

**University of Florida**  
**Department of Religion & Center for African Studies**

**Islam in Africa**  
**Fall 2017**

**AFS4935 section 24H9**  
**AFS6905 section 24H1**  
**REL3371 section 23BD**  
**RLG5365 section 23BE**

**Meeting & Location:**

M 8-9 (3:00-3:50; 4:05-4:55) & W 8 (3:00-3:50): MAT 107

**Instructor:** Benjamin Soares

Office: 107B Anderson Hall

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Email: benjaminsoares@ufl.edu

Office hours: Wednesday, 11 am-1 pm & by appointment

**Course Description:** This course provides a comparative and historical survey of Islam and Muslim societies in their diversity in sub-Saharan Africa with particular emphasis on the period from 1800 to the present. Important themes in this course include the changing relationship between Islam and state power, Islamic education, Islamic legal traditions, Sufism, slavery, the challenges of colonial rule, reform, religious encounters, and the postcolonial secular state. The course will also draw attention to current issues relating to Islam in contemporary Africa such as popular culture, cultural heritage, the politics of gender and sexuality, conflict, and contemporary jihadi movements.

**Course Objectives:**

By the end of this course students should have an:

- Overview of the history of Islam in Africa
- Understanding of the diversity within Islam and Muslim societies in Africa
- Understanding of how Islam and religious practice in Africa can intersect with social, cultural, political, and economic factors
- Understanding of religious encounters between Muslims and non-Muslims in Africa
- Understanding of some of the main currents within contemporary Islam

**Course Requirements and Grading Criteria** (N.B.: Graduate students see below for additional requirements):

The final grade for **undergraduates** will be determined by:

- Attendance (10%)
- Participation and in-class presentations (15%)
- 3 Response papers (25% each)

Active Participation and In-class Presentations: Students are expected to attend ALL classes and participate actively in class discussions. Active and informed participation requires that students read the material carefully before coming to class. In-class presentations include brief presentations (7 to 10 minutes) on selected topics/readings (from the *supplementary readings* or additional assigned readings) and presentations of response papers (see below).

3 Response Papers (2,000-2,500 words each): These response papers will address key issues and methodological and theoretical questions raised in the readings, lectures, and class discussions. The objective of these papers is to encourage students to read the materials closely and articulate their own informed and analytically nuanced positions. The format for papers is double spaced with font size 12.

**Graduate Section Course Requirements and Grading Criteria:**

Graduate students will fulfill all of the requirements listed above, including the three response papers. In addition to the 3 response papers and presentation(s), they will have 2 additional writing assignments, which we will agree upon together. The assignment is to write a review of book(s) and articles and/or book chapters. Each review should be 2,000 to 2,500 words double-spaced with font size 12. Graduate students will also meet with me at least two times (1/2 hour) during the semester to discuss the agreed upon readings and assignments. These meetings will be during my office hours, and each student should email me with questions and/or the list of texts for me to comment on in advance of the meeting.

The final grade for **graduate students** will be determined by:

- Attendance (10%)
- Participation and In-class presentations (15%)
- 5 papers (15% each)

**Readings:**

The following (recommended) book is available for purchase at the bookstore:  
Levtzion, Nehemia and Randall L. Pouwels, eds, *The History of Islam in Africa*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000 (ISBN 0-8214-1297-3).

All other readings will be available either in electronic format (e-books and e-journal articles) through the UF library website or via e-Learning (<http://elearning.ufl.edu>).

**Background reading:**

Esposito, John, *Islam, the Straight Path* (various editions). Oxford University Press. This is an introductory text that might be of use and interest.

## **Week 1: Introduction to Islam and Muslim societies in Africa**

21 August Introduction & Orientation

23 August

Robinson, David, Ch.1, "Muhammad and the Birth of Islam," & Ch. 2, "The Basic Institutions of Islam," in *Muslim Societies in African History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp. 3-23.

Loimeier, Roman, "Introduction: The Geographical and Anthropological Setting," & Ch. 3, "The Sahara as Connective Space," in *Muslim Societies in Africa: A Historical Anthropology*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013, pp. 1-10; 54-76.

Brenner, Louis, "Histories of Religion in Africa," *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 30, 2 (2000), 143-67.

## **Week 2: A. Understanding the Arabic Ecumene or Arabic as the "Latin of Africa"**

28 August

Diagne, Souleymane Bachir, "Toward an Intellectual History of West Africa: The Meaning of Timbuktu," in Shamil Jeppie & S. B. Diagne, eds, *The Meanings of Timbuktu*, Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council 2008, pp. 19-27.

