Course Description

A survey exploring Islamic orthodoxies and heterodoxies in South Asia. We will chart the process of Islam’s Indianization through a sequence of historical readings. The question “What’s South Asian about this?” then opens the way to ethnographic perspectives on themes of contemporary practice: possession and healing, dress and diet, ideology and relations with state and other authorities, caste. In the last third of the course we turn to representative literary texts for a view of how a distinctively Muslim cultural sensibility has come to be identified in both Pakistan and India with the language and letters of Urdu.

Class sessions will be conducted seminar-style, with most sessions being introduced by two discussion leaders who will prepare short, informal papers on the readings, a copy of which will be provided to the fellow discussant as well as to me. Among the assigned texts there are a number of mass-market Hindi films, examples of Bollywood cinema. You will be required to write a short essay on a film of your choice. The most important assignment is a final research paper. After discussing your choice of topic with me in an office-hours session, you will be called on to present some of your research before the class at the end of the term to give your fellow students a chance to participate as discussants.

Required Texts

Akbar Ahmed, Journey into Islam: The Crisis of Globalization

Salman Rushdie, Shame

Reading assignments taken from sources outside of these books will be placed on e-reserve. Films will also be made available as reserve materials.

Course Requirements

1. Class participation, including informal position papers: 40%
2. Film essay, 5 pp.: 15%
3. Research paper, 10+ pp.: 45%

Boilerplate

1. Eating in class bugs me, so please don’t bring in anything solid to chow down on while class is in session. If you feel you have to, for blood sugar–related reasons or anything else, tell me about it before we begin.
2. I reserve the right to make fun of you if your cell phone goes off.

3. Please turn in all written assignments to me (or my office mailbox) on paper. It’s up to you to print it out in time, not up to me. And when I grade papers, I mark them up with comments, so make sure you pick them up!

4. Late assignment policy: In principle, pretty mellow. As far as I’m concerned, there’s one cardinal rule: *If you need more time than what I’ve indicated, get in touch and clear it with me.* I promise to be accessible—by e-mail, by office phone, and in person before and after class and at the office. Don’t be a stranger: if you need help with the assignments—whether your concerns are time-related, text-related, or anything else—consider me your first stop.

**Course Schedule**

**week 1—Introductions**

Jan. 4 (F)

*introductions of: members of the class; the general scheme of the class; its goals and standards; some basic terms and concepts: Where is South Asia? How are we to consider “Islam”? As a creed? A community? An ideology? A culture?*

6 (Sun)

*screening: Coolie (dir. Manmohan Desai, 1983)*

7:00, Leighton 303

**week 2—Introductions (cont.)**

7 (M)

*reading: We’ll talk about the film. Your reading assignment is this: Go to YouTube and check out the argument in the comments section at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Crki7tB1o](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Crki7tB1o) (this is the final scene in Coolie, which you can also get to by searching for “coolie end scene masjid”). So: What’s the debate about? Who do you suppose is posting?*

9 (W)

*readings: V. Egger, “South Asia,” in *History of the Muslim World (e-reserve)*; Fred W. Clothey, “The Coming of Islam,” in *Religion in India (e-reserve).*

*Note: The e-reserve gnomes have filed the second entry incorrectly under D. Lopez, Religions of India in Practice.*

11 (F)

*reading: Akbar Ahmed, Journey into Islam: The Crisis of Globalization, chaps. 1–3*

**week 3—Journey into Islam**

14 (M)

*reading: Akbar Ahmed, Journey into Islam: The Crisis of Globalization, chaps. 4–5*
16 (W)  
*reading*: Akbar Ahmed, *Journey into Islam*, *chaps. 6–Epilogue*

18 (F)  
in-class screening: *Being Muslim in India* (dir. James McDonald, 1984)

**week 4—Historical Conjunctures I**

21 (M)  
*readings*: Aziz Ahmad, “Epic and Counter-Epic in Medieval India” (*e-reserve*); Ibn Battutah, “The City of Dihli and Sultan Muhammad ibn Tughluq” and “Ibn Battutah’s Stay in Dihli” (*e-reserve*)

23 (W)  
*readings*: Ibn Battutah, “From Dihli to Kinbayah,” “South India,” and “Ceylon and Coromandel” (*e-reserve*); Eleanor Zelliot, “A Medieval Encounter Between Hindu and Muslim: Eknath’s Drama-Poem Hindu-Turk Samvad” (*e-reserve*)

25 (F)  
*reading*: Abul-Fazl Allami, from *A’in-e Akbari* (*e-reserve*)

27 (Sun)  
7:00, Leighton 303

**week 5—Historical Conjunctures II**

28 (M)  
*reading*: Peter Gottschalk, from *Beyond Hindu and Muslim: Multiple Identity in Narratives from Village India* (*e-reserve*)

30 (W)  
*reading*: Barbara Metcalf, “Nationalism, Modernity, and Muslim Identity in India before 1947” and “The Case of Pakistan” (*e-reserve*)

Feb. 1 (F)  
*reading*: Aziz Ahmad, “Iqbal: Speculative Neo-Modernism” and “The Genesis of Pakistan” (*e-reserve*)

*over midterm break: get a head start on Shame*

**week 6—Shame**

6 (W)  
*reading*: Salman Rushdie, *Shame*, *first half*
8 (F)
*reading*: Salman Rushdie, *Shame*, second half

week 7 — Alternative Positions

11 (M)

13 (W)
*readings*: Katherine Pratt Ewing, “The Qalandar Confronts the Proper Muslim” (*e-reserve*); Gayatri Reddy, “‘We Are All Musalmans Now: Religious Practices, Positionality, and Hijra/Muslim Identification” (*e-reserve*)

discuss final research assignment

15 (F)
*reading*: Veena Talwar Oldenburg, “Lifestyle as Resistance: The Case of the Courtesans of Lucknow” (*e-reserve*)

17 (Sun)
*screening*: *Chaudhvin Ka Chand* (dir. M. Sadiq, 1960)
7:00, Leighton 303

week 8 — Defining Feminine Bodies and Spaces

18 (M)

20 (W)

22 (F)

week 9 — Sacred Discourse and Performance

25 (M)
*reading*: David Mandelbaum, from *Women’s Seclusion and Men’s Honor* (*e-reserve*)

deadline for film essay
27 (W)
readings: Kirti Singh, “The Constitution and Muslim Personal Law” (e-reserve); Paola Bacchetta, “Communal Property/Sexual Property: On Representations of Muslim Women in a Hindu Nationalist Discourse” (e-reserve)

29 (F)
readings: Carl Ernst, “India as a Sacred Islamic Land” (e-reserve); M. Hermansen, “Women’s Celebration of Muhammad’s Birth” (e-reserve)

week 10—Urdu Poetics

Mar. 3 (M)
readings: Ali Asani, “In Praise of Muhammad: Sindhi and Urdu Poems” (e-reserve); also TBA, possibly Web-based source through Sean Pue

5 (W)
reading: TBA, possibly Web-based source through Sean Pue

7 (F)
reading and recording: qawwali material TBA; Peter Manuel, “The Popularization and Transformation of the Urdu Light-Classical Ghazal-Song” (e-reserve)

week 11—Review and Wrap-up

10 (M)
presentations of individual projects

15 (Sat)
Final Research Paper Due: 5:00 IN MY MAILBOX, RELIGION DEPARTMENT