

REL 236 Islam

Fall 2019

Contact Information

Email: eszanto@ua.edu
Office: Manly Hall 209
Phone: 205-348-5310
Office Hours: TR 11 am to 12:30 pm

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the traditions of Islam, including their history, texts, intellectual debates, and contemporary practices.

In this course we will study the beliefs and practices found among Muslims. We will be examining the historical emergence of Islam, its doctrinal developments, and its interactions with various world cultures. The course is organized roughly chronologically, beginning with pre-Islamic Arabia, the making of the Prophet, the early community, the spread of Islam, philosophical and pedagogic debates and achievements, colonialism, and contemporary issues.

The rationale for this course is to expose students to the diversity within Islam. The course emphasizes the role of interpretation, culture, and historical influences on popular practices and political ideas. Beyond the descriptive content, this course aims at instilling critical thinking skills as they relate to the subject matter at hand.

Student Learning Outcomes

After taking this course, students will be able to:

- Recognize the complexities of Qur'an interpretation.
- Distinguish between Sunni and Shi'i varieties of Islam.
- Critique simplistic understandings of Shari'a.
- Discern the diversity within Islamic religious boundaries and identities.
- Theorize about issues related to identity using data related to Islamicate civilizations and peoples.
- Critically discriminate between reliable and less reliable information from a variety of sources providing data about Islam.

Required Reading Materials

Available at the bookstore:
Aaron Hughes, *Muslim Identities: An Introduction to Islam*

Available on Blackboard:

There will be number of assigned articles and chapters that will be available via blackboard.

The instructor also reserves the right to bring in or email students short readings to be discussed in class.

Assessment

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|---|-------------|
| Participation | 100 points |
| Reading Reflections | 200 points |
| Midterm | 150 points |
| Research Presentation | 50 points |
| Little Mosque Review | 100 points |
| Research Paper Proposal, Outline, and Bib | 100 points |
| Research Essay | 300 points |
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| Total | 1000 points |

Final grades will be based on the following ranges:

970-1000 = A+; 920-969 = A; 900-919 = A-; 870-899 = B+; 820-869 = B; 800-819 = B-;

770-799 = C+; 720-769 = C; 700-719 = C-; 600-699 = D; 0-599 = F.

Participation (10% or 100 points)

This is not an “attendance” grade. Rigorous discussion is crucial as it develops habits of critical thinking, exposure to and principled respect for disparate views, which are the most lasting fruits of a higher education. Accordingly, this course encourages active, prepared participation. To receive a good participation mark *a*) attend classes regularly; *b*) arrive prepared, having read and reflected upon the assigned readings; *c*) take active part in discussions. There is no make-up for participation. If you miss class for any reason, you must get the notes from a classmate, as the instructor will not provide them.

Reading Reflections (20% or 200 points)

Students will be asked to write a) short responses, a paragraph of at least 4 to 5 sentences and b) two discussion questions about to the readings assigned for that day for twenty class meetings (1% or 10 points x 20 = 20% or 200 points). These reading responses ought to be hand written and are due at the beginning of class. There are no make-ups for the reflections on missed classes. Please note that there are altogether 26 days with readings, so students can skip writing responses for up to 6 days. Please also note that most weeks, there is not much reading, which is why students are asked to spend some time reflecting.

Midterm (20% or 200 points)

One-hour exam in class as announced in the schedule. Short essay questions, drawing primarily from the lectures and readings of the first half of the course.

Research Paper Presentation (5% or 50 points)

10 minute presentation on the research paper students are writing to be submitted at the end of the semester.

Little Mosque Review (10% or 100 points)

Short review (2 pages). Watch any one episode from the first season of “Little Mosque on the Prairie.” Then write a review. Relate your review to at least one, but preferably more of the class readings (using footnotes and full citations).

Late papers: 10% will be deducted per day.

Research Paper Proposal, Outline and Bibliography (10% or 100 points)

Students ought to turn in a short proposal consisting of roughly 200 words describing the main thesis of their proposed research paper, a short general outline (outlining the organization of topics discussed) and a bibliography consisting of at least three peer-reviewed academic sources.

