

REL 3938 (Section 1G09): Islam and Nature Fall 2017

T 7 (1:55-2:45); R 7-8 (1:55-3:50)

Class location: T: AND 32; R: FLI 109

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Office hours: T 2:50- 3:50 ; R 3:55- 4:55

Description

This course provides the opportunity to explore the dynamics between Islam and nature, the ways in which the “greening of religion” has manifested in the Muslim world, and environmental interpretations of Islam- both in the real world and in the theoretical sphere. This course will take a broad look at this subject, focusing on different themes every week to cultivate a wide-ranging and comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted and interconnected aspects of Islam and Nature.

This interdisciplinary course will be primarily reading-based with weekly short writing assignments and a final paper. During this semester students will have the opportunity to hone critical thinking skills, improve their writing skills and practice public presentation.

It is expected that students remain objective and open-minded – many ideas discussed in this course may be new or unconventional. Students are, however, encouraged to contribute their experience and opinions to add to the critical analysis and enrichment of the entire class.

Topics and Organization

1. Background: The Greening of Religion Hypothesis, Lynn White and the other Abrahamic religions.

- To provide context for the course we will explore the roots of the Religion and Nature/ Religion and Ecology fields. We will briefly touch upon the ways that both Christianity and Judaism have dealt with questions of anthropogenic climate change and environmental degradation. Depending on the needs of the students we may also review the basic tenets of Islam and relevant terms.

2. Theory: What is Green about Islam?

- Using a variety of different scholars we will examine the diverse approaches to the topic of Islam and nature, we will explore different interpretations, ethical systems, and approaches to the question of if and how Islam is or can be an religion which lives in harmony with its environment.

3. IRL: How do these ideas and beliefs actualize in the Muslim world?

- Finally we will explore how the theoretical translates to the everyday, this will be achieved both with examples, woven throughout the course and in the regional case studies which will dominate the last third of our semester. The goal of this aspect of the course will be to both enliven the drier material and to translate ideas into reality, showing how this subject can be brought to bear on the current environmental crisis we now find ourselves in.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students will understand and be able to articulate the historical and theoretical basis for the connections between religion and nature generally.
2. Students will gain insight into the ways that religion and specifically Islam connects to the way that we perceive our environment and shapes the way in which we interact with it, both individually and in our greater communities.
3. Students will explore the connection between Islam and nature through a broad range of topics and will be able to detect the interconnected nature of Islam, the natural, and built environments. They will be able to evaluate the role and effectiveness of a broad range of methods, theories, perspectives, and frameworks relating to Islamic interactions with nature and environmental action.
5. Students will participate in discussions and will be able to synthesize what they have read, compare it to personal experience or other sources so that they may form and articulate their analysis and understandings both verbally and through their writing.
6. Students will learn to approach concrete problems, including the case studies addressed in course readings and discussions, in a holistic manner that benefits from interdisciplinary knowledge, systems thinking, and broad stakeholder engagement.

Course Requirements and Assignments

1. Participation and attendance (15% of final grade).
Attendance and participation: Active participation in class discussions and during paper presentation- participation from all students will be expected in every class. Attendance will be taken everyday, half a letter grade will be subtracted for every three unexcused absences, and an absence must be excused by a doctor's note or through verified, unavoidable circumstances.
2. Weekly Reading Responses (20% of final grade).
Students will reflect on each weeks reading and will connect this reading to their life experience, to other related topics, or to the lecture. These reading reflections will be submitted before class every Thursday from the second week until the twelfth week of the semester with the opportunity to make up or get extra credit in the thirteenth week. Each reflection will be roughly 350 words and will demonstrate an understanding of **all** the weeks readings.
3. Two hour exams (20% each of final grade; 40% total)
4. Final paper (25% total)
Students will be expected to pick a topic of interest related to Islam and nature, either a theme covered in lecture, or in readings, or an approved alternative topic of interest. Students will be expected to demonstrate an in-depth understanding of their topic and whenever possible make

connections to other aspects of the class. This paper should include a thesis statement, make an argument, and should be 2000-2500 words in length.

