

# REL 336 Islam and the West

Spring 2020

## Contact Information

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Email: [eszanto@ua.edu](mailto:eszanto@ua.edu)

Phone: 205-348-5310

Class location: Manly Hall 210

Office: Manly Hall 209

Office Hours: M 2-3 and R 12:30-2 pm

Class time: Monday 3:30 to 5:50

## Course Description

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Every community needs the ‘other’ in order to be established: for Europe in particular and the West in general, Islam has played this role since the Middle Ages, although over time this juxtaposition has taken different forms with varying effects. This course examines the West/East binary by looking at texts, as well as other forms of media.

Coverage of Muslims in the United States and Europe often focus on some kind of comparison or contrast between “Islam” and “the West.” This course examines how ideas of Islam and the West have been co-constructed. We will study how terms central to the concept “the West,” including modern, traditional, secularism, nationalism, and citizenship, have been developed in conversation with and contrast to understandings of Islam. Muslims in America and Europe continue to challenge and shape these categories and binaries through their practices, beliefs, and identities that have been interpreted, represented, and constructed in response to conceptions of the West.

## Student Learning Outcomes

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After taking this course, students will be able to:

1. Critically analyze the construction of the concepts: Islam, secularism, modernity, tradition, West, Orient, citizen, nationalism.
2. Synthesize theorists and primary sources pertaining to the construction contemporary formulations of Islam and the West.
3. Analyze discourses about Islam, Muslim communities, and the West using social theory.
4. Write critically about the discourses associated with Islam, Muslim communities, and the West for a public audience, using coherent, logical, and carefully edited prose and arguments.

## Required Reading Materials

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Available at the SUPe Store (and via online vendors):

“The Politics of the Veil” by Joan Wallach Scott

Available through the UA Box:

There will be number of assigned articles and chapters that will be available via the UA Box.

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	10 points
Bring in 2 news articles	5 points
Weekly Presentation	10 points
Reading Reflections	20 points
Comparative Writing Assignment	10 points
Research Presentation	10 points
Research Paper Proposal, Outline, and Bib	10 points
Research Essay	25 points
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Total	100 points

Final grades will be based on the following ranges:

97-100 = A+; 92-96.9 = A; 90-91.9 = A-; 87-89.9 = B+; 82-86.9 = B; 80-81.9 = B-;  
77-79.9 = C+; 72-76.9 = C; 70-71.9 = C-; 60-69.9 = D; 0-59.9 = F.

### **Participation (10% or 10 points)**

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, please get the notes from a classmate.

### **Two news articles (5% or 5 points)**

This course directly addresses the media's representation of Islam and Muslims. Therefore, we will be looking at specific examples. Students will sign up to bring in two news articles over the course of the semester. They can be from anytime post 1979 and should address the topic for that day in some capacity. We will be analyzing these in class as part of our discussion.

### **Weekly Presentation (10% or 100 points)**

Students will be asked to present *a)* the assigned reading for that day and *b)* a related news article to the topics discussed in the assigned reading. Students will sign up for presentations in the second week of classes. Presentations will be done in pairs. The articles should be news articles from the last twenty years.

### **Reading Reflections (20% or 20 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 ten class meetings (2% or 2 point x 10 = 20% or 20 points). These reading responses must 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 13 days with readings, so students can skip writing responses for up to 3 weekly readings.

**Comparative Writing Assignment (10% or 100 points)**

Students will be asked to write a comparative essay comparing Huntington and Fukuyama's articles. The writing assignment should be at least 2000 words long and must be submitted online via blackboard on Friday, February 7, 2020.

**Research Paper Presentation (10% or 10 points)**

10 minute presentation on the research paper students are writing to be submitted at the end of the semester. Please prepare a power point presentation as well.

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

Students must 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 (30% or 30 points)**

Short research paper (8 pages) and a bibliography (which is not part of the 8 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 five** scholarly, peer-reviewed books or scholarly, peer-reviewed journal articles from outside the required readings. **Non-academic Internet sources are not allowed.**

**Late papers: 10% will be deducted per day.**

**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**

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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**

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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.

## **System Requirements**

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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**

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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**

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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**

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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**

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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**

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

## **Severe Weather Protocol**

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

## **Pregnant Student Accommodations**

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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**

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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**

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

## Schedule

1) Monday, 13 January      Introduction

Short in-class writing assignment:

What do we know?

What do we think we know and what don't we know?

How do we know what we know?

“Taqwacore” (2009)

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2) Monday, 20 January      MLK Day      No Class

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3) Monday, 27 January      Islam and the West: Defining Subjects and Objects

Readings:

Hughes, “Introduction,” in *Muslim Identities*, pp. 1–12.

Said, “Communities of Interpretation,” in *Covering Islam*, pp. 36-68.

