

FALL 2015

ISLAM (HYBRID) 840:226:01 (crosslisted with 685:226:01)

Time and Place: Wednesdays 4.30-5.50, Scott Hall 115, College Age Campus.

Professor: J. Mojaddedi, jamojaddedi@hotmail.com **Office Hours:** Wednesday, 6-7:30pm, and at other times, always by appointment. (My private office is on Cook/Douglass, Room 104 of the Loree Building, but I can meet on College Ave – this is why office hour is by appointment, so we know where and when we are meeting.)

Course Description:

This is a hybrid course that provides an overview of Islam, from the narratives about its beginnings until the present day. Islam is not only practiced by more than a billion people globally, but is probably the most talked about religion today, though not always with much accuracy. This course provides a reliable understanding for anyone seeking an academic inquiry into Islam as a religious system, with reflection on its diverse schools and historical development in the light of modern secular scholarship. This final point is important to note, because a background in the study of Islam will not on its own guarantee a pass, even if some of the subject matter overlaps, because the secular academic approach is very different to the insider or outsider approach based on religious institutions or the popular media, respectively.

The course is divided into six units. Unit 1: “Origins and the Qur’an” focuses on the religious background in Arabia and the Near East in the 7th century, when Islam first emerged, as well as the oldest Islamic text, namely the Qur’an. Unit 2: “Biographical Sources for Muhammad,” as the name implies, focuses on the written materials about the life of the Prophet Muhammad, their special functions and debates about their historicity. Unit 3: “Empires and the Awakening” revisits the crucial formative period of Islam which involved much interaction and two-way influence with other religions and intellectual traditions in the Near East, especially Judaism, Christianity and Neoplatonic thought. Unit 4: “Sunnism, Shi’ism and Sufism,” as the name implies, focuses on the three main Islamic world-views and their histories of development, interaction, coexistence and conflict. Unit 5: “Modern Transformations” explores important developments in recent centuries, including the rise of Wahhabism and Islamism. Unit 6: “Contemporary Issues” devotes time to three key issues today, namely Muslim reformists, gender issues, and Islamophobia.

SAS Core Curriculum Goals

This Course fulfills the historical analysis (**HST**) and Arts and Humanities [philosophical and theoretical] (**AHo**) subsets of the core curriculum areas of inquiry.

- Explain the development of some aspect of a society or culture over time, including the history of ideas or history of science.
- Employ historical reasoning to study human endeavors.
- Examine critically philosophical and other theoretical issues concerning the nature of reality, human experience, knowledge, value, and/or cultural production.

Required Textbook:

Daniel Brown, *A New Introduction to Islam*, 2nd Edn, Wiley, 2009 (ISBN 9781405158077)
You must acquire your own copy of this book, and make sure it is the 2009 second edition if purchasing a used copy. Readings from this book will not be available as pdfs for copyright reasons.

Other Readings The specific readings other than chapters from the required textbook are available as pdfs in the Sakai Class “Course Content” page for each week’s online activity page, for you to download, print out, and bind, to serve as your own cost-effective course pack. These texts need to be read in preparation for the weekly comprehension quiz and forum postings.

Sakai: Everyone needs to log in to the private Sakai site exclusively for members of this hybrid course, at <https://sakai.rutgers.edu> If anybody has problems with accessing Sakai they should inform the professor as soon as possible, as it is necessary to use this facility for most of the activities required for this course.

