

Introduction to Islam (Rel. 125): Spring 2015

Instructor: Dr. Arash Naraghi

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Office Hours: Tuesday 1:00-2:00pm, Wednesday 4:00-5:00pm, and by appointment.

Lectures: MW 8:55 AM-10:05 AM, Main Street Campus, Memorial Hall, 302.

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:

- Goldziher, Ignaz, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, Translated by Andras and Ruth Hamori, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1981. ISBN:0-691-10099-3.

Note 1: We are going to use some articles and chapters from other books. They will be posted on Blackboard throughout the semester.

Note 2: This book is 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 3: 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 May 4th, 2015, at 1:30pm**, plus a midterm (tentatively scheduled for **Monday, March 2nd, 2015**). 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 (700-1500 words). On March 23 the paper topic will be posted on Blackboard. The paper due is **April 8th**. Paper should be typed, double spaced, and spell-checked. You are responsible to submit your paper on Blackboard. 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. Throughout the semester I am going to assign you 12 weekly assignments, and you are required to complete 10 out of 12 assignments by the end of the semester, that is, you are allowed to skip two assignments. If you decide to do more than 10 assignments, your final grade for assignments would be calculated based on the first ten highest grades you receive on your assignments. The assignments will be posted on the Blackboard every Wednesday, and you are required to submit your paragraph the next

Wednesday on Blackboard by midnight, unless I specify otherwise. (There would be no assignment for the first week.)

- (4) You will be divided in several groups, and each group is required to choose a topic related to Islam, and does some research on the topic, and presents it to the class as a group. You will be graded on your class presentation as a group.

Grading:

Final Exam: 25% - Midterm Exam: 25%- Paper: 20% - Weekly assignments: 20%.
Class Presentation: 10%

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 19, 21: Preliminary Remarks: Definitions and Methods

Reading: * "Phenomenology of Religion", by Douglas Allen, from *The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion*, Ch. 10, pp. 182-207 (will be available on Blackboard).

Jan 26, 28: Historical Context: The role and influence of Pre-Islamic history

Reading: *Izutsu, Toshihiko, "The Islamization of Old Arab Virtues", in *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'an*, Ch. V, pp. 74-105. (Will be available on Blackboard)

Feb 2, 4, 9. The Qur'an

Reading: **Islamic Theology and Law*, Ch. 1.

**Muslims* by Andrew Rippin, Rutledge, 4 edition (September 3, 2011)
Ch.2: "The Qur'an", pp.19-38. (Will be posted on Blackboard)

* *God and Man in the Qur'an (Semantics of the Qur'anic Weltanschauung)*, Toshihiko Izutsu. Islamic Book Trust, Kuala Lumpur, 2002, Ch. 3, "The Basic Structure of Qur'anic Weltanschauung", pp. 74-99. (Will be posted on Blackboard)

Feb 11, 16, 18: The Sunna

Reading: * *Islamic Theology and Law*, Ch. I: "Muhammad and Islam", pp. 1-31.

* *Muslims*, Ch.3: "Muhammad", pp.39-53. (Will be posted on Blackboard)

**Islamic Thought: An Introduction*, Abdullah Saeed, Rutledge, 2006, Ch. 3, "The Sunna of the Prophet", pp. 33-43. (Will be posted on Blackboard).

Part II: Historico-cultural Islam:

Feb. 23, 25, March 4: Legal Thought and Ritual Practice

Reading: **Islamic Theology and Law*, Ch.6: "Legal developments", pp.83-96,

The Midterm exam will be held on March 2nd.

March 16, 18, 23: Theological Thought

Reading: * *Islamic Theology and Law*, Ch. II: "The Growth and Development of Dogmatic Theology", pp. 67-116.

On March 23, the paper topic will be posted.

March 25, April 1, 6: Mystical Thought (Sufism)

Reading: **Islamic Theology and Law*, Ch. IV: "Asceticism and Sufism", pp.116-230.

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

April 8, 13: The Sects

Reading: * *Islamic Theology and Law*, Ch.V: "The Sects", pp. 167-230.

The Paper Due is on April 8th.

April 15: Later Developments

Reading: * *Islamic Theology and Law*, Ch. VI: "Later Developments", pp. 230-269.

April 20, 22, 27, 29: Class Presentations and Discussions

On April 27, you will receive the Study Guide for the Final Exam.

The Final Exam will be held on Monday May 4th, 2015, at 1:30pm, Main Street Campus, Memorial Hall, 302.

Important Notes:

- Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Ms. Elaine Mara, Assistant Director of Academic & Disability Support, located on the first floor of Monocacy Hall (extension 1401). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic & Disability Support office.
- 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.