In introduction to the Islamic Intellectual Tradition
Dr. Joseph E. Lowry
TR 1:30-3:00

**Description**

This course surveys the traditions of rational thought in classical Islamic culture, using English translations of classic works. We will read works that can be described as philosophical, including not only the Arabic and Islamic products of the Hellenistic mode of thought but other religious sciences whose methodology is broadly philosophical. The course examines the influence of these different disciplines upon each other, and the process of the Islamic ‘aspecting’ of the Greek intellectual legacy. The readings thus include not only the works of Hellenized philosophers (*falāsifa*) of Islam, but also those of theologians (*muʿtakallīmūn*), jurists (*fiqh*-writers), grammarians (*nahw/lugha*-writers), historians (*muʿarrīkhūn*) and litterateurs (*adab*-writers). No prerequisites; Arabic not required.

**Requirements**

Because most classes will consist of discussions of assigned readings, it is imperative that students prepare all assignments prior to class. In order to stimulate in-class discussion, students will respond in writing to one or two short questions that address aspects of selected readings. These responses are designed to help focus students’ reading and induce reflection on the assigned texts in preparation for in-class discussion. In addition to thorough preparation of the assigned readings and timely submission of responses to study questions, students will be required to write a substantial research paper (approx. 20 pages), and will report on their research in an oral presentation. There will also be a final exam.

**Required Texts**

The following books are required and may be purchased at the Penn Book Center (34th and Sansom):

- *The Case of the Animals vs. Man...*, tr. L. Goodman (GTB Press, or Oxford)

Additional readings will be posted to the course Blackboard site and/or distributed in class.

**Grades**

Grades will be based on a combination of preparation for and participation in class (including written responses to study questions, 30%), oral presentations (15%), the research paper (30%), and the final exam (25%).
NELC 437 — Schedule of Readings

January
12 Th Introduction; selected theological ideas from the Qur’an (handout)

Early kalām (Dialectical or Systematic Theology)
  2. Sālim b. Dhakwān, Epistle, translators’ introduction, 1, 15-19; text, 73-105 (paras. 33-105)
19 Th 3. John of Damascus, 133-159 (on heresy)
  4. Watt, Creeds, 57-61 (Testament of Abū Ḥanīfa); 29-32 (Ibn Ḥanbal); 62-67 (later Ḥanafī creed); 41-47 (al-Ashʿarī)

God’s Existence and Attributes
24 T 1. Blankinship, “The early creed,” 47-54
  5. al-Ashʿarī, 6-19, 45-52
  6. al-Hilli, 1-39
26 Th  • Ibn Khaldūn, Muqaddimah, 348-354 (on theology)
  7. R.M. Frank, “Currents and Countercurrents,” 113-134
  • Cambridge Companion, “Introduction,” 1-9
  • Cambridge Companion, “Greek into Arabic: Neoplatonism in Translation,” 10-31
  8. al-Ghazālī/Averroes, Tahafut, 156-170 (4th discussion)
31 Th 9. al-Ghazālī/Averroes, Tahafut, 186-221, 250-255 (6th and 10th discussions)
  • Cambridge Companion, “al-Ghazālī,” 137-154

February
God’s Knowledge
2 Th 10. al-Ghazālī/Averroes, Tahafut, 255-285 (11th - 13th discussions)
  • Cambridge Companion, “Averroes,” 180-200

Causality, Divine Power, Justice
7 T 11. al-Shāfiʿi on Abrogation (naskh)
  5. al-Ashʿarī, 53-96
  12. al-Ghazālī/Averroes, Tahafut, 311-332 (On the Natural Sciences)
9 Th 5. al-Ashʿarī, 97-106
  6. al-Hilli, 40-61

The Universe
14 T 13. al-Fārābī, Perfect State, 101-163 (chs. 3-9)
  • Cambridge Companion, “al-Fārābī...,” 52-71
16 Th 14. al-Ghazālī/Averroes, Tahafut, 1, 37, 57, 58, 69-87 (the 4 proofs for the eternity of the world and 2d discussion)
21 T 15. al-Ghazālī/Averroes, Tahafut, 285-310 (14th-16th discussions)

The Intellect and the Soul
23 Th  • Cambridge Companion, “Psychology: Soul and Intellect,” 308-326
  16. al-Ghazālī/Averroes, Tahafut, 333-356 (Natural Sciences, 2d discussion)

Resurrection
28 T 5. al-Ashʿarī, 10-11
  6. al-Hilli, 82-91
  17. al-Ghazālī, Incoherence, 208-225 (20th discussion)
  18. Averroes, Tahafut, 356-363 (Natural Sciences, 3d discussion)
March

