ANTH 5404 Understanding Islam
Fall Term, Academic Year 2013-2014

Lecture Time: Monday 16:30 - 18:15
Tutorial: Monday 18:30 – 19:15
Lecturer: Dr Paul O’Connor (paul.oconnor@cuhk.edu.hk)
Classroom: Humanities Building - 12
Teaching Assistant: Rao Yichen

Course Description

This class begins its study of Islam by examining the historical developments of Islam in pre-Islamic Arabia and looking at the life of various religious figures. It then examines aspects of Islamic civilization, culture and philosophy. Finally it addresses issues of the so-called ‘ politicization of religion’ in the context of globalizing modernity and violent conflict. Throughout this course we will investigate the insights that anthropological analyses can offer to discussions centering the relations between Muslim societies and the West.

Course Objectives

- Students will appreciate the contemporary cultural diversity, values and world views of Muslims living in diverse circumstances and places
- Understand the contemporary struggles over religious authority and orthodoxy in some parts of the Muslim world
- Understand the tensions and potential conflicts between religious ideas and practices relating to gender, education and art
- Be able to challenge and think critically about stereotypes about Muslims and Islam

Medium of Instruction - English

Course Assessment

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<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Mark Percentage</th>
<th>Word length/duration</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class/Tutorial Participation &amp; Oral Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Weekly Participation</td>
<td>On-going</td>
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<td>Class Project</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Halal Project</td>
<td>17 November</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take-home exam</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>3,000 words</td>
<td>27 October</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Essay</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>3,000 words</td>
<td>8 December</td>
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**Class Tutorial Participation and Oral Presentation (10%)**

This is an ongoing weekly assessment and is based on the involvement of students in class discussion and at oral presentations. Students are encouraged to make thoughtful insights on the class readings and lectures. Making connections between materials, synthesising the arguments of different theorists, and using current affairs examples are the highest objective of this component.

**Class Project (10%)**

Students will be given a short project on halal food to work on collaboratively and asked to present as a group in tutorial session week 12 (17th November). More information will be provided at the start of the course. The project will be presented as an oral report and debate.

**Take Home Exam (40%)**

You will have 2 weeks to complete 3 questions that draw on the lecture and readings from weeks 1-6. The take home exam should be 3,000 words in length. The Questions will be provided on Week 7’s (13th October) lecture and the exam is due on Monday the 27th of October. Answers should be in essay format and include academic references.

**Research Essay (40%)**

Students are required to write a 3,000 word research paper on the close reading of a topic from lectures week 7 to 13. It should include a research question and reference to scholarly work. Students must demonstrate that they have read and researched the topic and articulate a critical position.

All papers must conform with the department’s citation style (available on Blackboard Course Content) and be in an essay form (introduction, body, conclusion).

The research essay is due on the 8th of December. You can hand it in to your lecturer or in the Department of Anthropology.

**Plagiarism**

Students are required by university policy to submit all papers to VeriGuide (the Chinese University Plagiarism Identification Engine System). Please check the website http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/ for more information on how to submit papers through VeriGuide.

**Recommended Text**

All readings are available through the University online, or on reserve at the library. Many of the weekly readings come from Bowen which is also available from the University Book Shop.

**Bowen, John R., A New Anthropology of Islam, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).**
Students are expected to have read the required reading before each lecture. This will facilitate class discussion and student participation. Optional readings are for students interested in deepening their knowledge. They are also useful guides for students when focusing on their research essay in a particular topic.

**Overview**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1st September</td>
<td>Introduction: The Pilgrimage to Mecca</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>8th September</td>
<td>Thinking Anthropologically about Islam</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>15th September</td>
<td>Fieldtrip</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>22nd September</td>
<td>The Life of Muhammad</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>29th September</td>
<td>Learning to be Muslim</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>6th October</td>
<td>Worship and Ritual</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>13th October</td>
<td>Islam in Hong Kong</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>20th October</td>
<td>Mid Term Reading Week (No Class)</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>27th October</td>
<td>Muslims as Minorities</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>3rd November</td>
<td>Women in Muslim Societies</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>10th November</td>
<td>Jihad</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>17th November</td>
<td>Terror and Media</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>24th November</td>
<td>Conclusion: Islam in the World</td>
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**Schedule of Reading (includes some suggested reading order)**

**Week 1 (1st September)**  
Introduction: The Pilgrimage to Mecca


**Tutorial - Introductions**

**Week 2 (8th September)**  
Thinking Anthropologically about Islam


**Tutorial – Discussion of Cooper Reading From Week 1.**

- What is the relevance of song? What are the values of having made Hajj?

