

The Enlightenment, then, was a single army with a single banner, with a large central corps, right and left wing, daring scouts, and lame stragglers. And it enlisted soldiers who did not call themselves philosophes but who were their teachers, intimates, or disciples... Behind their tactical alliances and personal fellowship there stood a common experience from which they constructed a coherent philosophy. This experience... was the dialectical interplay of their appeal to antiquity, their tension with Christianity, and the *pursuit of modernity*... They, unlike the others, use the classical learning to free themselves from their Christian heritage, and then, having done with the ancients, turned their face toward *a modern worldview*. The Enlightenment was a volatile mixture of classicism, impiety, and science; the philosophes, in a phrase, were modern pagans.

—Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*, 7-8 (italics added)

Surely the present moment is one of great crisis in the history of modern culture. The modern world stands in need of biological renewal. And religion, which in its higher manifestations is neither dogma, nor priesthood, nor ritual, can alone ethically prepare the modern man for the burden of the great responsibility which the advancement of modern science necessarily involves, and restore to him that attitude of faith which makes him capable of winning a personality here and retaining it hereafter. It is only by rising to a fresh vision of his origin and future, his whence and whither, that man will eventually triumph over a society motivated by an inhuman competition, and a civilization which has lost its spiritual unity by its inner conflict of religious and political values.

—Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 149

## Islam in the Modern Age: Tradition, Fundamentalism & Reform

REL 378 (Spring 2017)  
MWF 2:30 – 3:20 (Chambers 3155)

Syed Rizwan Zamir, Ph.D.

Preyer 201A, (704) 894 2950, [rizamir@davidson.edu](mailto:rizamir@ davidson.edu)

To Schedule a Meeting: Click <http://bit.ly/2ixJNnl> (FRIDAY 11:00am-1:00pm)

## WHAT IS IT ABOUT? (Previously Course Description)

Popular discourse often characterizes 'Islam' and 'Modernity' as two mutually exclusive points of view. Such attitudes are frequently exhibited in questions such as: "Is Islam compatible with democracy?" or "Does Islam give equal rights to women?" In light of such questions, this course aims to engender a nuanced appreciation of the various meanings of the terms 'Islam' and 'Modernity'. The basic argument of this course is as follows: *In order to understand the place of Muslim actors in the contemporary world it is better to conceive of 'Islam' and 'Modernity' as historical projects that are still in the process of being executed.* Rather than assume that 'Islam' and 'Modernity' have fixed meanings, we will discover how these terms have come to represent varying (often vying!) political, social, cultural and spiritual aspirations at different moments in history. Most importantly, we will learn that even when viewed in isolation from one another, the respective visions of 'Islam' and 'Modernity' are varied and often suffer through deep internal tensions and conflicts.

We will begin with an examination of the phenomenon of 'Modernity', its origins in the Western Europe, its various interpretations and significance. We will then turn to a basic introduction to the Islamic tradition<sup>1</sup> and its pre-modern intellectual, political and social landscapes. With this historical and intellectual understanding of 'Islam' and 'Modernity', we will examine how 'Islam' and 'Modernity' that had unfolded in different geographical spaces came to intersect during the Colonial age, both conceptually and within the lived experience of Muslims. The rest of the course will examine the intellectual, religious, sociopolitical and cultural transformations in the Islamic world due to this intersection and the response of Muslim thinkers and societies to the Modern ideals. We will conclude with the rise of postmodernity and globalization and the future of 'Islam' and 'Modernity'.

Please note that this is not a course on Islam but on 'Islam's *relationship to* modernity'. Therefore, a nuanced appreciation of the meaning, values and phenomenon of Modernity in its various aspects is integral and crucial to the understanding of the subject matter.

---

<sup>1</sup> Prior knowledge of Islam and Muslim civilization is not expected or assumed. For your own comfort and interest you may pick any ONE of the introductory books on Islam listed in the recommended readings section.

