

Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures

NELC 358

Sufism

Instructor: Dr. Snjezana Buzov
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Class Schedule:
Location:
Call Number:
Credit: U 5

Course description: Examination of the distinctively Islamic mystical and spiritual features of Sufism and the relevance of its historical and cultural context.

This course is intended to satisfy the GEC requirement for Category 2. Breadth: Section C. Arts and Humanities (3) Cultures and Ideas

Goals:

Students evaluate significant writing and works of art. Such studies develop capacities for aesthetic and historical response and judgment; interpretation and evaluation; critical listening, reading, seeing, thinking, and writing; and experiencing the arts and reflecting on that experience.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

1. Students develop abilities to be informed observers of, or active participants in, the visual, spatial, performing, spoken, or literary arts.
2. Students describe and interpret creative work, and/or movements in the arts and literature.
3. Students explain how works of art and writings explore the human condition.

(3) Cultures and Ideas Expected Learning Outcomes:

1. Students develop abilities to analyze, appreciate, and interpret major forms of human thought and expression.
2. Students develop abilities to understand how ideas influence the character of human beliefs, the perception of reality, and the norms which guide human behavior.

Expected Learning Outcomes for NELC 358:

Students who complete this course will come to understand Sufism as a major, and a distinctively Islamic, mystical tradition within Islam, thereby developing abilities to analyze, appreciate, and interpret a major form of human thought and expression. By reading interpretative scholarly works with texts written by Sufi authors, this course seeks to portray a religion-specific study of Sufism, enabling students to understand how ideas influence the character of human beliefs, the perception of reality, and the norms which guide human behavior.

Rationale:

“Mysticism” and “spirituality” have been highly popular categories in the academic studies of religion, and they have been used as self-evident, uncontested, and universally applicable categories. In studying Sufism the use of these two analytical categories resulted in an essentialist approach which described Sufism or *tasawwuf* as the major Islamic mystical tradition within Islam. Instead of focusing on the universality and spirituality of mysticism this course will approach Sufism as an inner, esoteric Islam, which means that its purpose is to offer a religion-specific study of Sufism. The focus will be on the distinctively Islamic mystical and spiritual features of Sufism as well as on the relevance of its historical and cultural context.

We shall study Sufism by focusing on four major themes: Sufi cosmology, knowledge (gnosis), literature and culture. The readings for this course combine a number of interpretative scholarly works with texts written by Sufi authors. Additionally, student groups will be formed to examine and prepare presentations on the new, contemporary way of disseminating Sufi knowledge, and establishing and maintaining Sufi networks: the Sufi brotherhoods’ web pages online.

Required readings (available at SBX):

William Chittick. *Sufism: A Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2000.
Carl Ernst transl and ed. *Teachings of Sufism*, Boston & London: Shambala, 1999..
Raymond Ligtchez ed. *The Dervish Lodge*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992. (on reserve)
William Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds: Ibn Al-Arabi and the Problem of Religious Diversity*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994.

Grading:

Midterm and Final Exam: 70% (35% each)
Presentation: 10%
Four quizzes: 20% (5% each)

The course schedule:**WEEK ONE: Cosmology I**

Session one:

Introduction to the course

Session two:

Class topic: God/Macrocosmos

Readings: Definition of “cosmology” (Encyclopaedia Britannica dictionary)

Chittick, *Sufism*, 97-111.

Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds*, 15-31

WEEK TWO: Cosmology II

Session one:

Human being
Chittick, *Sufism*, 111-137.

Session two:

Microcosm, Macrocosm and Perfect man
Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds*, 31-39.
Chittick, *Sufism*, 81-89.

WEEK THREE: Knowledge

Session One:

“Gnosis”, Encyclopedia Britannica Dictionary
Ma‘rifa, Encyclopaedia of Islam, Brill Online
Chittick, *Sufism*, 1-32;

Session Two:

Chittick, *Sufism*, 32-52.
Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds*, chapters 4 and 7.

WEEK FOUR: Religious Diversity

Session One:

Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds*, chapters 8-9.

Session Two:

Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds*, chapter 9.

WEEK FIVE: Physical and Spiritual Journey

Session One:

“Silsila”, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Brill Online
“Tariqah”, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Brill Online
“Manâqib”, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Brill Online
Carl Ernst, *Teachings of Sufism*, 40-53.

Session Two:

Carl Ernst, *Teachings of Sufism*, 53-82.

WEEK SIX: Devotional Practices I

Session One:

Film: Sufi Dhikr, and discussion

Session Two:

Midterm Exam

WEEK SEVEN: Devotional Practices II

Session One:

Carl Ernst: *Teachings of Sufism*, 53-65.

Session Two: Sufi Orders

“Tariqah”, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Brill Online.

Chittick, *Sufism*, 61-74.

Muhammad Sanusi, “Practices of the Orders” (Ernst, *Teachings of Sufism*, 76-81).

Qadiris online, group presentation

Naqshbandis online, group presentation

WEEK EIGHT: Art, Architecture and Music I

Session One:

Raymond Lifchez, “The Lodges of Istanbul” (Lifchez, *The Dervish lodge*, 73-129).

Khalwatiyya online, group presentation

Session Two:

Ruzbihan Baqli, “On listening to Music” (Ernst, *Teachings of Sufism*, 95-102).

Ernst, “The Practices of Listening to Music” (Ernst, *Teachings of Sufism*, 103-117).

Shadiliyya online, group presentation

WEEK NINE: Art, Architecture and Music II

Session One:

Walter Feldman, “Musical Genres and Zikir of the Sunni Tariqas in Turkey” (Lifchez, 187-203).

Listening to: Galata Mevlevi Music And Sema Ensemble

Mevlevis online, group presentation

Session two:

Annemarie Schimmel, "Calligraphy and Sufism in Ottoman Turkey"
(Lifchez, *The Dervish lodge*, 242-252).

Frederick DeJong, "Pictorial Art of the Bektashi Order" (Lifchez, *The Dervish Lodge*, 228-241).

WEEK TEN: Daily Life

Session One:

Nancy Micklewright, "Dervish Images in Photographs and Paintings"(Lifchez, 269-283).

Ayla Algar, "Food in the Life of the Tekke" (Lifchez, 296-306).

Rifa'iyya online, group presentation

Session Two: Review

Final Exam: (date)

Academic Misconduct:

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info_for_students/csc.asp).

Disability Services:

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.