

«Central Asian Studies World Wide»
Course Syllabi for the Study of Central Eurasia
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John Schoeberlein
The Meanings of Islam in Central Asia (Islamic Civilizations 160)
Syllabus for the course offered in Spring 2001
Harvard University
Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

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Islamic Civilizations 160.**The Meanings of Islam in Central Asia**

Spring term, Wednesdays, 2:00 - 4:00 plus an additional meeting time to be arranged.
Coolidge Hall, Room 215.

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Course Description

The course will examine the changing role of Islam in Central Asia through history from a multi-disciplinary perspective. Central Asia is on the margins of the Islamic world, though integral to it, and the course will consider the ways that the regions' position on transcontinental trade routes and desert-oasis borderlands have led to particular expressions of the processes which are common to the Islamic world more widely. It will also look at the process of modernization and the role of Islam in the Russian and Soviet imperial contexts. Particular attention will be given to the current political, cultural and social processes in which Islam plays a part in the post-Soviet era.

Note: The course is intended primarily for advanced undergraduates and graduate students; Some background in Central Asia and/or Islamic civilization is preferable, though not required. Enrollment may be limited.

Themes and Objectives of the Course

Some see Central Asia as defined by Islam. Indeed, there is a tendency to consider that every aspect of life in an "Islamic society" is Islamic. By contrast, in other cases, religion is referenced mainly in relation to religious activities, morals, and historical influences. In Central Asia, we find reference to everything from "Muslim language" (tsarist period sources, referring collectively to all the languages spoken by the "natives") to the "Islamic threat" (common in Sovietology and now again in the post-Soviet Russian literature). Central Asian Muslims themselves refer to their Muslim customs, dress, mind-set, etc. And throughout the Islamic world, there is an assumption — as well as those who challenge it — that in an Islamic society, there *should* be a specific set Islamic institutions, including Islamic Law (Shari'ah), Islamic marriage (assuming specific relations between man and woman), Islamic morality, etc. — all dictated by the fundamental Islamic texts: the Quran and the Hadith — and the schools of their interpretation.

In this course, we will explore the many realms in which two concepts come together: "Central Asia" and "Islam". We will look at a range of understandings of Islam, as represented by those who adhere to it, those who analyze it, those who distrust and fear it, and those who romanticize and "orientalize" it. We will explore the domains in which Islam figures in the lives

of Central Asians, and the forms that this takes, in their great diversity across space, time and social domains. These include religious observance, concepts of cosmic and moral order, activities of everyday life, social organization and institutions, “culture”, and as a principal of political organization and mobilization.

In this wide frame, the participants in the course will have the opportunity to develop a broad knowledge of Central Asian Islam, while identifying particular themes which they wish to explore in greater depth in their papers and class presentations.

The following major themes will be covered:

- 1) The historical development and diversity of Islamic civilization in Central Asia.
- 2) Islam under the rule of the Russian empire, the Soviet Union, and independent states.
- 3) Islam and its relations to other traditions: Issues of conversion, syncretism, and confrontation with other religious traditions and belief systems.
- 4) Islam as religion and belief system: Central Asia’s role in the broader traditions, schools, orders and reform movements.
- 5) Islamic principles of social order: Hereditary roles, teachers, judges, healers, Islamic principles of authority, of community, of family relations, and of government and participation.
- 6) Islam as way of life: Ritual practice, principles of daily behavior, family relations, gender relations.
- 7) Islam as a principle and structure of political mobilization: Islamic opposition, statehood, reform, and Fundamentalism; Role of Islamic movements in relation to secular, non-Islamic, or anti-Islamic regimes.

Requirements

The format of this course is primarily as a seminar. Though occasionally there will be lectures to lay out the background which will assist in the readings and discussion, mainly we will be exploring concepts and cases as they may be understood from the available sources. In addition to readings, sources may include occasional invited speakers and the field experience of course participants.