## INTELLECTUAL PRACTICES (previously Course Requirements):

(NOTE: Depending upon the flow of our conversation, readings and practices may need aligning)

Discerning the Crisis ( <i>Mar 3</i> – Done individually)	10%
[THREE Exercises in] Discerning Perspectives → Class Discussion	21%
Overview of the Post-Colonial Muslim World	10%
Debating Perspectives (Letter → Debate → Response)	20%
The Story through a Prism (Collaborative Learning & Teaching) – <i>May 5</i>	30%
Revisiting the Story [of Islam and Modernity] (Reflection Essay) – <i>May 10</i> (Done individually)	9%

## LEARNING OUTCOMES (INSTRUCTOR’S)

It is expected that by the end of the class, the students will have:

1. Discerned the relevance of and stakes in the ‘Islam and modernity debate’, and make note of who could be the stakeholders in this conversation;
2. Grasped what is “modern” about the Modern Age, i.e., a grounded background to Western Modernity;
3. Made sense of the historical encounter, intersection and interaction of Islamic civilization with Western Modernity, and a ‘strong sense of crisis’ that it entailed, and why;
4. Explored the spectrum of Muslim responses to Western Modernity, worldview, institutions, and values;
5. Students will be able to engage the texts and practitioners of the Islamic faith and make sense of contemporary issues dealt with by Muslim thinkers and societies, and for that matter other religious communities facing the challenges of modernity.

## RESOURCES FOR THE COURSE:

1. Text-Guides (see the list below)
2. Mr. James Sponsel, Information Literacy Librarian [jasponsel@davidson.edu](mailto:jasponsel@ davidson.edu)
3. Ms. Caitlin Christian-Lamb, Associate Archivist [cachristianlamb@davidson.edu](mailto:cachristianlamb@davidson.edu)
4. Mr. Brian Little, Technology Support Analyst [brlittle@davidson.edu](mailto:brlittle@davidson.edu)
5. LIBRARY GUIDE FOR THE STUDY OF ISLAM AND ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION:  
<http://davidson.libguides.com/islamicstudies>

6. Writing Center: <http://www3.davidson.edu/cms/x11014.xml>
7. Speaking Center: <http://www3.davidson.edu/cms/x15986.xml>

### **TEXT-GUIDES (on Reserve in the Library and available at the Bookstore):**

1. *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies* ed. Stuart Hall, David Held, Don Hubert and Kenneth Thompson (Malden: Blackwell, 2008)
2. *Islam in Transition 2<sup>nd</sup>. Edition* ed. J. Esposito and J. Donohue (New York: Oxford, 2007)
3. Rene Guenon. *The Crisis of the Modern World* (New York: Sophia Perennis, 2004)
4. Dane Kennedy, *Decolonization: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford, 2016)

### **Text-Guides for Basic Background in Islam:**

- Gibb, Hamilton. *Mohammedanism: A Historical Survey* (? : Kessinger Publishing, 2010)
- Schimmel, Annemarie. *Islam: An Introduction*. (New York: SUNY, 1992)
- Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. *Islam: Religion, History and Civilization* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003)

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES (PARTICIPANTS, CONTRIBUTORS & COLLABORATORS)?**

# COURSE OUTLINE

## PART I: ISLAM & MODERNITY: A BASIC OVERVIEW

### WEEK 1 (Jan 18-20): Relevance of the Subject and the Framework for Our Study

- Studying “Islam in the Modern Age”: History, Methods and Approaches
- Introduction to Modernity

**Wednesday:** Introduction to the Course

**Friday:** There will be no class today

### WEEK 2 (Jan 23-27): Enlightenment I (and Modernity) and the Problem of Islamic Compatibility

- The Triumph of Modernity?
- The Problem of Compatibility between Islam and Modernity
- What is Modernity? Defining the “Modern” and “Modernity”

#### **Monday:**

Fukuyama, “The West has Won” (2001)

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/oct/11/afghanistan.terrorism30>

Dennis Prager, “Can Islam be Reformed?”

<http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/273388/can-islam-be-reformed-dennis-prager>

Muslim thinkers (Interview), “Islam and the West”

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/muslims/themes/west.html>

**Wednesday:** *Modernity*, 3-24

**Friday:** *Portable Enlightenment Reader*, 1-6 & 26-38 (on reserve)

### WEEK 3 (Jan 30-Feb 3): The Enlightenment II

- Origins of Modernity and The Enlightenment
- What Changed with the Enlightenment and Modernity & Why?

