multiethnic state straddling Africa, Asia, and Europe—how one dressed was a deeply political affair. Ottoman rulers and subjects alike used clothing to express (and sometimes transgress) the hierarchical, religious, and communal distinctions defining their society, much to the fascination of foreigners who visited the empire or sought knowledge of its sartorial traditions in texts and images. This seminar will explore Ottoman dress and dress codes in the context of the empire's long and complicated relationship with Western powers, focusing on the role that costume played as a charged site of cross-cultural interaction, posturing, and self-assertion from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. Our case studies will include costume albums—books showing people high and low in their characteristic garb—painted by Ottoman artists for Western buyers; diplomatic robes of honor and their attendant ceremonies; and cultural cross-dressing as manifested in European *turquerie* portraiture and masquerades. Moving into the modern period, we will consider how nineteenth-century dress reforms bridged the gap between Ottoman and Western costume while engendering new modes of Ottoman sartorial self-representation that challenged hardening Orientalist discourses in such venues as mannequin museums and world's fairs. The seminar will make considerable use of artworks in local collections, including rare books and prints at Hopkins itself.

Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive

**AS.010.451. Script, Character, Scribble: Writing and Pseudo-Writing in Modern and Contemporary Art. 3 Credits.**

Almost readable, but not quite: artists in the twentieth and twenty-first century played with script of all kinds, from ancient glyphs and Persian script to Roman typefaces and Korean Hangeul. Artists also scribbled in ways that evoke writing without script or meaning. This course takes on the question of meaning-making in art through the form of script—flirting with that tantalizing feeling that we can almost read the work of art through the marks on its surface. We will engage with artists from around the world whose work grapples with knowledge, meaning, and script, and discuss the limits and possibilities of legibility, knowing, and language. In addition to painting and drawing, we will also discuss conceptual art, installation, video, architecture, tapestry, ceramics, graphic novel forms, book arts, and sculpture. We will have opportunities to situate these works within longer histories of script and pseudo-script and image-text relations. Our discussion-driven seminars will be guided by readings in art history and theory. The course carries no expectation that you are multi-lingual or have experience with multiple scripts. Central to our semester will be group trips to see art in person in DC and Baltimore. Assignments include an option for short, focused writing with feedback and opportunities to experiment with genre and to rewrite, or a longer seminar paper, chosen in consultation with the professor.

Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive

**AS.010.465. Renew, Reuse, Recycle: Afterlives of Architecture in the Ottoman Empire. 3 Credits.**

Designed from the outset to be inhabited and used, works of architecture are inherently susceptible to changes in purpose, appearance, and meaning over time. This was particularly so in the Ottoman Empire (c. 1299–1922), a multiethnic and multireligious transcontinental polity whose territories were already marked by long and eventful architectural histories. Through such case studies as the Parthenon in Athens, the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople/Istanbul, the Citadel of Cairo, and the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, this course investigates the ways in which buildings and sites have been appropriated, repurposed, transformed, and/or reconceptualized in response to changing sociopolitical and artistic conditions. Topics to be addressed include the conversion of places of worship, (re)decoration as a vehicle of ideology, and the phenomenon of spoliation—the recycling, whether for practical or symbolic reasons, of existing building materials. In addition to the monuments themselves, we will address the objects that filled them and the human activities they hosted. While our focus will be on the Ottoman context and its relationship to the past, the course will also consider comparable examples in other geographies as well as developments in the post-Ottoman era, including the current debate over the Parthenon marbles and the recent reconversion of the Hagia Sophia into a mosque.  
Area: Humanities  
Writing Intensive

**AS.010.621. An Empire's Diversity: Ottoman Architecture and Patronage beyond the Imperial Court. 3 Credits.**

The established historiography of Ottoman architecture is dominated by the patronage of the sultans and their elites, particularly as it shaped the empire's third and final capital, Istanbul. While this focus on the "center" and its leadership reflects the Ottoman state's own hierarchical structure, it also obscures the larger network of places and people that enabled the imperial system to develop and acquire meaning in the first place. This course will explore Ottoman architecture and its patronage from the perspective of these neglected regions and actors, covering such examples as Christian vassal states along the empire's European borders, Arab lands with existing traditions of Islamic art, the curious persistence of Gothic models in the former Crusader kingdom of Cyprus, and the distinctive architectural practices of non-Muslim minorities within Istanbul itself. Drawn primarily from the early modern and modern periods, our case studies will be treated not as imitations of or deviations from the metropolitan mainstream, but as vital expressions of Ottoman culture that assertively engaged with, and themselves contributed to, the better-known strategies of the sultan's court. We will also go beyond issues of architecture and patronage and consider these buildings as lived spaces whose associated objects, furnishings, and social and ceremonial activities were no less constitutive of the empire's diverse architectural landscape.  
Area: Humanities

