

Carleton University
The Hadith
RELI 3350-A (Winter 2012)
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:35 am-12:55 pm

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Course Description

This course introduces students to the Hadith literature. The origins, transmission, compilation, and criticism by medieval Muslim scholars of the Hadith literature will be examined, as well as past and contemporary debates surrounding its authority and application. Its roles and functions in medieval Muslim societies will be discussed. Both readings from hadith compilations as well as academic scholarly studies of particular aspects of the Hadith literature are an integral part of this course.

NOTE: This course presupposes that all students accept that the Hadith will be studied using critical methods that are employed in a modern research university when examining texts of any type, whether religious or otherwise.

Also, this course is designed with the assumption that students have already taken at least one introductory course on Islam at Carleton (i.e. RELI 2310), or at another university. Anyone without this academic background is expected to obtain it through extensive background reading.

Course Textbooks and Required Readings

Jonathan Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2009).

- For the assigned readings from various hadith collections (al-Nawawi's *Forty Hadith*, Bukhari, Muslim), go to www.sunnah.com
- Links to the assigned journal articles are posted on WebCT.

Course Requirements

Your final grade will be determined by the following:

Reading responses—20%
Regular attendance and informed participation—15%
Midterm exam—20%
Research project and class presentation—20%
Final Exam—25%

The reading responses:

Please note that this course requires a fairly heavy reading load. Not only have tens of thousands of hadiths come down to us, but the hadith literature has given rise to complex scholarly discussions and debates, among Muslim ‘ulama past and present, as well as among historical-critical scholars today. Therefore, any course designed to introduce you to this immense literature inescapably involves a significant amount of reading.

The reading responses are designed to help you further develop your skills as an active, analytical reader of primary and secondary sources. The questions you are to answer in each reading response will be posted on WebCT. Reading responses are to be 1½ to 2 pages in length, double-spaced, in 12-point type.

One reading response is due per week. Each must be submitted in hard copy at the beginning of class in order to receive full credit.

Read, think, respond. Go beyond a quick skim through the reading (that lets the writer do your thinking for you), or a knee-jerk response to what seems at first glance to be an odd or way-off-base anecdote or idea. Take a closer look at what is going on in the text.

Regular attendance and informed participation:

Yes, coming to class regularly and participating really does matter.

Punctual, regular attendance together with active, informed participation is key to success in any course. Please ensure that you do the readings before class, and come prepared to discuss them in detail. The reading responses are intended to help you prepare for class discussion by getting you thinking about the various complex issues that the readings raise—they do not substitute for regular attendance or for active class participation.

Please note that any student who misses ten or more classes cannot be considered to have taken the course, and therefore will not receive a passing grade, regardless of the quality of any written work submitted.

The exams:

Both the mid-term and final exams will contain short answer (i.e. “define and explain the significance of...”) as well as essay questions. The questions are based on the assigned readings as well as the lectures and class discussions.

Please note that there will be no make-up for the mid-term exam. Any student who is unable to write the mid-term must choose whether to add the value of this exam to their final exam, or to their class presentation mark. In order to qualify for either of these options, you must (1) provide adequate documentation which shows why you missed the mid-term, and (2) fill out a form (available in my office) asking to have the normal grade distribution changed.

Research project and class presentation:

At the beginning of the semester, each student will sign up for a class presentation. Presentations involve researching a topic (from the list provided) in significant detail, presenting your findings to the class, and leading the discussion, as well as fielding questions. More detailed instructions will be provided on WebCT and in class. Within one week of the presentation, a written copy of it must be submitted to the professor, with citations and a complete bibliography. Please note that due to time constraints, presentations cannot be rescheduled for any reason.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1

Jan. 5—Introduction to the course

Week 2: Key terms for the study of hadith; scope, historical significance; the *Sahih Muslim*

Jan. 10

Readings: Brown, *Hadith*, 1-14; *Al-Nawawi's Forty Hadith*, nos. 1-42

Jan. 12

Readings: *Sahih Muslim*, Chapter 2 (The book of faith) and Chapter 3 (The book of purification)

Week 3: The transmission and compilation of hadith—traditional Muslim accounts

Jan. 17

Reading: Brown, *Hadith*, 15-66

Jan. 19

Readings: *Sahih Muslim*, Chapter 5 (The book of prayers), Chapter 6 (The book of mosques and places of prayer), and Chapter 8 (Friday)

Week 4: Third/ninth century hadith compilers

Jan. 24

Readings: Christopher Melchert, “The Piety of the Hadith Folk,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 34.3 (Aug. 2002), 425-439.

