

The College of Humanities: Religion
RELI 3843A: Topics in Islam—Muslim Historical Memory and the Present

Professor A. Geissinger

Office: 2A41 Paterson Hall

Office Hours: Mondays 1-3 pm,
or by appointment

Office phone: (613) 520-2600, ext. 3108

Course Lectures: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:05-5:25 pm

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. This course is intended for students who already have a basic familiarity with the Islamic religious tradition, including its beliefs, practices and historical development (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:

‘One-minute essays’ and in-class group work—20%

Midterm exam—25%

Class presentation and paper—30%

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).

- These books are all available through Haven Books (43 Seneca Street, Ottawa www.havenbooks.ca . 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.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1

Jan. 8—Introduction to the course

Jan. 10— Muhammad’s career; sources for early Muslim history; reading texts critically

*** sign up for class presentations in class today**

Readings: Afsaruddin, pp. 1-18; Aghaie, pp. 3-14.

Week 2

Jan. 15—Diverse and diverging Muslim memories of Muhammad

Reading: Maghen, “The Merry Men of Medina,” pp. 277-340 [link on WebCT].

Jan. 17—The question of succession; Abu Bakr and ‘Ali

Readings: Afsaruddin, pp. 19-29; al-Bukhari, “Book of the virtues of the Companions,” nos. 3449-3475, 3498-3511, 3629, 3643-3644, 3691-3694, 3705-3707 [link on WebCT].

Week 3

Jan. 22—‘Umar

Readings: Afsaruddin, pp. 30-46; al-Bukhari, “Book of the virtues of the Companions,” nos. 3476-3491, 3649-3654, 3700.

Jan. 24—‘Uthman and ‘Ali; the legacy of the rule of the “rightly-guided caliphs”

Readings: Afsaruddin, pp. 47-58; al-Bukhari, “Book of the Virtues of the Companions,” nos. 3492-3497, 3659, 3712.

Week 4

Jan. 29—The Companions as a group

Readings: Afsaruddin, pp. 59-75; “Book of the Virtues of the Companions,” nos. 3510-3535, 3544-3555, 3565-3586, 3588-3599, 3601-3602, 3648, 3684-3685.

Jan. 31—Diverse portrayals of female Companions

Readings: al-Bukhari, “Book of the virtues of the Companions,” nos. 3556-3564, 3587, 3600, 3604-3610, 3513, 3622-3623, 3641, 3660-3661, 3681-3683, 3695, 3697, 3704, 3710-3711, 3714, 3716, 3720-3721; Spellberg, “Nizam al-Mulk’s Manipulation of Tradition,” pp. 111-117 [link on WebCT].

Week 5

Feb. 5—The Successors (and their successors)

Reading: Afsaruddin, pp. 76-123.

Feb. 7—The Successors (cont.); the Ahl al-Bayt and the Shi’i imams

Readings: Afsaruddin, 129-147; al-Bukhari, “Book of the Virtues of the Companions,” nos. 3505-3511, 3523, 3536-3543, 3670-3672; “Ali’s advice to Hasan and Husayn,” *Nahj al-Balagha* [link on WebCT].

Week 6

Feb. 12 * **Midterm exam**

Feb. 14—Shi’ism and Muharram

Reading: Pinault, “Shia Lamentation Rituals and Reinterpretation of the Doctrine of Intercession,” pp. 285-305; Schimmel, “Karbala and Imam Husayn in Persian and Indo-Muslim literature” [links on WebCT]

Week 7--winter break

Week 8

Feb. 26—Shi’i commemorations of the lives of the imams

Reading: Aghaie, pp. 15-46.

Feb. 28—Introducing Muharram symbolism and rituals

Reading: Aghaie, pp. 47-66.

Week 9

March 5—Film (TBA)

March 7—The “Karbala paradigm” and modern images of Husayn

Reading: Aghaie, pp. 67-112.

Week 10

March 12—Modern images of Fatima and Zaynab: gender and the “Karbala paradigm”

Reading: Aghaie, pp. 113-130.

March 14—Memory and social change: possibilities and limitations

Reading: Aghaie, pp. 131-161.

Week 11

March 19—Sufi and “popular” Sunni memorializations of Companions and the *ahl al-bayt*

Reading: Brinner, “Prophet and Saint: The Two Exemplars of Islam,” pp. 36-51 [link on WebCT]

March 21—Memorializing the *salaf al-salih*: Sunni Islamists

Reading: Afsaruddin, pp. 148-167.

Week 12

March 26—Memorializing the *salaf al-salih*—Sunni modernists

Reading: Afsaruddin, pp. 168-182.

March 28—Contemporary constructions of the *salaf al-salih* and cultural identity

Reading: Elsadda, “Discourses on Women’s Biographies and Cultural Identity,” pp. 37-64 [link on WebCT]

Week 13

April 2—Memorializing the *salaf al-salih*: possibilities and limitations

Reading: Afsaruddin, pp. 183-197.

April 4—Course conclusion and review ***presentations due in written form (in class)**

Week 14

April 9—Exam (in class)

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance

Both the lectures as well as the readings are integral to this course. Readings are not a substitute for attending lectures—or *vice versa*. The ‘one-minute essays’ and in-class group work are both based on materials covered in the readings and/or classes (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 class preparation, attendance, 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 on exams, as well as in the class presentation.

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 value of this exam to your final exam, or the the class presentation. In order to qualify for either of these options, you must (1) provide documentation that shows why you missed the midterm, and (2) fill out a form (available in my office) asking to have the normal grade distribution changed.

Class presentations

Class presentations will involve library research about as well as a critical analysis of a historical figure discussed in this course through time, and from different Muslim sectarian and/or interpretive perspectives. Students will sign up for class presentations in the second class (Jan. 10). Presentations are to be a maximum of 10-15 minutes; presenters are expected to field questions and generate class discussion. Expectations for this assignment will be discussed in detail in class. **Please note that it is not possible to reschedule presentations.**

The presentation is to be written up in essay form (including footnotes and a complete bibliography), and is due on April 4 at the beginning of class. Late papers will be penalized by the deduction of 2% per 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.

Use the **Chicago documentary-note style** for citing sources in your paper:

<http://www.libs.uga.edu/ref/chicago.html#docnote>

Papers that 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.

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/>

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.

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. 3, 2012**. The last day to withdraw from **FALL/WINTER (Full Term)** and **WINTER** term courses is **APRIL 10, 2013**.

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/

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your **Letter of Accommodation** at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (*if applicable*).

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 Menton 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