Course Structure

The course is organized into six units, each containing two or three lessons. Each lesson represents one week of work, and contains:

- a) An introduction to the topic of the coming week during the second half of the weekly meeting on Wednesday, 4:30-5:50 (see e) below concerning the first half of the weekly class). The final class of the semester will use the second half of the class for an overview of what has been accomplished during the entire course.
- b) assigned reading(s) for the week
- c) a comprehension quiz, which can be taken repeatedly until the weekly deadline of Saturday 1pm. Only the highest score you attain will be recorded. There is a quiz every week for the first 12 weeks, but no quizzes after Thanksgiving, so you can concentrate on your paper.
- d) a discussion activity, using the Sakai forum and/or Voicethread tools. This activity requires posting a response of at least 150 words to an initial prompt by 11:55pm of the Saturday, and then posting by 11:55pm on the Monday either a response of at least 75 words to each of two of your classmates’ initial posts of your choosing (lessons 1, 4, 7, 11, and 13), or a post of 150 words on audio or video material (remaining lessons). Everyone is required to do the discussion activity for lessons 1, 4, 7, 11 and 13 and five other lessons of your choice. This means that you are required to fulfill this task for only ten weeks out of the total fourteen weeks of the course, but those ten weeks must include the aforementioned five lessons when responses to classmates’ posts are required. We need everyone on board during those five weeks for interaction with each other.
- e) A final in-class discussion of the topic and the issues that have been raised in the previous week’s discussion activity during the first half of the weekly meeting on Wednesday, 4:30-5:50. (The first meeting of the semester will instead use the first half of the meeting to introduce the course.)

***There are also three 20-minute monthly cumulative quizzes, which will take place during the weekly class on 10/7, 11/4, and 12/9. All the questions will be from the same pool as the weekly comprehension quiz questions taken in the preceding weeks, apart from the final question, which is worth about 40% of the monthly quiz. That final question requires a 200-word answer to your choice of prompts based on the discussion activity in forums, Voicethreads and in class during the preceding weeks.

***A paper of at least 2,000 words is also required to complete this course. The strict deadline for this paper is the start of the last class, 4:30, Wednesday 9th December. See further details on the “Assignment” page of Sakai.

Attendance and participation: Attendance as well as active and informed participation in discussions during the class meetings are rewarded in the final grade by 10%. Attendance of a class can only be established by indicating your presence at the beginning and remaining in the classroom for the full duration without use of electronic devices (e.g. phone, tablet, laptop), unless prior agreement has been obtained from the professor for late arrival/early departure. Classes will be interactive and not an occasion to sit as a passenger on the course behind a screen, or wander in and out, disturbing classmates and the professor. If you have emergency situations or do not wish to be engaged with the subject in class, it is better not to attend that week’s class. However, the three classes during which the monthly cumulative quizzes will be held (10/7, 11/4, and 12/9) are compulsory.

If you are unable to come to class for reasons beyond your control (i.e. not by choice), please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason. An email is automatically sent to your professors.

Phones, Tablets and Laptops: The use of electronic devices, including phones, laptops, tablets etc. is **not permitted** during class hours (Wednesday, 4:30-5:50). In this course, data is found in the readings and online activities, and it is more important to engage in and follow discussions in class than to record data mentioned in them. Use of electronic devices will lead to a penalty equal to two class attendances/participations. It is therefore better to use such devices in peace elsewhere during classtime rather than in the classroom. A letter from the disability office is required for any exceptions.

Papers: each paper must be typed and submitted in hard copy and also uploaded to Sakai for plagiarism scanning. Each paper must have a cover page and bibliography, which should consist of publications actually used for the paper. Academic sources will be provided, including pdfs online and books at the reserve desk of the library. Requests for recommendations for further reading are always welcomed. Please beware that if you instead opt to rely on web-sites or other printed materials as sources without sufficient discrimination, you run the risk of using inappropriate non-academic sources, and in consequence attaining failing grades. This is your responsibility.

Plagiarism will result in an immediate fail for the course. The Rutgers position regarding plagiarism and further relevant details, can be found here:
<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy>

It is always essential to ask if uncertain about any of these issues, before submitting your paper for plagiarism scanning.

