

Introduction to Islam (Rel. 125): Spring 2012

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Office Hours: Tuesday 10 am-11am, Wednesday 4pm-5pm and by appointment.

Lectures: MW 8:55am 10:05am, Main Street Campus, Comenius Hall, 114.

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 you have access to 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.

Important Note: Please turn off your cell phones before walking into class! If you are having an emergency that requires you to have your cell phone on, please tell me at the beginning of class. No text messaging is allowed during the class, and the use of computers should be strictly restricted to the things directly related to the class.

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:

- (1) A regular final exam, scheduled for **Monday April 30, 2012, at 8:30AM**, plus a midterm (tentatively scheduled for **Wednesday, February 29, 2012**). You will receive a Study Guide for the Midterm and Final Exams prior to the exams to know what kind of questions you should expect on the Midterm and Final Exams. Make up final exam will be administered only under the most extraordinary of circumstances, and only in light of appropriate supporting documents.
- (2) One paper (1500-2000 words). On March 23, 2012, you will receive the paper topic. The paper due is on **Wednesday, April 4, 2012**. Paper 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 paper through email. If so, you must receive a confirmation email from me, otherwise, you must assume that I have not received your paper. If the 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.). It is always helpful to discuss the draft of your paper with your friends, roommates, or classmates so as to solicit feedback.
- (3) You will be required to write weekly short paragraphs (not more than two pages) consist of your critical evaluation of the material to be discussed in the class. In the paragraphs, you should concentrate on a specific concept, theme or question. You are required to complete 10 assignments of this sort by the end of the semester, that is, you have the option of choosing 10 out of roughly

12 assignments I am to assign throughout the semester. Every week, by the end of our Wednesday class, the assignments should be submitted. (There would be no assignment due on Wed. Jan. 18th.)

Important note: *By the end of the semester, all four above-mentioned requirements (midterm exam, final exam, weekly assignments, and paper) must be completed in order to pass the course. In other words, if you miss at least one of the above requirements, we will fail the course automatically.*

Grading:

Final Exam: 30% - Midterm Exam: 30%- Paper: 20% - Weekly assignments: 20%.

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 16, 18, 23: 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 25, 30, Feb 1, 6, 8: The Qur’an

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

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

Feb 13, 15, 20: 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. 22: Video Presentation and Discussion

On Feb. 23, you will receive the Study Guide for the midterm exam.
Feb. 27: Review session for the midterm exam.

- * On February 24, the Study Guide for the Midterm Exam will be posted on Blackboard.
- * **The Midterm Exam will be held on Wednesday February 29, 2012.**

Part II: Historico-cultural Islam:

March 12, 14, 19: **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 21, 26, 28: **Theological Thought**

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

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

- * On March 23, the paper topic will be posted on Blackboard

April 2, 4, 9: **Mystical Thought (Sufism)**

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

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

- * **The paper due is on Wednesday April 4, 2012.**

April 11, 16, 18: **Philosophical Thought**

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

April 23, 25: **Shi’ism**

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

Study Guide for the Final will be posted on Blackboard on April 26.

The Final Exam will be held on Tuesday, May 3, 2012, at 8:30AM, Main Street Campus, Comenius Hall, 114.

Important Notes:

- 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).
- The Writing Center is located in a building that is not accessible to persons with mobility impairments. If you need the services of the Writing Center, please call 610-861-1392. The Writing Center tutors will make arrangements with the student who needs tutoring services to meet in an accessible location, such as the library or a study/conference room in PPHAC.

