

Department of French and Francophone Studies
Literature and Culture track
Professor: Valentin Duquet

Islam & France: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow



Picture source: [“L’islam en France et l’islam de France : le grand oubli de la campagne présidentielle. La tribune d’Emmanuel Dupuy et Karim Ifrak,”](#) *Opinion Internationale*, Emmanuel Dupuy & Karim Ifrak (2017).

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In January 2015, after the *Charlie Hebdo* terrorist attacks, the best-selling book nationwide was a nonfiction pamphlet written almost 300 years earlier: Voltaire’s *Traité sur la tolérance*. Then as now, important questions are raised in a climate of fear and violence. What does it mean to be a religious minority in a country like France with a long history of imperialism and republican universalism since the French Revolution? How do Muslims negotiate their multiple identities and navigate the turbulent waters of French politics like the concept of “Laïcité”—a form of secularism based not on freedom of religion but on freedom *from* religion?

In this advanced seminar course, we will look at the place of Islam and Muslims in France by taking a broad look at history through literary texts, films and music. We will start with the 18th century and the Enlightenment and move forward with discussion of Orientalism in the 19th century. We will then examine the period of decolonization and the African diaspora in the 20th

century, and debate freedom of speech and satire in the 21st. We will dedicate multiple weeks around the midterm break to reading the short novel *Noire et Musulmane: Grandir dans la minorité* by Fatima Adamou (2019), exploring the intersections of race, gender and religion. Finally, we will look to the future with the examples of two “political-fiction” books on each side of the Mediterranean Sea: Boualem Sansals’s *2084* and Michel Houellebecque’s *Soumission*, which was published on the same day as the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks.

COURSE OBJECTIVES & LEARNING OUTCOMES

In this course, students will be reading classic and subversive texts by French and Francophone authors like Assia Djebar, Kateb Yacine, Boualem Sansals and Michelle Houellebecque. We will look at representations and manifestations of Islam across media, periods and geographies—looking for instance at pamphlets in the 18th century, paintings in the early 19th century, and travel diaries in the early 20th. Students will also watch moving and thought-provoking films, like the 2004 movie *Le Grand voyage* (about a pilgrimage from France to Mecca) and the 2022 documentary *Salam* about Diam’s, a female hip-hop megastar who retired at the height of her career, converted to Islam and disappeared from the public eye. Together, these stories will provide students with a deeper understanding of French Islam and form the basis for vivid discussions about colonial haunting and social inclusion.

This course will be held entirely in French, including its assignments. Students will get a chance to practice all core skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing) at an ‘Advanced-Low’ level on the ACTFL proficiency scale. By the end of the semester, you should be able to (in French): discuss a work of art of literature according to theme and context; exchange thoughts with classmates comfortably and respectfully; present and articulate complex ideas with more ease; and write thoughtful essays of your own. Additionally, you will have a better grasp on the global systems and structures of power since the French Revolution. Perfect fluency in French is not required (nor is it expected!); the point of the course is to workshop ideas, thoughts, and language in a safe and friendly space.

TEXTS AND ACCESSIBILITY

Book to purchase: Fatima Adamou’s *Noire et Musulmane: Grandir dans la minorité* (2019). The \$6 Kindle version from Amazon is recommended. Other texts will be provided on Moodle free of charge. You can expect to read on average 20 pages per class day (twice a week).

ASSIGNMENTS

- 20%** Attendance + active participation
- 15%** Daily response posts
- 15%** Group podcast (10 min), audio only
- 20%** Group presentation (10 min)
- 30%** Final paper (1,000 word)

Attendance + active participation: You are allowed two free absences during the quarter. Tardiness or excessive use of English will count against your attendance grade. Active participation includes you engaging with and asking questions to your peers after their presentations.

Daily response posts: Before each class, after you are done reading, you will share your impressions of the text and raise up to three questions in a brief post in French on Moodle. The response can be as short as the length of a tweet (280 characters). You can either create a new post or react and add to a classmate's post. We will address your questions and concerns together in class. You are allowed to miss two responses during the quarter.

Group podcast: The deadline for your group podcast is based on which theme or topic you choose to work on. Podcasting is a great medium for intellectual conversations! With a classmate, you will create an audio recording and share it with your classmates on Moodle. You can either discuss or debate a political issue of your choice based on the themes of the class. One student should introduce the podcast name and topic at the beginning of the recording. However, this is not a Q&A: both students should participate equally and take up the same amount of time (roughly 5 min each).

