

CEDAR CREST COLLEGE

SYLLABUS

REL 227

Transplanted Religions

Islam in America: From Roots to Rap.

Winter 2010

Dates: January 8th to 10th

January 15th to 17th

Times Friday 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Saturday and Sunday 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

Location: Curtis 110

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Description

This course traces the trajectory of this seventh century faith in its incursion in the New World. It begins, chronologically, with the historical legacy of the surviving Muslims who came ashore as African slaves and their perseverance to remain Muslim. The migration of Arabs and Muslims from the Middle East, as well as parts of Asia, beginning from the period of World War I that gains momentum in the 1960's becomes the second historical register of Islam in America. The ethno-religious movement of the Nation of Islam, (NOI), that later develops into a distinct African American Muslim community makes the third assemblage for study. This inquiry studies the narratives of each of these singular groups and their endeavor to formulate interpretations and expressions of Islam in a land that is diverse and plural. These interpretations extend from questions of authority, institution building, gender jihad, struggle of American Muslim women, to the struggle of Muslim trans-gender community to gain acceptance. In this quest there have been adaptations from articulations of piety to cultural productions that have influenced the American cultural milieu. The events of September 11th 2001 and its effect in galvanizing this tradition within itself and also its representation in American media and culture will be examined. The role of the musical genre of rap in formulating identity and dissemination of the tradition for the second generation Muslims will be studied. This lesser studied role of Islam in the American penitentiary institutions, the growing number of Muslim conversion while incarcerated, and how this tradition assists in coping during imprisonment will be considered.

Objectives

The aim of this course is:

- To investigate this faith tradition through the multidisciplinary lens of religious studies.

- To comprehend what it means to be Muslim in America and how, and why, they are framed in American culture.
- To perceive how a faith tradition is refracted through the prism of race and ethnicity.
- To understand the transformation of this faith tradition in America.
- To study the conjunction of religion and diverse cultural backgrounds of American Muslims.
- The place of Islam and its contribution to a pluralistic religious America

Outcomes

- To think against a monolithic interpretation of Islam
- To become aware of the multiple interpretation of Islam in America
- To understand the role of Muslims and their contributions to America
- To become aware of the role of stereotypes in the interpretations of Islam
- To gain an understanding of how globalization affects the American Muslims through the study of their transnational networks.
- To meet Muslims in their own space through a mosque visitation

Assessment

Each student shall complete a paper with the length of four to five double spaced pages in either the **APA or MLA** format. The topics shall be chosen by the student from among the choices presented by the instructor in class. Also each student shall make a class presentation on the topic of their choice or upon consultation with the instructor. A final shall also be administered.

Papers shall constitute	30%
Class presentation	30%
Final	30%
Class participation	10%

Class Schedule

January 8th

- Course Introduction
- Religious studies as a paradigm for the study of religion
- Islam in the American Imaginary
- Stereotypes of Islam, its history and sources.
- Understanding Islamophobia
- **Video::Treatment of American Muslims**

- Deconstructing Islamophobia through the comedy of Azar Usman.
- Who speaks for Islam, role of representation and media.
- Framing theory and the role of the media
- Images of Islam
- Introduction to Islam
- Understanding the five pillars
- The centrality of the Qur'an
- The paradigmatic role of Muhammad
- Sunni and Shi'ite Islam
- Modern movements in Islam and the specter of Islamism
- From Jihad, Jihadism and Jihadists
- The role of American foreign policy

Reading assignment: Muslim Faith and Practice, Chapter 1
Islamophobia
U S Coverage of Islam
Views of Jihad through the ages

Jan.9th

- Waves of Immigration Theory (WOI)
- Overview of Muslim history in America
- Genealogy of Muslim arrivals
- Theories of Muslim settlements
- Countering the canon: Challenging WOI
- Legacy of Muslim slaves and settlements
- **Reading assignment: From West Africa to the Americas**
- The historical phases of American Muslim history
- The early proselytizers: The Ahmadiyya
- The enigmatic figure of Noble Drew Ali
- Nascent stages of the ethno-religious movements
- Marcus Garvey and Black Nationalism
- Detroit in the 1930's
- Beginning of the Moorish Temple Society (MTS)
- MTS as a bridge to American Islam
- **Reading assignment: Islam Comes To America, Chapter 3**
- W D Fard as progenitor of the Nation of Islam (NOI)
- Elijah Muhammad and the beginning of the NOI
- **Reading assignment: What the Muslims Want**
- The Qur'an and NOI cosmology
- Malcolm X and the establishment of NOI
- Myth making and the NOI
- **Reading assignment: Mythmaking in the African American Context**
- **Reading assignment: Letter from Mecca**
- Splinter groups: The Five Percenters

- **Reading assignment: The Five Percenter: A Teenage Nation of Gods and Earths**
- Conjunction of rap and the Five Percenters.
- The emergence of Louis Farrakhan
- Establishment of the African American Muslim community
- Crossing ethnic boundaries, African American Muslims and Immigrant Muslims
- Awaiting the third resurrection
- **Reading assignment: Islam in the African American community Chapter 4**
- **Reading assignment: To be Black, Female, and Muslim**