The majority of class time will be devoted to discussion. The students will each define for themselves what particular areas and themes they personally wish to explore in greatest depth. There will be limited regular assigned readings on a given theme, but students will also be expected to explore the sources more deeply depending on the particular topics on which they have chosen to focus. Those who can make use of sources in Russian, Central Asian, or other languages will be encouraged to do so. During most class meetings, specific students will assume responsibility for leading discussion. The student(s) responsible for the given topic will explore the sources in greater depth, give careful thought to how the topic should be explored,

and lead class discussion. They may prepare a short presentation of their thoughts on the key issues, a hand-out of discussion points, and/or other materials.

Evaluation of the student's performance in the course will be based on the following:

- 1) Presentation and leading of discussion: Several times in the course of the semester, each student will have responsibility for preparation and presentation of comments and discussion points on a given topic.
- 2) Participation: Each student is expected to keep current on the readings and to make regular, constructive contributions to discussions.
- 3) Papers: Each student will write two short papers in the course of the semester, addressing different themes. These will not be exhaustive studies, but rather thematic explorations. A "short" paper is in the neighborhood of 15 pages, though the length should be determined by what is appropriate for the chosen topic. Topics are selected in consultation with the instructor (it is your responsibility to begin early enough so you find the subject and materials which are suitable). The first paper will be due on **Friday, March 23** (which is just before Spring Break; if you don't mind spoiling your break with it, you may submit it on Monday, April 2). The second paper is due on **May 16** (the last day of reading period; no exceptions). Graduate students may submit a single paper in place of the two, as they wish. However, in this case, they must submit a detailed outline of the paper by **Friday, April 10**.

Readings

Assigned readings will be made available as photocopies (they may be picked up in the Central Asian Studies Program Office: Coolidge Hall, room 224A). We will collect money in order to cover the cost of photo-copying. The weekly plan of readings will be made available after we learn of the specific interests and level of experience of the students in the class. . The reading load will be about 3-4 articles or book chapters per week.

Week of February 12

Part 1: Central Asia Islam in the Context of the "Islamic World"

Gellner, Ernest

1981 Chapter 1: "Flux and reflux in the faith of men," in *Muslim society*, p. 1-85. In series: *Cambridge studies in social anthropology*, 32. Cambridge, Eng: Cambridge University Press.

Eickelman, Dale F.

1997 "Anthropology, the Middle East, and Central Asia," in *The Middle East and Central Asia: An anthropological approach*, p. 1-26. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall. [This is a revised edition of his *The Middle East: An anthropological approach*, published in 1988].

Part 2: Islam in Central Asia: Historical Background

Bennigsen, Alexandre A. and S. Enders Wimbush

1985 Chapter 2: "The spread of Islam and Russian expansion," and Chapter 7: "Muslims of Central Asia" and section on "The Uzbeks," in *Muslims of the Soviet Empire: A guide*, p. 5-12, 45-62. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University.

Lapidus, Ira Marvin

1988 Chapter 17: "Inner Asia from the Mongol conquests to the nineteenth century," in *A history of Islamic societies*, p. 414-436.

Cambridge, Eng./New York: Cambridge University Press.

Foltz, Richard

1999 Chapter :

in *Religions of the Silk Road : overland trade and cultural exchange from antiquity to the fifteenth century*, p. 89-109. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Week of February 19***Situating Central Asian Islam***

Bregel, Yuri

1980 "The role of Central Asia in the history of the Muslim East," *Occasional paper* [Afghanistan Council, the Asia Society], no. 20. New York: Afghanistan Council, Asia Society.

Esposito, John L.

1988 Chapter 3: "Religious life: Belief and practice," in *Islam: The straight path*, p. 68-115. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Saroyan, Mark

1997 "Rethinking Islam in the Soviet Union," in M. Saroyan, *Minorities, mullahs, and modernity: Reshaping community in the former Soviet Union*, p. 8-42. Berkeley: University of California.

