

The Pilgrimage to Mecca
INT D 425/INT D 530
University of Alberta, Fall 2013
Wednesdays 1:00-3:50 pm, HC 4-96

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Short Course Description

The pilgrimage to Mecca is the world's largest annual pilgrimage and a pillar of Islam. This interdisciplinary seminar explores theories of pilgrimage and ritual, Islamic law, Muslim and non-Muslim travellers' accounts, and the history as well as economic, artistic, political, social, and religious dimensions of the *hajj*. No prerequisites, open to all majors. Counts for Religious Studies major/minor or an Arts option.

Course Themes and Questions

Is pilgrimage an experience of belonging, transformation, or even exile? What is the meaning of the *hajj* rituals? Do pilgrimage centers foster radical unity and equality or contestation of religious orthodoxy and orthopraxy? Does the pilgrimage reduce or reinforce class differences? How have African and Asian pilgrims, and non-Muslim interlopers, described the Muslim Others they encountered? How have local rulers sought religious legitimacy through performance and patronage of the *hajj*, while also managing the threat posed by this source of "twin infection," epidemic diseases and revolutionary ideas? Why may women and men worship side by side at the Ka'ba, but not in mosques? Do popular pilgrimage murals defy a general prohibition on figural art in Islam? How are pilgrims transformed, and how do they transform their homelands? How does Saudi Arabia's control of Meccan and Medinan sites impact international relations? Is the preservation of historic and sacred sites more important than the enhancement of public facilities, safety, and economic exchange?

These are the central questions explored by our course materials. The course is sponsored by a grant from the Kule Institute for Advanced Study and aligns with one of KIAS' current research themes, *Place, Belonging, and Otherness*. Concepts of place and belonging are central to pilgrimage discourses. The pilgrim's departure from his or her homeland presupposes belonging to a global religious community that accepts the *hajj* as a religious obligation and values Mecca as a place of inimitable "religious power." Victor Turner's influential theory of *communitas* proposed that the pilgrimage is ultimately an experience of belonging, of an encounter between "free, equal, leveled, and total human beings," yet more recent scholars have theorized pilgrimage sites as spaces of contestation and sharpened group boundaries. Colonial powers and Muslim rulers often sought to focus their subjects' attentions on local needs or claims to religious authority by prohibiting the pilgrimage, while pilgrims' accounts alternatively have reinforced this narrative of local superiority by denigrating the practices of Muslim Others encountered far from home, or have praised the radical unity of the *hajj* experience and exalted Mecca. Whether returning from the "center" or from a self-imposed exile, pilgrims return home transformed, as newly othered, and must re-integrate into their families and communities.

We will thus explore belonging and otherness in relationship to place throughout the course. A central emphasis of the seminar will also be the need to examine the political, economic, social, and artistic dimensions of pilgrimage and to place them in historical context, rather than viewing the *hajj* as a set of purely religious rituals with fixed meanings.

Required Texts (available at the UofA Bookstore)

1. F.E. Peters, *The Hajj: The Muslim Pilgrimage to Mecca and the Holy Places*, Princeton UP, 1994
2. Michael Wolfe, ed. and trans., *One Thousand Roads to Mecca: Ten Centuries of Travelers Writing about the Muslim Pilgrimage*, Grove Press, 1997.
3. Robert Bianchi, *Guests of God: Pilgrimage and Politics in the Islamic World*, Oxford UP, 2004.
4. Abdellah Hammoudi, *A Season in Mecca: Narrative of a Pilgrimage*, Farrar, Strous, and Giroux, 2006.
5. Asra Nomani, *Standing Alone: An American Woman's Struggle for the Soul of Islam*, HarperCollins, 2005.
6. Course Pack (CP in syllabus)

Course Objectives

1. Students will gain knowledge of the history and meanings of the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca.
2. Students will apply the questions and methods of multiple disciplines to the *hajj*, and gain the capacity to approach future projects through an interdisciplinary lens.
3. Students will hone their skills in the critical analysis and interpretation of primary and secondary texts, through close reading, in-class discussions, and writing assignments.
4. Students will practice articulating and defending their ideas in a collaborative, discussion-based seminar.
5. Students will develop their research skills and writing skills by completing an independent research project on a topic related to the *hajj*; this research will culminate in a substantial paper drawing on both primary and secondary sources.

Course Requirements and Assessment

Students will be required to participate actively in course sessions, lead one class discussion, write weekly response papers, and undertake an independent research project culminating in a public presentation and substantial final research paper.

