Alnoor Dhanani  
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Office Hours: Monday 10-12 a.m. or by appointment

**Description:** This course introduces the philosophical tradition in Arabic known as falsafa, and some aspects of the rival atomistic cosmological tradition known as kalām (commonly translated as Islamic theology). We will examine the formation of these traditions, the positions their major exponents held, the arguments and counter-arguments they adduced in support of these positions, and the objections they raised against the positions of their rivals. We will also discuss the social and intellectual contexts of these traditions, as well as contested interpretations in current scholarship. The time span covered in the course ranges from the eighth century beginnings of these traditions up to the sixteenth century “School of Isfahan.” The format will consist of both lectures and discussions based on selections from English translations of primary texts.

**Grading**

- **Class participation and attendance:** 10%
- **Short analytical paper:** 25%
- **Takehome midterm:** 25%
- **Research paper:** 40%

*Class participation and attendance:* Students are expected to be present for every class meeting and to participate in discussions. This will require completing the assigned reading before class.  
*Short analytical paper:* A 3-5 page analysis of the arguments, premises, objections, and counter-arguments of a choice of primary texts (marked with an asterisk in the schedule of readings). Due November, 16 2015.  
*Takehome midterm:* Identification of persons and concepts, and short discussions of positions and arguments. Distributed on October 21, and due a week later on October 28, 2015.  
*Research paper of 8-10 pages for undergraduate students, 16-18 pages for graduate students,* on a topic that has been discussed with me and cleared by me before October 28, 2015. The research paper will be due on December 14, 2015. Late submission without an approved excuse will result in a half grade deduction for every day beyond the assigned date.

**Preparation time:** Success in this 4 credit hour course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for exams, etc.).

**Academic Integrity:** You must complete all assignments alone. In your writing, you must follow rules of attribution, meaning that you must cite all sources consulted in preparing your papers. As stated in the *Student Handbook*, “Every member of the University community is expected to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty. A student shall not receive credit for work that is not the product of the student’s own effort.” Examples of penalties for a student found responsible for an infringement of academic honesty are no credit for the work in question, failure in the course, and the traditional range of conduct sanctions from disciplinary warning through permanent dismissal from the University.

**Electronic devices:** Students are permitted to use a laptop or ipad (or similar) device in class for two purposes only: consulting readings assigned for class and note-taking. Devices may not be used to access social media (e-mail, facebook, twitter, etc.) or other internet use. Cell-phones may not be used...
for any purpose. Recording of class in any format is not permitted without prior consent of the professor for the specific session. Under no circumstance may a recorded session or any portion thereof be shared or distributed.

**Students with documented disabilities:** Students with disabilities certified by the Coordinator of Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities in the Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs and First Year Services will be given reasonable accommodations to complete required assignments. Disabilities that are not documented and approved by the Office of Academic Affairs will not be given accommodations.

**Schedule of classes**

8/31 Introduction to the course; What do we mean by “Islamic Philosophy”?  
9/2 Islamic philosophy and its historical context  
9/9, 9/10 *Kalām*, an alternative atomistic philosophy to the Neoplatonic Aristotelian falsafa  
9/16 The translation movement, from Greek, Syriac, Pahlavi, Sanskrit into Arabic  
9/21 Al-Kindi, the first Arab philosopher; cosmological argument for creation *ex nihilo*  
9/29 Abū Bakr al-Rāzī, Platonist? The Ethical Ideal; Views on Space, Time, and Matter  
9/30, 10/5 Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī; Epistemology, Cosmology, Political philosophy, Religion, Philosophy, and Prophecy  
10/7 *Ikhwān al-Safā*’ and their Epistles  
10/12, 10/14, 10/19, 10/21 Ibn Sinā (Avicenna); naturalization of falsafa; Emanation; Prophecy; Necessary and Possible Existence; Soul; the human soul; arguments against *kalām* atomism. TAKEHOME MIDTERM DISTRIBUTED ON 10/21  
10/26 NO CLASS; WORK ON MIDTERM  
10/28 MIDTERM DUE; RESEARCH PAPER PROPOSAL DUE  
10/28, 11/2 al-Ghazālī (Algazel); Reception of Ibn Sinā; critique of falsafa  
11/4 *Falsafa* in Andalusia I: Ibn Bājja (Avempace), Ibn Ṭufayl  
11/9, 11/11 *Falsafa* in Andalusia II: Ibn Rushd (Averroes); Response to al-Ghazālī; Juristic defense of falsafa; Political philosophy  
11/16 SHORT ANALYTICAL PAPER DUE  
The Avicennization of *kalām*? *Kalām* responses to Avicenna’s arguments against atomism  
11/18 The Avicennization of *kalām*? Al-Ījī and his critique of Avicenna  
11/23 *Falsafa* in Andalusia III: Maimonides and his critique of the *mutakallimūn*  
11/30 The “mystical turn”? Suhrawardī and Illuminationism  
12/2 The “mystical turn?” Ibn ‘Arabī  
12/7 Mullā Ṣadrā  
12/9 Wrap-up  
12/14 RESEARCH PAPER DUE
**Reading Assignments**

