

Humanities Seminar
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Great Thinkers of the Muslim World, 600-1300

Over the past 1400 years, numerous Muslims have contributed to the rich intellectual traditions of Islam. These thinkers explored theology, philosophy, mysticism, and science. Yet few of them today are known by educated Americans. The goal of this seminar is to introduce a range of sophisticated Muslim thinkers from the first seven centuries of Islam in the region known today as the Middle East and North Africa. Seminar participants will have the chance to read selections in translation of these thinkers' writings, along with selected secondary works, in order to facilitate an appreciation for the diversity and quality of classical Islamic thought.

This is a 10-week seminar.

Required Books:

Al-Khalili, Jim. *The House of Wisdom: How Arabic Science Saved Ancient Knowledge and Gave us the Renaissance*. New York: Penguin, 2010.

Saeed, Abdullah. *Islamic Thought: An Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

September 27: Islamic Thought—An overview

Saeed, *Islamic Thought*, Chapters 1, 2, 5.

Al-Khalili, *The House of Wisdom*, Chapter 3.

October 4: Imam 'Ali, as recounted by al-Sharif al-Radi

Saeed, *Islamic Thought*, Ch. 4

Al-Sharif al-Radi, *Nahj al-Balaghah* trans. Syed Ali Raza (Tehran), pp. 74-77; 165-185 (Sermons 17, 18, 82-89).

Terri DeYoung, "al-Sharif al-Radi," *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography* (2011), vol. 1, pp. 332-343.

October 11: Muhammad b. Isma'il al-Bukhari and Muhyi al-Din al-Nawawi: Masters of the Prophet Muhammad's teachings (*hadith*)

Saeed, *Islamic Thought*, Ch.3

Jonathan Brown, "Bukhari, Muhammad ibn Isma'il," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World* (2009)

Ahmed El Shamsy, "Nawawi, Muhyi al-Din," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World* (2022)

al-Nawawi's Forty Hadith: <https://sunnah.com/nawawi40>

October 18: al-Tabari and al-Zamakhshari: Qur'anic Exegesis

Kifayat Ullah, *Al-Kashshaf: al-Zamakhshari's Mu'tazilite Exegesis of the Qur'an* (2017), pp. 11-32.
Al-Tabari, *Selections from the Comprehensive Exposition of the Interpretation of the Verses of the Qur'an*, translated Scott Lucas (2017), vol. 1, pp. xi-xxii; 164-179 (Throne Verse).
Feras Hamza and Sajjad Rizvi, *An Anthology of Qur'anic Commentaries, Volume 1: On the Nature of the Divine* (2008), pp. 170-173. ("al-Zamakhshari on the Throne Verse")

October 25: Ibn Sina (Avicenna) & Miskawayh: Philosophy and ethics

Saeed, *Islamic Thought*, Ch.8
L.E. Goodman, *Avicenna* (1992), pp. 1-44 (skim pp. 1-10)
A.J. Arberry, *Avicenna on Theology*, pp. 9-24 (Ibn Sina's autobiography & biography)
Oliver Leaman, "Miskawayh, Ahmad ibn Muhammad," *The Biographical Encyclopedia of Islamic Philosophy* (2010)
Miskawayh, *Refinement of Character*, translated Constantine Zurayk, pp. 155-196 (Sixth Discourse: The Health of the Soul)
Scott Lucas, "The Value of Classical Islamic Thought for Muslims Today," *American Journal of Islam and Society* (2020), pp. 149-173 (Miskawayh at pp. 151-155)

November 1: Ibn Hazm: An Iconoclastic Scholar from Muslim Spain

Ibn Hazm, *The Ring of the Dove*, translated A.J. Arberry (1953) [Excerpts]
Muharrem Kilic, "Ibn Hazm, Abu Muhammad," *The Biographical Encyclopedia of Islamic Philosophy* (2010)
Christian Lange, "Ibn Hazm on Sins and Salvation," in *Ibn Hazm of Cordoba* (2013)
Camilla Adang, *Muslim Writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible* (1996), pp. 237-248.
Scott Lucas, "The Value of Classical Islamic Thought for Muslims Today," *American Journal of Islam and Society* (2020), pp. 149-173. (Ibn Hazm at pp. 161-165)

November 8: al-Ghazali: Reviver of the religious sciences

R.J. McCarthy, *Al-Ghazali: Deliverance from Error* (Fons Vitae edition), pp. 53-98 (pp. 99-123 notes on the translation)
Mustansir Mir, "Ghazali, Abu Hamid," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Science, and Technology in Islam* (2014).

November 15: Rumi: Poet of the Heart

Matthew Hotham, "Rumi, Jalal al-Din," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Science, and Technology in Islam* (2014)
Annemarie Schimmel, *Rumi's World*, pp. 73-89 (NOTE: Maulana = Rumi)
Franklin Lewis, *Rumi: Past and Present, East and West* (2007) [Excerpts]
Jalal al-Din Rumi, *The Masnavi*, translated Jawid Mojaddedi (2004), vol. 1, pp. 66-87.

November 22: NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Eve)

November 29: Ibn al-Haytham, al-Biruni, and Nasir al-Din al-Tusi: Natural scientists

Jim Al-Khalili, *The House of Wisdom*, Chapters 11, 12, 14

Nader El-Bizri, "Ibn al-Haytham," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Science, and Technology in Islam* (2014)

Parviz Morewedge, "Biruni, al-," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Science, and Technology in Islam* (2014)

Parviz Morewedge, "Tusi, Nasir al-Din," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Science, and Technology in Islam* (2014)

December 6: Ibn Rushd & Ibn 'Arabi: Philosophy and mysticism from Muslim Spain

Ibn Rushd, *The Decisive Treatise, Concerning what the Connection is Between Philosophy and Religion*, translated George Hourani, pp. 163-186.

William Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds* (1994), pp. 15-29

Oliver Leaman, "Ibn Rushd, Abu al-Walid," *The Biographical Encyclopedia of Islamic Philosophy* (2010)

Stephen Hirtenstein, "Ibn 'Arabi, Muhyiddin," *The Biographical Encyclopedia of Islamic Philosophy* (2010)