

Arabic Philosophy: Term Two

11: Kalam: Atomism and Predication

Kalam, is Islamic rational theology. The first of two lectures on Kalam will focus on atomism and theory of predication.

Reading: Selections from H. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam* (Harvard, 1976).

12: Kalam: Debates over Free Will

As preparation for lecture 14, this lecture will deal with the debate between the Mu‘tazilites and Ash‘arites over whether human freedom is compatible with divine omnipotence. The relevance of their arguments for the contemporary debate over compatibilism will be addressed.

Reading: Selections from D. Burrell, *Freedom and Creation in Three Traditions* (Notre Dame, 1993), and from al-Shahrastani, *Kitab al-Milal wa ‘l-Nihal*, translated as *Muslim Sects and Divisions*, translated by A.K. Kazi and J.G. Flynn (Kegan Paul, 1984).

13: Al-Ghazali: Criticism of the Philosophers

The first of two lectures devoted to al-Ghazali’s attack on Avicennan philosophy in the “Incoherence of the Philosophers,” here focusing on his discussion of the eternity of the world. We will also discuss his attitude towards philosophy as found in his autobiography, the “Deliverance from Error.”

Reading: Watt’s translation of the “Deliverance” (*The Faith and Practice of al-Ghazali* (Oneworld, 2000)) will be available in the library. For lectures 12-13: selections from al-Ghazali, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*, translated by M. Marmura (BYU Press 1997).

14. Al-Ghazali: Free Will

The second lecture on the “Incoherence” will deal with two related discussions in that text, on divine causality and free will. We will consider the soundness of al-Ghazali’s attack on Avicenna’s metaphysics and his defense of Ash‘arite occasionalism.

Reading: see above, lecture 13.

Further reading available in library: M. Marmura, “Ghazali’s Chapter on Divine Power in the *Iqtisad*,” *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 4 (1994).

15. Averroes: Faith and Reason

This lecture will focus on a controversial work in which Averroes defends the supremacy of philosophy over religion.

Reading: Translation of the “Decisive Treatise” from Hyman and Walsh, *Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (Hackett 1973), or better the new translation by C. Butterworth (BYU Press, 2001).

16. Averroes and the Averroists: Monopsychism

A discussion of the famous thesis of monopsychism, according to which there is only one intellect for all

humans. We will refer to Averroes' Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima and also discuss the emergence of the so-called Latin Averroists, particularly the monopsychism of Siger of Brabant. Reading: Selections from the Long Commentary on the De Anima, using the new R. Taylor translation which is now in press.

17. Ibn Tufayl and Ibn Bajja

This lecture will deal with two Muslim philosophers working in Spain near the time of Averroes. The lecture will be on Ibn Tufayl's allegory "Hayy ibn Yaqzan," which imagines an autodidact philosopher living alone on a desert island, and the discussion will be about Ibn Bajja's work on the conjunction of human intellect with active intellect.

Reading: Ibn Bajja's epistle on the conjunction of intellect.

Available in the library: L.E. Goodman, *Ibn Tufayl's Hayy ibn Yaqzan* (Twayne, 1972); S. Hawi, *Islamic naturalism and mysticism : A philosophic study of Ibn Tufayl's Hayy bin Yaqsan* (Brill, 1974).

18. Al-Razi and al-Tusi

On the attacks of al-Razi on Avicenna's thought and al-Tusi's attempts to defend Avicenna.

Reading: Hopefully passages from their respective commentaries on the *Isharat* of Avicenna, though I am still trying to locate English texts. If such translations are unavailable reading will be assigned from secondary texts.

Available in the library: M. Horten's studies of al-Razi and al-Tusi will be available for students who can read German: *Die philosophischen Ansichten von Razi und Tusi* (1910) or *Die spekulative und positive Theologie des Islam* (1967).

19. Mysticism

The lecture will focus on the Sufi thinker Ibn 'Arabi, and discuss whether there is any distinctively philosophical mysticism in the Islamic tradition.

Reading: Selection from Ibn al-'Arabi, *The Bezels of Wisdom*, translated by R.W.J. Austin (SPCK, 1980).

20. The Illuminationists

The final session will be devoted to the Illuminationists, al-Sharastani and the latest of the philosophers covered in the course, Mulla Sadra (16-17th century). This lecture will draw on the previous one, showing how the Illuminationists adapted and criticized Avicenna whilst blending his thought with the mystical tradition. Particular attention will be paid to their epistemology and Sadra's analogical theory of being.

Reading: Forthcoming is OUP's *Anthology of Persian Literature*, which will probably not cover these authors yet by next year. I am currently seeking available primary texts.

Available in Library: H. Ziai, *Knowledge and illumination : a study of Suhrawardi's Hikmat al-Ishraq*; (Scholars Press, 1990); J. Walbridge, *The Leaven of the Ancients* (SUNY Press, 1999); hopefully the forthcoming book on Mulla Sadra by S. Rizvi.