Papers short of the minimum length will receive a grade lowered according to the number of words missing. Late papers without an official Excused Absence will be penalized by one percentile (1 out of the final 100 for the course/the final 20 of the paper assignment) per 24 hours, or part of a 24 hour period (starting from the time the relevant hand-in class begins). Papers more than 7 days late will not be graded at all. It is the responsibility of the student handing in a paper late to make sure that it reaches the professor and to obtain confirmation of receipt on the day of its submission. Spelling and grammar will be taken into consideration in grading all papers, which should be typed double-spaced on letter size paper. The Writing Center at Rutgers offers help with writing papers.

Scheduled Monthly Cumulative Quizzes (10/7, 11/4, 12/9): The short questions in the monthly cumulative quizzes come from exactly the same pool of questions used for the weekly online comprehension quizzes, so you will have encountered them already and will be perfectly prepared if you have taken these. The extended (200-word) question at the end will be based on the main issues that have emerged in forum discussions, which will be highlighted further during the weekly class meetings.

The timing of the scheduled monthly cumulative quiz and paper submission deadlines are strictly enforced. There will be no make-up quiz without a doctor's note with the office's contact details for verification, or a note from your dean.

There is no final exam. Just the holidays to enjoy!

Final Grade Constituents:

- 30 3 Scheduled Monthly Cumulative Quizzes (10/7, 11/4, 12/9)
- 20 Paper (Deadline is start of last class meeting, 4:30pm, Wednesday 9th December)
- 20 Weekly Forum Posts
- 20 Weekly Comprehension quizzes (unlimited submission before weekly Saturday 1pm deadline)
- 10 Attendance and Participation during class meetings, Wednesdays, 4:30-5:50

Grading System: A=100-90, B+= 89-87, B=86-80, C+=79-77, C=76-70, D=69-65, F=64–

COURSE OUTLINE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

(FOR FULL DETAILS AND ALL MATERIALS SEE “COURSE CONTENT” ON SAKAI)

9/2 Introduction to Course

Read the syllabus before coming and take the video tour

UNIT 1: ORIGINS AND THE QUR’AN

Lesson 1: 9/2-9/8 Situating Islam

Material Used:

Brown, chps on Arabia and The Pre-Islamic Near East

Comprehension Quiz, by 1pm on 9/5

Discussion Posts, by 11:55pm on 9/5 and 9/7. *** Required of All Students For This Lesson Among their Ten Chosen Lessons***

Lesson 2: 9/9-9/15 The Qur’an (NO MEETING ON 9/9)***

Material Used:

Sells, *Approaching the Qur’an*, pp. 42-43, 90-103

Brown, chp on The Qur’an

Calder et al., *Classical Islam*, pp. 4-9, 13, 21

Qur’an Recitation and transcription of al-Fatiha and al-Qadr

Comprehension Quiz, by 1pm on 9/12

Discussion Posts, by 11:55pm on 9/12 and 9/14

UNIT 2: BIOGRAPHICAL SOURCES FOR MUHAMMAD

Lesson 3: 9/16-9/22 The Prophet Muhammad

Material Used:

Brown, chp on Muhammad

Ernst, pp. 73-92

Clip from the feature film “The Message”

Comprehension Quiz, by 1pm on 9/19

Discussion Posts, by 11:55pm on 9/19 and 9/21

Lesson 4: 9/23-9/29 The Hadith

Brown, chp on The Tradition Literature
Calder et al., *Classical Islam*, pp. 55-60

Comprehension Quiz, by 1pm on 9/26
Discussion Posts, by 11:55pm on 9/26 and 9/28.

Required of All Students For This Lesson Among their Ten Chosen Lessons

UNIT 3: EMPIRE AND THE AWAKENING

Lesson 5: 9/30-10/6 Foundational Islamic History

Material Used:

Brown, chps on The Conquests and The Religion of Empire

Brown, chp on The Caliphate

Clip from "Empire of Faith" PBS Documentary

Comprehension Quiz, by 1pm on 10/3
Discussion Posts, by 11:55pm on 10/3 and 10/5

10/7 IN-CLASS CUMULATIVE QUIZ 1

Lesson 6: 10/7-10/13 Theology and Rationalism

Material Used:

