

University of Florida, Department of Religion

## ***Islam in Africa***

Spring 2019

AFS 4935 & AFS 6905

REL 3371

### **Meeting & Location**

M 8-9 (15:00-15:50 & 16:00-16:55) & W 8 (15:00-15:50) in Anderson Hall 32

### **Instructor**

Benedikt Pontzen | 472 A Grinter Hall (by appointment only) | [bpontzen@ufl.edu](mailto:bpontzen@ufl.edu)

### **Course Description**

This course provides a comparative and historical overview of Islam and Muslim societies in their diversity in sub-Saharan Africa. The course will begin with an overview of recent academic debates on how to study these societies and Islam in their diversity. Thereafter, we will dip into the long history of Islam in Africa by highlighting some central historical features and trajectories of Muslim presence in Africa. The main part of the course will focus on contemporary Africa. In this part, we will acquire an overview of the central topics in the study of Islam in Africa, including Sufism and reform, Islam and politics, Islam and public spheres, religious encounters, gender and sexuality, etc. The second part will mainly build on studies of everyday Islam, i.e. Islam as lived by its adherents. In the concluding sessions, we will reflect on how to overcome the prevailing separation between the so-called Muslim world and Africa and ask for how to think the latter as part of the former and vice versa.

### **Course Objectives**

By the end of this course, the students should have an:

- overall acquaintance with current academic takes on Islam in Africa;
- overview of the major historical trends and trajectories of Islam in Africa;
- insight into the diversity of Islam and Muslim societies in Africa;
- awareness of how Islam is entangled with everything else and vice versa;
- understanding of religious encounters of Muslims and others in Africa;

- idea of the main currents in contemporary Islam in Africa.

### **Course Requirements and Grading Criteria**

The final grade will be determined by:

- attendance (10%);
- active participation and presentation in class (15%);
- 3 response papers to selected readings (25% for each).

Active participation and in-class presentations: Students are expected to attend all classes and to participate actively in class discussions. Active and informed participation requires that students do the assigned readings with care and before coming to class. In-class presentations include short presentations (up to 10 minutes) on a selected topic/reading, presentations of response papers, and acting as discussant for the presentations of others.

The response papers (1,000 – 1,500 words each): The response papers address the key issues as well as theoretical and methodological questions raised by the readings, lectures, and class discussions. The students write these papers to critically engage in depth with their readings and the discussions in class. This requires a close reading, attentive and active presence in class, and a careful articulation of one's informed and analytically nuanced position. The more you engage with the classes and readings and the more time you devote to a careful writing, the more likely you are to receive a high mark. The papers' format is 12pp and 1.5 spaced. Papers are due at the set dates.

### **Course Requirements and Grading Criteria – Graduates**

The final grade will be determined by:

- attendance (10%);
- active participation and presentation in class (15%);
- 3 response papers (15% each);
- 3 additional assignments (10% each).

Graduate students will fulfill the requirements listed above – the three response papers included. In addition to that, they will have three other assignments: 1) give an in-class presentation of a selected monograph; 2) write a review of another selected monograph; 3) meet with the instructor in person to discuss the readings and assignments.

In-class presentation of the selected monograph: Students give a fifteen minutes exposé of a selected reading. In their presentation, they will summarize the book, highlight its strengths and weaknesses, and relate it to the classes' discussions and readings.

The review: A review is not a synopsis, it should critically evaluate the text and give an argued opinion on it, highlighting its strengths and merits as well as its weaknesses and shortcomings. The format is as for the response papers but about 2,000 words in length.

Meetings with the instructor: We will meet at least two times during the term for half an hour to discuss your assignments and questions.

### **Method of Evaluation**

Final grades will be computed on this scale:

<b>A</b>	<b>A-</b>	<b>B+</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>B-</b>	<b>C+</b>
95-100%	91-94%	87-90%	83-86%	79-82%	75-78%

<b>C</b>	<b>C-</b>	<b>D+</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>D-</b>	<b>F</b>
71-74%	67-70%	63-66%	59-62%	55-58%	Below 55%

### **Make-Ups and Attendance**

Make-up exams will be allowed in unavoidable circumstances only; you need to provide compelling reasons and the required documentation. Absence(s) in class will detract points unless you provide documentation or compelling reasons to miss a session.

