

## ISLAM IN SOUTH ASIA (SPRING 2023)

### **Religion 3938: Special Topics in Religion Religion 5365: Studies in Islam Professor Ali Mian**

#### **Meeting Times:**

Tuesday Periods 5-6—11:45 AM to 1:40 PM (AND 0032)  
Thursday Period 6—12:50 to 1:40 PM (MAT 0011)

#### **Office Hours:**

Wednesdays 4-5 PM  
& by appointment

**Office Location:** AND 107-A

**E-mail:** [alimian@ufl.edu](mailto:alimian@ufl.edu)

#### **Course Synopsis**

The study of Muslims in colonial and post-colonial South Asia—in countries such as Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan—is a great way to understand the key features of modern and contemporary Islam. This course takes up this opportunity and introduces students to some central methodological and theoretical conversations in the academic study of Islam in South Asia.

Islamic traditions and Muslim lives in modern South Asia (and the South Asian diaspora) have been studied in relation to a range of diverse themes and from a number of disciplinary approaches. The reality is that the diversity of South Asian Muslims from Bengal to Baluchistan (East to West) and from Kashmir to Kerala (North to South), is dizzying and doing justice to it require years of sustained engagement with primary and secondary sources. This course highlights this diversity by fixating its analytical gaze on a few prominent themes: the relationship between colonial modernity and Islam in South Asia; the resilience of Sufi spaces and bodies; the scholarly traditions of theology, law, and ethics based in the region's madrasa networks; the challenges of pluralism and secularism; the rise of religious nationalism; the salience of studying Islam through objects, and the spread of South Asian Islam beyond the region.

The course covers these themes not only through readings from historians, anthropologists, and religious studies specialists, but also through in-class viewing of audiovisual materials and doing “digital ethnography” and “close reading” exercises.

#### **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.

### 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 either in-person meetings in my Anderson Hall office or zoom meetings with you in lieu of holding office hours in my physical office on campus.

### Assignments and Grade Breakdown

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

- **Attendance and Participation—200 points**  
Class attendance is mandatory, and will be taken at the beginning of each class session. You can miss one class each month (January, February, March, and April) without penalty. Each additional unexcused absence will detract 30 points from your grade. Excused absences are consistent with university policies as listed in the undergraduate catalog

(<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>) and require appropriate documentation. Class will begin and end on time. Five late arrivals (anything over 5 minutes) will be considered an absence.

Participation means that you come prepared to discuss the reading in class.

Please note that I will send you an email if I feel concerned about your attendance and participation.

You will receive a score in this category (50 points) at the end of each month.

- **6 Reading Responses—300 points**

There will be 8 opportunities for you to submit 6 reading responses. Each response is worth 50 points. The lowest 2 scores will be dropped in case you chose to complete more than what's required. Your reading response post should be analytical rather than descriptive, consisting of at least five developed paragraphs (each paragraph should develop an idea and should be at least 3 sentences).

You can address the following questions in your responses:

- How did the assigned reading(s) help us to understand Islam in South Asia?
- What methodological approaches and theoretical insights were gained in this set of readings?
- What are some desiderata in the scholarship? Remaining questions?

**No Late Work will be accepted. PLEASE ASK FOR AN EXTENSION 24 HOURS IN ADVANCE OF DUE DATE.**

I will grade your posts according to the following rubric:

**Excellent (40-50 points):** The reading response synthesizes the readings in a successful argumentative and analytical way that demonstrates the student's substantial comprehension of the key theoretical and methodological points covered in the reading and the class discussions. The reading response is complete in terms of the "five developed paragraphs" requirement and demonstrating competence.

**Adequate (26-39 points):** The reading response covers most of the readings in a successful analytical way but does not fully demonstrate the student's substantial comprehension of the key theoretical and methodological points

covered in the reading and the class discussions. While the reading response might be complete in terms of the “five developed paragraphs” requirement, the writing itself seems hurried and does not evidence sustained engagement with the texts.

**Insubstantial (under 25 points):** The reading response does not synthesize the readings in a successful argumentative and analytical way that demonstrates the student’s substantial comprehension of the key theoretical and methodological points covered in the reading and the class discussions. The reading response is incomplete in terms of the “five developed paragraphs” requirement and demonstrating competence.

**o:** Nothing Turned in

- **Final Paper—500 points:** The final paper should be between 3,500-4,000 words (between 5,500-6,000 words for graduate students). Please use Chicago style for your research paper. Your final paper assignment gives you an opportunity to concentrate your descriptive and analytical efforts on a **single object of study**. What you choose to write on has to relate to Islam in South Asia. Students will work with me on choosing a suitable topic.

**No Late Work will be accepted. PLEASE ASK FOR AN EXTENSION 24 HOURS IN ADVANCE OF DUE DATE.**

This assignment has different components:

**AN ABSTRACT—50 points DUE BY MIDNIGHT ON 9 MARCH THURSDAY**

This abstract should be between 200-250 words and should address the following points:

- your object of study and its relevance
- what would you like to find out about it?
- why you’d like to study it?
- how does it relate to the study of Islam in South Asia?
- your methodology (close reading, comparison, historical analysis, digital ethnography, and so on)
- your sources and their locations

**ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY—150 points DUE BY MIDNIGHT ON APRIL 7 FRIDAY**

Think of the annotated bibliography as laying the foundations of your final paper. By completing this assignment, you become equipped to demonstrate your expertise in the scholarship that exists on your particular research question and object of study. The entries of an annotated bibliography are therefore not random or arbitrary, but show a logic of selection at work. In other words, you choose the most relevant work that pertains to your specified research question or topic.

You should have at least 2 primary and 5 secondary sources. Each source or entry in this annotated bibliography should have a paragraph or two on that selection. The annotated bibliography should begin with a paragraph that introduces the logic of selection behind the following entries and what you seek to achieve by this piece of writing. Please follow the Chicago style.

You should use the library databases and read abstracts to see what works should go into your annotated bibliography. It goes without saying that you have to read every entry that you list. The 1-2 paragraphs that should follow each entry should highlight the **key argument or point** of the entry, its **sources**, its **methodologies**, and anything else that is relevant to your concerns. Here, you have to master the art of **concision**. The annotation should not go on for pages. Your capacity to be concise indicates how much of the reading you actually grasp to summarize in 3-4 powerful sentences. In your annotation you should also mention the strengths and limitations of the work under question.

**FIRST DRAFT—100 points DUE BY MIDNIGHT ON APRIL 21 FRIDAY**  
The first draft should at least be 1000 words (SEE BELOW FOR DETAILS ON HOW TO STRUCTURE YOUR PAPER)

**FINAL PAPER—200 points DUE BY 5PM ON 3 MAY WEDNESDAY**

A research paper is the first draft of an **article** that you would submit to a peer-reviewed journal. A research paper allows you to **share** the findings of your investigations with your peers and colleagues, sometimes in several fields of study at once. It is therefore important to identify your intended audience. By writing a research paper, you are essentially saying:

*Look, I had an important question about object X, a question that existing scholarship had not yet answered. I then followed methodology*

*Y to answer my question about object X. Here are my results and this is how they impact the existing scholarship.*

A research paper thus gives you the opportunity to assume a critical voice in your discipline or field of study. Your critical thinking skills and your argumentative capacities are on display, as well as your well-roundedness and comprehensiveness as a thinker.

A research paper often follows this format:

**Introduction**—identify your topic by means of a catchy question or an anecdote or a vignette that serves as a “hook” to catch the reader’s attention. After you have the reader’s attention, attend to the following tasks in an orderly and methodical manner, writing in clear, accessible prose:

- pose your key question
- describe your argument
- mention your sources
- list your methodology
- explain why your intervention matters

You should also give the reader a roadmap of what is to follow.

**Body of the Paper**—at least three sections. At times, it is important to have a “historical background” section before the three sections that analyze your evidence for your claim. Make sure there are “segues” between your paragraphs and from section to section. Make sure you follow the roadmap you gave the reader in the introduction of the paper.

