

MODULE HANDBOOK

Islamic Ethics: Classical approaches and Contemporary Issues

ETHINT

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MODULE DESCRIPTION

This module will explore contemporary Muslim responses to ethical questions on issues such as economics, human diversity, the regulation of sex, and medical ethics in light of the dominant theoretical approaches to ethics in the history of Muslim thought. Discussion of applied contemporary ethical questions will be approached after an exploration of diverse ethical discourses arising from readings of scripture, jurisprudence, theology and philosophy. The survey of methodological approaches and assumptions informing different ethical trajectories in Islamic intellectual traditions will be driven to help understand key trends and challenges in contemporary Muslim ethical thinking enabling an in depth engagement with the debates arising from a range of applied cases.

Key readings, assigned each week, will be taken from a range of secondary sources supported with primary source material, in translation, and further reading lists. These readings are chosen to deepen students familiarity with the diversity of classical genres relevant to ethical discourse in Islam, and enable a critical engagement with contemporary ethical thinking on applied issues.

An innovative level one course within the Hawza Programme, this module will demonstrate to students the interaction and overlap between traditional disciplines studied within a Hawza or Madressa context regarding ethical questions in Islam. It will ground the importance of subsequent studies, and allow for independent enquiry that relates classical tradition to contemporary responses to some of the most important ethical questions facing Muslims and Islamic thought today.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- a) Knowledge and understanding of: how competing visions of the Qur'an, *Shari'a*, *kalām*, *akhlāq* and their relation to theological and philosophical assumptions, inform contemporary ethical debates in Muslim thought.
- b) Intellectual skills: be able to interpret and critically engage with complex ideas and technical disciplines, connecting the relevance of theoretical debates to applied issues.
- c) Professional practical skills: To be able to make appropriate use of library and information resources. Evaluate conflicting views through appraisal of the ideas of others and the development of independent reasoning.
- d) Transferable skills: understand, interpret and communicate complex ideas effectively. Ability to develop well-grounded argumentation in oral discussion and in formal writing.

ASSESSMENT

| Assessment Method | Weighting (%) |
|-------------------|---------------|
| Assignment | 40% |
| Written Exam | 60% |

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

| WEEK | TOPIC(S) |
|---------|---|
| Week 1 | Quranic foundations of ethical discourse in Islam |
| Week 2 | Jurisprudential ethics: the ethical nature of Sharī'a, fiqh, uṣūl and qawāid |
| Week 3 | Theological ethics and debates on morality in 'ilm-kalām |
| Week 4 | Philosophical ethics and the Akhlāq traditions |
| Week 5 | Ethics in tasawwuf and irfān |
| Week 6 | Synthesizing ethical discourses; the case of al-Ghazālī |
| Week 7 | Moral turns in Islamic Jurisprudence and hermeneutics: Maqāsid, Quran centered and 'Adliyya readings of Sharī'a |
| Week 8 | Moral turns in Islamic Jurisprudence and hermeneutics: Maqāsid, Quran centered and 'Adliyya readings of Sharī'a |
| Week 9 | The ethical goals and moral deficit In Islamic Banking and Finance |
| Week 10 | The ethical goals and moral deficit In Islamic Banking and Finance |
| Week 11 | Sexual Ethics in Islam |
| Week 12 | Sexual Ethics in Islam |
| Week 13 | Islamic medical ethics and end of life decision |
| Week 14 | Islamic medical ethics and end of life decisions |
| Week 15 | Islam & religious diversity |
| Week 16 | Islam & religious diversity |
| Week 17 | Trajectories in Islamic Ethics: revision and discussion |