- Paper proposal- abstract style explanation of your proposed paper (2.5% of grade)
- Rough Draft - students will bring in a hard copy and peer edit a full length rough draft for their classmates (2.5% of grade)
- Final paper- final paper turned in on Canvas and which will be summarized in 8-10 minutes presentations in front of the class. (20% of grade)

*Consistent with Gordon Rule standards, the instructor will evaluate and provide feedback on the student's written assignments with respect to grammar, punctuation, usage of standard written English, clarity, coherence, and organization. (See below for grading rubric)

Gordon Rule –

This course counts for Gordon Rule 4 credit.

Course grades now have two components. To receive writing credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course.

Students will produce weekly, short writing assignments and a final paper project (8-10 pages double-spaced, 2000-2500 words each).

The instructor will evaluate and provide feedback on the student's written assignments with respect to grammar, punctuation, usage of standard written English, clarity, coherence, and organization. Students will receive a grade and corrections on their work. A published rubric will be used and distributed before the midterm.

Grading Policies and Scale

Full information about UF's grading policy, including credit for major, minor, General Education, and other requirements, is available at this website:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

The grade scale for this course is as follows:

A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C-	70-73
D+	67-69
D	64-66
D-	60-63
E	Below 60

Please note that a C- is not a qualifying grade for major, minor, General Education, Gordon Rule, or College Basic distribution credit. To achieve such credit you must achieve a C or better in this class. <http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>

Policies, Rules, and Resources

1. **Handing in Assignments:** Unless collected in class, place all papers in my mailbox in the Religion Department, 107 Anderson Hall. Please keep a dated electronic copy of all your papers, including the reflections submitted on canvas.
2. **Late or Make-Up Assignments:** You may take an exam early or receive an extension on an essay assignment only in extraordinary circumstances and with prior approval from the instructor. If an extension is not granted, the assignment will be marked down 1/3 grade (e.g., from B+ to B) for each day late.
3. **Completion of All Assignments:** You are responsible for knowing the course requirements and making sure you hand them in. The instructor is not responsible for reminding you of missing assignments.
4. **Communication:** Students must communicate any problems or concerns as they arise, not after a negative effect is seen on their grade and not at the end of the semester.
5. **Attendance and Participation:** Class attendance is required. Students should arrive **on time** and prepared to discuss the day's readings. After the first late arrival, the instructor reserves the right to mark you absent after 5 minutes, without an excused absence. The instructor will not provide notes or discuss material that has already been covered for students who arrive late, barring extraordinary circumstances.
5. **Common Courtesy:** Cell phones must be turned off during class, students who receive or make calls or text messages during class will be asked to leave and counted absent for the day. The instructor reserves the right to ask you to turn off the computer if circumstances warrant, students who use computers for purposes other than note taking will forgo their right to use their computer in class. The instructor also reserves the right to ask any student engaging in disruptive behavior to leave the class. If that occurs, the student will be marked absent for the day.
6. **Honor Code:** On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The university specifically prohibits cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation, bribery, conspiracy, and fabrication. For more information about the definition of these terms and other aspects of the Honesty Guidelines, see <http://www.chem.ufl.edu/~itl/honor.html>. Any student(s) demonstrated to have cheated, plagiarized, or otherwise violated the Honor Code in any assignment for this course will fail the course. In addition, violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines shall result in judicial action and the sanctions listed in paragraph XI of the Student Conduct Code.
7. **Accommodation for Disabilities:** Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide

documentation to the student, who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

8. Counseling Resources: Resources available on-campus for students include the following:

- a. University Counseling Center, 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575, personal and career counseling;
- b. Student Mental Health, Student Health Care Center, 392-1171, personal counseling;
- c. Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161, sexual counseling;
- d. Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601, career development assistance and counseling.

9. Software Use: All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.

10. Writing Assistance: In addition to scheduling time with the instructor, students are highly encouraged to seek assistance from the University Reading and Writing Center (<http://www.at.ufl.edu/rwcenter/index.html>). For additional assistance, I recommend Joshua Sowin's "A Guide to Writing Well" (<http://www.fireandknowledge.org/archives/2007/01/08/a-guide-to-writing-well/>). The University of Wisconsin-Madison Writing Center is also a valuable resource, especially for basic citation information: (<http://www.writing.wisc.edu/>).