**Week 3 (15th September)**  
Fieldtrip to Kowloon Mosque

**No Tutorial**

**Week 4** *(22nd September)* **The Life of Muhammad**


**Tutorial – How to think about Islam**

Students must prepare reflections on approaching Islam as a topic of study. How does the story of the Prophet Muhammad help us understand Islam? What impressions do you have of pre-Islamic Arabia?

**Week 5** *(29th September)* **Learning to be Muslim**


**Tutorial – Bowen Chapter 2 discussion**

How is Islam taught? What emphasis can we observe?

**Week 6** *(6th October)* **Worship and Ritual**

AND
Chapter 4, ‘Reshaping Sacrifice’, pp. 75-101.

**Tutorial – Piety** What does piety signal? Why is ritual important for communicating commitment to religion. Call on insights from both of this week’s readings.

**Week 7** *(13th October)* **Islam in Hong Kong**

Ho, Wai-yip. ‘Historical analysis of Islamic community development in Hong Kong: Struggle for recognition in the post-colonial era’, *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, vol. 21, no. 1, pp. 63-77.


**Tutorial – The significance of Hong Kong’s Mosques old and new**
Referring to Ho’s reading – what arguments does he make about Hong Kong’s mosques, history, and attitudes to Islam in the territory.

**Week 8  (20th October)  Mid-term Reading Week (No Class)**

**No Tutorial**

**Week 9  (27th October)  Muslim Minorities**


Lewis, Philip, Young, British and Muslim (London: Continuum, 2007), pp. 15-32.

**Tutorial – Minorities**

Students must find and bring a newspaper cutting, or news site printout to tutorial for discussion about Muslims as minorities. Your new item should refer to a story in which Muslims are present as minorities in a country.

**Week 10  (3rd November)  Women in Muslim Societies**


**Tutorial – Class discussion**

Is Islam bad for women? Is the modern world bad for Muslim women? Is the Qur’an fair to the sexes? Do Islamic cultures reinforce patriarchy and marginalize women?

**Week 11  (10th November)  Jihad**


**Tutorial – Jihad and Globalization**

Discussion of short article available on Blackboard.

**Week 12  (17th November)  Terror and Media**


**Tutorial – Project Presentations**

Present short work on Halal food in Hong Kong

**Week 13 (24th November) Conclusion: Islam in the World**

Browse and read news reports from the Guardian Middle East Section. (http://www.theguardian.com/world/middleeast/roundup)


**Tutorial – What does anthropology tell us about Islam and current affairs?**

*Further Reading on Covered Topics*

**General**


**The Pilgrimage**


**Thinking Anthropologically about Islam**


**The Life of Muhammad**


**Learning to be Muslim**


Noor, Farish A., Yoginder Sikand, and Martin van Bruinessen (eds), *The Madrasa in Asia: Political Activism and Transnational Linkages* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press)


**Worship and Ritual**


**Islam in Hong Kong**


Ho, Wai-yip. ‘Historical analysis of Islamic community development in Hong Kong: Struggle for recognition in the post-colonial era’, *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, vol. 21, no. 1, pp. 63-77.


Plüss, Caroline, ‘Hong Kong’s Muslim organisations: Creating and expressing collective identities’ *China Perspectives*, 2000, 29 pp. 19-23.

**Muslim Minorities**


**Women and Muslim Societies**


**Jihad**


**Terror and Media**


**Islam in the world**


Choueiri, Youssed M. *Islamic Fundamentalism* (London: Pinter, 1997).