

Ethical Dimension of Islam

**Department of Historical Studies
University of Toronto Mississauga**

Course Syllabus

Fall, 2011

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Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursdays by appointment

Course Description

In this course, we strive to look at ethics and the ways in which Islamic thinkers and scholars discuss different dimensions of ethical issues and topics. To do that, we discuss some topics which are discussed both in Western tradition and Islamic tradition.

Learning Objectives

At the end of this course, students will:

- 1. Distinguish different levels of ethical discussions**
- 2. Be familiar with philosophical, mystical and theological ethics from the Islamic point of view,**
- 3. Be familiar with the ways in which contemporary Muslim thinkers deal with ethical issues and debates**

Accessibility

The University of Toronto at Mississauga is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom, or course materials, please contact Access Ability Services: accessconfirm.utm@utoronto.ca or www.erin.utoronto.ca/access/.

Plagiarism

In writing papers, it is an offence for a student:

- To use someone else's ideas or words in your own work without confirming that those ideas/words are not yours.**
- To include false and misleading citations in your work.**
- To use or possess an unauthorized aid in any test or exam.**

For further information, read "How Not to Plagiarize" prepared by the U of T Writing Centre: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>.

Evaluation

Two papers (20% each; 1200-1400 words each; due Oct 13 th , Dec 1 th)	40%
Oral presentation	20%
Final exam	40%

Main Texts

- John Skorupski (2010) *The Routledge Companion to Ethics* (ed.), (London & New York: Routledge)
- William Schweiker (2005) *The Blackwell Companion to Religious Ethics* (ed.), (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing)
- Peter Singer (1991) *A Companion to Ethics* (ed.), (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing)
- Amin Sajoo (2004) *Muslim Ethics: Emerging Vistas* (ed.), (London & New York: I.B.Tauris Publishers)

Outline of Lectures:

1) Sep 6: Introduction: What is Ethics?

(Sajoo, chap.1, Schweiker, chap. 26, Bernard Williams, *Morality: an Introduction to Ethics*; pp. 73-82, Tannsjo: *An Introduction to Ethical theory*, chap.1)

2) Sep 13: Ancient Ethics: Plato & Aristotle

(Skorupski, pp.31-40, Singer, chap.7; Tannsjo: chap.5)

3) Sep 20: Virtue Ethics & Ethical Particularism

(Skorupski, pp.41-62, Jonathan Dancy, *Moral Reasons*, chap. 4,5,6 & *Ethics Without Principles*, chap.1; Tannsjo: chap.5; David McNaughton, *Moral Vision: An Introduction to Ethics*, chap. 13)

4) Sep 27: Classical Muslim Philosophers: Al-Farabi & Al-Kindi & Miskawayh

(Skorupski, pp.63-76, Schweiker, chap. 26 and 27)

5) Oct 4, 11: Theological Ethics (Divine Command Theory): Ash'arite & Mu'tazeleh

(Schweiker, chap. 27, Stewart, *Ethics: an Introduction to Moral Philosophy*, Part.1, Tannsjo, chap.1, Quinn, *Contemporary Debates in Moral Theory*, pp. 53-73)

6) Oct 18: Love Ethics: Rumi

(Binyamin Abramahov: *Divine Love in Islamic Mysticism*, [www. drsoroush.com](http://www.dr.soroush.com))

7) Oct 25: Russian Ethics: The Ethics of Prima Facie Duties

(Singer, pp. 411-420, David Ross: *The Right and The Good*, chap.2 & *Foundations of Ethics*, David McNaughton: “An Unconnected Heap of duties?”, *Philosophical Quarterly*, Brad Hooker & Margaret Little: *Moral Particularism*, chap.1,

8) Nov 2 Contemporary Muslim Thinkers: Abdulkarim Soroush

(Schweiker, chap.28, *Freedom and Democracy in Islam*, & *The Expansion of Prophetic Experience*, Soroush Dabbagh: “Contemporary Muslim Thought on Morality:The Case of Iranian Religious Intellectuals”)

9) Nov 9 Contemporary Muslim Thinkers: Mohammad Eqbal- Lahori

(Schweiker, chap.28, Iqbal- Lahori: *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*)

10) Nov. 16 Contemporary Muslim Thinkers: Seyyed Mohammad Hossein
Tabatabaie

(Tabatabaie: *The Principles of Philosophy and the Realist Method* & *Al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur’an*, Soroush Dabbagh and Hossein Dabbagh: “Tabatabaie’s Ethics versus Tractarian Ethics: A Comparative Study”

11) Nov 23: Islamic Bioethics: Abortion & Euthanasia

(Sajoo, Appendices C; Abdulaziz Sachedina: *Islamic Biomedical Ethics: Principles and Approach*; Kiarash Aramesh & Heydar Shadi: “ An Islamic Perspective on Euthanasia”& “ Iran’s experience on Religious Bio-ethics: An Overview)