Week of February 26***Islam and Identity***

Lemercier-Quelquejay, Chantal

1984 "From tribe to *Umma*," *Central Asian survey*, 3(3)15-26. Oxford.

Plus: Shahrani, M. Nazif Mohib: "'From tribe to *Umma*': Comments on the dynamics of identity in Muslim Soviet Central Asia," *Central Asian survey*, 3(3)27-38.

Gladney, Dru C.

1991 Chapter 1: "Muslim nationalism in China: A fourth tide," in D. Gladney, *Muslim Chinese: Ethnic nationalism in the People's Republic*, p. 1-63. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Khalid, Adeb

1998 Chapter 2: "The making of a colonial society" and Chapter 3: "The origins of Jadidism," in A. Khalid, *The politics of Muslim cultural reform: Jadidism in Central Asia*, p. 45-79 and 80-113. Berkeley: University of California Press. Comparative studies on Muslims societies, 27.

Week of March 5

Islamization

DeWeese, Devin

1994 Chapter 1: "The religious environment: Worldview, ritual, and communal status," in D. DeWeese, *Islamization and native religion in the Golden Horde: Baba Tukles and conversion to Islam in historical and epic tradition*, p. 17-66. University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Golden, Peter B.

1990 "The Karakhanids and early Islam," in Denis Sinor, ed.: *The Cambridge history of early Inner Asia*, p. 343-370. Cambridge, Eng./New York: Cambridge University Press.

Snesarev, Gleb Pavlovich

1970-71 "Remnants of pre-Islamic beliefs and rituals among the Khorezm Uzbeks [Parts I-III]," *Soviet anthropology and archeology*, 9(3)204-225, 9(4)329-352, 10(1)3-36. New York. Trans. from the Russian; original publication: *Реликты домусульманских верований и обрядов у Узбеков Хорезма*. Москва: Наука 1969.

Week of March 19

Islam and Social Order

McChesney, Robert Duncan

1996 Chapter 3: "Society and community: Shrines and dynastic families in Central Asia," in R. D. McChesney: *Central Asia: Foundations of change*, p. 71-115. Princeton, N.J.: The Darwin Press.

Togan, İsenbike

1992 "Islam in a changing society: The Khojas of Eastern Turkistan," in J.-A. Gross, ed.: *Muslims in Central Asia: Expressions of identity and change*, p. 134-148. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Tett, Gillian

1994 "'Guardians of the faith': Gender and religion in an (ex)Soviet Tajik village," in Camillia Fawzi El-Solh & Judy Mabro, eds.: *Muslim women's choices: Religious belief and social reality*, p. 128-151. Providence, R.I./Oxford: Berg.

Poliakov, Sergei P. [Поляков, Сергей Петрович]

1991 Chapter 1: "Central Asian traditionalism," Chapter 4: "Traditionalism and the economic structure," Chapter 13: "Religious institutions," and Chapter 14: "The clergy," in S. P. Poliakov: *Everyday Islam: Religion and tradition in Soviet Central Asia*, p. 3-5, 23-31, 95-112. M. B. Olcott, ed. Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe. (Translation of: *Traditsionalizm v sovremennom Sredneaziatskom obshchestve*. Moskva: Znanie/Tsentral'nyi dom nauchnogo ateizma, 1989.)

Week of April 2

Muslim Belief

Algar, Hamid

1990 "A brief history of the Naqshbandi Order," in Naqshbandis: Cheminements et situation actuelle d'un ordre mystique Musulman, p.3-44. Istanbul/Paris: ISIS.

Babadzhanov, Bakhtiyar

2000 "The Fergana Valley: Source or victim of Islamic fundamentalism?" in Lena Jonson and Murad Esenov, eds.: *Political Islam and Conflicts in Russia and Central Asia*. Stockholm: Swedish Institute of International Affairs.

