

SPRING 2018

RUMI SEMINAR 840:556/456:01

Time and Place: Wednesdays, 12.10–3.00, with a ten-minute break half-way. Academic Building, 15 Seminary Place, Room 514, College Ave Campus.

Professor: J. Mojaddedi **Office:** Loree, Room 104, Douglass Campus; jamojaddedi@hotmail.com

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 10.30-12 by appointment, live or online.

Course Description:

Rumi is today the best-selling poet in America, a position he has held for more than thirty years, despite the fact that he did not originally write in English. He is consequently one of the best-known spiritual leaders of the past and certainly the most well-known Sufi across the world. How has this mystic from the Islamic world, writing in Persian, the language of present-day Iran and Afghanistan, become so popular among a huge amount of adoring fans in the United States? Rumi's legacy suggests that this status is not an undeserved, freak accident, for he not only composed thousands of verses of poetry that became revered internationally from early on, through the huge Ottoman empire, but his disciples formed, on the basis of his teachings, a Sufi order that became highly influential for many centuries in three different continents. They are still active today and better known as "the Whirling Dervishes."

This seminar will focus on Rumi's writings in translation, in order to acquire an in-depth understanding of both his spirituality and Persian literature. We will contextualize Rumi historically and then analyze his poetry and discourses, with an emphasis on his didactic poetry. Analysis of texts in translation will be emphasized, both as a means to acquire a more in-depth and nuanced understanding of the material, and also to develop skills in textual analysis that are indispensable for advanced study. Original sources can also be provided for anyone who reads Persian, although no language other than English is needed for this course.

Who should take this class?

Students interested in an in-depth study of this seminal figure who is the best-selling poet in America as well as in Iran and Afghanistan. Also, students interested in poetry, mysticism, and Islamic civilization in general will benefit from this course, since Rumi's influence has been so far-reaching.

Learning objectives

- Students will historicize a figure who is popular today and usually encountered with little sense of his historical context.
- Students will learn Rumi's main teachings and how they fit with the wider Sufi tradition of mysticism of his time.
- Students will identify the correlation between innovations in his poetic style in relation to the Persian literary traditions and his mystical idiosyncrasies.

- Students will identify what is distinctive about Rumi that has made him so popular among diverse readerships through the centuries.
- Students will learn skills in textual analysis

Readings: The specific readings for each week will be available on the Sakai shell for this course. There are no required books.

Sakai: Everyone needs to log in to the Sakai site for this course, at sakai.rutgers.edu in order to access the pdf readings and submit reading responses. Students at Minnesota and Illinois need to email the professor in order to gain access to Sakai

Class participation: Since this is a seminar, class participation will be a major determinant of the final grade (30%, meaning that a fail is likely without participation). A successful class will be one in which the instructor's voice is hardly heard at all, though he is always ready to respond to questions, raise further issues, and provide clarifications when needed.

Weekly Reaction Papers: Every week, by Sunday 11:55pm each student is required to post on Sakai a one-page (300 + word) reaction paper on the reading for their choice of at least 10 weeks in total. These will serve as the basis for our class discussions. Specific questions are given for the response to answer:

Research Paper: The final version of the research paper is to be submitted during the final class of the semester on April 25th. A one-page description of your proposed topic with bibliography is due to the instructor at the beginning of the class on Wednesday March 21st.

Late papers (proposal or final paper) without an official Excused Absence will be penalized by one point out of the total points for that paper per 24 hours, or part of a 24 hour period. Papers short of the minimum length specified will be penalized according to the number of words missing. Spelling and grammar will be taken into consideration in grading all papers, which should be typed double-spaced on letter size paper. Each paper must be typed and submitted in hard copy at the beginning of the class on April 25th and also uploaded to Sakai for plagiarism scanning before midnight on April 25th.

