

## **Islam in South Asia (FALL 2020)**

**Religion 3938 Location:** ONLINE

### **Meeting Times:**

Tuesday (Periods 8-9: 3 to 4:55 PM)

Thursday (Period 9: 4:05 to 4:55PM)

### **Instructor: Professor Ali Altaf Mian, Ph.D.**

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### **Required Texts**

- Julia Stephens, *Governing Islam: Law, Empire, and Secularism in South Asia* (Cambridge University Press, 2018)
- Salman Rushdie, *Shalimar the Crown*
- Nadeem Aslam, *The Golden Legend*

\*All Other Readings will be provided as PDFs in Canvas

### **Course Synopsis**

The study of Muslims in South Asia—in India, but also in Bangladesh and Pakistan—is crucial for understanding contemporary Islam in our global world. South Asian Muslims are also active in the Arabian Gulf region and in Western Europe and North America, especially in the UK. In this course, we take “Islam in South Asia” as a case study for studying both Global Islam as well as religion and modernity more broadly. We begin with a set of readings that furnishes us with “historical foundations,” connecting the pre-modern period to the modern realities of Muslims in South Asia and the diaspora. The key event that defines large facets of Muslims’ experiences in contemporary South Asia is the partition of India in 1947. After briefly studying the historiography but also local effects of the partition, the next set of readings covers the pivotal role played by sacred spaces in generating community but also in resisting communalist containment. The penultimate unit observes the varied implications of the modernist project for understanding articulations of Muslim subjectivities in South Asia. The final unit uses two novels to explore questions of belonging, beauty, and brutality, as Muslims find themselves entangled in transnational networks. The key questions include: How have Muslims in South Asia grappled with colonialism, the rise of science and technology, secular liberalism and globalization, and environmental as well as planetary issues? How have Muslims navigated the

question of religious pluralism? What are the specific challenges facing South Asian Muslims in terms of gender equality and sexual liberation?

### General Education Objectives

This course has a Humanities (H) designation in the UF General Education Program.

**Humanities courses** provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and theory or methodologies used within a humanities discipline or the humanities in general.

Students will learn to identify and to analyze the key elements, biases and influences that shape thought. These courses emphasize clear and effective analysis and approach issues and problems from multiple perspectives.

### Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes in *content*, *communication*, and *critical thinking*:

- **Content:** Students will have knowledge of historical and contemporary expressions of Islam in South Asia, particularly in relation to modernity and colonialism, and some of the key challenges South Asian Muslims face in today's world.
- **Communication:** Students will be able to communicate their reasoned perspectives to others with clarity and openness to dialogue, in both speech and writing. They will be encouraged to listen attentively and compassionately to others and to consider a wide range of perspectives before making up their own minds. The writing assignments are especially relevant here.
- **Critical Thinking:** Students will be able to examine their own as well as others' biases when it comes to speaking and thinking about religion. They will try their best to avoid generalizing statements, reductive views, stereotyping gestures, and essentialist claims. They will be able to assess the rhetorical value of different types of evidence and sources.

### How Do I Come to Class?

Please note that while this class is online, you still have to attend lectures via Zoom. There are no pre-recorded lectures. All lectures and discussion meetings will take place on Zoom. Please make sure you have access to stable internet and a computer.

Instructions to Come to Class via Zoom: Please go to this class's page in your E-Learning (Canvas) account. Click on "Zoom Conferences." Here you will find a list of upcoming meetings. Click on "Join" to attend class.

NOTE: For your online safety and security, I am limiting participants to "authenticated users." That means you must access Zoom via your .ufl email and not another personal email. However, for your convenience, I have not required a password for each session. This strategy enables us to have safe, secure meetings but without the nuisance of entering a different password each time.

For more on Zoom, visit:  
<https://elearning.ufl.edu/zoom/>

### What's on E-Learning (Canvas)?

Canvas is essential for this course. The Canvas website for this course has been designed keeping your convenience in mind. All readings other than the three required texts are on Canvas (or will be posted at least two weeks prior to the day they're assigned). You will find instructions to complete each assignment by clicking on the turn-in page for that assignment. Periodically, I will post in-class resources in Files, after the lecture.

