

Module Title: Introduction to Muslim Mysticism

Module Code: IRFINT

Course Duration: 17 Weeks

Teaching Method: 2 units/week

Credits: 10

Overview:

This module seeks to define *‘irfān* and *taṣawwuf*. It endeavours to study the origins, history and development of mysticism in Islam, its divisions (theoretical and practical), central motifs in Sufi literature (the *qasida*, *nasib*, *maqamat*, *halat* and the *ghazal* forms and their themes), and the historiography of the major texts in Sufism. It introduces students to prominent figures in the field of Islamic mysticism such as al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 737), Rābi‘a al-‘Adawiyya (d. 801), Abu Yazīd al-Biṣṭāmī (d. 859), Sarī al-Saqāfī (d. 867), Junayd al-Baghdādī (d. 910), Ḥusayn Ibn al-Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj (d. 922), Abu al-Ḥasan Khurqānī (d. 1033), ‘Alī Ḥujwīrī (d. 1077), Abu Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 1111), Aḥmad al-Ghazālī (d. 1126), ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt Hamadānī (d. 1131), Ḥakīm Sanā‘ī (d. 1131), Farīd ud-Dīn al-‘Aṭṭār (d. 1221), Ibn ‘Arabī (d. 1240), and Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (d. 1273). This module will also enable the students to establish the link between *‘irfān*, *kalām* (theology), *manṭiq* (logic), and philosophy. It will also expose them to the major themes of Muslim mysticism from Ibn ‘Arabī onwards.

Syllabus:

The following are the subjects that are discussed in this module:

- Definition, subject matter, objective and benefits of ‘Irfān/Sufism
- Origin and etymology of the term: *ṣūfī*, *‘arif*, *‘ābid* and *zāhid* and their interrelations
- Relationship between ‘Irfān/Sufism and the other Muslim disciplines of theology, philosophy and ethics
- The history and development of ‘Irfān/Sufism, from its early prominent scholars/practitioners and their contributions up to and including the formation of the different *ṭarīqas* present today
- Distinction between theoretical and practical ‘Irfān/Sufism; their relation, importance, purpose and value among Muslim mystics specifically, and in ‘Irfān/Sufism generally
- The scriptural (Qur’anic and traditional) basis of mysticism and asceticism, early ascetic Sufism, practical Sufism and theoretical mysticism
- Overview of the central themes in Muslim Mysticism
- The impact of the transmission and translation of philosophical and religious texts from other cultures on the expression, interpretation, and practice of *‘irfan*
- Theoretical ‘Irfān/Sufism Part I: An overview of the central motifs in the Sufi literature of Maulana Jalal al-Din al-Rumi
- Theoretical ‘Irfān/Sufism Part II: An overview of the general teachings of Ibn ‘Arabī

Learning outcomes:

On completion of this module, the successful student will be able to:

1. Discuss the definition, subject matter, aims, and benefits of 'Irfān/Sufism
2. Discuss the etymology, history and development of 'Irfān/Sufism
3. Show an awareness of the scriptural basis of 'Irfān/Sufism
4. Show an understanding of the difference between the sciences of Muslim theology, Muslim philosophy and mysticism, and the historical tension between the Sufis, *muḥaddiths* and *fuqahā'*
5. Describe the influence of Muslim philosophy and theology on 'Irfān/Sufism
6. Understand of the key ideas of theoretical 'Irfān/Sufism of Maulana Rumi and Ibn 'Arabi
7. Demonstrate an awareness of the parallels between 'Irfān/Sufism and other mystical traditions

Assessment Weighting:

- 100% Exam

Learning Materials:

Core texts:

- AMI Pack
- Attar, M. I., & Nicholson, R. A. (1905), Part I of *Tadhkiratul Awliyaā'* (*Memoirs of the Saints*) of Muḥammad ibn Ibrahim Farid 'uddin 'Aṭṭār, London: Luzac
- 'Aṭṭār, F. A.-D., & Arberry, A. J. (2008), *Muslim Saints And Mystics: Episodes From the Tadhkirat al-Awliya'*, London: Routledge
- Smith, M. (2001), *Muslim women Mystics: The Life And Work Of Rab'ia And Other Women Mystics In Islam*, Great Islamic Thinkers, Oxford: Oneworld

Further Reading:

- 'Abdur Rabb, M. (1971), *Persian Mysticism: Abu Yazid al-Bistami*, Dacca: Academy for Pakistan Affairs
- 'Afīfī, A. A. & Muhammad Ibn 'Alī, M. A. D. (1939), *The Mystical Philosophy of Muḥyid Dīn-Ibnul 'Arabī*.

