

Islamic Ethics

REL 376 (Spring 2011)

T & TH 12:15 – 1:30 (Chambers B027)

Prof. Syed Rizwan Zamir

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Office Hours: Mon & Wed 10:30- noon; Tue 1:45 – 3:00

Course Description:

The course is a survey of the various modes of ethical thinking and lived practice within the Islamic religious and intellectual tradition. We will explore the Qur'anic ethical viewpoint, ethical life built on the imitation of the Prophet's example, and religious, theological, philosophical, political and mystical ethics. Though our study deals primarily with exploring these various ethical modes, for the purpose of the term paper project students will be required to choose a topic of their own choice, of historical, theological or contemporary significance, and apply one or more of these modes to it. Towards the end of the course we will also explore how these ethical modes have fared or were transformed in the modern period. This is a seminar course and requires active participation of students in weekly discussions.

Required Readings (available at the Bookstore):

1. Abdul Ali Hamid. *Moral Teachings of Islam*. Walnut Creek: AltaMitra Press, 2003
2. Campanini, Massimo. *An Introduction to Islamic Philosophy*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008
3. Cook, M. A. *Forbidding Wrong in Islam: An Introduction*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
4. Khalidi, Tarif. *Images of Muhammad: Narratives of the Prophet in Islam across the Centuries*. 1st ed. New York: Doubleday, 2009.
5. Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. *The Garden of Truth: The Vision and Promise of Sufism, Islam's Mystical Tradition*. New York: HarperOne, 2007.
6. Rahman, Fazlur. *Major Themes of the Qur'an*. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2009
7. Sajoo, Aryn B. Ed. *A Companion to Muslim Ethics*. New York: I. B. Taurus, 2010

Course Requirements:

Midterm	30%
Final Project	35% (Includes 5% Project Presentation)
Quiz	5%
Response Paper (4-page)	15%
Class Participation*	15%

*Note: In addition to regular attendance the participation grade will be based on an overall assessment of the quality of class presentations, attentiveness, class etiquette, and critical engagement with the readings and discussion. Do ask instructor if you have any questions regarding how to make your participation more effective.

Attendance Policy: Attendance is compulsory in this course and more than 2 absences without valid excuse such as sickness or family emergency etc. will result in lowering of grade. It is student's responsibility to obtain notes and 'catch-up' in the case of absence. Absence will not be a valid excuse for not knowing what happened in the class.

COURSE OUTLINE

Key: Lecture (L), Discussion (D), Lecture and Discussion (L & D) – italics (video)

WEEK 1: Introduction & Method of Study

Readings:

Imam Birgivi: 3-56

Sajoo: *Introduction* (1-31)

Tue, Jan 11: Introduction to the course (D)

Thu, Jan 13: Introduction to Islam (L & D)

WEEK 2: Sources of Islamic Ethics: Qur'anic Ethics I

Readings:

Rahman: Ch 1, 5 & 6

The Qur'an (Optional): Ch 1, 14, 21, 36 & 56

Tue, Jan 18: Introducing the Qur'an and the Qur'anic Worldview (L & D)

Thu, Jan 20: The Qur'anic Worldview I (D)

WEEK 3: Sources of Islamic Ethics: Qur'anic Ethics II

Readings:

Rahman: Ch 2, 3, 4 & 7

The Qur'an (Optional): Ch 2 & 3

Tue Jan 25: Ethical Implications of the Qur'anic Worldview (D)

Thu Jan, 27: Ethical Implications of the Qur'anic Viewpoint (D)

WEEK 4: Sources of Islamic Ethics: Prophetic Model I

Readings:

Khalidi: 21-103

Moral Teachings of Islam, p. 1-61

Tue, Feb 1: Introducing the Prophet and the Prophetic Model (L & D)

Thu, Feb 3: *Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet* (Video)

WEEK 5: Sources of Islamic Ethics: Prophetic Model II

Readings:

Khalidi 104 - 174

Moral Teachings of Islam, 61-123

Tue, Feb 8: Prophetic Model of Ethical Life (D)

Thu, Feb 10: Prophetic Model of Ethical Life (D)

WEEK 6: Ethics as Law/Law as Ethics

Readings:

Oxford History of Islam: Chapter 2 & 3 (Will be provided)

Tue, Feb 15: Introducing Shari'ah (L & D)

Thu, Feb 17: Shari'ah (D)

WEEK 7: Religious Ethics

Readings:

Cook: Ch 1-9 (1-110)

Tue, Feb 22: Commanding Good and Forbidding Evil (D)

Thu, Feb 24: **Midterm Test (Paper Proposal & Bibliography is due)**

SPRING BREAK: February 25 (4:30 P.M.) - March 7 (8:30 A.M.)

Note: *Before Thanksgiving Break you must meet with me individually to discuss your research paper.*

WEEK 8: Adab, Theological & Philosophical Ethics

Readings:

Adab Literature: Sajoo: Ch 3

Theology: *Defenders of Reason in Islam*: 90-115 (Will be provided)

Philosophy: Campanini: Ch 4, 5, 6 (p. 75-125)

Tue, Mar 8: Theological Ethics (L&D)

Thu, Mar 10: Theological & Philosophical Ethics (L&D)

WEEK 9: Philosophical Ethics contd. + Mystical Ethics I

Readings:

Philosophy: Campanini: 126-164 + "Meaning and Role of Philosophy in Islam" (Will be provided)

Mysticism: Nasr *Garden of Truth* xiii - 25

Tue, Mar 15: Philosophical Ethics (D)

Thu, Mar 17: Introduction to Sufism (L&D)

WEEK 10: Mystical Ethics II

Readings:

Nasr *Garden of Truth* 29-159

Tue, Mar 22: Sufi Worldview (D)

Thu, Mar 24: Sufi Worldview (D)

WEEK 11: Overlap among the Various Modes of Ethical Thinking

Readings:

The Ruler and Society (Will be provided)

Birgvi: 61-83 + 30 pages of your choice from the rest of the book

Tue, Mar 29: Interplay of Ethical Modes (D)

Thu, Mar 31: Interplay of Ethical Modes (D)

WEEK 12: Islamic Ethics and Contemporary Issues

Readings:

Khalidi: Ch 9 & 10

Sajoo: Ch 4-11 (79-199) – each group will present one chapter in the class

Tue, Apr 5: Group Presentations

Thu, Apr 7: Group Presentations (**Paper “What is Islamic Ethics?” is due today**)

WEEK 13: Concluding the Study of Islamic Ethics

Tue, Apr 12: Project Presentations

Thu, Apr 14: Project Presentations

WEEK 14: Concluding the Study of Islamic Ethics

Tue, Apr 19: Project Presentations

Thu, Apr 21: Project Presentations (**Project Paper is Due Today**)

EASTER BREAK: APRIL 22 (4:30 P.M.) - APRIL 27 (8:30 A.M.)

Week 15:

Thu, Apr 28: Project Presentations