(Draft)
GEOG 231: Geography of Islam
Professor Anna Mansson McGinty
Department of Geography and Center for Women’s Studies

Office: Bolton Hall 478
Office hours: MW 9:30-10:30am or by appointment
Email: mansson@uwm.edu
Office phone: (414) 229-2650

Course description and objectives

This geography course investigates diverse Muslim geographies and Islam, the second largest of the world’s religions and the fastest growing in the United States and in Europe, as a complex and ever-changing religious system. It begins by looking at the origin and main features of the religion, introducing the students to Prophet Mohammad and the religious scripture of Qur’an, as well as the historical context in which Islam developed. The course explores the diversity of Muslim cultures in different geographical, social, and political contexts and the various understandings of the religion that emerge in these. We will read about Muslim lives in places such as Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Europe, and North America, and Islamic institutions and movements such as the global network Al Jazeera, liberal Islam, Sufism, Islamic feminism, and Islamic fundamentalism. Students will look at how Islam is lived, focusing on everyday practices and prevailing ideologies. This implies the study of socio-cultural factors within various Muslim contexts and how they reflect certain collective actions as well as societal developments. Rather than approaching Islam as a static social phenomenon, emphasis is given to social and cultural change, diversity, and conflict.

In addition, the course familiarizes the students to the discourse of “Orientalism” and how their own perceptions of Islam and Muslims might be colored by it. We will look at how the media in the West has portrayed Islam and events in the “Muslim world.” In the end of the course, the students will learn about Muslims in the U.S. This will expose the students to the misrepresentation of the thesis “clash of civilizations” and the “us vs. them” rhetoric. Islam is a personal faith of millions of Americans, and Muslim Americans express and implement this faith in various ways within an American context, resulting in what some scholars have called “American Islam.”

Course grading and requirements

Attendance and participation 15%
Since class participation is a required component of your grade, it goes without saying that attendance is very important. I will take attendance each time we meet, and your attendance will count toward you participation grade. More than three absences will result in lowered final grade. That is, if you miss more than three classes, your attendance grade will be downgraded by one point/missed class (for example from A to A-, from A- to B+, from B+ to B etc.). Each student should bring at least one question or problem-based discussion point related to the readings to each class.
Two quizzes 10%
A couple of unannounced quizzes, or response papers, will be given out during the semester, which will cover readings due that day and/or the lecture from previous week. **There will be NO make-up quizzes.**

Two in-class film reviews 10%
You will write two analytical reviews of two documentaries shown in class. In your reviews you should relate your discussion to appropriate class discussions and readings. **There will be NO make-up film reviews.**

Midterm Exam 35%

Final exam 30%

Course policies

**Only** medical or legal emergencies and university sponsored activities are legitimate absences, all of which need written documentation.

*Academic Misconduct*

Make sure you properly cite all sources used in a written assignment. Plagiarism is a serious violation of academic integrity and will be prosecuted in accordance with university policies and procedures as set out in UWS Chapter 14 and UWM Faculty Document #1686. The standard penalty for plagiarism in this course will be a failing grade in the course and a written report to be placed in your file.

*Disability Information*

If you will need accommodations in order to meet any of the requirements of this course, please contact me as soon as possible. If you have not already done so, you should also contact the Student Accessibility Center at 414-229-6287.

*Accommodation for Religious Observances*

Students will be allowed to complete examinations or other requirements that are missed because of a religious observance.

*For further information on university policies, refer to [http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/SyllabusLinks.pdf](http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/SyllabusLinks.pdf)*

**Grades and Assessment**

Your in-class assignments and responses on essay questions on exams will be graded on:

- the complexity, strength, originality, and clarity of your ideas;
- how well you substantiate your claims;
- the skills and interest with which you approach the issues you address;
- the general competence of your writing
Grade distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100-95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74-76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>64-66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional information

If you are thinking about a major or a double major in Religious Studies, please contact either Dr. Demetrius Williams, Director, at williamd@uwm or Dr. Judith Beall, Associate Director, at jbeall@uwm.edu.
Textbooks (available at People’s Books)

People’s Books Cooperative

Costs (also includes the discounted prices):


Mansson McGinty, Anna. 2006. *Becoming Muslim. Western Women’s Conversions to Islam*. New York: Palgrave/Macmillan. $34.00/$30.60

Articles and book chapters (available on e-reserve*)


Ehrkamp, Patricia. 2007. “Beyond the Mosque: Turkish Immigrants and the Practice and Politics of Islam in Duisburg-Marxloh, Germany.” In *Geographies of Muslim Identities: Diaspora, Gender, and Belonging*, Hampshire and Burlington: Ashgate.


Hopkins, Peter. 2007. “Young Muslim Men’s Experiences of Local Landscapes after 11 September 2001.” In *Geographies of Muslim Identities: Diaspora, Gender, and Belonging*. Hampshire and Burlington: Ashgate.