### **Disabilities**

If you are a student with a disability and would like to request disability-related accommodation, you are encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Center as early as possible. You do not have to disclose anything to me unless you wish to do so. You can find the Disability Resource Center in Reid Hall: <https://drc.dso.ufl.edu/> or call them at (352) 392-8565.

### **Student Honor Code**

As a UF student, you have agreed to adhere to the UF Student Honor Code and the UF Student Conduct Code: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>. It is your responsibility to acquaint yourselves with these and to adhere to them.

## ***Syllabus and Readings***

Mandatory readings for all are marked with a \*, additional readings for graduates are marked with a †. The syllabus includes two buffer slots that will be used to allow more time for discussion or background information when required. The dates of the later classes will change accordingly!

### ***Introduction. Studying Islam in Africa***

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#### **Week 1, Mo, Jan 07 | *Presentation of the Course and Initial Discussion with the Students***

#### **Week 1, We, Jan 09 | *Studying Islam in Africa***

- †Hanretta, Sean. "Muslim Histories, African Societies. The Venture of Islamic Studies in Africa." *Journal of African History* 46, no. 3 (2005): 479–91.
- \*Janson, Marloes. "Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa." In *The Palgrave Handbook of African Colonial and Postcolonial History. Volume 2*, edited by Martin S. Shanguhya and Toyin Falola, 951–77. London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2018.
- \*Reese, Scott. "Islam in Africa/Africans and Islam." *The Journal of African History* 55, no. 1 (2014): 17–26.
- †Soares, Benjamin. "The Historiography of Islam in West Africa. An Anthropologist's View." *Journal of African History* 55, no. 1 (2014): 27–36.

#### **Week 2, Mo, Jan 14 | *Studying Islam***

- \*Ahmed, Shahab. *What Is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016. [Selected readings]
- \*Asad, Talal. "The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam." The Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University. Occasional Paper Series, Washington, DC, 1986.
- †Eickelman, Dale. "The Study of Islam in Local Context." *Contributions to Asian Studies* 16 (1982): 1–16.
- \*Tapper, Richard. "'Islamic Anthropology' and the 'Anthropology of Islam.'" *Anthropological Quarterly* 68, no. 3 (1995): 185–93.
- †Voll, John O. "Islam as a Special World System." *Journal of World History* 5, no. 2 (1994): 213–26.

#### **Week 2, We, Jan 16 | *Studying Africa***

- \*†Mudimbe, Valentin. *The Invention of Africa*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1988. [Selected readings]

- \*Wainaina, Binyavanga. "How Not to Write about Africa in 2012. A Beginner's Guide." *The Guardian*, 3 June 2012 (2012).  
<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/jun/03/how-not-to-write-about-africa>.
- \*———. "How to Write about Africa." *Granta* 92 (2005). <http://granta.com/how-to-write-about-africa/>.

**Week 3, Mo, Jan 21 | *Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; No Classes***

**Week 3, We, Jan 23 | *"African Islam" and Islam in Africa***

- †Loimeier, Roman. *Muslim Societies in Africa. A Historical Anthropology*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013. [Chapter 1: 1–34]
- \*Saul, Mahir. "Islam and West African Anthropology." *Africa Today* 53, no. 1 (2006): 3–33.
- \*Seesemann, Rüdiger. "African Islam or Islam in Africa. Evidence from Kenya." In *The Global World of the Swahili. Interfaces of Islam, Identity and Space in 19th and 20th Century East Africa*, edited by Roman Loimeier and Rüdiger Seesemann, 229–50. Berlin: LIT, 2006.
- †Soares, Benjamin. "Notes on the Anthropological Study of Islam and Muslim Societies in Africa." *Culture and Religion* 1, no. 2 (2000): 277–85.

