

**SC-539 - Hadith Methodology : History and Transmission of the Prophetic Sunna  
Hartford Seminary**

**Spring 2021  
wednesdays, 6:00pm – 8:00pm**

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Office Hours: By Appointment

**Course Description**

Compilations of hadith, or words attributed to the Prophet Muhammad, are the second most important form of scripture, or religious text, in the Islamic scholastic tradition. Hadith are an essential source of deriving Islamic law and determining what is deemed as Sunna or a model of proper Islamic practice based on prophetic precedent. In addition, hadith are critical to understanding the Qur'an and many of its general injunctions, which would be otherwise ambiguous without the correlating explanations found in hadith sources. This course will analyze the basic foundations of hadith studies ('ulūm al-ḥadīth) which are essential to a well-grounded understanding of this important field of Islamic Studies. A progression of the various elements related to hadith studies such as hadith terminology, the legislative authority of the Sunna, methods of collecting and preserving hadiths, important transmitters, canonical hadith sources, hadith classification, weak hadiths, and forged hadiths, will be presented over the course of the semester to build a solid understanding of the role of hadith in shaping the Islamic scholarly tradition. This study of the scholastic aspects of hadith studies will culminate with an exploration of relevant contemporary issues such as debates regarding the authenticity of hadiths in Western scholarship.

**Course Objectives**

- Understand the history of hadiths
- Recognize that hadiths are of varying reliability, and understand the Muslim scholars' criteria for evaluating their authenticity
- Understand the different perspectives on hadith in Western scholarship
- Examine the role of hadith as a source of Islamic theology, law and ethics, second to the Qur'an
- Analyze the contents of hadiths with a view to appreciating deductions that can be made from them, and identify potentially problematic issues
- Explain some of the contemporary debates among Muslims regarding particular hadiths
- Develop a holistic view of the field of hadith, useful to personal confidence and/or assisting in pastoral advice
- Be able to list prominent books of hadith, and distinguish which of them are intended for specialists and which are intended for laymen

**Program Learning Outcomes**

- To demonstrate foundational and critical knowledge of one's own religion
- To demonstrate knowledge and skills for dialogical and constructive engagement with diversity.
- To demonstrate the ability to relate theory and practice in the social contexts in which a religion's communities exist.

## List of Texts (TENTATIVE)

### Required

- Siddiqi, Muhammad Zubayr. *Hadith Literature Its Origin, Development & Special Features* (ITS, 2012).
- Brown, Jonathan AC. *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World*. (Oneworld, 2017)
- Nawawi. *Forty Ḥadīth Nawawi*. tr. Ezzeddin Ibrahim & Denys Johnson-Davies. (Kazi, 1982)
- Additional required readings will be made available to students.

### Recommended

- **MHS** = Abu-Alabbas, Melchert & Dann (eds.), *Modern Hadith Studies: Continuing Debates and New Approaches*, Edinburgh University Press, 2020.
- Muhammad `Awwamah. *Influences of Ḥadīth Upon Differences of Opinion Amongst the Jurist Imams*. (Turath, 2014)
- *Brown, Jonathan AC. Misquoting Muhammad The Challenge and Choices of Interpreting the Prophet's Legacy*. (Oneworld, 2014)
- Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbali. *The Compendium of Knowledge and Wisdom*. (Turath, 2007)
- M. Akram Nadwi. *Al-Muḥaddithāt : The Women Scholars in Islam*. (Interface, 2018)
- Mustafa Siba`ee. *The Sunnah and Its Role in Islamic Legislation*. (IIPH, n.d.)

## Assessment

Attendance & Participation	10%
In-Class Presentations	10%
Forum Discussions	30%
Weekly Quizzes	20%
Final Examination / Paper	30%

- Attendance: You must attend class regularly and promptly. More than two absences will reduce your grade in the course, unless there are extenuating circumstances.
- Presentations: Each student is required to sign up for one in-class presentation, where s/he will present on the **Nawawi** reading for that week, in 10-15mins. No two people are allowed to present on the same reading, so if there is reading you really want to present it, then sign up ASAP; it is first-come-first-served. The presentation should be 10-15mins long, and should:
  - Summarize the main points / themes addressed in the hadith(s) assigned
  - Include relevant comments from a book of hadith commentary (such as Ibn Rajab's

*Compendium of Knowledge and Wisdom)*

- Show that you have thought about the hadith(s) for yourself, and so you should include some analysis or critique or questions raised.
- Include a slideshow (Powerpoint, Google Slides, etc). You must upload a PDF of your slideshow to the Canvas course website by 6pm on the day of your presentation.

