

Carleton University
College of the Humanities
Religion Program: RELI 3843-A
Topics in Islam: Muslim Historical Memory and the Present
Tuesdays, 11:35 am-2:25 pm (Fall 2010)

Professor A. Geissinger
2A57 Paterson Hall

Email: Aisha_Geissinger@carleton.ca
Office Phone: (613) 520-2600, ext. 3108

Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:30-3:30 pm and Thursdays 10-11 am, or by appointment

Course Description

In this course, we will examine a number of individuals and categories of people, mainly from early Muslim history, which loom large in Muslim historical memory. Going beyond simple biography, this course situates particular figures and groups within their historical and social contexts, and examines how their stories have been variously told, retold, and reinterpreted at different points in time including the present. The role of such memories in Muslim constructions of community will be examined. **Please note that this is a historical course which presupposes a willingness to examine the material critically and dispassionately.**

This course is intended for students who already have a basic familiarity with the Islamic religious tradition, including its historical development, as well as basic Muslim beliefs and practices (preferably, because they have already taken RELI2310). Students who do not have this academic background are expected to do extra readings in order to acquire it.

Note: This course requires a fairly heavy reading load. It is assumed that students will come to class each week having read the material, and prepared to actively and critically engage with it.

Course Evaluation

Your final mark in this course will be determined by the following:

Regular attendance and informed participation—5%
'One-minute essays' and in-class group work—20%
Midterm exam—25%
Research essay outline—5%
Research essay—20%
Final exam—25%

Required Course Readings

- Asma Afsaruddin, *The First Muslims: History and Memory* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2008).
- Kamran Scot Aghaie, *The Martyrs of Karbala: Shi'i Symbols and Rituals in Modern Iran* (University of Washington Press, 2004).
- All other course readings are available through WebCT. Please bring them with you (either in printed form, or on your laptop) to class each week.

Class and Reading Schedule

Week 1: Sept. 14

Lecture topics: Introduction to the course; critical approaches to reading texts

Week 2: Sept. 21

Lecture topics: Muhammad's career; diverse and diverging Muslim memories of Muhammad; sources for early Muslim history

Readings: Afsaruddin, pp. 1-16; Aghaie, pp. 3-14; Maghen, "The Merry Men of Medina," pp. 277-340.

Week 3: Sept. 28

Lecture topics: the question of succession; Abu Bakr and 'Ali; 'Umar

Readings: Afsaruddin, pp. 19-46; al-Bukhari, "Book of the Virtues of the Companions," nos. 3449-3491, 3498-3511, 3670-3672 and 3692; Lazarus-Yafeh, "'Umar b. al-Khattab—Paul of Islam?" pp. 1-16.

Week 4: Oct. 5 * essay outline due (in class)

Lecture topics: 'Uthman and 'Ali; the legacy of the rule of the "rightly-guided caliphs"; the founding of the Umayyad dynasty; the Companions as a group

Readings: Afsaruddin, pp. 47-75; al-Bukhari, "Book of the Virtues of the Companions," nos. 3492-3497 and 3553-3555.

Week 5: Oct. 12

Lecture topic: diverse images and varying portrayals of female Companions

Readings: al-Bukhari, "Book of the Virtues of the Companions," nos. 3513, 3556-3564, 3604-3620, 3622-3623, 3681-3683, 3695, 3714; Ibn Sa'd, pp. 13-24, 43-56, 162-163, Spellberg, "Nizam al-Mulk's Manipulation of Tradition," pp. 111-117.

Week 6: Oct. 19 * Midterm exam

Week 7: Oct. 26

Lecture topics: the Successors (and their successors); the Ahl al-Bayt and the Shi'i imams

Readings: Afsaruddin, pp. 76-147; al-Bukhari, "Book of the Virtues of the Companions," nos. 3536-3543.

Week 8: Nov. 2

Lecture topics: Shi'i commemorations of the imams

Readings: Momen, "The lives of the imams," pp. 23-45; Aghaie, pp. 15-46.

