

## Islam - TH 460-3

Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary  
Summer 2015

July 6-30  
M, T, Th  
6-8:30 pm  
Schlegel Hall 123

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### Course Description

This course is designed as an introduction to the core elements of the religious history and cultural dynamics of Islamic Civilization, from the Middle Ages to the modern period. Within this framework the course will focus on cultural exchanges between Muslim and non-Muslim communities of the Near East, the advancements in theological principles as a part of the Muslim exegetical tradition, philosophical doctrines, the development of mysticism in Islam, and artistic achievements across this timeframe. The course will begin with the Late Antique Period, serving as a backdrop to discussions on Pre-Islamic Arabia and the Islamic Origins narrative. From there the course will focus on the Life of the Prophet Muhammad, the major themes and styles of the Qur'anic text, and the political history of the early Caliphates. The course will then shift to a survey of the Golden Age of Islam (9th-13th centuries), emphasizing the major contributions in the fields of science, philosophy, theology, and literature from the various Muslim dynasties of the Near East, North Africa and Central Asia. The third section of this course will introduce the Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal Empires of the early modern period, surveying their religious and political ideologies as well as their impact or influence upon western culture of that period. The last section of the course will focus on modern Islamic political thought and its relevance to the contemporary world.

### Course Objectives

The objectives of this course advance MDIV QEPSLO1: Students will demonstrate an ability to describe and articulate important characteristics of the history, traditions, practices, and perspectives of at least one religious tradition other than Christianity and one Christian ecclesial tradition other than their own.

At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Compare and contrast select themes, images, and persons in the Qur'an and the Bible.
2. Name and discuss characteristics of medieval Islam in light of Western Christianity's interaction with it.
3. Analyze the relationship between European intervention and colonialism and modern Islam.

## Course Requirements

Students will be expected to attend all class meetings, read the assigned materials, complete assignments according to the schedule, and participate in class discussions.

## Grading

This class will be graded on a standard 100 point scale. The breakdown is as follows:

4 short essays (4-5 pages in length) - each essay is worth 20 points

Class participation and discussion - 20 points

Scale:

90-100%	A	x7-x9 = + (there will not be an A+)
80-89%	B	x0-x2 = -
70-79%	C	
60-69%	D	
59% -	F	

## Directions for Essay Assignments

The essay papers should be between 4-5 pages in length, using 12-point font and appropriate citations of material. The specific questions to be addressed in each essay will be listed in the Weekly Schedule section of this syllabus.

## Required Texts

*The Holy Qur'an*, translated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali. Hertfordshire, England: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 2000.

Daniel W. Brown, *A New Introduction to Islam*. Second Edition. West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons Limited/Blackwell Publishing, 2009.

## Course Responsibilities

### Use of Inclusive Language

In accordance with seminary policy, students are to use inclusive language in class discussions and in written and oral communication by using language representative of the whole human community in respect to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical and intellectual capacities. Direct quotations from theological texts and translations of the Bible do not have to be altered to conform to this policy. In your own writing, however, when referring to God, you are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors, reflecting the richness of the Bible's images for God. For more information, see:

<http://www.lpts.edu/academics/academic-resources/academic-support-center/online-writing-lab/avoiding-gender-bias>

### 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. Use of another's language or ideas from online resources is included in this policy, and must be attributed to author and source of the work being cited. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism, and may result in failure of the course. Two occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the Seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues related to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For more information, see the Policy for Academic Honesty in the Student Handbook.

### Special Accommodations

Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center ([kmapes@lpts.edu](mailto:kmapes@lpts.edu)) during the first two weeks of a semester (or before the semester begins) and should speak with the instructor as soon as possible to arrange appropriate adjustments. Students with environmental or other sensitivities that may affect their learning are also encouraged to speak with the instructor.

### Citation Policy

Citations in your papers should follow Seminary standards, which are based on these guides:

American Psychological Association. *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. 6th ed. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2010.

Turabian, Kate L., Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. 8th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.

*The Chicago Manual of Style*. 16th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

Copies of these guides are available at the library and in the Academic Support Center.

