

## ISLAM IN THE AMERICAS

REL 4393/LAS 4935

MWF 3 (9:35am-10:25am) || FLI 0101

3 semester hours = 3 hours in class & 3 hours outside work expected per week



# ISLAM IN THE AMERICAS

**REL 4393 || LAS 4935**  
**MWF || 9:35-10:25a**

Why does Islam matter in the Americas? When did it arrive here? What values, practices, traditions, & tensions exist within its histories & social dynamics in the West? How can we study Muslim communities in this hemisphere? This course will place Latin America, the Caribbean, & North America within a broader Islamic framework & locate Muslims of various backgrounds & experiences within the hemisphere from the 1500s to today, from Cape Columbia, Canada to Catamarca, Argentina, & many periods & places in between.

**QUESTIONS?** CONTACT [KCHITWOOD@UFL.EDU](mailto:kchitwood@ufl.edu) || @KCHITWOOD

Instructor: Prof. Ken Chitwood

Office: 017 Anderson Hall

Office Hours: 11:00am-12:00pm MWF and by appointment.

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## Objectives:

1. To learn how to reflect critically on how you, as a student of religion, arrive at your beliefs, values, and practices and bring to consciousness the degree that these might shape how you report on the various cultures and subcultures which you study.
2. To appreciate the study of global Islam in its scope and variety.
3. To give you an opportunity to voice why this is an important topic in the current cultural, social, and political climate.
4. To familiarize you with the multiple narratives, representations, and manifestations of Islam across the American hemisphere — both in history and the contemporary scene.
5. To familiarize you with the resources available to study this topic.
6. To provide you with insight concerning, and opportunities to explore, the historical and contemporary communities of Muslims from Cape Columbia, Canada to Tierra del Fuego, Argentina and many places in between.
7. To foster your ability to think deeply about, and be critical of, the production and reception of scholarship and popular representations of Muslim communities in the Americas.

## Course Description:

Why does Islam matter in the Americas? When did it arrive here? What values, practices, traditions, & tensions exist within its histories & social dynamics in the West? How can we study Muslim communities in this hemisphere.

This course will place Latin America, the Caribbean, & North America within a broader Islamic framework & locate Muslims of various backgrounds & experiences within the hemisphere from the 1500s to today, from Cape Columbia, Canada to Catamarca, Argentina, & many periods & places in between.

The semester will be divided into four main parts: 1) studying global Islam; 2) theoretical themes in the study of religion in the Americas; 3) the history of Islam in the Americas; and 4) country/region specific cartographies of contemporary American Muslim populations.

In attempting to locate, and explore, Islam in the Americas students will first have to apprehend a bit of **what it is to study "global Islam."** In this introductory part of the course we will spend some time discussing what "Islam" is, what its main texts, traditions, and shared vocabulary are, and how studying Islam globally often means studying Muslim communities locally, but being sure to set them within macro-contexts at the regional, hemispheric, or global levels as well.

Studying Islam in the Americas will also require **a theoretical foundation.** This second part of our course will cover the heritage and contact of multiple cultures in the Americas — both across the hemisphere and the Atlantic ocean. In order to do so, we will take a look at the heritage of

Europe (specifically *al-Andalus*), North and West Africa, and other transnational ties via politics, economics, ideologies, technology, and more.

With these foundational aspects in place we will then dive into the study of **the history of Islam in the Americas**, the third section of course. Looking back to pre-colonial contact with Europe, we will navigate the "deeper roots" of Islam in the Americas that are largely ignored in historical overviews before delving into the "forbidden" and forced passages of Muslims across the Atlantic as conquistadors, slaves, and monsters in the Western imagination. Once here in the hemisphere we will see how Islam took part in, shaped, and was molded by its American context even as Muslims adapted to, resisted, and surrendered to the broader Euro-American worldview and its attendant lifeways.

In the final part of the course we will **take a closer look at specific countries and regions** ranging from North America to Latin America and the Caribbean. Specifically we will consider constituencies in Brazil, Mexico, Suriname, Trinidad, Cuba, Haiti, Puerto Rico, the U.S., and Canada.

Over the course of the semester there will be ample opportunity for students to read and respond, discuss and deliberate the topics via various assignments. However, a **semester capstone project**, which will be worked on, edited, and completed throughout the course, will be presented via a final paper and presentation. These projects can take up any number of thematic, chronological, demographic, or geographic topics.

