

**RSOC 81: Islam. Fall 2015.**

Instructor: Prof. D. Pinault.

Section 81-01 (27597); classroom: Kenna Hall 310, Tues-Thurs 10.20am-12 noon.

Section 81-02 (27598); classroom: Kenna Hall 310, Tues-Thurs 2.00pm- 3.40pm.

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**Course description.**

This course is intended as an introduction to the Islamic tradition. No previous knowledge of Islam is required. *NB: This is an intermediate-level course. Prerequisite for fulfillment of Core requirement: Introductory-level Religious Studies course.*

Events of recent years—from the terrorist attacks of September 11 to the “Arab Spring” and violent territorial conquests undertaken by ISIS (the Islamic State in Iraq & Syria)—have drawn increased attention to Islam. Overlooked in many recent polemical discussions is the reality that Islam is an Abrahamic faith, one that shares many features with Judaism and Christianity. In teaching this course I emphasize the fact that although the historical origins of this tradition can be traced to the Middle East, today Islam is both a global and an American religion, with a substantial Muslim community here in the Bay Area.

I seek to investigate in this course some sense of what Islam means to practicing Muslims as a religion that strives for the ordering of society and the attainment of spiritual serenity in conjunction with the surrender of one's self to God. But I also encourage you to explore frankly

with me some of the more challenging and problematic aspects of the Islamic tradition: jihad (in its various meanings) and religious violence; women's status and the rights of minorities in Muslim societies; and the tension between personal autonomy and communal solidarity in the construction of Muslim identity. All these issues have acquired greater urgency as Muslims today respond to the diversity of worldviews associated with the ongoing process of globalization.

In this introduction to Islam you will analyze and discuss a variety of Islamic primary-source texts: Qur'anic scripture, theological works, and mystical poetry. The course features a fieldwork component, in which you will have the opportunity to attend a number of religious services and interview members of local Muslim congregations. Observations from these visits will form part of a journal in which you record and respond to your field experiences.

### **Course learning goals and objectives.**

Santa Clara University's Core Curriculum guidelines identify the following goals and objectives for level-2 courses in Religion, Theology, and Culture:

“Goals—Habits of mind and heart: complexity; critical thinking; religious reflection.”

“Objectives—Students will be able to analyze complex and diverse religious phenomena...Students will be able to integrate and compare several different disciplinary approaches to a coherent set of religious phenomena. Students will be able to clarify and express beliefs in light of their critical inquiry into the religious dimensions of human existence.”

### **Our course in Islam implements the above goals and objectives as follows:**

First, you will be able to analyze religious phenomena associated with the Islamic tradition (the development of formal theology, manifestations of popular piety and its dialectic with Islamic law, the normative influence of scripture and hadith on morality, and the ways in which Islamic societies respond to challenges such as globalization and modernity).

Second, you will be able to integrate and compare several different disciplinary approaches— theological, historical, ethnographic, political, literary/textual—to the religious phenomena listed above.

Third, via a process of critical inquiry (which I define as rigorous and frank intellectual analysis, coupled with sympathetic engagement with the subject), you will gain a fresh appreciation for the religious dimension of human experience, not only as it applies to divergent/diverse Islamic understandings of what it means to be Muslim, but also as it applies to broader understandings of what it means to be a religiously-attuned person in general. Thereby you will be better able to clarify and express your own beliefs; for the study of religion makes one conscious of conceptual categories one might otherwise leave unexamined (eg, creed, ritual, myth/sacred narrative). It is an argument of this course that all of us—whether atheist, agnostic, skeptic, or devout—are religious, and that the academic study of one religion, undertaken in a spirit of intellectual honesty and sympathetic rigor, leads one to reflect on the universal qualities of religion and the spiritual dimensions of one's own personal existence. And that is a good worth striving for.

It is also the argument of this course that Islam—like every religion—is an open-ended tradition that is shaped by, but not limited to, its historical manifestations in the past. Corollary to this

argument is the proposition that in each generation, members of a faith community, whether consciously or unconsciously, engage in the process of what I call ‘selective appropriation’ with regard to the tradition to which they belong. One purpose of studying such traditions is to qualify oneself to participate in the discussions that will shape the future contours of the faith.

The outcome I hope for: in taking this course, you will acquire a familiarity with the Islamic tradition—its scripture, theology, ritual practices, and religious-political movements—sufficient to enable you to evaluate, in an educated, thoughtful, and critical way, ongoing developments in Islamic societies throughout the world.

### **Course syllabus.**

(Please note: readings are to be completed in time for the class under which they are listed. Be sure to bring to class the texts and photocopied material assigned for the given day.)

1.) Tuesday, September 22.

Introduction to the course. Methodology and terms; some attempts at a definition of religion. The religion of the Jahiliyah: culture, tradition, and values in the Arabian peninsula of the pre-Islamic era. Discussion of ungraded writing exercise.

**Topics to be addressed in your ungraded writing exercise:** a.) a brief description of your previous experience, impressions, and/or knowledge of Islam. b.) a statement in which you identify and briefly reflect on your own personal worldview, however you define this for yourself (whether in terms of denominational religious affiliation, unaffiliated spirituality, self-identification as an agnostic, skeptic, atheist, freethinker, etc.). c.) A response to the primary-source readings for Thursday (the six poems from C.J. Lyall’s *Translations of Ancient Arabian Poetry* and “The Death of the Knight Rabia”), in which you briefly identify and discuss the values and worldview of Jahiliyah Arab culture, as presented in these sources. Keeping in mind the definitions of religion we examine today in class, consider ways in which these works might be considered religious. To phrase the issue in another way: What do these poets and storytellers seem to consider most meaningful or of “ultimate concern”? What is your own response to this literature? Use brief citations from these sources in support of your argument.

**Minimum length of assignment: 500 words/2 pages, typed, double-spaced.** Suggested maximum length: 1,000 words/4 pages. **Hard-copy only; no electronic/online submissions.**

NB: This is an ungraded assignment. **But failure to submit this assignment at the beginning of class this Thursday, September 24, will result in the lowering of your final grade for this course by at least one step (eg, from C to C-).** Your final course grade will be lowered an additional step for each day late this assignment is submitted (eg, if your assignment is submitted on Friday, September 25, your final grade will be lowered two steps—eg, from C to D+). I will offer written comments on what you submit, and you will have occasion to refer again to the questions in this ungraded assignment in the first graded essay of the quarter.

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2.) Thursday, September 24. **UNGRADED WRITING EXERCISE DUE.**

Jahiliyah society and religion as reflected in pre-Islamic Arab poetry.

**Readings:** Esposito, pages 1-5; “Translations of Ancient Arabian Poetry” (Camino); “Thabit: The Death of the Knight Rabia,” 6 -13 (Camino). Read entire syllabus.

**Questions** for classroom discussion:

What are the values and the worldview of Jahiliyah Arab culture, as conveyed by the primary sources in our photocopied translations of ancient Arab poetry? In our classroom discussion, be ready to give examples from the texts in support of your arguments.

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3.) Tuesday, September 29.

Jahiliyah society and religion (cont'd.). The early life of the Prophet Muhammad.

Readings: Poems of Labid and Shanfara; Ibn Ishaq, "Biography of the Messenger of God," 20-22; Faruqi, 1-18, 35-44 (chapters 1 & 3); Esposito, 5-19.

