

HIST 387 – History and Politics of Shiism

Spring 2012
TR 10:30-1:15pm
Krug 242

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office hrs.: W 4-5pm

Shiism is a branch of Islam that has often dominated the news, but confusion remains as to how this branch of Islam relates to the larger Islamic context. 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 explore how these differences inform current Shii-Sunni relations in Islam. Course readings will consist of primary and secondary historical, legal, 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, law, and social 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 essay exams, a final research paper and oral presentations, that will involve evaluating the sources, both primary and secondary, textual and other, used in providing explanations and interpretations of Shiism.

Course requirements consist of attendance and participation, a midterm and final exam, and a research paper. Readings are challenging and so completing them before class, and attending and participating in class are strongly recommended. The midterm and final will consist of identifications and essays, and the research paper will involve the further exploration of topics relating to Shiism. Study guides, instructions and possible research topics will be provided for exams and research paper at the appropriate times.

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. Lastly, be prepared to encounter the occasional pop quiz.

Required Readings: .

The following are all required and available at the bookstore:

Halm, H., Shiism, 2nd ed., Columbia, 2004

Hyder, S. A., Reliving Karbala, Oxford 2008

Mottahedeh, R., Mantle of the Prophet, 2nd ed., Oneworld Publication, 2000

Nakkash, Y., Reaching for Power: The Shia in the Modern Arab World, Princeton, 2007

Satrapi, M., The Complete Persepolis, Pantheon, 2007

Course reader

The following is also required and can be ordered online:

Merip, "The Islamic Revolution at 30", MER 250, Spring 2009. Available at <http://www.merip.org/mer/backissues.html>.

Required readings indicated by # below, are in the course reader.

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. Cell 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: 1/31/2012

Last Day to Drop Classes: 1/31-2/24/2012

Selective Withdrawal Period: 2/27-3/30/2012

Tentative Reading and Assignment Schedule:

Week 1 Introduction

T: Introduction to course

R: representations of Shiism (Internet assignment)

Week 2 The Beginnings

T: Halm, Ch. 1

R: "Ali's instructions to Malik al-Ashtar", <http://www.al-islam.org/nahjul/letters/letter53.htm>

Week 3 The Imamiyya

T: Halm, Ch. 2, pp. 28-44

R: Ibn Babawayh, "Belief Concerning Prophets and Apostles and Imams and Angels," pp. 81-102, <http://www.wofis.com/Publications.aspx?bookID=4>

Week 4 The Zaydiya and Ghulat

T: Halm, Ch. 5

R: Halm, Ch. 3, #Morris, J. W., "Revisiting Religious Shiism and Early Sufism" (Reason and Inspiration in Islam, ed. Lawson, IB Tauris, 2005, pp. 102-116).

Week 5 The Ismailis

T: Halm, Ch. 4, pp. 160-178

R: Halm, Ch. 4, pp. 178-200

Week 6 The Fatimids

T: #Ibn Yaqub'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). **Study Guide for Midterm**

R: #Cortese and Calderini, "Battleaxes and Formidable Aunties" (Women and the Fatimids in the World of Islam, Edinburgh, 2006, pp. 101-147). **Review for Midterm and Research Paper Guide.**

Week 7 The Jafari madhhab

T: : Halm, Ch. 2, pp. 45-73, Shaykh al-Mufid, selection from the *Kitab al-Irshad*, "The Prophet's Farewell Pilgrimage and the Declaration at Ghadir Khumm, <http://shiastudies.com/library/english/00-noor/wit/019-KITAB-AL-IRSHAD/ir04.htm#f2>.

R: **Midterm Exam**

Spring Break

- Week 8 The Safavids
T: Halm, Ch. 2, pp. 79-97
R: #Babayan.....
Research Paper Bibliography Due.
- Week 9 Modern Iran
T: Halm, Ch. 2, pp 98-123
R: Khumayni's speech #36, <http://www2.trib.ir/worldservice/imam/speech/16.htm>
- Week 10 A Day in the Life of a Sayyid
T: Mottahedeh, Mantle of the Prophet
R: Mottahedeh, Mantle of the Prophet. ***Outline of Paper Due***
- Week 11 Alternate Visions in Modern Iran
T: #Shariati, A., "Dialectic of Sociology" (On the Sociology of Islam, Berkeley, 1979, pp. 111-118); #Yaganeh, "Sexuality and Social Protest in Iran" (Women in the Middle East: Past and Present, ed. N. Keddie, Princeton, 2007, pp. 297-323).
R: Satrapi, Persepolis.
- Week 12 Shiism in modern India
T: Hyder, *Reliving Karbala*, Chs.
R: Hyder, chs.
Rough Draft of Paper Due
- Week 13 Shiism in the modern Arab World
T: Nakash, Prologue, chs. 2-3
Final Exam Study Guide
R: Nakash, chs. 4-5, and Conclusion
- Week 14 The Shii Diaspora
T: MER 250, "The Islamic Revolution at 30", Spring 2009.
R: ***Review for Final Exam and Research Paper due***

FINAL EXAM DATE: May 10, 10:30-1:15. (Double Check on Patriotweb)