

Introduction to Islam (Section A)

REL 272 (Spring 2011)
MWF 9:30 – 10:20 (Chambers 1003)

Prof. Syed Rizwan Zamir

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Office Hours: Mon & Wed 10:30- noon; Tue 1:45 – 3:00

Course Description:

This course is a general introduction to Islamic faith, practices, history and culture. Our method of study will make reference to both the normative textual sources of Islam and the lived experience of the Muslim community through centuries. After a brief overview of the approaches to the study of Islam as they have emerged over centuries in the West (and our own method of study this semester), we will explore Islam as a religion, discussing its core beliefs, most important rites, religious texts and survey of various religious and intellectual disciplines such as law (*Shari'ah*), theology (*Kalam*) philosophy (*Falsafah*) and mysticism (*Tasawwuf*). Our study will also encompass Islamic culture and its various artistic and aesthetic expressions as developed over centuries. The course will close with discussion of early Islamic history and Islamic sects (such as the Shi'ites) and a brief overview of the present state of the Islamic world and its relationship with the West in modern times.

Required Readings (available at the Bookstore):

1. Berkey, Jonathan Porter. *The Formation of Islam: Religion and Society in the near East, 600-1800*, Themes in Islamic History. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
2. Curtis, Edward. *Muslims in America: A Short History*. New York: Oxford, 2009
3. Eaton, Gai. *Islam and the Destiny of Man*, State University of New York Press, 1986
4. Murata, Sachiko, and William C. Chittick. *The Vision of Islam*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2006
5. Safi, Omid. *Memories of Muhammad: Why the Prophet Matters*. New York: HarperOne, 2009

Course Requirements:

Midterm Examination	30%
Final Examination	35% (self-scheduled)
Paper (max. 5 pages)	15%
Active Participation*	6%
Quiz (2 unannounced)	14%

*Note: Participation grade is based on the overall quality of your in-class participation throughout the semester. This includes proper class etiquette, attentiveness, asking engaging questions and responding to those asked by the instructor. Do ask the instructor if you have any questions regarding how to make your participation more effective.

Attendance Policy: Attendance is compulsory in this course and more than 2 absences without valid excuse such as sickness or family emergency etc. will result in lowering of grade. It is student's responsibility to obtain notes and 'catch-up' in the case of absence. Absence will not be a good excuse for not knowing what happened in the class.

Grading Scale: To avoid any misunderstandings, I will share with you what is expected in order to obtain good marks in this course:

A: Excellent Work: a firm grasp of the material in lectures and readings and an ability to offer sound and insightful analysis.

B: Solid Work: a good grasp of the material in lectures and readings and significant effort to interpret the material in an analytical fashion.

C: Decent work: a fair grasp of the material in lectures and readings, but analysis and effort are lacking.

D: Poor work: a simplistic understanding of the material with little or no effort towards analysis.

F: Little grasp of the subject matter and no attempt to engage the material or respect the parameters of the course and assignments.

Disabilities: A student who requires accommodation for a documented disability of any type should see me *immediately* to discuss modifications to course requirements.

Academic Honesty: Students are expected to fully abide by the Honor Code as set out by the College and should pledge all their assignments and exams.

COURSE OUTLINE

Key: Lecture (L), Discussion (D), Lecture and Discussion (L & D) – italics (video)

WEEK 1: Introduction & Method of Study

Readings:

Eaton: Introduction & Ch 1

Safi: Introduction

Mon, Jan 10: Introduction to the course (D)

Wed, Jan 12: Map of the Islamic World & Methods & Approaches to the Study of Islam (L)

Fri, Jan 14: *Orientalism* + Concluding reflections on the Methods Study of Islam (D)

WEEK 2: Foundational Principles of Islam

Readings:

Eaton: Ch 2

Chittick & Murata: 164 – 187

Safi: Ch 1

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Mon, Jan 17: *No class (Martin Luther King, Jr Day)*

Wed, Jan 19: Principles of Islam I (L)

Fri, Jan 21: Principles of Islam II (L)

WEEK 3: Sources of Islam: The Qur'an and the Prophet

Readings:

Eaton: Ch 4 & 5

Safi: Ch 2

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Mon, Jan 24: The Qur'an (L)

Wed, Jan 26: The Qur'an II (L)

Fri, Jan 28: *Islam: The Empire of Faith (Part I)*

WEEK 4: Beliefs and Practices I - Islam

Readings:

Safi: 195-219

Eaton: Ch 3

Chittick & Murata: ix-xxxix, 3-7, 8-21

Mon, Jan 31: The Prophet (L)

Wed, Feb 2: The Prophet II/Introducing Hadith Gabriel & Pillars of Islam (L)

Fri, Feb 4: *Inside Mecca*

WEEK 5: Beliefs and Practices II – Islam and Iman

Readings:

Chittick & Murata: 35 – 131 (Ch 3 and 4)