<p><b><i>First response paper due Fr, Jan 25, by the latest: "Studying Islam in Africa"</i></b></p>
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***Part 1. Histories of Islam in Africa***

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**Week 4, Mo, Jan 28 | *The Spread of Muslims in Africa***

- \*†Levtzion, Nehemia, and Randal L. Pouwels, eds. *The History of Islam in Africa*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2000. [Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2: 1–59]
- \*†Loimeier, Roman. *Muslim Societies in Africa. A Historical Anthropology*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013. [Chapter 2: 35–53]

**Week 4, We, Jan 30 | *Royalty, Slavery, and Trade***

- \*Battuta, Ibn. *Ibn Battuta in Black Africa*. Edited by Said Hamdun and Noel King. Wiener, 1994. [Selected readings]

- †Loimeier, Roman. *Muslim Societies in Africa. A Historical Anthropology*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013. [Chapter 4: 77–107]
- †Lovejoy, Paul. “The Role of the Wangara in the Economic Transformation of the Central Sudan in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries.” *Journal of African History* 19, no. 2 (1978): 173–93.
- \*Ware, Rudolph T. “Slavery in Islamic Africa, 1400–1800.” In *The Cambridge World History of Slavery. Volume 3. AD 1420–AD 1804*, edited by David Eltis and Stanley L. Engerman, 47–80. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

### **Week 5, Mo, Feb 04 | Jihād and Renewal**

- \*Levtzion, Nehemia, and Randal L. Pouwels, eds. *The History of Islam in Africa*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2000. [Chapter 6: 131–152]
- †Loimeier, Roman. *Muslim Societies in Africa. A Historical Anthropology*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013. [Chapter 5: 108–134]
- \*†Lovejoy, Paul. *Jihād in West Africa during the Age of Revolutions*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2016. [Chapter 3: 68–101]

### **Week 5, We, Feb 06 | Colonial Occupation**

- \*†Levtzion, Nehemia, and Randal L. Pouwels, eds. *The History of Islam in Africa*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2000. [Chapter 8: 169–188]
- \*†Loimeier, Roman. *Muslim Societies in Africa. A Historical Anthropology*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013. [Chapter 12: 267–294]

***Second response paper due Fr, Feb 08, by the latest: “Histories of Islam in Africa”***

## ***Part 2. Islam in Africa. Central Topics***

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### **Week 6, Mo, Feb 11 | Sufis and Saints**

- †Bang, Anne K. *Islamic Sufi Networks in the Western Indian Ocean (c. 1880–1940). Ripples of Reform*. Leiden: Brill, 2014. [Selected readings]
- \*Brenner, Louis. “Sufism in Africa.” In *African Spirituality. Forms, Meanings, and Expressions*, 324–49. New York: The Crossroad Publishing, 2000.
- \*Levtzion, Nehemia, and Randal L. Pouwels, eds. *The History of Islam in Africa*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2000. [Chapter 20: 441–476]
- \*Seesemann, Rüdiger. “Sufism in West Africa.” *Religion Compass* 4, no. 10 (2010): 606–14.

†Soares, Benjamin. "The Prayer Economy in a Malian Town." *Cahiers d'études africaines* 36, no. 144 (1996): 739–53.

**Week 6, We, Feb 13 | *Sufis and Saints Continued***

**Week 7, Mo, Feb 18 | *Reform***

†Kresse, Kai. "'Swahili Enlightenment'? East African Reformist Discourse at the Turning Point. The Example of Sheikh Muhammad Kasim Mazuru." *Journal of Religion in Africa* 33, no. 3 (2003): 279–309.

\*Østebø, Terje. "African Salafism. Religious Purity and the Politicization of Purity." *Islamic Africa* 6 (2015): 1–29.

\*Thurston, Alexander. "Nigeria's Mainstream Salafis between Boko Haram and the State." *Islamic Africa* 6, no. 1–2 (2015): 109–35.

**Week 7, We, Feb 20 | *Reform Continued***

**Week 8, Mo, Feb 25 | *Religious Encounters***

\*Fabian, Johannes. "Religious Pluralism. An Ethnographic Approach." In *Theoretical Explorations in African Religion*, edited by Wim van Binsbergen and Matthew Schoffeleers, 138–63. London: KPI, 1985.

†Janson, Marloes. "Unity through Diversity. A Case Study of Chrislam in Lagos." *Africa* 86, no. 4 (2016): 646–72.

\*Janson, Marloes, and Birgit Meyer. "Introduction. Towards a Framework for the Study of Christian–Muslim Encounters in Africa." *Africa* 86, no. 4 (2016): 615–19.