Research Essay (25% or 250 points)

Short research paper (5 pages) and a bibliography (which is not part of the 5 pages). Choose any topic related to the course materials and write about it. Students are expected to make use of the course readings, but must also make substantive use of **at least three** scholarly, peer-reviewed books or scholarly, peer-reviewed journal articles from outside the required readings. **Internet sources are not allowed.**

Late papers: 10% will be deducted per day.

Extra-Credit (1% or 10 points)

Attend any public lecture offered by the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Alabama and write 100 words about it and hand it in during the next class.

Format for written assignments

Students shall use MLA format. All documents produced on a word processor shall use 12-point Times New Roman font, and shall be submitted electronically through Turnitin.com. Emailed and paper copies will not be accepted.

Policy on Missed Assessments

Do not wait until the last minute to submit your assessments. Work submitted after the due dates listed in Blackboard may result in a grade of zero. The instructor is solely responsible for determining whether provisions will be made for unforeseen circumstances. You must report these circumstances as soon as possible after the event. You will be required to produce documentation.

Please contact the instructor if there are questions about missed due dates.

Notification of Changes

The instructor will make every effort to follow the guidelines of this syllabus as listed; however, the instructor reserves the right to amend this document as the need arises. In such instances, the

instructor will notify students in class and/or via email and will endeavor to provide reasonable time for students to adjust to any changes.

Technical Support

To obtain assistance with technical issues (removing pop-up blockers, opening pages or quizzes, etc.) or if you are unable to see the course content or have other questions regarding the course itself, please visit the [College of Continuing Studies Online Course Technical Support Site](#) to submit a request, or call 205-348-9157 (Toll Free: 1-866-205-1011) during their [regular business hours](#).

System Requirements

This online course requires a modern Mac or PC computer and high-speed internet connection. Your computer must also have a [compatible browser](#), PDF viewer, speakers or headphones, microphone, and productivity software such as Office.

Minimum Student Technical Skills

Taking an online course requires a general computer literacy. Students are expected to be able to use Crimson email, Blackboard, web browsers, and general word processing programs prior to enrolling in an online course. Student needing assistance using Blackboard are encouraged to visit the [UA Blackboard support site](#).

Turnitin

The University of Alabama is committed to helping students uphold the ethical standards of academic integrity in all areas of study. Students agree that their enrollment in this course allows the instructor the right to use electronic devices to help prevent plagiarism. All course materials are subject to submission to TurnItIn.com for the purpose of detecting textual similarities. Assignments submitted to TurnItIn.com will be included as source documents in TurnItIn.com's restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. TurnItIn.com will be used as a source document to help students avoid plagiarism in written documents.

The Capstone Creed

The Capstone Creed was created by the Student Leaders Council. In the spring of 2000, a discussion of campus culture among student leaders led to an effort to identify the core values that sustain us as members of the University community. The Student Leaders Council recognized that the Capstone experience is not limited to our formal affiliation with the University during enrollment and that the University community does not end at the geographic boundaries of campus. As members of the Capstone community, there is a common thread that unites us all, and the Student Leaders Council has endeavored to make those core values manifest through the implementation of a campus-wide creed with which all Capstone stakeholders can identify.

The Capstone Creed reads: As a member of The University of Alabama community, I will pursue knowledge; act with fairness, integrity and respect; promote equity and inclusion; foster individual and civic responsibility; and strive for excellence in all I do.

Statement on Academic Misconduct

Students are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the official [Code of Academic Conduct](#) provided in the Online Catalog.

Statement On Disability Accommodations

Contact the [Office of Disability Services \(ODS\)](#) as detailed in the Online Catalog.

Severe Weather Protocol

Please see the latest [Severe Weather Guidelines](#) in the Online Catalog.

Pregnant Student Accommodations

Title IX protects against discrimination related to pregnancy or parental status. If you are pregnant and will need accommodations for this class, please review the University's FAQs on the [UAct website](#).

Religious Observances

Under the Guidelines for Religious Holiday Observances, students should notify the instructor in writing or via email during the first two weeks of the semester of their intention to be absent from class for religious observance. The instructor will work to provide reasonable opportunity to complete academic responsibilities as long as that does not interfere with the academic integrity of the course. See full guidelines at [Religious Holiday Observances Guidelines](#).

UAct Statement

The [UAct website](#) provides an overview of The University's expectations regarding respect and civility.