### Communication and Interaction

Please email me at [alimian@ufl.edu](mailto:alimian@ufl.edu) or send me a message from your Canvas inbox if you have any questions or concerns about this class. I welcome the opportunity to set up individual zoom meetings with you in lieu of holding office hours in my physical office on campus.

You do not have to turn on your video camera, but are welcome to do so if you'd like.

### Assignments and Grade Breakdown

This course is based on a 1000-point scale. Here is the breakdown of those 1000 points:

- **Discussion Board Posts—400 points**

There will be 25 opportunities for you to submit a discussion board post. Each post is worth 20 points. The lowest 5 scores will be dropped. While you can get a perfect score in this category by submitting only 20 posts, I encourage you to complete each post. The post should be analytical rather than descriptive, consisting of at least three sentences and should have one thoughtful question. This assignment will help us to ask highlight the key ideas within a reading or set of readings and to ask critical questions about the material.

The discussion board posts are **due by 2 PM on Tuesdays and 3 PM on Thursdays. No Late Work will be accepted and no extensions given in this category.**

I will grade your posts according to the following rubric:

**19-20 points:** The post poses a compelling and substantial question the answer to which helps the entire class comprehend the text more fully. The post includes at least three polished sentences that touch on the key arguments and/or themes of the reading. These sentences are not mere summary, but show the student's critical and synthesizing skills.

**14-18 points:** The post poses a good question that needs to be addressed for the student but not for the class in general. The post includes at least three sentences that summarize the reading and touch on the key themes.

**9-13 points:** The post poses a question whose answer is found in the text. The post might have three sentences but they do not touch on the reading's main points.

**4-8 points:** The post either lacks a question or three full sentences.

**1-3:** The post contains only a single sentence and/or incomprehensible sentences, or the content of the post is about another reading.

**0:** Nothing Turned in

- **Two Analytical Pieces (1000-1200 words)—300 points (150 points each)**

September 25 Friday—Analytical Piece 1 Due by 11:59 PM

October 30 Friday—Analytical Piece 2 Due by 11:59 PM

I will allow 24-hour extensions on this assignment if it is requested by email before the due date/time by email.

DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS WILL BE POSTED ON CANVAS

- **Final Paper (2000-2200 words)—300 points**

December 17—Final Paper due by Noon (No Extensions)

DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS WILL BE POSTED ON CANVAS

Accessing Your Grades: You can keep track of your grades by logging into Canvas and clicking on “Grades” in the panel on the left of your screen.

#### Grading Scale

Score	Percent	Grade	Grade Points
934-1000	93.4-100	A	4.00
900-933	90.0-93.3	A-	3.67
867-899	86.7-89.9	B+	3.33
834-866	83.4-86.6	B	3.00
800-833	80.0-83.3	B-	2.67
767-799	76.7-79.9	C+	2.33
734-766	73.4-76.6	C	2.00
700-733	70.0-73.3	C-	1.67
667-699	66.7-69.9	D+	1.33
634-666	63.4-66.6	D	1.00
600-633	60.0-63.3	D-	0.67
0-599	0-59.9	E	0.00

More information on grades and grading policies can be found here:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

#### Attendance and Participation

It is really important for you to come to each class via Zoom. In addition to mini-lectures and discussions, I will use the “breakout rooms” feature in Zoom to facilitate group work. It is therefore vital for you to pay attention during the entirety of our sessions. You can miss up to 1 Tuesday session and 1 Thursday session without penalty. For each additional session you miss, you will lose 50 points (that is, 5% of your grade).

#### Class Demeanor

Students are expected to join Zoom meeting ON TIME and avoid disruptive behavior. When posing your question or comment, please use courteous dialogue. Opinions held by other students should be respected in discussion.

#### Resources and Services

##### *Writing Studio*

<https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

The Writing Studio is committed to helping University of Florida students and faculty meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. We support independent learning and encourage scholarship by providing one-on-one consultations, workshops tailored to specific classes (graduate and undergraduate), and faculty retreats focusing on publishing original research. Students and faculty at all levels and in every discipline are welcome!

### ***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.

### ***University Honesty Policy***

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the 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 Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

### ***Counseling and Wellness Center***

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/about/>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

### ***Course Evaluations***

Students are expected to provide professional feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluer.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

### ***Schedule of Readings and Assignments***

#### **UNIT 1: HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS**

September 1 Tuesday—Barbara D. Metcalf, “Introduction: A Historical Overview of Islam in South Asia,” from *Islam in South Asia in Practice* (Princeton University Press, 2019).

