COURSE DESCRIPTION

The development of Islam in Late Antiquity divided the religious authority of the Prophet into extant two classes of knowledge: orthodox theology (\textit{\'ilm al-kalām}) and mysticism (\textit{tašawwuf}). 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…

REQUIRED TEXTS

Grading

Attendance/participation  10%
Class assignments        15%
Mid-term examination     20%
Student presentations    25%
Final paper              30%

Class Schedule

11 January 2017  Course introduction- major themes
18 January 2017  In lieu of class, please attend the lecture at the Jewish Museum at 7pm
25 January 2017  Sufism and the Quran
                 Readings: Haleem, The Quran- Read chapters 3, 24, 101-114
1 February 2017  Sufism in Asia and Africa
                 Readings: Ridgeon, The Cambridge Companion to Sufism- Parts III
8 February 2017  Sufi poetry
                 Readings: Jamal, Islamic Mystical Poetry
15 February 2017 Class workshop on Nūr Nama
                 Readings: See Blackboard
                 Class presentations on Sufi poetry in class- each student 5 minutes
22 February 2017 Women in Islamic practice
                 Guest Lecture by Prof. Huma Ghosh
1 March 2017     Sufism in the West
                 Readings: See Blackboard
                 Guest Lecture: Marcia Hermansen
8 March 2017     NO CLASS
                 Midterm examination (Blackboard)
15 March 2017    NO CLASS- SPRING BREAK
22 March 2017    South Asian Sufi music
                 Readings: See Blackboard
                 Guest Lecture: Zafreen Jaffer
                 Paper proposal due
29 March 2017    Class will instead be held on 27 March 2017 at 7pm in CBC 232 - 235
5 April 2017  Ginans as Sufi literature
Readings: See Blackboard
Guest Lecture: Ali Samji

12 April 2017  Course review

28 April 2017  Final paper due by midnight via Blackboard