

SHI@`I@ ISLAM: Thought and History

(TH 651 – Spring 2014)

Thursday : 6:30 pm – 9:30 pm.

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Office hours will be determined by the needs and schedules of the students

Syllabus

Course DESCRIPTION

This course will be based on the assumption that Islam is both a belief system and a world civilization. Therefore, all movements, sects and schools of thought will be treated as an integral part of Islam, broadly understood. The course will introduce Shi'ism as a general phenomenon within Muslim history, but will concentrate on Twelver Imami Shi'ism, as it is the most developed and influential Shi'ite legal school (*madhhab*). We will study Shi'ism in Muslim history from its beginning to the present. We will examine primary texts in translation, and when possible, in original languages. We will also read and discuss a good sampling of secondary literature.

This is a graduate seminar that will be based on class participation and lectures. Grading will be based on class attendance and participation, weekly readings and discussions, a class presentation of an individual research of a topic that will be developed into a 12-15 page final term paper.

Grading

Grades will be computed as follows: class participation, discussion and leading weekly book discussions 30 percent; class presentation of research topic 20 percent and final term paper 50 percent.

Course Outline and weekly topics

Week 1: I - Background

- A. Islam: name, concept and worldview
- B. Arabia before Islam: the place of Makkah and the impact of Judaism and Christianity.

Week 2: II - Formative History of the Muslim Ummah

- A. The Prophet Muh{ammad and the Theocratic Community
- B. The end of theocratic rule and the beginning of the Caliphate
- C. The normative or “rightly guided (*ra>shidu>n*) first four caliphs.

Readings: Ayoub – The Crisis of Muslim History

Week 3: III - The beginnings of Shi`i history and the Umayyad caliphate

- A. from the death of `Ali@, the first Shi`i Ima>m to the tragedy of Karbala>' and martyrdom of his son H{usayn, the third Ima>m.
- B. Protest movements: Shi`ism and Sufism.

Readings: Momen – Introduction to Shi'I Islam ch 2- 5

Week 4: IV – The tragedy of Karbala and its devotional and ritualistic aspects

- A. Poetic portrayals of the Tragedy, Elegiac (*mara>thi@ Literature*)
- B. The *ziya>rah* or spiritual visitation to the Ima>m's tomb
- C. Memorial services (*(maja>lis al-'aza<')*)
- D. Visual portrayals, the Persian Passion Play (The *shabi@h khaneh*)

A video of Shi'I rituals will be shown.

Readings: Ayoub – Redemptive Suffering Ch.4-6

Week 5: V - The Shi`ite Ima>ms after Karbala>'

- E. Ali@ Zayn al-`A>bidi@n [son of H{usayn]
- B. his son Muh{ammad al-Ba>qir
- C. al-Ba>qir's son the sixth Ima>m Ja`far al-S{adiq, the founder of the Ja`fari madhhab, or legal school.

Readings: Kitab al Irshad Imams 4-6

Momen – ch. 7 Imamate

Week 6: VI - Penitents, avengers and rebellious *mawa>li@*: Early Shi`ite extremist movements

- A. The Kaysa>niyyah
- B. The Khat{t{a>biyyah
- C. other temporary fringe movements.

Readings: Halm, Heinz. *Shi'ism second edition*

Weeks 7 and 8: VII - The Isma`i@liyyah

- A. rise and pre-Fatimid developments
- B. the Fatimid period
- C. the Duru>z (Druzes) sect
- D. post Fatimid developments

Readings: Daftari, Farhad, A Short History of the Ismailis (for week7) from pp. 21 to 114 (for week 8) pp. 120 to the end.

Weeks 9 and 10: VIII - The *ithna`ashariyyah* or Twelver Shi`ah

- A. the period of the Imams to the end of the minor occultation (*al-ghaybah al-sughra*) of the Twelfth Imam
- B. Beginning of the Greater Occultation (*al-ghaybah al-kubra*): crisis and consolidation
- C. Buwayhidd support and the crystallization of moderate Shi'ism
- D. Shi'ism under the Seljuks and Mongols

Readings:

Modarressi, Hossein. *Crisis and Consolidation in the Formative Period of Shi'ite Islam*

Tabataba'i, 'Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husain (Seyyed Hoseyn Nasr, trans. And ed.). *Shi'ite Islam (part 2)*

Week 11: XI – Development of the Religious Sciences

- A. The Qur'an and *sunnah* in the view of the Shi'ah and rise of Shi'ism: the Four Books and other sources
- b. Juris Prudence (*fiqh*)
- c. Theology (*kalam*)
- d. Philosophy and mysticism (*irfan*)

Readings: Tabataba'i, 'Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husain (Seyyed Hoseyn Nasr, trans. And ed.). *Shi'ite Islam (part 3)*

