This course critically examines social scientific studies of Islam while pursuing a deeper interrogation of whether such a thing as “Islam” can be meaningfully analyzed. The course begins by introducing students to the sociology of religion and the field’s evolution since the founding generation (Marx, Weber, Durkheim), highlighting where mainstream sociological literature has addressed Islam as a religious system. We then question the category of Islam itself, taking different perspectives from Islamic studies, history, and the social sciences, and then paying particularly attention to debates about the definitions of Islam and religion in anthropology and religious studies, focusing on the work of Clifford Geertz and Talal Asad. The second half of the course looks at the empirical sites of Clifford Geertz’s Islam Observed, studying varieties of Islam in Morocco and Indonesia. We end the course with a comparison to the United States.

**Required Readings and Reading Requirements:**
All book selections and articles will be provided on ClassesV2. Graduate students are encouraged to purchase books on Amazon. Each week’s readings will be approximately 100 pages for undergraduates. Graduate students are recommended to read the entire texts.

**Note on Academic Integrity**
Students are expected to adhere to the standards prescribed in the Undergraduate Regulations publication regarding cheating, plagiarism, and documentation. (http://www.yale.edu/yalecollege/publications/uregs/appendix/cheating.html)
Appropriately using and documenting sources is an integral component of developing necessary professional and academic skills. Students are encouraged to access the resources available through the Writing Center website when preparing writing assignments. (http://www.yale.edu/bass/writing/sources/why.html)

**No Laptops Except During Lecture (and No Phones At All)**
Unless you’re moonlighting as an obstetrician, turn off all phones and laptops while we talk. If for some reason you need to be contactable, tell us before class. During the lecture section, you may take notes on a laptop, but then put it away (we will let you know what’s ‘testable’ in discussion).
Course Structure and Grading:

**Classroom Participation (20%)**: Because this course is structured as a colloquium, its success depends on your active participation in discussion. All readings must be completed prior to class. Your attendance will, of course, also be a highly significant factor.

**“Islam or a Muslim?” Project (10%)**: All students are required to attend at least one lecture or presentation at Yale and read at least one article in a mainstream magazine or newspaper (e.g. *The New York Times, The Economist, The National Review, Reason, The Nation*) and describe how the category of Islam is being used in a ½ page to one page reflection.

**Oral Reports (20%)**: Undergraduate students are responsible for two oral reports on articles or chapters introducing week's topic and facilitating discussion. Graduate students are responsible for one book and one article. Each presentation should include a small handout with a summary of the book’s argument and important points for the rest of the class.

**Mid-Term Examination OR Mid-Term Paper (20%)**: For undergraduates, an examination of the readings in the first half of the course. For graduate students, a 7-10 page (max) response to themes presented in readings during first half of course. This early paper can be used as a guide for the larger paper required of graduate students at the end of the course.

**Final Paper (30%)**: For undergraduates, a 2000 word book review using the tools we have covered during the year. The review will use the ideas we covered throughout the year to compare and contrast one of the books we read to one of the supplementary books or a book of your own choice. For graduate students, an 8000 word (including bibliography) analysis of a topic you choose in consultation with the instructor. During the eighth week, graduate students will submit a paper proposal and working bibliography. The goal of this paper will be to present it at an academic conference and then prepare it for publication. Undergraduates may choose to do the graduate assignment as well.

**Contacting Us**

Please let us know if you need help with the class or if you’re confused (about the class that is, though you’re welcome to talk to me about more general existential confusion; however, Yale employ people much more qualified to discuss this with you than we). You can contact us at the e-mails above and in our separate office hours. Feel free to contact either of us, though generally, undergraduates should contact Prof. Guhin and graduate students should contact Prof. Wyrtzen as that is how the grading will be proportioned. We will be in touch about your projects throughout the semester, including a required early consultation—whether in office hours or over e-mail—in which we decide what you will do for your final project. If you contact us, we will get back to you within 48 hours. Don’t send a “where are you? the world is ending!” e-mail until 48 hours have passed, in which case we will have either e-mailed you back or the world will have ended.
Schedule of Discussion Topics and Readings:

Week 1 (Jan. 15): Introduction: What is Sociology? What is Islam?
   In-Class Handout on Sociology and the Study of Islam.

Section I: How do the social sciences talk about religion?

Week 2 (Jan. 22): What is Religion?


Supplemental Articles and Chapters:

Supplemental Books:

Week 3 (Jan. 29): How Do Scholars Create Islam?


Supplemental Articles and Chapters:
- Tayob, A. 2009. “Divergent Approaches to Religion in Modern Islamic

**Supplemental Books:**

**Week 4 (Feb. 5): Weber and Islam**


**Supplemental Articles and Chapters:**

**Supplemental Books:**

**Week 5 (Feb. 12): Clifford Geertz**


**Supplementary Articles and Chapters:**
- Reed, I. 2008. “Maximal Interpretation in Clifford Geertz and the Strong Program in Cultural Sociology: Towards a New Epistemology.” *Cultural*

**Supplementary Books:**

**Week 6 (Feb 19): Talal Asad**


**Supplementary Articles and Chapters:**

**Supplementary Books:**
Week 7 (Feb. 26): How do Scholars define Islam?


Supplementary Articles and Chapters:

Supplemental Books

Week 8 (Mar. 5): Midterm (Graduate Students do not need to attend)
Section III: The Cases

Week 9 (Mar. 26): Indonesia I


Supplementary Articles and Chapters:

Supplementary Books:

Week 10 (Apr. 2): Indonesia II


Supplementary Articles and Chapters:

Supplementary Books:

Week 11 (Apr. 9): Morocco I


Supplementary Articles and Chapters:

Supplementary Books:

Week 12 (Apr. 16): Morocco II


Supplementary Articles and Chapters:


Supplementary Books:
- Ozgur, Professor Iren. 2012. Islamic Schools in Modern Turkey: Faith, Politics, and Education. Cambridge University Press.

Week 13 (Apr. 23): The United States


Supplementary Articles and Chapters:

Supplementary Books
- Karim, Jamillah. American Muslim Women: Negotiating Race, Class, and Gender Within the Ummah. NYU Press, 2008.