

# Understanding Islam: Faith and Practice

June 21 – July 2, 2010

Monday-Friday,

10:00 am-12:00 pm & 1:00 pm-3:00 pm

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## Course Description

This course is an introductory survey of Islam. It will cover a range of topics including the early history of the religion, its beliefs, practices, ethics, and spirituality. It will pay particular attention to Islam and Christian-Muslim relations in the United States.

## Course Objectives

- Students will become familiar with a variety of sources, names, and authors relevant to the various branches of the study of Islam
- Students will gain a familiarity with a broad spectrum of Islamic terminology and deepen their insight into various aspects of Islam
- This course will help students to participate meaningfully and constructively in multi-cultural and interfaith conversations and learning

## Course Requirements

Students are expected to attend all class sessions, read all the assigned materials, and participate in class discussions. Assignments are as follows:

1. Class attendance, preparation and participation – 25% of final grade
2. Pre-class reading and a review: Marston Speight's *God is One: The Way of Islam*, read and bring a 2 page review of the book to the first meeting of the class – 15% of final grade
3. A presentation based on one of the assigned reading materials – 10% of final grade
4. A final research paper, 10-15 pages, relevant to the topics covered in the class, details to be worked out between student and instructor – 50% of final grade

## Required Texts:

R. Marston Speight, *God is One: The Way of Islam*. Second Edition with Afterword and Study Guide. New York: Friendship Press, 2001

## Academic Honesty:

All work turned in to the instructors is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source. Students unfamiliar with issues relating to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center and should make use of the available resources at an early date, since violations of seminary policy on academic honesty can lead to a failing grade for the course.

**Inclusive Language:**

The use of inclusive language in course work is a policy of Louisville Presbyterian Seminary. Direct quotations from theological texts and scriptural translations do not have to be altered to conform to this policy. In your own writing, however, avoid language for people that leaves out part of the population or perpetuates stereotypes. Do not assume masculine gender when the gender of the person is unknown. When referring to God, you are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors. See [http://www.lpts.edu/Academic\\_Resources/ASC/avoidinggenderbiasinlanguage.asp](http://www.lpts.edu/Academic_Resources/ASC/avoidinggenderbiasinlanguage.asp).

**Part I: The Essentials of Islam**

## June 21: Introduction

## Beliefs and Practices

1. Marston Speight, *God is One: The Way of Islam*

## June 22: Early History of Islam

## Developments of Islamic Sciences

1. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "A Brief Journey Through Islamic History" and "Schools of Islamic Thought and Their History," *Islam: Religion, History, and Civilization*, pp. 115-172

## June 23: The Qur'an

## Scripture and Its Place in Muslim Life

1. Michael Sells, "Introduction," *Approaching the Qur'an* pp. 1-31
2. Ingrid Mattson, "Blessed Words: The Qur'an and Culture" and "What God Really Means: Interpreting the Qur'an" *The Story of the Qur'an* pp. 137-220

## June 24: Ethics

## Spirituality

1. Abdulaziz Sachedina, "Human Vicegerency: A Blessing or a Curse? The Challenge to be God's Caliph in the Qur'an," *Humanity Before God*, pp. 31-54
2. John Renard, "Devotion: Ritual and Personal Prayer," *Seven Doors to Islam: Spirituality and the Religious Life of Muslims*, pp. 35-72

## June 25: Contemporary Islamic Thought

## Women in Islam

1. A selection of readings from contemporary thinkers - TBD

2. Riffat Hassan, "Muslim Women and Post-Patriarchal Islam." Paula M. Cooley, William R. Eakin, Jay B. McDaniel, eds, *After Patriarchy: Feminist Transformations of the World Religions*, pp. 39-64.
3. Gwendolyn Zoharah Simmons, "Are We up to Challenge? The Need for a Radical Re-ordering of the Islamic Discourse on Women," Omid Safi, ed. *Progressive Muslims*, pp. 235-248

## **Part II: Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations in America**

### **June 28: Islam in America I**

#### Overview

#### Immigrant Muslim Communities

1. Jane Smith, "Islam Comes to America," *Islam in America*, pp. 50-75
2. Karen Isaksen Leonard, "The Development of Ethno-Racial Muslim Communities in the United States" and "Covering Histories in the Late Twentieth Century" *Muslims in the United States*, pp. 3-29
3. Aminah Beverly McCloud, "Conceptual Discourse: Living as Muslim in a Pluralistic Society," Zahid Bukhari, Sulayman Nyang, Mumtaz Ahmad, John Esposito, eds, *Muslims' Place in the American Public Square*, pp. 73-83

### **June 29: Islam in America II**

#### African American Islam

#### American Shi'ism

1. Jane Smith, "Islam in the African American Community," *Islam in America*, pp.76-103
2. Sherman Jackson, *Islam and the Blackamerican: Looking Toward the Third Resurrection*, pp. 23-57
3. Liyakatali Taqim, "Foreign Influences on American Shi'ism," *The Muslim World*, Volume 90 Issue 3-4, September 2000, pp. 459-478

### **June 30: Christian-Muslim Relations in America I**

#### History

#### Challenges

1. Hugh Goddard, "Dialogue or Confrontation?" *A History of Christian-Muslim Relations*, pp. 177-198
2. Mahmoud Ayoub, "Towards an Islamic Christology, II: The Death of Jesus, Reality or Delusion," *The Muslim World*, Volume 70 Issue 2, April 1980, pp. 91-121

### **July 1: Christian-Muslim Relations in America II**

#### Dialogue Models

#### Future of Dialogue

1. Jane Smith, "Encountering Each Other" and "Models of Christian-Muslim Dialogue In North America," *Muslim, Christians, and the Challenge of Interfaith Dialogue*, pp. 3-22, 63-82
2. Jay T. Rock, "Christian-Muslim Relations in the Land of Selective History," *The Muslim World*, Volume 94 Issue 3, July 2004, pp. 305-312
3. Marcia Hermansen, "Muslims in the Performative Mode: A Reflection on Muslim-Christian Dialogue," *The Muslim World*, Volume 94 Issue 3, July 2004, pp. 387-396

#### July 2: Conclusion

1. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, "Is the Qur'an the Word of God?" in *Questions of Religious Truth*, pp. 39-62.