

HIST 387-012
Islam and Sectarianism

Fall 2017
TR 1:30-2:45
Lecture Hall 2

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office hrs.: R 3-4 pm

Islam has two branches, one of which is Shiism. How does it relate to the other Sunni branch of Islam? In exploring a variety of different sources from the seventh century to the present, this course will chart the evolution of Shiism from its origins in a struggle over leadership of the Muslim community to its development of distinct rituals, law, and communal identity. The course will also interrogate the phenomenon of sectarianism in Islam and explore whether and how these differences inform current Shii-Sunni relations. Course readings will consist of primary and secondary historical, religious, anthropological, legal, visual and literary sources.

By the conclusion of the course, students should have a grasp of the major chronology of Shii history, as well as its distinct ritual, legal, social, cultural and political roles. They should also have the ability to demonstrate the continuities and connections as well as departures between it and Sunni Islam. Students will be expected to demonstrate these outcomes through class participation, two essay exams, and a research paper that will involve evaluating the sources, both primary and secondary, textual and other, used in providing explanations and interpretations of Shii-Sunni relations. These outcomes are designed to fulfill the Global Understanding Common Core objectives at GMU: to demonstrate understanding of global patterns and processes; of the interconnectedness, difference, and diversity of a global society; and to explore individual and collective responsibilities within a global society through analytical, practical, or creative responses to global problems or issues, using resources appropriate to the field.

Grade Distribution:

Participation 15%
Midterm 25%
Final 25%
Research Paper 35%

Students are to complete all the assigned readings for each class before that class. Participation is expected and strongly suggested as failure to do so will adversely affect the student's grade. Dates for both exams are absolutely non-negotiable; so make sure to plan work, study, and vacations around these dates. There will be no exceptions made for these reasons. Study guides with further instructions for both papers and exams will be provided at the appropriate times. .

Required Readings: The following are all required and available at the bookstore:

Halm, H., Shi'ism, 2nd ed.. Columbia Univ. Press, 2004
Mottahedeh, R. Mantle of the Prophet, 2nd ed. Oneworld Publication, 2008
Nakkash, Y. Reaching for Power: The Shia in the Modern Arab World. Princeton, 2007
Satrapi, M. The Complete Persepolis. Pantheon, 2003
- Readings below indicated by # will be emailed to students.

ADDITIONAL ISSUES:

Students are not allowed to eat or text in class. And students are not allowed to use laptops for any purpose other than taking notes. Phones must be turned off. Walking in late is not only rude and disruptive, but will adversely affect your grade. Walking out during class for a bathroom break, etc., is equally disruptive. If a student is not prepared to participate, it is better not to attend, as attendance of warm bodies alone does not qualify as participation.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:

Disabilities and Academic Accommodations: If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism: This class and all of your work as an undergraduate are governed by GMU's Honor Code: "Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work." Plagiarism is presenting another person's words, ideas, or sequence of arguments as your own without attribution. We will discuss what constitutes plagiarism and how to cite sources properly in this course. It is my duty to report all violations of the Honor Code. To read more about the Honor Code, the Honor Committee, and its procedures, see go to <http://honorcode.gmu.edu>.

Last Day to Add Classes: 9/5/2017

Last Day to Drop Classes: 9/5/2017

Selective Withdrawal Period: 9/5-9/29/2017

Tentative Reading and Assignment Schedule:

Week 1 Introduction

T: Introduction to course
R: Online assignment: What is sectarianism?
<http://www.bbc.com/sport/football/41011511>
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/05/sunni-shia-why-conflict-more-political-than-religious-sectarian-middle-east>

Week 2 Islamic (?) Sectarianism

T: The Past: #al-Shahrastani, excerpt from *Kitab al-milal wa'l-nihal* (Book of Sects and Creeds)
R: The Present: al-Qaradawi on Shiism:
<http://www.islamopediaonline.org/fatwa/al-qaradawis-statement-shiites>,
<https://youtu.be/AU4IC43AWc4>, Sheikh Fadlallah on Sunnis:
http://english.bayynat.org.lb/islamicinsights/insight_Islamic_unity.htm

Week 3 The Beginnings

T: #Haider, Intro., pp. 1-4, Ch. 3, pp. 53-66
R: "Ali's instructions to Malik al-Ashtar": <http://www.al-islam.org/nahjul-balagha-part-2-letters-and-sayings/letter-53-order-malik-al-ashtar>

Week 4 Beliefs

T: Halm, pp. 28-44, 161-170, 202-206 .
R: Ibn Babawayh, "Belief Concerning Prophets and Apostles and Imams and Angels, etc." chs. 34-37, 41: <http://www.sicm.org.uk/index.php?page=suduk/main>

Week 5 The Zaydis

T: #Haider, pp. 85-90, 103-121.
R: #Haider, pp. 169-181; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29319423>

Week 6 The Ismailis

T: Halm, Ch. 171-178.
R: #Ibn Yaquub's *Risala fi'l-imama*, tr. Makarem (*The Political Doctrine of the Ismailis*, Delmar NY, 1990, pp. 21-23); Hunsberger, "Glory Regained" (*Nasir Khusraw, The Ruby of Badakhshan*, Edinburgh, 2006, pp. 241-254); Dafary, "Sayyida Hurra: The Ismaili Queen of Yemen" (*Ismailis in Medieval Muslim Societies*, London, 2005, pp. 89-103)

Week 7 Ismaili Modern

T: **Columbus Day**, No Class
R: Halm, pp. 181-195; #Sanders, P., "Bohra Architecture and the Restoration of Fatimid Culture", in *L'Egypte Fatimide*, Paris, 1999, pp. 151-174.
Review for Midterm and Research Paper Guide.

Week 8 The Imamiya

T: **Midterm Exam**
R: Halm, pp. 44-72.

Week 9 The Safavids

T: Halm, pp. 73-97.
R: Film: "Shah Abbas"
Research Paper Bibliography Due.

Week 10 Becoming Modern Iran

T: Halm, pp. 98-123.
R: #Iranian constitution: <http://www.iranonline.com/iran/iran-info/Government/constitution-1.html>

Week 11 The Life of a Sayyid

T: Mottahedeh, *Mantle of the Prophet*
R: Mottahedeh, *Mantle* cont.
Outline of Paper Due

Week 12 Revolutionary Iran

T: *Persepolis*
R: Film: "Divorce Iranian Style"

Week 13 Shiism Experienced

T: Halm, pp. 134-135, #Hyder, S., "Visions and Re-visions of Kerbala," in *Reliving Karbala*, Oxford, 2006, pp. 13-59.
R: #Deeb, L., Ch. 1 in *The Enchanted Modern*, Princeton, 2010.
Rough Draft of Paper Due

Week 14 Shiism in the Arab World

T: Nakash, Prologue, Ch. 2
R: Nakkash, Chs. 3-5
Final Exam Study Guide

Week 15 Epilogue

T: TBD
R: **Review for Final Exam and Research Paper due**

FINAL EXAM: T Dec. 19, 1:30-4:15 (subject to changes by the Registrar, please check Patriotweb to confirm)