Questions for classroom discussion:

Shanfara was an "outlaw poet," who had been cast out of his tribe for some offense. Compare his values with those of Labid. In what ways do they differ? What might audiences in the Jahiliyah have admired in each poet? Ibn Ishaq: "Biography of the Messenger of God." Describe Muhammad's first encounter with Gabriel. How did Muhammad react? Who reassured him, and by what means? **Compare Muhammad's encounter with Gabriel with Moses's encounter with God as described in the Bible, Exodus, chapters 3 and 4.**

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4.) Thursday, October 1. **FIRST ESSAY ASSIGNED.**

The Qur'an: tawhid (divine oneness) and final judgment. Human nature as depicted in Islamic scripture. The natural world in relation to divinity; Qur'anic responses to the Jahiliyah. The Prophet Muhammad in Mecca: initial revelations of the Qur'an.

Readings: Qur'an, chapters 1, 112, 96 (tawhid, judgment, and human nature); Qur'an, chapters 52, 55, 56, 45.21-35 (cf. 44.34-42) (judgment, the natural world, and the Jahiliyah); Faruqi, 53-58 (chapter 5); Esposito, 19-24.

Questions for classroom discussion:

What does the Qur'an say about: human nature; the physical world; the afterlife; the values of the Jahiliyah? Discuss Faruqi's presentation of how "nature and wealth" are viewed in Islam (see also Faruqi, pp.7-8).

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5.) Tuesday, October 6.

The Qur'an: silsilat al-anbiya' ("the chain of the prophets"). The patterns of human history according to Qur'anic revelation. The prophet Muhammad in Medina. The "greater" and the "lesser" jihad. The exemplary status of the prophet Muhammad: the role of sunnah and hadith. Implications of the doctrine of 'ismah (sinlessness; perfection; protection from error; infallibility; cf. adj. ma'sum) for Islamic ethics.

Readings: Qur'an, chapter 7 (prophethood and human history); Qur'an 2.190-194, 2.217-218, 2.243-252, 3.169-171, 9.1-16, 25.52, 49.15, 60.1(jihad; see also note 274 on p.99 of our Qur'an text); Esposito, 24-35, 235-237 (jihad); Pinault, The Shiites, ch.2, "Essentials of Islam..." pp.11-26; "The Sunnah of the Prophet: A Sampling of Exemplary Behavior and Statements" (Pinault, 2 pp., photocopy/Camino) & "The Prophet Muhammad and His Interactions With Certain Poets, Singers, and Storytellers" (Pinault, 3 pp., photocopy/Camino).

Questions for classroom discussion:

Qur'an, chapter 7. Describe the recurrent patterns of human history and the events that tend to befall prophets as described in this chapter. How does Qur'an 7.182-185 clarify the themes of this chapter? Compare the story of Noah in this Qur'anic chapter with the story of Noah as presented in the Bible (Genesis, chapters 6-9). What portrait of the prophet Muhammad emerges from the sunnah/hadith and biographical data in "The Sunnah of the Prophet" and "The

Prophet Muhammad and His Interactions...”? What are the moral implications and challenges associated with this material?

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6.) Thursday, October 8.

The Qur’an: Islam as an Abrahamic faith. Qur’anic interpretations of Judaism and Christianity. Community, family, and issues of personal identity in the Qur’an. The dhimmi and the question of tolerance: Qur’anic verses on the status of Jews, Christians, and other non-Muslims.

Readings: Esposito, 36-46(the caliphate and the dhimmi), 276-279 (“The Challenge of Religious Pluralism”); Qur’an: chs. 6.71-92 & 21.51-75 (Abr. and Azar); 37.99-111 (Abr.’s sacrifice of his son); 2.125-129 (Abr., Isma‘il, and the Kaaba); 3.64-68 (Abr. as a hanif); Qur’an 5.51, 3.85, 9.28-31, 11.118-119, 5.48, 5.69, 2.62, 2.256,18.29-31, 10.98-103 (the status of non-Muslims); Pinault, “Losers’ Vengeance: Muslim-Christian Relations and Pakistan’s Blasphemy Law,” 8-10 (available online).

Questions for classroom discussion:

What do the above passages have to say about Abraham? What does the Qur’an say with regard to salvation for non-Muslims? Evaluate the status of non-Muslims in contemporary Islamic societies in the light of Qur’anic verses on dhimmis. How do “blasphemy laws” affect the status of both non-Muslims and Muslims? What effect do such laws have on the possibility of offering intellectual critiques of the Islamic tradition?

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7.) Tuesday, October 13.

Islamic Christology. Depictions of Jesus in the Qur’an. Qur’anic references to the Prophet Muhammad.

Readings: Esposito, 46-73 (Kharijites; Shia Islam); Qur’an 112.1-4 (the question of divine sonship); 3.42-59 (the Virgin Mary and the miracles of Jesus); 4.155-159 (the docetic crucifixion); 5.116-120 (Jesus and the Last Day); 97.1-5 (“The Night of Power”); 53.1-18 (the Prophet’s mystical experience of the Divine); 80.1-12 (the Prophet and the blind man).

Questions for classroom discussion:

Compare Islamic and Christian understandings of Jesus. Check an encyclopedia such as the Britannica for a discussion of docetism/doceticism. Compare the Qur’an’s statements about the Prophet Muhammad with Faruqi’s discussion, 35-44.

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8.) Thursday, October 15. **FIRST ESSAY DUE.**

Definitions of orthodoxy and the formation of Sunni and Shia communities. The Kharijite (Khawarij) challenge: a radical definition of what it means to be Muslim. The practice of takfir (denunciation of someone as a kaafir) and its problematic legacy. The Qur’an and Islamic society: an introduction to Islamic law.

Readings: Esposito, 92-115 (shari‘ah), 134-139 (Shia rituals); Pinault, The Shiites, ch.1, 3-10, ch.3, 27-46.

Questions for classroom discussion:

What characterizes the Kharijite and Shia (also referred to as Shiite or Shii) forms of Islam? Describe their various views of leadership, authority, and the Islamic state.

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***NB: Friday, October 16: Last day to withdraw from classes without a W grade!***

9.) Tuesday, October 20.

**RESEARCH PAPER PROSPECTUS DUE. SECOND ESSAY ASSIGNED.**

Sufism, the mystical path in Islam. An introduction to Attar's Conference of the Birds.

Readings: Attar, introduction, ix-xxii; 39-126; Faruqi, 19-34 (chapter 2), 69-80 (chapter 7); Esposito, 124-134.

Questions for classroom discussion:

Define the terms mysticism and Sufism. Attar, p.41: "Rise from this well as Joseph did..." (cf. Qur'an 12.1-20): What does this verse imply about both the world and the Sufi's role therein? What do the speeches and excuses of the various birds symbolize? Pp.63-65: What is symbolized here by the story of the king, the palace, and his mirrors? What is Faruqi's view of Sufism?

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10.) Thursday, October 22.

Attar, Conference of the Birds (cont'd). **Film: The Sufi Way.**

Readings: Attar, 126-180; Pinault, The Shiites, chapters 4 & 5, pp.47-57.