**Monday:** *Modernity*, 25-48 & 51-54; Max Weber, “The Rationalism of Western Civilization” 53-67

**Wednesday:** Marshall Hodgson, “The Great Western Transmutation” (pdf)

**Friday:** “Modernity as Universalization of Heresy” (pdf)

#### WEEK 4 (Feb 6-10): Religion, Disenchantments and Dilemmas of Modernity

- Modernity and Religion
- Disenchantments and Dilemmas of Modernity
- Critiques and Critics

**Monday:** *Modernity*: 169-182; Brad Gregory, “Reformation Origins of the Enlightenment God”

**Wednesday:** *Portable Enlightenment Reader*, pp. 115-131;

**Friday:** *Modernity*: 395-422

#### WEEK 5 (Feb 13-17): Society and Culture of Modernity

- Evolution of Social and Cultural Norms and Values in the Modern Age
- Class and Gender

**Monday:** *Modernity*: 122-148

**Wednesday:** *Modernity*: 363-394

**Friday:** *Love in the Western World* (selections)

#### WEEK 6 (Feb 20-24): ‘Intersections’ of Islam and Modernity during the Colonial Age

- Definitions of “Islam”: Introduction to Islam & Premodern Islamic Societies
- Intersection of Islam and Modernity: Historical Details of the Colonial Period
- *Transformation* of the Muslim World under the Colonial Impact

**Watch:** “*Lion of the Desert*” (On RESERVE, will be discussed)

**Monday:** *Modernity*, 184-221;

**Wednesday:** Vali Nasr, “European Colonialism and the Emergence of Modern Muslim States” [here \(Oxford Islamic Studies Online\)](#)

**Friday: (readings will be selected)**

**Watch:** *Edward Said on Orientalism* [here](#)

Hamid Dabashi, *Brown Skins White Masks* (selections)

Hamid Dabashi, *Can Non-Europeans Think?* (library e-book)

Minute by the Hon'ble T. B. Macaulay, dated the 2nd February 1835 [here](#)

### **Supplemental Readings:**

\*Bernard Hamilton “Knowing the Enemy: Western Understanding of Islam” (pdf)

*The Portable Enlightenment Reader*, pp. 387-395

“Schooled to Order: Education and the Making of Modern Egypt” (pdf)

### **WEEK 7 (Feb 27-Mar 3): What Went Wrong? Crises & Challenges of Colonialism & Modernity**

- What Went Wrong? Insights from Historians and Sociologists
- What Went Wrong? Muslim Diagnosis and Articulation of the “Crisis”
- THE FOUR CRISES: Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Dimensions
- The Crisis of “Religion”

#### **Monday:**

- Bernard Lewis, “What Went Wrong?” [here \(The Atlantic\)](#)
- *Islam and the Plight of Modern Man*, Chapter 2;

#### **Wednesday:**

- *Cultural Schizophrenia*, pp. 3-15 (pdf);
- Syed Rizwan Zamir, “Chapter 1: ‘Ali Naqvi’s Reception of the Crisis of Religion” ProQuest Dissertations & Theses (PQDT) database (PDF OR Library website)

#### **Friday:**

- *Islam in Transition*, 20-23, 44-48 & 115-121;
- Chapter 2; *Islam in the World Today* pp. 800-829 (library e-book);

**Discerning the Crisis: (2-3 pages):** *Find 3 examples from the popular media that creatively capture the “Crisis” that parallels or expands on the readings for this week. Popular media includes newspapers, magazines, blogs, images and videos. The examples should be followed by your brief comments as to the significance of each item and how it relates to the readings for the week. DUE on MAR 3*

OR

*Without listing the various crises faced by Muslims and Muslim societies, discuss the crisis you saw as most critical/significant and WHY. Explain your reasons to the reader and reflect on why you made this choice and not any other?(500 words) DUE on MAR 3*

