

REL 4363
SUFISM: ISLAMIC MYSTICISM AND SPRITUALITY

Department of Religious Studies

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The development of Islam in Late Antiquity divided the religious authority of the Prophet into extant two classes of knowledge: orthodox theology (*'ilm al-kalām*) and mysticism (*taṣawwuf*). Whereas the theologians focused on the interpreting and safeguarding the law, the mystics looked beyond the law to union with the Divine. Ultimately the breadth of the spread of Islam into Asia and sub-Saharan Africa was almost exclusively through the syncretic and esoteric teachings of the mystics who formed bridges between indigenous philosophies and the Islamic tradition by a focus on love of the Divine, the Prophet, and his family over fear of Divine judgment. This course will explore the depth and breadth of the mystical tradition of Islam (Sufism) through primary and secondary texts.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of the course, students shall be able to: (1) Recognize the major themes of Islamic mystical thought and the complex varieties of Sufism which emerge from the Near East to South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. (2) Compare and contrast orthodox theological and mystical interpretations of core Islamic beliefs from the Quran and Prophetic Traditions. (3) Analyze the interaction of Near Eastern Islamic mysticism with other civilizations, such as Indic Vedanta and Jewish Kabala. (4) Assess the historical legacy and continued impact of the Sufi legacy in the Islamic world today through art, architecture, music, politics, etc...

READINGS

- al-Ghazali , Abu Hamid Muhammad. *Al-Ghazali's Path to Sufism: His Deliverance from Error (al-Munqidh min al-Dalal) and Five Key Texts*. Louisville: Fons Vitae, 2006.
- . *The Niche of Lights (Brigham Young University - Islamic Translation Series)*. Salt Lake City: Brigham Young University, 1998.
- Haleem, M. A. S. Abdel, trans. *The Qur'an (Oxford World's Classics)*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Jamal, Mahmood, ed. *Islamic Mystical Poetry: Sufi Verse from the Early Mystics to Rumi (Penguin Classics)*. New York: Penguin Classics, 2012.
- Renard, John, trans. *Knowledge of God in Classical Sufism: Foundations of Islamic Mystical Theology (Classics of Western Spirituality)*. Mahwah: Paulist Press, 2004.

GRADING

Weekly question review assignments	15%
Mid-term examination	20%
Student presentations	15%
Final paper (3000 words)	50%

MAJOR TOPICS

- 1.) What is Sufism?
- 2.) The historical evolution and spread of the Sufi tradition
- 3.) Mystical themes in *The Quran*
- 4.) Abu Nasr as-Sarraj, *The Book of Flashes*
- 5.) Abu Bakr al-Kalabadhi, *The Exploration of Sufi Teachings*
- 6.) Ali ibn Uthman Hujwiri, *The Revelations of Realities Veiled*
- 7.) Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali, *Deliverance from Error*
- 8.) Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali, *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*
- 9.) Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali, *The Niche of Lights*
- 10.) Fariduddin Attar, *Conference of the Birds*
- 11.) Mohyuddin Ibn 'Arabi, *The Bezels of Wisdom*
- 12.) Jalaluddin Rumi, *The Masnavi*
- 13.) Amir Khusrow Dehlavi, *The Garden and the Spring*
- 14.) Rabi'a al-Adawiyya, *Doorkeeper of the Heart*