Rubric for Grading of Presentations:

Capable, succinct summary of material	75%
Timing You will lose points if your presentation is less than 10mins, and more than 17mins	5%
Time Management Did you cover all your material in the allotted time?	5%
Visual Aesthetics	5%
Critical Analysis Analysis, or critique, or questions raised	10%


- Forum Discussions: Each student will post TWO reflections per week. One reflection should be 100-250 words, to the Online Forums, and should show that the student has read and thought about the assigned readings(s) for that week. The other reflection should be 50-100 words and should be a response to another student's posts.
- Weekly Quizzes: will consist mostly of multiple choice and/or short-answer questions
- Final Exam will consist of essay questions. If a final paper is written instead, the topic must be approved by the instructor, and the paper should be 10-15 pages long.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism, the failure to give proper credit for the words and ideas of another person, whether published or unpublished, is strictly prohibited. All written material submitted by students must be their own original work; where the words and ideas of others are used they must be acknowledged. Additionally, if students receive editorial help with their writing they should also acknowledge it appropriately.

For more details on the Seminary's Plagiarism policy, see: <https://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/policies/>

**CLASS OUTLINE:**

CLASS #	DATE	TOPIC & READINGS	NAWAWI 
1	1/20	<b>Introduction : The Event of the Hadith</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Siddiqi, ch. 1, 1-13</li> <li>• Brown, ch. 1, 1-14</li> <li>• Siba`ee, ch. 1, 73-91,</li> <li>• (Siba`ee, ch. 12 &amp; 13, 445-469)</li> <li>• (Fueck, Jonathan. "The originality of the Arabian Prophet." <i>Studies on Islam</i>, trans. and ed. Merlin Swartz (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981) (1981): 86-98)</li> </ul>	
2	1/27	<b>Early Transmission and Collection</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brown, ch. 2, 15-42 only (remainder optional)</li> <li>• Siddiqi, ch. 2 &amp; 3, 14-42</li> <li>• Pavel Pavlovitch, "Kunnā nakrahu al-kitāb: Scripture, Transmission of Knowledge, and Politics in the Second Century AH (719–816 CE)" in MHS</li> </ul>	1,7,37,39
3	2/3	<b>The "Golden Age" and Hadith Criticism</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brown, ch. 3, 67-103 only (remainder optional)</li> <li>• Siddiqi, ch. 7, 107-116</li> <li>• 100 Fabricated Hadiths, <a href="https://standup4islam.wordpress.com/2013/10/20/100-fabricated-hadiths/">https://standup4islam.wordpress.com/2013/10/20/100-fabricated-hadiths/</a> (Siddiqi, ch. 4, 43-75)</li> </ul>	2,3,22
4	2/10	<b>Non-Sunni Hadith</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brown, ch. 4, 123-149</li> <li>• Zaidis and Hadith <a href="http://zaidism.blogspot.com/2010/08/superiority-of-zaidism-in-hadith.html">http://zaidism.blogspot.com/2010/08/superiority-of-zaidism-in-hadith.html</a></li> <li>• Selections from <i>Usul al-Kafi</i> <a href="https://www.al-islam.org/printpdf/book/export/html/26141">https://www.al-islam.org/printpdf/book/export/html/26141</a></li> <li>• Ibadī Ahadith, <a href="https://hajarmulder.wordpress.com/2008/11/15/ibadi-ahadith/">https://hajarmulder.wordpress.com/2008/11/15/ibadi-ahadith/</a></li> <li>• (Etan Kohlberg, "Shi`i Hadith," <i>Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period</i>, 299-307)</li> <li>• Michael Dann, "Can Different Questions Yield the Same Answers? Islamic and Western Scholarship on Shi`i Narrators in the Sunnī Tradition," in MHS</li> </ul>	5,21,28

