Muslim Societies in African History
HIST-AD 131X (Cross-listed with ACS)
Spring 2017


Professor Erin Pettigrew  
erin.pettigrew@nyu.edu  
Office Hours (A6 1125): Th 3-5pm  
Credit Hours (4)  
No prerequisites  
M/W 10:25-11:40am  
C2 Woog  

Course Description:
The objective of this course is to trace and understand both the history of Islam as a religious tradition and Muslim societies in Africa as part of a larger world. This course surveys the history and historiography of Islam in Africa from its arrival in North Africa in the seventh century through the present day in postcolonial Africa while also paying attention to continuing points of contact and exchange between Muslims in Africa across the Sahara as well as the Atlantic and Indian Ocean worlds. Students will examine the history of Islam in Africa in light of issues such as conversion, interactions with other religious traditions, reform movements, slavery and race, education, gender, European colonial rule, and postcolonial politics. Possible sources for the course include Arab geographical and travel accounts, juridical texts debating social categories of race, slavery and gender, regional chronicles reflecting the interface between Islam and local African religious traditions, colonial reports revealing fears of Islam as a unifying force for Africans, and novels and films addressing Islam as a major theme. Students will also have the opportunity to travel to Doha, Qatar to visit the Bin Jelmood House, the Museum of Islamic Art, and Suq Waqif.
Intended Learning Outcomes:
• Gain insight into the worldviews and lives of Africans who have considered themselves Muslims and to understand how and why those worldviews and experiences changed.
• Critically analyze narratives that include Islam and Muslim communities in a range of social and cultural contexts through a variety of texts to recognize the ways both have been understood by others across regions and time periods.
• Learn to think comparatively, to consider an issue from the varying perspectives of different cultural traditions; to develop the ability to be open to others’ points of view and to see one’s own position from other angles.
• Develop skills in oral expression and ability to present ideas clearly and persuasively; and advance expository writings skills and development of a clear analytical style.

Teaching and Learning Methodologies:
This is a reading and viewing intensive course aimed at introducing students to foundational texts, new research, and film/literary production addressing the histories of Africans who considered themselves Muslim. This course adopts a seminar format combined with short lectures to provide the background necessary to contextualize each class’s assigned readings and/or viewings. Students will work together to come to a deeper understanding of the ideas and arguments in the readings and films. This course relies on two textbooks to guide students through the major regions or themes currently addressed in the field of History with a collection of written primary sources, films, news articles, and literature to draw attention to the lived experiences and worldviews of Muslim Africans. Embedded in these discussions is also an on-going focus on historical methodology when it comes to the history of Africa and Africans. Writing assignments provide students space to explore these concepts while improving their writing and analytic skills. Students will also lead discussion once and write a polished book review to provide the opportunity to further delve into a topic of interest while also deepening communication and analytic skills.

Films
*Timbuktu* (Dir. Abderrahmane Sissako, Mali/Mauritania/France, 2014, 1h40)
*The Silver Fez* (Dir. Loyd Ross, South Africa, 2009, 1h27)

Films will be assigned as at-home/out-of-class assignments and placed on reserve at the Library or available on-line as indicated in the syllabus. Supplementary short films and YouTube clips may be assigned throughout the semester.
Required Texts:

Readings not listed here will be available either on-line or on NYU classes. All books and films will be on reserve in the NYUAD library or available electronically and digitally. Links to readings available online are provided unless otherwise searchable through the NYUAD library. **Readings will be completed before the lecture for which they are assigned.**

Requirements and Assignments

**African Studies Event (5%)**
Students are required to attend at least one Africa-related event of their choice during the semester. This can be a seminar organized through African Studies, an Africa Global organized cultural event, a film screening, a music concert, an art exhibit on campus or in Abu Dhabi or Dubai, or a related talk on campus or elsewhere. **Before** attending the event, students should seek approval from the instructor to ensure the event fulfills the necessary African Studies requirement. After attending or participating in the event, students will then submit a short response paper (1 full and well-written page) contextualizing the event and writing any questions or reflections elicited during the experience.

