

Muslim Networks: Communication, Knowledge and Islamic Traditions in Historical and Contemporary Perspectives

HPRS7016

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AIM(S)

- To enable students to acquire a thorough understanding of the networking and interaction between Islam, Muslims and cultures in historical and contemporary contexts
- To develop critical awareness of significant factors influencing the development of specific interpretative and belief frameworks within Muslim societies

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this module students should be able to:

- Read and apply a variety of source materials critically and empathetically
- Employ multidisciplinary/ interdisciplinary skills appropriate for the academic analysis of key issues and topics associated with Islamic Studies
- Discuss the historical, cultural and religious translational networks associated with Muslim thought – including through the arts, pilgrimage, commerce, communications, and propagation
- Be aware of the impact of information technology on Muslim societies
- Develop comparative approaches to knowledge about Islam and Muslim societies

CONTENT

- Historical connectivity and networking: traditional patterns of knowledge transmission about Islam
- Transmission of culture and religious ideas
- Communications media: historical and contemporary
- Sufi networks: Communications and concepts; case study
- Shia networks: Communications and concepts; case study
- Islamic arts: networking of ideas (architecture, mosque design, popular arts)
- Contemporary frameworks of knowledge transmission and networking (print, media, internet)
- Muslim Network Typologies: significant frameworks of networking, including 'progressive Islam'

ASSESSMENT

Planning Document: 20%

Slideshow of 50 slides with detailed analytical commentary: 80%

Full information is contained on the programme page.

Contact details

Appointments:

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Muslim Networks: Communication, Knowledge and Islamic Traditions in Historical and Contemporary Perspectives

1. Introduction

The module assumes that the reader has a prior knowledge of Islam and Muslim societies, and a willingness to be open in her reading of materials from diverse academic sources. All the essential readings are contained within the module pack, but students are encouraged to follow up on these sources in greater detail, particularly in areas in which they have a personal interest.

Networks can take many forms and combinations: political, financial, social, spiritual, artistic, computer-mediated, historical, ethno-cultural, and/or linguistic affiliations all have a part to play in our reading of 'Muslim Networks' – although within the context of this module, the focus is on forms of religious networking.

This module seeks to introduce the diverse ways in which knowledge and ideas about Islam and Muslim societies have been transmitted between individual Muslims and different societies via numerous networks across history. *Muslim Networks* brings together a broad range of source materials in this developing field, in order to create an overview of significant themes and conceptual frameworks, and introduce the reader to an area of study which has implications within contemporary societies. Networks have evolved beyond geographical limitations, into (in some cases) digital pathways, whilst retaining a continuity of thought and beliefs.

It is important to consider the historical continuity of networking, which is why this module presents studies from across Muslim history, whilst linking them to contemporary societies. It is not possible to understand modern developments, without looking back at critical developments in the journeys of Islamic beliefs from their roots in the Arabian Peninsular through to the global phenomena associated with Islam today.

Whilst introducing materials on historical themes, it also explores some of the important theoretical works on modern societies. For example, clearly, there is a differentiation between the ways in which – for example – the Qur'an was first transmitted to wider audiences (for example, through oral/aural methods) and the ways in which it can be accessed today (for example, via the Internet). The message of the Qur'an may not have changed: the medium in which it is presented has transformed itself, as the nature of the networking has taken on numerous different forms. Recitation and the writing down of the Divine Word have become integrated into other media forms.

The ways in which bytes of knowledge about Islam have been presented to and consumed by different audiences over time is a central theme of *Muslim Networks*. Through history, networks have taken advantage of changes in technology, such as the introduction of print-media and satellite television, in order to present specific sources and interpretations of Islam. These have opened up new audiences for traditional materials – way beyond the original readership intended by writers.

Module Structure

This module is divided into inter-related sections. You are encouraged to read all sections of the module. However, it is acknowledged that there is substantial reading involved in completing this module. At the minimum, you should read the selected readings from the key book. You may then wish to focus on sections of particular interest to yourself. The sections run as follows:

- I. Introduction
- II. Traditional patterns of Islamic knowledge transmission
- III. The Early Spread of Islam
- IV. Muslim Networking: the Qur'an and the Hajj
- V. Sufi networks
- VI. Shi'a networks
- VII. Encountering Muslim Networks: Islamic arts and expression
- VIII. Contemporary frameworks of knowledge transmission and networking
- IX. Muslim Network Typologies
- X. Conclusion
- XI. Appendices

All the required reading is contained in the module pack. However, there are many options for supplementary reading outside of the pack requirements. If you have a special subject interest, please contact Dr Bunt if you require advice on printed or other resources. Feedback on the module content is also welcomed.

