

Introduction to Islam

REL 272 (Fall 2010)

MWF 9:30 – 10:40 (Chambers 3155)

Prof. Syed Rizwan Zamir

Office: Preyer 201A

Off. Tel. (704) 894-2950

Email (Mon – Fri): rizamir@davidson.edu (On weekends I will have limited access to email)

Office Hours: Mon & Wed 3:30 – 5:00 p.m. and by pre-arranged appointment

Course Description:

This course is a general introduction to Islamic faith, practices, history and culture. Our method of study will make reference to both the normative textual sources of Islam and the lived experience of the Muslim community through centuries. After a brief overview of the approaches to the study of Islam as they have emerged over centuries in the West (and our own method of study this semester), we will explore Islam as a religion, discussing its core beliefs, most important rites, religious texts and survey of various religious and intellectual disciplines such as law (*Shari'ah*), theology (*Kalam*) philosophy (*Falsafah*) and mysticism (*Tasawwuf*). Our study will also encompass Islamic culture and its various artistic and aesthetic expressions as developed over centuries. The course will close with discussion of early Islamic history and Islamic sects (such as the Shi'ites) and a brief overview of the present state of the Islamic world and its relationship with the West in modern times.

Required Readings (available at the Bookstore):

1. Berkey, Jonathan Porter. *The Formation of Islam: Religion and Society in the near East, 600-1800*, Themes in Islamic History. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
2. Burckhardt, Titus, and William Stoddart. *Fez, City of Islam*. Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1992.
3. Eaton, Gai. *Islam and the Destiny of Man*, State University of New York Press, 1986
4. Mattson, Ingrid. *The Story of the Qur'an*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2009
5. Murata, Sachiko, and William C. Chittick. *The Vision of Islam*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2006.

Course Requirements:

Midterm Examination	25%
Final Examination	30% (self-scheduled)
Response Papers (2)	each 10% (total 20%)
Class Participation*	15%
Quiz (2 unannounced)	each 5% (total 10%)

*Note: Participation grade will depend not simply on your attendance and grasp of the assigned material, but also on helpful insights and analysis that you will bring to the discussion. Do ask the instructor if you have any questions regarding how to make your participation more effective.

Attendance Policy: Attendance is compulsory in this course and more than 3 absences without valid excuse such as sickness or family emergency etc. will result in lowering of grade. It is student's responsibility to obtain notes and 'catch-up' in the case of absence. Absence will not be a good excuse for not knowing what happened in the class.

Grading Scale: To avoid any misunderstandings, I will share with you what is expected in order to obtain good marks in this course:

A: Excellent Work: a firm grasp of the material in lectures and readings and an ability to offer sound and insightful analysis.

B: Solid Work: a good grasp of the material in lectures and readings and significant effort to interpret the material in an analytical fashion.

C: Decent work: a fair grasp of the material in lectures and readings, but analysis and effort are lacking.

D: Poor work: a simplistic understanding of the material with little or no effort towards analysis.

F: Little grasp of the subject matter and no attempt to engage the material or respect the parameters of the course and assignments.

Disabilities: A student who requires accommodation for a documented disability of any type should see me *immediately* to discuss modifications to course requirements.

Academic Honesty: Students are expected to fully abide by the Honor Code as set out by the College and should pledge all their assignments and exams.

COURSE OUTLINE

Key: Lecture (L), Discussion (D), Lecture and Discussion (L & D) – italics (video)

WEEK 1: Introduction & Method of Study

Readings:

Eaton: Introduction, Ch 1 & 2

Mon, Aug 23: Introduction to the course (D)

Wed, Aug 25: Methods & Approaches to the Study of Islam & Hadith Gabriel (L & D)

Fri, Aug 27: *Orientalism*

WEEK 2: The Sources of Islam: The Qur'an

Readings:

Eaton: Ch 4

Mattson: p. 35-73, 76-85, 106 - 122

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Mon, Aug 30: Introduction to the Qur'an (L)

Wed, Sep 1: The Qur'an (D)

Fri, Sep 3: The Qur'an and Islamic societies (D)

WEEK 3: The Sources of Islam: The Prophet

Readings:

Mattson: 144 -170

Chittick & Murata: 164 - 187

Eaton: Ch 5

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Mon, Sep 6: The Prophet (L)

Wed, Sep 8: The Prophet (D)

Fri, Sep 10: *Islam: The Empire of Faith (Part I)*

WEEK 4: Beliefs and Practices I - Islam

Readings:

Eaton: Ch 3

Chittick & Murata: ix-xxxix, 3-7, 8-21

Mon, Sep 13: Hadith Gabriel & the Pillars of Islam (L)

Wed, Sep 15: Hadith Gabriel & the Pillars of Islam (D)

Fri, Sep 17: *Inside Mecca*

WEEK 5: Beliefs and Practices II

Readings:

Chittick & Murata: Part II: Ch 3 and 4 (p. 35 - 131)

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Mon, Sep 20: Beliefs (L)

