

PAR 6268
ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY

Fall 2013 (3 units) – Thursdays 6:15-9:15 pm
Instructor: Kirk Templeton



Course Description:

This course is an introduction to the major issues, figures and texts of the Islamic philosophical tradition. In addition to its intrinsic value, the Islamic tradition holds great interest and importance because it is our sister tradition, rooted in the same sources of Abrahamic religion and Greek philosophy. Islamic philosophy is one of the great intellectual traditions of the world, yet it is certainly the least known and studied in the West, despite the fact that its influence on Western culture has been lasting and profound. Moreover, this tradition provides the intellectual underpinning for much of Islamic culture, especially in the Islamic Republic of Iran, and so it provides an entryway into increased understanding of contemporary Muslim societies. All of this makes the discovery of Islamic philosophy an intellectual adventure that also provides us with a mirror in which we can better examine and understand our own philosophical heritage and its transformative possibilities.

The course will be divided into two parts. The first will be a historical survey of the Islamic tradition through an examination of its major figures and texts. We will first analyze the reception of Greek philosophy into Islamic culture beginning with the translation movement of the 8th to 10th century CE. We will then proceed to study the great masters of the tradition: al-Kindi, al-Farābi, Avicenna (Ibn Sina), al-Ghazālī, Averroes (Ibn Rushd), Suhrawardī, Ibn ‘Arabi and Mulla Sudra. We will conclude by considering some contemporary currents in Islamic thought. Throughout our survey, we will be considering the central issues and concepts of Islamic philosophy, including existence (*wujud*) and essence (*mahiyyah*), God’s existence and knowledge of the world, human cognition (*‘ilm*) and its foundations, cosmology, causality, and natural science and political thought. We will also focus in particular on the two periods in which it has influenced our own tradition most profoundly—the reception of Islamic Peripatetic philosophy by Europe in the 12th and 13th centuries and the influence in the late 20th century of Illuminations philosophy on Archetypal and Transpersonal Psychology.

In the second part of the course, we will read and discuss together *The Principles of Epistemology in Islamic Philosophy: Knowledge by Presence*. This is a work by Mehdi Ha’iri Yazdi, who is a contemporary scholar trained in the traditional method of Islamic philosophical study but who also has complete familiarity with the Western philosophical tradition. This will provide us with the opportunity to actually practice philosophy within the context of the Islamic tradition

Learning Objectives:

When this course is completed the student will be able to:

1. Be conversant with the major movements, figures, texts and issues of the Islamic philosophical tradition.
2. Articulate and critically evaluate the major philosophical doctrines expressed within the Islamic philosophical tradition.
3. Understand and appreciate the historical influence of the Islamic philosophical tradition upon Western intellectual culture.
4. Develop an increased understanding and appreciation of both the historical and contemporary intellectual life of Muslim societies.

Percentage of Course Composed of:

Cognitive/Didactic (lecture):	45%
Practical/Applied (discussion, presentation):	45%
Experiential:	10%

Criteria for Assessment

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Due Date</i>	<i>Percentage of Grade</i>
1. Midterm Paper	10/17/2013	30%
2. Final Paper	12/19/2013	50%
3. Class Participation	---	---

Explanation of Assignments:

1. Mid-term paper (6-10 pages double spaced)
Drawing on the materials presented in the lectures and readings, the mid-term paper should critically evaluate the doctrines of one of the major figures of the Islamic tradition.
2. Final paper (12-18 pages double spaced).
For the research paper, students may choose to address any topic relating to the course material. All students should submit a one-paragraph proposal by November 1. The final draft of the paper is due on December 19.

Required Texts:

1. Peter Adamson and Richard C. Taylor. *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*. Cambridge UP, 2005.
2. Seyyed Hossein Nasr. *Islamic Philosophy from its Origin to the Present: Philosophy in the Land of Prophecy*. Albany: SUNY.
3. Mehdi Ha'iri Yazdi. *The Principles of Epistemology in Islamic Philosophy: Knowledge by Presence*. Albany: SUNY, 1992.
4. Materials from books and journals distributed in class or online

Recommended Reading:

Neither the tenets and practices of Islamic spirituality nor the history of Muslim cultures have received much attention in Western, especially American, education. Because of this, students may find it helpful to supplement the course reading with texts that deal with these subjects. Here are some recommendations:

1. Sachiko Murata and William C. Chittick. *The Vision of Islam*. St. Paul: Paragon House, 1994. Written from a primarily Sufi perspective, this is one of the best introductory texts on the religion of Islam.
2. Tamim Ansary. *Destiny Disrupted: A History of the World Through Islamic Eyes*. Extremely well-written and researched, this is the best one-volume history of the Islamic world.
3. L.S. Stavrianos. *The World to 1500: A Global History*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentiss-Hill, 1999. The first great flowering of Islamic culture was in the pre-modern period of world history. This is a good and useful reference for that period, which is unfamiliar to many students.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES WITH ASSIGNED READINGS:

