

Yale University  
Fall 2011

SOCY343-01(23217)/SOCY512/RLST291/MMES343/EP&E273

### Sociology of Islam

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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 employs 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. Wyrzten 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:*

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**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?**

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

1. Riesebrodt, Martin. *The Promise of Salvation: A Theory of Religion*. Translated by Steven Rendall. Reprint. University Of Chicago Press, 2012.

*Supplemental Articles and Chapters:*

- Sayer, A. 1997. "Essentialism, social constructionism, and beyond." *The Sociological Review* 454–87.
- Flanagan, K. 2008. "Sociology into Theology: The Unacceptable Leap." *Theory, Culture & Society* 25(7-8):236–61.
- Furey, C. M. 2012. "Body, Society, and Subjectivity in Religious Studies." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 80(1):7–33.
- Barrett, J. 2009. "Cognitive Science, Religion, and Theology." in *The Believing Primate*, edited by Michael Murray and Jeffrey Schloss. Oxford University Press.

*Supplemental Books:*

- Taves, Ann. 2009. *Religious Experience Reconsidered: A Building-Block Approach to the Study of Religion and Other Special Things*. Princeton University Press.
- Tweed, Thomas A. 2008. *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion*. Harvard University Press.
- Smith, Jonathan Z. *Relating Religion: Essays in the Study of Religion*. 2004. University Of Chicago Press.

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

1. Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. 1st Vintage Books ed. Vintage, 1979.
2. Lockman, Zachary. 2004. *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism*. Cambridge University Press. (Chapters 6-7: "Said's Orientalism: a book and its aftermath"; "After Orientalism?" 182-267.)

*Supplemental Articles and Chapters:*

- Alam, A. 2007. "'Scholarly Islam' and 'Everyday Islam': Reflections on the Debate over Integration of the Muslim Minority in India and Western Europe." *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 27(2):241–60.
- Bowen, J. R. 1998. "What Is 'Universal' and 'Local' in Islam?." *Ethos* 26(2):258–61.
- Tayob, A. 2009. "Divergent Approaches to Religion in Modern Islamic

Discourses.” *Religion Compass* 3(2):155–67.

*Supplemental Books:*

- Duderija, A. 2011. *Constructing a Religiously Ideal "Believer" and "Woman" in Islam*. Palgrave Macmillan.

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

1. Weber, Max. 1946. “Religious Rejections of the World and Their Directions.” *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. 323–59.
2. Eisenstadt, S.N. 1999. “Weber’s Analysis of Islam and the Specific Pattern of Islamic Civilization” in Huff, Toby E. (Ed.) *Max Weber & Islam*. Transaction Books. (281-294)
3. Matin Asgari, A. 2004. “Islamic studies and the spirit of Max Weber: a critique of cultural essentialism.” *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies* 13(3):293–312.
4. Salvatore, A. 1996. “Beyond Orientalism? Max Weber and the displacements of essentialism’ in the study of Islam.” *Arabica* 43(3):457–85.

*Supplemental Articles and Chapters:*

- Swedberg, R. 2003. “The Changing Picture of Max Weber's Sociology.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 29(1):283–306.
- Bellah, R. N. 1999. “Max Weber and world-denying love: a look at the historical sociology of religion.” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 67(2):277–304.

*Supplemental Books:*

- Turner, Bryan S. 1978. *Weber and Islam: A Critical Study*. Routledge Kegan & Paul, 1978.
- Weber, Max. 2010. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Revised. Oxford University Press, USA.

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

1. Geertz, Clifford. 1977. “Religion as a Cultural System.” Pp. 87–125 in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
2. Geertz, Clifford. 1971. *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia*. University Of Chicago Press.

*Supplementary Articles and Chapters:*

- Micheelsen, A. 2002. “I don’t do systems”: An interview with Clifford Geertz.” *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 14:2–20.
- Reed, I. 2008. “Maximal Interpretation in Clifford Geertz and the Strong Program in Cultural Sociology: Towards a New Epistemology.” *Cultural*

*Sociology* 2(2):187–200.