Questions for classroom discussion:

Summarize the story of Sheikh San'an (alternate spelling: Sam'an) and the stages of his quest and love affair. What (or who) is symbolized by the Christian girl (more than one answer here!)? Is his falling in love a good thing or a bad?

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11.) Tuesday, October 27.

Attar, Conference of the Birds (concluded). Sufism as a bridge to other religious traditions: the poetry of Jalal al-Din Rumi; the spiritual friendship of the 10<sup>th</sup>-century Sufi "heretic-saint" Husain ibn Mansur al-Hallaj and the 20<sup>th</sup>-century Catholic Orientalist Louis Massignon.

Readings: Attar, 180-245; Rumi, Hallaj, Massignon (selections: photocopied handouts).

Questions for classroom discussion:

Attar, 212-216: What kind of spiritual experience is symbolized by the story of the princess and the slave? Relate this story to the moth-flame imagery that recurs in this book.

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12.) Thursday, October 29. **FIRST TEST.**

Theological controversies. Murji'ism as a means of preserving the Islamic community.

Mu'tazilite and Ash'arite doctrines: free will in relation to divine omnipotence. Apostasy, free will, and the question of communal coercion. The possibilities for a "humanistic Islam": pluralism and tolerance in the Islamic tradition.

Readings: Faruqi, 59-68 (chapter 6); Esposito, 85-92; Pinault, "Humanistic Islam," 8-9.

Questions for classroom discussion:

Briefly describe Murji'ite theology. What are the positive and negative aspects of Murji'ism? Analyze the logic of al-Ash'ari's thought-experiment ("Let us imagine a child...", Esposito, p.90) with regard to souls that are "condemned to the depths of hell." Define the term apostasy. What is Faruqi's view of apostasy? Compare his view with that of the Khawarij/Kharijites and the Murji'a/Murji'ite form of theology. How does the concept of "humanistic Islam" address the issues of apostasy and Muslim communal identity raised by Faruqi, the Kharijites, and the Murjiites?

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**13.) Tuesday, November 3.**

Women's issues and feminism: traditionalist and modernist views. Gender and definitions of human nature.

Readings: Qur'an: 2.228, 4.1-3, 4.34, 4.129, 24.2, 24.30-31, 33.28-35, 35.18; Faruqi, 45-52 (chapter 4); Esposito, 116-124; Donohue & Esposito, Islam in Transition, "Fatwa: The Islamic Veil," 212-214.

Questions for classroom discussion:

Compare the views of Esposito and Faruqi on women's status in Islam in the light of the Qur'anic verses assigned above. What do the fatwas cited in our readings claim with regard to the necessity of women wearing the veil?

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**14.) Thursday, November 5. SECOND ESSAY DUE.**

From the Crusader wars of the Middle East to the Ottoman invasions of Europe: religion as ideological justification for conflict. Nationalism and Islamic identity from the eighteenth century to today.

Readings: Esposito, 141-146, 152-160; Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, "An Islamic Response to Imperialism" and "Islamic Solidarity," in Donohue & Esp., Islam in Transition 13-19.

Questions for classroom discussion:

How does Afghani explain the decline of Islamic societies? What suggestions does he present for the revival of Islam?

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***NB: Friday, November 6: Last day to withdraw from classes with a W grade!***

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**15.) Tuesday, November 10.**

Modernity and religious revivalism in Islam. The question of fundamentalism and neotraditionalist-"Islamist" movements. From resistance to governance and subsequent violent exclusion: the Muslim Brotherhood in 21<sup>st</sup>-century Egypt.

Readings: Muhammad Abduh, "Islam, Reason, and Civilization," in Islam in Transition, 20-23; Hasan al-Banna, "The New Renaissance," in Islam in Transition, 59-63.

Questions for classroom discussion:

What is Abduh's view of Islamic history and Islamic civilization's relationship with the West? How does he account for the resurgence of Western civilization at the end of the Middle Ages? What does al-Banna identify as worthwhile in non-Muslim societies and social movements?

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**16.) Thursday, November 12.**

Islam and modernity. Muslim responses to westernization and the process of globalization.

Wahhabi Salafism vs. Khomeinist Shi'ism: Saudi Arabia, Iran, and competition for the leadership of global Islam. The Islamic state in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: rights and duties of the individual therein. The revival of the Caliphate (Khilafah) in contemporary Islamist thought.

Readings: Esposito, 175-184, 221-226; Abu-l-'Ala' Mawdudi, "Nationalism and Islam," in Islam in Transition, 74-77; Mawdudi, "Political Theory of Islam," in Islam in Transition, 262-270; Khomeini, "Islamic Government," 332-340, in Islam in Transition. Review Faruqi, ch.6, "The Islamic World Order," 59-68.

Questions for classroom discussion:

What is Mawdudi's view of the Islamic state and the role of individuals in Muslim society? Check an encyclopedia such as the Britannica for definitions of the word 'totalitarianism.' To

what extent do the views of the state espoused by Mawdudi, al-Banna, and Faruqi conform to or differ from the totalitarian ideal? Khomeini: By “jurisprudent” Khomeini means faqih in the sense of a religious authority who is learned in Islamic law. According to him, how have Islam’s “enemies” portrayed this religion, and for what purpose (cf. p.333)? What is Khomeini’s view of the proper form of government?

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17.) Tuesday, November 17.

Shia Muslim lamentation rituals and the annual observance of Muharram. Shia perspectives on the self-sacrifice of Imam Husain at Karbala. Interpretations of Muharram ritual: questions of shafa’ah (intercession), thawab/savab (religious merit), and the assertion of communal identity. Readings: Pinault, The Shiites, ch.6, 59-62, chs.8-9, pp.79-98.

Questions for classroom discussion:

Compare the use of moth/flame imagery in Sufism and Shia Islam. What special meaning is attributed to Qur’an 3.103 in Shia Islam?

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18.) Thursday, November 19.

**TERM PROJECT (RESEARCH PAPER OR FIELD JOURNAL) DUE.**

Shia Muslim lamentation rituals (cont’d.).

Readings: Pinault, The Shiites, chs. 10-19, pp.99-175.

Questions for classroom discussion:

What sorts of criticism are directed against the practice of matam (lamentation ritual)? How is matam justified, according to the Shias interviewed in our text?

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***Monday, November 23-Friday, November 27: Thanksgiving Week/no classes.***

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19.) Tuesday, December 1. **SECOND TEST.**

Islam, religious pluralism, and the question of coexistence: prospects for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.  
No new readings.

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### **Texts.**

The following are available in the Santa Clara University bookstore:

Abdullah Y. Ali, ed. The Meaning of the Holy Qur’an (Amana).

Farid ud-Din Attar. Conference of the Birds (Penguin).

J. Donohue & J. Esposito. Islam in Transition (Oxford). NB: This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.

John Esposito. Islam: The Straight Path (Oxford). NB: This is the 4th edition.

Isma’il R. Al Faruqi. Islam (Amana).

D. Pinault. The Shiites: Ritual and Popular Piety in a Muslim Community (St. Martin’s).

### **Other readings (Camino/internet/online material):**

Various authors. “A Selection of Pre-Islamic Arabic Poetry.”

Thabit. “The Death of the Knight Rabi’a,” 6-13.

Ibn Ishaq. “From the Biography of the Messenger of God,” 20-22.

