

# ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY: Ethics, Soul and Afterlife

Rutgers University  
Spring 2021 (M/R 9:50-11:10)  
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Zoom meeting ID: 769 892 1310

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## 1. Course Description

This course is intended to be an introduction to some major issues, figures, and texts of Islamic philosophy, theology. All discussions will take place at two different levels: First, we outline the larger religious, historical, and intellectual context in which each philosopher or theologian, perceived and addressed his/her own central questions. Second, we closely examine the logical structure of some major arguments they presented to support their claims, and will critically evaluate the soundness of their arguments.

The content of the course can be presented in two different ways: First, the course presents an introduction to main figures in Islamic Theology or *kalām*; and Islamic Philosophy or *falsafih*. These figures include al-Juwaini, al-Ghazali, Abd al-Jabbar, al-Razi, al-Farabi, Avicenna, and Averroes. On the other hand, the course can be seen as an exploration of the nature of happiness and immortality through discussions of historical figures in Islamic Theology and Islamic Philosophy. In the first part of the course, we discuss moral philosophy in Islamic Theology. We will examine the Mu'tazilites' and Ash'arites' views on ethical theory. The Mu'tazilites formulated the rationalist Islamic ethical system with basic deontological presuppositions, and the Ash'arites formulated a rigorous 'voluntarist' and consequentialist system of morality. The second part of the course deals with the nature of happiness and immortality among Islamic philosophers. We can't understand the nature of happiness in Islamic philosophy unless we have a better understanding of cosmology and philosophy of mind espoused by Islamic philosophers. By investigating the view of Islamic philosophers on the nature of soul and its immortality we strive to have a better understanding of human happiness in Islamic thought.

## 2. Course Goals

- To develop an initial understanding of the main figures in Islamic thought
- To develop a substantial understanding of major philosophical, theological, issues within the intellectual tradition of Islam.
- To exercise scholarly fairness, sympathy, and tolerance toward different cultures and world views, and expand our intellectual horizon.
- To develop expository writing skills.
- To have a first hand experience of inter-connectedness of Intellectual dimensions of Islam with Greek Philosophy and other religions.

### 3. Required Texts

All other readings will be provided through Canvas.

The readings are chapters from the following books:

*Classical Arabic Philosophy, an anthology of sources* Translated by McGinnis and Reisman

*The Ethics of Abd al-Jabbar*, by G. Hourani,

*Philosophy in Islamic World* by Peter Adamson,

*al-Ghazali's "moderation in belief" (Iqtisad)*, Translated by Aladdin Yaquub.

*Deliverance from Error*, translated by McCarthy

*Guide to Conclusive Proofs for the Principles of Belief: Al-Irshad*, translated by Walker

*The Proof of Prophecy*, Translated by Khalidi

*The Metaphysics of Healing* Translated by Marmura,

*On the Perfect State* Translated by Walzer

### 4. Course Requirements

Your grade will be determined by four quizzes (20%), Participation (5%) and two papers (75%).

### 5. Grading Scale

The grading scale for the course is as follows:

A	= 89.5-100
B+	= 84.5-89.49
B	= 79.5-84.49
C+	= 74.5-79.49
C	= 69.5-74.49
D	= 59.5-69.49
F	= 0-59.49

### 6. Participation (5%)

All students are expected to do the assigned reading and come to class prepared. You're attendance would not be very helpful to you if you are not prepared for the class. You will be allowed two absences. Your participation grade will be adjusted downward by a third (e.g. A to A-, A- to B+, etc.) for each additional absence.

### **7. Two papers (75%)**

Each paper consists of you writing a four to five page paper in response to a question given to you in the class. You have to hand in your papers two weeks after the prompt is given to you. Each paper counts for 42% of your final grade.

### **8. Four Quizzes (20%)**

Each Quiz consists in multiple-choice questions. Each quiz will be on the first class after finishing the relevant part

### **9. Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty**

*All* written work for the course must be your own. Be sure to cite any works you use, including web sites, books, and articles. Presenting *anyone* else's work as your own is considered plagiarism.

### **10. Disabilities**

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation:

<https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

## 11. Tentative Schedule

Historical Background			Adamson, Chapter 1,2 and 15
The Asharites	al-Juwaini	Voluntarism	<i>Irshad, the Doctrine of Justice and Injustice</i> (pp. 141-146)
	al-Ghazali	Introduction	Adamson, chapter 20 Griffel's "Taqlid of the philosophers"
		Autobiography	Deliverance from Error §§1-21, §§80-101
		Ethics	<i>Iqtisad</i> , Third Treatise (on the act of God, pp.157-188)
		Unbelief and Interpretation	Faysal IV-IX (pp. 92-107)
1 <sup>st</sup> Quiz			
The Mutazilites	Abd al-Jabbar	Knowledge	The Ethics of Abd al-Jabbar (Hourani), Chapters 2
		Good and Evil	Chaters 4, 5
		Revelation	Chapter 6
2 <sup>nd</sup> Quiz			
First Paper			
Falsafa	al-Razi	Introduction	Adamson chapter 7
		Metaphysics	Classic Arabic Philosophy, On Five Eternals, pp 47-49
		Rationalism	The Proof of Prophecy, Part 1, chapter 1 and 2
	al-Farabi	Introduction	Adamson, chapter 9
		Cosmology	Classic Arabic Philosophy, On the Intellect, 68-78
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quiz		
	Avicenna	Introduction	Adamson chapter 17, 18., 19
		The Nature of Happiness	Avicenna's psychology pp.32-33 Metaphysics of Healing, chapter 7, pp. 347-357 alFarabi's the Perfect state, chapter 13 reason pp. 197-209
		The Proof of Soul's existence	Classic Arabic Philosophy, The Soul I.I,175-179,

		The Nature of Soul	The Soul V2. 188-192 V3. 192-195 V.4 195-199
		Al-Ghazali’s responses	Al-Ghazali’s <i>Tahafut</i> Problem XVIII 197-220 Problem XIX 220-228
	4 <sup>th</sup> Quiz		
	Averroes	Introduction	Adamson, chapter 26
		Active Intellect and Immortality	Ivry, “Averroes on Intellection and Conjunction” Tahafut al Tahafut pp.475-477
2 <sup>nd</sup> Paper			