Final Grade Constitutents:

30% participation,
 30% Reaction papers,
 40% Research paper (3,500-4,500 words for undergraduates; 5,500-6,500 words for graduate students) (includes points for the proposal).

Grade Scheme: A=100-90, B+= 89-87, B=86-80, C+=79-77, C=76-70, D=69-65, F=64
 An incomplete ("T" grade) will not normally be given for this course.

Course Outline and Reading Assignments

(Since this is a seminar course, this may be adapted according to the needs and interests of class members on particular topics).

1/17 Intro

“Bring your own Rumi” to share your experience of his poetry and teachings

1/24 Situating Rumi’s Sufism and Poetry

Sedgwick, *Sufism: The Essentials*, pp. 5-17

Karamustafa, *Sufism: The Formative Period*, pp.1-15

Calder et al., eds and trs, *Classical Islam*, pp. 163-7, 171-5, 299-303

1/31 Life and Works

Keshavarz, *Reading mystical lyric*, pp. 1-12

Rumi, *Signs of the Unseen*, Introduction

Aflaki, *The Feats of the Knowers of God*, selections

Lewis, *Rumi: Past and Present, East and West*, pp. 128-33, 242-68

2/7 Rubaiyat and Ghazals 1

(Professor at U. of Minnesota)

De Bruijn, *Persian Sufi Poetry*, pp. 6-19 (notes pp. 26-27), 51-83

20 quatrains from Omar Khayyam, *The Ruba’iyyat*

(<http://classics.mit.edu/Khayyam/rubaiyat.html>)

Barks, *Open Secret*, 6-13, 20-21

2/14 Rubaiyat and Ghazals 2

Hafez ghazals selection (tr. Mojaddedi)

Rumi’s ghazals, Selection

Keshavarz, *Reading Mystical lyric*, pp. 72-137

2/21 Fihe ma fihe 1

(Professor at U. of Illinois)

Rumi, *Signs of the Unseen*, Discourses 21, 22, 23, 29, 42

Mojaddedi, *Beyond Dogma*, Chapter One

2/28 Fihe ma fihe 2

Rumi, *Signs of the Unseen*, Discourses 3, 8, 28, 34, 38, 39
Rumi's 'Moses and Shepherd' from *The Masnavi: Book Two*

3/7 Fihe ma fihe 3

Rumi, *Signs of the Unseen*, Discourses 10, 15, 16, 24, 31, 45 63
Mojaddedi, *Beyond Dogma*, Chapter Two

-----SPRING BREAK-----

3/21 Introduction to Masnavi poetry; The Masnavi *Paper Title and Abstract Deadline

De Bruijn, *Persian Sufi Poetry*, pp. 84-113
The Masnavi: Book One, Selections
Attar, *Conference of the birds*, p. 66-86
Mojaddedi, "the Ebb and Flow"

***3/28**

Lecture by Ahmet Karamustafa at 4.30pm EST at Rutgers University

4/4 The Masnavi 2: "Islam" and Mysticism

Mojaddedi, *Beyond Dogma*, pp. 30-46, 64-74, 93-113
The Masnavi, Bk. 2, pp. 101-105, 129-31, 152-65, 194-201
The Masnavi, Bk. 3, pp. 78-91, 141-57

4/11 The Masnavi 3: Oneness and Union

Izutsu, "The Basic Structure of Metaphysical Thinking in Islam," pp. 1-15
Chittick, "Rūmī and *Waḥdat al-wujūd*," pp. 70-111
The Masnavi, Bk. 1, pp. 185-97, 227-43
The Masnavi, Bk. 3, pp. 223-238

4/18 The Masnavi 4: sama`

Avery, *Psychology of Early Sufi Sama*, pp. 10-54
The Masnavi, Bk. 1, pp. 119-37

The Masnavi, Bk. 3, pp. 256-60

4/25 Mevlevi Order and Rumi Today (* **research paper due in class**)

R. Feild, *The Last Barrier*, pp. 108-121, 141-155.