- Schilbrack, K. 2005. “Religion, Models of, and Reality: Are We Through with Geertz?.” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 73(2):429–52.
- Segal, R. A. 1999. “Weber and Geertz on the Meaning of Religion.” *Religion* 29(1):61–71.
- Sewell, W. H. 1997. “Geertz, cultural systems, and history: From synchrony to transformation.” *Representations* (59):35–55.

*Supplementary Books:*

- Geertz, Clifford. 1985. *Local Knowledge: Further Essays In Interpretive Anthropology*. Basic Books, 1985.
- Durkheim, E. 1995. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Tr. K. Fields. Free Press.

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

1. Asad, Tala. 1993. “The Construction of Religion as an Anthropological Category.” Pp. 27–54 in *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
2. Asad Tala. 2009. “The idea of an anthropology of Islam.” *Qui Parle* 17(2):1–30.

*Supplementary Articles and Chapters:*

- Anjum, O. 2007. “Islam as a Discursive Tradition: Talal Asad and His Interlocutors.” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 27(3):656–72.
- Bush, S. S. 2012a. “‘Are Meanings the Name of the Game? Religion as Symbolic Meaning and Religion as Power?’” *Religion Compass* 6(12):525–33.
- Lee, J. 2012. “Ethos and Worldview Reconsidered: Geertz, Normativity, and the Comparative Study of Religions.” *Religion Compass* 6(12):500–510.
- Springs, J. 2012. “Meaning vs. Power: Are Thick Description and Power Analysis Intrinsicly at Odds? Response to Interpretation, Explanation, and Clifford Geertz.” *Religion Compass* 6(12):534–42.

*Supplementary Books:*

- Asad, Talal. *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*. 1st ed. Stanford University Press, 2003.
- Mahmood, Saba. *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*. Princeton University Press, 2005.

## Week 7 (Feb. 26): How do Scholars define Islam?

1. Abu-Rabi', Ibrahim M. 2006. "Contemporary Islamic Thought: One or Many?" in Abu-Rabi', Ibrahim M. (Ed.) *The Blackwell Companion to Contemporary Islamic Thought*. Blackwell. (1-20)
2. Hughes, A. W. 2012. "The Study of Islam Before and After September 11: A Provocation." *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 24: 314–36.
3. Berg, H. 2012. "The Essence of Essentializing: A Critical Discourse on 'Critical Discourse in the Study of Islam'." *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 24:337–56.
4. Martin, R. C. 2012. "The Uses and Abuses of Criticism in the Study of Islam: A Response to Aaron Hughes." *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 24: 371–88.
5. Mas, R. 2012. "Why Critique?." *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 24:389–407.
6. Rippin, A. 2012. "Provocation and Its Responses." *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 24:408–17.
7. Hughes, A. W. 2012. "Provoked: An Afterword." *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 24:418–23.

### *Supplementary Articles and Chapters:*

- Karim, Jamillah. "Can We Define 'True' Islam? African American Muslim Women Respond to Transnational Muslim Identities. 2010. in Ernst, Carl W. and Richard C. Martin *Rethinking Islamic Studies: From Orientalism to Cosmopolitanism*. The University of South Carolina Press. (114-130)
- Ernst, Carl W. and Martin, Richard C. "Toward a Post-Orientalist Approach to Islamic Religious Studies" 2010. in Ernst, Carl W. and Richard C. Martin *Rethinking Islamic Studies: From Orientalism to Cosmopolitanism*. The University of South Carolina Press. 1-19.
- Haj, S. 2002. "Reordering Islamic Orthodoxy: Muhammad ibn'Abdul Wahhāb." *The Muslim World* 92(3-4):333–70.

