COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Islamic tradition has played an important role in the social, economic, and political development of societies in Africa, Asia, and Europe since Late Antiquity. The theological core of Islam is the belief in the unity of God (tawḥīd) as expressed in the central text of the tradition, the Quran. In addition to the Quran as Divine revelation, the sum total of Muhammad’s (570-632 CE) actions, thoughts, and beliefs (sunna) form the foundation of Islamic law (sharīʿa) which guides the lives of the world’s currently estimated 1.6 billion Muslims. In the intervening 1400 years since the beginning of Muhammad’s prophesy an immense body of jurisprudence has developed to meet the changing needs of Muslims in various cultural and historical contexts. While unified by a faith tradition, the historical development of Islam shall be historicized within local geographical contexts and through the impact of colonization and modernity.

Despite approximately 62% of Muslims living today in the Asia-Pacific region, many Islamic studies curricula in North America and Western Europe focus heavily on the ‘central’ Islamic lands while giving only cursory acknowledgement to the contributions and development of Islamic thought and civilization outwith the Near East. This course attempts to correct this imbalance through emphasizing the diverse political and philosophical constructs of Islamic thought by paying attention to the lived realities of Muslims on the ‘periphery’ of Islamic civilization through engagement with primary texts.

It is through incisive study that we, as a society, are able to break popular ideological notions of ‘the other,’ particularly those of Islam and Muslims, which have come to predominate in popular discourse over the last decade. The study of complex and diverse worldviews promotes equality and respect of other societies ordered with organizational preferences very different from our own. Through this course being part of the Global Learning initiative, it is hoped that students at FIU will begin to engage with the beautiful complexity of contemporary Muslim societies and hopefully inspire them to seriously engage with other societies and civilizations outside the Western hemisphere through the study of religion and politics.

This course is designed to be a comprehensive survey of Islamic civilization from the birth of tradition in seventh century Arabia to the contemporary period. Organization of this course is both topical and historical. Students shall be encouraged to engage with primary texts in consultation with the instructor and relevant secondary literature. The course will engage the
intellectual tradition of Islam as well minority discourses within the tradition, particularly from Asia and Africa as well as focusing on issues of contemporary relevance.

GLOBAL LEARNING COURSE OUTCOMES

GLOBAL AWARENESS- Students will be able to describe the complex interplay among key ideas, historical eras, and thinkers that have helped to shape and define the diversity of the Islamic world today.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE- Students will be able to analyze contemporary issues in the Islamic world through their historical background, Western colonial engagement with modernity, and postcolonial politics that continue to shape the dynamics of Muslim societies in the international system.

GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT- Students will demonstrate a willingness to engage with other societies and civilizations outside the Western hemisphere through the study of religion and politics.

Global Learning Graduation Honors

FIU’s Excellence in Global Learning Graduation Medallion is awarded to students who complete at least four global learning courses, participate in a variety of global co-curricular activities, and complete a capstone consisting of one of the following: a substantial original research project and presentation on a global topic; extensive foreign language study; long-term study abroad; or, a globally-focused internship. The Peace Corps Prep certification is conferred upon students who complete at least four global learning courses, extensive language study, and a global problem-solving project. For more information, visit goglobal.fiu.edu.

REQUIRED TEXTS


SUGGESTED FURTHER READINGS

## Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student presentations and class assignments</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mosque visits</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final paper</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Class Participation (10% of Final Grade)

Each student will endeavor to attend all class sessions on time and participate actively in class discussions. Students are expected to do all readings assigned in the syllabus. Handout readings will be available on Blackboard. Every student will also serve at least once as a class discussant, singly or in a pair depending on class size: class discussants will prepare notes on the assigned readings ahead of time and raise key points, discussion topics, important background issues, and questions in order to facilitate class discussion. Discussants are not expected or required to lecture but rather should prepare to complement the work of the professor through analysis and questions prepared on the topic of the day’s lecture in advanced coordination with the professor.

### Midterm (40% of Final Grade)

Online midterm examination will consist of all material presented hitherto.

### Site Visits (15% of Final Grade)

There will be scheduled site visits to understand faith in praxis. As it is a hybrid course, you are expected to attend these site visits. If you need exemptions to miss classes before or after the visit, please email the professor well in advance so he can coordinate with the other professors.

### Final Paper (35% of Final Grade)

Due by midnight on the assigned day of the final examination via Blackboard.