Week 9: Nov. 9

Lecture topics: Muharram symbolism and rituals; communal identity and controversy

Readings: Aghaie, pp. 47-86.

Week 10: Nov. 16

Lecture topics: Husayn; Zaynab; the Karbala Paradigm

Readings: Aghaie, pp. 87-130.

Week 11: Nov. 23

Lecture topics: Salafist and modernist constructions of the “pious forbearers”; Companions and cultural identity

Readings: Afsaruddin, pp. 148-182; Ibn Sa’d, 270-273, 295; Elsadda, “Discourses on Women’s Biographies and Cultural Identity,” pp. 37-64.

Week 12: Nov. 30 * essay due (in class)

Course conclusion and review

Reading: Afsaruddin, pp. 183-199; Aghaie, pp. 131-161.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES

Lectures

This is a lecture course, which means that the lectures, as well as the readings, are a vital component of this course. Readings are not a substitute for attending lecture—or *vice versa*. The ‘one-minute essays’ and in-class group work are based on materials covered in the readings and/or the lectures (or both), and these short assignments can only be completed and submitted during the class in which they are assigned. These assignments cannot be made up, or submitted later. **Therefore, regular attendance, preparation, and informed participation are crucial to success in this course.** Students are strongly urged to carefully consider whether they will be able to make the necessary time commitment.

Exams

The mid-term and final exams will be made up of short-answer (i.e. define and explain the significance of...), essay questions, and questions which require you to carry out a critical analysis of a text.

The development of the ability to critically analyze primary source texts is an integral part of this course, and students will be expected to demonstrate this skill in class group-work, on exams, and in the essay assignment.

Please note that **there will be no make-up examination for the midterm.** If you must miss the midterm, you must choose whether to add the 25% value of this exam to your final exam, or to your research paper. In order to qualify for either of these options, you must (1) provide adequate documentation which shows why you missed the midterm, and (2) fill out a form (available in my office) asking to have the normal grade distribution changed.

The essay

- Detailed instructions about the essay will be provided in class.
- **Topic:** Select your topic from the list provided in class, and narrow it down to a manageable scope. All topics must be cleared with me before proceeding.
- **The essay outline** (5%, due on Oct. 5 in class) must include: a working title, a paragraph describing the topic and how you intend to approach it, as well as a list of at least seven sources. These seven sources may not include encyclopedia articles. Encyclopedias should be used as introductory starting points only.
- Please note that essay outlines which are more than one week late will not be accepted, and that essays for which an essay outline was not submitted by that point (i.e. by midnight of Oct. 12) will not be marked. Once Oct. 12 has passed, **no changes of topic will be permitted** under any circumstances.
- **Essay format:** 10 pages (including footnotes, plus title page and bibliography; double-spaced, 1-inch margins, twelve-point type).
- **Thesis statement:** your essay must begin with a clear thesis statement, and proceed to defend it by presenting evidence, which you have obtained through academic research.
- Bear in mind that **this is a historical research paper**, which requires you to engage with the material in a critical and analytical way. Your personal beliefs (or lack thereof) are not relevant to this assignment, and should not be referenced. Ensure that you provide historical evidence for whatever arguments you make.
- **Use the Chicago documentary-note style** for citing sources in your paper:
<http://www.libs.uga.edu/ref/chicago.html#docnote>
Essays which do not have footnotes and a bibliography will not be accepted.
- Ensure that you know what **plagiarism** is, and how to avoid it. For details, see:
<http://www2.carleton.ca/studentaffairs/academic-integrity/>
If you are in any doubt about what constitutes plagiarism, ask.
- **Essays are due** in hard copy, at the beginning of class, on Nov. 30. Late papers will be penalized by the deduction of 2% per day or partial day (including weekends), unless an extension has been arranged before the due date. Retroactive extensions will be granted only according to the rules of the university—personal and family emergencies (documentation must be provided). **Extensions will not be granted because of exam or essay conflicts, jobs, busy schedules, etc.**
- **Late papers** can be submitted to me in my office, or put in the drop box at the Religion and Classics Department (a large locked wooden box on the wall outside 2A39 Paterson

Hall). Do not put them under my (or anyone else's) door; the cleaning staff may pick them up and throw them out.