5	2/17	<b>Hadith and Islamic Law</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brown, 103-106; ch. 5, 150-172</li> <li>• Siddiq, ch. 7, 107-116</li> <li>• Ibn Yusuf, <i>Fiqh al-Imam</i> (White Thread, 2003), ch II-2, 55-64.</li> <li>• Sherman A. Jackson, "From Prophetic Actions to Constitutional Theory", 25 <i>Int'l J. Middle E. Stud.</i> 71, 74 (1993)</li> <li>• (Siba`ee, Appendix (partial), 485-542)</li> <li>• (Mutaz al-Khatib, "Hadith Criticism between Traditionists and Jurisprudents" in MHS)</li> </ul>	17,33
6	2/24	<b>Hadith and Islamic Theology</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brown, ch. 6, 173-183</li> <li>• Ibn al-Jawzi, Anthropomorphist Tendencies amongst the Hanabila, (tr. Merlin Swartz), <a href="http://www.marifah.net/articles/anthropomorphist-ibnjawzi.pdf">http://www.marifah.net/articles/anthropomorphist-ibnjawzi.pdf</a></li> <li>• Fatwa 1: <i>Can Aahaad Hadiths be accepted with Regard to `Aqeeda?</i> <a href="https://islamqa.info/en/130918">https://islamqa.info/en/130918</a></li> <li>• Fatwa 2: <i>Establishing Matters of Aqida with Hadith Ahad</i>, <a href="http://seekershub.org/ans-blog/2009/05/27/establishing-matters-of-aqidah-with-hadith-ahad/">http://seekershub.org/ans-blog/2009/05/27/establishing-matters-of-aqidah-with-hadith-ahad/</a> <i>What the Scholars Say About Khabar al-Ahad and Aqeeda</i>, <a href="https://slanderers.wordpress.com/category/iman/what-the-scholars-say-about-khabar-al-ahad-aqeeda/">https://slanderers.wordpress.com/category/iman/what-the-scholars-say-about-khabar-al-ahad-aqeeda/</a></li> </ul>	4,19,22,34
7	3/3	<b>Hadith and Ethics</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tirmidhi, A Commentary on the Depiction of the Prophet Muhammad (Dar al-Arqam, 2015), ch. 32, 35, 36, 38, 39, 45, 47, 48, 49.</li> <li>• Christopher Melchert, "The Piety of the Hadith Folk," <i>International Journal of Middle East Studies</i>, Vol. 34, No. 3 (Aug., 2002), pp. 425- 439</li> <li>• "Hadith and Ethics: An Interview with Mutaz al-Khatib" in 2020, Hikma. <i>Journal of Islamic Theology and Religious Education</i></li> </ul>	11,12,20, 27
8	3/10	<b>Hadith and Sufism</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brown, 110-113; ch. 7, 184-196</li> <li>• Fatwa: Was the Prophet Created From Light? <a href="https://islamqa.info/en/4509">https://islamqa.info/en/4509</a></li> <li>• Jeremy Farrell, "Early 'Traditionist Sufis': a Network Analysis" in MHS</li> </ul>	6,9,30,38
9	3/17	<b>Western views on Hadith</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Siddiqi, Appendix II, 124-135</li> <li>• Harald Motzki, <i>Hadith: Origins and Developments</i>, 15-33</li> <li>• (Brown, ch. 8, 192-239)</li> </ul>	13,15,35,36

10	3/24	<b>Modern Debates on the Status of Hadith</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brown, ch. 9, 240-268</li> </ul> Daniel Brown, <i>Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought</i> , summary at <a href="http://mypercept.co.uk/articles/PDF/Rethinking-Tradition-Islamic-Thought.pdf">http://mypercept.co.uk/articles/PDF/Rethinking-Tradition-Islamic-Thought.pdf</a>	16,31,40
	3/31	<b>NO CLASS</b>	
11	4/7	<b>Some Pre-Modern Controversies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Siba`ee, ch. 7, 201-214</li> <li>A Twelver Shi`ite account of Ghadir Khumm: <a href="https://www.al-islam.org/ghadir/incident.htm">https://www.al-islam.org/ghadir/incident.htm</a></li> <li>Hadith of Ghadir Khumm: A Sunni Perspective, <a href="https://gift2shias.com/2013/10/24/hadith-of-ghadir-khumm-a-sunni-perspective/">https://gift2shias.com/2013/10/24/hadith-of-ghadir-khumm-a-sunni-perspective/</a></li> </ul>	23,25,26,29
12	4/14	<b>Some Modern Controversies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brown, <i>Misquoting Muhammad</i>, ch. 4, 114-160</li> <li>Siba`ee, ch. 8, 215-234]</li> <li>(Siba`ee, ch. 11, 303-432)</li> </ul>	10,18,41
13	4/21	<b>Reformers and Hadiths</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brown, <i>Misquoting Muhammad</i>, ch. 5 (p. 161-215)</li> <li>Fatima Kizli, "The Reception and Representation of Western Hadith Studies in Turkish Academe" in MHS</li> <li>Ahmad Snober, "Hadith Criticism in the Levant in the Twentieth Century: From <i>ẓāhir al-isnād</i> to <i>ʿilal al-ḥadīth</i>" in MHS</li> </ul>	8,14
14	4/28	<b>Hadith Narrators and Culture</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brown, 43-49</li> <li>Siddiqi, Appendix I, 117-124</li> <li>Metcalf, Barbara D. "Living Hadith in the Tablighi Jama`at." <i>The Journal of Asian Studies</i>, vol. 52, no. 3, 1993, pp. 584-608</li> <li>(Nadwi, 35-57, 138-183)</li> <li>Christopher Melchert, "Ibn al-Mubarak, Traditionist" in MHS</li> </ul>	24,42
	5/5	<b>EXAM WEEK</b>	