Hizb ut-Tahrir

[2001] "The reasons for the establishment of Hizb ut-Tahrir," From Hizb ut-Tahrir website: <<http://www.hizb-ut-tahrir.org/english/definition/messages.htm>> (page dated: 24 Jan. 2001; visited: 21 Mar. 2001).

Week of April 9

Islam and Political Mobilization

Olcott, Martha Brill

1995 "Islam and fundamentalism in independent Central Asia," in Yaacov Ro'i, ed.: *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting legacies*, p. 21-39. London: Frank Cass.

Manz, Beatrice Forbes

1987 "Central Asian uprisings in the nineteenth century: Ferghana under the Russians," *The Russian review*, 46:267-282.

Ignatenko, Aleksandr

2000 "Endogenous radicalism in Islam," *Central Asia and Caucasus journal*, 2000(2)118-130.

Atkin, Muriel

2000 "The rhetoric of Islamophobia," *Central Asia and Caucasus journal*, 2000(1)123-132.

International Crisis Group

2001 "Central Asia: Islamist mobilisation and regional security." *ICG Asia report*, no. 14. Osh/Brussels: International Crisis Group.

Week of April 16***Islam and Conflict***

Polat, Abdumannob

2000 "The Islamic revival in Uzbekistan: A threat to stability?" in R. Sagdeev and S. Eisenhower, eds.: *Islam and Central Asia: An enduring legacy or an evolving threat?*, p. 39-57. Washington, DC: Center for Political and Strategic Studies.

Atkin, Muriel

1997 "Thwarted democratization in Tajikistan," in K. Dawisha and B. Parrott, eds.: *Conflict, cleavage, and change in Central Asia and the Caucasus*, p. 277-311. Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press.

Also refer back to the ICG Report on *Islamist Mobilization and Regional Security*.

Week of April 23***Women and Islam in Changing Societies***

Tokhtakhojaeva, Marfua

1995 Chapter 8: "On the threshold of the future — or of the past?" and "Conclusion," in *Between the slogans of Communism and the laws of Islam*, p. 229-256. Lahore: Shirkat Gah Women's Resource Center.

Poliakov, Sergei P.

1991 Chapter 11: "Gender and behavior," in *Everyday Islam: Religion and tradition in Soviet Central Asia*, p. 81-86. M. B. Olcott, ed. Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe. (Translation of: *Traditsionalizm v sovremennom Sredneaziatskom obshchestve*. Moskva: Znanie/Tsentral'nyi dom nauchnogo ateizma, 1989.)

Michaels, Paula A.

1998 "Kazak women: Living the heritage of a unique past," in H. L. Bodman and N. Tohidi, eds.: *Women in Muslim societies: Diversity within unity*, p. 187-202. Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner.

Tohidi, Nayereh

1998 "Guardians of the nation": Women, Islam, and the Soviet legacy of modernization in Azerbaijan," in H. L. Bodman and N. Tohidi, eds.: *Women in Muslim societies: Diversity within unity*, p. 137-161. Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner.

Week of April 30***Islam and Post-Soviet State Building***

Karimov, Islam

1997 "Religious extremism and fundamentalism" and "Revival of spiritual values and national self-consciousness," in I. Karimov, *Uzbekistan on the threshold of the twenty-first century*, p. 29-42, 117-129, Tashkent: Uzbekiston.

Goble, Paul

2000 "Fighting fundamentalism with Sufism," *RFE/RL Newslines*, 12 September 2000.

Hunter, Shireen Tahmaseeb

1996 Chapter 2: "Political ideology and institution-building," in S. T. Hunter, *Central Asian since independence*, p. 20-39. Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Shahrani, M. Nazif Mohib

1995 "Islam and the political culture of 'scientific atheism' in the post-Soviet Central Asia: Future predicaments," in M. Bourdeaux, ed.: *The politics of religion in Russia and the new states of Eurasia*, p. 273-292. Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharp.