

**RELIGION 125, Fall 2008.**  
**INTRODUCTION TO ISLAM**

**SYLLABUS**

**Course Description:** The course is an introduction/survey of the ideals and practices of Islam across its history. Included are the ritual (worship), theological, philosophical, mystical, ethical and political dimensions of Islam. Special attention is given to Islam's primary message and its implementation in the lives of Muslims, and to Islam's depictions of Muslims and peoples of other beliefs.

**Course Objectives:** At the end of the course, students are expected be able to:

1. describe the significance of the Qur'an, articulate its major themes, and its views of the sacred scriptures of other religions;
2. understand the prophetic tradition in Islam and its relationships to religious and social developments in Islam;
3. understand Islam's chief mission and its universal principles;
4. explain the interaction of Islamic teachings with its cultural surrounding past and present so as to distinguish Islam's universal principles and their particular applications;
5. appreciate the major disciplines of Islamic intellectual traditions including Muslim law;
6. explain Islamic portrayals of and relations to other religions and their adherents;
7. explain the major historical periods of the Muslim community (*umma*); and
8. understand some key challenges Islam poses to and faces internally in the present and foreseeable future.

**Required Texts:**

1. *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an* (in Arabic and English). Translation by Abdullah Yusuf Ali (usually called *Yusuf Ali*). Amana Publications. (Please put a cover on the volume and do not write on the Arabic side of the page).
2. *Islam in the World* by Malise Ruthven. Oxford University Press.
3. *The New Encyclopedia of Islam*. Edited by Cyril Glassé. Altamira Press.
4. I will provide articles via Blackboard and Handouts in class. These will be the same as if they were part of a class presentation

**Recommended:** To be published in MID-October, 2008

*Opening the Qur'an: Toward Understanding Islam's Holy Book*. By Walter H. Wagner. University of Notre Dame Press.

**Attendance Expectations and Policy:**

**Regular attendance, preparation for class sessions and meaningful participation are important.** I intend to be on time (and will finish on time) at every class that the College is open. Some absences cannot be avoided and will be excused (illness, family emergencies, commitments to other College trips, really observed religious holy days etc.). Two unexcused absences (equal to one week of class) are not encouraged but permissible.

**Course Doings:**

1. Regular lectures-class presentations;
2. **Two quizzes on terms, names and ideas from class and readings, October 2 and 23**
3. **Team Presentations** based on scenarios provided by the professor, **November 18, 22, 25;**
4. **Essay exam on the Qur'an. To be submitted via Blackboard Digital Drop Box by November 10**
5. A **Journal** to be kept by each student.. **DUE November 4**
6. A **FINAL EXAM** to be taken in class.

**I OFFER REVIEW SESSIONS PRIOR TO THE ESSAY AND FINAL EXAMS**

## ABOUT THE TEXTS AND READINGS

### 1. CONCERNING THE QUR'AN.

A. The Arabic text of the Qur'an (also spelled Koran) is considered by Muslims to be the literal revelation of God. Although one may not be a Muslim, it is appropriate to be respectful Muslim reverence for the text. Please cover the volume we use and do not write or underline on the Arabic side of the page.

B. The volume we are using (usually called *Yusuf Ali*) contains numerous appendices. Please read these throughout the semester. Yusuf Ali rendered his translation/interpretation in a poetic form that sometimes obscures the meaning. Patience and discernment are helpful. The single voice "speaking" in the Qur'an is God. Sometimes the speaker uses "We" and "He" as well as "I." Note the distinction in English between "you" (singular, almost always Muhammad and "ye" (plural, meaning others).

C. The reading roster has you read 42 of the 114 Surahs. You are encouraged/expected to read more.

**2. CONCERNING *THE NEW ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ISLAM*.** Edited by Cyril Glassé. This is a good reference work. The reading assignments cover several articles. You will find it helpful to look up words, names, etc. for information and clarification. The work also has chronologies, charts and maps.

**3. CONCERNING *ISLAM IN THE WORLD* BY MALISE RUTHVEN.** Although not a Muslim, he understands Islam as well as the West. Note the maps and glossary.