*SPRING BREAK: Fri, Mar 3 (4:30 p.m.) - Mon, Mar 13 (8:30 a.m.)*

**WEEK 9 (Mar 13-17): Decolonization (& Postcolonialism)**

**Writings/Poetry on social justice**

- Developments since WWII
- Decolonization?
- Postcolonialism

**Collaborative Report Presentations on Wednesday & Friday**

**Monday:**

*Modernity*, 425-428 & 436-444

Cesaire *Discourse on Colonialism* (selections)

*Decolonization: A Very Short Introduction* (selections)

**Wednesday: Student Presentations**

**Friday: Student Presentations**

**Suggested Resources for Report Presentations:**

T.B. Irving *World of Islam &*

*Islam in the World Today*

*Islam and the Plight of Modern Man*, 123-184



## PART II: MUSLIM RESPONSES TO MODERNITY

### WEEK 10 (Mar 20-24): “The Political Crisis”: The Question of Governance

- Political Thought and Political History of Premodern Islam
- The Political Crisis and Contemporary Muslim Responses
- Role of Shari‘ah in Islamic governance

**Monday:** *Modernity*: 55-87;

**Wednesday:** *Islam in Transition* 16-19, 24-34, 41-43, 262-287 & 332-340

**Friday:** *Islam in Transition* 288-330 (Perspectives on Democracy)

**Collaborative Exercise (I) in Discerning Perspectives:** *Through a synthesis of your readings for this week, draw an accessible intellectual map/typology of Muslim responses to the Political Crisis. Your presentation must express the spectrum of political views relationally. In other words it should capture the commonalities and differences among the various positions. You may use bullet points, visuals (charts or figures etc.), short descriptions or any other creative medium. Be prepared to present this map/typology of contemporary Islamic political thought in the class. Will be discussed in the classes on Wednesday and Friday (DUE on MAR 24)*

### WEEK 11 (Mar 27-31): The Question of Economics: State, Economy and Law (Shari‘ah)

- Economic Life in Premodern Islam & Shariah Guidelines for Economic life
- Economy-Shari‘ah-State in Premodern Islamic Societies
- Contemporary Islamic Economic Thought

**Monday:** *Modernity*: 106-120; Harvey Cox, “The Market as God” [here](#);

**Wednesday:** *Islam in Transition*, 100-113, 128-132 & 228-259

**Friday:**

Seyyed Hossein Nasr, “Islamic Work Ethics”

Waleed El-Ansary (The Spiritual Significance of *Jihad*)

**Collaborative Exercise (II) in Discerning Perspectives:** *Through a synthesis of your readings for this week, draw an accessible intellectual map/typology of Muslim responses to the Economic Crisis. Your presentation must express the spectrum of economic views relationally. In other words it should capture the commonalities and differences among the various positions. You may use bullet points, visuals (charts or figures etc.), short descriptions or any other creative medium. Be prepared to present this map/typology of contemporary Islamic economic thought in the class. Will be discussed in the classes on Wednesday and Friday (DUE on MAR 31)*

## **WEEK 12 (Apr 3-7): Muslim Response I: Reformist/Modernist/Critical Tradition**

- Origins, Developments and Characteristics of the Modernist thought
- Varieties within Islamic Modernism: Proponents, Ideas, Method & Influence

**Wednesday:** “Modernism” encyclopedia entry (Database *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*) [here](#);

“What is Progressive Islam” (PDF)

*Islam in Transition* 178-183 & 352-360

**Friday:** *Islam in Transition* 9-15, 35-37, 122-127, 145-156 & 501-512

## **WEEK 13 (Apr 10-14): Response II – Fundamentalist/Salafi Tradition**

- Origins, Development & Characteristics of Salafi Movement
- Varieties of Salafism: Proponents, Ideas, Method & Influence

**Monday:**

“Fundamentalism” encyclopedia entry (Database *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*) [here](#); *Global Salafism*, “Introduction” (on reserve);

**Wednesday:** Maududi “Our Message” (pdf)

**Friday:** *Islam in Transition*, 59-63, 409-443

*EASTER BREAK: Fri Apr 14 (4:30 p.m.)- Wed Apr. 19 (8:30 a.m.)*

## **WEEK 14 (Apr 19-21): Response III – The Tradition and the Traditionalists**

- “The Tradition”, ‘Traditional’ and the ‘Traditionalist’
- Traditional view of Time and the Critique of the Modern World
- What is Traditional Islam? Contrasts with Modernist and Fundamentalist Islam

