

Sara & Megan's
The Study of World Religions NTC



Announcement:

The rest of the lectures will not be covered on the exam.

Islam Terms:

Five Pillars/Arkaan

1. Shahadah- This is the basic confession of faith in the Islam and it consists of two statements. The first statement is there is only one god the God Allah. The second statement is that Muhammad is his prophet.
2. Salat- These are obligatory prayers that are recited 5 times a day. If you are travelling or you are ill, then you can suspend the obligation.
3. Zakat- This is almsgiving. If you are Muslim, 2.5% of your wealth each year is given to charity.
4. Ramadan- You must abstain from all of the good things in life, such as food, cigarettes, sex, etc., during the daylight hours for a month. Ramadan ends with a feast and with the exchange of gifts.
5. Hajj- Every Muslim once in their life, if they have the financial means, should make an effort to go to Mecca, which is called pilgrimage. Central to the Hajj is the visit to Ka'ba.

Jihad- Literally means to struggle or to exert, especially in the way of God. You will do this by keeping the five pillars. There are two types of Jihad.

1. Jihad-i-akbar- This is the higher jihad. It involves keeping to the five pillars and being the muslim that you ought to be. The way of being and submitting to Allah.
2. Jihad-i-asgar- This is the lower jihad. At some point when the Muslim community is threatened, this jihad is when you take up arms in defense.

Sufism-Sufism is the response that occurred due to the gain in wealth of Muslims. It is the mystical branch of Islam. Sufis believe that a good life is a simple life and that they should renounce worldly possessions. They believe that you should live in asceticism and live a life in the service of God. It is much less popular than Sunni because it is the mystical branch of Islam. They are called Sufis because they wear white, woollen robes. The word for wool suf. Sufism is characterized by three main things: asceticism (dedicate your life to God), love (God is love), and knowledge.

Ma'rifa- When a mystic has an encounter with God, it is described as an act of participation with the one from who all things come from. It is a form of knowing or knowledge. When you encounter God, you cannot describe him because it transcends all words.

Tariqahs- Sufi orders. You will have different teachers and different ways of practicing Sufi and the orders you receive will depend on the teacher.

Fakir- Literally means poor in spirit. A fakir is a member of the Sufi order.

Al-Hallaj- One of the three Sufi mystics. The mystic who made the mistake of saying that he was God and for that he was executed. He is 9th century mystic.

Rabi'a- One of the three Sufi mystics. This is the female Sufi. There are a bunch of suitors that came to see her and eventually one was deemed suitable to talk to her, but she turned him down because he did not have the answers that she was seeking. She is an 8th century mystic.

Rumi- One of the three Sufi mystics. A 13th century figure. A lot of his lectures were permeated with the theme of love, love of God.

Sharia- Literally means the way to the watering hole. This has significance for desert dwelling people because water is the source of life. Thus, the way to the watering hole has a religious significance because religion deals with life and death. Sharia is summed up as the way. Islam is concerned more with law and how you must live versus Christianity that tends to be more intellectual. Islam tends to be more practical.

Ilm, Alim, Ulama- All derivatives of the same word. Ilm is knowledge. Alim is someone that possesses knowledge and the Ulama is a group of people/teachers that possess knowledge. For example, the professors at McGill University form a secular Ulama. The knowledge that the Ulama possess is about the Koran law.

Four main sources of Islamic Law:

1. Qur'an- This is the first place one looks to find information about the law.
2. Hadith- If the information is not in the Koran, then the second place one looks is in the Hadith, which are the stories of the prophet. Muhammad has always insisted that he is a human being, thus it does not have a divine property like Koran.
3. Quiyas- Analogical reasoning. The idea is that if it is not found in the Koran or the Hadith, then it is said that since God created man then man should be able to use his rational faculties to see what the law should be in the specific case. For example, since alcohol is prohibited in the Koran, then you can extrapolate that marijuana and other drugs are also prohibited.
4. Ijma- The consensus of all Muslims. This is based on Muhammad's famous statement: "My followers will never agree in error."

Five Major Schools of Law:

1. Jafari- This is the school of Shi'a. It is prevalent in Iran.
2. Hanafi- This school is prevalent on the Indian subcontinent. Hanafi is known to be a more liberal school. This is a Sunni school.
3. Maliki- Prevalent in North Africa. This is a sunni school. In addition to the four main sources of law, they are also look to the four rightly guided caliphs.
4. Shafi'I- Prevalent in Indonesia. In addition to the four main sources of law, it looks to opinion of Muhammad's direct companions. A sunni school.
5. Hanbali- This school is prevalent in Saudi Arabia. This is the most conservative school in its interpretation of the Koran and the laws. It is a sunni school.

Five Categories of Activities-

1. Halal- The obligatory activities that include the five pillars.
2. Mustahabb- The recommended activities for your spiritual growth. For example, prayers before bed and visiting the sick.
3. Mubah- These are neutral activities that you have to do every day. For example, driving your car- Islamic religion does not have anything to say about this.
4. Mukruh- Reprehensible activities. However, these are tolerated. For example, divorce.
5. Haram- Prohibited activities. For example, eating of pork or making images of God himself. God is not imaginable, so you cannot make an image of him.