

**ISLAM IN AMERICA**  
**RELPOL 285 SPRING 2022**  
PROFESSOR ALI ([tazeen.ali@wustl.edu](mailto:tazeen.ali@wustl.edu))



CLASS TIMES: **TU/THU 10-11:20 AM**  
LOCATION: **UMRATH 140**

PROFESSOR ALI'S [Zoom](#) OFFICE HOURS  
TUESDAYS 12:30-2:30 PM OR BY APPOINTMENT  
MEETING ID: 948 9810 9853; PASSCODE: ali

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

From Olympic athlete Ibtihaj Muhammad and Democratic Congresswomen Rashida Tlaib and Ilhan Omar to Oscar-winning actor Mahershala Ali, there are several prominent American Muslim public figures today. Indeed, Muslims have long been an embedded part of American culture since their forced arrival through the Transatlantic slave trade and later waves of immigration throughout the 18th to 21st centuries from various regions across the world. Yet, Muslim national belonging in the U.S. has continually been publicly contested throughout history up until our current political moment. In this course, we examine the notion of a religiously plural America and analyze Muslims' place within it, considering the ways that American Muslims both shape and are shaped by U.S. society as both religious actors with autonomy and as a marginalized outgroup.

We will approach this course both chronologically and thematically over three units:  
1. History of Islam in the U.S. (16th to 19th centuries) 2. Black Islam: Malcolm X, the Nation of Islam, and Hip-Hop (20th to 21st centuries) and 3. Lived Religion: American Muslims in the Contemporary U.S. (post-9/11 and present day U.S.). By the end of the course, students should be able to describe the various circumstances and periods of Muslim arrival in the U.S.; demonstrate knowledge of the heterogeneity of American Muslim experiences across gender, ethnicity, and race; and analyze how the category of race informs American Muslim assimilation trends, discrimination patterns, and internal community dynamics. Furthermore, students will develop critical skills in reading and assessing the claims of primary and secondary sources that relate to Islam in America.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:** (ALL AVAILABLE ELECTRONICALLY – NO NEED TO PURCHASE)

There is no need to buy any texts for this course: all readings are available electronically through Olin library or will be provided on Canvas. However, if you would prefer to have your own physical copies, we will be reading the following titles in full:

As told by Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. Ballantine Books, 2015.  
Shabana Mir, *Muslim American Women on Campus: Undergraduate Social Life & Identity*, 2014.  
John O'Brien, *Keeping It Halal: The Everyday Lives of Muslim American Teenage Boys*, 2017.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS & EVALUATION:

### ***Class attendance and participation 10%***

Students are expected to attend each session, completing assigned readings **before** each class session and coming prepared to discuss them. Note: please bring the assigned text(s) along with your highlighted passages, notes, and questions to each class.

### ***Leading Discussion 5%***

Each student will lead one class discussion either individually or in pairs. Guidelines provided below. A sign-up sheet with dates will be circulated in class.

### ***Weekly Reading Journals 20%***

Students will submit weekly journal entries between 150-200 words on Canvas (10 total, worth 2% points each) on that week's reading. These entries should reflect what interested/ intrigued/ excited/ confused/ annoyed you about the reading and why. These are very brief in length and should therefore **not** summarize the reading.

### ***Unit Reflection Papers 45%***

Students will complete a total of three reflection papers, worth 15% each. These should be 2-3 pages double-spaced in 12- or 11-point font and 1 inch margins due at the end of each course unit. Prompts are provided on the course Canvas page under "Assignments."

Reflection papers due on Canvas by noon on: **Feb 11, March 11, April 22**

### ***Final Explainer Video 20%***

Students will create 5-minute "explainer" style videos on a course topic of their choice. Guidelines will be distributed separately, but students must have their topics approved by me on or before April 12th. The final assignment will be due on **May 10 at 5pm CT** and should be uploaded to Canvas.

### Grading Scale:

<b>A</b> 93.0-100	<b>A-</b> 90.0-92.9	<b>B+</b> 87.0-89.9	<b>B</b> 83.0-86.9	<b>B-</b> 80.0-82.9	<b>C+</b> 77.0-79.9
<b>C</b> 73.0-76.9	<b>C-</b> 70.0-72.9	<b>D+</b> 67.0-69.9	<b>D</b> 63.0-66.9	<b>D-</b> 60.0-62.9	<b>F</b> Below 60

\*Please note that Canvas will generate an automatic final grade that does **not** reflect the percentages above: grades posted on Canvas only reflect your score on specific assignments. Use the percentages above to manually calculate your progress towards your final grade.

