

# **REL 236 Islam**

Fall 2021

## **Contact Information**

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Email: eszanto@ua.edu  
Phone: 205-348-5310  
Office: Presidents Hall 209  
Office Hours: TTh 12:30 pm to 1:30 pm and by appointment  
Office hours can also be scheduled as Zoom meetings  
<https://uasystem.zoom.us/j/2534968518>  
Class: Presidents Hall 207  
Class Time: TTh 2:00 pm to 3:15 pm

## **Course Description**

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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**

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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**

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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**

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Vocab Quiz	20 points
Film Review Podcast 1	10 points
Film Review Podcast 2	10 points
Meet me - week 3	5 points
Meet me - week 10	5 points
Midterm Exam	25 points
Final Exam	25 points
<hr/> Total	100 points

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 (20 points)**

Muslims use their own vocabulary. Knowing the vocabulary is basic to continued and reflective thinking. To ensure that students learn some of this vocabulary, there will be an online multiple choice vocab quiz with some short answer questions. Students will be provided a list of vocabulary terms ahead of time.

### **Attend office hours (10 points = 2 \* 5 points)**

In order to better attune the class to students' individual needs, each student must attend office hours either in person or via Zoom twice a semester. 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. These meetings will be scheduled twice during the semester. Each meeting is worth 5 points.

### **Film Reflection 'Podcasts' (20 points = 2 \* 10 points)**

The films will be accessible through Kanopy. For each film, record and submit a 5 min audio recording. In this recording, reflect on the film and how the themes in the film relate to course reading materials. (No editing or special auditory effects are required.) The audio recording can be done using your smart phone or Voicethread on Blackboard.

### **Midterm (25 points)**

One-hour take home exam will be administered through Blackboard. The exam is open book and will contain several short essay questions, drawing primarily from the lectures and readings of the first half of the course.

### **Final Exam (25 points)**

One-hour take home exam will be administered through Blackboard. The exam is open book and will contain several short essay questions, drawing primarily from the lectures and readings of the second half of the course.

## **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.

## **Technical Support**

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

## **System Requirements**

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This 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 a college 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](#).

## **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.

## **COVID-19 Statement**

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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. In the interest of your health and safety and that of all UA students, faculty and staff, the University reserves the right to change the mode of instruction or schedule of instruction at any time, based upon prevailing public health and other guidance. While the method of delivery may change, educational instruction and opportunities will continue. As such, the University will not provide a refund of tuition, in whole or in-part, based on any such changes. Detailed information on changes in format or schedule can be found at [studentaccounts.ua.edu](http://studentaccounts.ua.edu) and [financialaid.ua.edu](http://financialaid.ua.edu).

UA students, faculty and staff are required to comply with [UA System Comprehensive Health and Safety Task Force](#) guidance regarding social distancing, face coverings and other measures.

Getting vaccinated is the best way to [protect yourself and our herd](#). COVID-19 vaccines are being administered by the [University Medical Center, the Student Health Center](#) and various businesses and healthcare providers. Students who [report proof of their vaccination status](#) will receive Bama Cash as a thank you gift for doing their part.

## Schedule

- 1) Thursday, 19 August 2021      Introduction (see Hughes pp. 1-12)  
How do we know what we know?
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### WEEK ONE

- 2) Tuesday, 24 August      Ch. 1 Origins, Hughes pp. 17-25  
3) Thursday, 26 August      Ch. 1 Origins, Hughes pp. 25-37
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### WEEK TWO

- 4) Tuesday, 31 August      Ch. 2 Making of the Last Prophet, Hughes pp. 41-54  
5) Thursday, 2 September      Ch. 2 Making of the Last Prophet, Hughes pp. 54-63
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### WEEK THREE

- 6) Tuesday, 7 September      Ch. 3 The Qur'an, Hughes pp. 67-80  
7) Thursday, 9 September      Ch. 3 The Qur'an, Hughes pp. 80-91

Come to my (virtual) office hour this week. It is worth 5 percent.

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### WEEK FOUR

- 8) Tuesday, 14 September      Ch. 4 Islam Beyond the Arabian Peninsula  
Hughes pp. 95-105  
9) Thursday, 16 September      Ch. 4 Islam Beyond the Arabian Peninsula  
Hughes pp. 105-114

Take-home Vocab Exam must be submitted via Blackboard no later than Friday, 17 September 2021 before midnight.

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## WEEK FIVE

- 10) Tuesday, 21 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.

- 11) Thursday, 23 September      “Muhammad: The Last Prophet” (2002)

Film Review must be submitted via Blackboard no later than Monday 27 September 2021 before midnight.

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## WEEK SIX

- 12) Tuesday, 28 September      Ch. 5 Early Sectarianism and the Formation of Shi’ism  
Hughes pp. 115-122

- 13) Thursday, 30 September      Ch. 5 Early Sectarianism and the Formation of Shi’ism  
Hughes pp. 123-131
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## WEEK SEVEN

- 14) Tuesday, 5 October      Review

Take-Home Midterm exams must be submitted via Blackboard by Tuesday, 5 October 2021 before midnight.

- 15) Thursday, 7 October      Ch. 6 Legal Developments and the Rise of Sunni Islam  
Hughes pp. 133-141
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## WEEK EIGHT

- 16) Tuesday, 12 October      Ch. 6 Legal Developments and the Rise of Sunni Islam  
Hughes pp. 141-151

- 17) Thursday, 14 October      Ch. 7 Sufism, Hughes pp. 154-167
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## WEEK NINE

- 18) Tuesday, 19 October Ch. 7 Sufism, Hughes pp. 167-177
- 19) Thursday, 21 October Ch. 8 Constituting Identities Beliefs and Schools  
Hughes pp. 183-192
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## WEEK TEN

- 20) Tuesday, 26 October Ch. 8 Constituting Identities Beliefs and Schools  
Hughes pp. 192-201
- 21) Thursday, 28 October Mid-Semester Study Break – no Classes

Come to my (virtual) office hour this week. It is worth 5 percent.

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## WEEK ELEVEN

- 22) Tuesday, 2 November Ch. 9 The Performance of Muslim Identities  
Hughes pp. 203-217
- 23) Thursday, 4 November Ch. 9 The Performance of Muslim Identities  
Hughes pp. 217-220
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## WEEK TWELVE

- 24) Tuesday, 8 November Ch. 10 Encounters with Modernity, Hughes pp. 225-233
- 25) Thursday, 11 November Ch. 10 Encounters with Modernity, Hughes pp. 233-250
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## WEEK THIRTEEN

- 26) Tuesday, 16 November Ch. 11 Constructing Muslim Women, Hughes pp. 254-263
- 27) Thursday, 18 November Ch. 11 Constructing Muslim Women, Hughes pp. 263-271

## WEEK FOURTEEN

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| 28) Tuesday, 23 November  | “The Lizard” (2006)<br>Film podcast due on Tuesday, 23 November before midnight |
| 29) Thursday, 25 November | Thanksgiving, no classes  |

## WEEK FIFTEEN

- 29) Tuesday, 30 November Ch. 12 Islam Post September 11, Hughes pp. 274-285

30) Thursday, 2 December Ch. 12 Islam Post September 11, Hughes pp. 285-293

**TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM** must be submitted via Blackboard between 8 am on 6 December 2021 and 8 December 2021 before midnight.