It is my hope that this course will help place Latin America, the Caribbean, and North America within a broader Islamic framework and locate Muslims of various genealogies within the hemisphere over the *longue durée*. Furthermore, this course will aim to focus on local values, practices, traditions, and tensions placing these within larger questions about what kinds of histories, social dynamics, and meaning production make Islam significant, or how its significance is denied, in a part of the world that hasn't recognized its history here or its contemporary configurations or impact.

**Required Texts:**

Curtis, Edward E., ed., *The Bloomsbury Reader on Islam in the West*. Bloomsbury, 2015.

Hammer, Julianne and Safi, Omid. *The Cambridge Companion to American Islam*. Cambridge, 2013.

Khan, Aisha, ed. *Islam and the Americas*. University Press of Florida, 2015.

Narbona, Maria del Mar Logroño, Paulo G. Pinto, John T. Karam, eds. *Crescent Over Another Horizon: Islam in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Latino USA*, University of Texas Press, 2015.

\*\*Sonn, Tamara, *A Brief History of Islam* (2nd Edition), Wiley-Blackwell, 2010 (available online at: <https://libraryoflights.files.wordpress.com/2011/09/islam-a-brief-history-tamara-sonn.pdf>)

**Recommended Texts:**

Curtis, Edward E. *Muslims in America: A Short History*, Oxford University Press, 2009.

Fernández-Armesto, Felipe. *The Americas: A Hemispheric History*, Modern Library, 2006.

Gomez, Michael. *Black Crescent: The Experience and Legacy of African Muslims in the Americas*, Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Nasr, Sayed Hossein, et. al. eds., *The Study Qur'an: A New Translation and Commentary*, Harper One, 2015.

**Bibliography of Other Readings/Sources:**

Afzal, Ahmed. *Lone Star Muslims: Transnational Lives and the South Asian Experience in Texas*. New York University Press, 2015.

Ahmed, Shahab. *What is Islam? The Importance of being Islamic*. Princetown University Press, 2015.

Aidi, Hishaam and Manning Marable, Editors, *Black Routes to Islam*. Palgrave, 2009.

Arjana, Sophia Rose. *Muslims in the Western Imagination*. Oxford University Press, 2015.

Bender, Thomas, ed. *Rethinking American History in a Global Age*. University of California Press, 2002.

Bilici, Mucahit. *Finding Mecca in America: How Islam Is Becoming an American Religion*. Chicago, 2012.

Bolton, Herbert E. 1933. "The Epic of Greater America," *American Historical Review* 38 (3): 448-474.

Chitwood, Ken. "Judaism and Islam in Latin America," *Encyclopedia of Religion in Latin America*, ed. by Henri Gooren, (New York: Springer References, forthcoming 2016).

———. "Globalizing the Study of American Islam: Approaches to the field through the lens of globalization theory," *University of Waikato Islamic Studies Review*, (Vol 2, no. 2 — Fall 2016).

———. "Islam en Español: The narratives, demographics, & reversion pathways of Latina/o Muslims in the U.S.," *University of Waikato Islamic Studies Review*, (Vol 1, no. 2 — Fall 2015).

———. "Like a river through rock: the dynamics of Puerto Rican Muslim migration to Central Florida," The 6th Conference on Immigration to the US South "Immigrants Making an Impact: Challenges and Opportunities in the South and Nationwide," University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC, October 13 - 15, 2016.

———. "Youth, Islam, and the Construction of Religious Identities: A Case-Study among Puerto Rican Muslims," Latin America Studies Association, New York City, NY, May 29, 2016.

———. "Dreams of al-Andalus: narratives of conversion and identity reconstruction among Latina/o Muslims in the U.S." American Academy of Religion — Southeastern Commission for the Study of Religion (SECSOR) Regional Meeting, Nashville, TN, March 6-8, 2015.

———. "Latina/o Muslims 'Like' one another: an ethnographic exploration of social media and the formation of a Latina/o Muslim digital community." University of Florida — Religion and Culture in a Digital Age Conference, Gainesville, FL, January 24, 2015.

———. "American Islam: The study of American Islam from demographic & ethnographic perspectives," *Yearbook of International Religious Demography: 2016*, Brill Publishing, July 2016: 129-137.

———. "Our Man in Havana: Turkey's alter-Islamist agenda in a global context," *Critical Muslim 16: Turkey*, London, UK: Hurst Publishers, December, 2015.

