

Course Title: Sunni/Shi'a in Islam

ANT 3930 Section 09GG
Fall 2015

Days and Periods: T 7 & R 7-8 (T 1:55pm – 2:45pm & R 1:55pm-3:50pm)

Classroom: NRN (Norman Hall) 0184

Instructor: Khadidja Arfi
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Office Hours: T and R (12:00 pm – 1:15pm and by appointment

Course Overview and Objectives

Combining anthropological and interdisciplinary approaches and drawing on both classical and modern textual and other sources, this course presents a study of the development of various sects of Islam with an emphasis on Sunni and Shi'a. The course aims at going much beyond the simplistically constructed image of a Sunni/Shi'a split. It seeks to answer a number of fundamental questions such as: What led to the emergence of Sunni and Shi'a sects of Islam? How are most Muslim sectarian identities remembered and reproduced in the context of present day world politics? How do the relationships between politics and religion intersect in both Sunni and Shiites sects of Islam? What instigates violence between Sunni and Shi'a communities? Why is such a conflict amplified now knowing that these sects and religions coexisted peacefully and accepted each other for more than a thousand years? How under authoritarian regimes and foreign powers are such groups being dragged into violence escalating into fierce animosity? How might using a moderate discourse of unity, open dialogue, and acceptance between the sects of Islam and others bring more peace and less conflict to these communities? In addressing these questions, the course seeks to provide students with enough knowledge and skills such that they can acquire a good and educated grasp of complicated and complex conflicts and issues between and within various communities and sects of Islam in the world today.

Students Learning Outcomes

- Get a direction toward more research in the emerging academic field of the anthropology of Muslim societies
- Appreciate the importance of fieldwork and comparison of theory and methodology
- Further their understanding of Muslims in their diversity in a critical and reflexive manner
- Appreciate the presented glimpses of Islamic diversity through different anthropological and historical accounts
- Discover that studying the diverse Muslim communities and the tensions existing among them can contribute to a refined understanding of Muslims, their religion, and their practices.
- Explore Muslim discourses about their practices in their diversity facing the challenges of modern life globalization and politics.
- Become informed about variation even in common forms of Islamic practices and the tenets of Islam
- Learn that by using a discourse of openness, dialogue and acceptance would lead to a more peaceful world.

Textbooks and Required Readings

The textbooks for the course are as follows:

- The succession to Muhammad: a study of the early Caliphate by Wilferd (1997) Ebook Via Library West.
- Shi'ism: doctrines, thought, and spirituality by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Hamid Dabashi, Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr (1988) Ebook Via Library West.
- The charismatic community: Shi'ite identity in early Islam by Dakake (2007) Via Library West.
- Pilgrims of love : the anthropology of a global sufi cult by Werbner 2003 (selected chapters)
- Rehearsed spontaneity and the conventionality of ritual: Disciplines of Salat by Saba Mahmood. In The Anthropology of Islam Reader, edited by: Kreinath, Jens. Routledge: London and New York, (2012) (pp. 121-141) Via Course Reserve.
- Law of desire : temporary marriage in Shi'i Iran By Shahla Haeri (1989)
- Temporary Marriage: an Islamic discourse on female sexuality in Iran, by Shahla Haeri in Mahnaz Afkhami and Erika Friedl (editors) 1994 (pp. 98-114)
- The women of Karbala : ritual performance and symbolic discourses in modern Shi'i Islam edited by Kamran Scot Aghaie (2005)
- The heirs of the prophet: charisma and religious authority in Shi'ite Islam, by Takim 2006 (recommended)
- Other resources: documentaries, video clips and articles to be chosen as needed

Assignments

1. Discussions:

Each student is required to hold discussions via CANVAS as scheduled. Each student must submit a new discussion thread and respond to an existing thread (paragraph form). Discussions will be open for few days. This is an opportunity for you to react to readings, reflect, and comment on specific themes in the readings, lectures or presentations. It is also a chance to share ideas with your peers.

2. Presentations:

1. Each student is required to hold at least one presentation. Each presentation is based on the readings/theme of the week. The presentation may include audio-visual materials, handouts, and/or educational activities. Presenter(s) must produce 3-5 discussion questions for the class. The presentation should last 30-40 minutes leaving ample time for discussion and questions.