Fyze, Asaf A. A, *A Shi'ite Creed*

Week 12: XII - The Nuṣayrī - 'Alawīs

- A. Introduction to Nuṣayrī history
- B. 'Alawīs religion
- C. The 'Alawīs of Syria in modern times

Week 13: XIII - Safavid Iran [1600] to the 20th Century and Pahlavi Era

- A. Consolidation of Shi'ite power under the Safavids and the role of the 'ulama'
- B. post Safavid developments: the Religious Establishment and the authority of the supreme mujtahid, or *marja'*

Readings: Momen – Introduction to Shi'ism Ch.6

Nasr, Vali, Reza. *The Shia Revival How Conflicts Within Islam will Shape the Future*

Week 14: XIV - Iranian Islamic Revolution, 1979

- A. Shi'ism in the twentieth century, before the Revolution
- B. The Islamic Revolution and after: whither Shi'ism?

Readings: *Islam and Revolution 1: Islamic Government from Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini* translated and edited by Hamid Algar p. 27-167 and Mavani "Ayatullah Khomeini's Concept of Governance (wilayat al-faqih) and the Classical Shi'ite Doctrine of Imamate"

Week 15: - XV – Class presentations and concluding the course.

Required Readings:

1. *Ayoub, Mahmoud, *The Crisis of Muslim History: Religion and Politics in Early Islam*, Oxford, Oneworld Publications, 2003.
2. Chittick, William, *A Shi'ite Anthology*, London: Muhammadi Trust of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, 1980
3. Daftari, Farhad, *A Short History of the Ismailis*. Edinburgh University Press 1998
4. Friedman, Yaron, *The Nuṣayrī - 'Alawīs*, Leiden: Brill 2010
5. Fyze, Asaf A. A, *A Shi'ite Creed*, World Organization for Islamic Services, Tehran, Third edition 1999/1420
6. *Halm, Heinz. *Shiism*. Second Edition. New York: Columbia University Press 2004
7. Modarressi, Hossein. *Crisis and Consolidation in the Formative Period of Shi'ite Islam*. The Darwin Press, inc. Princeton, New Jersey 1993
8. *Momen, Moojan. *An Introduction to Shi'I Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985
9. *Nasr, Vali, Reza. *The Shia Revival How Conflicts Within Islam will Shape the Future*. New York, W.W. Norton 2006
10. *Tabataba'i, 'Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husain (Seyyed Hoseyn Nasr, trans. And ed.). *Shi'ite Islam*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1975

* Denotes books you need to buy. The rest will be made available online or electronically through email.

Recommended Readings

1. Ayoub, Mahmoud. *Redemptive Suffering in Islam: a Study of the Devotional Aspects of 'Aṣḥuṣṣa' in Twelver Shi'ism*, the Hague, Mouton Publishers, 1978
2. Dakake, Maria. *The Charismatic Community: Shi'ite Identity in Early Islam*. State University of New York Press. Albany 2007
3. Jafri, S. Husain M. *The Origins and Early Development of Shi'a Islam*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2002
4. Amir-Moezzi, Mohammad Ali. *The Divine Guide in Early Shi'ism: The Sources of Esotericism in Islam*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994
5. Arjomand, Said Amir. *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1984

6. Bill, James A. and John Alden Williams. *Roman Catholics and Shi'i Muslims: Prayer, Passion, and Politics*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1003
7. Brunner, Ranie and Werner Ende, eds. *The Twelver Shia in Modern Times: Religious Culture and Political History*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2001
8. Corbin, Henry. *Cyclical Time and Ismaili Gnosis*. London: The Institute of Ismaili Studies Ltd., Kegan Paul Int'l with Islamic Publications, 1985 ed
9. Halm, Heinz. *Shi'a Islam: From Religion to Revolution*. Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener, 1997
10. Kholberg, Etan, ed. *Shi'ism*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003
11. Khumayni, Ayatu'llah Seyyid Ruhullah (Hamid Algar, trans. And ed.) *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini*. Berkeley: Mizan press, 1981
12. Nasr, Seyyed Hossein, Hamid Dabashi and Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, eds. *Expectation of the Millennium: Shi'ism in History*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988
13. Sachedina, Abdulaziz A. *Islamic Messianism: The Idea of the Mahdi in Twelver Shi'ism*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981
14. Martin, Vanessa. *Creating an Islamic state: Khomeini and the making of New Iran*. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000)
15. Amir-Moezzi, Mohammad Ali. *The Spirituality of Shi'i Islam: Beliefs and Practices*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2011.

For further research and additional readings, please consult the extensive library of Shi'ite sources on line: www.al-islam.org and <http://www.noorlib.ir/View/en/Default>

All required books will be assigned for weekly readings, where two students will introduce a book and lead a discussion of it. It is of course assumed that all students will also have read each book in the assigned, and not listed order. This is an important part of your class participation, which will constitute 30% of your final grade.