



The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

Islam and Religious Objects - 24921

Last update 23-09-2021

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 2nd degree (Master)

Responsible Department: Comparative Religion

Academic year: 0

Semester: 1st Semester

Teaching Languages: English

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Hannelies Koloska

Coordinator Email: hannelie.koloska@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: Wednesday 1-2pm or upon appointment

Teaching Staff:

Dr. Hannelies Koloska

Course/Module description:

There are no ritual objects used within Islamic services. But what about the prayer rug (sajāda), prayer beads (misbaḥa) or the prayer stone used by Shi'i Muslims? Is the Qur'an a ritual object? Are lamps in the mosque understood as religious objects?

Many objects are considered part of devotional life in Islam and play an important role in religious practices. What is their historical anchoring and development, how are they related to objects and tradition of other religious communities? What makes them Islamic? This course will give an introduction to theories about the relation between religion and material culture. We will explore selected religious objects that are still in common use among Muslims, their history and function.

Course/Module aims:

This course will both introduce the students to the academic fields of Material Culture Studies and Material Religion and to the importance and relevance of material objects in Islamic religious traditions with an emphasis on selected case studies.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

- demonstrate specific knowledge of the development of the academic fields of Material Culture Studies and Material Religion and the main currents of academic discourse
- specify the use of material objects in Islamic contexts in past and present
- explain different Muslim approaches to religious material objects

Attendance requirements(%):

In case of absence the teacher has to be notified (not more than 2 times).

*Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: -group/pair or individual works
-interactive learning*

Course/Module Content:

- 1)- "Material Culture Studies" - concept and theories

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- 2) -"Material Religion" – Material Approach to Religion
 - 3) - How to define an object?
 - 4) -The Qur'an as Ritual Object
 - 5) - Ritual Objects in the Qur'an
 - 6) Amulets and Talismans in Islam
 - 7) Islamic Worship and Religious Objects
 - 8) Religious Vestments and Textiles
 - 9) Relics of the Prophet

Required Reading:

David Morgan (ed.), *Religion and Material Culture. A Matter of Belief*, New York: Routledge, 2009.(parts)

David Chidester, "Material Culture", *Vocabulary for the Study of Religion*, General Editors Robert A. Segal, Kocku Von Stuckrad.

E. Frances King. *Material Religion and Popular Culture*, New York: Routledge, 2009 (esp. pp. 1-18).

Bräunlein, Peter J. "Thinking Religion Through Things: Reflections on the Material Turn in the Scientific Study of Religions." *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion*, vol. 28, no. 4/5, 2016, pp. 365-399.

McGregor, Richard J. A.: *Islam and the Devotional Object: Seeing Religion in Egypt and Syria*.(excerpts)
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.

Schimmel, Annemarie: *Deciphering the Signs of God. A phenomenological Approach to Islam*.
Albany; the New York University Press, 1994.(excerpts)

Additional Reading Material:

To be announced

Course/Module evaluation:

End of year written/oral examination 0 %
Presentation 20 %
Participation in Tutorials 20 %
Project work 50 %
Assignments 10 %
Reports 0 %
Research project 0 %
Quizzes 0 %
Other 0 %

Additional information:

This course will include an excursion and study day at the Museum for Islamic Art Jerusalem.

Final Papers can be submitted in English or Arabic.