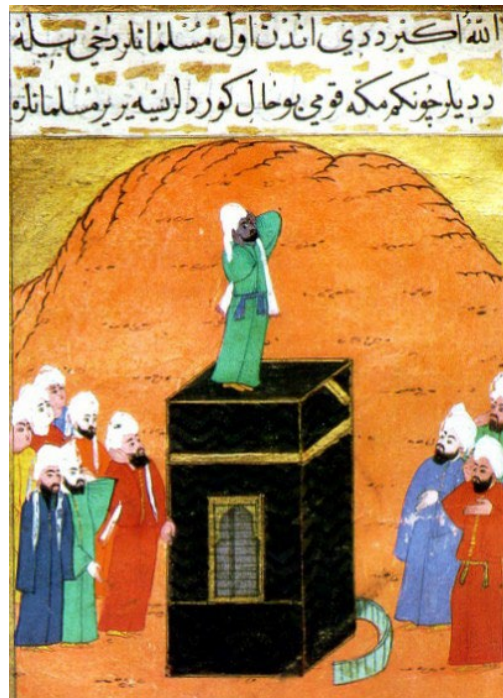


University of Wisconsin, Madison
Department of History
Professor: Khaled Esseissah
esseissah@wisc.edu
Office Hours: Mondays, 9:00-11:00 am
Course Time: Tu/Th 9:30AM - 10:45AM
Class Location: Humanities 1217
Course Credit: 3 credits
Course Designation: This is an undergraduate level course



History 229: Transnational Islam: African Diaspora

Course Description

Islam has long been one of the religions professed by African-descended Muslims globally. Currently, Islam is one of the fastest-growing religions among African Americans in the United States, while it is also becoming a majority religion in many regions of contemporary Africa. How did this happen and how have Africans and diasporic Africans influenced Islam in the process of adopting it? Using regional and thematic approaches, this course explores Black presence within Islam. It examines how Black Muslims in the African Diaspora (defined more broadly) have lived and expressed Islam in historical and contemporary contexts. Through in-class readings and discussions of primary and secondary sources, this course will provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to better understand the role Africa and Black people have played in the larger story of Islam. In addition to developing a more nuanced understanding of Islam in the African Diaspora, this course will explore the intertwined histories of religion, slave trades, race, ethnicity, migration, colonialism, and imperialism in various contexts.

Required Texts

Edward E. Curtis IV, *The Call of Bilal: Islam in the African Diaspora* [e-copy is available through UW-Madison library).

All other course readings are available on the Canvas website.

Course Requirements

| | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|-----|
| In-Class Assignments (6) | Throughout Term | 10% |
| Participation | Throughout Term | 20% |
| Transnational Islam Event | December 5 | 10% |
| First Reading Response | September 28 | 10% |
| Second Reading Response | November 16 | 10% |
| Mid-Term Exam | October 19 | 20% |
| Final Exam | December 14 | 20% |

In-Class Assignments (10%): Students will complete 5 in-class assignments based on material from the readings due in class on any given day. These will be **open-book**, will take 15 minutes to complete, and will **not** be announced in advance. The grades of the 5 best assignments will be taken. Collectively, they will total **10%** of your final grade. In case of missed In-Class Assignments: we will accept **documentation** for **family emergencies, illness, and religious holidays as per university policy**

Participation (20%):

Participation means more than attending class. You can only participate fully if you attend, if you have completed the readings, and if you are ready to engage with your fellow students.

I will grade your participation on the basis of the contribution you make to the overall class discussion. I will note your efforts to engage critically not only the assigned materials but also the questions and observations of others in the class. You are expected to contribute to—but not dominate—class discussions, so please be sure that everyone has the opportunity to share thoughts, opinions, and questions.

An “A” grade for participation is earned by a student who enthusiastically attends all classes, gives evidence of having completed the assigned readings, and consistently engages the class in thoughtful and sophisticated critical analysis of the assigned readings, thus enhancing the level and depth of class discussions.

A “B” grade for participation is earned by a student who missed a class, whose contributions to class are inconsistent in terms of critical analysis and engagement of issues raised during the class.

Grades below “B” (i.e., “C”, “D”, “F”) for participation are given to students who remain passive and unwilling to contribute to class discussions, have clearly not read the assigned materials, and who fail to attend class regularly.