Labid. “The Mu‘allaqa.”

Shanfara. “The Lamiyah.”



D. Pinault. "Losers' Vengeance: Muslim-Christian Relations and Pakistan's Blasphemy Law." *America: The National Catholic Weekly*, April 10, 2006, pp.8-10.

D. Pinault. "Humanistic Islam." *Commonweal: A Review of Religion, Politics, and Culture*, January 11, 2002, pp.8-9.

**Additional readings (photocopies):**

D. Pinault. "The Sunnah of the Prophet: A Sampling of Exemplary Behavior and Statements" (2 pp.).

D. Pinault. "The Prophet Muhammad and His Interactions With Certain Poets, Singers, and Storytellers" (3 pp.).

**Requirements and grading.**

The final grade will be assigned on the following basis:

two essays, each worth 15%	Total: 30%
two tests, each worth 10%	Total: 20%
field journal or research paper	30%
participation	20%

**NB: ONLY STUDENTS WHO ATTEND THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS ARE ELIGIBLE TO TAKE THIS COURSE. NO STUDENT WHO MISSES THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS WILL BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE IN THIS COURSE.**

**NB: TO HAVE THE POSSIBILITY OF RECEIVING A PASSING GRADE FOR THIS COURSE, YOU MUST COMPLETE ALL THE COURSE REQUIREMENTS. ANYONE WHO NEGLECTS TO TAKE THE TESTS OR SUBMIT THE REQUIRED ESSAYS AND TERM PROJECT (RESEARCH PAPER/FIELD JOURNAL) WILL BE INELIGIBLE FOR A PASSING GRADE FOR THE COURSE.**

**Essay assignments.** Each essay will be devoted to an assigned topic linked to the required readings. Each essay is to be typed, double-spaced, and is to include brief paginated citations of the texts used in support of each of your arguments. Length of each essay: 8-10 pages (you may exceed this length if necessary.) Due dates will be listed on the assignment sheet distributed for each essay (see also the "course syllabus" section).

Please note: each paper must be handed in on time, at the beginning of class on the day it is due. I will lower the grade for your essay by at least one step (eg, C becomes C-) if you fail to submit your essay at the beginning of class on the due date. I will lower the grade by at least two steps (eg, C becomes D+) for papers submitted the day after they are due. The grade given for a particular essay will be lowered an additional step for each further day late the paper is submitted. Lateness penalties also accrue over weekends; thus the grade for a paper due on a Thursday that is submitted the following Tuesday will be lowered six steps (eg, B becomes D).

***The same lateness penalties also apply to your research paper/ field journal.***

**NB: Email/on-line submissions are NOT acceptable.**

I urge you to meet with me to discuss your ideas, outlines, and first drafts for each essay assignment.

Additionally, please be sure to proof your essays for grammatical mistakes, typographical errors, and infelicities of wording: these can have an adverse effect on the grade you earn.

***NB: Each page of every essay should have a header that includes your name, the title of the essay, and the page number.***

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The two **tests** will be taken in class on the dates indicated above in the “course syllabus” section. These tests will comprise short-format essays and definition questions. Preparation for each test will entail a comprehensive review on your part of all assigned readings, lectures, and discussions up to the date of the test.

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You will be required to write either a **research paper** or a **field journal**.

**Option #1: Research Paper.**

You will investigate some aspect of contemporary 21<sup>st</sup>-century Islam. The primary focus must be the religious, spiritual, or theological dimension of your chosen topic (rather than, say, the political, economic, or anthropological dimension, although of course there’s likely to be disciplinary overlap).

If you pursue option #1, then by **TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20**, you must submit to me in class a **one-page typed prospectus** identifying your research topic. Your prospectus will indicate 1.) what question you hope to answer in your investigation; 2.) the analytical method you’ll use in your research; 3.) the persons, if any, you plan to interview; and 4.) the textual sources you’ll use (NB: you must analyze at least one Islamic primary-source text that is not included in our syllabus; additionally, you must use and cite at least three texts from our syllabus).

All topics are to be approved by me in advance. I encourage you to meet with me personally before submitting your prospectus for help in choosing your research topic.

NB: Good resources for research on contemporary Islam include **w3newspapers.com** (which provides access to news articles from throughout the Islamic world) and **memri.org** (the website of the Middle East Media Research Institute). If you’re interested in Shia Islam, contact Prof. Andrew Newman of the University of Edinburgh (email: [andrew.j.newman@ed.ac.uk](mailto:andrew.j.newman@ed.ac.uk)) and ask for your name to be added to his “Shii News” electronic list.

Due date for research paper: **THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19**. This is when you’ll submit to me in class a final typewritten hard-copy version of your paper. Length: 15-20 pages (you may exceed this length if necessary), typed, double-spaced, with footnotes and bibliography for all textual citations. Lateness penalties apply (see above under “Essay assignments”).

**NB: As with all the written assignments for this course, email/on-line submissions are NOT acceptable.**

***NB: Each page of your research paper should have a header that includes your name, the title of your paper, and the page number.***

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**Option #2: Field Journal.**

**Journal.** Students who are interested in this option will arrange, in conjunction with me, trips to religious services at various Islamic sites in the Bay area. The confirmed date for each trip will be announced once our hosts have finalized plans with us. We'll carpool and travel as a group, and I'll accompany you.

For this option, you are required to participate in at least **two** of these group visits. Throughout the quarter, keep a journal in which you record your notes from each field trip and evaluate your field experiences in light of your readings and classroom discussions and the interviews you conduct. On **THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19**, you are to submit to me in class a final typewritten version of your journal. Length of journal: **15-20 pages** (you may exceed this length if necessary), typed, double-spaced, with footnotes and bibliography for any textual citations you make. The journal should incorporate the following data:

- 1.) **Field trips:** your impressions of each shrine you visit and a description of its physical setting;
- 2.) a description of the rituals/religious practices that you witness;
- 3.) a description of the participants (dress, age, gender, etc., as well as their interactions with each other and with the celebrants);
- 4.) a summary of any sermon or other discourse presented by individuals at the site, together with your own response to and interpretation of such speeches;
- 5.) your own personal response to what you experience, together with your own analysis and interpretation of what you witness at the site;
- 6.) a summary of interviews with at least two members of the congregation from each site (I encourage you to develop follow-up interviews with congregation members via e-mail, telephone, etc. You are also encouraged to do additional interviews with fellow students, Muslims on campus, members of Islamic organizations in the Bay area, etc. See me for more details);
- 7.) an analysis in which you compare your experiences at the different sites;
- 8.) a discussion of links between your fieldwork and your assigned classroom readings (the Qur'an, Attar, Faruqi, etc.);
- 9.) a description and analysis of the website associated with each mosque you visit (if such a website exists);
- 10.) a discussion of the following questions: With regard to each mosque you visit, what do our hosts choose to emphasize (whether explicitly or implicitly) or single out as key aspects of Islam and their particular denomination/ faith tradition (Sunni, Shia, Sufi, etc.)? What topics do they seem to avoid or prefer not to discuss? What is your own response to this self-presentation? (Keep in mind the notion of 'selective appropriation' that is mentioned earlier in the syllabus under 'goals and objectives.')
- 11.) an assortment of various free-form "midnight jottings" (see below for more information).
- 12.) Finally, your journal is to offer **concluding reflections**, in which you include your own personal responses to the readings, fieldwork, and interviews you undertake this quarter.