- Cook, Karoline. *Forbidden Passages: Moriscos and Muslims in New Spain*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016.
- Cooke, Miriam and Bruce Lawrence. *Muslim Networks from Hajj to Hip Hop*. The University of North Carolina Press, 2005.
- Curiel, Jonathan. *Islam in America*. J.B. Tauris, 2015.
- Dannin, Robert. *Black Pilgrimage to Islam*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Dean, Carolyn. *Inka Bodies and the Body of Christ: Corpus Christi in Colonial Cuzco, Peru*. Duke University Press, 1999.
- Diouf, Sylviane A. *Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas*. New York University Press, 2013.
- Elliott, John. *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America*. Yale University Press, 2007.
- Esposito, John L. *Islam: The Straight Path*. Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Gilsenan, M. *Recognizing Islam: Religion and Society in the Middle East*. Tauris, 2000.
- Grewal, Zareena. *Islam Is a Foreign Country: American Muslims and the Global Crisis of Authority*. NYU, 2013.
- Grim, Brian J., Todd M. Johnson, egard Skirbekk, Gina A. Zurlo, eds. *Yearbook of International Religious Demography 2016*. Brill, 2016.
- Haddad, Yvonne Y., Jane I. Smith, and Kathleen M. Moore. *Muslim Women in America: The Challenge of Islamic Identity Today*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Hussain, Amir. 2004. "Muslims in Canada: Opportunities and Challenges." *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 3, no. 3–4: 359–379.
- . "(Re)presenting: Muslims on North American Television". *Contemporary Islam: Dynamics of Muslim Life*, Vol. 4, No. 1, April 2010, pp. 55-75.
- . *Muslims in the Making of America*. Baylor University Press, 2016.
- Kahera, Akel Ismail. *Deconstructing the American Mosque: Space, Gender, and Aesthetics*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002.

Khan, Aisha. *Callaloo Nation: Metaphors of Race and Religious Identity among South Asians in Trinidad*. Duke University Press, 2004.

Knight, Michael Muhammad. *The Five-Percenter: Islam, Hip-Hop, and the Gods of New York*. Oxford: Oneworld, 2008.

—————. *Magic in Islam*. Tarcher Perigee, 2016.

Maria de Castro, Cristina. *The Construction of Muslim Identities in Contemporary Brazil*. Lexington, 2013.

Martínez-Vásquez, Hjamil A. *Latina/o Y Musulmán: The Construction of Latina/o Identity among Latina/o Muslims in the United States*. Pickwick Publications, 2010.

Reis, João José. *Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia*. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. Vintage, 1998.

**Assignments (300 points total):**

1. *Semester Capstone Project* (Process and Final Product) (150 pts)
  - Question/thesis project idea (15) — January 20
  - Primary document analysis and/or interview (15) — February 3
  - Secondary lit. review (20) — February 17
  - Outline (20) — March 3
  - Final Finished Paper (80) — April 24
2. *Final Presentations* (25 pts) — TBD
3. *Five group quizzes* (50 pts, 10 pts each) — see Course Calendar
4. *Op-ed/analysis piece, V-log, or social media project* (25 pts) — March 31
5. *Participation grade* earned with class discussions & attendance cards (daily 3x5 cards with): 1) what did you learn? 2) what question do you still have? (50 pts)

**Grading Scale:**

A 94-100	A - 90-93
B+ 86-89	B 80-85
C+ 76-79	C 70-75
D+ 66-69	D 60-65
E Below 60	

Grades are consistent with UF policy as stated here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

**Late or Make-Up Assignments:**

You may turn in assignments early or receive an extension on an exam or essay assignment only in extraordinary circumstances, with written approval, and with prior consent from the instructor. If an extension is not granted, the assignment will be marked down 1/2 grade (e.g., from B+ to B) for each day late.

**Attendance and Participation:**

Class attendance and active participation is required and a significant portion of your grade. Poor attendance will harm your course grade. Students should arrive on time and prepared to discuss the day's readings.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up assignments and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the online catalog at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

**Honor Code:**

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 (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honorcode/>) 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.



**Common Courtesy:**

Cell phones, carrier pigeons, and other communication devices should be turned off during class. Students who receive or make calls during class will be asked to leave. You may take notes on a laptop computer or on a slate-board, although the instructor reserves the right to ask you to turn off the computer or wipe the slate clean if circumstances warrant. The instructor also reserves the right to ask any student engaging in disruptive behavior (e.g., whispering, reading a newspaper) to leave the class.

**Conferences:**

Students are encouraged to meet with the instructor during office hours or by appointment.

**Accommodation for Disabilities:**

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.