Diagne, Souleymane Bachir, "Precolonial African Philosophy in Arabic," in Kwasi Wiredu, ed., *A Companion to African Philosophy*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2004, pp. 66-77.

*The Lost Libraries of Timbuktu* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BzBCI9kcdqc>), BBC, 2009 (excerpts to view in class).

### **B. Islamization in History**

30 August

Levtzion, Nehemia, "Islam in the Bilad al-Sudan to 1800," in N. Levtzion & Randall Lee Pouwels, eds, *The History of Islam in Africa*, Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000, pp. 63-91.

Loimeier, Roman, Ch. 4, "Dynamics of Islamization in the Bilad al-Sudan," in *Muslim Societies in Africa: A Historical Anthropology*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013, pp. 77-107.

al-Maghili, Muhammad ibn Abd al-Karim, *Shari'a in Songhay: the Replies of al-Maghili to the Questions of Askia al-Hajj Muhammad*, J. O. Hunwick, transl. & ed., London: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1985, pp. 60-95.

### Supplementary reading:

Wilks, Ivor, "The Juula and the expansion of Islam into the Forests," in N. Levtzion & Randall Lee Pouwels, eds, *The History of Islam in Africa*, Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000, pp. 93-115.

### **Week 3:**

4 September (Labor Day) No Class

6 September (Study Day) No Class (instructor traveling to attend conference)

### **Week 4: Law, Race, & Slavery**

11 September

Robinson, David, Ch. 5, "Muslim Identity and the Slave Trades," in *Muslim Societies in African History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp. 60-73.

Shell, Robert, "Islam in Southern Africa, 1652-1998," in N. Levtzion & Randall Lee Pouwels, eds, *The History of Islam in Africa*, Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000, pp. 327-348

Clarence-Smith, W.G., "A Fragile Sunni Consensus," In *Islam and the Abolition of Slavery*, Oxford: OUP, 2006, pp. 22-48.

Ware, Rudolph, Ch. 3, "Slavery in Islamic Africa, 1400-1800", in *The Cambridge World History of Slavery*, Volume 3: *AD 1420-AD 1804*, Cambridge: CUP, pp. 47-80.

13 September

Diouf, Sylviane A., Ch. 1, "African Muslims, Christian Europeans, and the Transatlantic Slave Trade," and Ch. 4, "Literacy: A Distinction and a Danger," *Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas*, New York: NYU Press, 2013 (15<sup>th</sup> anniversary ed.), pp. 20-70; 159-209

#### Supplementary reading:

Diouf, Sylviane A., Ch. 2, "Upholding the Five Pillars of Islam in a Hostile World," and Ch. 5, "Resistance, Revolts, and Returns to Africa," in *Servants of Allah*, New York: NYU Press, 2013 (15<sup>th</sup> anniversary ed.), pp. 71-98; pp. 210-50.

### **Week 5: Renewal and Jihad**

18 & 20 September

Levtzion, Nehemia, "The Eighteenth Century: Background to the Islamic Revolutions in West Africa," in N. Levtzion & J. O. Voll, eds, *Eighteenth-Century Renewal and Reform in Islam*, Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1987, pp. 21-38.

Robinson, David, "Revolutions in the Western Sudan," in N. Levtzion & Randall Lee Pouwels, eds, *The History of Islam in Africa*, Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000, pp. 131-52.

Loimeier, Roman, Ch. 5, "Dynamics of Jihad in the Bilad al-Sudan," in *Muslim Societies in Africa: A Historical Anthropology*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013, pp. 108-29.

Uthman dan Fodio, "The Book of the Difference," in David M. Robinson & Douglas Smith, eds, *Sources of the African Past: Case Studies of Five Nineteenth-Century*

*African Societies*, New York: Africana Publishing, 1979, pp. 140-43.  
Al-Kanami, "The Case against Jihad," in Robert O. Collins, ed., *West African History*, Vol. 1, *African History in Documents*, Princeton: M. Wiener, 1990, pp. 70-72.

Supplementary reading:

Mack, Beverly B. & Jean Boyd, *One Woman's Jihad: Nana Asma'u, Scholar and Scribe*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000, pp. 1-14; 30-91.