**Please note:** The journal is to be handed in on time. Lateness penalties apply (see above under "Essay assignments"). **NB: Email/on-line submissions are NOT acceptable.**

An important note: This journal is **both personal and characterized by informed opinion**. This means it is subjective (you will make use of the first person) and opinionated. You are expected and encouraged to voice your personal responses to what you experienced in your expeditions and what you learned in the classroom from our readings and discussions; but these

opinions should be characterized by thoughtful reflection and supported by arguments derived from your eyewitness fieldwork and your textual work throughout the quarter.

***NB: Each page of your journal should have a header that includes your name, the title “Islam Journal,” and the page number.***

**NB: Students pursuing the field-journal option are required to participate in at least two group visits with the class. This is a minimum. For enhanced credit, I encourage you to undertake as many field trips as possible.** You may also choose to do follow-up visits on your own initiative, which will further your learning opportunities and add to the quality of your journal. You are to consult with both me and the designated contact persons at the given mosque before engaging in any independent visits.

***Please give special attention to the following point:*** We will be car-pooling to reach our destinations for the field trips. Before each trip I will circulate a sign-up sheet to match students who have the use of a car with students who need a ride. Although I will do my best to match drivers and passengers, ***ultimately it is your responsibility to get to each field site.*** This means that as a student registered in this course, you are expected to exert your best effort to secure the use of a car if you possibly can.

**Additional NB, concerning “Midnight Jottings”:** Throughout the quarter your journal should be an ongoing record of your reflections on what you read for this course (which may include free-form “*midnight jottings*” as an immediate response to what you’ve read for a given day, whether news items or assigned readings), what you witness in your field trips, what you experience in your interviews and conversations, and what you analyze in the newspapers and other media concerning Islam. Since your journal will be an ongoing record on which you work throughout the quarter, you should not wait until the end of the quarter to begin making journal entries. At any point throughout the quarter you are welcome to show me your journal entries for evaluation and criticism.

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**AMONG THE POSSIBLE SITES FOR FIELDTRIP VISITS:**

**SBIA (SOUTH BAY ISLAMIC ASSOCIATION), SAN JOSE.** Address: 325 N. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, San Jose 95112. Contact person: Mr. Adnan Rasheed, tel: 408 876 8901; email: [adrash15@sbcglobal.net](mailto:adrash15@sbcglobal.net)

**SABA (SHIA ASSOCIATION OF THE BAY AREA), SAN JOSE.** Address: 4415 Fortran Ct, San Jose, CA 95134 Tel: (408) 946 5700; [saba@saba-igc.org](mailto:saba@saba-igc.org); [aalim@saba-igc.org](mailto:aalim@saba-igc.org) Website: [www.saba-igc.org](http://www.saba-igc.org) Contact person: Mr. Mehboob Abedi/email: [mehboob\\_abedi@yahoo.com](mailto:mehboob_abedi@yahoo.com).

**NAQSHBANDI SUFI TARIQAH, 427 South California Avenue, Palo Alto, 94306.** Contact person: Mr. Maruf (Mahboob) Khan tel: 510-499-3872 (cell#); 510 649 9405 (home landline); email: [marufkhan1990@gmail.com](mailto:marufkhan1990@gmail.com)

**DAR-E-BUTOOL, 44920 Osgood Road (cross-street: Grimmer), Fremont, CA 94539.**  
**Contact person: Mr. Syed Ahmar Rizvi; tel.: 510-566-6662; email: [shehwaar@gmail.com](mailto:shehwaar@gmail.com)**  
**Website for this mosque: [www.dar-e-butool.org](http://www.dar-e-butool.org)**

**BOOK REPORT. A further NB concerning the journal:** You have the option of substituting for one of your two required mosque field trips a **book report/evaluation** of one of the texts listed below. Your evaluation should include the following: a **summary** of the major themes treated in the book; an **analysis** of the book in light of relevant passages from the Qur'an (eg, regarding gender issues, Islamic government, family relations, jihad, etc.); and a **comparison** of the book's themes with at least one of the other texts or essays assigned for this course (eg, Attar, Faruqi, al-Banna, etc.).

In addition, your book report is to include a **critique** in which you identify what you believe to be the **strong points** of the text you've chosen. Select a **favorite passage** and explain why it's your favorite. What insights does it offer? Identify and evaluate the book's **weakest points**. Has the author failed to address points you've learned about from your other readings this quarter?

Total length of journal + book report: 15-20 pages: 10-15 pages for the journal (field trip(s), midnight jottings, etc., as described above) + 5 pages for the book report. The book report is to be attached to the journal and handed in on the due date for the journal.

**Books from which to choose for the book report:**

Khaled Abou El Fadl. [The Place of Tolerance in Islam](#)

Leila Aboulela. [Minaret: A Novel](#). (The story of a Sudanese Muslim woman who flees Khartoum for a new life in London.)

M.J. Akbar. [The Shade of Swords: Jihad and the Conflict between Islam and Christianity](#)

Nadeem Aslam. [Maps for Lost Lovers](#). (A novel about Muslim immigrant families in England)

Patrick Cockburn. [The Rise of the Islamic State: ISIS and the New Sunni Revolution](#)

J. Esposito & J. Voll. [Islam and Democracy](#)

Akeel Bilgrami. [Secularism, Identity and Enchantment](#) (a discussion of Muslim identity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century)

Michael Cook. [Ancient Religions, Modern Politics](#)

Yvonne Haddad & J. Esposito, eds. [Islam, Gender, and Social Change](#)

Y. Haddad & Adair Lummis. [Islamic Values in the United States](#)

Y. Haddad, Jane I. Smith, & Kathleen Moore. [Muslim Women in America: The Challenge of Islamic Identity Today](#)

Ayaan Hirsi Ali. [The Caged Virgin: An Emancipation Proclamation for Women and Islam](#)

Samuel Huntington. [The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order](#)

Mark Juergensmeyer. [Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence](#)

Irshad Manji. [The Trouble with Islam: A Muslim's Call for Reform in Her Faith](#)

Ali Merad. [Christian Hermit in an Islamic World: A Muslim's View of Charles de Foucauld](#)

Abul A'la Mawdudi. [Towards Understanding Islam](#)

Abdullahi Ahmed an-Na'im. [Toward an Islamic Reformation: Civil Liberties, Human Rights, and International Law](#)

Asra Nomani. [Standing Alone in Mecca: An American Woman's Struggle for the Soul of Islam](#)

Tariq Ramadan. [Western Muslims and the Future of Islam](#)

Feisal Abdul Rauf. [What's Right with Islam: A New Vision for Muslims and the West](#)

Jessica Stern & J.M. Berger. [ISIS: The State of Terror](#).

Bassam Tibi. *The Challenge of Fundamentalism: Political Islam and the New World Disorder*  
Serge Trifkovic. *The Sword of the Prophet (A Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam)*  
Amina Wadud. *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective*  
Michael Weiss & Hassan Hassan. *ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror*  
Behzad Yaghmaian. *Embracing the Infidel: Stories of Muslim Migrants on the Journey West*

**NB concerning the book report:** You have the option of doing the book report in addition to the minimum number of two or more field trips. (If you do so, your journal will in all likelihood significantly exceed 20 pages in length.) Thereby you will have the possibility of earning enhanced credit for the grade you achieve for the journal.