**AS.010.631. Performing Power: Ceremonial, Diplomacy, and Gift-Giving in and beyond the Ottoman Empire. 2 Credits.**

As a major global power straddling three continents, the Ottoman Empire developed a rich and diversified ceremonial culture aimed at impressing local and international audiences alike. This seminar will explore the ways in which works of art and architecture provided settings and apparatus for, and were themselves shaped and enlivened by, the ceremonial acts in which they featured. Covering the period between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, we will address a range of case studies—including mosque inaugurations, royal processions, the reception of foreign ambassadors, and the exchange of diplomatic gifts—with regard to their sociopolitical, visual, material, and spatial contexts. A major concern of the seminar will be the question of how Ottoman ceremonies, together with their staging and attendant art forms, were adapted in response to changing conditions and audiences, particularly with the shift from the early modern to the modern period. While our focus will be on the Ottoman Empire, the course will also consider the ceremonial cultures of the various Asian and European polities with which the Ottomans interacted, investigating the points of comparison and contrast that defined these multifarious but connected interregional approaches.  
Area: Humanities

**AS.010.662. Script, Character, Scribble: Writing and Pseudo-Writing in Modern and Contemporary Art. 3 Credits.**

Almost readable, but not quite: artists in the twentieth and twenty-first century played with script of all kinds, from ancient glyphs and Persian script to Roman typefaces and Korean Hangul. Artists also scribbled in ways that evoke writing without script or meaning. This course takes on the question of meaning-making in art through the form of script—flirting with that tantalizing feeling that we can almost read the work of art through the marks on its surface. We will engage with artists from around the world whose work grapples with knowledge, meaning, and script, and discuss the limits and possibilities of legibility, knowing, and language. In addition to painting and drawing, we will also discuss conceptual art, installation, video, architecture, tapestry, ceramics, graphic novel forms, book arts, and sculpture. We will have opportunities to situate these works within longer histories of script and pseudo-script and image-text relations. Our discussion-driven seminars will be guided by readings in art history and theory. The course carries no expectation that you are multi-lingual or have experience with multiple scripts. Central to our semester will be group trips to see art in person in DC and Baltimore. Assignments include an option for short, focused writing with feedback and opportunities to experiment with genre and to rewrite, or a longer seminar paper, chosen in consultation with the professor.  
Area: Humanities  
Writing Intensive

**History of Science, Medicine, and Technology****AS.140.301. History of Science: Antiquity To Renaissance. 3 Credits.**

The first part of a three-part survey of the history of science. This course deals with the origins, practice, ideas, and cultural role of scientific thought in Graeco-Roman, Arabic/Islamic, and Medieval Latin/Christian societies. Interactions across cultures and among science, art, technology, and theology are highlighted.  
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences  
Writing Intensive

**AS.140.387. Islam and Medicine: Histories, Debates and Controversies. 3 Credits.**

This course will analyze how “Islam” and “medicine” interacted and intersected from the medieval and into the modern and contemporary world. We will look at the rise of Islamic medicine in the medieval and early modern period, the modernization of medicine in the Islamic world, and we will also investigate questions and challenges facing Muslim physicians and patients in the US, Europe and inside and outside the Muslim-majority world. We will address questions related to modernization of medical education in the Islamic world, colonization and decolonization, questions related to gender and sexuality, issues related to Islamic bioethics from organ transplantation and clinical death to abortion, artificial fertilization among other similar questions.

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

**Near Eastern Studies****AS.130.364. Archaeology of Arabia. 3 Credits.**

This course examines the archaeology of the Arabian Peninsula from the earliest Paleolithic in the region (c. 1.5 million years ago) through the first few centuries of the Islamic era (c. 1000 AD). We will review basic geology and environmental conditions, examine the development of animal herding and crop cultivating lifeways, and scrutinize the rise of ancient South Arabian complex societies and civilizations. Co-listed with AS.131.664.

