

REL 236 Islam

Spring 2023

Contact Information

Email: eszanto@ua.edu
Office: Presidents Hall 209
Office Hours: TTh 11:30 am to 1:30 pm and by appointment
Class: Presidents Hall 207
Class Time: TTh 2:00 pm to 3:15 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 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

Attendance	5 points
Vocab Quiz	15 points
“The Message” Film Review	15 points
Chapter presentation	10 points
Meeting with instructor	5 points
Midterm Exam	25 points
Final Exam	25 points
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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.

Attendance (5 points)

Attendance and participation are key to success. Hence, regular participation and attendance will be noted and graded.

Vocab Quiz (15 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.

Film Review (15 points)

The film, “The Message (1977),” will be accessible via Box, however, it is also available for free on YouTube. The review must be at least 1000 words long and must refer to the textbook. The review needs to be a critical review, addressing questions about the portrayal of origins, tribal society, etc. The review will be submitted via Blackboard on Saturday, February 4, 2023 before midnight.

Chapter Presentation (10 points)

Each student will sign up for one day, which means each student will present half a chapter from the textbook. Each presentation should be around 5 to 10 min long and should include 3 discussion questions. Each presentation also needs a power point, which needs to be sent to the instructor by midnight the day before the presentation.

Meeting with instructor (5 points)

In order to better attune the class to students’ individual needs, each student must attend office hours during the indicated week. I’d like to know who my students are and what they are interested in. Hence, please sign up to meet me in my office during the indicated week.

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

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 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 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

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, 12 January 2023 Introduction (see Hughes pp. 1-12)
How do we know what we know?
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WEEK ONE

- 2) Tuesday, 17 January Ch. 1 Origins, Hughes pp. 17-25
3) Thursday, 19 January Ch. 1 Origins, Hughes pp. 25-37
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WEEK TWO

- 4) Tuesday, 24 January Ch. 2 Making of the Last Prophet, Hughes pp. 41-54
5) Thursday, 26 January Ch. 2 Making of the Last Prophet, Hughes pp. 54-63
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WEEK THREE (instructor is on grand jury duty)

- 6) Tuesday, 31 January Watch “The Messenger”
7) Thursday, 2 February Watch “The Messenger”

Film Reviews must be submitted via Blackboard no later than Saturday, February 4, 2023 before midnight

WEEK FOUR

- 8) Tuesday, 7 February Ch. 3 The Qur’an, Hughes pp. 67-80
9) Thursday, 9 February Ch. 3 The Qur’an, Hughes pp. 80-91
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WEEK FIVE

- 10) Tuesday, 14 February Ch. 4 Islam Beyond the Arabian Peninsula
Hughes pp. 95-105

11) Thursday, 16 February Ch. 4 Islam Beyond the Arabian Peninsula
Hughes pp. 105-114

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

WEEK SIX

12) Tuesday, 21 February Ch. 5 Early Sectarianism and the Formation of Shi'ism
Hughes pp. 115-122

13) Thursday, 23 February Ch. 5 Early Sectarianism and the Formation of Shi'ism
Hughes pp. 123-131

WEEK SEVEN

14) Tuesday, 28 February 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.

And Review

15) Thursday, 2 March Midterm

Take-Home Midterm exams must be submitted via Blackboard between Wednesday, 1 March and Thursday, 2 March before midnight.

Midterm grades due 3 March

WEEK EIGHT

16) Tuesday, 7 March Ch. 6 Legal Developments and the Rise of Sunni Islam
Hughes pp. 133-141

17) Thursday, 9 March Ch. 6 Legal Developments and the Rise of Sunni Islam
Hughes pp. 141-151

WEEK of SPRING BREAK

18) Tuesday, 14 March SPRING BREAK

19) Thursday, 16 March SPRING BREAK

WEEK NINE

18) Tuesday, 21 March Ch. 7 Sufism, Hughes pp. 154-167

19) Thursday, 23 March Ch. 7 Sufism, Hughes pp. 167-177

Take-home Vocab Exam must be submitted via Blackboard no later than Friday, 24 March 2023 before midnight.

WEEK TEN

20) Tuesday, 28 March Ch. 8 Constituting Identities Beliefs and Schools
Hughes pp. 183-192

21) Thursday, 30 March Ch. 8 Constituting Identities Beliefs and Schools
Hughes pp. 192-201

WEEK ELEVEN

22) Tuesday, 4 April Ch. 9 The Performance of Muslim Identities
Hughes pp. 203-217

23) Thursday, 6 April Ch. 9 The Performance of Muslim Identities
Hughes pp. 217-220

WEEK TWELVE

24) Tuesday, 11 April Ch. 10 Encounters with Modernity, Hughes pp. 225-233

25) Thursday, 13 April Ch. 10 Encounters with Modernity, Hughes pp. 233-250

WEEK THIRTEEN

- 26) Tuesday, 18 April Ch. 11 Constructing Muslim Women, Hughes pp. 254-263
27) Thursday, 20 April Ch. 11 Constructing Muslim Women, Hughes pp. 263-271
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WEEK FOURTEEN

- 28) Tuesday, 25 April Ch. 12 Islam Post September 11, Hughes pp. 274-285
29) Thursday, 27 April Ch. 12 Islam Post September 11, Hughes pp. 285-293
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TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM must be submitted via Blackboard on Wednesday, 3 May 2023 before midnight.