

RELS 405 Sufism and Mysticism in Islam

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Office Hours: Mon & Weds 3:00-5:00
(or by appointment)

Course Description: This course is a reading course on Sufism in the general history of Islam. We will begin with a very brief survey of basic beliefs in Islam and the Shari'a and then explore a select history of Islamic mysticism based in specific Sufi texts. We will look at early Sufism and its Sunni expressions, then review Sufism among the Shi'ite Muslims of Iran and Iraq, followed by the development of Sufism in India. From India, we will trace the lineage of Sufism into the American context and its current development in the Sufi Order International (SOI) and other American branches. Specific Sufi texts will be those written by Sufi mystics such as al-Ghazali, Ruzbihan Baqli, Ibn Arabi, and Pir Vilayat Khan with supplemental readings of other great Sufi teachers. We will also review classical Islamic cosmology and various ritual techniques used in Sufism.

Books: Primary Sources: Ibn Arabi and Rabia Harris (Translator). *Journey to the Lord of Power: A Sufi Manual on Retreat*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 1981. JLP
Ruzbihan Baqli and Carl W. Ernst (Translator). *The Unveiling of Secrets: Diary of a Sufi Master*. Chapel Hill, NC: Parvardigar Press, 1997. US
Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali and R. J. McCarthy SJ (Translator). *Al-Ghazali's Path to Sufism: His Deliverance from Error (al-Munqidh min al-Dalal) and Five Key Texts*. Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2000. DFE
Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan. *That Which Transpires Behind That Which Appears*. New Lebanon, NY: Omega Publications, 1994. TTBA
Secondary Sources: William C. Chittick. *Science of the Cosmos, Science of the Soul: The Pertinence of Islamic Cosmology in the Modern World*. Oxford, BG: Oneworld Publications, 2007. SCSS
Carl W. Ernst. *Teachings of Sufism*. Boston, MA: Shambhala, 1999. TS
Annemarie Schimmel. *Islam: An Introduction*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992. Islam
Recommended: Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri. *The Thoughtful Guide to Sufism*. Berkeley, CA: O Books, 2004. TGS

Requirements: Students are expected to attend all classes and participate in class discussions, missing more than two classes will result in a lower grade. The assignments in this course include the following: **10 short reading summaries** (400-450 words; 2% each = 20%); **three class presentations** (5% each = 15%) with **three long abstracts** (800-900 words; 5% each = 15%) each with two discussion questions; **Mid-term exam** (25%); **Final Paper** (10-12 page) plus **paper proposal and bibliography** (20% + 5%). A long abstract with questions is due on every day you present; you will read your abstract, then offer two questions for discussion. The due dates for long abstracts will depend on the dates of your presentations. On any week you have a long abstract due, you are excused from the short one for that week. However, you still owe me ten short abstracts! All late assignments will be graded down 10%; any missed assignments will receive an F (55%).

Honor Code: Lying, cheating, and plagiarism are violations of the Honor Code and are not permitted at the College. Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly to the Dean of Students. A student responsible for academic dishonesty will receive a XF in the course, indicating failure based on dishonesty. Students should be aware that unauthorized collaboration--working together without permission-- is a form of cheating.

Disabilities: If you have a disability that qualifies you for academic accommodation, please present a letter to me from the Center for Disability Services at the beginning of the semester. Please discuss with me any special needs you may have. For more information regarding accommodation and the SNAP program, see:
<http://www.cofc.edu/~cds/index.htm>.

Grading Scale:

Numerical and letter grades: A = 95-92; A- = 91-89; B+ = 88-86; B = 85-82; B- = 81-79; C+ = 78-76; C = 75-72; C- = 71-69; D+ = 68-66; D = 65-63; D- = 62-60; F = 59 or lower.

Reading Assignments: Each weekly assignment is in two parts, the first due on Tuesday, the second due on Thursday of each week. Short abstracts cover one day of reading; if you miss a day, you can do the next day. All make up abstracts must come from material not yet discussed in class.