Required Readings

PLEASE NOTE: All readings will be available online on Canvas unless otherwise noted.

Schedule

** PLEASE NOTE: There may be changes in dates and assignments as the semester proceeds. Students will be informed of any changes and will be responsible for having assignments completed by the updated due dates.

Week	Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment due
Week 1	22-Aug	Introductions		
	24-Aug	Lynn White/ greening of religion		
Week 2	29-Aug	Other Abrahamic religions	Taylor--introduction to ERN	
	31-Aug	Other Abrahamic religions (Christianity and Judaism)	Hesse land Ruether--Christianity and Ecology Introduction, Wensveen--Christianity Theology & Ecology, Tirosh-Samuelson--Judaism	Reading Response 1
Week 3	5-Sep	Review of Islam	Esposito-- Introduction and Chapter 1	
	7-Sep	Review of Islam-	Foltz--Islam	Reading Response 2
Week 4	12-Sep	Scriptures: Quran	Ozdemir-- Understanding Environmental Ethics Qur'an perspective	
	14-Sep	Scriptures: Sunna	Ozdemir--Muhammad The Prophet Of Islam	Reading Response 3
Week 5	19-Sep	Environmental Ethics	Khalid --Islam and the Environment Ethics and Practice an Assessment	
	21-Sep	Environmental Ethics	Dien--Islam and the Environment Chapter 1, Dien-- Toward Islamic Environmental Ethics Chapter 4	Reading Response 4
Week 6	26-Sep	Sharia and Nature	Hamad--Application of Sharia	
	28-Sep	Sharia and Nature	Barau--Sharia Land Use Sustainability Model	Reading Response 5
Week 7	3-Oct	Islam and Science	Nasr--Islam And Science, Chapter 6: Islam (science and religion)	
	5-Oct	Islam and Science/midterm review		Reading Response 6
Week 8	10-Oct	Midterm		
	12-Oct	Islam and Animals: Guest Lecture Dr. Tlili	Foltz--Contemporary Muslim Views on Animal Rights	No Reading Response
Week 9	17-Oct	Green Islam and Food	Denny-- Islam and Food and Agricultural Ethics, Assam--Islam and food	
	19-Oct	Green Islam and Food	Foltz--Towards an Islamic Vegetarianism	Reading Response 7
Week 10	24-Oct	Environment and Muslim Women	Amar--Ecological Justice and Human Rights for Women	
	26-Oct	Green Islam and Sufism	Afzaal--Sufism, Nasr-- Sufism and the Integration of Man	Reading Response 8

Week 11	31-Oct	Case studies: Middle East	Foltz- Iran	Turn in Paper Proposal
	2-Nov	Case studies: Middle East	Jabbara--Islam and the Environment and Family Planning	Reading Response 9
Week 12	7-Nov	Case studies: Asia/Indonesia: Guest Lecture Nadjyah	Gade--Indonesian Environmental Islam, Aoki--Islamic NGOs on environmental problems in Indonesia	
	9-Nov	Case studies: Africa	Ahmad-- Nigeria, Bell--Islam, Ritual, and Climate Change in Mali	Reading Response 10
Week 13	14- Nov	Case studies: Europe	Yazid-- Chapter 2, chapter 4 and conclusion	
	16- Nov	Case studies: America (peer review rough draft)	Abdule-Matin--Chapter 3: Green Muslims Finnegan--Farming Among American Muslims: Conclusion	Rough Draft Optional Reading Response
Week 14	21- Nov	Modern manifestations: Architecture, Blogs, etc.	Find an article or blog that realtes to class, read it, email it to me before class.	
	23- Nov	No Class-Happy Thanksgiving!		
Week 15	28- Nov	Paper Presentations		Final Paper Due
	30- Nov	Final Review		
Week 16	5-Dec	Final		
	7-Dec	Semester End-Happy Winter Break!		