

REL 236 Islam

Fall 2020: A Hybrid Course

Contact Information

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Office: Manly Hall 209

Office Hours: MW 11:30 am to 12:30 on Zoom and 1 to 3 pm on Fridays in Manly Hall 209

Class Time: MW 10:00 am to 11:15 am on Zoom

Class Location: on Zoom for the foreseeable future, then in Manly Hall 207

COVID-19 Adjustment

Given numbers of new infections in the state and elsewhere in the country along with UA's response (e.g., mandated social distancing in all classrooms, thereby reducing each room's capacity by 80%) and concerns student have expressed regarding the risks associated with in-person meetings, we will begin this course in a remote fashion, using twice weekly Zoom videoconference sessions that will take place during the class's regularly scheduled times. All students are therefore required to have sufficient technological resources and competencies to participate fully in each weekly class. Should the risks of in-person meetings lessen sufficiently at a later point in the semester then we will discuss, as a class, whether to shift to in-person meetings. There will be optional in person office hours in Manly 209 on Fridays from 1 to 3 pm. However, office hours will also be held on Zoom.

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 texts, institutions, 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.
- Discern the diversity within Islamic religious boundaries and identities.
- 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 one other required article which will be available via blackboard.

Assessment

Vocab Quiz	15 points
Attendance/Participation	20 points
Critical Reflection 'Podcast'	15 points
Midterm Exam	25 points
Final Exam	25 points

Total	100 points
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Final grades will be based on the following ranges:

97-100 = A+; 92-96 = A; 90-91 = A-; 87-89 = B+; 82-86 = B; 80-81 = B-;
77-79 = C+; 72-76 = C; 70-71 = C-; 60-69 = D; 0-59 = F.

Vocab Quiz (15 points)

Muslims use their own vocabulary. Knowing the vocabulary is basic to continued and reflective thinking. Hence, there will be an online multiple choice vocab quiz with some short answer questions.

Attendance/Participation (20 points = 2 * 5 points + 10 points)

Because physical attendance is not required, I may never "meet" you. However, I'd like to know who my students are and what they are interested in. Hence, please drop by my office in person or virtually. I will ask you a general question about the course and how you are doing in it. These meetings will be scheduled twice during the semester. Each meeting is worth 5 points. Speaking up and adding substantively to at least every other class will constitute ten points.

Critical Reflection ‘Podcast’ (15 points)

In a 7 to 10 min audio recording, reflect on one of the questions I will provide to the class. (No editing or special auditory effects are required.) You must also compile and submit an annotated bibliography of at least five sources. The audio recording can be done using your smart phone or Voicethread on Blackboard.

Midterm (25 points)

One-hour online 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.

Final Exam (25 points)

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

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, please contact OIT. Please be ready to provide your myBama username, your phone number, your campus location, your device type, and a description of your issue.

Location	125 Gordon Palmer Hall
Hours	8:00am to 4:30pm Monday – Friday

Phone 205-348-5555
After Hours Phone 855-474-3860
Email ITSD@ua.edu

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.

COVID-19 Statement

All University faculty, staff, and students are expected to maintain a commitment to the health and safety of our campus community. Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, specific health and safety standards are in place to minimize exposure and community spread on campus. All students must be familiar with and abide by the requirements outlined in the UA Return Plan | UA System Comprehensive Health and Safety Plan. Students must (1) wear a mask or face

covering at all times while participating in face-to-face class sessions; and (2) adhere to social distancing standards. More information on these requirements and UA Healthcheck system and screening can be found at healthinfo.ua.edu/returnplan. You are expected to visit the site and comply with all noted requirements related to in-person class attendance.

Schedule

- 1) Wednesday, 19 August Introduction (see Hughes pp. 1-12)
How do we know what we know?
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WEEK ONE

- 2) Monday, 24 August Ch. 1 Origins, Hughes pp. 17-25
3) Wednesday, 26 August Ch. 1 Origins, Hughes pp. 25-37
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WEEK TWO

- 4) Monday, 31 August Ch. 2 Making of the Last Prophet, Hughes pp. 41-54
5) Wednesday, 2 September Ch. 2 Making of the Last Prophet, Hughes pp. 54-63

Come to my (virtual) office hour this week. It's worth 10 percent.

WEEK THREE

- 6) Monday, 7 September Labor Day
7) Wednesday, 9 September Ch. 3 The Qur'an, Hughes pp. 67-80
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WEEK FOUR

- 8) Monday, 14 September Ch. 3 The Qur'an, Hughes pp. 80-91
9) Wednesday, 16 September Ch. 4 Islam Beyond the Arabian Peninsula
Hughes pp. 95-105

Open online from Wednesday 8 am to Friday midnight: Vocab Exam

WEEK FIVE

- 10) Monday, 21 September Ch. 4 Islam Beyond the Arabian Peninsula
Hughes pp. 105-114
- 11) Wednesday, 23 September 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.
(On Blackboard)
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WEEK SIX

- 12) Monday, 28 September Ch. 5 Early Sectarianism and the Formation of Shi'ism
Hughes pp. 115-122
- 13) Wednesday, 30 September Ch. 5 Early Sectarianism and the Formation of Shi'ism
Hughes pp. 123-131

Open online from Wednesday 8 am to Friday midnight: MIDTERM EXAM

WEEK SEVEN

- 14) Monday, 5 October Ch. 6 Legal Developments and the Rise of Sunni Islam
Hughes pp. 133-141
- 15) Wednesday, 7 October Ch. 6 Legal Developments and the Rise of Sunni Islam
Hughes pp. 141-151
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WEEK EIGHT

- 16) Monday, 12 October Ch. 7 Sufism, Hughes pp. 154-167
- 17) Wednesday, 14 October Ch. 7 Sufism, Hughes pp. 167-177
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WEEK NINE

- 18) Monday, 19 October Ch. 8 Constituting Identities Beliefs and Schools
Hughes pp. 183-192
- 19) Wednesday, 21 October Ch. 8 Constituting Identities Beliefs and Schools
Hughes pp. 192-201
- Friday, 23 October Critical Question Podcast is due
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WEEK TEN

- 20) Monday, 26 October Ch. 9 The Performance of Muslim Identities
Hughes pp. 203-217
- 21) Wednesday, 28 October Ch. 9 The Performance of Muslim Identities
Hughes pp. 217-220
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WEEK ELEVEN

- 22) Monday, 2 November Ch. 10 Encounters with Modernity, Hughes pp. 225-233
- 23) Wednesday, 4 November Ch. 10 Encounters with Modernity, Hughes pp. 233-250
- Come to my (virtual) office hour this week. It's worth 10 percent.
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WEEK TWELVE

- 24) Monday, 8 November Ch. 11 Constructing Muslim Women, Hughes pp. 254-263
- 25) Wednesday, 11 November Ch. 11 Constructing Muslim Women, Hughes pp. 263-271
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WEEK THIRTEEN

- 26) Monday, 16 November Ch. 12 Islam Post September 11, Hughes pp. 274-285
- 27) Wednesday, 18 November Ch. 12 Islam Post September 11, Hughes pp. 285-293

FINAL EXAM will be online for two days during the exam period.