

HIS 6934 – 004 Seminar: Islamic Law and Society

Dr. Will Hanley

W 3-5.45pm

DOD 207

The Course: RLG 6596/HIS 6934, Islamic Law and Society, examines the development of Islamic law and legal cultures as they impact and are shaped by the various contexts in which they operate. Focusing especially on the intersections between Islam law and Islamic societies, the course presents students with some of the most recent scholarship on the origins and evolution of Islamic law, its manifestations in the medieval period, and its interpretations in the modern era. The course uses primary sources in conjunction with source critical secondary literature to explore contemporary scholarly debates surrounding Islamic law, its interpreters, and its social contexts.

Course Objectives: At the end of the course, the student will be able to contextualize the major historical developments of Islamic law, and will have internalized a notion of its major concepts and debates. They will organize their thinking on these topics by producing written responses and questions to weekly readings, and will generate an original piece of research (20-30 pages in length, using at least 10 peer-reviewed sources) that will contribute to the scholarly discussion on the social context of Islamic law.

Prerequisites: The course presumes some prior knowledge of Islam or Middle Eastern history. A background in non-Islamic religion and society (for example, history of religion in early modern Europe) could also serve as a prerequisite. Knowledge of Middle Eastern or Islamic language is helpful but not required.