**Participation (15%)**
As a seminar-based class, active participation in all class sections is a fundamental requirement and will form a substantial portion of the final grade. This entails having read/watched, annotated, and thought about the complete assignment carefully before class starts. Participation in class will be judged by quality, not by quantity, both active listening and thoughtful speaking are essential to productive class discussion. Productive participation is marked by regular comments and/or questions that show
the student has read and thought critically about the assigned work for the class. Students should ask questions, contribute different interpretations to the sources and subjects addressed, and share their perspectives in a relevant and supportive manner. Student thoughts and questions will provide the starting point for class discussion.

Active participation will be consequently factored into the final grade for the course. Those who never speak in class but have perfect attendance will end up with a score around 60% for participation. If students feel reluctant to speak in class, they should talk to the professor early in the semester to find an alternative way to participate.

Two Short Assignments (20%)
1) Choose an example of important Islamic architecture from sub-Saharan Africa; investigate its history, its stylistic features, its role in local social and cultural life, and its significance for our understanding of the history of Islam in its location or region. Present your findings in essay form (1200 words), as a PowerPoint presentation using visual aids with text (1200 words), or as a website. Due Saturday, February 11 by 5pm.

2) Write a critical response essay to the class trip to Doha, Qatar. If you take photographs or film any video from the trip to museums, Souq Waqif, music performances, or our discussions, include these in uploaded form to Professor Pettigrew. This class trip will focus on histories of and legacies of diasporic connections when it comes to trans-oceanic and historical ties between Africa and Islam. You will be witnessing specific histories of enslavement and demographic movement from Africa to the Gulf and Middle East as well as the kind of work that African slaves did in the Gulf and the ways that slavery eventually became criminalized so that, even if you follow how the institution of slavery has disappeared in the region, you will also confront questions about how its legacies remain. Write 1200 words that show reflection of how class readings link to the museums and discussions during the visit. Due Saturday, March 11 by 5pm.

Discussion Leader (10%)
Students will sign up the second day of class to lead discussion once during the semester. Leading discussion means having read, digested, and understood the readings assigned for the day enough to give a clear summary of the main argument or position of the readings, to compare and place the texts in dialogue with each other or previous readings, to define any new or complicated terms; and to provide a series of questions about the readings for the class. Students should come prepared to give a 7-10 minute summary and analysis of the readings before opening up the floor to a discussion facilitated by the professor but directed by the discussion leader. Visual aids or PowerPoint are not required but might help make the discussion more lively.
Book review (20%)
Each student will choose one book from the suggested reading list attached to the syllabus and write a short review of it (1000 words). Reviews should be formal, polished, critically balanced and reflect a careful reading.

Research Paper (30%)
Students will carry out original individual research on a topic of interest and write a mid-length (3000-4000 word) research paper on it using library sources. The research paper should investigate some topic closely related to the theme of the course but about which we have either not had any substantial reading or only addressed a portion thereof. Papers should ideally draw on primary sources, but since that is often not possible, secondary sources should be of high quality and peer reviewed, and papers should address the reliability of all evidence, primary and secondary. The paper will be graded on mechanics (spelling, grammar, intelligibility, flow), quality of argumentation (logical progressions and engagement with existing literature), and use of evidence (quantity, quality, interpretation of, and awareness of limitations of).

Final Papers are due Friday, May 19 by 5pm.

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Attendance
Attendance is mandatory and students must come prepared to discuss all assigned written and unwritten materials. Absences are excused due to illness, personal or family emergency, or religious obligation. As quickly as possible, notify the professor of your expected or unintended absence. Students may make up for an unexcused absence by submitting a thoughtful response paper.

Late Papers
Papers are to be submitted online by midnight on the date indicated on the syllabus. Providing deadlines ensures that the professor can grade and return papers to the class in a timely fashion and that students get the full benefit of comments to incorporate into future assignments. It also ensures that students do not fall behind, finding themselves in a place from which it is impossible to catch up. Once in the quarter, if it is clear 24 hours before a paper is due that a student will miss the deadline no matter the excuse, the students should notify the professor by email and will be granted an extension of a day with no penalty. Otherwise, all papers should be
submitted on time with a 1/3 grade deduction for every day late (so, an A- paper would become a B+, a B+ would become a B and so on).

