



Introduction to Shia Traditions, Beliefs, and Practices (DI-513)

Fall 2020

Hartford Seminary

Instructor: Hossein Kamaly
Imam Ali Chair in Shia Studies

Meeting Time: Thursdays: 6:00-8:00PM
Office Hours: Fridays, 10:30-11:59 AM

Online (Zoom)
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This course surveys the development of Shi‘i Islam against the backdrop of major events and developments, views on succession after the Prophet, the formation of the caliphate, and the key Shi‘i notion of Imamate. Various forms of early Shias will be introduced, including the Imāmīs, Zaydīs, and Ismailīs. Consequential developments in Iran and Iraq as well as the Fatimid Shia caliphate, which extended from Egypt and North Africa to Yemen and reached as far as India, will be studied through the prism of doctrine as well as art. The rift caused by the launch of the Crusades from the west and then by the coming of Mongol armies from the east will be addressed. The peak of Shia revival during the early modern period will be discussed in terms of religious and non-religious learning, especially related to architecture and trade. In addition, this course also discusses the importance of the Shia in the world today. At the end of the course, students will have acquired a broad understanding of Shia beliefs, practices, and traditions—as manifested geographically from medieval Spain to contemporary Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, and North America.

Syllabus: First Draft 17th September 2020 (Subject to multiple revision):

Pedagogy: This course is based on reading and in-depth discussion: Primary and secondary sources are read and discussed in the light of classical and contemporary theories of ethics. The combination of primary sources with contemporary studies makes the material relevant and engaging to the students.

Teaching is comprised of both synchronously delivered and asynchronously provided components. This method is bound to present challenges for the students and the instructor alike, but hopefully it will work.

Required Work & Evaluation:

On the average, 70-140 pages of readings are assigned per week.

Students should prepare for class by reading all assigned texts for each session.

Online participation & Attendance:

Attendance, keeping up with assigned readings and active participations are important in this class.

Note: More than two unexcused absences result in a failing grade.

Offline discussion

Students are expected to respond to assigned readings before each class session by posting questions and comments on weekly discussion threads on CANVAS. Responses posted closer than three hours to class time will be disregarded.

Writing assignments:

- 1) Three short responses (each about 1000 words in length):
One on the foundations of Islamic ethics + Two on two of the five contemporary topics to be covered in class.
- 2) A final research paper, 3500-4000 words: specific topic to be decided in conference with the instructor. Topics will be assigned in class. (Progress to be assessed beginning the fifth week of the semester).

Note: Late submissions are *not* accepted.

Grading: The following formula will be used to calculate the final grade for each student:
Regular and timely online attendance & participation (15%) + Short responses (2 x 20%) + Mid-term Exam (20%) + Final Paper (30%)

Note: This course description, syllabus, and reading list is subject to multiple revisions. For updates, visit CANVAS.

Suggested Readings (subject to revision):

- Alatas, Syed Farid. Shia in Indonesia and Malaysia.
- Aun Hasan Ali. Discourse on 'Ilm al-Waḍ' in Modern Shī'ī Scholarship: Some notes. *Islamic Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 3/4 (Autumn - Winter 2011), pp. 325-345.
- Bayhom-Daou, Tamima. The Imam's Knowledge and the Quran according to al-Faḍl b. Shādhān al-Nisābūrī (d. 260 A.H./874 A.D.). *BSOAS* 64, no. 2 (2001), pp. 190-8.
- Bayhom-Daou, Tamima. Kitab Sulaym ibn Qays revisited. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London; Cambridge Vol. 78, Iss. 1 (Feb 2015): 105-119.
- Calder, Norman. Accommodation and Revolution in Imami Shi'i Jurisprudence: Khumayni and the Classical Tradition. *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (Jan., 1982), pp. 3-20.
- Calder, Norman. Khums in Imāmī Shī'ī Jurisprudence, from the Tenth to the Sixteenth Century A. D. *BSOAS*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (1982), pp. 39-47.
- Calder, Norman. Zakat in Imami Shi'i jurisprudence, from the tenth to the sixteenth century A. D. *BSOAS*, Vol. 44, No. 3 (1981), pp. 468-480.
- Calder, Norman. Doubt and Prerogative: The Emergence of an Imāmī Shī'ī Theory of Ijtihad. *Studia Islamica*, No. 70 (1989), pp. 57-78.
- Gleave, Robert M. Early Shī'ī Hermeneutics: Some Exegetical Techniques Attributed to the Shi'i Imams Karen Bauer (ed.), *Imams, in Aims, Methods, and contexts of Qur'anic exegesis* (2nd/8th-9th/15th centuries) (Oxford University Press, 2013).
- Gleave, Robert M. Early Shiite hermeneutics and the dating of Kitab Sulaym ibn Qays. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*. Volume 78, Issue 1 (February 2015), pp. 83 – 103.
- Gleave, Robert. Recent Research into the History of Early Shi'ism. *History Compass*, 7/6 (2009), pp. 1593–1605.
- Gruber, Christiane. The 'Restored' Shī'ī muṣḥaf as Divine Guide? The Practice of fāl-i Qur'ān in the Ṣafavid Period. *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (2011), pp. 29-55.
- Hassan Ansari and Sabine Schmidtke. The Shī'ī Reception of Mu'tazilism: Twelver Shī'īs. *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology*, Edited by Sabine Schmidtke, 2016.
- Khaleeli, Alexander. Hisham ibn al-Hakam: Arch-Heretic? *Journal of Shia Islamic Studies*, Summer 2010, Vol. III · No. 3.
- Nasr, Vali R. The SHIA REVIVAL. *Military Review*; Fort Leavenworth 87.3 (May/June 2007): 9-13.
- Rieck, Andreas. Shias in Pakistan: Historical Background. In *The Shias of Pakistan: An Assertive and Beleaguered Minority*. Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Surani, Iqbal. Satpanthī Khoja-s to Shī'a Imāmī Ismā'īlī Ṭarīqa: The Construction of Religious Identity of the Khoja-s Imāmī Ismā'īlī of South Asia. *Studia Islamica* 112 (2017) 1-28.
- Yaron Friedman. *The Shī'īs in Palestine From the Medieval Golden Age until the Present*. Brill, 2020.