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-Farābī, 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

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Percentage of Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Midterm Paper</td>
<td>10/17/2013</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Final Paper</td>
<td>12/19/2013</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Class Participation</td>
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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:
2. Seyyed Hossein Nasr. *Islamic Philosophy from its Origin to the Present: Philosophy in the Land of Prophecy.* Albany: SUNY.
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:

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
   d. Imam Khomeini’s Letter to Mikhail Gorbachev (online or handout)

2. 9/5/2013 – Greek into Arabic, *Kalaam* and the Brotherhood of Purity.
   c. Nasr 49-60; 119-136.

3. 9/12/2013—Beginnings of falsifah: Al-Kindi; Razi; The Ismailis.
   a. Companion 32-51; 327-332.
   c. Al Kindi. Selections from “On First Philosophy” (online or handout).
   e. Companion 266-286.
   f. Companion 72-91.
4. 9/19/2013 - Al-Farābi.
   a. *Companion* 52-71; 276-280; 332-337.
   b. Nasr 93-103.

5. 9/26/2013 -- Avicenna: Essence and Existence and the Philosophy of Being.
   b. Nasr 63-84; 141-142.
   c. Avicenna: *Dānish-nāma-yi ‘alā’ī* ("Treatise on Knowledge, Dedicated to Prince ‘Alā’ al-Dawāh") (handout or online).

   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”

   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.
   b. Nasr 150-158.
   d. Kirk Templeton. “Philosophical Transmission in the Latin West.” (online or handout).
   e. *Companion* 370-404.

   a. *Companion* 201-223.
   b. Nasr 158-162.
   c. Suhrawardī: Selections from *Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq* (online or handout).

10. 10/31/2013—Suhrwardī and the Imaginal World; India.
   c. Henry Corbin, “Mundis Imaginalis or the Imaginary and the Imaginal.” (online or handout)
   e. Suhrwardī. Selections from “Hūrqalyā, the World of Autonomous Images and Imaginative Perception.” Corbin. *Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth.* 118-134. (online or handout).
   g. Kirk Templeton. “The Empire of Light.” (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


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).


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

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.