Group presentation: The day of your group presentation will depend on which theme or topic you choose to work on. The presentation will look broadly at an author, a text as a cultural object, or a movement. The topic of your presentation must be different from the topic of your podcast, and you must work with a different classmate. Both students should participate equally and take up the same amount of time (roughly 5 min each). You are encouraged to include visuals in your slideshow and see this presentation as a chance to "teach" the class about a topic that interests you.

Final paper: Your final essay will be a close reading of a text from the course schedule. It should not repeat points made in class. In your paper, you will analyze the interplay of *le fond* and *la forme*, making connections between the past, the future, and present issues.

COURSE PLAN

Week 1: The Eighteenth Century: Anti-Clericalism & the Enlightenment

Class 1: Extract from Voltaire's *Le fanatisme, ou Mahomet le Prophète* (1736)

Class 2: Extract from Voltaire's *Traité sur la tolérance* (1763)

Week 2: The Nineteenth Century: Orientalism & the Representations of Women, part I

Class 1: What is Orientalism? Discussion of paintings from Eugène Delacroix (1834)

Class 2: Extracts from Assia Djebar's *Femmes d'Alger dans leur appartement* (1980)

Week 3: The Nineteenth Century: Orientalism & the Representations of Women, part II

Class 1: Who was Isabelle Eberhardt?

Class 2: Extract from Isabelle Eberhardt's *Journalier* (1901)

Week 4: The Twentieth Century: Postcolonialism & the Arab Diaspora, part I

Class 1: Introduction to the Francophone Movement in Algeria

Class 2: Kateb Yacine's *La Kahina: version française d'un épisode de La guerre de 2000 ans* (1982)

Week 5: The Twentieth Century: Postcolonialism & the Arab Diaspora, part II

Class 1: Film discussion, *Le Grand voyage* (2004), directed by Ismaël Ferroukhi

Class 2: Film discussion, *Le Grand voyage* (2004), directed by Ismaël Ferroukhi

Week 6: Intersections of Race, Gender and Religion, part I

Class 1: Fatima Adamou's *Noire et Musulmane: Grandir dans la minorité* (2019)

Class 2: Fatima Adamou's *Noire et Musulmane: Grandir dans la minorité* (2019)

Week 7: Intersections of Race, Gender and Religion, part II

Class 1: Fatima Adamou's *Noire et Musulmane: Grandir dans la minorité* (2019)

Class 2: Fatima Adamou's *Noire et Musulmane: Grandir dans la minorité* (2019)

Week 8: Intersections of Race, Gender and Religion, part III

Class 1: Fatima Adamou's *Noire et Musulmane: Grandir dans la minorité* (2019)

Class 2: Fatima Adamou's *Noire et Musulmane: Grandir dans la minorité* (2019)

Midterm Break

Week 9: Today in France: Hip-Hop Culture and Religious Conversions

Class 1: Documentary film, *Salam* (2022), directed by Shersha, Benyamina & Cissé

Class 2: The story and music of Diam's (continued) & the political engagement of rappers

Week 10: Islam Tomorrow: Future Dystopias, part I

Class 1: Extract from Boualem Sansals's *2084 – La fin du monde* (2015)

Class 2: Extract from Boualem Sansals's *2084 – La fin du monde* (2015)

Week 11: Islam Tomorrow: Future Dystopias, part II

Class 1: Extract from Boualem Sansals's *2084 – La fin du monde* (2015)

Class 2: Extract from Boualem Sansals's *2084 – La fin du monde* (2015)

Week 12: Islam Tomorrow: Future Dystopias, part III

Class 1: Extract from Michelle Houellebecq's *Soumission* (2015)

Class 2: Extract from Michelle Houellebecq's *Soumission* (2015)

Week 13: Islam Tomorrow: Future Dystopias, part IV

Class 1: Extract from Michelle Houellebecq's *Soumission* (2015)

Class 2: Extract from Michelle Houellebecq's *Soumission* (2015)

Week 14: Final Discussions: *Laïcité*, Memory and the Path Forward

Class 1: Debating *Charlie Hebdo* and Freedom of Expression

Class 2: Politics in 2022: the "Rassemblement National," Eric Zemmour & Colonial Legacy

Week 15: Final Week

Class 1: Final Conference Presentations

Class 2: More Presentations, Paper Peer-Review/Writing Workshop

Bonnes vacances!

