

The Anthropology of Islam & Muslim Society

SPRING TERM 2020



Timetable

Lecture and seminar: 3 hour session held once per week

Student presentations comprise an important element of the teaching

There is also a fieldtrip to the London Central Mosque

Aims & Objectives (1)

- The module introduces students to anthropological debates concerning Islam and Muslim societies.
- Explores a wide range of ethnographic contexts to examine the intersections between religious practice - Islamic knowledge, authority, prayer, ritual and piety and political, economic, social and cultural processes.
- The module questions whether 'Islam' can be considered as a unified experiential and analytical category, and how anthropologists have participated in the production of Islam as a specific field of study.
- In the first half of the semester we will discuss the emergence of 'the anthropology of Islam', situating it within past and current anthropological debates about the analytical validity of categories such as 'world religion' and 'religion'.

Aims & Objectives (2)

- The second half of the module turns towards the interaction between Islam and politics. Much early work focused on the 'politicisation of Islam' in a world widely assumed to be becoming more secular.
- Taught over the 13 weeks of the Autumn term.
- Lectures provide an overview of a topic and are usually accompanied by visual material (power points on study direct).
- The issues raised in the lecture are discussed in greater detail and with reference to ethnographic material in the weekly seminars.

Topics

- TOPIC 1** **The anthropology of Islam: a critical introduction.**
- TOPIC 2** **Religious Authority and Traditions of Learning in Muslim societies.**
- TOPIC 3** **Healing and Mysticism.**
- TOPIC 4** **Prayer and Piety: Debating Islamic ethics and Muslim moralities.**
- TOPIC 5** **Islam and Culture: Dancing, Playing, Performing.**
- TOPIC 6** **Global Studies Reading Week**
- TOPIC 7** **Islam and the State: from Islamism to the Taliban.**
- TOPIC 8** **Islam in China and the former Soviet Union: Muslim Responses to Transition.**
- TOPIC 9** **Muslim Migrants: Global, Transnational or Cosmopolitan?**
- TOPIC 10** **Beyond Political Islam: Mobilising Muslims.**
- WEEK 11** **TUTORIAL MEETINGS**
- WEEK 12** **TUTORIAL MEETINGS**

Assessment

- **Autumn Term: 5,000 word dissertation**
- A long essay on a topic that has been selected in consultation with your module convenor. The essay will deal in some depth with theoretical and empirical material related either to one or more of the topics of the module, or to a related topic that further explores or complements the material of the module. We expect the essay to draw on library-based research in addition to the module readings. While first-hand research is not a requirement, students are allowed to draw on research conducted during the duration of the module or previously.

Further information about the essay including a list of essay questions will be provided later in the term. Please be sure to check your emails regularly and be in touch with your module convenor.