

The Day He will assemble you for the Day of Assembly - that is the Day of Deprivation. And whoever believes in Allah and does righteousness - He will remove from him his misdeeds and admit him to gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. That is the great attainment.

Qur'an 64:9

Die before you die.

The Prophet

...and so it comes about that, if one does not stop short of the most profound order of reality, it can be said in all truth that the 'end of a world' never is and never can be anything but the end of an illusion. P.279

René Guénon

the END.

DEATH, APOCALYPSE, MESSIANISM & THE WORLD-TO-COME

REL 174 (Spring 2019)

T & TH 12:15 – 1:30 pm (Chambers 2164)

WHAT IS THE COURSE ABOUT?

This course deals with “The End.” and future of human and cosmic life as prophesized within the Islamic sources, and interpreted and envisioned by Islamic tradition and Muslims. It surveys death, afterlife and the world to-come, apocalypse, and messianic

themes within Islamic thought, culture and history. We will begin with an orientation to the “Islamic Myth” of creation and flow of sacred history. We then will examine Personal eschatology where we explore human death and the afterlife, the journey from the grave till The Day (of Judgment), depictions of heaven and hell, and purpose and meaning of death (and by extension life). Here, we will also consider various interpretations and debates amongst Muslims about the end of times, including gendered and Shi’ite contestations. Finally, we approach Cosmic eschatology where we will detail Islamic understanding of the apocalypse and the End of times, the Messianic figure of the Guided One (Mahdi) and individual and collective judgment of humanity. We will also explore the imprint & impact of eschatology on Muslim culture, politics, history & contemporary times. The course will end with reflections on the relevance of Islamic eschatology for the world we live in.

Study Guide through the END. [The ROAD MAP]

PREAMBLE: ROOTS OF ISLAMIC VIEWS OF "THE END."

WEEK 1 (Jan 15-17): The Beginnings: Mythical and Scriptural Roots of "The END."

- The Hadith Gabriel
- SRZ, "THE ORIENTING TALE of all that's Islamic" (DRAFT)

WEEK 2 (Jan 22-Jan 24): Islamic Revelatory & Pre-Arabian Historical Contexts

- The Garden and the Fire, pp.1-20
- The Islamic Understanding of Death & Resurrection, pp.147-155
- Leor Halevi, Muhammad's Grave (selections)

DYING, DEATH & THE GRAVE

WEEK 3 (Jan 29-31): Dying and Death

- Al-Ghazali on the Remembrance of Death and the Afterlife, pp.37-96 & 121-147
- The Islamic Understanding of Death & Resurrection, pp.31-61

WEEK 4 (Feb 5-7): Death, Dying, Funerals in Early Islamic History

- Leor Halevi, Muhammad's Grave (selections)
- "The Funeral Prayer" *Reliance of the Traveler: A Classic Manual of Islamic Sacred Law* (PDF)

THE END OF THE WORLD & THE WORLD-TO-COME

WEEK 5 (Feb 12-14): Beginning of the END., its Signs & the END.

- *Al-Ghazali on the Remembrance of Death and the Afterlife*, pp. 171-216
- *The Islamic Understanding of Death & Resurrection*, pp. 63-97

WEEK 6 (Feb 19-21): Visions of the World-to-Come

- *The Garden and the Fire*, 21-39, 63-97 and 111-122
- *Al-Ghazali on the Remembrance of Death and the Afterlife*, pp. 217-261

IMPRESSIONS, EXPRESSIONS & IMPRINTS OF the END.

WEEK 7 (Feb 26-28): Material, Artistic and Cultural Legacies I

- Watch the Documentary: *Inside Mecca* [on reserve in the library]
- *The Garden and the Fire*, 40-62, 98-111 & 123-163
- "The Islamic Garden: History, Symbolism and the Qur'an" *Voices of Islam* vol. 4 (Lib. ebook)

SPRING BREAK: Fri, Mar 1st (4:30 p.m.) - Mon, Mar 11 (8:30 a.m.)