- I. **Week One**, August 25, 27: Introduction to Islamic Mysticism
 - A. Reading Assignment: Schimmel, Islam, pp. 1-50
- II. **Week Two**, September 1, 3: Islamic orthodoxy and orthopraxis
 - A. Reading Assignment: Schimmel, 50-100; Schimmel 101-144
 - B. Writing Assignment: **450 word abstract due**, September 1
- III. **Week Three**, September 8, 10: Science and Cosmos in Islam
 - A. Reading Assignment: Chittick, SCSS, 1-38; Chittick, 39-74
 - B. Writing Assignment: **450 word abstract due**, September 8
- IV. **Week Four**, September 15, 17: Science and Cosmos in Islam
 - A. Reading Assignment: Chittick, 75-108; Chittick 109-149
 - B. Writing Assignment: **450 word abstract due**, September 15
- V. **Week Five**, September 22, 24: Muhammad and Qur'an for Sufi; al-Ghazali
 - A. Reading Assignment: Ernst, TS, 1-40; al-Ghazali 9-31, read notes!
 - B. Writing Assignment: **450 word abstract due**, September 22
- VI. **Week Six**, September 29, October 1: al-Ghazali, Deliverance from Error
 - A. Reading Assignment: al-Ghazali, 31-59; al-Ghazali, 59-80, read notes!
 - B. Writing Assignment: **450 word abstract due**, September 29
- VII. **Week Seven**, October 6, 8: Islamic Spiritual Practice
 - A. Reading Assignment: Ernst, TS, 41-82
 - B. **MID-TERM EXAM: October 8**

- VIII. **Week Eight**, October, 15: Ruzbihan Baqli, Persian Sufism
- A. **Fall Break, October 13**: Have Fun, no class
 - B. Reading Assignment, October 15: Baqli, US, ix-35
- IX. **Week Nine**, October 20, 22: Early Visions, Persian Sufism
- A. Reading Assignment: Baqli, 35-71; Baqli, 71-105
 - B. Writing Assignment: **450 word abstract due**, October 20
- X. **Week Ten**, October 27, 29: Sufi Diary, Persian Sufism; Love
- A. Reading Assignment: Baqli, 105-141; Ernst, 82-94
 - B. Writing Assignment: **450 word abstract due**, October 27
- XI. **Week Eleven**, November 3, 5: Classical Andalusian Sufism, Ibn 'Arabi
- A. Reading Assignment: Ibn Arabi 1-31; Ibn Arabi, 32-64; read notes!
 - B. Writing Assignment: **450 word abstract due**, November 3
- XII. **Week Twelve**, November 10, 12:
Jalal ad-Din Rumi; Sufi Music
- A. Reading Assignment: Ernst, 95-117; Ernst, 118-169
 - B. Writing Assignment: **450 word abstract due**, November 10
 - C. **Paper Topic with Bibliography**: Due November 12th
- XIII. **Week Thirteen**, November 17, 19: Sufism in America
- A. Reading Assignment: Pir Vilayat, TTBA, 3-45; Vilayat 46-83
 - B. Writing Assignment: **450 word abstract due**, November 17
- XIV. **Week Fourteen**, November 24: International Sufi Order
- A. Reading Assignment: Pir Vilayat, 84-132
 - B. Writing Assignment: Turn in late 450 abstracts
 - C. **Thanksgiving Break**: November 25-29
- XV. **Week Fifteen**, December 1: Ruhaniyat Order & Sufi Women
- A. Reading Assignment: Pir Vilayat, 133-179; Ernst, 179-199
 - B. Writing Assignment: Last chance to turn in any late 450 abstracts
- XVI. **FINAL PAPER: Due December 7**, RELS Dept, my mailbox by 4:30 pm;
late papers will be penalized by a 10 point reduction.