Formatting and Citation Guidelines
All assignments must be typed, double-spaced, have 1” margins and size 12 Times New Roman font. Students should use footnotes instead of endnotes when citing sources.

History follows the Chicago Style for citations. Please consult Kate Turbian, *A Manual for writers of research papers, theses, and dissertation: Chicago style for students and researchers*. Available at the Library (LB2369.T8 at the Reference Desk) or consider purchasing a copy if you plan on taking more courses in the History program. A quick and easy guide can be found at http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html. Citing sources for arguments and evidence is of vital importance, please do so consistently and thoroughly. Bowdoin College has a helpful website with tips on “Reading, Writing, and Researching for History” at http://www.bowdoin.edu/writing-guides/ worth exploring.

Students are expected to follow NYUAD’s policy on Academic Integrity aimed at ensuring “fairness, honesty, and respect within and outside the classroom.” Part of this academic integrity is also maintaining academic honesty by always citing and attributing other people’s words and ideas used in assigned papers and in discussion. To avoid any issues of plagiarism, students should properly cite all sources consulted to any extent (including material from the internet), whether or not assigned and whether or not quoted directly. (See https://students.nyuad.nyu.edu/campus-life/community-standards/policies/academic-integrity/)

Academic Disability
Please schedule an appointment with the professor at the beginning on the semester to discuss any specific accommodation you may need for documented disabilities for this course. The First Year Dean at NYU Abu Dhabi and the Director of the NYU Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) are available to advise students about NYUAD’s policy, procedures, and resources, as well as oversee compliance with approved accommodations. nyuad.disabilities@nyu.edu
Course Schedule

Week 1: Introduction

Wednesday, January 25: Africanization of Islam or Islamization of Africa?

Week 2: The Arrival of Islam

Monday, January 30: On Sources

Wednesday, February 1:

Week 3: Traders, Clerics, and Kings

Monday, February 6: West Africa
- Loimeier, Chapter 3 and 4 “The Sahara as Connective Space” and “Dynamics of Islamization in the Bilad al-Sudan” of Muslim Societies in Africa (54-107).
- Al-Bakri, parts of Kitab al-masalik wa-l-mamalik in Levtzion and Hopkins, Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History (62-87).

Wednesday, February 8: East Africa and the Horn of Africa

First Short Assignment Due Saturday, February 11 by 5pm (electronically)
Week 4: Nomads, Farmers, and Pastoralists in West Africa

Monday, February 13: West African Empires

- Ibn Battuta, parts of al-Rihla from Levitzon and Hopkins, Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History, (279-304).
- Mohammed al-Sa’di, excerpts from Tarikh al-Sudan, (1-34, 91-117, 186-236).

Wednesday, February 15: Out of the Court and into the Fields

- Mungo Park, Chapter 4 from Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa (97-107).

♪♫ Noura mint Seymali concert at the NYUAD Arts Center ♪♫

Week 5: Race and Slavery

Monday, February 20: Racial Discourse in the Sahel

- IN CLASS: Bible, Genesis 9, verses 18-27 from the King James Version.

Wednesday, February 22: Slavery in the Arabian Gulf


*** Trip to Doha, Qatar February 24-25 ***
Week 6: Merchants and the Swahili Coast in East Africa

**Monday, February 27: Sufism**

**Wednesday, March 1: Diasporas in East Africa**
- Anne Bang, Chapters 7- Conclusion, *Sufis and Scholars of the Sea*, (126-203).