WEEK 8 (Mar 12-14): Philosophical, Mystical, Ethical and Moral Legacies II

- *Al-Ghazali on the Remembrance of Death and the Afterlife*, pp. 7-36, 85-120 & 252-261
- *The Islamic Understanding of Death & Resurrection*, pp. 1-30
- *The Adab of the True Seeker* (selections)

WEEK 9 (Mar 19-21): MIDTERM REVIEW

TUESDAY: Prepare for the Review

THURSDAY: MIDTERM REVIEW

INTERPRETING & DEBATING the END.

WEEK 10 (Mar 26-28): Spiritual, Philosophical and Esoteric Interpretations I

READINGS WILL BE CHOSEN FROM THIS LIST:

- “Aghaz and Anjam” in *Shi'i Interpretations of Islam* (Library e-book, pp.45-88)
- William Chittick, *Imaginal World* [Death and Afterlife section], pp. 97-119 (Library e-book)
- *Salvation and Hell in Classical Islamic Thought* (selections), pp.27-60
- Ibn 'Arabi “At the End of Time” *The Meccan Revelations* vol. 1 (selections) e.g., pp. 65-124 (PDF)

WEEK 11 (Apr 2-4): Contemporary Muslim Contestations of Islamic Eschatology

TUESDAY: You will work on your portfolio-journal. [SRZ's CAMPUS VISIT IN NY]

READINGS WILL BE CHOSEN FROM THIS LIST:

- *The Islamic Understanding of Death & Resurrection*, pp.99-146 & 183-192
- Said Nursi Risala (Selections)
- *Islam and the Fate of Others*, 1-25 & 110-145 (On Reserve)
- Dina Greenberg, “The Gendered Expressions of Grief” (PDF)
- Lila Abu-Lughod, “Islam and the Gendered Discourses of Death” (PDF)
- Maryam Jameelah, “The Feminist Movement and the Muslim Woman” (PDF)

THE MESSIAH, MESSIANIC HOPES & MESSIANIC MOVEMENTS

WEEK 12 (Apr 9-11): Messianic and Apocalyptic Ideas and Movements in History

- David Cook, “Early Islamic and Classical Sunni and Shiite Apocalyptic Movements” (PDF)
- Shahzad Bashir “Messianism in Islamic Religious History” (PDF)
- *Apocalypse in Islam*, pp.ix-65

WEEK 12 (Apr 9-11): Intersections of Eschatology and Politics in Contemporary Islam

- *Apocalypse in Islam*, pp.69-164

WEEK 13 (Apr 16-18): Mahdi, His Helpers, His Followers (The Shiite Tradition)

READINGS WILL BE CHOSEN FROM THIS LIST:

- *Expectation of the Millennium* (selections)
- *Shi'ism: Doctrines, Thought, Spirituality* (selections)
- Abdulaziz Sachedina, *Islamic Messianism* (selections)
- Amir-Moezzi, "The End of Time and the Return to the Origin", *The spirituality of Shi'i Islam* (PDF)
- *Divine Guide in Early Shiism* (selections)

EASTER BREAK (April 19 4:30 pm – April 24 8:30 am)

IS THIS "THE END."?

WEEK 14 (Thursday, Apr 25): Bringing it All Home to Our World

- *The Reign of Quantity*, (SELECTIONS) "Introduction", 50-127 and 172-176

WEEK 15 (Tuesday, Apr 30): The Signs of Times

BOOK SUMMARY & REVIEW: *The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of Times*

STUDYING BEYOND OUR STUDY: CONCLUDING SYNTHESIS, SHARING JOURNALS, ETC. (THIS WILL BE PURELY OPTIONAL)

1. OPTIONAL FILM EVENING: *The Dark Knight Rises* (2012), *Khartoum* (1966), *Noah* (2014) or another that relates to the themes of the class...
2. Tea conversation about "The End." in Popular Culture & Media and sharing of journals