- **Papers that do not follow** the directions outlined above and given in class (in content, methodology, appearance, length) may be returned ungraded for resubmission. In such a case, late penalties will accrue from the due date, regardless of when the problem was discovered.
- Be sure to **keep a hard copy** of your paper, and do a computer/disk back-up as well. Please submit the original for marking, not a photo-copy.
- **If you have never written a paper like this** before, you are strongly urged to contact the Student Academic Success Centre:
<http://www2.carleton.ca/sasc/writing-tutorial-service/writing-resources/>

Email communication

Please be aware that in order to ensure compliance with the federal privacy act known as FIPPA, Carleton communications policy states that faculty may only communicate with students through their Carleton Connect accounts.

REGULATIONS COMMON TO ALL HUMANITIES COURSES

COPIES OF WRITTEN WORK SUBMITTED

Always retain for yourself a copy of all essays, term papers, written assignments or take-home tests submitted in your courses.

PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines plagiarism as "*presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one's own.*" This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another's data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in "*substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.*"

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course's instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of "F" for the course.

GRADING SYSTEM

Letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100 (12)	B = 73-76 (8)	C - = 60-62 (4)
A = 85-89 (11)	B- = 70-72 (7)	D+ = 57-59 (3)
A- = 80-84 (10)	C+ = 67-69 (6)	D = 53-56 (2)
B+ = 77-79 (9)	C = 63-66 (5)	D - = 50-52 (1)

F Failure. Assigned 0.0 grade points

ABS Absent from final examination, equivalent to F

DEF Official deferral (see "Petitions to Defer")

FND Failure with no deferred exam allowed -- assigned only when the student has failed the course on the basis of inadequate term work as specified in the course outline.

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean.

WITHDRAWAL WITHOUT ACADEMIC PENALTY

The last date to withdraw from **FALL TERM** courses is **DEC. 6, 2010**. The last day to withdraw from **FALL/WINTER (Full Term)** and **WINTER** term courses is **APRIL 5, 2011**.

REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term because of disability, pregnancy or religious obligations. Please review the course outline promptly and write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at: carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Merton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Documented disabilities could include but not limited to mobility/physical impairments, specific Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/psychological disabilities, sensory disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and chronic medical conditions. Registered PMC students are required to contact the PMC, 613-520-6608, every term to ensure that your Instructor receives your Letter of Accommodation, no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations. If you only require accommodations for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodations to PMC by the last official day to withdraw from classes in each term. For more details visit the PMC website: carleton.ca/pmc/accommodations/

PETITIONS TO DEFER

If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a **FINAL** assignment by the due date because of circumstances beyond your control, you may apply a deferral of examination/assignment. If you are applying for a deferral due to illness you will be required to see a physician in order to confirm illness and obtain a medical certificate dated no later than one working day after the examination or assignment deadline. This supporting documentation must specify the date of onset of the illness, the degree of incapacitation, and the expected date of recovery.

If you are applying for a deferral for reasons other than personal illness, please contact the Registrar's Office directly for information on other forms of documentation that we accept.

Deferrals of assignments must be supported by confirmation of the assignment due date, for example a copy of the course outline specifying the due date and any documented extensions from the course instructor.

Deferral applications for examination or assignments must be submitted within **5 working days** of the original final exam.

ADDRESSES: (Area Code 613)

College of the Humanities 520-2809	300 Paterson
Greek and Roman Studies Office 520-2809	300 Paterson
Religion Office 520-2100	2A39 Paterson
Registrar's Office 520-3500	300 Tory
Student Academic Success Centre 520-7850	302 Tory
Paul Merton Centre 520-6608/TTY 520-3937	501 Uni-Centre
Writing Tutorial Service 520-2600 Ext. 1125	4 th Floor Library
Learning Support Service 520-2600 Ext 1125	4 th Floor Library