

Introduction to Islam (Rel. 125): Spring 2010

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Office Hours: Monday 10:30am-11:30am; Wednesday 10:30am-11:30am; and by appointment.

Lectures: MW 2:35pm-3:45pm, Main St. Campus, Comenius Hall, 201.

Course Description:

The course is a survey of the ideals and practices of Islam across its history. We distinguish between two 'types' of Islam: (i) 'Textual Islam', i.e., Islam as revealed in Islamic authoritative texts, and (ii) 'Historico-cultural Islam', i.e., Islam as expanded throughout its history. In this course, we examine the constant dialogue between these two 'types' of Islam. Our primary focus is on rational/intellectual dimension of Islamic tradition, i.e., Muslim doctrines, the development, production and transmission of religious knowledge, and the key trends, schools and movements that have contributed to the production of this knowledge. As 'Textual Islam', we discuss the Qur'an and the *Sunna* of the Prophet as two major foundations for 'Historico-cultural Islam'. As 'Historico-cultural Islam', we discuss development of legal, theological, mystical, philosophical and political thoughts throughout Islamic history.

Course Objectives:

- To understand Islam's primary message and rituals.
- To have a perspective of varieties of Islamic knowledge.
- To have a perspective of how Islamic knowledge in different branches has been developed.
- To become familiar with some primary sources of Islam.
- To exercise scholarly fairness, sympathy, and tolerance toward different cultures and world views, and expand our intellectual horizon.
- To develop expository writing skills.
- In a class of this nature, class members will naturally come with or develop a wide variety of opinions about the topics covered. But the goal of this course is not to agree and to adopt a single opinion concerning the interpretation of a particular text or doctrine; rather, the goal is to back up or criticize the opinions put forward in a rational manner, and to reveal the complexity of cultural phenomena, particularly, in the realm of religion.

Required Texts:

- *Muslims (Their Religious Beliefs and Practices)*, Andrew Rippin, Rutledge, ISBN:0-415-34888-9.
- *Classical Islam (A sourcebook of religious literature)*, edited and translated by Norman Calder, Jawid Mojaddedi, and Andrew Rippin.

Note 1: These books are available at Moravian College Book Store. Also, some additional articles would also be available during the course on the Blackboard. (Please make sure to register for the course Blackboard.)

Note 2: You will find that you get the most out of the course if you read each assignment before lecture and then re-read the assignment after the lecture.

Lecture attendance:

It is not possible to perform well in the course without attending lecture regularly. We will cover substantial amounts of material in lecture not included anywhere in the readings. It is highly unlikely that you will learn this material adequately by, e.g., borrowing your friend's lecture notes. You have two class sessions you can miss with no questions asked. Beyond those two

class sessions, any further missed classes without a really good excuse (involving a note from your doctor, psychiatrist, parole officer, etc.) will cost you 2% of your final grade.

Academic honesty:

Students are required to honor academic integrity. The course imposes the application of Moravian College's Academic Honesty Policy. The policy is to be found at Moravian College's *Student Handbook*.

Course requirements:

A regular final exam, scheduled for **Monday, May 3rd, at 8:30am**, plus a midterm (tentatively scheduled for **Wednesday, Feb. 24th**), and two short papers (600-800 words) due throughout the semester. Papers should be typed, double spaced, and spell-checked. You are responsible to submit a hard copy of your paper. In some exceptional cases, you may be allowed to submit your papers through email. If so, you must receive a confirmation email from me, otherwise, you must assume that I have not received your paper.

You will be provided with several suggested paper topics; however, you are allowed to write on a topic of your own choice as long as the topic is in the domain of the issues discussed in the class. If you decide to write on a topic of your choice, please make sure you have my approval first.

If a paper is turned in late without prior permission, the grade will be adjusted downwards by a third of a grade for each day the paper is late (e.g., A to A-, A- to B+, B+ to B, etc.). Make up midterm and final exams will be administered only under the most extraordinary of circumstances, and only in light of appropriate supporting documents.

Although the papers are rather short, you will find that they require an amount of effort far disproportionate to their length. You are required to discuss the draft of your paper with me before you submit the final version of your paper. You may also want to show a draft to your friends, roommates, or classmates so as to solicit feedback.

Important note: *All two papers, plus the midterm and the final must be completed in order to pass the course.*

Grading:

- Each paper- 20% (Total 40%)
- Midterm exam-30%
- Final exam-30%

You will be provided with a study guide for the midterm and for the final a week prior to the exams.

The grading scale is as follows:

Points	Grade	4-point conversion
95-100	A	4
90-95	A-	3.7
87-90	B+	3.3
84-87	B	3
80-84	B-	2.7
77-80	C+	2.3
74-77	C	2
70-74	C-	1.7
67-70	D+	1.3
64-67	D	1
60-64	D-	0.7
0-60	F	0

Tentative Lecture Schedule:

Part I: Textual Islam:

Jan 18, 20, 25: Historical Context: The role and influence of Pre-Islamic history

Reading: **Muslims*, Ch. 1: “Prehistory”, pp. 5-19.

*Izutsu, Toshihiko, “The Islamization of Old Arab Virtues”, in *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur’an*, Ch. V, pp. 74-105.

Jan. 27, Feb.1& 3: The Qur’an

Reading: **Muslims*, Ch.2: “The Qur’an”, pp.19-38

* *Classical Islam*, Ch.1:“The Qur’an”, pp. 3-15.

Feb. 8, 10, 15: The Sunna

Reading: * *Muslims*, Ch.3: “Muhammad”, pp.39-53.

**Classical Islam*, Ch.2: “The life of Muhammad”, pp.16-35, and Ch.3:”*Hadith*”, pp. 36-58.

Feb. 17: Video Presentation and Discussion & Study Guide for the midterm exam

Feb 22: Review Session for the midterm exam.

Feb. 24: Midterm Exam

Part II: Historico-cultural Islam:

March 1, 3: Legal Thought and Ritual Practice

Reading: **Muslims*, Ch.6: “Legal developments”, pp.83-96, and, Ch.7: “Ritual Practice”, pp.97-110.

* *Classical Islam*, Ch.7: “Law and ritual”, pp. 178-227.

March 8& 10: Spring Recess

March 15, 17, 22: Theological Thought

Reading: * *Muslims*, Ch. 5: “Theological exposition”, pp. 68-82.

* *Classical Islam*, Ch. 6: “Theology and Philosophy”, pp.134-177.

March 15: First Paper Assignment (You are required to take your final draft to the writing Center. Please make sure the center sends me a confirmation email.)

March 24, 29, 31: Philosophical Thought

Reading: * *Muslims*, Ch.5; and *Classical Islam*, Ch. 6.

March 29: First Paper due

April 5: Easter Recess

April 7, 12, 14: Mystical Thought (Sufism)

Reading: **Muslims*, Ch.9: “Sufi devotion”, pp.127-139.

* *Classical Islam*, Ch. 8: “Sufism”, pp.228-268.

April 14: Second Paper Assignment

April 19, 21: Shi’ism

Reading: * *Muslims*, Ch. 8: “The Shi’a”, pp. 113-126.

April 21: The Study Guide for the Final Exam

April 26: Modern Challenges (Feminism)

Reading: *Muslims*, Ch.16: “Feminism’s Islam”, pp.267-280.

April 26: **Second Paper due**

April 28: **Review Session for the Final**

Final Exam: Monday, May 3rd, at 8:30am, Comenius Hall 201.

Important Note: Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Mr. Joe Kempfer, Assistant Director of Learning Services for Disability Support, 1307 Main Street (extension 1510).