

# AS.194 (ISLAMIC STUDIES)

## 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.