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| 1. Active Participation and Professionalism | 20% |
| 2. Response Papers (five) | 25% |
| 3. Discussion Facilitation | 10% |
| 4. Research Proposal and Bibliography | 5% |
| 5. Research Presentation | 10% |
| 6. Final Research Paper | 30% |

Active Participation

This is a discussion-based seminar. You should contribute substantive comments and/or questions during each class session. Active engagement with the course material is crucial to doing well in the course and to fostering a vibrant, collaborative intellectual community. Finish all readings prior to class, think about them, and come to class prepared to contribute. Bring a hard copy of all readings to class; do not rely on electronic versions, as laptops inhibit your ability to engage your classmates. Strive to maintain a respectful, open atmosphere in which opposing arguments and viewpoints may be voiced and explored.

Classroom professionalism goes beyond attendance and participation to include all the behaviors that keep our sessions academically focused, productive, enjoyable, and respectful (including arriving on time, dressing appropriately, storing and turning off electronic devices, etc.)

Some suggested strategies for engaging in classroom discussion:

- Ask questions if something is unclear or if you get lost or confused;
- Respond to the comments of others rather than directing all comments at the professor;
- Offer counter-arguments;
- Draw connections with other readings, discussions, and the occasional current event;
- Point out the real controversies in the readings that make discussion interesting;
- Be unafraid of being wrong, and conversely, be respectful of the lack of knowledge we all bring to discussions on occasion;
- Acknowledge and be thoughtful about the nuances of an argument;
- Encourage others to speak – avoid conversation-stoppers;
- Keep the discussion on track, while being aware that related ideas can be constructive ways of considering an argument in a new light;
- *Prevent others from dominating class discussion* by jumping in with a new thought or with a relevant question. This is your class, too.

If you have particular difficulties entering into discussions in class, and would like to try out some strategies for participating more fully, please come see me *early in the semester* for assistance. Students are encouraged to take advantage of my office hours in order to discuss course material and requirements, papers, class participation, or anything else relevant to our course. If my office hours conflict with other courses, please do not hesitate to make an appointment for a mutually convenient time.

Absences: You cannot participate in class if you are absent. Attendance is mandatory and unexcused absences will significantly lower your participation grade. If you must miss class as a result of religious observance, medical necessity, or some other reason, please contact me by email. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections 23.4.2 and 23.4.3 of the University Calendar.

Response Papers

To facilitate your intellectual engagement with the course readings and your synthesis of concepts and themes presented each week, you will complete five, two-page response papers over the course of the term. You should critically reflect on the set of readings for the week, integrating the individual pieces into broader themes and questions. Where possible, make connections to readings, themes, and questions from previous weeks. You also may wish to pose questions, both those you seek to answer and those which continue to puzzle you. These papers should not be a mere summary of the readings or of our class discussions. You should ideally address primary sources in every paper, and will normally include secondary sources as well.

Response papers should be formal and polished short essays, not stream-of-consciousness journal entries or informal personal reflections. Be sure to carefully edit your work and pay attention to the organization of your essay.

Papers must be uploaded to your folder in the assignments section of the course Moodle site by 5:00 pm on the Sunday following our class discussions of those readings. While there is some flexibility in the weeks you choose to write, all five papers must be completed by Sunday, November 3rd (the end of week 9). You should focus on your research paper during the final weeks of the course.

Graduate Students will need to complete three additional response papers (for a total of eight) at any time.

Discussion Facilitation

Once during the semester, you will lead class discussion of the day's readings. This process includes several steps:

- 1) Prepare of a draft set of discussion questions and agenda, including any planned classroom activities and exercises. This draft must be emailed to me by Monday evening.
- 2) [Optional] We can meet at a mutually convenient time on Tuesday, the earlier the better, to go over your plan. I may suggest specific revisions or discussion strategies. This meeting may be waived if scheduling proves too difficult or the discussion plan is already very good.
- 3) I will post the final discussion agenda to Moodle following our meeting, by 7:00 pm on Tuesday.
- 4) In class, you will briefly present (5-10 minutes) key themes in the readings, then facilitate the discussion for the remainder of the period. As we will have occasional film clips and lectures, the length of the discussion periods may vary from two hours to a full session.

Undergraduates will pair with a partner for this exercise, and both facilitators will receive a common grade for the assignment. **Graduate students** will facilitate a session on their own. Evaluation is based on your agenda and questions, the presentation of key themes, and the discussion facilitation.

All students should print out the questions, think about them, and bring a hard copy to class.

