- Spring 2017 -

**ISLAM IN THE AMERICAS**

**REL 4393/LAS 4935**

MWF 3 (9:35am-10:25am) || FLI 0101

3 semester hours = 3 hours in class & 3 hours outside work expected per week

Instructor: Prof. Ken Chitwood  
Office: 017 Anderson Hall  
Office Hours: 11:00am-12:00pm MWF and by appointment.  
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**Objectives:**

1. To learn how to reflect critically on how you, as a student of religion, arrive at your beliefs, values, and practices and bring to consciousness the degree that these might shape how you report on the various cultures and subcultures which you study.
2. To appreciate the study of global Islam in its scope and variety.
3. To give you an opportunity to voice why this is an important topic in the current cultural, social, and political climate.
4. To familiarize you with the multiple narratives, representations, and manifestations of Islam across the American hemisphere — both in history and the contemporary scene.
5. To familiarize you with the resources available to study this topic.
6. To provide you with insight concerning, and opportunities to explore, the historical and contemporary communities of Muslims from Cape Columbia, Canada to Tierra del Fuego, Argentina and many places in between.
7. To foster your ability to think deeply about, and be critical of, the production and reception of scholarship and popular representations of Muslim communities in the Americas.

**Course Description:**

Why does Islam matter in the Americas? When did it arrive here? What values, practices, traditions, & tensions exist within its histories & social dynamics in the West? How can we study Muslim communities in this hemisphere.

This course will place Latin America, the Caribbean, & North America within a broader Islamic framework & locate Muslims of various backgrounds & experiences within the hemisphere from the 1500s to today, from Cape Columbia, Canada to Catamarca, Argentina, & many periods & places in between.
The semester will be divided into four main parts: 1) studying global Islam; 2) theoretical themes in the study of religion in the Americas; 3) the history of Islam in the Americas; and 4) country/region specific cartographies of contemporary American Muslim populations.

In attempting to locate, and explore, Islam in the Americas students will first have to apprehend a bit of what it is to study "global Islam." In this introductory part of the course we will spend some time discussing what "Islam" is, what its main texts, traditions, and shared vocabulary are, and how studying Islam globally often means studying Muslim communities locally, but being sure to set them within macro-contexts at the regional, hemispheric, or global levels as well.

Studying Islam in the Americas will also require a theoretical foundation. This second part of our course will cover the heritage and contact of multiple cultures in the Americas — both across the hemisphere and the Atlantic ocean. In order to do so, we will take a look at the heritage of Europe (specifically al-Andalus), North and West Africa, and other transnational ties via politics, economics, ideologies, technology, and more.

With these foundational aspects in place we will then dive into the study of the history of Islam in the Americas, the third section of course. Looking back to pre-colonial contact with Europe, we will navigate the "deeper roots" of Islam in the Americas that are largely ignored in historical overviews before delving into the "forbidden" and forced passages of Muslims across the Atlantic as conquistadors, slaves, and monsters in the Western imagination. Once here in the hemisphere we will see how Islam took part in, shaped, and was molded by its American context even as Muslims adapted to, resisted, and surrendered to the broader Euro-American worldview and its attendant lifeways.

In the final part of the course we will take a closer look at specific countries and regions ranging from North America to Latin America and the Caribbean. Specifically we will consider constituencies in Brazil, Mexico, Suriname, Trinidad, Cuba, Haiti, Puerto Rico, the U.S., and Canada.

Over the course of the semester there will be ample opportunity for students to read and respond, discuss and deliberate the topics via various assignments. However, a semester capstone project, which will be worked on, edited, and completed throughout the course, will be presented via a final paper and presentation. These projects can take up any number of thematic, chronological, demographic, or geographic topics.

It is my hope that this course will help place Latin America, the Caribbean, and North America within a broader Islamic framework and locate Muslims of various genealogies within the hemisphere over the longue durée. Furthermore, this course will aim to focus on local values, practices, traditions, and tensions placing these within larger questions about what kinds of histories, social dynamics, and meaning production make Islam significant, or how its
significance is denied, in a part of the world that hasn’t recognized its history here or its contemporary configurations or impact.

**Required Texts:**


Narbona, Maria del Mar Logroño, Paulo G. Pinto, John T. Karam, eds. *Crescent Over Another Horizon: Islam in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Latino USA*, University of Texas Press, 2015.


**Recommended Texts:**


**Bibliography of Other Readings/Sources:**


———. “Globalizing the Study of American Islam: Approaches to the field through the lens of globalization theory,” *University of Waikato Islamic Studies Review*, (Vol 2, no. 2 — Fall 2016).