**9/2** Islamic philosophy and its historical context

*Primary Sources*

ʻAḍūd al-dīn al-Ījī, “Preliminaries” in *Stations in Kalām*. (LATTE)


*Secondary Sources*


**9/9** Kalām, an alternative atomistic philosophy to the Neoplatonic Aristotelian falsafa

*Primary Sources*


**9/10** Kalām, an alternative atomistic philosophy to the Neoplatonic Aristotelian falsafa

*Secondary Sources*


**9/16** The translation movement, from Greek, Syriac, Pahlavi, Sanskrit into Arabic

*Secondary Source Readings*


George Saliba, “Translations and translators, Islamic” in *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, 11:127-133. (LATTE)

**9/21** Al-Kindi, the first Arab philosopher; cosmological argument for creation ex nihilo

*Primary Source Readings*


*Secondary Source Readings*

Peter Adamson, “Al-Kindī and the Reception of Greek Philosophy” in *The Cambridge Companion to Islamic Philosophy*, 32-51. (Online access)

9/29 Abū Bakr al-Rāzī, Platonist? The Ethical Ideal; Views on Space, Time, and Matter

Primary Source Readings


Selections from Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, Proofs of Prophecy, tr. by T. Khalidi, (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 2011). TBD (LATTE)

Secondary Source Readings


9/30 Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī; Epistemology, Cosmology Political philosophy, Religion, Philosophy, and Prophecy

Primary Source Readings

al-Fārābī, Letter Concerning the Intellect in Philosophy in the Middle Ages, ed. by Arthur Hyman and James Walsh, (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1977), 215-221. (LATTE; text on reserve)


Secondary Source Readings

M. Mahdi, “The Virtuous City”, “Prophecy and Revelation” in Alfarabi and the foundations of Islamic political philosophy, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 125-170. (LATTE; text on reserve)

10/5 Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī; Political philosophy, Religion, Philosophy, and Prophecy

Primary Source Readings

*al-Fārābī, The Political Regime in Medieval Political Philosophy, ed. by Ralph Lerner and Muhsin Mahdi, (Toronto: Collier-Macmillan, 1963), 31-57. (LATTE; text on reserve)


Secondary Source Readings

M. Mahdi, “The Virtuous City”, “Prophecy and Revelation” in Alfarabi and the foundations of Islamic political philosophy, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 125-170. (LATTE; text on reserve)

10/7 Ikhwān al-Safā’ and their Epistles

Primary Source Readings


Secondary Source Readings

Godefroid DeCallataÿ, “Brethren of Purity”, Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE. (Online access)

10/12 Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna); naturalization of falsafa;

Primary Source Readings


Secondary Source Readings

10/14 Ibn Sīnā; Soul, the human soul;

**Primary Source Readings**


Ibn Sīnā, A selection from *The Healing: On the Soul* on “7. A pointer and reminder … for establishing the existence of the soul belonging to us” in *Classical Arabic Philosophy: An Anthology of Sources*, 178-179. (LATTE; text on reserve)

**Secondary Source Readings**


10/19 Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna); Emanation, Prophecy, Necessary and Possible Existence

**Primary Source Readings**

al-Fārābī, *The Aims of Aristotle’s Metaphysics* in *Classical Arabic Philosophy: An Anthology of Sources*, 78-81. (LATTE; text on reserve),

*Ibn Sīnā, Selections on establishing prophecy from Fi ithbāt al-nubuwa and Healing: Metaphysics X in Medieval Political Philosophy*, 98-121. (LATTE; text on reserve)

Ibn Sīnā, Selection on Necessary and Possible Existents from *The Metaphysics of the Healing*, tr. by Michael Marmura, (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2005), 29-34. (LATTE; text on reserve)