Internet:

You are encouraged to use the Internet as a research tool, to *supplement* conventional academic material. Follow the academic handbook for guidance on referencing. Software available through the university, such as RefWorks, is very useful at this level of study. Details are on the library's website: <https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/library/student-essentials/refworks/>

The URLs contained in this module are incorporated into the text, in order to provide useful supplements to the conventional course materials. They are helpful because they frequently provide alternative perspectives, or difficult to

obtain material. Their content is externally generated, and is not the responsibility of the author of the module or the University of Wales Trinity Saint David. URLs can change without notice: whilst all resources were checked at the time of going to press, there may be subsequent adjustments. Please advise Gary Bunt if any link is broken.

General Guidance about this Module

- Some of these tasks require the reading of materials incorporated into the course pack, taken from various sources.
- Some of the discussions contain reference to other sources and further reading. These may be particularly relevant for students 'specialising' in a particular topic, but are not 'required reading' in themselves.
- While there are links to significant works in the sections, substantial further recommended reading is outlined in each section. This is particularly relevant if you are researching on a particular theme in this module. Contact Gary Bunt for further advice on reading materials, particularly in areas that are specific to your assessment topic.

Key book

It is recommended that you obtain the key book:

cooke, miriam and Bruce B. Lawrence (editors), *Muslim Networks: from Hajj to Hip Hop* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005) *An e-book edition is also available for purchase.*

This has been selected because its themes reflect those of the module, and it contains a broad range of scholarly chapters from experts in different fields of study associated with Muslim Networks.

Main Bibliography

This is a listing of the main books used in the module.

Allieve, Stefano, and Jørgen S. Nielsen (editors), *Muslim Networks and Transnational Communities in and Across Europe*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2003)

Berkey, Jonathan P, *The Formation of Islam: Religion and Society in the Near East, 600-1800* (Cambridge: University Press, 2003)

Blank, Jonah, *Mullahs on the mainframe: Islam and modernity among the Daudi Bohras* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2001)

Bloom, Jonathan M., *Paper before Print: the history and impact of paper in the Islamic world* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2001)

Bunt, Gary R. *Hashtag Islam*, (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2018)

Eickelman, Dale F., and James Piscatori (editors), *Muslim Travellers: Pilgrimage, Migration, and the Religious Imagination*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990)

Eickelman, Dale F. and Jon W. Anderson (editors), *New Media in the Muslim World: An Emerging Public Sphere*, (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2nd edition, 2003)

Encyclopaedia of Islam, Vols. I-XII, Online Edition, P.J. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs (editors), (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2001)

Esposito, John, *Islam: The Straight Path* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 3rd edition, 1998).

Ernst, Carl, *Rethinking Islam in the Contemporary World*, (Edinburgh: University Press, 2004)

Hillenbrand, Robert, *Islamic Architecture: Form, Function, and Meaning*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994)

Hourani, Albert, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1991)

Inayatullah, Sohail and Gail Boxwell (editors), *Islam, Postmodernism and Other Futures: A Ziauddin Sardar Reader* (London: Pluto Books, 2003)

Kennedy, Hugh. (editor), *An Historical Atlas of Islam, Second Revised Edition*, Editor: Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2002)

Mandaville, Peter, *Transnational Muslim Politics, Reimagining the Umma*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2001)

Museum With No Frontiers, *Ifriqiya: Thirteen Centuries of Art and Architecture in Tunisia*, Brussels: Museum With No Frontiers, 2002)

Peters, F.E., *The Hajj: The Muslim Pilgrimage to Mecca and the Holy Places*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994)

Renard, John. *Seven Doors to Islam: Spirituality and the Religious Life of Muslims*, (Berkeley: University of California, 1996)

Schaebler, Birgit and Leif Stenberg (editors), *Globalization and the Muslim World: Culture, Religion and Modernity*, (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2004)

Smart, Ninian, (editor), *Atlas of the World's Religions*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999),

Surty, Muhammad Ibrahim H.I., *The Science of Reciting The Qur'an: A Course in 'Ilm Al-Tajwid*, (Leicester, The Islamic Foundation, 1988)

Sells, Michael, *Approaching The Qur'an: The Early Revelations*, (Ashland, Oregon: White Cloud Press, 1999)

Waines, David, *An Introduction to Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2nd edition, 2003)

Possible Slideshow topics

- Sufism and the transmission of religious knowledge in Muslim networks.
- Artistic forms of religious expression (such as those contained within calligraphy and architecture) in the development of Muslim networks and affiliations.
- Shi'a Islam and Muslim networks.
- The impact of electronic media on Muslim networks.