

# Summer Intensive Course—GTA 2017

## Course Descriptions- Sisters

### Identity, Gender, and Order\*

**Instructor:** Shuja Ali Mirza

**Duration:** 8-10 Sessions

**Introduction:** The world is not just “one big vanilla pudding”. It is composed of an infinite multitude of different things that are *universus*—turned into one, or, towards the One. To see the world as a whole, the differences must be placed properly in an order. The different levels of being and the different *kingdoms* must be tied together into a great “Chain of Being.” The identity of any particular being comes from its placement on this Chain. Human identity is no exception. The human body and its association with the *animal kingdom* provides the grounds for a primary identification that determines the particular sex of the human being. The human spirit and its association with the *human kingdom* finds its realization through the modalities that become actualized as it inspires and informs the lower levels of human existence. What is of note in the human case is that this very *power* or *faculty* that makes human beings different from animals, plants, and minerals, engenders a self-conscious will that is free and that allows the human being to move along the Chain of Being. Hence human identification has an aspect that is existential, creational, and static, and another aspect that is volitional, conational, and dynamic. The latter aspect has both an individual element and a societal element. The gender that any human being identifies with is a function of all of the above elements. The series of lectures will seek to investigate the role of identity and gender as it applies to the divine order mandated by Allah and will juxtapose it with the increasing disorder of the modern and postmodern world.

\*This course will be offered as a replacement for the Philosophy of Hijab course (originally intended to be taught by Sr. Zainab Mirza) since the respected teacher is unable to attend this year’s Summer Intensive Course.

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### Reflections on the Qur’an

**Instructor:** Batool Arastu

**Duration:** 9 Sessions

**Introduction:** The Qur’an—a book of guidance for mankind—encourages us to ponder over all that we see and hear and not to succumb to blind belief. We are asked to reflect upon God’s creations, from the tiniest insect to the largest of celestial bodies. We are asked to reflect upon the clouds that form in the sky and pour down as rain; upon the sun, the moon, and the stars; upon the alteration of day and night; and upon the lofty mountains and green velvet meadows. Allah wants people to ponder over His infinite might over creation and to recognize that He has created everything and sustains every living being.

We are also asked to reflect over the verses of the Qur’an itself, for it is a book of guidance replete with many valuable lessons to help us in our journey through life. In this short course, we hope to ponder over some of the verses of this noble book to see what we can learn from it. Specifically, we will be studying the verses of Surah Taḥrīm and the commentaries that have been written by renowned scholars of both the Shia and Sunni schools of thought. Some of the works that we will be referring to include Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī’s *al-Mīzān fī tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, Suyūṭī’s *al-Durr al-manthur*, Ṭabari’s *Jāmi’ al-bayān* (commonly known as *Tafsīr al-Ṭabari*), al-‘Arūsī’s *Nur al-Thaqalayn*, and Bahrānī’s *al-Burhān fī tafsīr al-Qur’ān*.

There are many lessons in this Surah that we, as sisters in particular, can learn and apply in our everyday lives Insha-Allah.

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## Self-Knowledge

**Instructor:** Farva Raza

**Duration:** 8 Sessions

**Introduction:** Allah(swt) created mankind with a specific purpose, which is to reach perfection, or kamāl as they say in Arabic and Persian. How do we attain this perfection? Is this perfection related only to our body, our soul, or both? How do we train towards perfection? How important is self-knowledge in attaining this goal and to achieve our worldly goals? We know that self-knowledge will lead to self-building but what is self-building?

These are some of the questions that we will attempt to answer in this short course. We will be referring to Agha Shomali's book, *Self-knowledge* and Agha Amini's book, *Self-Building* to help us answer some of these questions.

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## Getting Acquainted with the Saḥīfah Sajjādiyyah

**Instructor:** Mariam Rashid

**Duration:** 3 Sessions

**Introduction:**

*"O God, bless Muhammad and Muhammad's Household, give me to enjoy a sound guidance which I seek not to replace, a path of truth from which I swerve not, and an intention of right conduct in which I have no doubts"* (Du'ā Makārim al-Akhlāq, *Saḥīfah Sajjādiyyah*)

The *Saḥīfah Sajjādiyyah*, referred to among other things as "the sister of the Qur'an" and authored by one of the great representatives of the Islamic civilization and spiritual authorities of his time, provides a roadmap for the human soul through which it can reach the height of its potential. This course offers a brief look into how its supplications can be used both as a means of communication with God and as a manual through which we may learn how to interact with the world, with the hope that it can continue to be taken up as a source of guidance and inspiration throughout the stages of life.

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## History of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ)

**Instructor:** Zehra Baqri

**Duration:** 4 Sessions

**Introduction:** The study of Islamic history holds both historical relevance and present-day significance. To study the lives and rituals of past civilizations supports us in shaping our own future. When it comes to the development of our own faith and our connection with *the Reality (al-Haqq)*, a glance into the life of our Beloved Holy Prophet is an essential tool on this journey of spirituality. This course will attempt to examine the awe-inspiring life and times of the last of the holy prophets, and in the process, help define him as a present-day example for us.

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# Ahkam Relevant to Female Youth in the West

**Instructor:** Huma Hasnain

**Duration:** 4 Sessions

**Introduction:** Being the servant of Allah Most High, it is the responsibility of every human being to adapt his actions according to the will of his Lord. It is near impossible to extract these do's and don'ts directly from its sources by everyone. Islamic Jurists take the responsibility to find the Islamic law and make it simple for us. So, now we should learn the precepts of Islam and act accordingly to express our gratitude towards Allah.

Worship ('Ibādah) is the essential part of one's religious duty and one should be in the state of ritual purity to perform it. This 4-hour course is designed to cover the Islamic law on how a woman can attain the ritual purity according to the verdicts of Ayatollah Khamenei and Ayatollah Sistani (May Allah protect them). Practical scenarios will be discussed in order to make the content relevant to today's world.