**1<sup>st</sup> Response Paper Due: Friday, 22 September at 5 pm**

**Week 6: Muslims under Colonial Rule**

25 & 27 September

Triaud, Jean-Louis, "Islam in Africa under French Colonial Rule," in N. Levtzion & Randall Lee Pouwels, eds, *The History of Islam in Africa*, Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000, pp. 169-87.

Loimeier, Roman, Ch. 12, "Muslim under Colonial Rule," in *Muslim Societies in Africa: A Historical Anthropology*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013, pp. 267-94.

Umar, Muhammad S., Ch. 1, "The Challenges of British Colonialism," & Ch. 4, "'Ulama' Responses to Normative and Legal Challenges of Colonialism," in *Islam and Colonialism: Intellectual Responses of Muslims of Northern Nigeria to British Colonial Rule*, Leiden: Brill, pp. 18-63; 156-208.

Supplementary reading:

Umar, Muhammad S., Ch. 3, "Emirs' Responses to the Political Challenges of Colonialism," and Ch. 5, "Western Educated Muslim Elites' Responses to the Ideological Challenges of Colonialism," in *Islam and Colonialism*, Leiden: Brill, pp. 104-56; 209-53.

**Week 7: Saints and Sufis**

2 & 4 October

Seesemann, Rüdiger, "Sufism in West Africa," *Religion Compass*, 10, 4 (2010), 606–614.

Hutson, Alaine, "The Development of Women's Authority in the Kano Tijaniyya, 1894-1963," *Africa Today*, 46, 3/4 (1999), 43-64.

Seesemann, Rüdiger & Benjamin Soares, "As Good Muslims as Frenchmen: On Islam and Colonial Modernity in West Africa," *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 39, 1 (2009), 99-120.

Zelege, Meron, "The Gendering of Discourse in the Debates of Religious Orthodoxy," in Patrick Desplat and Terje Ostebo, eds, *Muslim Ethiopia: The Christian Legacy, Identity Politics, and Islamic Reformism*, New York: Palgrave, 2013, pp. 115-37.

Salomon, Noah, "Evidence, Secrets, Truth: Debating Islamic Knowledge in Contemporary Sudan," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 81, 3 (2013),

820–51.

Supplementary reading:

Kresse, Kai, “Debating *Maulidi*: Ambiguities and Transformation of Muslim Identity along the Kenyan Swahili Coast,” in Roman Loimeier & Rüdiger Seesemann, eds, *The Global Worlds of the Swahili*, Berlin: Lit-Verlag, 2006, pp. 211-30.

**Week 8: Muslims and “African” Religious Traditions**

9 & 11 October

Boddy, Janice, “Zar.” In *Wombs and Alien Spirits: Women, Men, and the Zar Cult in Northern Sudan*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994, pp. 125-65.

Larsen, Kjersti, “Bodily Selves: Identity and Shared Realities among Humans and Spirits in Zanzibar,” *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 44, 1 (2014), 5-27.

O’Brien, Susan, “Spirit Discipline: Gender, Islam, and Hierarchies of Treatment in Postcolonial Northern Nigeria,” in Anupama Rao and Steven Pierce, eds, *Discipline and the Other Body: Correction, Corporeality, Colonialism*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2006, pp. 273–302.

Masquelier, Adeline, “When Spirits Start Veiling: The Case of the Veiled She-Devil in a Muslim Town of Niger,” *Africa Today* 54, 3 (2008), 39-64.

Supplementary reading:

McIntosh, Janet, “Reluctant Muslims: Embodied Hegemony and Moral Resistance in a Giriama Spirit Possession Complex,” *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 10, 1 (2004), 91-112.

**Week 9: Education**

16 & 18 October

Launay, Robert, “Introduction,” in *Islamic Education in Africa: Writing Boards and Blackboards*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016, pp. 1-26.

Hoehner, Hannah, “Experiencing Inequality at Close Range: *Almajirai* Students & Quranic Schools in Kano,” in Abdul Raufu Mustapha, ed., *Sects & Social Disorder: Muslim Identities & Conflict in Northern Nigeria*, Oxford: James Currey, 2014, pp. 98-125.

Umar, Muhammad S., “Mass Islamic Education and Emergence of Female ‘Ulama in Northern Nigeria: Background, Trends, and Consequences,” in Scott Reese, ed., *The Transmission of Learning in Islamic Africa*, Leiden: Brill, 2004, pp. 99-120.

Babou, Cheikh Anta, “The al-Azhar School Network: A Murid Experiment in Islamic Modernism,” in Robert Launay, ed., *Islamic Education in Africa*, 2016, pp. 173-94.