Transnational Islam History/Studies Event (10%)

Students are required to attend at least one Africa-related event of their choice during the semester. This can be a seminar, cultural event, a film screening, a music concert, an art exhibit on campus or in Madison or a related talk organized through African American Studies, African Studies Program, Middle

Eastern Studies Program, History Department on campus or elsewhere. Before attending the event, students should seek approval from the instructor to ensure the event fulfills the necessary requirement. After attending or participating in the event, **students will then submit a short response paper (a well-written single-spaced page) contextualizing the event and writing any questions or reflections elicited during the experience. (Due on December 5 by 11:00pm on Canvas)**

Two Reading Responses (20%):

- **Due on September 28 by 11:00pm on Canvas**

Reading Response 1 is due today by 11:00pm: readings chosen from class sessions from Sep. 10 and Sep. 26

- **Due on November 16 by 11:00pm on Canvas**

Reading response 2 is due today by 11:00pm: readings chosen from class sessions from Oct. 1 and Nov. 14.

In your reading responses, you should not summarize the reading. Instead, I am asking you to do three things:

- Select *three readings (or documentary)* from at three sessions. You can choose only one short story or essay of less than 10 pages.
- Select from each reading *two direct citations* (of c. 50 consecutive words) that go to the heart of the arguments or insights of the author *and* are important to you (whether you find them enlightening or are critical of them). In the case of a film, you can analyze two direct citations or two scenes.
- Explain in your own words what the direct citation says or means in the context of the reading (c. 250 words);
- Briefly comment/reflect on why you chose this particular citation (c. 250 words).
- You must also give a full bibliographical reference (and a page number), which does not have to be part of the word-count.

I would expect that this means that, for each of the three readings, you would have a response of c. 500 words; since the RR consists of your response to three readings, this would yield a word count of c. 1500 words, *but this is just a general guideline and RRs can be somewhat shorter or longer without any penalty.*

While you are always encouraged to ask questions, please do so in class and do not make questions the main focus of your reading response. You will get credit for each of the assigned reading responses (10% of the grade for each, see below).

Two Take-Home Exams (40%)

Each exam will account for **20%** of the student's grade, for a total of **40%** of the semester grade. Exams will test your ability to identify terms, discuss historical developments, and interpret sources. The exams will ask students to identify terms and to write essays which synthesize data and perspectives from a variety of materials (readings, films, lectures, discussions).

Mid-term exam: (20%): Open-book, take-home exam essay (2100 words) You will answer 3 essay questions about selected readings of the syllabus **from the beginning of the semester up to 17**

October. Detailed assignment will be discussed in class. Assignment to be posted one week before the due date. Expectations and grading scales will be discussed in class before exam (15 % of the course grade). **Please submit your paper on Canvas by on October 19 by 11:00pm.**

Final Exam (20%): Open-book, **take-home exam essay (2100 words)** You will answer 3 essay questions about selected readings of the syllabus **from October 22 up to this point.** Detailed assignment will be discussed in class. Assignment to be posted one week before the due date. Expectations and grading scales will be discussed in class before exam (**15 % of the course grade**). **Please submit your paper on Canvas by on Tuesday, December 14th by 11:00pm.**

More details to follow on each assignment!

General Information and Classroom Conduct

Technology in the Classroom:

Laptops are distracting to those around you and should not be used in class. All other electronic devices, such as cell phones, should be turned off during class to allow your full concentration- and that of those around you. If you need specific accommodations regarding technology in the classroom, please get in touch ASAP.

Writing Resources:

The History Lab is a resource center where experts PhD students will assist you with your history papers. No matter your stage in the writing process — choosing a topic, conducting research, composing a thesis, outlining your argument, revising your drafts — the History Lab can help you sharpen your skills and become a more successful writer. Go to: <https://history.wisc.edu/undergraduate-program/the-history-lab/>

Academic Integrity: I expect you to know and abide by the university's policies on academic integrity. This course includes instruction on the basic principles of academic integrity. However, as in every course, you are responsible for potential violations throughout your enrollment. I follow the university's policies for suspected violations.

