

COURSE OUTLINE

Course: RELI 3402A (33599) Seyyed Hossein Nasr and *Scientia Sacra*

Instructor: Dr. Leonard Librande

Fall Sep–Dec 2008

Class: T & Th 8:30–10:00 am

Location: SA 505

Office: Paterson 2A43

Phone: (613) 520–2100

E-mail: Use WebCT Email for RELI 3402A

Office Hours: Thursday 10:00–12:00 am

Course Description

Seyyed Hossein Nasr is University Professor of Islamic Studies at George Washington University and the foremost proponent of the Traditionalist School's view on religions.

Nasr was born in 1933 in Tehran. He studied science at MIT and then geology at Harvard and completed a Ph.D. in the history of science. In 1958 he returned to Iran and in 1963 became the youngest full professor in the history of Teheran University. In 1979 the Iranian Revolution caught Nasr out of the country. Unable to return, he took up a position at the University of Utah and in 1984 moved to his current position at George Washington University.

Nasr brings a new perspective to mainstream Islamic Studies, one which seeks to clarify the nature of traditionalist religions like Islam. As such, his writings add to our understanding of Islam as a religion and to our ability to comprehend religion as a feature of human existence in modern times.

Required Texts

The Essential Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Ed. William C. Chittick, Bloomington: World Wisdom, 2007.

On Reserve

Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, New York: Crossroad, 1981.

Course Requirements

The final grade of this course will be calculated as follows:

Three (3) 2–3 page Papers (60%)

Final 10 page Paper in the form of a *lexique* (Due Dec 3) (40%)

Course Goals

The goals of this course relate to the disciplined study of religion, especially in terms of what is entitled *Religionswissenschaft* or the scientific study of religion.

- To survey S.H. Nasr's views on the multiplicity of religions
- To seek an understanding of his view on the Traditionalist School or what is often termed *scientia sacra*
- To learn how well his view on religion provides an answer to the essential question of what is religion

Schedule Of Instruction Tuesdays and Thursdays:

FALL TERM 2008 Schedule

Sep 4	Oct 2		
Sep 9 Sep 11	Oct 7 Oct 9	Nov 4	Nov 6
Exam Period			
Sep 16 Sep 18	Oct 14 Oct 16	Nov 11	Nov 13
December			
Sep 23 Sep 25	Oct 21 Oct 23	Nov 18	Nov 20
Sep 30	Oct 28 Oct 30	Nov 25	Nov 27

Assigned Term Work

There are no examinations in this course, either during the term or in the form of a final December exam. Instead you will be asked to compose a series of 3 short papers. You will also compile a lexicon as a final assignment.

During the term we will be reading and discussing the 21 essays found in the text *The Essential Seyyed Hossein Nasr*. This means that you will need to read approximately 2 essays each week of the term in advance of class.

The three short (not to exceed two-page) papers are due respectively on Sep 25, Oct 23, and Nov 20. Each one to respond to one of the following questions:

- (1) HOW CAN RELIGION BE DEALT WITH IN A MULTI-RELIGIOUS WORLD? or
HOW DOES THE TRADITIONALIST SCHOOL APPROACH RELIGION?
or
WHAT REASONS DOES NASR GIVE FOR THE IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION TO A SOLUTION FOR OUR ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS?

- (2) HOW DOES ISLAM'S DESCRIPTION OF GOD REFLECT THE TRADITIONALIST SCHOOL'S APPROACH? or
 WHY MUST THERE BE MULTIPLE PROPHETS FROM ISLAM'S VIEWPOINT? or
 WHAT IS MAN'S ROLE IN NATURE FOR ISLAM AND WHY? or
 WHO OR WHAT IS THE SOUL OR SELF? or
 HOW DOES THE FUNCTIONING OF THE HEART DEMONSTRATE THE UNITY OF RELIGIONS or
 WHAT ROLE DOES PHILOSOPHY PLAY IN THE CASE OF ISLAM AS A TRADITIONAL RELIGION? or
 WHAT CONTRIBUTIONS HAVE SUHRAWARDI AND MULLA SADRA MADE TO THE TRADITIONAL SCHOOL OF RELIGIONS? or
 HOW HAVE ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY AND ITS VIEW ON *WUJUD* AND *MAHIYYA* GUIDED ISLAM?
- (3) WHAT IS *SCIENTIA SACRA*? or
 WHAT DID THE RENAISSANCE AND HUMANISM DO TO THE TRADITIONALIST VIEW OF MAN? or
 WHAT IS FUNCTION OF THE DOCTRINE OF GOD AS REALITY IN TRADITIONALIST SCHOOL? or
 WHY IS ETERNITY ESSENTIAL TO THE TRADITIONALIST SCHOOL? or
 or
 WHAT IS TRADITIONAL ART? or
 WHY IS THE BODY SO IMPORTANT FOR THE TRADITIONAL SCHOOL? or
 WHY MUST CONSCIOUSNESS PRECEDE MATTER FOR THE TRADITIONAL SCHOOL?