Alidou, Ousseina D., “Mwalim Bi Swafiiya Muhashamy-Said: A Pioneer of the Integrated (Madrassa) Curriculum in Kenya and Beyond,” in Robert Launay, ed., *Islamic Education in Africa*, 2016, pp. 195-211.

### Supplementary readings:

Fortier, Corinne, "Orality and the Transmission of Qur'anic Knowledge in Mauritania," in R. Launay, ed., *Islamic Education in Africa*, 2016, pp. 61-78.

Sounaye, Abdoulaye, "Walking to the *Makaranta*: Production, Circulation, and Transmission of Islamic Learning in Urban Niger," in R. Launay, ed., *Islamic Education in Africa*, 2016, pp. 234-67.

## **Week 10: Islam and Youth Culture**

23 October

Film: *Recording a Revolution: A Story of Music, Religion, and Identity*, (Center for African Studies, University of Florida, 2011), (excerpts)

25 October Discussion of film with film producer, Prof. Susan O'Brien

Larkin, Brian, "Indian Films and Nigerian Lovers: Media and the Creation of Parallel Modernities," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 67, 3 (1997), 406-440.

Adamu, Abdalla Uba, "Poetic Barbs: Angst, Voter Mobilization and Urban Musics in Kano State 2011 Elections," 2012, typescript.

"Hip Deep in Nigeria," *Afropop Worldwide*, (<http://www.afropop.org/36695/hip-deep-in-northern-nigeria/>)

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Response Paper Due: Friday, 27 October (5 pm)**

## **Week 11: Reform**

30 October

1 November

Loimeier, Roman, "Patterns and Peculiarities of Islamic Reform in Africa." *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 33, 3 (2003), 237-62.

Last, Murray, "From Dissent to Dissidence: The Genesis and Development of Reformist Islamic Groups in Northern Nigeria," in Abdul Raufu Mustapha, ed., *Sects & Social Disorder: Muslim Identities & Conflict in Northern Nigeria*, Oxford: James Currey, 2014, pp. 18-53.

Ostebo, Terje, "Being Young, Being Muslim in Bale," in Patrick Desplat and T. Ostebo, eds, *Muslim Ethiopia: The Christian Legacy, Identity Politics, and Islamic Reformism*, New York: Palgrave, 2013, pp. 47-69.

Seesemann, Rüdiger. 2006. "African Islam or Islam in Africa?: Evidence from Kenya." In Roman Loimeier & Rüdiger Seesemann, eds, *The Global Worlds of the Swahili*, Berlin: Lit-Verlag, pp. 229-50.

Supplementary readings:

- Kaba, Lasiné, "Islam in West Africa: Radicalism and the New Ethics of Disagreement, 1960-1990," in N. Levtzion & Randall Lee Pouwels, eds, *The History of Islam in Africa*, Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000, pp. 189-208.
- Loimeier, Roman, "L'Islam ne se vend plus: The Islamic Reform Movement and the State in Senegal," *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 30, 2 (2000), 168-90.
- Tayob, Abdulkader, "Back to the Roots, the Origins and the Beginning: Reflections on Revival (*tajdīd*) in Islamic Discourse," *Temenos* 50, 2 (2014), 257-71.

**Week 12: Religious Encounters**

6 November

8 November

- Shankar, Shobana, "A Fifty-Year Muslim Conversion to Christianity: Religious Ambiguities and Colonial Boundaries in Northern Nigeria, c. 1906-1963," in B. Soares (ed.), *Muslim-Christian Encounters in Africa*, Leiden: Brill, 2006, pp. 89-114.
- Janson, Marloes, "Unity through Diversity: A Case Study of Chrislam in Lagos," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 86, 4 (1997), 646-72.
- Hansen, Thomas Blom, "Global Hindus and Pure Muslims: Universalist Aspirations and Territorialized Lives," in *Melancholia of Freedom: Social Life in an Indian Township in South Africa*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012, pp. 223-60.
- Bezabeh, Samson, "Living across Digital Landscapes: Muslims, Orthodox Christians, and an Indian Guru in Ethiopia," in R. Hackett and B. Soares, eds, *New Media and Religious Transformations in Africa*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015, pp. 266-83.