Language and Logic
1 Th  •  Ibn Khaldūn, 431-441 (on language and the linguistic sciences)
   19. al-Shāfi‘ī on Language and Textual Interpretation
   5. al-Ash‘arī, 107-111

6 T  •  NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK
8 Th  •  NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

13 T  •  Cambridge Companion, “Logic,” 247-265
   •  Ibn Khaldūn, 382-385 (on logic)

>> PRELIMINARY PAPER OUTLINES AND BIBLIOGRAPHIES DUE!!  <<

The Good Life
15 Th  •  Abū Bakr Ibn Zakariyā’ al-Rāzī, The Philosopher’s Way of Life, 36-44
   •  al-Ghazālī, Deliverance from Error, 61-114 (notes 115-143)
   23. The Life of the Shaykh al-Ra’is (= Avicenna, Ibn Sinā), 17-111 (read closely to p. 43, skim the rest)

20 T  •  Ibn Tufayl, Hayy b. Yaqẓān, Introduction; 95-134 (penultimate line)

22 Th  •  Ibn Tufayl, Hayy b. Yaqẓān, 134-166 (to end)
   •  Cambridge Companion, “Philosophy in Andalusia...,” 155-179

Politics, Ethics, and Social Organization
27 T  •  al-Ash‘arī, 112-116
   6. al-Hilli, 62-81
   •  Ibn Khaldūn, 427-428 (on scholars and politics)
   24. al-Fārābī, Perfect State, 229-277 (chs. 15, 16)

29 Th  •  Sincere Brethren, The Case of the Animals, 51-115 (chapters 1-17) (Oxford pagination may differ)
   •  Cambridge Companion, “The Ismā‘īlīs,” 72-91

April
3 T  •  Sincere Brethren, The Case of the Animals, 115-202 (chapters 18-30) (Oxford pagination may differ)

5 Th  •  Ibn Khaldūn, Muqaddimah, 5-9 (introduction); 11-32 (on writing history); 91-154 (on human civilization)

10 T  •  Ibn Khaldūn, Muqaddimah, 230-295 (on human civilization)

Philosophy and Religion
12 Th  •  al-Shāfi‘ī on Subjective Reasoning (istiḥsān)
   26. al-Ghazālī, “Introduction” to the Incoherence of the Philosophers, 1-11
   27. al-Fārābī, Perfect State, ch. 17, 277-285

17 T  •  Ibn Khaldūn, Muqaddimah, 358-367 (on Sufism)
   •  Ibn Khaldūn, Muqaddimah, 388-395 (metaphysics, sorcery)
   •  Ibn Khaldūn, Muqaddimah, 398-405 (refutation of philosophy)
   •  Cambridge Companion, “Mysticism and Philosophy: Ibn ’Arabi and Mullā Ṣadrā,” 224-246

The Modern Study of ‘Islamic’ Philosophy
19 Th  •  O. Leaman, “Does the Interpretation of Islamic Philosophy Rest on a Mistake?”
   30. Leaman, “How to Read Islamic Philosophy,” 191-236

24 T  •  In-class presentation of research topics
General Bibliography

The first two websites listed below have reasonably reliable articles on philosophy generally, and Islamic philosophy in particular, respectively; the third is an excellent bibliographical source:

http://plato.stanford.edu/
http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/
http://philosophy.cua.edu/faculty/tud/biblio.cfm#sectionone

The following are works of a general, introductory nature (and will be on reserve):
O. Leaman, An Introduction to Islamic Philosophy, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)
---, A Brief Introduction to Islamic Philosophy (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999)
History of Islamic Philosophy, O. Leaman, S.H. Nasr eds. (New York: Routledge, 2001)
J. McGinnis and D. Reisman, eds., Classical Arabic Philosophy: An Anthology of Sources (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2007) (the introduction is excellent)
M. Campanini, An Introduction to Islamic Philosophy (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008)

The following two encyclopedias contain articles on individual thinkers and, occasionally, concepts:
Encyclopaedia Iranica (up through about the letter H at this point; often the articles are more recent than those in the Encyclopaedia of Islam and so more up to date; also available online and in the seminar room)

The Index Islamicus, available online through Franklin, allows you to search all articles on anything related to Islam by author, keyword, etc. (not full text, obviously) and is an obligatory starting-point for any serious research paper. Note that many of the journal articles you will find (and possibly some books) will be available online through Franklin.

Finally, there are two journals that specialize in Islamic philosophy: Arabic Sciences and Philosophy (Cambridge) and the Journal of Islamic Philosophy (Harvard), in addition to the other specialist journals in the field of Islamic studies.