The three short papers need to be tightly organized, compactly written, and forcefully articulated. Footnotes are not to be counted as part of the page limit allotted to the paper. Your paper should demonstrate your grasp of the issues and clearly depict the specifics for the reader.

The final paper is meant to function as a lexique. A lexique is a form of dictionary of technical and special terms especially descriptive of a specific topic. So a lexique is in one sense a dictionary, but it must also provide a thorough description of *scientia sacra* through its description of terms in order thereby to inform the reader through the citation and explanation of key terms regarding the meaning of these terms and the overall sense of *scientia sacra*. The paper should provide a first-time reader with the basic terminology that Nasr uses to explain his views.

Again the paper's length is to be computed without counting the footnotes.

Avoid the use of any web sources. The only exceptions are for library resources on the internet for downloading copies of published articles. Otherwise you must rely on books and articles available in the library or

through interlibrary loan. Given the brevity of this paper, it can not include quotations. Quotations if required ought to be included in the footnotes or endnotes.

This final paper is due on the final date for handing in term work in December. If you have verifiable problems in meeting the deadlines for the short papers, speak to me. If it concerns the deadline for the final paper, you will need to speak to the Registrar's Office for a deferral. Don't let things slip to the last minute!

In general a grade in the D range indicates that the writer has not understood the topic chosen, has done too little or no research to support the description of the topic, and has failed to offer any development of the topic from paragraph to paragraph. This paper may repeat thoughts again and again and may be filled with mechanical faults.

A grade in the C range can be achieved by a clear description of the topic chosen, but there is no development of the topic and it remains vague and uninteresting. This paper has insufficient supporting evidence and relies too much on personal opinion without defending the opinion.

A grade in the B range can be awarded when the writer demonstrates the topic's relevance to related and similar topics. This paper is well organized, has enough supporting evidence and is organized around one main idea. The writing in this paper is mechanically correct with few exceptions.

A grade in the A range will be given when the writer locates the topic for the reader within broader spheres of study. This is a paper that is lively and interesting; it has style and all its parts fit the topic.

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 "to use and pass off as one's own idea or product the work of another without expressly giving credit to another." This can include:

- Copying from another person's work without indicating this through appropriate use of quotation marks and footnote citations.
- Lengthy and close paraphrasing of another person's work (i.e. extensive copying interspersed with a few phrases or sentences of your own).
- Submitting written work produced by someone else as if it were your own work (e.g. another student's term paper, a paper purchased from a term paper "factory", materials or term papers downloaded from the Internet, etc.).
- Handing in "substantially the same piece of work to two or more courses without the prior written permission of the instructors...involved." (University Senate)

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 range from a mark of zero for the plagiarized work to a final grade of "F" for the course, and even suspension from all studies or expulsion from the University.

GRADING SYSTEM

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

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

F	Failure. No academic credit
WDN	Withdrawn from the course
ABS	Absent from the final examination
DEF	Official deferral (see "Petitions to Defer")
FND	"Failed, no Deferral" – assigned when the student is absent from the final exam and has failed the course on the basis of inadequate term work as specified in the course outline.

WITHDRAWAL WITHOUT ACADEMIC PENALTY

The last date to withdraw from Fall term courses is November 7th, 2008. Last day to withdraw from Fall/Winter (full year) and Winter term courses is March 6th, 2009.

REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

For Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must contact a coordinator at the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities to complete the necessary *Letters of Accommodation*. After registering with the PMC, make an appointment to meet and discuss your needs with me in order to make the necessary arrangements as early in the term as possible. Please note the deadline for submitting completed forms to the Paul Menton Centre is November 7th, 2008 (for fall/winter term courses) / March 6th 2009 (for winter term courses).

For Religious Obligations:

Students requesting academic accommodation on the basis of religious obligation should make a formal, written request to their instructors for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student.

Students or instructors who have questions or want to confirm accommodation eligibility of a religious event or practice may refer to the Equity Services website for a list of holy days and Carleton's Academic Accommodation policies, or may contact an Equity Services Advisor in the Equity Services Department for assistance. (613-520-5622)

For Pregnancy:

Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a *letter of accommodation*. The student must then make an appointment to discuss her needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.

PETITIONS TO DEFER

Students unable to complete a **final** term paper or write a **final** examination because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control or whose performance on an examination has been impaired by such circumstances may apply in writing within five working days to the Registrar's Office for permission to extend a term paper deadline or to write a deferred examination. The request must be fully and specifically supported by a medical certificate or other relevant documentation. Only deferral petitions submitted to the Registrar's Office will be considered.

ADDRESSES

College of the Humanities 520-2809	300 Paterson
Classics and 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	500 Unicentre
Writing Tutorial Service 520-6632	4 th floor Library