Area: Humanities

**AS.131.664. Archaeology of Arabia. 3 Credits.**

This course examines the archaeology of the Arabian Peninsula from the earliest Paleolithic in the region (c. 1.5 million years ago) through the first few centuries of the Islamic era (c. 1000 AD). We will review basic geology and environmental conditions, examine the development of animal herding and crop cultivating lifeways, and scrutinize the rise of ancient South Arabian complex societies and civilizations. Co-listed with AS.130.364.

**Philosophy****AS.150.333. An Iconoclast in Islamic Philosophy: Abu Bakr al-Razi. 3 Credits.**

Abu Bakr al-Raʿzī was a fascinating philosopher and physician in the golden age of Islam. He was credited with being the first to apply placebos in clinical trials and scientifically distinguishing measles from smallpox. He also applied his rigorous methodology in medicine to philosophy. He provided very original arguments for surprising conclusions on topics ranging from metaphysics to religion. In this course we will survey al-Razi’s philosophy in general. We will both learn and examine al-Razi’s philosophical ideas on metaphysics, ethics and religion as well as the relevant philosophical background for his philosophy. We will also compare his ideas in various fields of philosophy to contemporary approaches to these issues. Recommended Course Background: Introductory Philosophy Course.

Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive

**Political Science****AS.190.394. Comparative Politics of the Middle East and North Africa. 3 Credits.**

This course examines the domestic, regional, and transnational politics of the Middle East and North Africa. The class is organized into three units. The first examines major armed conflicts—anti-colonial, intra-state, and inter-state—from 1948 through the 1990s. It uses these historical moments as windows onto key issues in Middle Eastern and North African political issues such as external intervention/occupation, human rights, sectarianism, social movements, and memory politics. Unit Two focuses on policy relevant issues such as democratization, minority populations, religion and politics, and gender. In Unit Three, students will explore the politics of the Arab Uprisings through critical reading and discussion of new (post-2011) scholarship on MENA states, organizations, and populations. Enrollment limited to Political Science and International Studies majors.

Area: Social and Behavioral Sciences

**Sociology****AS.230.367. Islamic Finance. 3 Credits.**

Today, Islamic finance is a global industry comprising nearly \$3 trillion in assets, with hubs from Kuala Lumpur to Dubai to London. But half a century ago, nothing called “Islamic finance” existed. So where did Islamic finance come from? Why is it growing so fast? And what does it mean for finance to be Islamic? We discuss the ban on usury in Islam and other religious and philosophical traditions, finance in early and medieval Islamic societies, petrodollars and the birth of Islamic banking in the 1970s, the rise of Islamic capital markets since 2000, contemporary shariah-compliant financial structures, and the constitution of piety through financial practice.

Area: Social and Behavioral Sciences

**AS.230.445. Sociology of Religion. 3 Credits.**

This seminar tackles major issues in the classical and contemporary sociology of religion. We begin with Ibn Khaldun, Friedrich Nietzsche, Karl Marx, Max Weber, Émile Durkheim, and Mary Douglas, asking basic questions: What are religion and the sacred? Why do they exist? What is the relationship between religion and social structure? And what role does religion play in morality, solidarity, boundaries, exploitation, patriarchy, and macrohistorical transformations such as the rise of capitalism? Keeping this theoretical grounding (and its flaws and biases) in mind, we continue to probe the problem of religion in modernity through more-recent writings. Topics include the secularization debate (Are modernity and religion antithetical?); “religious markets” and rational-choice theories of religion; religious revivalism, evangelicalism, fundamentalism, and proselytizing movements; feminist and queer sociologies of religion; civil religion (Is standing for the national anthem a religious act?); embodiment and prayer; Orientalism and postcolonial interrogations of the secular; religious violence and nationalism; the intersectionality of religion with race, class, and caste; and religion and neoliberalism. Although dominant sociologies of religion have focused on Christianity in Western Europe and North America, this course applies a global lens, training significant focus on non-Western and non-Christian contexts.

Area: Social and Behavioral Sciences

Writing Intensive