

# Storytelling in the Muslim World

AMESALL

01:013:445

**This course has been certified as satisfying the Discipline-based Writing and Communication Learning Outcome Goal of the SAS Core Curriculum [WCd]**

## ASYNCHRONOUS REMOTE

Fall 2020

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Course description: Storytelling is a timeless human activity that is older even than writing and the Muslim world is home to one of the oldest, richest and most culturally diverse storytelling traditions in existence. This course will explore a selection of central texts of medieval Islamic narrative. We will read classic popular narratives that have circulated across the Muslim world and interpret them in relation to enduring questions about power, justice, identity, knowledge and love.

### Selected texts\*:

*The Adventures of Sayf Ben Dhi Yazan: An Arab Folk Epic*

*The Arabian Nights*

*The Story of Layla and Majnun* (Nizami Ganjavi)

Francis Pritchett, *The Romance Tradition in Urdu: Adventures from the Dastan of Amir Hamza*

Jack Zipes, "The Changing Function of the Fairy Tale"

\*All readings in English translation

Learning Objectives: The class will challenge students to question conventional definitions of Islam and the Muslim world through lectures and readings on the cultural histories of Central Asia, the Middle East and Europe. Students will explore the differences and continuities between popular oral literature and the authored text, and they will be introduced to concepts about the important way in which stories travel across time and space through translation. The class will also provide students with a basic narrative grammar through which they can learn to decipher a whole range of stories that we tell about ourselves and the world in which we live.

Course requirements: (1) Average 50 pages of reading per week; (2) weekly Voicethread assignments; (3) weekly Forum posts; (4) three short papers (2pp); (5) Final research paper (10pp)

### Grading:

Voicethread assignments: 25%

Sakai Forums posts: 15%

Three short papers: 30%

Final paper: 30%