†Nolte, Insa, Rebecca Jones, Khadijeh Taiyari, and Giovanni Occhiali. "Research Note. Exploring Survey Data for Historical and Anthropological Research. Muslim-Christian Relations in South-West Nigeria." *African Affairs* 115, no. 460 (2016): 541–61.

\*Soares, Benjamin. "Reflections on Muslim–Christian Encounters in West Africa." *Africa* 86, no. 4 (2016): 673–97.

**Week 8, We, Feb 27 | *Religious Encounters Continued***

**Week 9, Mo, March 04 | *Spring Break, No Classes***

**Week 9, We, March 06 | *Spring Break, No Classes***

**Week 10, Mo, March 11 | *Living Islam***

- †Janson, Marloes. "Living Islam through Death. Demarcating Muslim Identity in a Rural Serahuli Community in the Gambia." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 17 (2011): 100–115.
- \*Marsden, Magnus. *Living Islam. Muslim Religious Experience in Pakistan's North-West Frontier*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. [Selected readings]
- \*Schielke, Samuli, and Liza Debevec, eds. *Ordinary Lives and Grand Schemes. An Anthropology of Everyday Religion*. New York: Berghahn, 2012. [Introduction: 1–16]
- †Soares, Benjamin, and Filippo Osella. "Islam, Politics, Anthropology." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute Special Issue* (2009): S1–S23.

**Week 10, We, March 13 | *Living Religion***

- \*Lambek, Michael. "The Anthropology of Religion and the Quarrel between Poetry and Philosophy." *Current Anthropology* 41, no. 3 (2000): 309–20.
- †Meyer, Birgit, and Dick Houtman. "Introduction. Material Religion – How Things Matter." In *Things. Religion and the Question of Materiality*, edited by Dick Houtman and Birgit Meyer, 1–23. New York: Fordham University Press, 2012.
- \*Orsi, Robert. "Afterword. Everyday Religion and the Contemporary World. The Un-Modern, or What Was Supposed to Have Disappeared but Did Not." In *Ordinary Lives and Grand Schemes. An Anthropology of Everyday Religion*, edited by Samuli Schielke and Liza Debevec, 146–61. New York: Berghahn, 2012.
- \*— ——. "Is the Study of Lived Religion Irrelevant to the World We Live In?" *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 42, no. 2 (2003): 169–74.

**Week 11, Mo, March 18 | *Islamic Publics and the Islamic Sphere***

- †Eickelman, Dale, and Armando Salvatore. "The Public Sphere and Muslim Identities." *Archives of European Sociology* 43, no. 1 (2002): 92–115.
- †Larkin, Brian. "Binary Islam. Religious Movements in Nigeria." In *New Media and Religious Transformations in Africa*, edited by Rosalind I.J. Hackett and Benjamin Soares, 63–81. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2014.
- \*Launay, Robert, and Benjamin Soares. "The Formation of an 'Islamic Sphere' in French Colonial West Africa." *Economy and Society* 28, no. 4 (1999): 497–519.
- \*Meyer, Birgit, and Annelies Moors. 2006. "Introduction." In *Religion, Media, and the Public Sphere*, edited by Birgit Meyer and Annelies Moors, 1–25. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.



†Schulz, Dorothea. "Promises of (Im)Mediate Salvation. Islam, Broadcast Media, and the Remaking of Religious Experience in Mali." *American Ethnologist* 33, no. 2 (2006): 210–29.

### **Week 11, We, March 20 | *Islamic Learning and Education***

- \*Brenner, Louis. "The Transformation of Muslim Schooling in Mali. The Madrasa as an Institution of Social and Religious Mediation." In *Schooling Islam. The Culture and Politics of Modern Muslim Education*, edited by Robert W. Hefner and Muhammad Qasim Zaman, 199–223. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007.
- \*Hoechner, Hannah. "Porridge, Piety and Patience. Young Qur'anic Students' Experiences of Poverty in Kano, Nigeria." *Africa* 85, no. 2 (2015): 269–88.
- \*Launay, Robert. "Introduction. Writing Boards and Blackboards." In *Islamic Education in Africa. Writing Boards and Blackboards*, edited by Robert Launay, 1–26. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2016.
- †Ware, Rudolph T. *The Walking Qur'an. Islamic Education, Embodied Knowledge, and History in West Africa*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014. [Selected readings]

### **Week 12, Mo, March 25 | *Islam and the State***

- \*Kresse, Kai. "Muslim Politics in Postcolonial Kenya. Negotiating Knowledge on the Double Periphery." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* Special Issue (2009): S76–S94.
- †Salomon, Noah. *For Love of the Prophet. An Ethnography of Sudan's Islamic State*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016. [Selected readings]
- \*Soares, Benjamin, and Filippo Osella. "Islam, Politics, Anthropology." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* Special Issue (2009): S1–S23.