### *Supplemental Books*

- Varisco, Daniel Martin. 2005. *Islam Obscured: the rhetoric of anthropological representation*.
- Moaddel, Mansoor. *Islamic Modernism, Nationalism, and Fundamentalism: Episode and Discourse*. University Of Chicago Press, 2005.
- Roy, Olivier. *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah*. Columbia University Press, 2006.
- Mamdani, Mahmood. *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror*. Three Rivers Press, 2005.

## Week 8 (Mar. 5): Midterm (Graduate Students do not need to attend)

### Section III: The Cases

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#### Week 9 (Mar. 26): Indonesia I

1. Laffan, Michael. *The Makings of Indonesian Islam: Orientalism and the Narration of a Sufi Past*. Princeton University Press, 2011.

##### *Supplementary Articles and Chapters:*

- Kersten, C. 2009. "Indonesia's New Muslim Intellectuals." *Religion Compass* 3(6):971–85.
- Laffan, M. 2005. "The Fatwa Debated? Shura in one Indonesian Context." *Islamic Law and Society* 12(1):93–121.
- Lukens Bull, R. A. 2001. "Two sides of the same coin: Modernity and tradition in Islamic education in Indonesia." *Anthropology & education quarterly* 32(3):350–72.
- Mujiburrahman. 1999. "Islam and politics in Indonesia: The political thought of Abdurrahman Wahid." *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 10(3):339–52.
- Sirozi, M. 2005. "The Intellectual Roots of Islamic Radicalism in Indonesia: Ja'far Umar Thalib of Laskar Jihad (Jihad Fighters) and His Educational Background\*." *The Muslim World* 95(1):81–120.

##### *Supplementary Books:*

- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. New Edition. Verso, 2006.
- Aydin, Cemil. *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought*. Columbia University Press, 2007.
- Ho, Engseng. *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility Across the Indian Ocean*. University of California Press, 2006.

#### Week 10 (Apr. 2): Indonesia II

1. Doorn-Harder, Pieterella van. *Women Shaping Islam: Reading the Qu'ran in Indonesia*. University of Illinois Press, 2006.

##### *Supplementary Articles and Chapters:*

- Sirry, M. 2010. "The Public Expression of Traditional Islam: the Pesantren and Civil Society in Post-Suharto Indonesia." *The Muslim World* 100(1):60–77.
- Syamsiyatun, S. 2007. "A Daughter in the Indonesian Muhammadiyah: Nasyiatul Aisyiyah Negotiates a New Status and Image." *Journal of Islamic Studies* 18(1):69–94.
- Rinaldo, R. 2008. "Envisioning the Nation: Women Activists, Religion and the Public Sphere in Indonesia." *Social Forces* 86(4):1781–1804.
- Simon, G. M. 2009. "The soul freed of cares? Islamic prayer, subjectivity, and the contradictions of moral selfhood in Minangkabau, Indonesia." *American*

*Ethnologist* 36(2):258–75.

- Jones, C. 2010. "Images of Desire: Creating Virtue and Value in an Indonesian Islamic Lifestyle Magazine." *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 6(3):91–117.

*Supplementary Books:*

- Ahmed, Leila. *A Quiet Revolution: The Veil's Resurgence, from the Middle East to America*. Yale University Press, 2012.
- Bennett, Linda Rae. *Women, Islam and Modernity: Single Women, Sexuality and Reproductive Health in Contemporary Indonesia*. 1st ed. Routledge, 2007.
- Deeb, Lara. *An Enchanted Modern: Gender and Public Piety in Shi'i Lebanon*. Princeton University Press, 2006.
- Hafez, Sherine. *An Islam of Her Own: Reconsidering Religion and Secularism in Women's Islamic Movements*. NYU Press, 2011.
- Robinson, Kathryn. *Gender, Islam and Democracy in Indonesia*. Routledge, 2008.