**Counseling Resources:**

Resources available on-campus for students include the following:

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

**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.

## **Online Course Evaluation:**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>.

## **COURSE CALENDAR:**

### **Part One: Introduction to the Study of Global Islam**

#### **WEEK 1:**

Wednesday 1/4 — Intro and Course Overview

Friday 1/6 — What is Islam? Text/tradition, universals, and contradictions

Reading(s): “*What is Islam?* Forum — Introduction” & Articles:  
<http://marginalia.lareviewofbooks.org/islam-forum-introduction/>

Recommended: Michael Muhammad Knight, *Magic in Islam*, Ch. 1ff.

#### **WEEK 2:**

Monday 1/9 — Islam 101: Texts, traditions, shared vocabulary

Reading(s): Sonn, Foreword, Preface, & Ch. 1.

Wednesday 1/11 — Global Islam: scope & glocal tensions

Reading(s): Gilson, Preface & An Anthropologist’s Introduction

Friday 1/13 — **Quiz 1** & Discussion

## **Part Two: Studying Islam in the Americas (Theoretical Themes)**

### **WEEK 3:**

Monday 1/16 — NO CLASS

Wednesday 1/18 — A Hemispheric Approach to Religion in the Americas

Reading(s): Bolton, “The Epic of Greater America;” Fernández-Armesto, “Americas? America?”

Recommended: Bender, “Introduction.”

Friday 1/20 — A Hemispheric Approach to Religion in the Americas

Reading(s): Elliott, “Introduction: Worlds Overseas;” Fernández-Armesto, Chs. 2-3.

Discussion: Thesis Project Ideas (**THESIS/PROJECT IDEA DUE**)

### **WEEK 4:**

Monday 1/23 — An Americas Approach to Islam in the Americas

Reading(s): Curtis, “Introduction to the Volume;” Khan, “Introduction: A Storied Hemisphere”

Wednesday 1/25 — Entrees into the Field

Reading(s): Chitwood, “Exploring Islam in the Americas from Demographic and Ethnographic Perspectives;” Karam, del Mar Logroño Narbona, & Pinto, “Introduction: Latino America in the *Umma*/the *Umma* in Latino America.”

Friday 1/27 — No Class, **Quiz 2** (Online)

## **Part Three: History of Islam in the Americas**

### **WEEK 5:**

Monday 1/30 — Deeper Roots?

Reading(s): Ahmad, "Pre-Columbian Presence of Africans and Muslims," (922-926); Hussain, "Islam in America: A Short History."

Wednesday 2/1 — Muslims, Spain, & the Americas

Reading(s): Curtis, Ch. 1 pp. 11-15 & 39-46; Rose Arjana, "Muslim Monsters in the Americas," pp. 132-141; Dean, Ch. 1 "Corpus Christi Triumphant," pp. 7-14; Cook, Ch. 1 "De los Prohibidos' Muslims and Moriscos in Colonial Spanish America."

Friday 2/3 — Discussion: Primary Document Analysis (**PRIMARY DOC ANALYSIS DUE**)

## **WEEK 6:**

Monday 2/6 — Muslims, Africa, & the Americas

Reading(s): Gomez, Ch. 1.

Wednesday 2/8 — Muslims, Africa, & the Americas

Reading(s): Diouf, Ch. 1. Karam, Ch. 2 "African Rebellion and Refuge on the Edge of Empire."

Friday 2/10 — **Quiz 3** & Discussion

## **Part Four: Specific Regions, Countries, & Themes**

## **WEEK 7:**

Monday 2/13 — Latin America: Brazil

Reading(s): Hatch, "Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia by João José Reis (1993)," available at: (<http://notevenpast.org/slave-rebellion-brazil-muslim-uprising-1835-bahia-1993/>); Maria de Castro, Introduction; Pinto, Ch. 5 "Conversion, Revivalism, and Tradition: The religious Dynamics of Muslim Communities in Brazil;" Ali, Ch. 9 "Bahamian and Brazilian Muslims: Struggle for Identity and Belonging."

Recommended: Gomez, Ch. 3 "Brazilian Sambas."

Wednesday 2/15 — Latin America: Mexico

Reading(s): Medina, “Islam in Mexico;” Farooq, “Searching for God and Justice in Mexico’s Rebel State,” available at: <https://wp.nyu.edu/therevealer/2013/05/28/searching-for-god-and-justice-in-mexicos-rebel-state-2/>

Friday 2/17 — Latin America: Mexico (**SECONDARY DOC REVIEW DUE**)

Reading(s): de Maria y Campos, Ch. 6 “Guests of Islam: Conversion and the Institutionalization of Islam in Mexico;” Cañas Cuevas, Ch. 8 “The Politics of Conversion to Islam in Southern Mexico.”