**Another NB: Students pursuing Option #1 (the research paper) may also write a book report for extra credit. In this case, the 5-10 pages for the book report will be in addition to the 15-20 pages dedicated to the research paper.**

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**CREATIVE FICTION/POETRY.** You also have the option of substituting for one of your two required mosque field trips a work of *creative fiction or poetry*. The short story or poem you write must address one or more of the Islamic themes (theological, mystical, historical, social, etc.) explored in this course. *You must append to your story/poem a discussion of the sources on which you drew (including at least two texts from our syllabus) for inspiration and how you made use of these sources.* Total length of journal + fiction/poetry: 15-20 pages = 10-15 pages for the journal (field trip(s), midnight jottings, etc., as described above) + 5-10 pages for the story/poem plus discussion of sources (as noted above, you may exceed 20 pages if necessary). The story or poem is to be included in the journal and handed in on the due date for the journal. You are required to consult with me in advance (preferably at least 3 weeks before the journal is due) should you decide to pursue this option.

For examples of fiction that make use of such themes, you are welcome to read two stories that have been published by the course instructor and that are available gratis for reading online. Simply google Pinault + "Murder of a Prince-Mystic" or Pinault + "Patti Smith Gets Me Busted in Peshawar."

**NB concerning the fiction/poetry assignment:** You have the option of writing a story or poem in addition to the minimum number of two or more field trips. (If you do so, your journal will in all likelihood significantly exceed 20 pages in length.) Thereby you will have the possibility of earning enhanced credit for the grade you achieve for the journal.

**Another NB: Students pursuing Option #1 (the research paper) may also write creative fiction/poetry for extra credit. In this case, the 5-10 pages for the story/poem will be in addition to the 15-20 pages dedicated to the research paper.**

**Another, and important, NB: You may undertake both of the above alternative options (book report, short story/poem); but if you're pursuing Option #2 (the field journal), you will still be required to participate in at least one of the required mosque field trips.**

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Class **participation** is an important part of this course. Thus you should make your best effort to attend class regularly and participate actively in classroom discussions. The assigned readings are to be completed before the class for which they are due. Reading each assignment in

advance is essential to your informed and thoughtful participation. This is an important point to emphasize: your presence in class will contribute to your participation grade only if you prepare in advance and then actively contribute to classroom discussions. Make a point of preparing the study questions listed under each day's readings in the syllabus; this is part of your preparation for classroom participation.

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With regard to issues of participation and grading, please note the following: Frequent **absence** from class will hurt your participation grade for the quarter. **"Frequent" here means more than one unexcused absence during the quarter.** After the first unexcused absence, your final grade for the course will be lowered one step (eg, C becomes C-) for each unexcused absence.

Of course illness or personal circumstances might arise that necessitate your absence; if this occurs please contact me at once so that we can discuss your situation. **(NB: A note from the Cowell Student Health Center does NOT automatically excuse your absence.)**

You should never be absent without notifying me. **If you know in advance you must be away, please notify me of this.** If you suddenly and unexpectedly miss class for any reason, you must contact me immediately (via email, voicemail, or a visit to my office) to explain why you missed class. This won't excuse your absence but it will let me know you take your responsibilities seriously and plan to continue in our course. This is a courtesy to me; and I value courtesy.

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**NB: Whenever you email me,** be sure to include the following in the subject line: **your name; our course title; topic of email.** Thus, eg: Husain ibn Mansur al-Hallaj/RSOC 81/request for meeting.

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**NB: Electronic devices of any kind (laptops, tablets, smart phones/cell phones, pagers, etc.) may not be used during our class time. Please be sure all such devices are turned off and out of sight. Students using such devices in class will be considered absent for that day and penalized accordingly. (See above under "absence.")** This means you will need to bring pens/pencils and a paper-notebook with you to class for note-taking. Students with special needs should furnish me the requisite permission forms from the Disabilities Resources Office.

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**A word on food.** Our classroom is not a cafeteria. Breakfast or lunch should be eaten elsewhere, and not during our class session. Having stipulated this, I will, however, make an exception for non-aromatic small-scale snack items—by which I mean food such as granola bars, apple slices, or cookies, as long as—and this is important—the food you bring into the classroom doesn't generate any smell, and as long as you clean up after yourself and dispose of trash appropriately. Students violating this rule will be counted as absent on the day of the offense. Feel welcome to consult with me for any points of clarification.

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**Attendance.** Please note also that I take attendance at the beginning of each class. I consider you late if you arrive after I finish taking attendance. Frequent lateness will affect your participation grade adversely. "Frequent" here means more than three instances of lateness during the quarter. After the third instance of lateness, your participation grade will be lowered one step (eg, C becomes C-) for each instance of lateness. If you arrive late for any class, please

let me know at the end of the period that you are here so I can note your tardy presence (as you can see from the above, absence is penalized more heavily than tardiness). Note also that if you arrive more than twenty minutes late to class, you will be marked as absent for that day. Early departure from class (especially without notifying me first) may also cause you to be marked as absent.

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**A note on participation and reading.** To be able to participate in classroom discussions, you need to remember clearly the content and significance of the assigned readings. This can be challenging, especially given the large number of primary and secondary sources assigned for this quarter. In preparing for each day's discussion, you are expected to take notes on each assigned text as you read it. Bring these notes to class along with the texts assigned for that day. This will equip you to enjoy (rather than merely suffer through) each day's discussion.

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**Writing assignments and academic honesty.** It is your responsibility to ensure that work you submit as your own is in fact your own, and that you acknowledge properly any sources from which you take ideas and phrasing. I comply with University policies regarding plagiarism and academic honesty (consult the discussion entitled "Academic Integrity" in the Undergraduate Bulletin). Should you need clarification concerning this issue, please consult me before submitting your essay.

This is my response when a student engages in plagiarism: the student receives an F for the plagiarized assignment. The student also receives an F for the course and is expelled from my course. Additionally, I send a report of the student's plagiarism to Santa Clara University's Office of Student Life and I consult with the Dean of Student Life concerning the possibility of further disciplinary action.

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In **grading** your work this quarter I use the following criteria:

F: unacceptable. With regard to essay assignments, this is the only grade for which I permit a rewrite. The highest grade I will award a rewrite, however, is D.

D: acceptable, even if unsatisfactory.

C: adequate; satisfactory.

B: good; impressive work.

A: outstanding. Indicates work that excels in meeting the standards of thoroughness, creativity, and sustained and thoughtful engagement with the assigned subject matter.

**Additionally, please note the following grade scale:**

A = 96-100%

A- = 90-95%

B+ = 86-89%

B = 80-85%

B- = 76-79%

C+ = 70-75%

C = 66-69%

C- = 60-65%

D+ = 56-59%

D = 50-55%

D- = 46-49%

F = 45 or less



**Disability accommodation policy.** To request academic accommodation for a disability, students must contact Disabilities Resources, which is located in the Benson Center (phone number: 408 554 4109). Students must register with Disabilities Resources and provide appropriate documentation to that office prior to receiving accommodation for a disability.