Jan.10th

- Divergence of the immigrant experience
- The Arab Muslim community
- Early history and Detroit
- Stereotypes of Arabs and Hollywood
- **Reading assignment: The evolution of Hollywood's representation of Arabs**
- **Video: Planet Arabs**
- Arab Americans and profiling
- **Video: Suhair Hammad, First writing since**
- **Reading assignment: Ambiguous insiders: an investigation of Arab American invisibility**
- The South Asian Muslim community
- Masala identity
- **Reading assignment: American Muslims: South Asian Contributions to the mix**
- Transnational Muslim networks and American Muslims
- Muslim American or American Muslim
- American Muslim cultural productions
- **Video: Little Mosque on the Prairie**
- Hyphenated selves and identity
- **Reading assignment: Hyphenated selves and American Muslims**
- Virtual Islam and Juridical Authority
- **Reading assignment: From Imam to Cyber Mufti**
- **Reading assignment: Living a Muslim Life in American Society**
- **Pluralism of the American Muslims**
- Civic and political engagement
- Diversity of American Muslims
- Shi'ism in America
- The role of ethnicity and race
- The mosque: Claiming space and changing landscapes
- Changing roles
- **Reading assignment: Urban enclaves and Muslim identity in urban America**
- Architecture and sacred space

Jan. 15th

- September 11th 2001 and the transformation of American Muslims
- Muslim reactions to Sept.11th

- **Reading assignment: Being Muslim, Being American after 9/11**
- **Reading assignment: Chapter 8, Islam in America Post 9/11**
- Tensions within American Muslim community
- Cultural citizenship and American Muslims
- Questioning assimilation or acculturation
- Progressive Muslims and a new taxonomy
- **Reading assignment: Progressive Muslims**

Jan.16th

- Prison religion
- Religion and rehabilitation
- **Reading assignment: The role of religion in prison**
- Islam and the U S prisons
- Conversion during incarceration
- Transgender challenges
- **Reading assignment: On the edge of belonging**
- Gender issues
- **Reading assignment: Chapter 6, Women and the Muslim American family**
- Muslim cosmology and gender
- Questioning patriarchy
- Stereotyping Muslim women
- **Video: Hijabi monologues**
- **Guest Speaker(s)**
- Scarf wars
- Hijab scenes
- Hijab as metaphor and its multiple meanings
- Guest speakers
- **Reading assignment: Why here, Why now, Young Muslim women wearing hijab**
- Issues of Islamic feminism
- **Reading assignment: Transforming Feminisms**
- Empowered femininity and activism
- Controversy of female led prayers
- Reading assignment: **An examination of the Female Prayer Leadership**
- **Islamic jurisprudence, Civil Disobedience and Woman Led Prayer**
- **Can a Woman be an Imam**
- Female friendly mosques
- Reading assignment: **An Islamic Bill of Rights for women in the mosque**
- Social issues, marriage and sexuality
- **Reading assignment: Muslim marriages in America**
- **Reading assignment: Muslim marriage goes online**
- **Reading assignment: Halal, Haram and Sex and the City**
- **Reading assignment: Sex and the single Shi'ite**
- Raps as a musical crossing
- Early genealogy of rap

- **Video: Lupe Fiasco**
- Reading assignment: **Rep that Islam**
- **Video: A land called paradise**

Jan.17th

- Pluralism and American Muslims
- Islam and the American spiritual marketplace
- The role of Sufism
- **Video: Rumi**
- Reading assignment: **Spiritual consumption and the Rumi phenomena**
- Mosque visit
- Class presentations

Cedar Crest College Honor Code

The Honor Code policy can be found in the Customs Book. Any violation will be dealt with according to college procedure.

Disability Accommodation

Students with documented disabilities who may need academic accommodations should discuss these needs with the professor during the first day of class. Students with disabilities who wish to request accommodations should contact Academic Services.

Classroom Protocol

The use of cell phones and texting is prohibited. The use of a tape recorder as an aid to note taking is permitted but it cannot be used to quote the instructor for paper writing purposes.

Standards for the Academic Study of Religion

The academic study of religion is grounded in the assumption that human experience of the sacred can be studied as an intellectual and societal phenomenon without bias. Accordingly, the major disciplines for the study of religion depend upon the same objectivity that would be assumed in the humanitarian and social sciences.

Paper writing tips

When writing your papers be mindful that it is going to be read by somebody else and as such be cognizant of assumptions that you would take for granted. And the same applies of the thought patterns, logic and coherence, that you formulate in the course of writing. If you need assistance please contact the staff at the **Academic Services, Curtis 109, extension 4628**

Use of Internet sources

Students are asked to use on line resources for **only thirty percent of their resources. Please be aware of websites that are designated as .org, as they are not subjected to peer review.**

Textbook

Islam in America by Jane I Smith
Second edition
Columbia University Press
New York 2009