1. 8/29/2013 --INTRODUCTION
 - a. *Companion* 1-9.
 - b. Nasr, 1-30.
 - c. "Advent of Islam: Fundamental Teachings of the Qur'an" from *A History of Muslim Philosophy* Ed. M. M. Sharif. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1963. (online or handout)
 - d. Imam Khomeini's Letter to Mikhail Gorbachev (online or handout)
 - e. Saba Fatima. "An Examination of the Ethics of Submissiveness." *Journal of Islamic Philosophy* 4 (2008). 3-20 (online or handout)
2. 9/5/2013 – Greek into Arabic, *Kalaam* and the Brotherhood of Purity.
 - a. Nasr 31-47; 107-118.
 - b. *Companion* 10-31.
 - c. Nasr 49-60; 119-136.
 - d. "Ikhwan al-Safa" from *A History of Muslim Philosophy* Ed. M. M. Sharif. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1963. 289-319 (online or handout)
 - e. Seyyed Hossein Nasr. "The *Rasā'il* of the Ikhwān al-Safa'—Their Identity and Content." *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*. Albany: SUNY, 1993. 25-43
3. 9/12/2013—Beginnings of falsifah: Al-Kindi; Razi; The Ismailis.
 - a. *Companion* 32-51; 327-332.
 - b. Nasr 136-141.
 - c. Al Kindi. Selections from "*On First Philosophy*" (online or handout).
 - d. Muhammad Ibn Zakariya al-Razi from *A History of Muslim Philosophy* Ed. M. M. Sharif. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1963. 434-449 (online or handout).
 - e. *Companion* 266-286.
 - f. *Companion* 72-91.
 - g. Nasr 145-50.

4. 9/19/2013 - Al-Farābi.
 - a. *Companion* 52-71; 276-280; 332-337.
 - b. Nasr 93-103.
 - c. Al-Farābi. Selections from *Marādi' ārā ahl al-Madina al-Fadila*.

5. 9/26/2013 -- Avicenna: Essence and Existence and the Philosophy of Being.
 - a. *Companion* 92-136; 280-281; 337-342.
 - b. Nasr 63-84; 141-142.
 - c. Avicenna: *Dānīsh-nāma-yi 'alā'ī* ("Treatise on Knowledge, Dedicated to Prince 'Alā' al-Dawah" (handout or online).
 - d. Seyyed Hossein Nasr. "Existence (Wujud) and Quiddity (Mahjyyah) in Islamic Philosophy." *International Philosophical Quarterly*. 29.4 (1989). 409-428 (handout or online)
 - e. Stephen P Mann. "Metaphysics: God and Being." *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Philosophy*. A.S. McGrade ed. Cambridge UP. 17-170. (handout or online).

6. 10/3/2013 -- Avicenna (cont'd): Philosophy of the Orientals and Visionary Recitals.
 - a. Henry Corbin. "Avicennan Cosmos and Visionary Recital." *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*. Tr. Willard R. Trask. NY: Pantheon, 1960. 1-35. (handout or online)
 - b. Henry Corbin. "The Angel, Spirit and Intelligence." *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*. Tr. Willard R. Trask. NY: Pantheon, 1960. 46-55. (online or handout).
 - c. Avicenna: "Remarks and Admonitions" (handout or online).
 - d. Avicenna: "The Logic of the Orientals" (handout or online).
 - e. Kirk Templeton. "Henry Corbin and the Hermeneutics of *Ta'wil*"

7. 10/10/2013 – The Crisis of Philosophy: Al-Ghazālī and Averroes.
 - a. *Companion* 137-54; 342-345
 - b. Al-Ghazālī: Selections from *The Niche of Lights*. (handout or online)
 - c. Al-Ghazālī: Selections from *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*. (handout or online).
 - d. *Companion* 180-200; 281-286; 345-347.
 - e. Averroes: Selections from *The Decisive Treatise*.