From *Translations of Ancient Arabian Poetry* (London: Wms & Norgate, 1930), translated by C.J. Lyall; adaptation of translation & notes by D. Pinault.

**1.) Poet: Qatari ibn al-Fuja'ah**

I said to my soul, when it called to me to flee breathless from the array of battle:  
Why do you tremble? Begging and weeping will not gain you even one day extra  
of life, beyond what your Doom appoints.  
So be still then, and face the onset of Death high-hearted,  
for none upon earth are allowed to live forever.  
No garment of praise is the cloak of old age and feebleness:  
no praise for the cautious who bows like a reed in the storm.  
The pathway of Death is set for all men to travel:  
the Crier of Death proclaims throughout the earth his empire.

**2.) Poet: Abd al-Malik ibn Abd al-Rahim**

When a man stains not his honor by doing any deed of shame,  
then no matter the clothing he wears, glorious does he appear, and shining.  
But unless he takes upon himself the burden of loss and toil,  
there lies not before him any road to praise and glory.  
A tribe are we who consider it no shame to be slain in fight;  
in fact, our fearlessness before death brings near to us our days of doom.  
There dies among us no lord a quiet death in his bed,  
and never is blood of us poured forth without vengeance.  
Our torch-flame of hospitality is never quenched to the wanderer of the night,  
nor has a guest ever found fault with us where men meet together.

**3.) Poet: Ibrahim ibn Kunaif**

Be patient: for free-born men endurance is the best thing of all,  
nor is there refuge against the wrongs and hurts brought to us by Time.  
And even if it did any good to bow to Fear,  
or if one could ward off harm by humbling oneself before the god of Ill,  
still the best and most glorious of styles would be to bear with a valiant front  
the full brunt of every stroke and blow dealt us by the Fates.  
All the more so is this true, given that none outruns by one day his Doom,  
nor has there ever been any refuge from the decree of the gods.

4.) **Poet: Duraid ibn al-Simmah**---lament for his brother Abdallah, killed on a raid.

I warned them: "Think! Even now two thousand men are on your track, all laden with sword and spear, their captains in Persian armor."

But when my clansmen refused to heed my warning, I followed their path, even though I knew well that they were fools, and that I walked not in Wisdom's way.

For aren't I one of the Ghaziyah? And if they err,

I err with my house; and if the Ghaziyah go right, so I.

But know you, if Abdallah is dead, and his place a void,  
no weakling unsure of hand, and no holder-back was he!

No wailer before ill-luck, one mindful in all he did  
to think how his work today would live in tomorrow's tale.

Content to bear hunger's pain though meat lay close at hand,  
to labor in ragged shirt that those whom he served might rest.

If Scarcity laid its hand on him, and Famine devoured his store,  
he gave but the gladlier what little to him they spared.

Slaughter chose from all men the race of Simmah for her own;  
so fate goes to fated end.

Flesh to feed the Sword are we, and unrepining meet our doom;  
well we feed Him, slain or slaying; joyfully he takes our food!

5.) **Poet: Sulmi ibn Rabi'ah**

Roast flesh, the glow of fiery wine,

to speed on camel fleet and sure

As your soul inclines to urge the beast on  
through all the hollow's breadth and length;

White women statue-like that trail  
rich robes of price with golden hem;

Wealth, easy lot, no dread of ill,  
to hear the lute's wailing string:

These are life's joys. For man is set  
the prey of Time, and Time is change.

Life narrow or large, great store or nought,  
all's one to Time, all men to Death.

Death brought to nought Tasm long ago,  
Ghadhi of Bahm, and Dhu Judun,  
the race of Jash and Marib, and  
the House of Luqman and al-Tuqun.

Note to poem 5: The last four lines of this poem refer to "lost cities" and vanished civilizations of the Arabian peninsula. Even in the 6<sup>th</sup>-early 7<sup>th</sup> centuries AD (when this poem was composed), these names were a source of mystery and awe. Ghadhi of Bahm was an ancient prince from the Arabian civilization of 'Ad, a civilization also referred to in the Qur'an (7.65 & 89.6-8). Marib, a desert city famous for its irrigation works, was also built by the people of 'Ad.

**6.) Poet: Ta'abbata Sharran of Fahm**

My mother's brother lies out among the rocks  
Slain in combat by the clan of Hudhayl, but his blood drips not without vengeance.  
In death he left a burden to me and departed, a burden of vendetta:  
And I take up the load lightly and bear it---  
A heritage of bloodshed to me, his sister's son:  
Me, dauntless---downcast of eyes, dripping poison,  
Like the hooded asp that spits venom: the viper.

Fearful these tidings of death that reached us, heavy---  
In comparison the heaviest of burdens is nothing!  
Fate has cut off from us, Time the tyrant,  
My uncle: one whom none had dared to belittle.  
He was like sunshine in wintertime, until when the heat of summer burned,  
He was coolness and shade.  
Lean-sided and thin, but not from lacking:  
Liberal-handed, generous, keen-hearted, haughty;  
A rushing rainflood when he gave of his fullness.

In vengeance Hudhayl has been burned by me.  
I had vowed to drink no wine until vengeance was achieved:  
So now reach me the cup, my friend Sawad son of 'Amir:  
Spent is my body with grief for my uncle.  
To Hudhayl we gave to drink Death's chalice,  
Whose dregs are disgrace, ill reputation, shame, and dishonor.  
The hyena laughs over the slain of Hudhayl; and the wolf—  
See there!—grins by their corpses; while the vultures flap their wings,  
Full-bellied, treading the Hudhayl dead, too gorged to fly away.

**Labid ibn Rabi'a al-'Amiri. "The Mu'allaqa."**

Translation by D. Pinault.

NB: Labid's "Mu'allaqa" belongs to an ancient genre of Arabic poetry known as the Qasida.

The Qasida traditionally is comprised of the following segments:

Atlal: "traces": the poet comes upon the traces of his beloved's campsite.

Nasib: "erotic invocation": the poet remembers the vanished woman.

Rahil: "departure": the poet leaves the campsite.

Wasf: "description": the poet contemplates the natural landscape through which he travels.

Qasd: "goal/destination": the poet's survival of his journey is linked with various poetic subgenres—eg, "boasting," "wine-drinking," "praise" (of tribal patrons), "insults" (against tribal enemies), etc.

To help you read this poem, I've indicated the major thematic segments into which it's divided.

**Atlal.** She's gone: my beloved, Nawaar of the Murrith clan.

The camp where I was supposed to meet her:

Empty, sanded over by desert winds.

The seasons have come and gone here:

Rainstorms filling dried riverbeds,

Green plants shooting up, fighting for life,

Animals clustering with their newborns—

Ostriches, gazelles, oryx-antelopes with their horns.

I studied her campsite and its tracings,

Tracings now faint with the passage of time, like an old scroll

Marked with a pen, or a faded tattoo on human skin.

I crouched and studied the campsite, its ashes and sand and stones,

Studying it for signs.

I crouched to question them: Where is she? What happened?

But how can we question ashes and sand and stones?

These things do not speak.

**Nasib.**

It hit me then: desire for Nawaar.

Long gone, now, packed off by her family in some howdah,

Its frame heavily curtained with rich brocades, so she'd be veiled from view.