### **Week 11 (Apr. 9): Morocco I**

1. Salime, Zakia. *Between Feminism and Islam: Human Rights and Sharia Law in Morocco*. Univ Of Minnesota Press, 2011.

*Supplementary Articles and Chapters:*

- Zemni, S. 2006. "Islam between Jihadi Threats and Islamist Insecurities? Evidence from Belgium and Morocco." *Mediterranean Politics* 11(2):231–53.
- Layish, A. 2004. "The Transformation of the Sharī'a from Jurists' Law to Statutory Law in the Contemporary Muslim World." *Die Welt des Islams* 44(1):85–113.
- Moaddel, M. 2002. "The study of Islamic culture and politics: An overview and assessment." *Annual Review of Sociology* 359–86.

*Supplementary Books:*

- Bennabi, Malik. 2001. *On the Origins of Human Society*.
- An-Na'im, Abdullahi Ahmed. *Islam and the Secular State: Negotiating the Future of Shari'a*. Harvard University Press, 2010.
- Hallaq, Wael B. *The Impossible State: Islam, Politics, and Modernity's Moral Predicament*. Columbia University Press, 2012.
- March, Andrew F. *Islam and Liberal Citizenship: The Search for an Overlapping Consensus*. Oxford University Press, USA, 2011.

### **Week 12 (Apr. 16): Morocco II**

1. Eickelman, Dale F. *Knowledge and Power in Morocco*. Princeton Univ. Press, 1992.

*Supplementary Articles and Chapters:*

- Naji, M. 2012. "Learning to Weave the Threads of Honor: Understanding the Value of Female Schooling in Southern Morocco." *Anthropology &*



- education quarterly* 43(4):372–84.
- Gray, D. H. 2006. “Transnational Muslim women: A qualitative study of conceptions of Islam in Morocco and in France.” *The Journal of North African Studies* 11(3):319–35.
  - Dieste, J. L. M. 2009. “‘Demonstrating Islam’: the Conflict of Text and the Mudawwana Reform in Morocco.” *The Muslim World* 99(1):134–54.

*Supplementary Books:*

- Gellner, Ernest. 1981. *Muslim Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.
- Messick, Brinkley. 1996. *The Calligraphic State: Textual Domination and History in a Muslim Society*. University of California Press.
- Mitchell, Timothy. 1991. *Colonising Egypt*. University of California Press.
- Ozgur, Professor Iren. 2012. *Islamic Schools in Modern Turkey: Faith, Politics, and Education*. Cambridge University Press.
- Starrett, Gregory. 1998. *Putting Islam to Work: Education, Politics, and Religious Transformation in Egypt*. University of California Press.
- Tan, Charlene. 2011. *Islamic Education and Indoctrination: The Case in Indonesia*. Routledge.
- Zaman, Muhammad Qasim. 2007. *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change*. Princeton University Press.

**Week 13 (Apr. 23): The United States**

1. Jackson, Sherman A. *Islam and the Blackamerican: Looking Toward the Third Resurrection*. Oxford University Press, USA, 2011.

*Supplementary Articles and Chapters:*

- Ajrouch, K.J. 2004. “Gender, Race, and Symbolic Boundaries: Contested Spaces of Identity among Arab American Adolescents.” *Soc. Perspectives* 47(4):371–91.
- Voas, D., and F. Fleischmann. 2012. “Islam Moves West: Religious Change in the First and Second Generations.” *Ann. Rev. of Soc.* 38(1):525–45.
- Winchester, D. 2008. “Embodying the faith: Religious practice and the making of a Muslim moral habitus.” *Social Forces* 86(4):1753–80.

*Supplementary Books*

- Abdullah, Zain. *Black Mecca: The African Muslims of Harlem*. Oxford. 2010.
- Bilici, Mucahit. *Finding Mecca in America: How Islam Is Becoming an American Religion*. University Of Chicago Press, 2012.
- Bowen, John R. *Can Islam Be French?: Pluralism and Pragmatism in a Secularist State*. Princeton University Press, 2011.
- Karim, Jamillah. *American Muslim Women: Negotiating Race, Class, and Gender Within the Ummah*. NYU Press, 2008.