September 3 Thursday—Continue Discussion of Metcalf’s “Introduction”

September 8 Tuesday—Finbarr B. Flood, “Before the Mughals: Material Culture of Sultanate North India.”

September 10 Thursday—Scott Kugle, “Celestial Bodies seen from Deccan Soil,” from *When Sun Meets Moon: Gender, Eros, and Ecstasy in Urdu Poetry*

September 15 Tuesday—Julia Stephens, *Governing Islam: Law, Empire, and Secularism in South Asia* (Cambridge University Press, 2018), (Introduction and Chapters 1-2)

September 17 Thursday—Stephens, *Governing Islam*, Chapter 3

September 22 Tuesday—Stephens, *Governing Islam*, Chapter 4-5

September 24 Thursday: Stephens, *Governing Islam*, pgs. 155-189 (Chapter 6 and Conclusion)

September 25 Friday—Analytical Piece 1 Due by 11:59 PM

## UNIT 2—PARTITIONED SPACES

September 29 Tuesday:

- David Gilmartin, “The Historiography of India’s Partition: Between Civilization and Modernity.” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 74.1 (2015):23-41.
- Amber H. Abbas, “Disruption and Belonging: Aligarh, Its University, and the Changing Meaning of Place since Partition.” *The Oral History Review* 44.2 (2017):301-322.

October 1 Thursday: Ali Altaf Mian, “The Pain of Partition: Communal Problems, National Solutions” (forthcoming in Mian, *Muslims in South Asia* [Edinburgh University Press]).

## UNIT 3—COMMUNITY AND ANTI-CONTAINMENT

October 6 Tuesday: Excerpt from Shahid Amin, *Conquest and Community: The Afterlife of Warrior Saint Ghazi Miyan*

October 8 Thursday: Excerpt from Amin, *Conquest and Community*

October 13 Tuesday: Carla Bellamy, “Personae: Transgression, Otherness, Cosmopolitanism, and Kindship” and “Conclusion” from *The Powerful Ephemeral: Everyday Healing in an Ambiguously Islamic Place*

October 15 Thursday—Excerpt from Anna Bigelow, *Sharing the Sacred: Practicing Pluralism in Muslim North India*

## UNIT 4—MUSLIM SELVES CONTESTED

October 20 Tuesday: Katherine Pratt Ewing, “Part III: Modern Respectability and Antinomian

Desire,” in *Arguing Sainthood: Modernity, Psychoanalysis, and Islam*

October 22 Thursday: Faisal Devji, “Illiberal Islam,” from *Islam after Liberalism*, eds. Faisal Devji and Zaheer Kazmi

October 27 Tuesday: Nicholas Evans, “Televising Islam: The Aesthetics of the Caliphate” and “Conclusion: The Problem with Proof” from *Far from the Caliph’s Gaze: Being Ahmadi Muslim in the Holy City of Qadian*

October 29 Thursday—Anand Vivek Taneja, “Saintly Visions: The Ethics of *Elsewhen*” from *Jinnealogy: Time, Islam, and Ecological Thought in the Medieval Ruins of Delhi*

October 30 Friday—Analytical Piece 2 Due by 11:59 PM

## **UNIT 5—TRAJECTORIES OF BEAUTY AND BRUTALITY**

November 3 Tuesday—Salman Rushdie, *Shalimar the Crown*, pgs. 3-133

November 5 Thursday—Rushdie, *Shalimar the Crown* pgs. 137-174

November 10 Tuesday—Rushdie, *Shalimar the Crown* pgs. 175-309

November 12 Thursday—Rushdie, *Shalimar the Crown* pgs. 311-398

November 17 Tuesday—Nadeem Aslam, *The Golden Legend*, pgs. 1-100

November 19 Thursday—Aslam, *The Golden Legend*, pgs. 101-145

November 24 Tuesday—Aslam, *The Golden Legend*, pgs.146-224

November 26 Thursday—NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Holiday)

December 1 Tuesday—Aslam, *The Golden Legend*, pgs.225-361

December 3 Thursday—Grad Student Presentation

December 8 Tuesday—Grad Student Presentation

December 17—Final Paper due by Noon (No Extensions)