### **Course Policies:**

***Attendance*** is required, please arrive on time to receive full participation credit. If you need to miss a class due to illness, family emergency, religious observance, job interview, scheduled athletic event, or other compelling reason, please notify me over email as soon as possible: absences will be excused at instructor's discretion. An unexcused absence will result in no participation credit for that day.

***Late work*** will be penalized by one-third of a letter grade for each day overdue including weekends and breaks. A deadline extension may be granted under some circumstances but only **before** the original due date has passed. If you anticipate difficulty in meeting a deadline, please contact me as far in advance of the due date as possible to discuss an extension.

***Academic Integrity*** policies at Washington University should be reviewed at <https://wustl.edu/about/compliance-policies/academic-policies/undergraduate-student-academic-integrity-policy/> (Links to an external site.). For correct citation format, please consult *The Chicago Manual of*

*Style.* You may also seek assistance from AJ Robinson, our Islamic Studies librarian at Olin Library by scheduling an appointment here: <https://wustl.libcal.com/appointments/aj> (Links to an external site.) or reaching out to them directly at [robinson.a@wustl.edu](mailto:robinson.a@wustl.edu). Please consult me if you have **any** questions or concerns.

**Technology** in the classroom (including laptops, cell phones, tablets) is strongly discouraged unless stated otherwise. If you prefer to use them in class, please do so with focus and respect for their ability to distract you and your classmates, and please disable internet and phone access. If you need to use technology to accommodate your learning in accordance with a VISA Plan or otherwise, please do so without hesitation. \*These guidelines on internet and technology do not apply for classes conducted on Zoom, but please note that for Zoom sessions, you are required to keep your cameras on for full participation credit unless you have cleared it with me in advance.

**Course Schedule:**

<b>Week 1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
Jan 18	Introductions/ please read over the syllabus.
Jan 20	“United States of America,” in the <i>Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World</i> , 2009. Pp. 1-9 “Demographic portrait of Muslim Americans,” Pew Research Center, 2017. Pp. 1-16 (skim)
<b>Week 2</b>	<b>America’s First Muslims: Enslaved Africans in the New World</b>
Jan 25	Sylviane A. Diouf, <i>Servants of Allah: African Muslims enslaved in the Americas</i> , Intro & Ch. 2  <b>*Journal 1 Due Mon 1/24 at midnight</b>
Jan 27	Hishaam Aidi and Manning Marable: “The Early Muslim Presence and its Significance.” Pp. 1-12
<b>Week 3</b>	<b>Islam, the Founding Fathers, and Freedom of Religion</b>
Feb 1	Denise A. Spellberg, <i>Thomas Jefferson’s Qur’an: Islam and the Founders</i> , Intro & Ch. 3  <b>*Journal 2 Due Mon 1/31 at midnight</b>
Feb 3	Spellberg, <i>Thomas Jefferson’s Qur’an</i> , Ch. 5 Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, <a href="https://www.monticello.org/site/research-and-collections/virginia-statute-religious-freedom">https://www.monticello.org/site/research-and-collections/virginia-statute-religious-freedom</a>
<b>Week 4</b>	<b>Islam, Race, and Citizenship</b>
Feb 8	Kambiz GhaneaBassiri, “Ch. 3 Conflating Race, Religion, and Progress: Social Change, National

	Identity, and Islam in the Post–Civil War Era,” 2010. Pp. 95-134
Feb 10	GhaneaBassiri, Ch. 4 “Race, Ethnicity, Religion, and Citizenship” <b>Unit 1 Reflection Paper Due Friday 2/11 at 12 pm (noon)</b>
<b>Week 5</b>	<b>Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam</b>
Feb 15	Autobiography of Malcolm X Ch. 1-7 <b>*Journal 3 Due Mon 2/14 at midnight</b>
Feb 17	Autobiography of Malcolm X Ch. 8-10
<b>Week 6</b>	<b>Malcolm X</b>
Feb 22	Autobiography of Malcolm X Ch. 11-16 <b>*Journal 4 Due Mon 2/21 at midnight</b>
Feb 24	Autobiography of Malcolm X Ch. 17-19 & Epilogue
<b>Week 7</b>	<b>Women in the Nation of Islam</b>
March 1	Ula Taylor, <i>The Promise of Patriarchy: Women and the NOI</i> , Intro & Ch. 6: pp. 1-6; 74-103 <b>*Journal 5 Due Mon 2/28 at midnight</b>
March 3	Griffin, Ironies of the Saint: Malcolm X, Black Women, & the Price of Protection pp. 214-227 Jamillah Karim, “Through Sunni Women’s Eyes: Black Feminism and the NOI,” pp. 155-165.
<b>Week 8</b>	<b>Legacies and Influences of Black Islam</b>
March 8	Khabeer, <i>Muslim Cool: Race, Religion, and Hip Hop in the United States</i> , Intro & Ch. 1, pp. 1-76.
March 10	Khabeer, <i>Muslim Cool</i> , Ch. 2 pp. 77-108. <b>Unit 2 Reflection Paper Due Friday 3/11 at 12 pm (noon)</b>
<b>Week 9</b>	<b>Spring Break 3/13-18</b>
<b>Week 10</b>	<b>Muslims After 9/11 &amp; in the Age of Trump</b>