For more information, see: <https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/>
http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html

Disability: The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA. (See: McBurney Disability Resource Center)

Extension Policy: I will normally accommodate lateness due to illness, serious family events, or other exceptional circumstances. *I will not accept a late paper unless you have asked prior permission.* For late work or make-up work, you have to produce a documentation of your excuse (e.g., doctor's note) prior to missing the assignment. *An extension for a final assignment requires requesting an incomplete grade.*

Special Learning needs: If you have special learning needs, please let me know as soon as you possibly can, so that I can make the necessary arrangements.

Some Nuts and Bolts

Many of these are from <https://teachingcenter.wustl.edu/resources/inclusive-teaching-learning/establishing-ground-rules/>

Do not be late to class. Cell phones and other electronic devices should be silenced and put away before class begins. If you need specific accommodations regarding technology in the classroom, please get in touch ASAP.

- Please learn each other's names.
- Respect the speaker, even when you do not agree with or respect the point the speaker is making.
- Listen carefully; do not interrupt—even when you are excited to respond.
- Try not to generalize about groups (even groups with which you identify) and do not ask another person to speak as a representative of a group.
- Keep an open mind—enter the classroom dialogue with the expectation of learning something new.
- Look forward to learning about—and being challenged by—ideas, questions, and points of view that are different than your own.
- Do not “monopolize” the conversation; give others a chance to contribute to the discussion.
- Support an atmosphere of learning and growth. Approach discussion as a means to “think out loud.” Allow others (as well as yourself) to revise and clarify ideas and positions in response to new information and insights.
- Bring out ideas, perspectives, or solutions that you think are not yet represented or haven't yet been adequately discussed.
- Support your arguments with evidence. Be honest when you are not sure if you have enough evidence to make a strong argument or when your thoughts about a topic are still speculative or exploratory.

- Try not to make assumptions; ask questions to learn more about other perspectives, especially those that are different from your own.
- All writing for this course should be typed, printed out, and stapled before submission. In addition, please make sure papers are formatted within the following guidelines: 11-12 point font, Times New Roman, double-spaced, with 1 inch margins, and with page numbers inserted on the bottom of the page. In addition, make sure your name is clearly visible on the first page. I will deduct points if you do not follow these basic formatting guidelines. Unless otherwise specified, I will not accept papers submitted by email or via Canvas. Papers submitted late will receive a 1/3 grade reduction for each day they are late.
- **Take notes by hand in class. Read why here:**
<http://contemplatingcognition.wordpress.com/2014/06/05/why-you-should-never-take-notes-on-a-laptop/>. Cell phones and other electronic devices should be silenced and put away before class begins. If you need specific accommodations regarding technology in the classroom, please get in touch ASAP.
- - Talk with me about patterns in the discussion that are troubling or that may be impeding full engagement by you or others.
- I will use Canvas to send email updates to the class. Please ensure that your settings allow you to receive emails from me as they come in so that you don't miss vital information.

Communication with Professor

Please feel free to email me with your questions, concerns, and/or to schedule a time to meet in person. When sending emails please remember to follow the guidelines outlined below:

- *Check the syllabus.* Before sending your email or message, be sure that your question has not already been addressed in the syllabus or announcements.
- *Be patient.* If you have a concern and send me a message, you can expect a response within 2 business days maximum. Please allow 2 business days for assessment submission feedback.
- *Specify subject.* Subject line should include the topic of the message and class title.
- *Greet & Close.* E-mails should begin with a formal greeting and end with you signing your name in all messages/emails. So, if you send an email to me, please use proper format, including a salutation, complete sentences, a closing, and your name. Here's an example:

•
Dear Professor Esseissah,

I have the plague, and I will not be able to attend class tomorrow. I will make sure to keep up with the reading and assignments.

Thank you,
Serious Student

- *Check writing.* Proofread (i.e. grammar and spelling) your message before sending.

Syllabus revision: While it is unlikely, this syllabus is subject to revision at any time by the instructor. I will announce changes during class meetings as well as over email.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Sep. 5: Course introduction, syllabus, & expectations

Read:

Edward E. Curtis IV, *The Call of Bilal: Islam in the African Diaspora* [Introduction]

Please complete day one questionnaire before class time!

Sep. 10: Studying Islam & African Diaspora: The Basics

Ziauddin Sardar, *What Do Muslims Believe? The Roots and Realities of Modern Islam* (New York: Walker & Company, 2007), 41-79.

Sep. 12: Defining Terms and Concepts: Transnational Islam? African Diaspora?

