

Syllabus “Muslim Connections Across Asia” (SINO 2014)

Course convenor

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Time & place

Monday 15.30-17.20, CPD-2.45

Abstract

Many introductions to Islam take the Arabian Peninsula as the starting point and origin of historical processes of Muslim community formation. These are, in turn, assembled under one umbrella term and genealogically fixed to territories in the Middle East. In this course, we will explore Islam from a different perspective, namely as made up of a complex web of connections which Muslims establish through interaction. By looking at the results of historical and anthropological research we will, departing from Hong Kong, follow these connections across different parts of Central, East, South, Southeast and West Asia. In this regard, we will analyze and critically discuss the local, transnational and transregional anchoring of Muslim connections under the conditions of trade, empire, pilgrimage, and conquest.

Course objectives & learning outcomes

The course aims to provide students with grounded knowledge of historical and contemporary Muslim connections across different parts of Asia, including China. It furthermore aims to train students to critically evaluate the social scientist concepts used to frame such connections.

1. After completion of the course students will be able to identify Muslim connections across Asia, including China.
2. Students will also demonstrate the ability to explain social science concepts used to frame Muslim connections across Asia, including China.
3. Students will finally be able to apply and compare these different social science concepts.

Assessment

The different parts of the course assessment are aligned with the course objectives and the expected learning outcomes. The assessment is split in three parts: 1) development of test questions (20%), 2) mid-term test (30%), 3) in-class essay on two central questions (50%).

1) Development of test questions (20%):

In preparation for the mid-term test you will develop your own questions on “Islam in Hong Kong” and “West Asia connections I”. The best questions will be employed in the test. We will discuss criteria and techniques to formulate good test questions in class on 25 September and you will have to submit 5 questions by 4 October, 23.59 via Moodle. Please submit your assessment as a word document. To ensure fairness to all your classmates, late assessments will be deducted 1/3 of a letter grade each day. Assessments turned in on or after the 7th day from the date the assessment was originally due (including weekends and holidays) will receive a zero. Exceptions may be granted based on documented proof of emergencies (medical or other).

2) Mid-term test (30%):

The mid-term test will be conducted on 23 October. The test consists of short questions which require you to apply knowledge acquired in the course sessions “Islam in Hong Kong”, “West Asia connections I” **and** “West Asia connection II”. Attendance is essential. If you cannot attend please present a medical or other relevant certificate.

3) In-class essay (50%):

You will write an in-class essay on two central questions on the course content on 20 November. The aim of the essay is to establish a comparative angle on the discussed topics. If you cannot attend please present a medical or other relevant certificate.

Attendance

In accordance with University and School guidelines attendance is mandatory. If you cannot participate I expect you to excuse yourself and to provide a medical or other relevant certificate.

Course program

The course program consists of *core readings* and *additional literature* which complements these readings. Students are expected to read all core texts. These texts will be essential to participation and assignments. I strongly encourage you to also read as many additional texts as possible. They will enable you to get a broader picture of the subject matter and to contribute to in-class discussions and assessment projects from innovative angles.

4 September Introduction

In this session, I introduce the syllabus and give you a conceptual overview of the course topics. In addition, I give you the opportunity to clarify basic questions on Islam and Muslims. We then dive into examples from Paul O’Connor’s book *Islam in Hong Kong* which you can find on Moodle (a chapter from this book will also be the core reading for the next session).

11 September No class!

18 September Islam in Hong Kong

In today's lesson, we take the historical presence of Muslims in Hong Kong as a starting point to map broader connections, past and present. In this regard, we discuss questions such as: Where did the first Muslims in Hong Kong come from? What sort of Islamic institutions have been developed over time? And how have Muslim communities in Hong Kong transformed and established links to new places in the course of time?

Core reading:

Chapter "1.2 The History of Islam in Hong Kong" in Paul O'Connor, *Islam in Hong Kong*, Hong Kong University Press, Hong Kong, 2012, pp. 21–33.

Additional literature:

Chapter "1.3 Transformations" in Paul O'Connor, *Islam in Hong Kong*, Hong Kong University Press, Hong Kong, pp. 35–54.

Ho, Wai-Yip. "British Raj to China's Hong Kong: The Rise of Madrasa for Ethnic Muslim Youth", *Modern Asian Studies* 48/2, 2014, pp. 399–432.

25 September West Asia connections I

The first of two classes on West Asia connections focusses on patterns of global Muslim mobility in the nineteenth century. Adopting a particular perspective towards imperial globalization this lesson prepares the ground to understand the next lesson's reading on Muslims in Bombay, India, who eventually became the first Muslim immigrants to Hong Kong.

At the end of today's class, we discuss and prepare the first assignment for assessment (20%) – the development of critical test questions on "Islam in Hong Kong" and "West Asia connections I" which you will have to submit by **4 October, 23.59 via Moodle** (see also section "Assessment" above).

Core reading:

Chapter "Introduction" in James L. Gelvin and Nile Green (eds.), *Global Muslims in the Age of Steam and Print*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2014, pp. 1–22.

Additional literature:

Tagliacozzo, Eric. "Hajj in the Time of Cholera: Pilgrim Ships and Contagion from Southeast Asia to the Red Sea" in James L. Gelvin and Nile Green (eds.), *Global Muslims in the Age of Steam and Print*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2014, pp. 103–120.

