

Digital Pathways to Mysticism

Integrating digital pedagogy in the study of Sufism at *The American University of Sharjah* (AUS)

Meis Al-Kaisi

Department of Arabic and Translation Studies
American University of Sharjah



Why Digital Sufism? Why Now?



 Follow



ARA 380: Sufism

Connecting Past to Present

This course follows Sufism from its foundational ideas and classical figures to its evolution as a modern spiritual movement.





Transforming Tradition

CLASSICAL FIGURES

Examining renowned Sufi thinkers and their teachings in modern digital contexts.

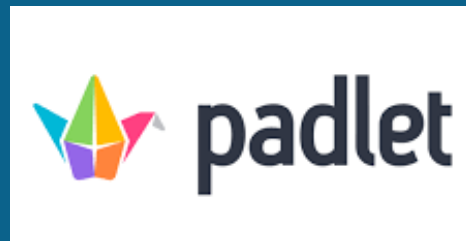
CONTEMPORARY COMMUNITIES

Investigating how modern Sufi groups utilize social media for outreach.

DIGITAL PEDAGOGY

Integrating interactive tools to enhance student engagement and learning.

Redesigned Course Elements



Multimedia Storytelling

Students create engaging narratives using digital tools and multimedia resources.

Virtual Exhibits

Interactive platforms showcase Sufi art and history in innovative ways.

Digital Ethnography

Investigating online Sufi communities through social media interactions and content analysis.

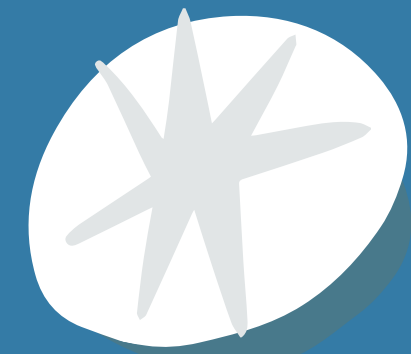
Why These Changes Matter



Connecting classical texts and traditions with the way students live and learn today.



Helping students see Sufism not only as a historical subject, but as a living, evolving tradition.



Fostering digital literacy alongside spiritual literacy.

Digital Dervishes

Social Media and the Transformation of Sufi Brotherhoods

My Research Project

Impact of Social Media on Sufi Brotherhoods

Theoretical Framework

- Mediatization theory
- Networked religion
- Globalization theory
- Affordance theory

Key Themes

- Digital spiritual authority
- Formation of digital devotional publics
- Transnational Sufi networks

Methods

- Virtual ethnography (Instagram, X, YouTube, TikTok)
- Content analysis (themes of authority, community, outreach)

Questions

- How is authority maintained online?
- How do digital publics form?
- How do teachings spread and adapt globally?



Active Learning & Meaningful Assessment


Students engage in digital ethnography, analyzing online Sufi communities and practices.

Hands-on assignments connect theory with real-world digital environments.

Assessments include multimedia storytelling, virtual exhibits, and class participation.

Evaluation emphasizes creativity, critical engagement, and application of concepts.

Diverse aformats ensure students can express understanding in multiple modes.





Student Feedback

What did you like the most about this course



"The concept and the different ways to navigate through such a new topic."



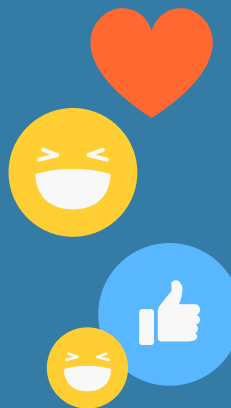
"The assignments we had. We had a lot of creative freedom."



"The medium in which the course was delivered"



"Very, very interesting course material."



Digital Ethnography

Investigating the Naqshbandiyya Online

<https://padlet.com/malkaisi/digital-sufism-final-research-project-naqshabandi-haqqani-or-tvhgoj6hi4d8alqv>

**Tracking Social Media
Hashtags and Sentiments**

Student "Jude" Prezi Presentation

Social Media Engagemnt

Student "Rose" Presentation

YouTube Ecosystem

Student "Abdallah" Presentation



Thank you!

Meis Al-Kaisi

Department of Arabic and Translation Studies
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E: malkaisi@aus.edu