Brown, chp on Islamic Theology and Philosophy

Clip from "Science and Islam" BBC Documentary

Comprehension Quiz, by 1pm on 10/10
Discussion Posts, by 11:55pm on 10/10 and 10/12

UNIT 4: SUNNISM, SHI'ISM AND SUFISM

Lesson 7: 10/14-20 Sunni Jurisprudence

Material Used:

Brown, chp on Islamic Law

Calder et. al., *Classical Islam*, pp. 280-4

Comprehension Quiz, by 1pm on 10/17
Discussion Posts, by 11:55pm on 10/17 and 10/19. ***Required of All Students For This Lesson Among their Ten Chosen Lessons***

Lesson 8: 10/21-27 Twelver Imami Shiism

Material Used:

Rippin, *Shiism*, pp. 120-35

Calder et. al., *Classical Islam*, pp. 232-8

Clip from "Ashura at Skardu" Documentary

Comprehension Quiz, by 1pm on 10/24

Discussion Posts, by 11:55pm on 10/24 and 10/26

Lesson 9: 10/28-11/3 Sufism

Material Used:

Brown, chp on Sufism

Calder et. al., *Classical Islam*, pp. 299-306, 334-44

Clip from "Nusrat Fateh Ali in Concert" Channel 4 UK

Clip from "Sufi Soul" Documentary

Comprehension Quiz, by 1pm on 10/31

Discussion Posts, by 11:55pm on 10/31 and 11/2

UNIT 5: MODERN TRANSFORMATIONS

*****11/4 CUMULATIVE QUIZ 2*** (ONLINE DURING CLASS TIME PERIOD)**

Lesson 10: 11/4-11/10 Wahhabis (NO MEETING ON 11/4)***

Material Used:

Rippin, pp. 170-3, 283-5

Commins, pp. 7-39

BBC 4 Radio Program: "What is Wahhabism?"

Comprehension Quiz, by 1pm on 11/7

Discussion Posts, by 11:55pm on 11/7 and 11/9

Lesson 11: 11/11-/17 Islam as a Political Ideology

Material Used:

Brown, chp on Islam and the West

Brown, chp on The Turbulent 20th Century

Clip from "America at a Crossroad: Jihadism" PBS Documentary

Comprehension Quiz, by 1pm on 11/14

Discussions Posts Discussion Posts, by 11:55pm on 11/14 and 11/16. ***Required of All Students For This Lesson Among their Ten Chosen Lessons***

UNIT 6: CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

Lesson 12: 11/18-11/24 Contemporary Muslim Reformers

Material Used:

Brown, chp on Islam in the Twenty-First Century

Khaled Abou El-Fadl, “The Ugly Modern and the Modern Ugly,” in Omid Safi, ed., *Progressive Muslims*, pp. 34-62

Clip from “Muslims” PBS Documentary

Comprehension Quiz, by 1pm on 11/21

Discussion Posts, by 11:55pm on 11/21 and 11/23

Lesson 13: 11/25-12/1 Muslim Women and Feminism (NO MEETING ON 11/25)***

Material Used:

Ali, “Progressive Muslims and Islamic Jurisprudence,” in Safi, *Progressive Muslims*, pp. 163-89

Clips from “Muslims” PBS Documentary

Clip from “Divorce Iranian Style” Documentary

No Comprehension Quiz

Discussions Posts Required Discussion Posts, by 11:55pm on 11/28 and 11/30.

Required of All Students For This Lesson Among their Ten Chosen Lessons

Lesson 14: 12/2-12/8 Islamophobia

Material Used:

Rippin, pp. 316-30

Dabiq, Issue 4, pp. 14-17

Clip of Islamophobia example in America

No comprehension Quiz

Discussion Posts, by 11:55pm on 12/5 and 12/7

*****12/9 IN-CLASS CUMULATIVE QUIZ 3*****

*****12/9 PAPER DUE 4:30PM IN CLASS*****

Happy Holidays!