

Course Title: **Theoretical Mysticism: The *Muqaddima* of Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī**

Module Code: IRFQAY  
Course Duration: 17 x 4 (68 weeks)  
Teaching Method: 2 units per week  
Credits: 10 x 4 (40 credits)

**Course Description:**

The science of theoretical mysticism or *ʿirfān* as it is commonly known is one of the authentic sciences of Islam. Adherents of this school of thought claim it to be the most accurate description of the quintessential teaching of Islam known as *tawḥīd*. This course introduces the principal themes and foundations of the thought of Ibn ʿArabī through a close textual reading and study of the classical textbook known as the *Muqaddima*, whose author Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī is regarded as one of the highly respected figures of this community. The course is delivered to students in their third and fourth years. Semesters One and Two are focussed on the basic ontological scheme which is advocated by Ibn ʿArabī's followers and the notion that all existence is in some way united by one existence—namely God's existence—which presents itself in multiple forms through different manifestations and theophanies. The key philosophical problem treated in the first semester is that of the one and the many: of whether or not our immediate phenomenal experience of multiplicity returns to a primeval form of unity. Once it has been shown that all multiplicity is undergirded by a true ontological unity, students are then introduced to this school's understanding of the Divine Names. The descent of unity into multiplicity in the form of the Immutable Archetypes and their existence in manifest existence is the subject of focus in the second semester as well the Five Presences in which the Absolute Existence is continually being manifested. The second semester ends with the notion of the Perfect Man. Semester Three properly begins the study of epistemology as understood by this school. The student is introduced to the mystical notions of unveiling and realisation which lead through successive spiritual exercises to intimacy with God. This semester thus deals with the spiritual anthropology of man. The final semester—Semester Four—is dedicated to the study of the perfect manifestation of God on Earth: namely, the Prophet and his Infallible Household. Here the student examines the notions of prophecy and spiritual vicegerency or *wilāya*. Finally, the course ends with a discussion of the four spiritual journeys and the Return.

**Assessment:** 100% examination

**General Course Texts:**

Qayṣarī, D. *Foundation of Islamic Mysticism: Qayṣarī's Introduction to Ibn ʿArabī's Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam. A Parallel English-Arabic Text*. Translation and Commentary by Mukhtar H. Ali. Milton Keynes: Spiritual Academy Press, 2012.

Module Title: **The *Muqaddima* of Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī: Part III**

Module Code: IRFQAY3

Assessment: 100% examination

Term Schedule:

Week 1:	Substance and Accident (I)
Week 2:	Substance and Accident (II)
Week 3:	Substance and Accident (III)
Week 4:	Substance and Accident (IV)
Week 5:	Substance and Accident (V)
Week 6:	The Five Divine Presences (I)
Week 7:	The Five Divine Presences (II)
Week 8:	The Five Divine Presences (III)
Week 9:	The World of Imagination (I)
Week 10:	The World of Imagination (II)
Week 11:	The World of Imagination (III)
Week 12:	Man and Macrocosm (I)
Week 13:	Man and Macrocosm (II)
Week 14:	The Muhammadan Reality (I)
Week 15:	The Muhammadan Reality (II)
Week 16:	Prophethood and Sainthood (I)
Week 17:	Prophethood and Sainthood (II)

\* Reading lists provided in class for each of the relevant topics each week.