Week 7: Reformists

**Monday, March 6: Nineteenth-Century**

**Wednesday, March 8: Sokoto Caliphate and Nana Asma'u**

*Second Short Assignment Due Saturday, March 11 by 5pm (electronically)*

Week 8: Jurisprudence

**Monday, March 12: Islam Law in Africa**
- David Powers, Chapter 1 “Kadijustiz or Qadi-Justice? A Paternity Dispute from Fourteenth-Century Morocco,” in *Law, Society and Culture in the Maghrib, 1300-1500* (23-59).
- Elisabeth McMahon, “Slave Wills along the Swahili Coast,” in Bellagamba, Greene, and Klein, *African Voices on Slavery and the Slave Trade*, (511-520)

Week 9: March 26-30 Colonial Understandings of Islam

**Monday, March 27: France and “L'Islam noir”**
- Abdulrazak Gurnah, *Paradise*.

**Wednesday, March 29: British Colonial Rule over Muslim Subjects**
- Abdulrazak Gurnah, *Paradise*. 

**Week 10: Muslim Responses to Colonialism**

**Monday, April 3: Amadu Bamba and the Founding of the Muridiyya**
- Cheikh Anta Babou, Chapters 1-4, *Fighting the Greater Jihad* (1-114).

**Wednesday, April 5: The Muridiyya in Colonial and Post-Colonial Senegal**
- Cheikh Anta Babou, Chapters 5-Conclusion, *Fighting the Greater Jihad* (115-184).
- Roberts and Roberts, Chapter 6: “Mouride Women: In the Mirror of the Mother,” in *A Saint in the City: Sufi Arts of Urban Senegal* (151-163).
- LISTEN: Youssou N’Dour, *Bamba* [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5W-eYx6DGgI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5W-eYx6DGgI)

**Week 11: Education**

**Monday, April 10: Islamic Education in Africa**

**Wednesday, April 12: Pilgrimage and Education**

**Week 12: Gender**

**Monday, April 17: Health and Healing**
  [https://muse.jhu.edu/article/50416](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/50416)

**Wednesday, April 19: Saving Women**

• Assia Djebar, Women of Algiers in their Apartment

**Week 13: Religious Pluralism**

**Wednesday, April 26: Internal and External Shifts**

• Loimeier, “Muslims on the Cape: Community and Dispute,” Muslim Societies in Africa, (248-266).

*** Film Screening of *The Silver Fez***

**Week 14: Muslims in the Era of the Nation State**

**Wednesday, May 3: East Africa**


*** Film Screening of *Timbuktu* Sunday, May 4 ***

**Week 15: Islamic Futures?**

**Monday, May 8: Timbuktu**

• News stories on Timbuktu, 2012 and 2016.

**Wednesday, May 10: Rich and Poor**

**FINAL PAPERS ARE DUE FRIDAY, MAY 19 BY 5PM.**

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<tr>
<td><strong>Analytical substance</strong></td>
<td>Author presents basic information without or with very limited analysis</td>
<td>Paper has limited discussion of main points and/or does not show how historical factors relate to each other</td>
<td>Author successfully identifies main points; shows how different factors relate to each other</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Use of supporting material</strong></td>
<td>Author does not use evidence and/or entirely fails to cite sources</td>
<td>Author uses evidence only rarely and/or fails to cite sources adequately</td>
<td>Author uses secondary and/or primary sources to support argument and cites sources</td>
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<td><strong>Argument structure</strong></td>
<td>No thesis statement; paper is entirely summative</td>
<td>Paper is summative rather than argument-driven; thesis statement is weak or hard to find</td>
<td>Paper has a thesis-driven argument; paper is organized</td>
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<td><strong>Quality of writing</strong></td>
<td>Writing is difficult to understand and/or very unprofessional; contains numerous errors</td>
<td>Writing is understandable; contains few writing errors</td>
<td>Writing is clear, professional, and communicates main points; contains no major writing errors</td>
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<td><strong>Historical perspective</strong></td>
<td>Author does not show historical perspective (please note that it is appropriate to critique historical figures and write of historical tragedies, crises, or kindnesses, but not to write a polemic or apologia; analysis is key)</td>
<td>Author shows limited understanding of historical perspective; weakly contextualizes perspectives</td>
<td>Author discerns between assumptions and value judgments versus analysis and argument; uses historical context and accurate facts</td>
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**WRITING RUBRIC developed by Annelise Heinze**