Supplementary readings:

- Last, Murray, "Muslims and Christians in Nigeria: An Economy of Political Panic," *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*, 96, 392 (2007), 605-16.
- Omar, A. Rashied, "From Resistance to Reconstruction: Challenges Facing Muslim-Christian Relations in Post-Apartheid South Africa," in B. Soares, ed., *Muslim-Christian Encounters in Africa*, Leiden: Brill, 2006, pp. 275-92.
- Larkin, Brian and Birgit Meyer, "Pentecostalism, Islam and Culture: New religious Movements in West Africa," in E. K. Akyeampong, ed., *Themes in West Africa's Religious History*, Oxford: James Currey, 2006, pp. 286-312.



## **Week 13: Art, Popular Culture, and Cultural Heritage**

13 November

15 November

Bravmann, René, "Islamic Art and Material Culture in Africa," in N. Levtzion & Randall Lee Pouwels, eds, *The History of Islam in Africa*, Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000, pp. 489-517.

McLaughlin, Fiona, "Islam and Popular Music in Senegal: The Emergence of a 'New Tradition,'" *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 67, 4 (1997), 560-81.

Skinner, Ryan Thomas, "A Pious Poetics of Place," in *Bamako Sounds: The Afropolitan Ethics of Malian Music*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015, pp. 107-30.

Masquelier, Adeline, "'The Mouthpiece of an Entire Generation': Hip-Hop, Truth, and Islam in Niger," in A. Masquelier & B. Soares, eds, *Muslim Youth and the 9/11 Generation*, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press and the School for Advanced Research Press, pp. 213-38.

De Jorio, Rosa, "The Fate of Timbuktu's Sufi Heritage: Controversies around Past Traces and Current Practices," in *Cultural Heritage in Mali in the Neoliberal Era*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016, pp. 116-33.

## **Week 14:**

20 November (American Academy of Religion annual meeting) No Class

22 November (Thanksgiving break) No Class

## **Week 15: Gender, Sexuality, & Politics**

27 November

29 November

Gaudio, Rudolph, Ch. 1, "Introducing 'Yan Daudu [excerpts]," & Ch. 5, "Playing with Faith," in *Allah Made Us: Sexual Outlaws in an African Islamic City*, Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, pp. 1-10, 117-42.

Janson, Marloes, "Modern Love: Dating the Halal Way in Lagos," in Gomez-Perez, Muriel, ed., *Femmes, génération et agency en Afrique subsaharienne*, Paris, Karthala, 2015.

Fortier, Corinne, "Women and Men Put Islamic Law to Their Own Use: Monogamy versus Secret Marriage in Mauritania," in Margot Badran, ed., *Gender and Islam in Africa: Rights, Sexuality, and Law*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011, pp. 213-31.

Shaikh, Sa'diyya, "Embodied Tafsir: South African Muslim Women Confront Gender Violence in Marriage," in Margot Badran, ed., *Gender and Islam in Africa: Rights,*

*Sexuality, and Law*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011, pp. 89-115.

## **Week 16: Conflict**

4 December

Thurston, Alexander, "Introduction," Ch. 1, "The Lifeworld of Muhammad Yusuf," & Ch. 2, "Preaching Exclusivism, Playing Politics," in *Boko Haram: The History of an African Jihadist Movement*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018, pp. 1-141.

### Supplementary readings:

Chesworth, John. 2006. "Fundamentalism and Outreach Strategies in East Africa: Christian Evangelism and Muslim Da'wa," in Soares (ed.), *Muslim-Christian Encounters in Africa*, Leiden: Brill, pp. 159-86.

Seesemann, Rüdiger. 2007. "Kenyan Muslims, the Aftermath of 9/11, and the 'War on Terror,'" in B. Soares & René Otayek, eds, *Islam and Muslim Politics in Africa*, New York: Palgrave, pp. 157-76.

6 December Final Class/Wrap Up

## **3<sup>rd</sup> Response Paper Due: Wednesday, 6 December (12 pm)**

### **Policies, Rules, Expectations, and Resources:**

1. **Attendance** is mandatory
2. Active discussion of the **readings** by each student during every meeting.
3. **Handing in Assignments:** Response papers should be handed in through e-learning/Canvas via Turnitin.
4. **Late Assignments:** An extension will be granted only in extraordinary circumstances and with prior approval from the instructor.
5. **Completion of All Assignments:** You must complete all written and oral work and fulfil the requirement for class participation in order to pass the course.
6. **Honor Code:** UF students are bound by the Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>), and all students have agreed to follow this Code, meaning they will not give or receive unauthorized assistance in completing assignments.
7. **Course Evaluation:** Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>.
8. **Students Requiring Accommodations:** Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter, which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.