2. Oral presentations will be held at the end of the semester as shown in schedule; each student presents the findings of the ethnography of a specific issue related to the final paper topic.

3. Exams:

Three take-home exams to be taken on specific dates (details below)

4. Writing:

a. One page report on the "in the field" sent via Assignment on CANVAS

[In the field] assignment is for each student to be a participant observer of one or both of the communal Muslim rituals:

- Eid al-adha (the feast of the sacrifice) communal gathering (time and place to be announced)
- Friday congressional prayer or one of the daily prayers at the local mosque of Gainesville on University Street (ICG)

b. Final paper (6-10 pages) based on the ethnography of a specific issue related to course themes (via CANVA)

Evaluation & Grading

Attendance		10
CANVAS Discussions	1 Point each	10
Presentations		10
In the Field Report		10
Take-home Exam One		10
Take-home Exam Two		10
Take-home Exam Three		10
Oral Presentation		10
Final Paper		20

Policies on make-up work: No late assignments and make-up exams except with instructor's permission.

Final Grades. A detailed breakdown of final grades is as follows:

A=93+, A-=90-92.9, B+=87-89.9, B=83-86.9, B-=79-82.9, C+=75-78.9, C=72-74.5, C-=69-71.9, D=62-68.9, E=<62

One can also link to the following: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Course Policies and Procedures

Classes, Readings, & Attendance Policy:

- Students are responsible to get their books prior to the beginning of class
- Students are responsible to follow the syllabus on Sakai
- Students are responsible to read the assigned text prior to class period
- Students are responsible to post their comments/questions/critics on "Discussion Forum" on Sakai prior to class period
- Students are required to attend class unless excused for out of the ordinary circumstances [attendance is taken on each class meeting]

Classroom Behavior Rules: total courtesy for classmates and instructor is required.

Communication: Students are in a course in which we communicate with each other through academic learning, thus, students should communicate with classmates and instructor with total respect and courtesy when discussing the course subjects.

Academic Honesty: Students must conform to the University of Florida's academic honesty policy regarding plagiarism and other forms of cheating. The university specifically prohibits cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation, bribery, conspiracy, and fabrication. Violations will lead to the Department's and the University's procedures for dealing with academic dishonesty. All students are expected to honor their commitment to the [University's Honor Code](#) and the student conduct code.

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

Please make any requests by the second week of class.

UF Counseling Services

Resources are available on-campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career and academic goals that interfere with their academic performance. These resources include:

1. [University Counseling and Wellness Center](#), 3190 Radio Road, 392-1575, personal and career counseling
2. [Sexual Assault Recovery Services](#) (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161, sexual counseling
3. [Career Resource Center](#), Reitz Union, 392-1601, career development assistance and counseling
4. [Reading & Writing Center](#), Broward Hall, 392-0791, writing assistance, study skills, test preparation

Course Outline

Critical Dates:

- Ethnographic report Due 9/25 @ 11:55pm via Assignment/Canvas
- Take home exam I: Due 9/28 @ 8:00am via Assignment/Canvas
- Take home exam II: Due 10/26 @ 8:00am via Assignment/Canvas
- Take home exam III: Due 12/1 @ 8:00am via Assignment/Canvas
- Oral presentation: Due 12/01, 12/03, and 12/8 (if needed) (select a date)
- Final paper topic proposal: Due 11/22 Assignment/Canvas
- Final paper due: December 12-17 Assignment/Canvas

Course Schedule

Week #	Day	Theme	Topic	Source
Week One	T 8/25 P. 7		INTRODUCTION to Shi'a/Sunni In Islam	
	R 8/27 P. 7-8	Visualizing Islam	Islam: Faith and History	DVD 4608
Week Two	T 9/1	Methodology	Approaching Islam in its diversity CANVAS Discussion 1	The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam by Talal Assad article (Available on Canvas)
	R 9/3	Signs of Split in Early Muslim Communities	Introduction, Abu Bakr, and Omar	The succession to Muḥammad : a study of the early Caliphate By Wilferd (1997) Ebook Via Course Reserve
Week Three	T 9/8		Uthman CANVAS Discussion 2	
	R 9/10		Ali and Conclusion Students Presentation 1 Movie the Message	
Week Four	T 9/15		Movie the Message	Viewing and Discussion
	R 9/17	The Development of Shi'sm	The roots of Shi'ism in early Islamic history / Mahmud Shahabi CANVAS Discussion 3	Shi'ism : doctrines, thought, and spirituality by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Hamid Dabashi, Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr (1988) Ebook