8. 10/17/2013 – Al Andalus and the Transmission of Islamic Philosophy to the West.
 - a. Marīa Rosa Menocal. "A Brief History of a First-Rate Place." *Ornament of the West*. NY: Back Bay Books, 2002. 15-50. (online or handout).
 - b. Nasr 150-158.
 - c. *Companion* 155-200; 349-369.
 - d. Kirk Templeton. "Philosophical Transmission in the Latin West." (online or handout).
 - e. *Companion* 370-404.
 - f. Kirk Templeton. "Avicenna, Aquinas and the Active Intellect." *Journal of Islamic Philosophy*. 3 (2008) (online or handout)
 - g. Jonathan Lyons. "The Invention of the West." *The House of Wisdom: How the Arabs Transformed Western Civilization*. NY: Bloomsbury Press, 2009. 186-202 (online or handout).
 - h. Marīa Rosa Menocal. "The Myth of Westernness in Medieval Literary Historiography." *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History: A Forgotten Heritage*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania Press. 1-26 (online or handout)

- i. Henry Corbin. "Latin Avicennism and Iranian Avicennism." *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*. Tr. Willard Trask. NY: Pantheon, 1960. 101-120. (online or handout)
9. 10/24/2013 – Suhrawardī and the Science of Lights.
 - a. *Companion* 201-223.
 - b. Nasr 158-162.
 - c. Suhrawardī: Selections from *Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq* (online or handout).
 - d. Kirk Templeton. "The Historical Context of the Metaphysics of Light in Suhrawardī's *Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq* (online or handout).
 10. 10/31/2013—Suhrawardī and the Imaginal World; India.
 - a. Tom Cheetham. "Against the Times: Primordial Space, Primordial Time." *Henry Corbin and Islamic Mysticism*. Woodstock, CT: Spring Journal, 2003. 1-42 (online or handout).
 - b. Henry Corbin, "Towards a Chart of the Imaginal." *Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth. From Madean Iran to Shi'ite Iran*. Princeton UP, 1977. (vii-xix) (online or handout)
 - c. Henry Corbin, "Mundis Imaginalis or the Imaginary and the Imaginal." (online or handout)
 - d. Kirk Templeton. "Towards an Imaginal Methodology in the Study of Western Esotericism." Phoenix Rising Academy AAR parallel Session, Nov. 19th, 2011 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KSyOf2oRsR4&list=PLB836124E4C6E4E6A>
 - e. Suhrawardī. Selections from "'Hūrqulyā, the World of Autonomous Images and Imaginative Perception." Corbin. *Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth*. 118-134. (online or handout).
 - f. Richard C. Foltz. "The Islamization of the Silk Road." *Religions of the Silk Road*. NY: St. Martin's Griffin. 89-110 (online or handout).
 - g. Kirk Templeton. "The Empire of Light." (online or handout).
 11. 11/07/2013 – Ibn 'Arabi and Mulla Sadra.
 - a. William C. Chittick. "Introduction" and "The Divine Presence." *Ibn Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination: The Sufi Path of Knowledge*. Albany: SUNY, 1989. ix-30 (online or handout).
 - b. William C. Chittick. "Introduction." *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-Arabi's Cosmology*. Albany: SUNY, 1998. Xii-xxxv (online or handout)
 - c. William C. Chittick. "Ibn al-'Arabi on Participating in the Mystery." Jorge N. Ferrer and Jacob H. Sherman Eds. *The Participatory Turn*. Albany: SUNY, 2008. 245-264 (online or handout).
 - d. *Companion* 224-246
 - e. Nasr 85-91; 223-233.
 - f. Mulla Sadra: Selections from *Metaphysics* (online or handout)
 12. 11/14/2013 – the Modern Period
 - a. Nasr 259-272; 273-280.
 - b. Nikke R. Keddie. "The Life and Thought of Sayyid Jamāl ad-Dīn al-Afghānī." *An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamāl ad-Dīn al-Afghānī*. Berkeley: UC Press. 1-46 (online or handout).
 - c. Charles Kurzman. "Liberal Islam and its Islamic Context." *Liberal Islam: A Sourcebook*. NY: Oxford UP, 1998. 3-28 (online or handout).
 - d. Muhammad Iqbal. "The Principle of Movement in the Structure of Islam." Kurzman 255-269 (online or handout).

- e. Ali Shari'ati. "Mysticism, Equality, and Freedom." *Marxism and Other Western Fallacies: An Islamic Critique*. Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1980. 97-122. (online or handout)
- f. Fazlur Rahman. "Islam and Modernity." Kurzman 304-318. (online or handout).
- g. Abdul-Karim Soroush. "The Evolution of Devolution or Religious Knowledge." Kurzman 244-254 (online or handout).
- h. Fatima Mernissi. "A Feminist Interpretation of Woman's Rights in Islam." Kurzman 112-126. (online or handout).
- i. Mehran Kamrava. "Introduction." *Iran's Intellectual Revolution*. Cambridge UP, 2008. 1-9 (online or handout).

13. 11/28/2013 – Knowledge by Presence and Mysticism I

- a. Yazdi: Introduction, Chapters 1 through 4.

14. 12/5/2013 – Knowledge by Presence and Mysticism II

- a. Yazdi: Chapters 5 through 7.

15. 12/12 /2013 – Knowledge by Presence and Mysticism III

- a. Yazdi: Chapters 8 through 10.