### **Week 12, We, March 27 | *Islamic Aesthetics***

- \*Bourgeois, Jean-Louis. "The History of the Great Mosque of Djenné." *African Arts* 20, no. 3 (1987): 54–63 & 90–92.
- \*†Larkin, Brian. *Signal and Noise. Media, Infrastructure, and Urban Culture in Nigeria*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008. [Selected readings]

### **Week 13, Mo, April 01 | *Gender***

- \*Frede, Britta, and Joseph Hill. "Introduction. En-Gendering Islamic Authority in West Africa." *Islamic Africa* 5, no. 2 (2014): 131–65.

- †Janson, Marloes. "Male Wives and Female Husbands. Reconfiguring Gender in the Tablighi Jama'at in The Gambia." *Journal of Religion in Africa* 46, no. 2–3 (2016): 187–218.
- †Hill, Joseph. *Wrapping Authority. Women Islamic Leaders in a Sufi Movement in Dakar, Senegal*. Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2018.
- \*Schulz, Dorothea, and Marloes Janson. "Introduction. Religion and Masculinities in Africa." *Journal of Religion in Africa* 46, no. 2–3 (2016): 121–28.

### **Week 13, We, April 03 | Material Culture**

- \*Graw, Knut. "Beyond Expertise. Reflections on Specialist Agency and the Autonomy of the Divinatory Ritual Process." *Africa* 79, no. 1 (2009): 92–109.
- \*Ngom, Fallou, and Mustapha H. Kurfi. "'Ajamization of Islam in Africa.'" *Islamic Africa* 8, no. 1–2 (2017): 1–12.
- \*Wiley, Katherine. "Fashioning People, Crafting Networks. Multiple Meanings in the Mauritanian Veil (Malahfa)." In *African Dress. Fashion, Agency, Performance*, edited by Karen T. Hansen and D. Soyini Madison, 77–91. London: Bloomsbury, 2013.

***Third response paper due Fr, April 05, by the latest: "Islam in Africa. A Selected Topic"***

## ***Conclusion. Studying Islam in Africa***

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### **Week 14, Mo, April 08 | Islam in Africa. Connections and Relations**

- †Bachir Diagne, Souleymane. *The Ink of the Scholars. Reflections on Philosophy in Africa*. Dakar: CODESRIA, 2016. [Selected readings]
- \*———. "Toward an Intellectual History of West Africa. The Meaning of Timbuktu." In *The Meanings of Timbuktu*, edited by Shamil Jeppie and Souleymane Bachir Diagne, 19–27. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council, 2008.
- \*Kane, Ousmane O. *Beyond Timbuktu. An Intellectual History of Muslim West Africa*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016. [Selected readings]

### **Week 14, We, April 10 | Africa as Part of the "Muslim World"**

- †Bachir Diagne, Souleymane. *Open to Reason. Muslim Philosophers in Conversation with the Western Tradition*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2018. [Selected readings]
- \*Bang, Anne K. "Islam in the Swahili World. Connected Authorities." In *The Swahili World*, edited by Stephanie Wynne-Jones and Adria LaViolette, 557–65. Abingdon: Routledge, 2017.

†Loimeier, Roman. *Muslim Societies in Africa. A Historical Anthropology*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013. [Chapter 3: 54-76]

\*Lydon, Ghislaine. "Saharan Oceans and Bridges, Barriers and Divide's in Africa's Historiographical Landscape." *The Journal of African History* 56, no. 1 (2015): 3–22.

**Week 15, Mo, April 22 | *Wrap Up***

**Week 15, We, April 24 | *Individual Consultations with Instructor***