A long line of camels, each bearing a woman of her clan,

Like does or fawns, soft and beautiful,

Each heavily guarded, long gone over the dunes.

By now she could be anywhere, Yemen or the Hijaz,

Or the hard volcanic stone of Qahr or Tilkham.

**Rahil.**

Well: enough of that! Nawaar's gone.  
Cut the knot: another love-affair over.  
Best to leave, on my own camel,  
A tough old veteran—  
Tough as the desert oryx-antelope.

**Wasf.**

While I ride through the sands I contemplate those antelopes  
And what they have to endure:  
Pursuit by wolves, that hunt down and tear apart  
The fawns and does that once fed on young green plants.  
Greedy brutes fight over dismembered corpses:  
For when it comes to al-Manaya—the goddesses of Fate—  
The arrows and darts the goddesses send forth do not miss their targets.  
The lone survivor of the wolf-raid—a solitary oryx—huddles by dark in a thicket,  
While a night-storm drenches it, and it keeps still in the mud.  
With dawn and a clear sky it catches the scent of a foe far worse than wolves:  
Man.  
It runs and runs, pursued by hunting-dogs,  
Till, cornered, it wheels and lowers its head and fights and fights with its horns,  
Using them as a man would a spear,  
Killing one dog, leaving another streaked with blood.  
A tough old beast—  
And that's how tough my camel is,  
The camel I ride, through the midday heat, when the hills quiver with mirages,  
When I keep pushing on, through strength of will,  
Letting nothing in this landscape stop me.

**Qasd.**

Hey, doesn't Nawaar realize I can start a love-affair, but when I'm tired of it,  
I can cut the cord, just like that?  
I'm the kind of guy who leaves when I get bored  
With hanging around a dull place.  
See, you've no idea how many good times I've had,  
Chatting away the night with pals,  
Keeping off the chill with a stiff drink of wine,  
Enjoying the view of the hired girls as they play their songs for me.  
And when it's time to fight, I defend my tribe;  
At dawn I'm the first to climb onto a camel or horse, weapon in hand.  
And, at the oasis, in tense situations, when other tribes show up—  
All of them strangers, unknown to us and dangerous,  
Men who are wary and proud, the looks on their faces showing readiness  
For bloodshed and feuds, as if they were wild jinns of the wasteland sands—  
Among men like that I've argued my tribe's case and staked our claim and refuted theirs,  
And shown them all I'm as dangerous and proud as anyone there.

When animals are to be slaughtered and offered as food,  
I make sure there's enough for all guests—the wanderer and traveler,  
The old woman and all the orphans.  
We have leaders, noble and generous,  
Men who come from a tribe that follows a sunnah (ancestral way of life)  
Laid out for us by our fathers and forefathers.  
For every tribe, after all, has a sunnah and a model to follow.  
Such men as ours preserve their honor, and their deeds count for something,  
Because they're careful how they act and don't give way to impulse.  
Such men are like rain in the desert for wayfarers and widows:  
The jealous and envious have nothing to find fault with,  
For in the tribe I come from,  
Such are the kind of men we have.

Shanfara. **Lamiyat al-‘Arab.**

Translated by D. Pinault.

You, my clansmen and family members, get up and get out!  
I choose a different tribe altogether.  
The night is moonlit; my camel is saddled and ready.  
I can make my own way in the world.  
A man who is noble and independent can always find a refuge from harm,  
Can find a place of his own to hide.  
The world’s a big place, especially for an individual  
Who’s smart and knows how to survive a solo wasteland trip by night.

I have a second family, whom I’m closer to than you:  
The wolf, fast and strong; the leopard, with spotted fur; the jackal, with long trailing hair.  
They’re the kind of family that doesn’t betray a man when he confides his secrets;  
And they won’t abandon a criminal or bandit just because of what he’s done.  
They’re proud, these beasts, and brave and fast and strong;  
But when we glimpse the first thing we can hunt down—  
Gazelle or prey of any kind—then I’m fastest and strongest of all.  
Yet once we’ve caught our food, I can tame my hunger. I can do without.

Three good friends I have:  
A bold heart;  
A knife unsheathed from its scabbard and ready for use;  
And a long bow of yellow polished wood, with a fistful of arrows.

I master thirst; I master fear.  
I’m not the sort to keep a wife or helplessly ask her for advice.  
I don’t stay close to tribal campsites, where there are lots of people, nice and safe,  
Nor do I make myself presentable with deodorant and cologne.  
No, I’m so tough that when my feet strike the flint-hard ground,  
Glints of fire flare.

And when I have to go without anything to eat,  
I let my hunger lengthen and go on and on till I kill hunger dead  
And strike all thought of food from my mind.  
I’ll eat dust and dirt from the earth before I’ll accept a handout  
From some wealthy clown who thinks he’ll have a claim on me.

So if you catch sight of me  
Like the snake, offspring of the desert sands,  
Sun-scorched and blasted by the mid-day heat,  
Barefoot and worn thin from what I’ve been through,  
Then just keep this in mind:  
I’m the master of endurance, and I wear endurance  
Like a shirt over a heart that beats strong as a young wolf’s.



Resolution, determined undying energy: I wear these like a pair of shoes.

Some days I have plunder; some days I do without.  
Doesn't matter: the man with real wealth is the exile,  
Who wanders free, not weighed down  
By the weight of many things.

I raid camps by night, crawl past the guards,  
And knife men in my way, leaving their wives widows and their children fatherless.  
Come morning, the tribesmen ask each other:  
"Who—or what—was that? Our dogs howled and barked,  
but whatever it was last night came and went unseen.  
Human? No. Men can't manage that. Maybe a jinn,  
Ill-omened, leaving a trail behind of destruction as it passed."

One day in summer, with the heat at its worst,  
When asps and vipers writhed and lashed themselves  
Along the sun-baked earth,  
I set out to face the desert, with no protection,  
Nothing to shield my head, nothing except an old tattered cloak,  
And my hair, a long matted mane  
That whipped and blew about in the wind.  
A long time, now, since my last shampoo,  
Or since I've felt the touch of someone  
Combing out my hair for lice.  
A year now, frankly, since it's been washed.

Many a wasteland, bare and blank, like the back of a shield,  
Have I crossed, on my two feet, alone,  
Deserts no one else dares cross.  
But I made it, from one end to the other,  
And finally came to a halt  
On the summit of a sand-swept hill,  
And rested at my ease.

Around me, close at hand, the wild goats came and went,  
Their coats sweeping the earth, like gowns young women wear.

At twilight, they gathered motionless around me,  
As if I, too, were a desert beast,  
Long-horned, white-footed, making my way forever  
Up a steep mountain path.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Academic quarter \_\_\_\_\_

Year (Fr, Soph, Jr, Senior) \_\_\_\_\_ Course title & no. \_\_\_\_\_

Local address \_\_\_\_\_

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Telephone/Cellphone \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Major (also indicate any Minor concentrations/Pathway) \_\_\_\_\_

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Previous coursework in Religious Studies \_\_\_\_\_

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Previous study of Islam \_\_\_\_\_

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Competence in languages other than English (speaking/reading/writing) \_\_\_\_\_

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Particular interests in the field of Religious Studies/Islam \_\_\_\_\_

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Other interests/travel experience/overseas volunteer service etc. \_\_\_\_\_

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