

فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكُرْكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونَ

So remember Me, and I will remember you; and be grateful to Me; and do not deny/cover.

Qur'an, 2:152

What I am, therefore, is in key part what I inherit, a specific past that is present to some degree in my present. I find myself part of a history and that is generally to say, whether I like it or not, whether I recognize it or not, one of the bearers of a tradition.

- Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p.221

Designing Life in the Middle Ages

(Exemplary Lives in Christian and Muslim Memory & Heritage)

REL 377 (Spring 2022) MW 7:30-8:45 pm (LIB Studio D)

WHAT IS IT ABOUT? (Previously Course Description)

Today there is much discussion of striking an appropriate work/life balance, finding happiness in life, and pursuing a life worth living. These are by no means new conversations. In fact, these questions have been of perennial and global interest. Situating ourselves historically in medieval Christian and Muslim worlds, and drawing on their theological and intellectual traditions, we invite you to discover how our medieval predecessors answered these questions. You will then apply these medieval lessons to designing their own lives in the 21st century. In the process, you will also discern the challenges and gaps in implementing lessons drawn from the past in a different religious culture and historical period. While mostly about the *contents* of Christian and Muslim understanding of a good human life, our journey inevitably involves a humanistic inquiry into the Christian and Muslim understanding of 'designing', 'life' (including *afterlife* and *exemplary life*), the 'Middle Ages' (therefore of Age, History, Time & Eternity), and finally what it means to be 'IN' an age such as the Middle Ages. Every study (aka class) with us usually involves conscientious reading of texts, and entail speaking from within the text, speaking with it, and speaking to/about it as well.

INSTRUCTORS

Prof. Jakub Kabala [Office: Dana 263; Phone: (704) 894 2884]

Email: jakabala@davidson.edu

Meeting Hours: MW 2:30-4:00

--

Prof. Syed Rizwan Zamir [Office: Eumenean Hall 104; Phone: (704) 894 2950]

Email: rizamir@davidson.edu (Saturdays even I don't know where I am; Sundays I do slowly re-turn)

You can meet with SRZ:

1. Right after the class meeting (just walk up to me); or
2. Through a scheduled appointment through email. Mention your availability in the next couple of days and your preference for a zoom or in-person meeting.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

INSTRUCTORS':

By the end of this course Students in this course will have

1. Learned Medieval Christian & Muslim perspectives on what is a good life
2. Contextualized these perspectives within the history of medieval civilization
3. Compared perspectives on life within two religious traditions
4. Interpreted and applied these perspectives to their own lives
5. Honed their skills in reading and interpreting historical written records

INTELLECTUAL PRACTICES (Previously Course Assignments)

Midterm I (Islam)	20%
Midterm II (Christianity)	20%
Final Group Project (with Life Manifesto)	25%
Dialog between Groups	10%
Weekly Journal Entries	10%
Contributions to the Intellectual Community (includes "Designing Life Today", 5%)	15%

TEXT-GUIDES

- I. *Deliverance from Error*, by Abu Hamid Ghazali

THE MAP

See Moodle for Calendar of Readings

Disabilities

A student who requires accommodation for a documented disability of any type should see the instructor immediately to discuss modifications to course requirements. "Davidson College values the diversity of its community and is an equal access institution that admits otherwise qualified applicants without regard to disability. The college seeks to accommodate requests for accommodations related to disability that are determined to be reasonable and do not compromise the integrity of a program or curriculum. To make such a request or to begin a conversation about a possible request, please contact Beth Bleil, Director of Academic Access and Disability Resources, in the Center for Teaching and Learning by visiting her office in the E.H. Little Library, by emailing her at bebleil@davidson.edu or by calling 704-894-2129. It is best to submit accommodation requests within the drop/add period; however, requests can be made at any time in the semester. Please keep in mind that accommodations are not retroactive."

Honor (and Conscience)

The College expects students to fully abide by the Honor Code. The instructor wonders also about the burdens of conscience, and to what extent our honor intersects with our conscience.