

Islam in South Asia (SPRING 2022)

Course Number: 29393: Section 5014

Religion 3938 : Special Topics in Religion (Islam in South Asia)

Meeting Times:

Tuesday Period 4—10:40 to 11:30 AM

Thursday Periods 4-5—10:40 to 12:35 AM

Instructor: Professor Ali Altaf Mian, Ph.D.

E-mail: alimian@ufl.edu

Office: Anderson Hall 107-A

Course Synopsis

The study of Muslims in South Asia—in India, but also in Bangladesh and Pakistan—is crucial for understanding contemporary Islam in a globalized world. This course introduces students to key methodological and theoretical conversations in the academic study of Islam in modern South Asia. We begin with a historical overview that illuminates how British colonialism and post-colonial political developments have shaped the lives of Muslims in modern South Asia (Julia Stephens). We zoom in on the relationship between Islam and politics by engaging with scholarship on sovereignty, secularism, anti-colonial resistance, and political citizenship (Muhammad Qasim Zaman, Rajbir Singh Judge, Wilson Jacob, and Shaunna Rodrigues). The Islamic tradition, especially Sufism, has given Muslims creative intellectual and ethical resources to engage with broader historical processes and political forces. This course therefore pays special attention to Sufi bodies and spaces (Scott Kugle, Katherine Pratt Ewing, and Ali Altaf Mian). Muslim bodies in modern South Asia have also been subjected to racialization and minoritization, which are two topics we cover in this course (Anna Bigelow and Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst). In the course's penultimate unit, we closely read Shenila Khoja-Moolji's *Sovereign Attachments*, a text illuminates how political questions are tied to affective life and sexual difference. Finally, it is also important to study how South Asian Islam travels in the diaspora. To that end, we read about Muslims in the Caribbean and in the United Kingdom (Aliyah Khan and Hussein Kesvani).

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 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—100 points**
Class attendance is mandatory, and will be taken at the beginning of each class session. You can miss three class sessions without penalty. Each additional unexcused absence will detract 50 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 one absence.
- **Reading Responses—400 points**
There will be 25 opportunities for you to submit a reading response. Each response 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, since

you get most out of this class by being prepared to discuss the reading. Your reading response post should be **analytical rather than descriptive**, consisting of **at least five sentences and should have one thoughtful question**.

The discussion board posts are **due by 9:30 AM. No Late Work will be accepted and no extensions will be 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 five 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 five 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 includes 3-5 sentences but they do not touch on the reading's main points.

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

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

0: Nothing Turned in

- **Unit Synthesis Presentation—100 points**

For this assignment, you will prepare an analytical essay that summarizes and synthesizes a unit (300-500 words). In this essay, you should address the following questions:

- How did the assigned reading(s) help us to understand the unit title?
- What methodological approaches and theoretical insights were gained in this unit?
- What are some desiderata in the scholarship?

You will then make a 10-minute presentation on your essay in class on the last day of a unit. Each student will sign up for this assignment at the beginning of the semester.

- **Final Paper—400 points:** The final paper should be between 3,000-4,000 words. 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 broadly defined. Students will work with me on choosing a suitable topic.

This assignment has different components:

AN ABSTRACT—50 points DUE 11 February by Midnight

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—100 points **Annotated Bibliography due by March 18 Friday by Midnight

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 FOR IN-CLASS PEER REVIEW SESSION—50 points
This is on April 19 Tuesday (last day of class)

Bring 2 printed copies of a first-draft version of your final paper to class on Wednesday December 8th. Make sure the first-draft is at least 8-10 pages and represents your best effort.

FINAL PAPER—200 points DUE DATE TBA

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, 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.bluera.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

Jan 6 Thursday—Introduction

Jan 11 Tuesday—Julia Stephens, *Governing Islam: Law, Empire, and Secularism in South Asia* (Cambridge University Press, 2018), Introduction and Chapter 1

Jan 13 Thursday—Stephens, *Governing Islam*, Chapter 2

Jan 18 Tuesday—Stephens, *Governing Islam*, Chapter 3

Jan 20 Thursday—Stephens, *Governing Islam*, Chapter 4

Jan 25 Tuesday—Stephens, *Governing Islam*, Chapter 5

Jan 27 Thursday: Stephens, *Governing Islam*, Chapter 6 and Conclusion

*Unit Synthesis Presentation on “Historical Foundations”: _____

UNIT 2: CONTESTATIONS OF THE POLITICAL

Feb 2 Tuesday: Muhammad Qasim Zaman, “The Sovereignty of God in Modern Islamic Thought.” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*

Feb 4 Thursday: Rajbir Singh Judge, “The Invisible Hand of the Indic.” *Cultural Critique*

Feb 8 Tuesday: Wilson Chacko Jacob, “Being and Becoming Anticolonial: The Life of Sayyid Fadl and the State of History” *Critical Times*

Feb 10 Thursday: Shaunna Rodrigues, “The Place of Political Membership: Abul Kalam Azad’s Critique of Borders and Nations” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*

*Unit Synthesis Presentation on “Contestations of the Political”: _____

****Feb 11 Friday: Abstract for Final Paper Due by Midnight**

UNIT 3: SUFI BODIES & SPACES

Feb 15 Tuesday: Scott Kugle, “Body Enraptured: The Lips of Shah Hussayn,” from *Sufis’ and Saints’ Bodies*

Feb 17 Thursday: Scott Kugle, “Body Revived: The Heart of Hajji Imdadullah,” from *Sufis’ and Saints’ Bodies*

Feb 22 Tuesday: Katherine Pratt Ewing, “Embodied Metaphor: Playing with Gender in South Asian Sufism.” *JAAR*

Feb 24 Thursday: Ali Altaf Mian, “Genres of Desire: The Erotic in Deobandi Islam.” *History of Religions*

*Unit Synthesis Presentation on “Sufi Bodies and Spaces”: _____

UNIT 4: RACIALIZATION AND MINORITIZATION

March 1 Tuesday: Anna Bigelow, “Memory and Minority: Making Muslim Indians.” *Numen*

March 3 Thursday: Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst (Reading TBA)

March 8 Tuesday—NO CLASS (Spring Break)

March 10 Thursday—NO CLASS (Spring Break)

UNIT 5: AFFECT & SEXUAL DIFFERENCE

March 15 Tuesday: Shenila Khoja-Moolji, *Sovereign Attachments*

March 17 Thursday: Shenila Khoja-Moolji, *Sovereign Attachments*

****Annotated Bibliography due by March 18 Friday by Midnight**

March 22 Tuesday: Shenila Khoja-Moolji, *Sovereign Attachments*

March 24 Thursday: Shenila Khoja-Moolji, *Sovereign Attachments*

*Unit Synthesis Presentation on “Affect and Sexual Difference”: _____

March 29 Tuesday: NO CLASS (Dr. Mian lecturing at Oak Hammock)

March 31 Thursday: Shenila Khoja-Moolji, *Sovereign Attachments*

UNIT 6: SOUTH ASIAN MUSLIMS IN THE DIASPORA

April 5 Tuesday: Aliyah Khan, *Far from Mecca: Globalizing the Muslim Caribbean* (excerpt)

April 7 Thursday: Aliyah Khan, *Far from Mecca: Globalizing the Muslim Caribbean* (excerpt)

April 12 Tuesday: Hussein Kesvani, *Follow me, akhi: The Online world of British Muslims* (excerpt)

April 14 Thursday: *A Match Made in Heaven: British Muslim Women Write about Love and Desire* (excerpt)

*Unit Synthesis Presentation on “South Asian Muslims in the Diaspora”: _____

April 19 Tuesday: In-Class Peer Review Session