Research Proposal and Bibliography

For your final project, you will research and critically analyze a topic of your choosing related to the key themes of the course. Throughout the course, I will suggest potential topics as they arise, and you are strongly encouraged to think about your final topic early and often.

By the end of the eighth week, you will need to formulate these ideas in a formal, 1-page research proposal accompanied by an annotated bibliography of at least ten pertinent sources. Proposals must be uploaded to the appropriate Moodle folder by **Sunday, October 27th**. Guidelines will be provided in advance and feedback will be provided within a week. Substantial topic changes after this point will require consultation with the professor and a fresh research proposal and bibliography.

Final Research Paper and Presentation

During our final class session (**December 4th**), you will have an opportunity to present your project to the class. As the course's KIAS sponsorship requires dissemination of your research, this session will be open to the campus community and we will order refreshments.

This will be your chance to educate the class on some aspect of the *hajj*, or another pilgrimage, that we have not covered. Be prepared to summarize your thesis, outline, and primary arguments and evidence. The use of visual aids and/or handouts is encouraged.

Your final paper must be submitted to your Moodle folder by 5 pm on Friday, December 13th. Undergraduate papers should be 10-15 pages long, while graduate papers should be 20-25 pages. A formal assignment sheet will be provided.

Grading

All assignments must be completed to pass the course. Grades will be assigned during the term in the form of letter grades. Grades will not be distributed on a curve, but will be based on “a combination of absolute achievement and relative performance” in the class (University Calendar §23.4 (4)). At the end of the term, a final percentage will be calculated from the relative weight of each earned grade; this percentage will determine the final letter grade. Letter grades correspond to the following numerical percentages:

A+	97-100
A	93-96
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C range	70-79, as above
D range	60-69, as above
F	59 or lower

A's are earned by clearly superior work, in terms of both content and writing. Papers and presentations offer clear, well-defined, and well-expressed arguments, demonstrating an imaginative and sophisticated understanding of the subject matter and its subtleties. They are also well-crafted technically, free of grammatical, spelling, punctuation, and format errors. They provide a clear introduction and a substantive conclusion. An A range paper stands out from the rest and must be merited.

B's are earned by good, competent papers and presentations that illustrate an adequate understanding of the subject matter, and a reasonably good effort at crafting a clear and coherent argument, while generally avoiding awkward and unclear writing, and grammatical, spelling, punctuation, and format errors. B+ papers are better than most and have the potential to be excellent work. The B range indicates that I think you are demonstrating an acceptable level of understanding of the course material and an ability to work with it productively.

C's are earned by papers and presentations that are flawed in argumentation and/or in writing. The argument may be undefined, poorly articulated or poorly supported. It generally does not offer more than a minimal summary of course material. The essay or presentation may be especially difficult to follow, and afflicted by generally poor or sloppy writing.

D's and F's are a clear indication that the paper or presentation is unacceptable and well below your capabilities.

Policies and Required Notes

Access to Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material: Not applicable, as this is a first-time variable topics offering with essay-based written evaluation.

Syllabus: "Policy about course outlines can be found in §23.4(2) of the University Calendar."

Academic Integrity: "The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/secretariat/studentappeals.cfm) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University."

Plagiarism and Cheating: "All students should consult the "Truth-In-Education" handbook or website (<http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/TIE>) regarding the definitions of plagiarism and its consequences when detected. An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. Before unpleasantness occurs consult <http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/TIE/>; also discuss this matter with any tutor(s) and with your instructor.

Recording of Lectures: "Audio or video recording of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Recorded material is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the instructor."

Late Assignment Policy: Students who consult in advance with the instructor regarding contingencies preventing the timely completion of an assignment may, at the discretion of the instructor, be granted an extension. In this course, late papers will be reduced one step per day (i.e. A- becomes B+; B+ becomes B). An excused absence does not automatically extend an assignment deadline, and an assignment due in another course will not qualify as grounds for an extension.

Specialized Support and Disability Services: Students who require accommodations in this course due to a disability affecting mobility, vision, hearing, learning, or mental or physical health are advised to discuss their needs with Specialized Support and Disability Services, 2-800 Students' Union building, 492-3381 (phone) or 492-7269 (TTY), or sadvisor@ualberta.ca

Course Schedule and Readings

(Subject to change at professor's discretion)

* Indicates weeks available for student facilitations

Week 1

September 4: Introductions

In class: *The Hajj: One American's Pilgrimage to Mecca*, 18 April, 1997, ABC News, 22 mins.