Edward A. Alpers "*Defining the African diaspora.*"

Colin A. Palmer, "*Defining and studying the modern African diaspora.*" *The Journal of Negro History* 85, no. 1-2 (2000): 27-32.

Bowen, John R. "*Beyond migration: Islam as a transnational public space.*" *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 30, no. 5 (2004): 879-894.

Sep. 17: Black Prophets and Luminaries in the Quran

Mustafa Briggs, *Beyond Bilal: Black History in Islam*, 17-31.

Imam Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti, *The Spirits of Black Folk: Sages Through the Ages*, translated by Adeyinka Mendes, ix-48; 77-191.

Sep. 19: No Class. Professor Esseissah will be attending a conference at University of Illinois

Sep. 24: The spread of Muslims in Africa

Selections from J.F.P. Hopkins and Nehemia Levtzion, eds, *Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History* (1982, 2000).

At home viewing of Islam in Africa - History of Africa with Zeinab Badawi [Episode 9] (44.49 minutes):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tcF-e6RhLzU>Links to an external site.



“In this episode Zeinab Badawi travels to several countries and looks at the early spread of Islam in Africa and how many Africans practice to this day a mystic, Sufi form of the religion. She shows how not only Islam but Arab culture came to influence a large part of the continent, particularly in the north. And she charts the rise of the powerful Islamic dynasties of North Africa, that built magnificent monuments, mosques and empires, including a part of southern Europe and who helped determine the path of this part of the continent.”

Sep. 26: Early Black Muslims in North Africa and the Middle East

Edward E. Curtis IV, *The Call of Bilal: Islam in the African Diaspora*, 1-52 [e-copy is available through UW-Madison library].

Loimeier, Chapter 2, *Muslim Societies in Africa* (35 – 53).

Peter von Sivers, Chapter 1 “Egypt and North Africa” in Levtzion and Pouwels, *The History of Islam in Africa* (21-36)

Oct. 3: Arabic Literacy, Manuscript Culture, and Education in Muslim Africa

Diagne, Souleymane Bachir, “Toward an Intellectual History of West Africa: The Meaning of Timbuktu,” in Shamil Jeppie & S. B. Diagne, eds, *The Meanings of Timbuktu*, Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council, 2008, pp. 19-27.

The Lost Libraries of Timbuktu (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BzBCI9kcdqc>), BBC, 2009.

Oct. 3: Slavery and Abolition in Muslim Africa

R. T. Ware, “Slavery in Islamic Africa, 1400–1800,” in *The Cambridge World History of Slavery*, edited by David Eltis and Stanley L. Engerman (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011), v. 3, 47-80.

R. T. Ware, “Slavery in Islamic Africa, 1776–1905,” in *The Cambridge World History of Slavery*, edited by David Eltis, Stanley L. Engerman, and Seymour Drescher, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2017), v. 4, 344-372.

Oct. 8: Racial Discourse in Muslim Africa.

Bruce Hall, “The Question of ‘Race’ in the Pre-colonial Southern Sahara.”

Jonathon Glassman, "Toward a comparative history of racial thought in Africa: historicism, barbarism, autochthony," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 63,1 (2021): 72-98.

Oct. 10: African Muslims in the Indian Ocean World

Edward E. Curtis IV, *The Call of Bilal: Islam in the African Diaspora*, 85-110.

Ali, Omar Hamid, *Malik Ambar: Power and Slavery Across the Indian Ocean* [selected readings]

Oct. 15: A Black enslaved Muslim explorer of the Americas

Richard A. Gordon, "Following Estevanico: The Influential Presence of an African Slave in Sixteenth-century New World Historiography." 15, no. 2 (2006): 183-206.

Lalami, Laila. *The Moor's account*. Simon and Schuster, 2015 [selected readings]

Oct. 17: The Transatlantic Slave Trade and Islam in North America

Sylviane A. Diouf, *Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas*, 1-71.

The Autobiography of Omar Ibn Said (pdf)

The Biography of Mahommah Gardo Baquaqua: His Passage from Slavery to Freedom in Africa and America.

Oct. 22: African Muslims in the Caribbean

Afroz, Sultana, "The Unsung Slaves: Islam in Plantation Jamaica," *Caribbean quarterly* 41, no. 3-4 (1995): 30-44.