Schedule

- 1) Thursday, 22 August Introduction (see Hughes pp. 1-12)
How do we know what we know?
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WEEK ONE

- 2) Tuesday, 27 August Ch. 1 Origins, Hughes pp. 17-25
3) Thursday, 29 August Ch. 1 Origins, Hughes pp. 25-37
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WEEK TWO

- 4) Tuesday, 3 September Ch. 2 Making of the Last Prophet, Hughes pp. 41-54
5) Thursday, 5 September Ch. 2 Making of the Last Prophet, Hughes pp. 54-63
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WEEK THREE

- 6) Tuesday, 10 September Ch. 3 The Qur'an, Hughes pp. 67-80
7) Thursday, 12 September Ch. 3 The Qur'an, Hughes pp. 80-91
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WEEK FOUR

- 8) Tuesday, 17 September Ch. 4 Islam Beyond the Arabian Peninsula
Hughes pp. 95-113
9) Thursday, 19 September Islam Beyond the Arabian Peninsula

Eaton, Richard, "Approaches to the Study of Conversion to Islam in India," in *Islam and the History of Religions*, edited by Richard C. Martin (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1984): pp. 106-124.

WEEK FIVE

10) Tuesday, 24 September Ch. 5 Early Sectarianism and the Formation of Shi'ism
Hughes pp. 115-131

11) Thursday, 26 September Early Sectarianism and the Formation of Shi'ism

Hussain, Ali J. "The Mourning of History and the History of Mourning: The Evolution of Ritual Commemoration of the Battle of Karbala." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, Vol. 25, No. 1, (2005): pp. 78-88.

WEEK SIX

12) Tuesday, 1 October Ch. 6 Legal Developments and the Rise of Sunni Islam
Hughes pp. 133-141

13) Thursday, 3 October Ch. 6 Legal Developments and the Rise of Sunni Islam
Hughes pp. 141-151

WEEK SEVEN

14) Tuesday, 8 October Ch. 7 Sufism, Hughes pp. 154-167

15) Thursday, 10 October Ch. 7 Sufism, Hughes pp. 167-177

WEEK EIGHT

16) Tuesday, 15 October Ch. 8 Constituting Identities Beliefs and Schools
Hughes pp. 183-192

17) Thursday, 17 October Ch. 8 Constituting Identities Beliefs and Schools
Hughes pp. 192-201

WEEK NINE

18) Tuesday, 22 October Midterm

19) Thursday, 24 October Ch. 9 The Performance of Muslim Identities
Hughes pp. 203-217

WEEK TEN

20) Tuesday, 29 October Ch. 9 The Performance of Muslim Identities
Hughes pp. 217-220

Schielke, Samuli. "Second Thoughts about the Anthropology of Islam, or how to make Sense of Grand Schemes in Everyday Life." *ZMO working papers*, Vol. 2 (2010): pp. 1-16.

21) Thursday, 31 October NO CLASS

WEEK ELEVEN

22) Tuesday, 5 November Ch. 10 Encounters with Modernity, Hughes pp. 225-233

Roy, Olivier. "Islam in the West of the Westernization of Islam?" in *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Umma* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004): pp. 201-231.

23) Thursday, 7 November Ch. 10 Encounters with Modernity, Hughes pp. 233-250

WEEK TWELVE

24) Tuesday, 12 November Ch. 11 Constructing Muslim Women, Hughes pp. 254-271

25) Thursday, 14 November Ch. 11 Constructing Muslim Women

Hirschkind, Charles and Saba Mahmood. "Feminism, the Taliban, and Politics of Counter-Insurgency." *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 75, No. 2 (Spring, 2002), pp. 339-354.

Research Paper Proposal, Outline, and Bibliography is due via Turnitin.com.

WEEK THIRTEEN

26) Tuesday, 19 November Ch. 12 Islam Post September 11, Hughes pp. 274-285

27) Thursday, 21 November Ch. 12 Islam Post September 11, Hughes pp. 285-293

28) Tuesday, 26 November No Lecture – Little Mosque on the Prairie Assignment

29) Thursday, 28 November THANKSGIVING (no class)

30) Tuesday, 3 December Islam Post September 11

Mamdani, Mahmoud. "Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: A Political Perspective on Culture and Terrorism." *American Anthropologist*, New Series, Vol. 104, No. 3 (Sep., 2002), pp. 766-775.

31) Thursday, 5 December Research Paper Presentations