### Attendance Policy

According to the Seminary catalog, students are expected to attend class meetings regularly. In case of illness or emergency, students are asked to notify the instructor of their planned absence from class, either prior to the session or within 24 hours of the class session. Six or more absences (1/4 of the course) may result in a low or failing grade in the course.

## Course Schedule

### Monday, July 6th

Topics: Introduction to the course, the Late Antique Period, pre-Islamic Arabia, the early life of the Prophet Muhammad

Readings: 1. Brown, *A New Introduction to Islam*, Chapters 2 & 3  
2. The Life of Simeon - *A History of the Monks of Syria* by Theodoret of Cyrrhus \*PDF; translated by E.M. Price, Cistercian Pub., 1985.  
3. *The Qur'an* - Surat al-Alaq (Chapter 96 - The Clot), Surat al-Takwir (Chapter 81 - The Turning)

### Tuesday, July 7th

Topics: The life of Muhammad continued, the development of the earliest community (the *umma*), the Qur'an - an introduction to theological principles & literary structure

Readings: 1. Brown, *A New Introduction to Islam*, Chapters 4 & 5  
2. *The Qur'an* - Surat al-Ma'idah (Chapter 5 - The Table), Surat Maryam (Chapter 19 - Mary), Surat al-Ikhlās (Chapter 112 - The Oneness)

### Thursday, July 9th

Topics: The Qur'an continued, the crisis of leadership after the death of the Prophet, the emergence of the early Caliphates, the Islamic Conquests Period, the first dynasty of Islam, Muslim-Christian relations in the early Islamic period

Readings: 1. The Qur'an - Surat al-Qiyamah (Chapter 75 - The Resurrection), Surat al-Zalzalah (Chapter 99 - The Quaking)  
2. Brown, *A New Introduction to Islam*, Chapters 7 & 8

### Monday, July 13th

#### **Essay #1 Due in-class on Monday**

Directions:

After reading the chapters from the Qur'an listed above, please address the following questions: What stands out to you as the major themes in these sections? How do these particular themes compare to Christian theology and New Testament motifs? What appears to be the view of Christians/Christianity in these passages from the Qur'an? In what ways do the figures of Mary and Christ, in their Qur'anic context, resonate with traditional Christian interpretations? Does any of the language used in Surat Maryam have a familiar tone to New Testament passages?

Topics: Viewing The Message (Movie) about the early career of Muhammad

## Tuesday, July 14th

Topics: The Abbasid Revolution, the Golden Age of Islam, Science and Philosophy under the Caliphates, Sectarian Disputes

Readings: 1. Brown, *A New Introduction to Islam*, Chapter 11  
2. Selections from al-Jahiz \*PDF; from the *Life and Works of Jahiz*, translated by Charles Pellat, The University of California Press, 1969. pp. 1-5, 128-132, 180-184.  
3. Ibn Fadlan on The Rus \*PDF; from *Ibn Fadlan's Journey to Russia: A Tenth-Century Traveler from Baghdad to the Volga*, edited and translated by Richard Frye, Princeton, NJ: Weiner Pub., 2005. pp. 62-73.

## Thursday, July 16th

Topics: The Crusader period, Christian-Muslim relations in the High Middle Ages

Readings: 1. Brown, *A New Introduction to Islam*, Chapter 13  
2. Selections from William of Tyre \*PDF; from William of Tyre's *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*. trans. by Babcock, Emily Atwater and Krey, August C. Columbia University Press, 1943. pp. 360-378.  
3. Selections from Fulcher of Chartres \*PDF; from Fulk of Chartres, *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem*, trans. Frances Rita Ryan. University of Tennessee Press, 1969. Chapters 27 & 28.  
4. Selection from Osama Ibn Munqidh \*PDF; *An Arab-Syrian Gentleman and Warrior in the Period of the Crusades; Memoirs of Usamah ibn-Munqidh (Kitab al i'tibar)*, trans. by Phillip Hitti, New York, 1929. pp. 160-168.