- Consultation with the professor is recommended. Whenever possible, the term paper should fit into the student’s wider academic trajectory. Select from topics provided or provide topic of interest for instructor approval. Sample topics could include: Sufi poetry in Islam, the American Muslim experience after 9/11, women’s and minority rights after the Arab Spring, etc.
- Proposals (1-2 pages of narrative, plus preliminary bibliography using a standard bibliographic style) are due no later than the date of the midterm. Some students may be required to submit a revised proposal.
- Final Papers are due by midnight on the assigned day of the final examination—electronic copies to be uploaded to Blackboard. Please note that, due to the late due date, no extensions will be permitted and no late papers accepted.
GRADING CRITERIA

All student work will be assigned numerical grades, corresponding to the following letter grades, according to the criteria below. Final grades will be calculated according to the percentages outlined above and converted to final letter grades for the course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numerical Grade</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95-100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>“As” are awarded for excellent to exceptional work, free of technical and stylistic errors, showing sustained thought and engagement with the material on an appropriate but impressive academic level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-94</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>“Bs” are awarded for good to very good work, with some occasional errors, but nonetheless clearly indicating a good grasp of the material and assigned task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>“Cs” are awarded for average to above average work, meeting minimal standards but marked with errors, and exposing gaps in student performance and/or fulfillment of the assignment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-76</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>“Ds” are awarded for barely passing to below average work, usually riddled with errors and seriously deficient in fulfilling the assignment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 59</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>“Fs” are awarded for unacceptable work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COURSE REGULATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

Readings must be completed by the date for which they are assigned. Careful preparation of readings is essential for success in this course! As this is a seminar-style class, students will be expected to actively participate in class discussions of the readings. In the interest of fairness, deadlines are firm and will not be extended except in case of emergencies. Late assignments without authorized extensions may be penalized five percentage points for each day late, or part thereof, up to a maximum of 30 points. Keep disk and paper copies of all written work.

Standards for citation and referencing must be adhered to. I recommend MLA style (see http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/Documentation.html and follow the link to MLA style), but any standard format is acceptable as long as you are consistent. Students may use abbreviated parenthetical references for assigned course texts, i.e., (Girard, p. 90) but must provide full bibliographic information for all other sources used for written work. Internet sources are generally unacceptable as references, but if you do use them, citations must include full url details and date accessed. All written assignments must be typed, formatted in 10-12 point standard fonts, double-spaced, with one-inch margins.

Spelling, grammar, neatness, clarity, style, organization, etc. all DO count! Poor writing will affect your grade. Strive for clarity and use your computer’s spell-check program wisely. Re-write and revise your essays before turning them in; do not ask to do so afterwards. Ask yourself, Is this clear? Am I communicating my thoughts well? Would a friend in another class understand what I am saying?
Plagiarism and any and all forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is stealing someone else’s words or original ideas. Plagiarism occurs in three forms:

- Written work that is entirely stolen from another source;
- Using quotations from another source without properly citing them; and
- Paraphrasing from another source without proper citations

In all cases, to avoid plagiarism, students must properly cite the source material. Only commonly known facts and concepts, general material learned in the course of research and study, and students’ original ideas do not require citation.

Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas, and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and to honestly demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions http://www.fiu.edu/~oabp/misconductweb/2codeofacainteg.htm

Offenders will receive a grade of F for the plagiarized assignment, and possibly the course, and may be reported directly to the Office of Academic Affairs. For useful guidelines, go to the Plagiarism Prevention section on the FIU Library’s website: http://libguides.fiu.edu/plagiarism.

Attendance and punctuality in class are required. Each unexcused absence after ONE will adversely affect your final grade, deducting up to 15 points from your class participation grade for each occurrence. Students with more than three absences will receive a zero for class participation.

EARLY ALERT

In an effort to help you succeed in your academic courses, FIU utilizes an Early Alert system. Instructors are now able to notify students’ academic advisors if there are concerns about class performance. If an alert is submitted, your academic advisor will send you a message via your Student Dashboard (accessed via your MYFIU page) to discuss ways to improve your performance. Please respond to any communication you receive from your academic advisor about an early alert. Our goal with this program is to help you to be successful by identifying any issues as early on as possible and working to address them.
COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION AND THE LIFE OF MUHAMMAD

Thematic questions: **Who was Muhammad and in what socio-political environment did he emerge in 7th century Arabia? What technological and material changes to Arabian society make his message resonate among the Medinan tribes?**

Topics for class discussion: **Arabian geography, Byzantium, Persia, and Yemen**

August 23: Course Introduction

http://ed.ted.com/lessons/the-complex-geometry-of-islamic-design-eric-broug

Read: The Islamic World Today (Esposito, Introduction)

Complete Assignment 1 on Blackboard

WEEK 2: LEGACY OF THE PROPHET

Thematic questions: **How was the life of the Prophet reinterpreted by subsequent generations of Muslims? How did the early Arab conquests change the powers of the eastern Mediterranean? Can we search for a historical Muhammad?**

Topics for class discussion: **Jerusalem, the Wars of Apostasy, the Caliphate, and empire**

August 30: Muhammad as Prophet and Statesman (Esposito, chapter 1)

Introduction to Shia Islam (McAuliffe, Hadith and Sunnah section)

Complete Assignment 2 on Blackboard

WEEK 3: LIVED ISLAM AND THE PROPHET

September 6: Videos on Islamic history *Islam: Empire of Faith* and *The Message*