**Assignments (300 points total):**

1. *Semester Capstone Project* (Process and Final Product) (150 pts)
   - Question/thesis project idea (15) — January 20
   - Primary document analysis and/or interview (15) — February 3
   - Secondary lit. review (20) — February 17
   - Outline (20) — March 3
   - Final Finished Paper (80) — April 24

2. *Final Presentations* (25 pts) — TBD

3. *Five group quizzes* (50 pts, 10 pts each) — see Course Calendar

4. *Op-ed/analysis piece, V-log, or social media project* (25 pts) — March 31

5. *Participation grade* earned with class discussions & attendance cards (daily 3x5 cards with): 1) what did you learn? 2) what question do you still have? (50 pts) —
Grading Scale:

- A 94-100
- A - 90-93
- B+ 86-89
- B 80-85
- C+ 76-79
- C 70-75
- D+ 66-69
- D 60-65
- E Below 60

Grades are consistent with UF policy as stated here: https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx

Late or Make-Up Assignments:

You may turn in assignments early or receive an extension on an exam or essay assignment only in extraordinary circumstances, with written approval, and with prior consent from the instructor. If an extension is not granted, the assignment will be marked down 1/2 grade (e.g., from B+ to B) for each day late.

Attendance and Participation:

Class attendance and active participation is required and a significant portion of your grade. Poor attendance will harm your course grade. Students should arrive on time and prepared to discuss the day’s readings.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up assignments and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the online catalog at: https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx

Honor Code:

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (http://www.dso.ufl.edu/secr/process/student-conduct-honorcode/) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.
**Common Courtesy:**

Cell phones, carrier pigeons, and other communication devices should be turned off during class. Students who receive or make calls during class will be asked to leave. You may take notes on a laptop computer or on a slate-board, although the instructor reserves the right to ask you to turn off the computer or wipe the slate clean if circumstances warrant. The instructor also reserves the right to ask any student engaging in disruptive behavior (e.g., whispering, reading a newspaper) to leave the class.

**Conferences:**

Students are encouraged to meet with the instructor during office hours or by appointment.

**Accommodation for Disabilities:**

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

**Counseling Resources:**

Resources available on-campus for students include the following:

1. University Counseling Center, 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575, personal and career counseling;
2. Student Mental Health, Student Health Care Center, 392-1171, personal counseling;
3. Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161, sexual counseling;
4. Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601, career development assistance and counseling.

**Software Use:**

All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.
Online Course Evaluation:

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at https://evaluations.ufl.edu. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at https://evaluations.ufl.edu.

COURSE CALENDAR:

**Part One: Introduction to the Study of Global Islam**

**WEEK 1:**

Wednesday 1/4 — Intro and Course Overview

Friday 1/6 — What is Islam? Text/tradition, universals, and contradictions


**WEEK 2:**

Monday 1/ 9 — Islam 101: Texts, traditions, shared vocabulary

   Reading(s): Sonn, Foreword, Preface, & Ch. 1.

Wednesday 1/11 — Global Islam: scope & glocal tensions

   Reading(s): Gilsenan, Preface & An Anthropologist’s Introduction

Friday 1/13 — Quiz 1 & Discussion
**Part Two: Studying Islam in the Americas (Theoretical Themes)**

**WEEK 3:**

Monday 1/16 — A Hemispheric Approach to Religion in the Americas


Recommended: Bender, “Introduction.”

Wednesday 1/18 — A Hemispheric Approach to Religion in the Americas


Friday 1/20 — Discussion: Thesis Project Ideas (THESIS/PROJECT IDEA DUE)

**WEEK 4:**

Monday 1/23 — An Americas Approach to Islam in the Americas

Reading(s): Curtis, “Introduction to the Volume;” Khan, “Introduction: A Storied Hemisphere”

Wednesday 1/25 — Entrees into the Field

Reading(s): Chitwood, “Exploring Islam in the Americas from Demographic and Ethnographic Perspectives;” Karam, del Mar Logroño Narbona, & Pinto, “Introduction: Latino America in the Umma/the Umma in Latino America.”

Friday 1/27 — No Class, Quiz 2 (Online)

**Part Three: History of Islam in the Americas**

**WEEK 5:**

Monday 1/30 — Deeper Roots?

Reading(s): Ahmad, “Pre-Columbian Presence of Africans and Muslims,” (922-926); Hussain, “Islam in America: A Short History.”
Wednesday 2/1 — Muslims, Spain, & the Americas

Reading(s): Curtis, Ch. 1 pp. 11-15 & 39-46; Rose Arjana, “Muslim Monsters in the Americas,” pp. 132-141; Dean, Ch. 1 “Corpus Christi Triumphant,” pp. 7-14; Cook, Ch. 1 “De los Prohibidos’ Muslims and Moriscos in Colonial Spanish America.”

Friday 2/3 — Discussion: Primary Document Analysis (PRIMARY DOC ANALYSIS DUE)

WEEK 6:

Monday 2/6 — Muslims, Africa, & the Americas

Reading(s): Gomez, Ch. 1.

