

## Course Proposal for Boston University in Niger

Course Name: Islam in sub-Saharan Africa

### Professors

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### Course Objectives

- Encourage reflection about the dynamics of African culture
- Know more about Africa, especially its secular relations with the Moslem world
- Learn the importance and unique qualities of Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa
- Gain an approach to knowledge about Islam and Moslem African cultures

N.B. The equivalent of two years of college French is necessary to take this course. Lectures will be in French. Readings will be in English or French.

### Teaching Methodology

Lectures  
Interviews  
Field trips to important sites or clerics  
Text analysis  
Round table discussions

### Grading

- midterm 20%,
- oral presentation 20%,
- term paper 20%,
- final exam 20%,
- class participation 20%.

Grades will be given on a scale of 0 to 20.

### Plagiarism

All students are responsible for having read the Boston University statement on plagiarism, which is available in the Academic Conduct Code. Students are advised that the penalty against students on a Boston University program for cheating on examinations or for plagiarism may be '...expulsion from the program or the University or such other penalty as may be recommended by the Committee on Student Academic Conduct, subject to approval by the Dean.'

#### Weekly Program

##### Week 1

###### Introduction

- Justification of the course,
- Presentation of the syllabus,
- Presentation of the African continent,
- Black Africa and the Arab World from ancient times until the birth of Islam,
- Definition and clarification of concepts (jihad, hegira, hadith, califat, sultanat, shari'a, Kharedjites, 'Ummah, Coran, surat, Islam, Tariqa, etc.

###### Reading Assignment :

R1 : EL FASI M. et HRBEK I., 1990, pp. 913-926

R2 : EL FASI M. et HRBEK I, III, 1990, pp. 53-79,

##### Week 2

###### Chapter I : Birth and Founding of Islam

- Context of the birth of Islam,
- Islamic doctrine (uniqueness of Allah, universality and atemporalness of Islam, principal pillars of Islam, etc),
- Appearance of the first rifts and sects in Islam.

###### Reading Assignment:

R3 : CORNELL V. J., 1999, pp. 77-88,

R4 : G. NICOLAS, 1981, pp. 11-20.

##### Week 3

###### Chapter II: Expansion of Islam and Africa (first contacts of Africa with Islam) :

- First Moslem in Ethiopia (615 and 619),
- Expansion of Islam in the time of the Orthodoxes Caliphs,
- Mogadishu or Zeila?
- Conquest of Egypt in 642 by Amr ben al-As in the time of Caliph Omar,
- First contact of sub-Saharan Africa with Islam: Uqba ben Nafi au Kawar (Bilma) en 666/7.

###### Reading Assignment :

R5 : EL FASI M., et HRBEK I., III, 1990, pp. 99-106.

R6 : HODGKIN Th., 1975, pp. 88-90.

N.B. By the end of this week, students should have selected their term paper subject, in consultation of one of their professors.

##### Week 4 :

###### Chapter III: Islamization of Black Africa.

- Historic stages of this Islamization,,
- Factors of this Islamization.
- Agents of this Islamization

###### Reading Assignment:

R. 7 : TRIAUD J.-I., 1985 , pp. 273-277,

R.8 : NICOLAS G., 1981, pp. 34-47 ; 48-75.

##### Semaine 5

###### Chapter IV : Local pre-Islamic cultures in Black Africa and the practice of

Islam.

- First forms of coexistence: Islam and local religions (Vaudou, Bori, Yenandi, etc),
- Differences between local religions and Islam,
- Reconciliation with Islam.

Reading Assignment:

R.9 : NICOLAS G., 1981, pp. 21-33.

Midterm

Week 6

Chapter V : Islam and social dynamics :

- Role of the Moslem elite in politics,
- Jihad in Africa : case study of the jihad of Usman Dan Fodio.

Reading Assignment:

R10 : HODGKIN Th., 1975, pp. 240-243 ; 244-247.

Week 7

Chapter V (continued from previous week)

- Islam and colonization
- Islam in independent Africa,
- Some examples of intolerance: Shari'a in Nigeria, Izalat in Niger, etc.

Reading Assignment:

R11 : HISKETT M., 1984, pp. 293-295.

R12 : TRIAUD J.-L., 1981/1982, 192-193, pp. 18-20, dans le cas du Niger.

Week 8

Chapter VI : Inter-community coexistence in Moslem cultures in Black Africa. Niger: a case study.

- Arrival of Christianity,
- Factors of coexistence,
- Importance of Islam and Christianity in ethnic relations

Reading Assignments :

R.12 M. ALIO et H. DAN KARAMI, 2002

Week 9

Conclusion : What to retain of Islam in Africa?

- Peaceful penetration,
- Permanent adaptation,
- Current redynamization
- Social changes

Oral exam and presentation of term papers.

Week 10

Final exam and results

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Required Reading

ALIO M. et DAN KARAMI H., "Facets of a Relationship : Christian-Muslim Reflexion on Diversity, Peaceful Coexistence and Understanding" in PCUSA Program, Interfaith Listening Pilot Project, New-York, September 7th-25th 2002.

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 ESPOSITO (J.), The Oxford History of Islam. Oxford, O.U.P., 1999.  
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 2, 1985, pp. 273-282.  
 TRIAUD J.-L., "L'Islam et l'Etat en Republique du Niger" in Le Mois en  
 Afrique, n°192-193, decembre 1981-janvier 1982, pp. 18-20.

#### Suggested Reading

ABBINK J. et al. , Rethinking Resistance. Revolt and Violence in African  
 History. Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2003.  
 AJAYI J. F. A. et M. CROWDER, History of West Africa, I et II. London,  
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 1976, pp; 264-301.  
 LANGE D., Le Diwan des sultans du (Kanem) Borno : Chronologie et histoire  
 d'un royaume africain (de la fin du Xeme siecle jusqu'a 1808). Wiesbaden,  
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 ed. Islam and the History of Learning in Katsina. Ibadan, Kenbin Press Ltd,  
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