Complete Assignment 3 on Blackboard

WEEK 4: QURAN AND SUNNAH

Thematic questions: **What is the Quran to Muslims? How was it collected and canonized? What does it mean to have Arabic as a sacred language to the authority of non-Arab Muslims? Who speaks for the Quran? How were the sayings of Muhammad (ḥadīth) recorded and canonized? How do the canon collections differ between the Sunni and Shia sects of Islam? What is the role of the Prophetic Traditions (sunna) in Islamic jurisprudence?**

Topics for class discussion: ḥadīth, revelation, inspiration, and jurisprudence

Topics for class discussion: The Arabic language, revelation, inspiration, and historicity
September 13: Introduction to the Quran and Hadith  
Islamic law  
Complete Assignment 4 on Blackboard

WEEK 5: THE SHARIA

Thematic questions: What is Islamic Law (shari‘a)? How did it develop and what are the major schools of thought? What is the relevance of the shari‘a in the 21st century?

Topics for class discussion: the process of devising Islamic law, fatwa, and ḥukm.

September 20: Introduction to Islamic Law  
Socratic circle on the shari‘a

WEEK 6: SUFISM

Thematic questions: How did Islamic mysticism (taṣawwuf) develop as a reaction to Islamic legalism? What are the different forms of taṣawwuf in Africa, Asia, and the Near East? How have taṣawwuf and Salafism come to ideologically define modern Islamic societies?

Topics for class discussion: Salafism, Sufism, legalism, and mysticism

September 27: Islamic mysticism  
‘Friends of God’

WEEK 7: ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY

Thematic questions: How did Al-Ghāzalī attempt to reconcile the mystical and legal forms of Islam? What does his spiritual autobiography say about the personal journey in Islamic societies? What is the relationship between the individual and community in the journey towards spiritual gnosis?

Topics for class discussion: human nature and the Divine, gnosis, and communal religion

October 4: Al-Ghāzalī  
Ibn Ṭufayl

Annotated bibliography due

WEEK 8: JUDAISM AND ISLAM

Thematic questions: What was the status of Jews in the Islamic World? How did Islamic Spain come to define Judeo-Islamic intellectual exchanges in the medieval world?

Topics for class discussion: Maimonides, Islamic Spain, and the Convivencia
October 11: ‘Opening Lecture: How Islam Saved the Jews’

Islam in South and Southeast Asia (McAuliffe, Qasida and Adab)

Paper proposals due

WEEK 9: ISLAM IN AFRICA AND ASIA

Thematic questions: How did Islam spread to South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa? How do the forms of Islam practiced in these regions differ from those in the Near East? What role does maritime trade play in the spread of culture and religion?

Topics for class discussion: Zanzibar, Swahili, and the Indian Ocean World

October 18: Islam in Central Asia
Islam in Iran

NO CLASS- online midterm

WEEK 10: ART AND ARCHITECTURE

Thematic questions: Why is Islamic art generally non-representational? What does the layout of a mosque say about Islamic spirituality and the human connection to the Divine? Why do maths, such as geometry, play such an important role in Islamic aesthetics?

Topics for class discussion: Islamic geometry, astrolabe, and mosque aesthetics

October 25: Art and Architecture
Representations of Muhammad

Class will meet in GL 280 for library skills workshop

WEEK 11: ISLAM AND MODERNITY

Thematic questions: How did colonization affect various Muslim societies and how did they interact with modern social issues? ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’ How does the global distribution of power and resources between the Global North and Global South affect state relationships of Muslim societies and the West?

Topics for class discussion: subaltern studies, postcolonialism, and gender studies

November 1: Islamic Feminism
Democracy and Islam

Complete Assignment 5 on Blackboard
WEEK 12: MINORITY DISCOURSES IN CONTEMPORARY ISLAM

Thematic questions: How are Muslim minority sects dealt with in Muslim majority societies? How and why has modern militant-extremism emerged in many Islamic societies?

Topics for class discussion: Muslim minorities and transnational militant-extremism

November 8: Militant-extremism (McAuliffe, Religious Reassertion)
Religious pluralism (McAuliffe, Religious Pluralism)

November 11: Visit Bait-AL-Naseer Mosque for Friday prayers at 13.330 at 208 NW 7th Ct, Hallandale Beach, FL 33009

WEEK 13: CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

Thematic questions: What is Islamic feminism and how is it challenging patriarchal norms in Muslim communities? Is there freedom to critique and analyze the Quran and the foundations of Islam from a secular academic lens?

Topics for class discussion: Muslim feminism, pluralism, and secular critical theory

November 15: American Islam- Skype guest lecture
November 18: Sikh Temple Visit 1100-1215
16000 Stirling Rd
Southwest Ranches, FL 33331

WEEK 14: AMERICAN ACADEMY OF RELIGION

November 22: NO CLASS- American Academy of Religion annual conference

Week 15: CLASS DEBATE

November 29: Class wrap-up
Mosque/Temple visit report due

FINAL EXAMINATION

December 6: Final paper due online via Blackboard