Wednesday 2/8 — Muslims, Africa, & the Americas

Reading(s): Diouf, Ch. 1. Karam, Ch. 2 “African Rebellion and Refuge on the Edge of Empire.”

Friday 2/10 — Quiz 3 & Discussion

Part Four: Specific Regions, Countries, & Themes

WEEK 7:

Monday 2/13 — Latin America: Brazil

Reading(s): Hatch, “Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia by João José Reis (1993),” available at:
(http://notevenpast.org/slave-rebellion-brazil-muslim-uprising-1835-bahia-1993/); Maria de Castro, Introduction; Pinto, Ch. 5 “Conversion, Revivalism, and Tradition: The religious Dynamics of Muslim Communities in Brazil;” Ali, Ch. 9 “Bahamian and Brazilian Muslims: Struggle for Identity and Belonging.”

Recommended: Gomez, Ch. 3 “Brazilian Sambas.”
Wednesday 2/15 — Latin America: Mexico


Friday 2/17 — Latin America: Mexico (SECONDARY DOC REVIEW DUE)

Reading(s): de Maria y Campos, Ch. 6 “Guests of Islam: Conversion and the Institutionalization of Islam in Mexico;” Cañas Cuevas, Ch. 8 “The Politics of Conversion to Islam in Southern Mexico.”

WEEK 8:

Monday 2/20 — Latin America: Suriname

Reading(s): Hoeffte, Ch. 4 “Locating Mecca: Religious and Political Discord in the Javanese Community in Pre-Independence Suriname;” Bal & Sinha-Kerkhoff, Ch. 3 “Ethnic and Religious Identification among Muslim East Indians in Suriname (1898-1954).”

Wednesday 2/22 — Caribbean: Trinidad & Tobago

Reading(s): Khan, Chs. 10-11

Friday 2/24 — Caribbean: Trinidad & Tobago

Reading(s): Khan, Chs. 12-13; Kassim, Ch. 9 “Forming Islamic Religious Identity Among Trinidadians in the Age of Social Networks.”

WEEK 9:

Monday 2/27 — Caribbean: Cuba

Reading(s): Delmonte, Ch. 7 “Cubans Searching for a New Faith in a New Context;” Chitwood, “Our Man in Havana.”
Wednesday 3/1 — The French Caribbean: Haiti & Guadaloupe


Friday 3/3 — No Class (OUTLINES DUE)

**SPRING BREAK**

WEEK 10:

Monday 3/13 — Puerto Rican Muslims


Wednesday 3/15 — Puerto Rican Muslims

Reading(s): Ramadan-Santiago, Ch. 6 “Insha’Allah/Ojalá, Yes Yes Y’all;” Chitwood, “Puerto Rican Muslims ‘Like’ One Another;” Chitwood, “‘Like a river through rock’: the dynamics of Puerto Rican Muslim migration to Central Florida;” Chitwood, “Youth, Islam, and the Construction of Religious Identities: A Puerto Rican Case Study.”

Friday 3/17 — Quiz 4 & Discussion

WEEK 11:

Monday 3/20 — North America: An Introduction

Reading(s): Hammer & Safí, Introduction, Ch. 1; Curtis, Ch. 2 pp. 47-58.


Reading(s): Hammer & Safí, Chs. 3-6.

Reading(s): Deutsch, Ch. 5 “Fear of a Brown Planet;” Gomez, Ch. 6 “Breaking Away.”

WEEK 12:


Reading(s): Gomez, Ch. 7 “The Nation;” Curtis, Ch. 3 pp. 93-100.


Reading(s): Curtis, Ch. 5 pp. 187-198; Curtis, Ch. 7 pp. 251-260; Hammer & Safi, Chs. 7, 13, 15.


Friday 3/31 — Discussion: Op-eds and Analyses (OP-ED/ANALYSIS PIECE DUE)

WEEK 13:

Monday 4/3 — North America: Canada

Reading(s): Hussain, “Muslims in Canada: Opportunities and Challenges.”

Wednesday 4/5 — North America: Latina/o Muslims

Reading(s): Chitwood, “Islam en Español: The narratives, demographics, & reversion pathways of Latina/o Muslims in the U.S.;” Curtis, Ch. 7 pp. 241-250; Martínez-Vásquez, Introduction & Ch. 1.

Friday 4/7 — Quiz 5 & Discussion

WEEK 14:

Monday 4/10 — Presentations & Discussion

Wednesday 4/12 — Presentations & Discussion

Friday 4/14 — Presentations & Discussion
WEEK 15:

Monday 4/17 — Presentations & Discussion

Wednesday 4/19 — Presentations & Discussion

**FINAL FINISHED PAPER DUE by FINAL PERIOD: Monday, April 24, 2017**