**4. *OPENING THE QUR'AN: TOWARD UNDERSTANDING ISLAM'S HOLY BOOK*.** Yes, you know (sort of) the author. I will put sections of the **uncorrected, pre-publication text** on Blackboard. Anticipated date of publication is October 15.

## ABOUT OTHER MATTERS

**1. ESSAY EXAM AND FINAL EXAM.** You will receive the questions ahead of time. There will be a review of the questions. Feel free to study and discuss the exam with others. But the work that is posted on the Blackboard is to be yours. The Final Exam will be taken in class under exam conditions.

**2. JOURNAL.** Get a spiral notebook, 8½ by 11 or equivalent. Make at least a 3 page, hand-written, legible entry each week, include in addition to 3 page entry newspaper, periodical or internet articles as you see fit. The entries are to:

a. Reflect your academically-oriented thinking about class work, readings, items in the news. **This will be graded.**

b. Questions you might have and to which you may want my responses.

c. Your personal reflections as to what has been covered, readings, Islam in the news, etc. Mark these clearly week-by-week as your own views. **This will not be graded.** The Journal is confidential and will not be shared, except as you may do so.

## CLASS PRESENTATION SCENARIOS

### **SCENARIO 1: FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

A presentation of the understandings of freedom in "Western" culture and Islamic culture of expression featuring the recent episode of Danish cartoons on the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

### **SCENARIO 2: LISTENING TO AND QUESTIONING MOTIVES AND ACTIONS**

An interview of and discussion with Osama bin Laden.

### **SCENARIO 3: BIBLICAL AND QURANIC VIEWS OF SHARED PERSONALITIES:**

A presentation of the Biblical and Quranic versions of: Abraham, Moses, Solomon and how these versions reflect Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

### **SCENARIO 4: THREE SPIRITUAL LEADERS SPEAK**

A presentation-interview with Seyyid Qutb, Ayatullah Khomeini and Fethullah Gülen. Qutb (hanged by Egyptian government) was intellectual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood; Khomeini led 1979 revolution in Iran; Gülen is an influential Turkish sufi who advocates gentle peace among religions.

**SCENARIO 5: WESTERN & ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVES ON WOMEN, MARRIAGE & FAMILY**

A presentation/discussion on Western and Islamic perspectives on women, marriage and family with challenges and opportunities posed by both sides to one another.

**READING ROSTER**

**August 26** Getting Started

**August 27** Read *Ruthven*, pages xx-26; *Qur'an*, Surahs 1 and 114; *Glassé* pages 358-62, 146-47)  
(Pilgrimage and Pillars articles)

**September 2 Class meets (Start of Ramadan in North America) and September 4**  
Read: *Ruthven*, pages 26-79; *Qur'an*, Surahs 96-113, 68; *Glassé* pages 42-46 (on Allah).

**September 9 and 11** Read *Ruthven* pages 80-121; *Qur'an*, Surah 2 (be patient!)

**September 16 and 18** Read *Ruthven* 122-173; *Qur'an*, Surahs 3-4; *Glassé* pages 239-40, 296-97  
(on Jesus and Mary).

**September 23 and 25** Re-Read *Ruthven* 122-173; *Qur'an*, Surahs 5-6, 65; *Glassé* pages 419-20, 141,  
407 (on Shariyah, 2 articles on fiqh, and schools of law)

**September 30** Rosh Hashanah (starts sundown September 29) **CLASS MEETS. CATCH UP!**  
Provision made for observant Jewish students. *You are invited to 5 Tuesday evening programs at Moravian Seminary, 7-9 PM. Weekly topics on Muslim and Jewish-Christian views of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses & Jesus.*

**October 2** Class meets Eid ul-Fitra (Probable End Ramadan in North America). Provision made for observant Muslim students  
**QUIZ #1!!**

**October 7** **NO CLASS. FALL BREAK**

**October 9** Yom Kippur (starts sundown October 8. **Provision made for observant Jewish students.**)  
Read *Qur'an*, Surahs 10-12 and 27. *Glassé* pages 86-7 (Bible and next article)

