

Introduction to Islam (Rel. 125): Spring 2016

Instructor: Dr. Arash Naraghi

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Office Hours: Tuesday 3:45pm-4:45pm, Wednesday 11:00am-12:00pm, and by appointment.

Lectures: TR- 10:20am- 11:30 am, Main Street Campus, Hall of Science 123.

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.
- Rippin, Andrew, *Muslims (Their Religious Beliefs and Practices)*, Rutledge, ISBN:0-415-34888-9.

Note 1: We are going to use some articles and chapters from other sources. They will be posted on Blackboard/Canvas 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/Canvas. (Please make sure you have access to Blackboard/Canvas.)

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 **Friday, May 6th, at 8:00AM**, plus a midterm (tentatively scheduled for **Tuesday, March 1st, 2016**). 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 (600-800 words). On **March 22** the paper topic will be posted on Blackboard/Canvas. The paper due is **April 5th**. Paper should be typed, double spaced, and spell-checked. You are responsible to submit your paper on Blackboard/Canvas. 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/Canvas/Canvas every Wednesday, and you are required to submit your paragraph the next Wednesday on Blackboard/Canvas/Canvas by midnight, unless I specify otherwise. (There would be no assignment for the first week.)

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 13, 15: 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/Canvas).

Jan 19, 21: 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. (Will be available on/Canvas)

Jan 26, 28, Feb 2, 4: The Qur’an**Reading:**

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

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

* *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/Canvas)

Feb 9, 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.

**Islamic Thought: An Introduction*, Abdullah Saeed, Rutledge, 2006, Ch. 3, “The Sunna of the Prophet”, pp. 33-43. (Will be posted on Blackboard/Canvas).
February 23, Guest Speaker: Dr. Kin Cheung
February 25, NO CLASS, (I am attending a conference)

The Midterm exam will be held on March 1st.

Part II: Historico-cultural Islam:

March 3, 15, 17: **Legal Thought and Ritual Practice**

Reading:

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

On March 22nd, the paper topic will be posted.

March 22, 24, 29: **Theological Thought**

Reading:

**Islamic Theology and Law*, Ch. II: “The Growth and Development of Dogmatic Theology”, pp. 67-116.
** Muslims*, Ch. 5: “Theological exposition”, pp. 68-82.

The paper due is on April 5th.

March 31, April 5, 7: **Mystical Thought (Sufism)**

Reading:

**Islamic Theology and Law*, Ch. IV: “Asceticism and Sufism”, pp.116-230.
: **Muslims*, Ch.9: “Sufi devotion”, pp.127-139.

April 12, 14, 19: **The Sects**

Reading:

** Islamic Theology and Law*, Ch.V: “The Sects”, pp. 167-230.
** Muslims*, Ch. 8: “The Shi’a”, pp. 113-126.

April 21, 26: **Later Developments**

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

April 28: Reflection and Review

**The Final Exam will be held on Friday, May 6th, 2016, at 8:00AM
Main Street Campus, Hall of Science, 123.**

Important Notes:

- Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact the Academic Support Center, located in the lower level of Monocacy Hall, or by calling [610-861-1401](tel:610-861-1401). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.
- 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.