## Class schedule

### Islam in the eyes of the West, Orientalism, and Representations

| WEEK 1 | Introduction, *Following Muhammad*, Chapter 1  
|        | Video: *Hollywood Harems* |

### Approaching Islam in Terms of Religion

#### Muhammad and the Qur'an

| WEEK 2 | *Following Muhammad*, Chapter 2 and 3  
|        | Documentary: *Islam and its Five Pillars* |

### Women and Gender in Islam

| WEEK 3 | *Following Muhammad*, pp. 142-51  
|        | Ahmed, Chapter 3 and 4* (Mernissi, Parts from *The Veil and the Male Elite*)  
|        | Islamic Feminism  
|        | Ahmadi*, Mansson McGinty* |

### Spirituality - Sufism

| WEEK 4 | *Following Muhammad*, Chapter 5, Schimmel*  
|        | Documentary: *Islamic mysticism: the Sufi way* |

### Religious Fundamentalism

|        | Lawrence, “Fundamentalism as a Religious Ideology in Multiple Contexts” and “Fundamentalists in Pursuit of an Islamic State”* |

### Islamic Global Network

| WEEK 5 | Documentary: *Al Jazeera Voice of Arabia*  
|        | Preparing for midterm exam |

| WEEK 6 | **MIDTERM EXAM** |
Islam in Different Parts of the World
Muslim Geographies

Indonesia: religious violence, liberal Islam, and gender politics

WEEK 7
Hefner, “Muslim Democrats and Islamist Violence in Post-Soeharto Indonesia”*
Brenner, “Islam and Gender Politics in Late New Order Indonesia”*

Documentary: Struggle for the Soul of Islam: Inside Indonesia

Saudi-Arabia: Wahhabism and civil Islamists

WEEK 8
Esposito, Ch. 5 (pp. 191-195)*
Okruhlik, Empowering Civility through Nationalism*

Egypt: Islamism and re-veiling movement

Esposito, pp. 158-175*, Badran “Competing Agenda. Feminist, Islam, and the state in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Egypt”*

Documentary: Veiled Revolution

“Arab Spring” 2011 – mass demonstration and revolution

WEEK 9
TBA

TBA

Muslims in the West

European Islam (or Euro-Islam)

WEEK 10
Hopkins* (two articles!)
Tariq Ramadan*

Sweden and Denmark

The controversy of the Danish cartoons of Muhammad

Conversions to Islam

WEEK 11
Parts of Becoming Muslim, Chapter 1, 4, 5
Islam in the United States

WEEK 12

Esposito, pp. 208-222*
Prologue and chapter 1 and 3 in MMS

The younger generation Muslims in the U.S.
Chapter 2, 4, and 5 in MMS, Hermansen*

WEEK 13

Chapter 6-8 in MMS

Field trip to the ISM (Islamic Society of Milwaukee)

WEEK 14

Discussion of fieldtrip and summery of class

Final Exam
Revised January 24, 2008

Syllabus Links
1. Students with disabilities. Notice to these students should appear prominently in the syllabus so that special accommodations are provided in a timely manner. http://www4.uwm.edu/sac/SACltr.pdf

2. Religious observances. Accommodations for absences due to religious observance should be noted. http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S1.5.htm

3. Students called to active military duty. Accommodations for absences due to call-up of reserves to active military duty should be noted.

   Students: http://www4.uwm.edu/current_students/military_call_up.cfm

   Employees: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S40.htm

   (Editorially Revised, 3/25/09)

4. Incompletes. A notation of "incomplete" may be given in lieu of a final grade to a student who has carried a subject successfully until the end of a semester but who, because of illness or other unusual and substantiated cause beyond the student's control, has been unable to take or complete the final examination or to complete some limited amount of term work. http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S31.pdf

5. Discriminatory conduct (such as sexual harassment). Discriminatory conduct will not be tolerated by the University. It poisons the work and learning environment of the University and threatens the careers, educational experience, and well-being of students, faculty, and staff. http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S47.pdf

6. Academic misconduct. Cheating on exams or plagiarism are violations of the academic honor code and carry severe sanctions, including failing a course or even suspension or dismissal from the University. http://www4.uwm.edu/acad_aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm

7. Complaint procedures. Students may direct complaints to the head of the academic unit or department in which the complaint occurs. If the complaint allegedly violates a specific university policy, it may be directed to the head of the department or academic unit in which the complaint occurred or to the appropriate university office responsible for enforcing the policy. http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S49.7.htm

8. Grade appeal procedures. A student may appeal a grade on the grounds that it is based on a capricious or arbitrary decision of the course instructor. Such an appeal shall follow the established procedures adopted by the department, college, or school in which the course resides or in the case of graduate students, the Graduate School. These procedures are available in writing from the respective department chairperson or the Academic Dean of the College/School. http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S28.htm

9. Other The final exam requirement, the final exam date requirement, etc. http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S22.htm

   (Editorially Revised, 8/26/11)