FINAL REVIEW

TEXT-GUIDES

(A copy of each on Reserve in the Library & available at the Bookstore)

1. Michael Sells, *Approaching the Qur'an: The Early Revelations*, Ashland: White Cloud Press, 2007;
2. Jane Idelman Smith & Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, *The Islamic understanding of Death and Resurrection*, New York: Oxford University Press: 2002;
3. Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali, *Al-Ghazali on the Remembrance of Death and the Afterlife: Book XL of the Revival of the Religious Sciences*, tr. T. J. Winter. Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1989;
4. Nerina Rustomji, *The Garden and the Fire: Heaven and Hell in Islamic Culture*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2009;
5. Jean-Pierre Filiu, *Apocalypse in Islam*, tr. M. B. DeBevoise Berkeley: university of California Press, 2011;
6. Rene Guenon, *The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*, New York: Sophia Perennis, 2001.

Text-Guides for Basic Background in Islam

Note: Prior knowledge of Islam and Muslim civilization is not expected or assumed. For your own comfort, you may pick ONE of the introductory books listed on Veils & Webs.

{Veils & Webs (rizwanzamir.net) > Dear Strangers > Resources}

LEARNING OUTCOMES (INSTRUCTOR'S):

It is expected that by the end of this class the participants will have:

- 1. Become familiarized with the necessary language and concepts of Islamic eschatology (i.e., with the key concerns, ideas, issues, debates, terms, categories, traditions & important thinkers) & cultivated an ability overall to make sense of Islamic visions of the End.;*
- 2. A strong foundation to pursue and critically engage further the texts and practitioners of Islamic faith on this subject;*
- 3. Observed varieties within Islamic understanding of death and afterlife and debates that surround these issues;*
- 4. Explored and engaged in an informed discussion about eschatological issues within the Islamic Tradition in the modern context, including the ability to compare and contrast various understandings;*
- 5. Reflected upon various themes related to the course, e.g., death, is there life and another world, after this life, after this world, our own deaths, & how the world will end, if so;*
- 6. Revisited/re-viewed and carefully understood readings, and gained appreciation of its importance as an intellectual practice to one's learning;*
- 7. Learned to assess the intellectual quality of these practices in their own work as well as that of their peers.*

NOTE: Implicit but the most significant outcome hoped for this class is to make learning joyful, relevant and meaningful for all involved in the class. Making the class more relevant to you personally is something that will require your engagement and deep interest. Feel free to talk to the instructor about ways in which you (or/and the instructor) could contribute in achieving these goals, personally and together as a class.

LEARNING OUTCOMES (PARTICIPANTS, STUDENTS, i.e., YOURS):

Do you have any?

INTELLECTUAL PRACTICES (Previously Course Assignments):

Intellectual Practices are in place throughout the course as “building blocks” to help build synthesis and understanding. Descriptions of each may be found on Veils & Webs under Dear Strangers > Intellectual Practices.

Midterm Review	30%
Final Review (Cumulative)	35%
The PORTFOLIO-Journal (DUE MAY 8)	35%
Required Entries:	
→ 2 Interpretive Reflections (500 words)	10%
→ Book Summary & Review (<i>Reign of Quantity &...</i>)	15%
→ Journal Writing & Reflections throughout the Semester [Entries must be Logged (Involves Self/Peer-Grading)]	10%

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 as set out by the College. The instructor wonders...about the relationship between Honor & Conscience...

Additional Resources & Support: Basic writing and speaking skills are expected in this course and quality of both will be critical to your success in this course. There are numerous resources available to help you through the course. Please see the section entitled "Resources" under the "Dear Strangers" tab from Veils & Webs (rizwanzamir.net).

INSTRUCTOR:

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

Email: rizamir@davidson.edu (Saturdays I am gone; Sundays I slowly re-emerge)

Meeting Hours: Mondays 8-11 am (Schedule appointments via Sign-Up Genius)

If you cannot meet in these times, email me.