**Secondary Source Readings**

Alnoor Dhanani, “Rocks in the Heavens?! The Encounter between ‘Abd al-Jabbār and Ibn Sīnā” in David Reisman (ed.), *Before and After Avicenna*, (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 127-144. (Online access)

Alnoor Dhanani, “The Impact of Ibn Sīnā’s critique of Atomism on Subsequent Kalām Discussions of Atomism”, *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, 25(2015), 79-86. (Online access)

10/21 Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna); arguments against kalām atomism

**Primary Source Readings**


**Secondary Source Readings**

Alnoor Dhanani, “Rocks in the Heavens?! The Encounter between ‘Abd al-Jabbār and Ibn Sīnā” in David Reisman (ed.), *Before and After Avicenna*, (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 127-144. (Online access)

Alnoor Dhanani, “The Impact of Ibn Sīnā’s critique of Atomism on Subsequent Kalām Discussions of Atomism”, *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, 25(2015), 79-86. (Online access)

10/28 al-Ghazālī (Algazel); Reception of Ibn Sīnā

**Primary Source Readings**


**Secondary Source Readings**

Michael Marmura, “al-Ghazālī” in *The Cambridge Companion to Islamic Philosophy*, 137-154. (Online access)

11/2 al-Ghazālī (Algazel); critique of falsafa;

**Primary Source Readings**

*al-Ghazālī, “Seventeenth Discussion” in The Incoherence of the philosophers (Tahāfut al-falāsifa), tr. by Michael Marmura, (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1997), 170-181. (LATTE; text on reserve)

11/4 Falsafa in Andalusia I: Ibn Bājja (Avempace), Ibn Ṭufayl

Primary Source Readings

*Avempace (Ibn Bājja), The Governance of the Solitary in Medieval Political Philosophy, 122-133. (LATTE; text on reserve)

Ibn Tufayl, Hayy, the Son of Yaqzan, in Medieval Political Philosophy, 134-162. (LATTE; text on reserve)

Secondary Source Readings

Joseph Montada, “Philosophy in Andalusia. Ibn Bājja and Ibn Ṭufayl”, in Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy, 155-179. (Online access)

11/9 Falsafa in Andalusia II: Ibn Rushd (Averroes); Jurist defense of falsafa; Political philosophy

Primary Source Readings

Averroes (Ibn Rushd), Decisive Treatise Determining what the Connection is between Religion and Philosophy in Medieval Political Philosophy, 163-185. (LATTE; text on reserve)


Secondary Source Readings


11/11 Falsafa in Andalusia II: Ibn Rushd (Averroes); Response to al-Ghazālī

Primary Source Readings


11/16 The Avicennization of kalām? Kalām responses to Avicenna’s arguments against atomism

Secondary Source Readings

Alnoor Dhanani, “The Impact of Ibn Sīnā’s critique of Atomism on Subsequent Kalām Discussions of Atomism”, Arabic Sciences and Philosophy, 25(2015), 79-104. (Online access)


11/18 The Avicennization of kalām? Al-Ījī and his critique of Avicenna

Secondary Source Readings


Robert Wisnovsky, “One Aspect of the Avicennan Turn in Theology”, Arabic Sciences and Philosophy, 14(2004), 65-100. (Online access)

11/23 Falsafa in Andalusia III: Maimonides and his critique of the mutakallimūn

Primary Source Readings


Secondary Source Readings

Alnoor Dhanani, “Revisiting Maimonides Critique of Kalām,” unpublished paper. (LATTE)
11/30 The “mystical turn”? Suhrawardi and Illuminationism;

**Primary Source Readings**

Suhrawardī, “Part Two. The First Discourse: On light and its reality, the Light of Lights and that which was first generated from it” in *The Philosophy of Illumination*, tr. by John Walbridge and Hossein Ziai, (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1999) 76-89. (LATTE; text on reserve)

**Secondary Source Readings**

John Walbridge, “Suhrawardī and Illuminationism,” in *Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, 201-223. (Online access)

12/2 The “mystical turn?” Ibn ‘Arabī

**Secondary Source Readings**


Sajjad Rizvi, “Mystical Philosophy: Ibn ‘Arabī and Mullā Sadrā,” in *Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, 224-246. (Online access)

12/7 Mullā Sadrā

**Secondary Source Readings**

Sajjād Rizvi, “Reconsidering the Life of Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī (d. 1641)”, *Iran*, 40 (2002), 181-201. (Available online via JSTOR)
Books on Reserve