Aliyah Khan's *Far from Mecca: Globalizing the Muslim Caribbean* [selected readings]

Oct. 24: African Muslims in Latin America

Domingues da Silva, Daniel B., David Eltis, Nafees Khan, Philip Misevich, and Olatunji Ojo, "The transatlantic Muslim diaspora to Latin America in the nineteenth century," *Colonial Latin American Review* 26, no. 4 (2017): 528-545.

Edward E. Curtis IV, *The Call of Bilal: Islam in the African Diaspora*, 111-133

Oct. 29: Descended African Muslims in Modern Middle East

Matthew S. Hopper, *Slaves of One Master: Globalization and Slavery in Arabia in the Age of Empire* [Introduction]

Nathaniel Mathews, *Zanzibar Was a Country: Exile and Citizenship between East Africa and the Gulf* [Introduction]

Cathlene Dollar, "An 'African' Tarika in Anatolia" Notes on the Tijaniyya in Early Republican Turkey", *Annual Review of Islam in Africa*, 11 (2012), pp. 30-34

Nov. 5: Black Muslims' Contribution to Europe

Curtis IV, *The Call of Bilal*, 53-84.

Olivette Otele, *African Europeans: An Untold History* [Introduction]

Nov. 7: Ajami traditions in Africa and African Diaspora

The Arabic script in Africa: studies in the use of a writing system, 1-41 & 159-172.

Fallou Ngom, *Muslims beyond the Arab world: The odyssey of ajami and the Muridiyya* [Introduction]

November 12: Female Scholarship in the African Islamic Traditions: Nana Asma'u

Selections Jean Boyd, *The Caliph's Sister: Nana Asma'u 1793-1865, Teacher, Poet, and Islamic Scholar.*

At home of viewing of interview with Ella Collins (Malcolm X's sister)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PeR4snEsCgk>Links to an external site.



Nov. 14: African American Muslims in Contemporary United States

Gomez, Black Crescent, Chs. 6-8, Epilogue.

The Autobiography of Malcolm X (New York: Ballantine Books, 1965), Chs. 1, 13-14, 17-19.

At home viewing the documentary Muhammad Ali: In Their Own Words

https://fod-infobase-com.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/p_ViewVideo.aspx?xtid=114664

Nov. 19: African Muslim migrants in Contemporary Europe and United States

Ousmane Oumar Kane, *The Homeland is the Arena: Religion, Transnationalism, and Integration of Senegalese Immigrants in America* [Selected readings]

Mayke Kaag, "Transnational Elite Formation: The Senegalese Murid Community in Italy", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 39/9 (2013), pp. 1425-1439

Making Refuge: Somali Bantu Refugees and Lewiston, Maine [selected readings]

Nov. 21: Black Muslims & Immigrant Muslims in Contemporary United States

Jamillah Karim's *American Muslim Women: Negotiating Race, Class and Gender Within the Ummah* [Introduction]

Nov. 26: A Native *dīn* and the Limits of Solidarity

Su'ad Abdul Khabeer, *Muslim Cool: Race, Religion, and Hip Hop in the United States* (NYU Press, 2016). 27-76.

Black star, crescent moon: The Muslim international and black freedom beyond America, 45-88

Thanksgiving Break. No Classes. Nov. 28- Dec. 1

Dec. 3: Black Muslim fashion

Elisha P. Renne, "The Hijab as a Moral Space in Northern Nigeria" in Karen Tranberg Hansen and D. Soyini Madison (eds.), *African Dress: Fashion, Agency, Performance* (2013), pp. 92-110

Heather Akou, *The Politics of Dress in Somali Culture, (chapter five)*

Dec. 5: Music and Identity

Helene Basu, "Music and the Formation of Sidi Identity in Western India", *History Workshop Journal*, 65/1(2008), pp. 161-178.

Jonathan Curiel, "Muslim Roots of the Blues/The Music of Famous American Blues Singers Reaches back through the South to the Culture of West Africa", *SF Gate* (Aug. 15 2004) <http://www.sfgate.com/opinion/article/Muslim-roots-of-the-blues-The-music-of-famous-2701489.php>Links to an external site.

Dec. 10: Explanations & Directions: Black history, Islam, and the humanities

Edward E. Curtis IV, "Black History, Islam, and the Future of the Humanities Beyond White Supremacy," <https://humanitiesfutures.org/papers/black-history-islam-future-humanities-beyond-white-supremacy/>Links to an external site.