2 October Public holiday – no class!

4 October **Submission of your 5 own critical questions for the mid-term test by 23.59 via Moodle!**

9 October **West Asia connections II**

In today's class, we discuss the religious economy of colonial Bombay which – as a port city – provides fertile ground for comparison with Hong Kong. Furthermore, since Hong Kong's first Muslims arrived in the context of British imperial circulations this class results in a clearer understanding of how to map Muslim connections across Asia against the backdrop of historical trajectories and patterns of migration.

In the second part of today's class, we discuss your critical test questions which you have submitted via Moodle. We discuss the quality of the questions and seek to find answers. The best test questions will become part of the mid-term test on 23 October.

Core reading:

Chapter "Introduction" in Nile Green, *Bombay Islam*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2011, pp. 1–23.

Additional reading:

Chapter "6. Making Islam in the Motor City", in Nile Green, *Terrains of Exchange*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2014, pp. 207–233.

16 October **Reading week – no class!**

23 October **Muslims in China I**

This is the first of two classes on Muslims in China. Today we focus on an overview of the different Muslim groups that are present in China, in particular on the Hui Muslims of Gansu and Ningxia and their positioning within broader Chinese and global settings. This lesson also serves as preparation and background for the second class on Muslims in China next week.

In the second part of today's class, you write and submit the **mid-term test** (30%) on "Islam in Hong Kong", "West Asia connections I" **and** "West Asia connections II" which we have prepared in the previous lessons.

Core reading:

Chapter "Introduction" in Matthew S. Erie, *China and Islam*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2016, pp. 1–38.

Additional reading:

Gladney, Dru C. "Islam in China: State Policing and Identity Politics" in Yoshiko Ashiwa & David L. Wank, *Making Religion, Making the State*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2009, pp. 151–178.

30 October

Muslims in China II

In today's second class on Muslims in China we host two specialist guests. Dr. James Frankel (CUHK) and Mohammed Al-Sudairi (HKU) present a lecture on "Sino-Muslims in Foreign Christian and Islamic Missionary Imaginaries."

Core reading:

Israeli, Raphael. "The Cross Battles the Crescent: One Century of Missionary Work among Chinese Muslims (1850–1950)", *Modern Asian Studies* 29/1, 1995, pp. 203–221.

6 November

Southeast Asia connections

After our discussions on the legacy of British colonial circulations of Muslims and the Chinese Hui this class will focus on a third group of Muslims – those from Southeast Asia, especially Indonesia, who are of high relevance to the history of Hong Kong. While the largest number/group of Indonesian Muslims in Hong Kong today consists of labour migrants ("domestic helpers"), Indonesia has also been a central node for Muslim connections across Asia in the past. In this regard, we will specifically look at aspects of pilgrimage mobility across the Indian Ocean to the Middle East.

Core reading:

Chapter "Introduction" in Eric Tagliacozzo, *The Longest Journey: Southeast Asians and the Pilgrimage to Mecca*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2013, pp. 3–12.

Chapter "Conclusion" in Eric Tagliacozzo, *The Longest Journey: Southeast Asians and the Pilgrimage to Mecca*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2013, pp. 293–305.

Additional literature:

Ho, Wai-Yip. "The Emerging Visibility of Islam Through the Powerless: Indonesian Muslim Domestic Helpers in Hong Kong", *Asian Anthropology* 14/1, 2015, pp. 79–90.

13 November

Central Asia connections

In today's class, we discuss the significance of connections between China and Central Asia, past and present. In this regard, traders have always played an important role in connecting places across Asia and maintaining overland routes throughout Eurasia. Via a focus on mobile Afghan traders we will see that China's rise as an economic and political power has long been entangled with the activities of Muslim traders of various backgrounds.

Core reading:

Marsden, Magnus, "Crossing Eurasia: Trans-Regional Afghan Trading Networks in China and Beyond", *Central Asian Survey* 35/1, 2016, pp. 1–15.

Additional reading:

Chapter “Introduction” in Rian Thum, *The Sacred Routes of Uyghur History*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 2014, pp. 1–15.

20 November East Asia connections

Tying in with last week’s class, today we focus on the often-unexpected emergence of Muslim communities in different Asian locales. In this respect, the founding of the first mosque in Japan provides a striking example of how the trajectories of Muslims from various parts of Asia intersected in concrete construction projects and the materiality of the mosque.

In the second part of today’s class, you write the last assignment of this semester. The **in-class essay** (50%) consists of two questions and cover the broader strands of the course content.

Core reading:

Chapter “7. Founding the First Mosque in Japan”, in Nile Green, *Terrains of Exchange*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2014, pp. 235–279.

Additional literature:

Kwon, Jeeyun. “The Rise of Korean Islam: Migration and Da’wa”, *Middle East Institute*, 2014, Online: <http://www.mei.edu/content/map/rise-korean-islam-migration-and-da'wa>

27 November Closing session

We use the final session of this semester to discuss open empirical and conceptual questions regarding Muslims connections across Asia and attempt to come to general conclusions which aim to help continue your investigation beyond the classroom.