March 22	<p>Omid Safi, "Being Muslim, Being American After 9/11," pp. 296-302.</p> <p>Nadine Naber, "Look Mohammed the Terrorist Is Coming! Cultural Racism, Nation-Based Racism, and the Intersectionality of Oppressions after 9/11," 2007. Pp. 276-304.</p> <p>amina wadud, "American by Force, Muslim by Choice." <i>Political Theology</i> 12(5): 699-705, 2011.</p>
March 24	<p><i>*No Class Meeting*</i></p> <p>Watch: <i>American Muslim: a documentary</i>, 2019 (On Ares)</p> <p><b>Journal 6 Due at midnight</b></p>
<b>Week 11</b>	<b>Lived Religion: Muslim American Teens</b>
March 29	<p>O'Brien, <i>Keeping It Halal: The Everyday Lives of Muslim American Teenage Boys</i>, Preface, Ch. 1-2, pp. 1-49</p> <p><b>Journal 7 Due Mon 3/28 at midnight</b></p>
March 31	O'Brien, <i>Keeping It Halal</i> , Ch. 3 pp. 50-77
<b>Week 12</b>	<b>Lived Religion: Muslim American Teens cont.</b>
April 5	<p>O'Brien, <i>Keeping It Halal</i>, Ch. 4-5, pp. 78-148</p> <p><b>Journal 8 due Mon 4/4 at midnight</b></p>
April 7	O'Brien, <i>Keeping It Halal</i> , Ch. 6, pp. 149-168
<b>Week 13</b>	<b>Lived Religion: Muslim American Women</b>
April 12	<p>Shabana Mir, <i>Muslim American Women on Campus</i>, Ch. 1 &amp; 2, pp. 1- 46.</p> <p><b>Journal 9 Due Mon 4/11 at midnight</b></p>
April 14	Shabana Mir, <i>Muslim American Women</i> . [Ch. 3 pp. 47-86]
<b>Week 14</b>	<b>Lived Religion: Muslim American Women cont.</b>
April 19	Shabana Mir, <i>Muslim American Women</i> , Ch. 4 pp. 87- 125

April 21	Shabana Mir, <i>Muslim American Women</i> , Ch. 5 & 6 pp. 126-83  In-class guest, Dr. Shabana Mir (American Islamic College, Chicago)  Prepare a question/comments for Dr. Mir's class visit; post by 8 am 4/21  <b>Unit 3 Reflection Paper Due Friday 4/22 at 12 pm (noon)</b>
<b>Week 15</b>	<b>Surveillance in an Age of Terror</b>
April 26	Moustafa Bayoumi, "Introduction: My Muslim American Life," in <i>This Muslim American Life: Dispatches from the War on Terror</i> . [Intro & Ch. 9] pp. 1-19 & pp. 140-147 <b>Journal 10 Due Mon 4/25 at midnight</b>
April 28	Wrapping Up; distribute final  Final Due on May 10 at 5 pm

**\*Guidelines for Leading Class Discussion\***

Please sign up to lead discussion on the Google doc under 'Collaborations.'

These discussions, depending on the assigned text(s) for the day, should last anywhere from 30-45 minutes. To begin, each discussant should share with the class a short presentation (5-10 min each) on the assigned reading(s). You should coordinate with your discussion partner ahead of class to discuss how to divide the presentations and questions.

A. Short Presentation that should include:

- brief background on the author(s) (their credentials/training/ discipline)
- summary on the text's key arguments
- your own brief reflections on it

B. Pose at least 4 or 5 questions to prompt discussion of the readings.

- Avoid yes or no questions (unless accompanied by "how" or "why")
- Try to connect the reading to other things we've learned/ read in class
- Ask questions that require evidence from readings

C. Mark at least 2 specific passages to examine together in class: anything that struck you as significant, confusing, troubling, compelling etc.

D. Take the leadership role in asking questions and facilitating the discussion among your classmates, encourage everyone to participate.

*Optional:* You may choose to share a media source or handout relevant to the discussion topic(s) (using the share screen function on Zoom)

**Student Resources:**