Official Resources:

[University of Texas Honor Code](#)

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the *student's own work*. Should plagiarism, i.e. appropriation of another's work without proper attribution, be deemed to have occurred, the student will automatically receive a zero for the assignment. Penalty for violation of this Code can also be extended to include failure of the course and University disciplinary action.

[Services for Students with Disabilities \(SSD\)](#)

SSD ensures students with disabilities have equal access to their academic experiences at the University of Texas at Austin by determining eligibility and approving reasonable accommodations.

[Use of E-Mail for Official Correspondence to Students](#)

E-mail is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, you are responsible for reading your e-mail for university and course-related information and announcements. You are responsible to keep the university informed about changes to your e-mail address. You should check your e-mail regularly and frequently—I recommend daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-critical.

Thrive is a free iPhone app designed to enhance UT Austin student well-being and help better manage the ups and downs of campus life. Students will find short videos of actual UT Austin students sharing their own stories as well as interactive activities designed to help them apply these concepts to their own unique experience.

[Behavior Concerns Advice Line \(BCAL\)](#)

If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050.

[Counselors in Academic Residence Program \(CARE\)](#)

CARE is a program of the Counseling and Mental Health Center that was created in collaboration with the Office of the Provost. CARE counselors are located within the colleges they serve. They are licensed mental health professionals and work with students who have been referred by faculty and staff. CARE's primary mission is to provide access to mental health support for students who are struggling emotionally and/or academically. Cassy Moreno, LPC, is the CARE counselor for Liberal Arts and is available to meet with COLA students in need of mental health assistance.

[Counseling and Mental Health Center \(CMHC\)](#)

In addition to CARE, students can visit the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC) for counseling services: Counseling and Mental Health Center Crisis Line 512-471-CALL (2255). (UT Students Only - available every day of the year including holidays). CMHC Crisis Line is a confidential service of CMHC that offers an opportunity for UT-Austin students to talk with trained counselors about urgent concerns. A counselor is available every day of the year, including holidays. You can call us when you want, at your convenience. Our telephone counselors will spend time addressing your immediate concerns. Our telephone counselors also have specific training in responding to crisis situations. Counseling and Mental Health Center offers several discussion groups students may attend that cover various topics. Some groups are drop-in groups while other groups topics range from identity-based groups, Voices Against Violence, Mindfulness groups, and other support groups. A list of all the group options are available at [this link](#).

[Student Emergency Services \(SES\)](#)

Student Emergency Services provides assistance, intervention, and referrals to support students navigating challenging or unexpected issues that impact their well-being and academic success. SES can be reached at 512-471-5017 (Mon – Fri from 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.). Emergency situations include but are

not limited to: Missing Student; Family Emergency; Fire or Natural Disaster; Student Death (current or former); Medical or Mental Health Concern; Academic difficulties due to crisis or emergency situations; Interpersonal Violence (stalking, harassment, physical and/or sexual assault).

UT Outpost

UT Outpost will help battle hunger and food insecurities of our students, as well as giving students access to professional attire for job and internship interviews. The service is located in the UA9 Building (2609 University Avenue) which is behind the Student Services Building (SSB).

Center for Students in Recovery (CSR)

The Center for Students in Recovery (CSR) provides a safe space and supportive community for students in recovery or seeking recovery from addiction. Participation at CSR is completely voluntary and there is no barrier to entry. Students at any stage of recovery and at any point in their academic journeys are welcome.

Sanger Learning Center

The Sanger Learning Center is UT Austin's main resource for academic support. Some of the services offered at the Sanger Learning Center include but aren't limited to: 1-on-1 tutoring or drop in tutoring; improving your study skills with a learning specialist; weekly meetings with a Peer Academic Coach; and help with public speaking assignment.

Gender and Sexuality Center (GSC)

The mission of the Gender and Sexuality Center (GSC) is to provide opportunities for all members of the UT Austin community to explore, organize, and promote learning around issues of gender and sexuality. The center also facilitates a greater responsiveness to the needs of women and the LGBTQIA+ communities through education, outreach, and advocacy.

Religious Holy Days

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.