

“And the garment of God-consciousness— that is best.”

The Qur'an, 7:26

INTRODUCTION TO ISLAM

REL 178 (Fall 2020)

TTH 7:00-8:15 pm ONLINE [Zoom]

WHAT IS IT ABOUT? (Previously Course Description)

This course is a general introduction to Islamic faith, practices, history and culture. After a brief overview of the Islamic world and 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 early Islamic history and then mainly Islam as a religion. We will discuss core beliefs, most important rites, religious texts and various religious and intellectual disciplines such as law (*shari'ah*), theology (*kalam*) philosophy (*falsafah*) and mysticism (*tasawwuf*). Our study will have special emphasis on Islamic religious and philosophical thought especially that of the classical formative period. It will also encompass Islamic culture and its various artistic and aesthetic expressions.

THE ROADMAP

SEE MOODLE FOR CALENDAR OF READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS

Disabilities: A student who requires accommodation for a documented disability of any type should see the instructor immediately to discuss modifications to course requirements. “Davidson College values the diversity of its community and is an equal access institution that admits otherwise qualified applicants without regard to disability. The college seeks to accommodate requests for accommodations related to disability that are determined to be reasonable and do not compromise the integrity of a program or curriculum. To make such a request or to begin a conversation about a possible request, please contact Beth Bleil, Director of Academic Access and Disability Resources, in the Center for Teaching and Learning by visiting her office in the E.H. Little Library, by emailing her at bebleil@davidson.edu, or by calling 704-894-2129. It is best to submit accommodation requests within the drop/add period; however, requests can be made at any time in the semester. Please keep in mind that accommodations are not retroactive.”

Honor (and Conscience): The College expects students to fully abide by the Honor Code. The instructor wonders also about the burdens of conscience and to what extent these two intersect.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

INSTRUCTOR'S:

It is intended that by the end of the class, the participants will have:

1. Adequate familiarity with the basics of Islam as a religion, its doctrines and practices;
2. Gained firm intellectual foundations in the subject to make sense of and engage texts and practitioners of Islamic faith;
3. Gained knowledge of the origins, sacred history and early history of Islam;
4. Gained knowledge of the key terms, categories, debates and important figures of early Islamic intellectual history;
5. Learned how Islamic sciences and intellectual disciplines developed and relate to Islamic religion;
6. Gained skills and appreciation for careful readings of texts that is geared towards accomplishing better understanding of both the texts and the issues that they raise;
7. Engaged in intellectual practices of interpreting and teaching texts;

YOURS?

For a note on this, see “A Note on Learning Outcomes (Yours?)” on Veils & Webs (rizwanzamir.net > Scroll Down, Bottom Left, “Notes” Section).

A NOTE:

If our study will inspire joy of learning and its themes prove relevant to your lives, it will be an excellent learning outcome. Yet making the class more relevant to you personally and as a group is something that will require a deeper engagement and a more active investment from you. Feel free to talk to the instructor about ways in which you individually or collectively pursue your intended intellectual goals.

INTELLECTUAL PRACTICES (Previously Course Requirements/Assignments)

Various “Intellectual Practices” are “building blocks” to help deepen comprehension and synthesis. At the heart of all these intellectual practices is *thinking* and *thinking through* the themes of this course. As will be discussed the first day, texts assigned and close reading of these texts are critical to the success of these intellectual practices. Contents of the course (reading and intellectual practices) may be revised in light of the emerging shifts in our intellectual journey.

Presence & Participation through Readings (includes Google Doc entries)	15%
Midterm Review	30%
In class TEACHING (on <i>Hajj</i>)– In Groups	10%
Concluding Presentation – In Groups	10%
Final Comprehensive Review of our study	35%

TEXT-GUIDES

(Available at the Bookstore and on reserve in the library)

The Qur'an: Basic Teachings Paperback – Import, December 1, 2015

by [T.B.Irving](#) (Compiler), [Khurshid Ahmad](#) (Compiler), [M.Manazir Ahsan](#) (Compiler) <https://amzn.to/3alIcJp>

Islam: An Illustrated Journey Hardcover – November 19, 2018

by [Farhad Daftary](#) (Author), [Zulfikar Hirji](#) (Author) <https://amzn.to/2DPEOud>

A Treasury of Virtues: Sayings, Sermons, and Teachings of 'Ali, with the One Hundred Proverbs attributed to al-Jahiz (Library of Arabic Literature) Paperback – October 4, 2016

by [al-Qadi al-Quda'i](#) (Author), [Tahera Qutbuddin](#) (Translator), [Rowan Williams](#) (Foreword) <https://amzn.to/3kCalko>

Vision of Islam (Visions of Reality) Paperback – June 1, 1998

by [Sachiko Murata](#) (Author), [William C. Chittick](#) (Author) <https://amzn.to/33RKLBG>

NOTE: All other assigned texts will be posted on Moodle.

Text-Guides for Basic Background in Islam

Note: Prior knowledge of Islam and Muslim civilization is not expected or assumed. For your own comfort, you may pick ONE of the introductory books listed on Veils & Webs.

{Veils & Webs (rizwanzamir.net) > Dear Strangers > Resources}

Additional Resources & Support:

There are numerous resources available to help you through the course. Please see the section entitled “Resources” under the “Dear Strangers” tab from Veils & Webs (www.rizwanzamir.net).

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- By appointment through email. In your email do mention your availability in the next couple of days.
 - If it is a brief conversation you can also speak to me right after the class.
 - On weekends I keep electronic time to the bare necessary minimum.
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