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Mon, Feb 7: Pillars of Islam (L)
Wed, Feb 9: Concluding Pillars and Introducing *Iman* (L)
Fri, Feb 11: *Knowledge of the World*

WEEK 6: Beliefs and Practices III - *Iman* continued

Readings:

Chittick & Murata: p. 132 – 164 & 193 - 235

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Mon, Feb 14: Beliefs II (L)
Wed, Feb 16: Question & Answer (D)
Fri, Feb 18: *Man and Nature*

WEEK 7: Islamic Law/*Shari'ah*

Readings:

Eaton: Ch 9 & 10

Chittick & Murata: 22-34

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Mon, Feb 21: *Shari'ah* (L)
Wed, Feb 23: *Shari'ah* Institutions (L)
Fri, Feb 25: Midterm Exam

SPRING BREAK: February 25 (4:30 P.M.) - March 7 (8:30 A.M.)

WEEK 8: *Ihsan*

Readings:

Chittick & Murata: 267 - 298, 304-317

Safi: Ch 3

Mon, Mar 7: Introducing *Ihsan* (L)
Wed, Mar 9: Sufism (L)
Fri, Mar 11: *The Inner Life*

WEEK 9: *Ihsan* II

Readings:

Eaton: Ch 11

Chittick & Murata: 298-303

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Mon, Mar 14: Sufism II (L)
Wed, Mar 16: Islamic Art (L)
Fri, Mar 18: *Patterns of Beauty*

WEEK 10: Islamic Philosophy, Science and Scholastic Theology

Readings:

Chittick & Murata: 236-265

Berkey: 224-230

Mon, Mar 21: Islamic Theology (L)
Wed, Mar 23: Islamic Philosophy & Science (L)
Fri, Mar 25: *Empire of Faith Part II*

WEEK 11: Islamic Religious Sciences & Islamic Political Thought

Readings:

Murata & Chittick: 319-329
Eaton: Ch 6 and 7

Mon, Mar 28: Conclusion of Hadith Gabriel & Map of Islamic Religious Sciences (L & D)
Wed, Mar 30: Islamic Political Thought (L)
Fri, Apr 1: Early Islamic History (L)

WEEK 12: Islamic History I

Readings:

Berkey: 70-90, 102-109, 124-151
Safi: Ch 5

Mon, Apr 4: Early Islamic History & Shi'ism (L)
Wed, Apr 6: Shi'ism (L)
Fri, Apr 8: *No class today (You will watch The Message on Sunday instead)*

WEEK 13: Islam in the Modern World

Readings:

Murata & Chittick: 329-335

Mon, Apr 11: Into the Modern World (L)
Wed, Apr 13: Modern Islamic Religious Movements (L)
Fri, Apr 15: *Reel Bad Arabs – Your Paper is due Today*

WEEK 14: Islam *and* the West/Islam *in* the West

Readings:

Curtis: ix - 118

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Mon, Apr 18: Islam *and* the West/Islam *in* the West (L)
Wed, Apr 20: Islam in America (L)
Fri, Apr 22: Question and Answer Session (D)

EASTER BREAK: APRIL 22 (4:30 P.M.) - APRIL 27 (8:30 A.M.)

WEEK 15: Wrapping Up

Wed, Apr 27: Review and Conclusions

Hadith of Gabriel

One day we were sitting with the Messenger of God—may God bless him and grant him peace, when suddenly a man with very white clothing and jet-black hair came upon us. No mark of travel was visible upon him, and none of us recognized him. Sitting down before the Prophet, leaning his knees against his, and placing his hands upon his thighs, he said, “Tell me Muhammad about submitting (*islam*).” He replied, “Submitting is that you bear witness that there is no god but God and that Muhammad is the Messenger of God, that you perform the ritual prayer, pay the alms tax, fast during [the month of] Ramadan, and make the pilgrimage to the House (i.e. the Ka’ba) if you are able.” The man said, “You are right.” We were surprised at his questioning him and then declaring that he was right. The man said, “Now tell me about faith (*iman*).” He replied, “Faith is that you have faith in God, His angels, His books, His messengers, and the last day, and that you have faith in the measuring out, both its good and its evil.” Remarking that he was right, he then said, “Now tell me about virtue (*ihsan*).” He replied, “Virtue is that you worship God as if you see Him, for if you do not see Him, He nonetheless sees you.” Then the man said, “Tell me about the Hour.” The Prophet—may God bless him and grant him peace—replied, “Regarding that the one questioned knows no more than the questioner.” The man said, “Then tell me about its marks.” He said, “The slave girl will give birth to her mistress, and you will see the barefoot, the naked, the destitute, and the shepherds vying in building.” Then the man went away. After I had waited for a long time, the Prophet—may God bless him and grant him peace—said to me, “Do you know who the questioner was ‘Umar?’” I replied, “God and His Messenger know best.” He said, “He was Gabriel and he came to teach you your religion (*din*).