- ‘Aṭṭār, F. A.D, Davis, D. & Darbandi, A. (1984), *The Conference of the Birds*, The Penguin Classics, England: Penguin Books
- Chittick, William (1989), *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, New York: State University of New York Press
- Chittick, W. C. (1983). *The Sufi Path of Love: The Spiritual Teachings of Rumi*. Albany, State University of New York Press
- Fakhry, Majid (1997), *Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Mysticism*, Oxford: Oneworld
- Ghazzālī, & McCarthy, R. J. (2006), *Al-Ghazzālī's Path to Sufism and his Deliverance from error: An Annotated Translation of al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl*, Louisville: KY, Fons Vitae
- Al-Hujwiri, Ali Ibn ‘Uthman (1996), *Kashf al-Mahjub*, translated by Nicholson, Reynold, Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications
- Jalal Al-Din, R., Muhammad Ibn Muhammad, & Nicholson, R. A. (1971), *The Mathnawi of Jalalu' d-din Rumi*, London: Luzac
- Lewisohn, L., & Shackle, C. (2006), *'Aṭṭār and the Persian Sufi Tradition: The Art of Spiritual Flight*. London: I. B. Tauris
- Lombard, J. E. B. (2003), *Aḥmad al-Ghazzālī and the Metaphysics of Love*, Thesis (Ph.D.), Yale University, 2003
- Martin, D. L. (1984), *Fanā' (mystical annihilation of the soul) and al-Baqā' (subsistence of the soul) in the Work of Abū al-Qāsim al-Junayd al-Baghdādī*, Thesis (Ph.D.), University of California, Los Angeles, 1984
- Mason, H. W. (1995), *Al-Hallaj*, Curzon Sufi Series, Richmond: Curzon Press
- Mourad, S. A. (2006), *Early Islam Between Myth and History: Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and the Formation of His Legacy in Classical Islamic Scholarship*, Leiden: Brill.
- Mumisa, Michael (2003), “A Study of Abu Hamid al-Ghazali’s Life and Epistemology” in *An International Journal for Comparative Philosophy and Mysticism*, London: Academy of Iranian Studies
- Netton, Richard Ian (1991), *Muslim Neoplatonists: An Introduction to the Thought of the Brethren of Purity (Islamic Surveys)*, Edinburgh: University Press
- Nicholson, R. A. (1963), *The Mystics of Islam*, London: Routledge
- Nicholson, R. A. (1921), *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, Cambridge: The University Press
- Omar Khayyam (2009), *Writings of the Sufi: The Mystical Tradition in Islam*, St Petersburg: Red and Black Publishers
- Omar Khayyam, ‘Aṭṭār, F. A. D., Fitzgerald, E., & Briggs, A. D. P. (2009), *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, London, Phoenix
- Osho (2004), *Unio Mystica: Discourses on the Sufi Mystic, Hakim Sanai*, India: Tao Pub

- Sanā'ī al-Ghaznavī, A. A. & Pendlebury, D. (1976), *The Walled Garden of Truth*, New York: Dutton
- Schimmel, A. (1975), *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press
- Schimmel, A. (1993), *The Triumphal Sun: A Study of the Works of Jalāloddinn Rumi*, Albany (N.Y.), State University of New York press
- Sells, M. A. (1996), *Early Islamic Mysticism: Sufi, Qur'an, Miraj, Poetic and Theological writings*, The Classics of Western Spirituality, New York: Paulist Press.
- Shah, I. (1964), *The Sufis*, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday