

Department of Religions & Theology

MODULE DESCRIPTIONS

Semester A:

A survey of Islamic theology, philosophy, and mysticism (Sufism) from its origins to the modern period: BCRE09

ECTS: 5

Contact hours: 22 Lecture Hours

Lecturer(s): Prof. Damien Janos (ext. 1297)

Module Description:

This module is a survey of some of the most important schools and movements in Islamic intellectual history, from the beginning of Islam to our own time. It covers the development of Islamic theology (kalām), in both the Sunnite and Shi‘ite contexts, the emergence of a distinct philosophical tradition in Arabic inscribed in the continuity of Greek philosophy (mostly Aristotelianism and Neoplatonism), and Islamic mysticism or Sufism. We will discuss some of the main figures who shaped these traditions in the medieval and modern periods and read some of the seminal texts they produced. The course will introduce students to key concepts and terms, as well as to some enduring themes and issues focusing on God, prophecy, human knowledge, and society, which Muslim theologians, philosophers and mystics all sought to address in their own way. Many of these issues still resonate throughout the Islamic world today, and so we will also look at the response of modern Muslim intellectuals to these questions.

Indicative reading:

Abrahamov, B. *Islamic Theology: Traditionalism and Rationalism*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998.

Adamson, P. and R. Taylor, (eds.). *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Chittick, W.C. *The Sufi Doctrine of Rumi: An Introduction*. Bloomington, Ind.: World Wisdom, 2005.

———. *Sufism: A Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications, c2000.

Martin, R.C. and M.R. Woodward. *Defenders of Reason in Islam: Mu‘tazilism from Medieval School to Modern Symbol*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1997.

Rahman, F. *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984.

Watt, W.M. *Islamic Philosophy and Theology: An Extended Survey*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1985.

Learning outcomes:

On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- demonstrate a solid understanding of the historical development of the main schools of Islamic theology, philosophy, and mysticism and identify the key scholars who shaped these disciplines up to the modern period
- be familiar with some of the main concepts and technical terms that characterize these disciplines
- engage critically with some representative texts from these traditions
- approach contemporary Islamic debates through an enriched historical and conceptual perspective

Methods of Assessment: 3000 word essay, deadline Fri, December 16, 2016