Michael Cooperson, “Ibn Hanbal and Bishr al-Hafi: A Case Study in Biographical Traditions,” *Studia Islamica* 86 (1997), 71-101.

Jan. 26

Readings: *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Chapter 3 (Knowledge)

Sahih Muslim, Chapter 48 (The book of knowledge)

Week 5: The transmission and compilation of hadith—historical questions

Jan. 31

Readings: Harald Motzki, “Dating Muslim Traditions: A Survey,” *Arabica* 52.2 (April 2005), 204-253

Gregor Schoeler, “The Constitution of the Koran as a Codified Work: Paradigm for Codifying Hadith and the Islamic Sciences?” *Oral Tradition* 25.1 (March 2010).

Feb. 2

Readings: *Sahih Muslim*, Chapter 10 (Rain), Chapter 12 (Funerals) and Chapter 13 (Zakat)

Week 6: Introducing medieval hadith criticism (*al-jarh wa'l-ta'dil*)

Feb. 7

Readings: Brown, *Hadith*, 67-122.

Feb. 9

Readings: *Sahih Muslim*, Chapter 14 (The book of fasting), Chapter 15 (The book of i'tikaf), and Chapter 16 (The book of pilgrimage)

Week 7: Shi'i hadith compilations

Feb. 14 * **mid-term exam** (in class)

Feb. 16

Reading: Brown, *Hadith*, 123-149

Week 8

Feb. 21—Winter Break

Feb. 23—Winter Break

Week 9: Hadith and Islamic law

Feb. 28

Readings: Brown, *Hadith*, 150-172.

Wael Hallaq, “The Authenticity of Prophetic Hadith: A Pseudo-Problem,” *Studia Islamica* 89 (1999), 75-90.

March 1

Readings: *Sahih Muslim*, Chapter 21 (The book of emancipating slaves), Chapter 30 (The book pertaining to punishments), and Chapter 31 (The book pertaining to juridical decisions)

Week 10: Hadith and gender

March 6

Readings: Asma Sayeed, “Women and Hadith Transmission: Two Case Studies from Mamluk Damascus,” *Studia Islamica* 95 (2002), 71-94; *Sahih Muslim*, Chapter 17 (The book of marriage).

March 8

Readings: *Sahih Muslim*, Chapter 17 (The book of suckling), Chapter 18 (The book of divorce) and Chapter 38 (The book pertaining to clothes and decoration)

Week 11: Hadiths, theology and Sufism**March 13**

Reading: Brown, *Hadith*, 173-196.

March 15

Readings: *Sahih Muslim*, Chapter 47 (The book of destiny), Chapter 50 (The book of heart-melting traditions) and Chapter 56 (The book pertaining to piety and softening of hearts)

Week 12: Hadith and society**March 20**

Readings: *Sahih Muslim*, Chapter 32 (The book of luqatah), Chapter 35 (The book of hunting and the animals which may be slaughtered), Chapter 37 (The book of drinks), and Chapter 40 (The book on salutations and greetings)

March 22

Readings: *Sahih Muslim*, Chapter 33 (The book of jihad and expedition), Chapter 34 (The book on government), Chapter 39 (The book of general behaviour)

Week 13: Hadith and Muslims today**March 27**

Reading: Brown, *Hadith*, 240-275.

March 29

Readings: *Sahih Muslim*, Chapter 43 (The book of visions), Chapter 53 (The book giving description of the Day of Judgment, paradise and hell), and Chapter 55 (The book pertaining to the turmoil and portents of the last hour)

Week 14: Hadith and Muslim pietism**April 3**

Readings: *Sahih Muslim*, Chapter 44 (The book pertaining to the excellent qualities of the holy prophet), Chapter 51 (The book pertaining to repentance), and Chapter 56 (The book pertaining to piety and softening of hearts)

April 5—course conclusion and review