**Wednesday:**

Rene Guenon, *Crisis of the Modern World* (selections)

**Friday:**

Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islam and the Plight of Modern Man*, Ch: 1  
Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "What is Traditional Islam?" (pdf);  
TJ Winter, "Ishmael and the Enlightenment" (pdf)

## WEEK 15 (Apr 24-28): Debating Muslim Responses & Choosing Sides

- Debating Muslim Responses
- From modernity to postmodernity
- Globalization and Revisiting The Project of Modernity

**Collaborative Exercise (III) in Discerning Perspectives:** *Through a synthesis of your readings in PART II of the course, draw an accessible intellectual map/typology of Muslim responses to Modernity. Your presentation must clearly express how these responses relate to one another, what they share and what they don't. In other words, what are the commonalities and differences among these responses? Again, employ visuals (charts, figures etc.), short descriptions or any other creative medium. Will be discussed on Monday (DUE on APR 24).*

**April 26-28 (THE DEBATE)** *Which Muslim response to modernity is best and why? Why others are wrong?*

**Letters written to upholders of other responses → Debate → Post-Debate Response**

## PART III: REVISITING THE STORY (& THE FUTURE OF ISLAM AND MODERNITY)

### WEEK 16 (May 1-5): THE STORY THROUGH A PRISM

COLLABORATIVE ENDEAVORS SHARED THIS WEEK (DUE MAY 5)

REVISITING THE STORY OF ISLAM AND MODERNITY: YOUR FINAL ACT (ESSAY DUE MAY 10)

#### RESOURCES TO CONSULT FOR YOUR ESSAY:

*Modernity*, "The Enlightenment Project Revisited", 636-662  
Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" (pdf)

Ejaz Akram, “The Muslim World and Globalization” in *Islam, Fundamentalism and the Betrayal of Tradition*, Ch. 8 (library e-book)

*Interview: “How The West Won - Dennis Prager w/Rodney Stark; 10-13-2015”*

<https://youtu.be/kiduOidrIZs>

S.H. Nasr *Man and Nature* (selections)

## The Story through a Prism (Collaboration in Learning and Teaching)

**(No later than Feb 10 you need to form your FOUR-member team)**

*IMPORTANT NOTE:* This course is about “Islam” in relation to “Modernity”. A clear sense of this *relationality* and how it comes to bear upon your research and presentation should be well demonstrated in your collaboration. In other words, a collaboration undertaken without a crisp awareness of relationality between Islam and Modernity and its application to your chosen theme-topic will be deemed lacking and incomplete.

### MILESTONES (THE PROCESS)

1. **STEP I: MAKING THE CASE (7%, Due March 3)**
  - a. *What* is your theme-topic, *why* it matters and *how* will you carry it out?
  - b. *Feasibility* (Checking Resources): Is this study possible?
2. **STEP II: TELLING THE STORY & SHARING IT WITH OTHERS (10%, DUE THE LAST WEEK)**
  - a. Choose any format: Prezi, video, narration-text etc.
3. **STEP III: ANALYSIS (7%, DUE MAY 5):**
  - a. Findings – Academic-scholarly, popular perceptions on the theme-topic, quantitative (stats & polls)
  - b. Gaps and discrepancies among findings in a. and an explanation of why they are there
  - c. A map typology of various positions how they relate to one another

- d. Conclusion:
  - 1. Three significant points and why they matter
  - 2. Make a case for each of the three points
  - 3. Where to now? If you were to continue this pursuit
  - 4. Challenges to and hurdles in your research and conclusions
- 4. **STEP IV: REFLECTION ON THE PROCESS (6%, DUE MAY 5)**
- 5. **STEP V:** Finalized items 2, 3 & 4 will all be posted on the class website by May 5.

**SOME HINTS:**

- 1. You have resources available to you. See page 3 of the syllabus.
- 2. You may want to occasionally meet with the instructor.
- 3. Think for yourself, trust your instincts, bring care to your thinking, and “dare to know”!