**WEEK 8:**

Monday 2/20 — Latin America: Suriname

Reading(s): Hoefte, Ch. 4 “Locating Mecca: Religious and Political Discord in the Javanese Community in Pre-Independence Suriname;” Bal & Sinha-Kerkhoff, Ch. 3 “Ethnic and Religious Identification among Muslim East Indians in Suriname (1898-1954).”

Wednesday 2/22 — Caribbean: Trinidad & Tobago

Reading(s): Khan, Chs. 10-11

Friday 2/24 — Caribbean: Trinidad & Tobago

Reading(s): Khan, Chs. 12-13; Kassim, Ch. 9 “Forming Islamic Religious Identity Among Trinidadians in the Age of Social Networks.”

**WEEK 9:**

Monday 2/27 — Caribbean: Cuba

Reading(s): Delmonte, Ch. 7 “Cubans Searching for a New Faith in a New Context;” Chitwood, “Our Man in Havana.”

Wednesday 3/1 — The French Caribbean: Haiti & Guadeloupe

Reading(s): Bonilla, Ch. 7 “Between Terror and Transcendence;” Arab News, “Islam finds a place in Haiti,” available at: <http://www.arabnews.com/islam-finds-place-haiti>; USA Today, “Islam's inroads in Haiti, land of Voodoo and Christianity,” available at: <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2012/10/11/islam-haiti/1626271/>; Kuczynski, Ch. 8 “Muslims in Martinique.”

Friday 3/3 — No Class (**OUTLINES DUE**)

**\*\*SPRING BREAK\*\***

**WEEK 10:**

Monday 3/13 — Puerto Rican Muslims

Reading(s): Ramadan-Santiago, “History of Islam in Puerto Rico;” Ocasio, “Alianza Islamica: The True Story,” available at: <http://theislamicmonthly.com/alianza-islamica-the-true-story/>.

Wednesday 3/15 — Puerto Rican Muslims

Reading(s): Ramadan-Santiago, Ch. 6 “Insha’Allah/Ojalá, Yes Yes Y’all;” Chitwood, “Puerto Rican Muslims ‘Like’ One Another;” Chitwood, “‘Like a river through rock’: the dynamics of Puerto Rican Muslim migration to Central Florida;” Chitwood, “Youth, Islam, and the Construction of Religious Identities: A Puerto Rican Case Study.”

Friday 3/17 — **Quiz 4** & Discussion

**WEEK 11:**

Monday 3/20 — North America: An Introduction

Reading(s): Hammer & Safi, Introduction, Ch. 1; Curtis, Ch. 2 pp. 47-58.

Wednesday 3/22 — North America: African-American Muslims, Immigrant Flows, & Frictions

Reading(s): Hammer & Safi, Chs. 3-6.

Friday 3/24 — North America: African-American Muslims, Immigrant Flows, & Frictions

Reading(s): Deutsch, Ch. 5 “Fear of a Brown Planet;” Gomez, Ch. 6 “Breaking Away.”

**WEEK 12:**

Monday 3/27 — North America: African-American Muslims, Immigrant Flows, & Frictions

Reading(s): Gomez, Ch. 7 “The Nation;” Curtis, Ch. 3 pp. 93-100.

Wednesday 3/29 — North America: African-American Muslims, Immigrant Flows, & Frictions

Reading(s): Curtis, Ch. 5 pp. 187-198; Curtis, Ch. 7 pp. 251-260; Hammer & Safi, Chs. 7, 13, 15.

Recommended: Afzal, Introduction; Grewal, Introduction.

Friday 3/31 — Discussion: Op-eds and Analyses (**OP-ED/ANALYSIS PIECE DUE**)

**WEEK 13:**

Monday 4/3 — North America: Canada

Reading(s): Hussain, “Muslims in Canada: Opportunities and Challenges.”

Wednesday 4/5 — North America: Latina/o Muslims

Reading(s): Chitwood, “Islam en Español: The narratives, demographics, & reversion pathways of Latina/o Muslims in the U.S.,” Curtis, Ch. 7 pp. 241-250; Martínez-Vásquez, Introduction & Ch. 1.

Friday 4/7 — **Quiz 5** & Discussion

**WEEK 14:**

Monday 4/10 — Presentations & Discussion

Wednesday 4/12 — Presentations & Discussion

Friday 4/14 — Presentations & Discussion

**WEEK 15:**

Monday 4/17 — Presentations & Discussion

Wednesday 4/19 — Presentations & Discussion

**\*\*FINAL FINISHED PAPER DUE by FINAL PERIOD: Monday, April 24, 2017\*\***