

REL3367

ISLAM: FAITH AND SOCIETY

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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 (*tawhīd*) 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 (*sharī'a*) 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 literature and norms have 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.

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 dominant 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

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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.

TEXTBOOK

Frederick Denny, *An Introduction to Islam*, Fourth Edition.

New York: Routledge, 2017

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COURSE ASSESSMENT

Weekly Readings and Discussion (20% of grade)

Midterm (20% of grade)

Final paper (30% of grade)

Attendance (10% of grade)

Discussions

Most weeks, I will post a reading from a primary source in the Discussions section within the Modules heading on Canvas. By the following Tuesday, please post a response to this reading, which will be discussed in class. The response will be graded for evidence that you actually dealt with the content of the reading.

Discussions will include an in-person component as well. Based on my reading of your discussion responses, you will be assigned positions with which to have a round-table, "Socratic" style debate of the themes presented.

Midterm

An online midterm, with a combination of essay and objective sections, will be posted in the middle of the semester. It will be worth 20% of the total grade.

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Final Paper

Due by midnight on the assigned day of the final examination via Canvas. Consultation with the teaching assistant 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 during the tenth week. 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 Canvas. Please note that, due to the late due date, no extensions will be permitted and no late papers accepted.

Attendance is mandatory. FIU Check-In will be used to verify attendance.

ChatGPT or other AI language models will **not** be tolerated in class assignments. Any suspicion of such use will be considered academic misconduct.

Short **pop quizzes** may be given.

WEEK 1

August 22: Introduction to Class, What is Islam?

August 24: Context of Islam

WEEK 2

August 29: Context of Islam II

August 31: The Prophet and the Origins of Islam I

Discussion 1 posted (Qur'an, Ibn Ishaq, *Sira* (tr. Guillaume))

WEEK 3

September 5: The Prophet and the Origins of Islam II

September 7: The Qur'an – What is it? Early Islamic Conquests and Rule

Qur'an reading and discussion

Discussion 2 posted *The History of al-Tabari Vol. 13, "The Events of the Year 16,"* 8-39)

WEEK 4

September 12: Sectarian Divisions

September 14: Caliphate and its Culture, History to 1258

Discussion 3 posted (Usama ibn Munqidh reading)

WEEK 5

September 19: Doctrines and Pillars

September 21: Doctrines and Pillars II, Qur'an Revisited

Discussion 4 posted (*Study Qur'an Reading*)

WEEK 6

September 26: Hadith Sciences

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September 28: Theology

Discussion 5 posted (Hadith and Tafsir reading)

WEEK 7

October 3: Law I

October 5: Law, Politics

Discussion 6 posted

MIDTERM POSTED – DUE

WEEK 8

October 10: Islam and Politics II

October 12: History from 1258 to 1800

Discussion 7 posted

WEEK 9

October 17: Mysticism I

October 19: Mysticism II

Discussion 8 posted

WEEK 10

October 24: Islamic social patterns

October 26: Gender, Diversity

Discussion 9 posted (Lady Mary Montagu reading)

FINAL ESSAY PROPOSAL DUE

WEEK 11

October 31: Islam and Diversity II

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November 2: 1800 to the present

Discussion 10 posted (Omar ibn Sa'id reading)

WEEK 12

November 7: Themes in modern history

November 9: Islam and the West

Discussion 11 posted

WEEK 13

November 14: Islam and modern challenges I: Islamic Modernism

November 16: Islam and modern challenges II: Neo-traditionalism, Liberalism

Discussion 12 posted

WEEK 14

November 22: TBD

THANKSGIVING

FINAL ESSAY DUE