Wed, Sep 22: Beliefs (D)

Fri, Sep 24: *Unity*

WEEK 6: Beliefs and Practices III - Iman continued

Readings:

Chittick & Murata: p. 132 – 164 & 193 - 235

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Mon, Sep 27: Beliefs II (L)

Wed, Sep 29: Beliefs II (D)

Fri, Oct 1: *Man and Nature*

WEEK 7: Islamic Law/*Shari'ah*

Readings:

Eaton: Ch 9 & 10

Chittick & Murata: 22-34

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Mon, Oct 4: *Shari'ah* (L)

Wed, Oct 6: *Shari'ah* (D)

Fri, Oct 8: Midterm Exam (First Response Paper is Due)

FALL BREAK: Friday, Oct 8 (4:30 P.M.) - Wed, Oct 13 (8:30 A.M.)

WEEK 8: *Ihsan* - Sufism

Readings:

Chittick & Murata: 267 - 298, 304-317

Burckhardt: Ch 7

Wed, Oct 13: Sufism (L)

Fri, Oct 15: *The Inner Life*

WEEK 9: *Ihsan*- Islamic Art

Readings:

Eaton: Ch 11 & 12

Chittick & Murata: 298-303

Burckhardt: Ch 4

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Mon, Oct 18: Sufism (D)

Wed, Oct 20: Islamic Art (L & D)

Fri, Oct 22: *Patterns of Beauty* (D)

WEEK 10: Islamic Philosophy, Science and Scholastic Theology

Readings:

Chittick & Murata: 236-265

Burckhardt: Ch 6

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Mon, Oct 25: Islamic Philosophy, Science and Theology (L)

Wed, Oct 27: Islamic Philosophy, Science and Theology (D)

Fri, Oct 29: *Empire of Faith Part II/Knowledge of the World*

WEEK 11: Islamic Culture

Readings:

Burckhardt: Ch 1, 2, 3 & 5

Mon, Nov 1: Islamic Culture (D)

Wed, Nov 3: Islamic Culture (D)

Fri, Nov 5: *Nomad and the City*

WEEK 12: Islamic History I

Readings:

Murata & Chittick: 319-329

Eaton: Ch 6 and 7

Berkey: 70-90, 102-109

Mon, Nov 8: Early Islamic History (L)

Wed, Nov 10: Early Islamic History (D)

Fri, Nov 12: *The Message*

WEEK 13: Islamic History II & Shi'ism

Readings:

Berkey: 124-151, 179-188, 203-230, 248-257

Mon, Nov 15: Shi'ism (L)

Wed, Nov 17: Islamic History and Shi'ism (D)

Fri, Nov 19: *The Message* Part II

WEEK 14: Islam *and* the West/Islam *in* the West

Readings:

Esposito: 203 - 222 (Toolkit)

Nasr: 275 - 316

Mon, Nov 22: Islam and the West (D) **(Second Response Paper is Due)**

THANKSGIVING BREAK: Tue, Nov23 (4:30 P.M.)-Mon, Nov 29 (8:30 A.M.)

WEEK 15: Islam in the Modern World

Readings:

Murata & Chittick: 329-335

Burckhardt: Ch 8

Mon, Nov 29: Into the Modern World (L & D)

Wed, Dec 1: *Reel Bad Arabs*

Fri, Dec 3: Wrapping Up (L & D)

Hadith of Gabriel

One day we were sitting with the Messenger of God—may God bless him and grant him peace, when suddenly a man with very white clothing and jet-black hair came upon us. No mark of travel was visible upon him, and none of us recognized him. Sitting down before the Prophet, leaning his knees against his, and placing his hands upon his thighs, he said, “Tell me Muhammad about submitting (*islam*).” He replied, “Submitting is that you bear witness that there is no god but God and that Muhammad is the Messenger of God, that you perform the ritual prayer, pay the alms tax, fast during [the month of] Ramadan, and make the pilgrimage to the House (i.e. the Ka’ba) if you are able.” The man said, “You are right.” We were surprised at his questioning him and then declaring that he was right. The man said, “Now tell me about faith (*iman*).” He replied, “Faith is that you have faith in God, His angels, His books, His messengers, and the last day, and that you have faith in the measuring out, both its good and its evil.” Remarking that he was right, he then said, “Now tell me about virtue (*ihsan*).” He replied, “Virtue is that you worship God as if you see Him, for if you do not see Him, He nonetheless sees you.” Then the man said, “Tell me about the Hour.” The Prophet—may God bless him and grant him peace—replied, “Regarding that the one questioned knows no more than the questioner.” The man said, “Then tell me about its marks.” He said, “The slave girl will give birth to her mistress, and you will see the barefoot, the naked, the destitute, and the shepherds vying in building.” Then the man went away. After I had waited for a long time, the Prophet—may God bless him and grant him peace—said to me, “Do you know who the questioner was ‘Umar?’” I replied, “God and His Messenger know best.” He said, “He was Gabriel and he came to teach you your religion (*din*).