**Conclusion**—this is usually three paragraphs. In your concluding paragraphs, you take a step back to summarize the argument and your analyses. You mention possible limitations of your argument and you might also identify key questions that still need to be answered.

\*Make sure you are specific in selecting an object of study. You can often use these categories to think about the specificity of your object of study: *What? Who? Why? When? Where? How?* And then ask yourself the big question of *So What?*

**Ask Yourself:**

- Does my finished product evidence sustained thinking and continuous revisions?

- Is my project relevant to my degree program? Is it actually going to help me in future courses, my qualifying exams, my dissertation and so on?
- Am I writing clearly and accessibly?

#### 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/>

#### 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, <https://disability.ufl.edu>) 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.

### ***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.ua.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.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

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

**\*Please note that all page numbers correspond to the printed page numbers (and not the PDF’s page number, though in some cases they overlap).**

## **UNIT 1: HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS**

January 10 Tuesday—Introduction to the Course

Jan 12 Thursday—Metcalf, “Introduction,” *Islam in South Asia in Practice* (Princeton University Press), pgs. 1-39



Jan 17 Tuesday—Julia Stephens, *Governing Islam: Law, Empire, and Secularism in South Asia* (Cambridge University Press, 2018), Introduction and Chapter 1, pgs. 1-56

Jan 19 Thursday—Stephens, *Governing Islam*, Chapter 2, pgs. 57-85

**\*\*Reading Response 1 Due by 20 Jan Friday 5 PM**

Jan 24 Tuesday —Stephens, *Governing Islam*, Chapter 3-4 pgs. 86-131

**Jan 26 Thursday—Zoom Event, “Shi’i Traditionalism in Modern South Asia” 12-2 PM**

Jan 31 Tuesday: Stephens, *Governing Islam*, Chapter 5-6 and Conclusion, pgs. 132-189

February 2 Thursday—NO CLASS (Dr. Mian presenting)

**\*\*Reading Response 2 Due by 3 Feb Friday 5 PM**

## **UNIT 2: SUFI SHRINES, AFFECTS, AND RITUALS**

February 7 Tuesday: Ajmer

- Catherine B. Asher, “Pilgrimages to the Shrines in Ajmer,” pgs. 77-86 in *Islam in South Asia in Practice*
- Excerpts from *The History of Akbar* (in-class read & discuss)
- In-Class Digital Ethnography: What do we learn about the Ajmer shrine from the content posted by <https://www.instagram.com/sufimusafir/> ?

Feb 9 Thursday: Qawwals and Qawwali

- Syed Akbar Hyder and Carla Petievich, “Qawwal Songs of Praise,” pgs. 93-100 in *Islam in South Asia in Practice*
- In-Class Viewing: Video Clips of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and Abida Parveen

Feb 14 Tuesday: Sehwan Sharif

- Omar Kasmani, “Introduction” to *Queer Companions: Religion, Public Intimacy, and Saintly Affects in Pakistan*

Feb 16 Thursday: Sufi Meditation and Ritual

- Scott Kugle, “The Brilliance of Hearts: Hajji Imdadullah Teaches Meditation and Ritual,” pgs. 212-224 in *Islam in South Asia in Practice*

**\*\*Reading Response 3 Due by 17 Feb Friday 5 PM**

### UNIT 3: ISLAMIC LAW AND ETHICS IN SOUTH ASIAN MADRASAS

Feb 21 Tuesday

- Ebrahim Moosa, *What is a Madrasa?* Please read: Prologue and Chapters 1-3, pgs. 1-74

Feb 23 Thursday

- Moosa, *What is a Madrasa?* Please read: Chapters 4-5, pgs. 77-121

Feb 25 Saturday: In-Person Day-Long Event, “New Directions in the Study of Islam in South Asia.” 9AM to 6:30 PM

Feb 28 Tuesday

- Moosa, *What is a Madrasa?* Please read: Chapters 6-9

March 2 Thursday

- Moosa, *What is a Madrasa?* Please read: Chapters 10-12 and Epilogue

\*\*Reading Response 4 Due by 3 March Friday 5 PM

### UNIT 4: BEING MUSLIM IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA

March 7 Tuesday: The Challenges of Religious Pluralism, part I

- Anna Bigelow, “Memory and Minority: Making Muslim Indians.” *Numen*

March 9 Thursday: The Challenges of Religious Pluralism, part II

- Rachana Rao Umashankar, “Sufi Sound, Sufi Space: Indian Cinema and the Mise-en-Scène of Pluralism,” in *Modern Sufis and the State: The Politics of Islam in South Asia and Beyond*, eds. Katherine P. Ewing and Rosemary Corbett.