Week 2

September 11, 2013: Theorizing Pilgrimage and Ritual

1. Malory Nye, "Ritual," Ch. 6 in *Religion: The Basics* (Routledge, 2003): 125-48. **CP**
2. "Sacred/Profane," entry in *The HarperCollins Dictionary of Religion*, ed. Jonathan Z. Smith (HarperCollins, 1995), pp. 943-48. **CP**
3. Victor Turner and Edith Turner, "Introduction: Pilgrimage as a Liminoid Phenomenon," Ch. 1 in *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (Columbia, 1978), pp. 1-39. **CP**
4. John Eade and Michael Sallnow, "Introduction," in *Contesting the Sacred: The Anthropology of Christian Pilgrimage*, ed. Eade and Sallnow (Routledge, 1991), pp. 1-29. **CP**
5. Wolfe, Ch. 21, pp. 486-503 ("Malcolm X: United States, 1964").

****Week 3***

September 18: Law and the Beginnings of the *hajj*

1. Peters, Ch. 1, pp. 3-59.
2. Marion Katz, "The Hajj and the Study of Islamic Ritual," *Studia Islamica* 98/99 (2004), pp. 95-129. **CP**
3. Ahmad b. Lulu b. al-Naqib, *Reliance of the Traveller: The Classic Manual of Islamic Sacred Law*, trans. Noah Ha Mim Keller (Amana Publications, 1997) pp. 297-370. **CP**

****Week 4***

September 25: Classic Muslim Travel Accounts

1. In class: *Journey to Mecca: In the Footsteps of Ibn Battuta*, National Geographic, 2009, 45 mins.
2. Peters, Chs. 2-3, pp. 60-143.
3. Wolfe, Chs. 1-3, pp. 3-67 (Nasr-e Khosraw, Ibn Jubayr, and Ibn Battuta).

****Week 5***

October 2, 2013: Early Modern and Ottoman Period, 16th to 19th Centuries

1. Peters, Ch. 4, pp. 144-205.
2. Wolfe, Chs. 4, 5, 7, and 12, pp. 71-101, 126-161, and 276-294 (Ch. 10 recommended).

Week 6, October 9: No Class – Middle East Studies Association annual conference

****Week 7***

October 16: Non-Muslim Interlopers and the Muslim Other, 17th-20th Centuries

1. Peters, Ch. 5, pp. 206-265
2. Wolfe, Chs. 6, 8, and 9, pp. 102-125, 162-187, and 191-225 (Chs. 11 and 13 recommended).

Week 8

October 23: Colonial Rule, Public Health, and *Hajj* Management

1. Michael Christopher Low, "Empire and the Hajj: Pilgrims, Plagues, and Pan-Islam under British Surveillance, 1865-1908," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 40 (2008), pp. 269-90. **CP**
2. Peters, Ch. 6, pp. 266-315 (Ch. 7, pp. 316-362, recommended).
3. °Abd al-Hādī al-Ḥusaynī al-Ṣiqillī (d. 1311/1893), "A Question and its Answer, Related to Explaining the Condition of Ability for Performing the Pilgrimage," trans. Jocelyn Hendrickson, pp. 1-12. **CP**

October 27th: Research Proposal Due

Week 9

October 30: Contemporary *Hajj* Politics

1. Bianchi, Chs. 1-4 and 10, pp. 3-75 and 253-72 (all students)
2. Bianchi, Ch. 5, 6, 7, 8, or 9 (sign up for one; read more if possible)

This week, we will take a divide-and-conquer approach to the reading. Each of you will take responsibility for one of the country case studies in the book. Be prepared to summarize the main points of interest and be able to draw on that case to inform our general discussion.

Week 10

November 6: Art

1. *The Hidden Art of Islam*, BBC documentary directed by Faris Kermani, 2012, 60 mins. **In class.**
2. Hammoudi, pp. 1-166 (read ahead for week 11)

****Week 11***

November 13: A Contemporary *Hajj* Account, Morocco

1. Hammoudi, pp. 167-end

Week 12

November 20, 2013: Architecture and Memory

1. Various articles on construction in Mecca and Medina – see links on Moodle
2. In class: *Circling the House of God, Reflections on the Hajj*, Martin Lings, Matmedia, 2009, 35 mins.
3. Nomani, pp. 1-145 (read ahead for week 13)

****Week 13***

November 27, 2013: A Contemporary *Hajj* Account, United States

1. Nomani, pp. 149-end

Week 14

December 4: **Final Presentations**

December 13th: Final Research Paper due to Moodle