

Islamic Poetry in South Asia

A certificate course at the Boston Islamic Seminary
by Hasan Hameed

Overview: Join us on a riveting literary journey across a thousand years of Islamic history in India. From Amir Khusraw to Allama Iqbal, we will cover the works of some of the greatest authors of our tradition. Each session will comprise readings from original Persian and Urdu poetry, which I will translate and comment upon in English. We will also explore important thematic questions. How did poetry allow Muslims—a small minority—make home in the subcontinent? What was the social and educational role of poetry in Muslim society? What lessons does the South Asian poetic tradition offer to Muslims in America today? In asking these and other questions, we hope to better understand how our rich literary heritage can help Muslims—and others—live meaningfully in the modern world.

Note: No knowledge of Persian or Urdu is required.

Tentative schedule

Saturday, November 23

9 – 1100 | Session 1: Longing for the beloved 🌸

Break

1115 – 1315 | Session 2: Multilingual and multicultural: how a minority made home in medieval India [readings: selected verses from Amir Khusraw]

Zuhar and Lunch break

1430-1700 | Session 3: The lover and beloved: the world of the *ghazal* [readings: selected ghazals from Mirza Ghalib and Faiz Ahmed Faiz]

Sunday, November 24

10 – 1200 | Session 4: Transmitting the life of the prophet ﷺ: the social role of devotional poetry

Break

1215 – 1330 | Session 5: Poetry in political crisis: resistance, martyrdom, revolution [reading: selected verses from Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Ahsan Aziz]

Zuhar and Lunch break

1430 – 1600 | Session 6: The revolutionary and transcendent poetry of Iqbal [reading: *The rise of Islam*, by Iqbal]

Break

1615–1800 | Session 7: Muslim dissent and divine response: poetry for social change [reading: *Shikwa* and *Jawab-i Shikwa*, by Iqbal]