Gottschalk and Greenberg, “Overview of Western Encounters with Muslims,” in *Islamophobia: Making Muslims the Enemy*, pp. 13-43.

In class:

So: How do we know what we know?

Two presenters will summarize and pose questions to the class about the readings.

We will look at and discuss: “Teaching about Islam & Muslims in the Public School Classroom.”

Recommended watching before class:

“The Message” (1976) and think about how the film portrays Islam and what kinds of “messages” it aims to convey.

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4) Monday, 3 February      Historicizing the Relationship and Orientalism

Readings:

Said, “Introduction,” in *Orientalism*, pp. 1-15.

Shaheen, “Reel Bad Arabs,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, pp. 171-193.

In class:

Two presenters will summarize and pose questions to the class about the readings.

We will watch clips from “Not without my daughter” (1991) and discuss the stereotypes in the film as discussed by Shaheen.

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5) Monday, 10 February      End of History and the Clash of Civilizations debate

Readings:

Fukuyama, "End of History," pp. 1-18.

Huntington, "Clash of Civilizations," pp. 3-27.

In class:

In-class debate.

**Comparative Essay due: Friday, February 15 via Blackboard.**

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6) Monday, 17 February      Orientalism in Practice?: Headscarf Controversies

Readings:

Scott, "Introduction and Chapter 1," in *The Politics of the Veil*, pp. 1-41.

Alloula, *The Colonial Harem*, pp. 3-16, 105-126.

In class:

Two presenters will summarize and pose questions to the class about the readings.

Recommended watching:

"Burka Avenger" – watch any episode on Youtube

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7) Monday, 24 February      Racism, Ethnicity, and Identity

Readings:

Scott, "Chapter 2," in *The Politics of the Veil*, pp. 42-89.

Fanon, "Algeria Unveiled," in *A Dying Colonialism*, pp. 42-55.

In class:

Two presenters will summarize and pose questions to the class about the readings.

Recommended watching:

"The Battle of Algiers" (1966)

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8) Monday, 2 March      Secularism and its Others

Readings:

Scott, "Chapter 3," in *The Politics of the Veil*, pp. 90-123.

Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, pp. 6-35.

In class:

Two presenters will summarize and pose questions to the class about the readings.

Recommended Watching:

“The Physician” (2013) and think about the portrayal of Muslim and Islam and the meta-story.

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9) Monday, 9 March                      Individualism

Readings:

Scott, “Chapter 4,” in *The Politics of the Veil*, pp. 124-150.

Appadurai, “From Ethnocide to Ideacide,” “The Civilization of Clashes,” “Globalization of Violence,” in *Fear of Small Numbers*, pp. 1-48.

In class:

Two presenters will summarize and pose questions to the class about the readings.

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10) Monday, 16 March                      SPRING BREAK

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11) Monday, 23 March                      Sexuality

Readings:

Scott, “Chapter 5” and “Conclusion,” in *The Politics of the Veil*, pp. 150-184.

In class:

Two presenters will summarize and pose questions to the class about the readings.

Watch clips from and discuss “Little Mosque on the Prairie” s01 episode 4 and s02 episode 10 on Youtube.

Recommended watching:

“Submission” Part 1 on Youtube – note: this can be disturbing to some viewers

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12) Monday, 30 March                      Imagining Communities and Authorizing National Discourses

Readings:

Anderson, “Cultural Roots,” “The Origin of National Consciousness,” and “Patriotism and Racism,” in *Imagined Communities*, pp. 9-46, 141-154.

Said, “Knowledge and Power,” in *Covering Islam*, pp. 134-164.

In class:

Two presenters will summarize and pose questions to the class about the readings.

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

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13) Monday, 6 April                      The Romance of Resistance: Westoxication

Readings:

Abu Lughod, "The Romance of Resistance," *American Ethnologist*, pp. 41-55.

Ahmad, "Westoxication," in *Contemporary Debates in Islam: An Anthology of Modernist and Fundamentalist Thought*, pp. 343-357.

Shariati, "Critical Attitude towards the West and Western Decadence," in *Contemporary Debates in Islam: An Anthology of Modernist and Fundamentalist Thought*, pp. 315-324.

In class:

Two presenters will summarize and pose questions to the class about the readings.

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14) Monday, 13 April                      Self-Orientalizing and Occidentalism

Readings:

Mohamed, "The United States in Contemporary Arab Media and Intellectual Life," in *Arab Occidentalism*, pp. 18-49.

Michel Foucault, Writings on Iran, pp. 203-209, 239-277.

In class:

Two presenters will summarize and pose questions to the class about the readings.

Research paper presentations.

Research Paper Presentations and Concluding Discussion

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15) Monday, 20 April                      Research Paper Presentations and Concluding Discussion

In class:

Research Paper Presentations

**Research Papers Due on April 29 via Turnitin.com on Blackboard.**