ANTH 1737 Special Topics in Cultural Anthropology
Anthropology of Islam

David W. Montgomery, Ph.D.
Spring 2012

Course Meetings: Mondays & Wednesdays, 3:00 – 4:15
Location: 1700 W.W. Posvar Hall

Office Hours: Tuesdays 10:00-12:00 & by appointment
Office Address: 3113 W.W. Posvar Hall

Email Address: dwm@pitt.edu
Office Telephone: 412.624.3243

Course Description:
Islam has had a profound influence on a broad array of nations, ethnic groups and local expressions of culture. It has played a role in shaping societies, politics, economics, and law. Taking a broad, anthropological perspective on the study of religion, this course examines the many different ways in which culture and society have been influenced by Islam in different parts of the world. The objective of this course is to move beyond simplistic stereotypes in order to appreciate the lived complexities of Islam and the utility of anthropology for understanding Islam.

There are no pre-requisites for this course.

Office Hours:
In addition to the regularly scheduled office hours, I will be available by appointment.

Readings:
You are expected to undertake the readings for each session and encouraged (though not required) to prepare an outline of the material contained in the readings in a way that aids you in gaining an understanding of the topic. All readings are available on CourseWeb.

Required Texts:

*** (one of the following; come to class before purchasing) ***

Recommended Texts:

GRADUATE STUDENTS


Optional Texts:
These books are not required for purchase, but any of the below may be useful background / introductions for those less familiar with Islam.


Grades:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Islam in Contemporary Events paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short ethnographic paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final project paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
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Course Requirements and Evaluation:
1. Participation:
   Given the seminar nature of the course, regular attendance and active and appropriate participation in the class by every student is imperative. Attendance is expected and absences will adversely affect your class participation grade, which constitutes 30% of your grade.

   Participation will be evaluated by:
   - Attendance
   - Class discussion
   - Engagement with the material
   - Group contributions

   Each student will be responsible for presenting a 1-2 page overview/discussion of the readings for one of the class periods. This summary should focus on the major issues addressed by the readings. It should be posted on CourseWeb by **6:00 PM, TWO DAYS BEFORE** the class for that particular set of readings. The remaining class members are expected to respond weekly to the readings—though this can be in a more succinct fashion—raising additional issues for discussion by **8:00 AM the day of class** for which it is due (usually on Wednesdays). Students will select the readings they want to review during the second week of class.
Note: Late postings will receive, at best, only partial credit. Furthermore, single lines of commentary (e.g. “the readings made me think of this post which you guys might find interesting”) or off-hand remarks (e.g. “wow, that’s cool.”) will not count towards your participation score. Any commentary that shows some reflection, insight, or poses interesting questions will count, no matter how brief.

2. Islam in Contemporary Events:
Islam is in the news daily, yet much of what is reported fails to take an anthropological perspective into consideration. Each student is expected to write a 3 page analysis on Islam in the news/contemporary events, contextualizing the significance of the event and the anthropological contribution to understanding it. Furthermore, the student will give a short in-class presentation on the paper. This will comprise 20% of your grade.

3. Ethnographic Paper:
One argument made in the course is that Islam is anthropologically most rich in its lived setting. Books help us understand events, but the experience itself is of significant importance. As such, each student is expected to visit a local Islamic environment. This could be a mosque, regular Muslim meeting group, or social activity where Muslim identity plays a defining role. The student is to go as an ethnographic observer and write a 3-4 page ethnographic piece focusing on a particular aspect of the experience. This piece should engage with the material discussed in class and be both descriptive and analytical. It will comprise 20% of your grade.

4. Final Project:
Each student will produce a final project that explores, from an anthropological perspective, an issue in/aspect of Islam of the student’s choosing. There will be three components of this project:
   b. A 10-minute presentation to the class about the project.
   c. A final paper of 10 pages. This will be 30% of your grade.
A portion of the final paper should connect the research to a theme developed/touched upon in class and/or the readings.

NOTE: All written work must be submitted electronically via “Turnitin.” Hard copies are to be handed in as well. Failure to do both will result in your grade being lowered by a letter. Also, currently, no quizzes or exams are scheduled. This may change on short notice if it appears that students are not keeping up with the work.