Week Five	T 9/22		Shi'ism and Sunnism / Hamid Enayat Students Presentation 2	
	R 9/24	In the Field	Eid al-adha (Sacrifice Holiday)	Celebrating with the Community • Ethnographic report Due 9/25 @ 11:55pm Canvas
		EXAMS	Take-Home Exam I	Due 9/28 @ 8:00am Canvas
Week Six	T 9/29	The Charisma of a Community	Pt. I. The principle of walāyah... CANVAS Discussion 4	The charismatic community : Shi'ite identity in early Islam By Dakake (2007)
	R 10/1		Pt. II. The charismatic nature of Shi'ite identity Pt. III. Creating a community within a community Students Presentation 3	
Week Seven	T 10/6		Sunni, Sufi, Shi'a Muslims and charismatic authority: modernity/globalization CANVAS Discussion 5 Students Presentation 4	Pilgrims of love : the anthropology of a global sufi cult by Werbner 2003 (chaps 4,5 & 13)
	R 10/8	Online Search	Recognizing Sectarianism Students Presentation 5	
Week Eight	T 10/13	Religious Practices	Introducing Shi'a and Sunni religious practices CANVAS Discussion 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rehearsed spontaneity and the conventionality of ritual: Disciplines of Salat by Mahmood • The Private Performance of Salat Prayers: Repetition, Time, and Meaning by Haeri • Visualizing salat: sunni & shi'a
	R 10/15	Salat	Salat (daily prayer :) Ethnographic study in Egypt and Iran Students Presentation 6	
Week Nine	T 10/20	Marriage	Marriage law and practices among Shia and Sunni Muslims CANVAS Discussion 7	Law of desire : temporary marriage in Shi'i Iran By Shahla Haeri (1989)
	R 10/22		Students Presentation 7	Temporary Marriage: an Islamic discourse on female sexuality in Iran, by Shahla Haeri in Mahnaz Afkhami and Erika Friedl (editors) 1994 (pp. 98-114)
		EXAMS	Take-home Exam II	Due 10/26 @ 8:00am Canvas
Week Ten	T 10/27	Religious Commemorations	Introducing Eid al Fitr, Eid al Adha, Mawlid, and Ashura	
	R 10/29	Ashura	Imam Hussein and Symbol of his Martyrdom among Sunni and Shi'a Muslims CANVAS Discussion 8	Yusuf Ali (1978)
Week Eleven	T 11/3	Women and Ashura	Commemorating Ashura Gendered CANVAS Discussion 9	The women of Karbala : ritual performance and symbolic discourses in modern Shi'i Islam

			Students Presentation 8	edited by Aghaie (2005)
	R 11/5			
Week Twelve	T 11/10	Political Islam(s)	Hijacking religion: Political ambitions and discrimination (sunni & Shi'a) past and present CANVAS Discussion 10 Students Presentation 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manghol, Safadist, and Othoman empires in Middle East • Saddam's rule in Iraq
	R 11/12		The road to Karbala	
Week Thirteen	T 11/17	Present Conflicts and Sectarianism	Cases from East Asia and the Middle East	
	R 11/19		Is ISIS a result of Sectarianism? Students Presentation 10 Karbala: City of Martyrs After Saddam's rule (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentary viewing and discussion • Final paper topic submission Due 11/22 Canvas
Week Fourteen	T 11/24		Karbala: City of Martyrs After Saddam's rule (2)	Documentary viewing and discussion
	R 11/26	HOLIDAY	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY	NO CLASS
		EXAMS	Take-home Exam III	DUE 12/1 @ 8:00am Canvas
Week Fifteen	T 12/1		Oral presentation	
	R 12/3		Oral presentation	
Week Sixteen	T 12/8		Last day of Class	
Final Paper due 12/ 12 @ midnight (no later than 12/17 @ 5:00pm), ELECTRONIC COPY, VIA Canvas				

Notice: The instructor reserves the right to change or amend any aspect of this document at any time during the semester.