**ABSTRACT FOR FINAL PAPER DUE BY MIDNIGHT ON 9 MARCH THURSDAY**

\*\*Reading Response 5 Due by 10 March Friday 5 PM

March 14 Tuesday—NO CLASS (Spring Break)

March 16 Thursday—NO CLASS (Spring Break)

March 21 Tuesday:

- Harini Kumar—READING TBA

March 23 Thursday:

- Veena Das, “Moral and Spiritual Striving in the Everyday: To Be a Muslim in Contemporary India,” in *Ethical Life in South Asia*, eds. Anand Pandian and Daud Ali
- In-Class “Digital Ethnography” Exercise (focused on discussions of Indian Muslims’ contemporary concerns)

March 28 Tuesday:

- Joel Lee—READING TBA

March 30 Thursday: NO CLASS (Dr. Mian presenting)

**\*\*Reading Response 6 Due by 31 March Friday 5 PM**

## **UNIT 5: THE MATERIAL TURN IN THE STUDY OF MUSLIM SOUTH ASIA**

April 4 Tuesday

- Karen G. Ruffle, “Guises of the Protective Hand: The ‘Alam and the ‘Domestication’ of Qutb Shahi Shi’ism.” *South Asian Studies*
- Karen G. Ruffle, “Wounds of Devotion: Reconceiving *Mātam* in Shi’ī Islam.” *History of Religions*

April 6 Thursday

- Roxani Margariti, “Coins and Fish: Sovereignty, Economy, and Religion in the Islamate Indian Ocean,” in *Islam through Objects*, ed. Anna Bigelow

## **ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF FINAL PAPER DUE BY APRIL 7 FRIDAY BY MIDNIGHT**

April 11 Tuesday

- Amanda Lanzillo—READING TBA

April 13 Thursday

- Ali Altaf Mian, “Displaced Ornaments: Naiza Khan’s Critique of Sexual Difference in Muslim South Asia.”

**\*\*Reading Response 7 Due by 14 April Friday 5 PM**

## **UNIT 6: MUSLIMS IN THE SOUTH ASIAN DIASPORA**

April 18 Tuesday

- Christopher Jaffrelot, “South Asian Muslims’ interactions with Arabian Islam until the 1990s: Pan-Islamism before and after Pakistan,” in *Pan-Islamic Connections: Transnational Networks between South Asia and the Gulf*, eds. Christopher Jaffrelot and Laurence Louër.
- Alix Philippon, “Pakistani Sufism in the Gulf: Structural Constraints, Modes of Transplant and Remittances,” in *Pan-Islamic Connections: Transnational Networks between South Asia and the Gulf*, eds. Christopher Jaffrelot and Laurence Louër.

April 20 Thursday

- Aliyah Khan, “Muslim in/of the Caribbean,” from *Far from Mecca: Globalizing the Muslim Caribbean*.

## **FIRST DRAFT OF FINAL PAPER DUE BY APRIL 21 FRIDAY BY MIDNIGHT**

April 25 Tuesday

- Yunas Samad, “The Pakistani diaspora: USA and UK,” in *Routledge Handbook of the South Asian Diaspora*, eds. Joya Chatterjee and D.A. Washbrook
- Faisal Devji, “Europe’s Muslim passions,” in *Routledge Handbook of the South Asian Diaspora*, eds. Joya Chatterjee and D.A. Washbrook

**\*\*Reading Response 8 Due by 25 April Tuesday 10 PM**

**FINAL PAPER DUE BY 5PM ON 3 MAY WEDNESDAY**