Student Conduct:
At all times students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the norms of the University of Pittsburgh’s academic standards. This includes responding and behaving respectfully and civilly to all in the class. Students are expected to follow all formal university policies. In addition, by the act of submitting individual work for evaluation, students assert that the work is their own. Neither plagiarism nor dishonesty will be tolerated. With this publication students are on notice, both actual and constructive, that all University policies apply to every component of this course, including but not limited to those relating to academic misconduct.

Furthermore, although computers can be used for note-taking purposes, web surfing, emailing, chatting, texting and other forms of communication that distract from participation in the class will not be tolerated. Students who do this will be asked to leave the class.
Academic Integrity
All students are expected to adhere to the standards of academic honesty. Any work submitted by a student must represent his/her own intellectual contribution and efforts. Any student found to be engaged in cheating, plagiarism, or any other acts of academic dishonesty will be subject to a failing grade in the assignment and/or the course and to further disciplinary action.

Special Accommodations
If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting accommodations, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and Disability Resources and Services at www.drs.pitt.edu or call 648-7890 or 412-383-7355 (TTY) as early as possible in the term. The DRS office is located in 140 William Pitt Union.

Schedule:

(Week 1)
W—4 Jan Introduction and Overview of Islam in Practice
Readings:
Harper’s Index Islam
President Obama’s speech at Cairo University

(Week 2)
M—9 Jan Overview of Islam in Practice
Readings:
Film: PBS Frontline: Muslims

Exploring an Anthropology of Islam

W—11 Jan Classical Anthropology on Islam
Readings:

(Week 3)
M—16 Jan No class; holiday schedule
W—18 Jan Classical Anthropology on Islam
Readings:
(Week 4)
M—23 Jan  Ethnographies of Islam
Readings:
Film:  *An Oral History of Islam in Pittsburgh*

W—25 Jan  Critiquing an Anthropology of Islam
Readings:

(Week 5)
M—30 Jan  Islam in Pittsburgh
Visit, The Islamic Center of Pittsburgh

Islamic Variations and Ethnographic Encounters

W—1 Feb  Sunnis and Shi'ites
Readings:

(Week 6)
M—6 Feb  Sufis
Readings:

Film: Habiba: A Sufi Saint from Uzbekistan

W—8 Feb Pilgrimage, Missionaries, and Conversion
Readings:

### Ways of Learning Islam

(Week 7)
M—13 Feb Gender
Readings:

Film: (Un)Veiled: Muslim Women Talk About Hijab

W—15 Feb Gender, Sex, and Family
Readings:

(Week 8)
M—20 Feb Rituals and What Muslims Do
Readings:


**Ethnographic Paper DUE**

**W—22 Feb**    Learning Islam
Readings:


(Week 9)

**M—27 Feb**    Learning Islam
Readings:


**Islam in the Everyday: Negotiating Muslimness**

**W—29 Feb**    Negotiating Muslimness
Readings:


(Week 10)
M—12 Mar  Negotiating Muslimness
Readings:
Film: New Muslim Cool

W—14 Mar  Negotiating Muslimness *Proposal for Final Project DUE*
Readings:

(Week 11)
M—19 Mar  Globalization, Modernity, and Tradition
Readings:

Islamic Groups, Islamic Movements, and the State

W—21 Mar  Islamic Groups and Islamic Movements
Readings:

(Week 12)
M—26 Mar  Islam in Politics and the Politics of Islam
Readings:


W—28 Mar Islam, Ethics, Politics, and Anthropology

Readings:


*(Week 13)*

M—2 Apr Secular and Islamic States

Readings:


*Case Study: Afghanistan and Surroundings*

W—4 Apr Afghanistan and Surroundings

Readings:

- [NOTE: select one of the following books to read with group]

Film: Kabul Transit

*(Week 14)*

M—9 Apr Afghanistan and surroundings

Readings:


Class Presentations

W—11 Apr Class presentations

(Week 15)

M—16 Apr Class presentations, continued

Summary

W—18 Apr Summary, Wrap Up **FINAL PAPER DUE**