**October 14 and 16** Read *Qur'an*, Surahs 8-9, 61. *Glassé* pages 240-41 (on jihad). Sukkot (starts sundown October 13, ends sunset, October 15)

**October 21 and 23** Read *Ruthven* pages 174-218; *Qur'an*, Surahs 39, 42, 62; *Glassé* pages 422-28, 36, 178-9, 187, 253, 447, (on Alawi), 39-41.  
**QUIZ #2 October 23**

**October 28 and 30** Read *Ruthven*, pages 219-281. *Qur'an*, Surahs 1; 2:254-257; 36; 24. *Glassé* pages 435-40; 142-46 (5 divine presences)

**NOVEMBER 4** **REVIEW FOR ESSAY EXAM**

**November 6** Regular Class

**NOVEMBER 10** **11:59 PM ESSAY EXAM DUE VIA BLACKBOARD**

**November 11 and November 13** Read *Ruthven* pages 282-351. *Qur'an*, Any 3 Surahs not yet assigned. *Glassé* pages 332 (Muslim Brotherhood; 259-61 Khomeini; 182 Hizb Allah, 168 (Hamas).

**November 18, 20 and 25** Class Presentations Thanksgiving break begins evening of Nov. 25!

**November 27** NO CLASS

**December 2 and 4** Read *Ruthven*, Pages 352-430. *Qur'an*, Surahs 1 and 114

**JOURNALS DUE IN CLASS ON NOVEMBER 4**

**DECEMBER 6-9: HAJJ. EID UL-ADHA ON DECEMBER 9** Provision made for observant Muslim students.

**December 9** LAST CLASS. REVIEW FOR FINAL

**FINAL EXAM TO BE SCHEDULED BY THE DEAN'S OFFICE!  
Journals returned at Final Exam**

**GRADING MATTERS**

Regular attendance and meaningful Participation are assumed.

1. Quiz #1	10
2. Quiz #2	10
3. Class Presentation	15
4. Journal	15
5. Essay Exam	20
6. Final Exam	30
TOTAL:	100

**COLLEGE ADVISABLE STATEMENTS ADAPTED FOR THIS COURSE:**

1. Any student who wishes to disclose a disability and request accommodations under the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) for this course first MUST meet with either Ms. Laurie Roth in the Office of learning Services (for learning disabilities and/or ADD/ADHD) of Dr. Ronald Kline in the Counseling Center (for all other disabilities)."
2. Concerning Academic Honesty, please consult the relevant sections in the College Catalogue and the Student Handbook. Bottom Line: the work you do is to be your work. Essentially, by our being in the course together, you and I are in a covenant of trust with each other. Trust me to do my best with integrity and sound scholarship, and I trust you to do the same with the work that is submitted for a grade. I trust you. You may consult with one another, the internet, etc. – but woe to plagiarists and those who “lift papers” from the internet! **BE VERY CAREFUL ABOUT INTERNET SOURCES IN RESEARCH!!** If you have any questions about a source’s accuracy/integrity or the extent of using a source without attribution, please see me first.

**WAGNERIAN OBSERVATIONS**

While the syllabus includes a grading grid, I reserve the right to make a **one way qualitative judgment** in developing a final grade. That means, for example, if you have a disaster on a test but do super work on most other factors, I **may** go beyond the end-term numerical grade. The qualitative judgment **will not reduce** the numerical total of graded factors in composing a final grade. While the syllabus is intended to be similar to a contract between the student and the professor, there may be some changes or modifications, such as shifts of dates or changes in the anticipated subjects to be taken in class.

**About Attendance.** I intend to be on time at every class that the College is open, and I expect you to be there and on time, too. Legitimate reasons supported by credible evidence (from the Dean of Student’s Office, etc.) will be acknowledged. **More than 2 unexcused “cuts” will reduce the final grade.** If a religious holy day that you really observe and on which you are not to write or will be home for the observance, please inform me.

About “Participation.” *Participation entails being present, plus keeping awake, alert, doing the readings being able to respond to questions, and making thoughtful contributions to class discussion.*