## Monday, July 20th

### **Essay #2 Due in Class on Monday**

Directions:

After reading the various selections from the past week, how has your view of medieval Islam changed? Does this Muslim culture of the Near East appear to be an enlightened and sophisticated civilization? What kinds of artistic and literary achievements stand out the most to you? How does this contrast with the view of Islam depicted in the Crusader literature? In light of the readings, how has your view of the Crusades been challenged? Does this appear to have been a "Holy War", or something else?

Topics: The Coming of the Mongols, the Arrival of the Turks

- Readings:
1. Brown, *A New Introduction to Islam*, Chapter 14
  2. "The Ottoman Milieu" \*PDF; in Mark D. Angel, *The Foundations of Sephardic Spirituality: The Inner Life of Jews in the Ottoman Empire*. Jewish Lights Pub., 2006. pp. 37-46.

### Tuesday, July 21st

Topics: Muslim Spain in the High Middle Ages, the Fall of al-Andalus, The Safavid & Mughal Empires

- Readings:
1. "The Path to Expulsion" \*PDF; from Jane Gerber, *The Jews of Spain: A History of the Sephardic Experience*. New York: Free Press, 1994. pp. 115-134.
  2. "An Experiment in Synthesis" \*PDF; from Abraham Eraly, *The Mughal Throne: A Saga of India's Great Emperors*. London: Phoenix Press, 2004. pp. 181-201.

### Thursday, July 23rd

Topics: the Napoleonic Campaign in Egypt, Islam and the West during the Enlightenment Age, Intellectual Responses to Colonialism, Orientalism

- Readings:
1. Brown, *A New Introduction to Islam*, Chapter 15
  2. Sayyid Qutb - "Social Justice in Islam" \*PDF; in *Islam in Transition*, ed. Donohue and Esposito. Oxford University Press, 1982. pp. 123-129.
  3. al-Afghani - "Religion versus Science" \*PDF; in *Modernist and Fundamentalist Debates in Islam*, ed. Moaddel and Talattof. Palgrave Macmillan, 2002. pp. 23-28.

### Monday, July 27th

#### **Essay #3 Due in Class on Monday**

Directions: After reading the selections from the previous Monday and Wednesday (relating to concepts of tolerance for religious minorities), please discuss the differing fates of minority communities within the Christian and Islamic world in the late 15th and early 16th century. Are these late medieval concepts of religious tolerance uniform? If not, what seems to be greatest divergences? In particular, how are Jewish minorities typically dealt with in this period within Christendom and the Muslim realms?

Topics: Islam in the 20th century, political movements, Shi'ism and Iran, Islam and Modernity, Contemporary Media and Islam, Guest Speaker on the Topic of Contemporary Conversion to Islam

- Readings:
1. Brown, *A New Introduction to Islam*, Chapter 16
  2. Khomeini - "The Necessity of Islamic Government" \*PDF; in *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought: Texts and Contexts from al-Banna to Bin Laden* (Princeton Studies in Muslim Politics), ed. Roxanne Euben and Muhammad Zaman. Princeton Univ. Press, 2009. pp. 163-180.
  3. Qasim Amin - "The Liberation of Women" \*PDF; in *Modernist and Fundamentalist Debates in Islam*, ed. Moaddel and Talattof. Palgrave Macmillan, 2002. pp. 163-182.
  4. Edward Said, "Covering Islam" \*PDF; in *Anthropology of Islam Reader*, ed. Jens Kreinath. Routledge Press, 2012. pp. 309-321.

## Tuesday, July 28th

**Trip to River Road Mosque/Louisville Islamic Center \*Times to be arranged.**

## Thursday, July 30th

Topics: A Return to the Middle Ages, Sufism and Mystical Islam

Readings:

1. Selections from Rumi \*PDF; "The Jesus Poems" in *The Essential Rumi*, trans. Coleman Barks. HarperCollins, 1996. pp. 201-205.
2. Selections from *The Conference of the Birds* \*PDF; in Attar's *Conference of the Birds*, trans. by Arberry. Penguin Books, 1990. pp. 1-20.

### **Essay #4 Due via e-mail on the following Monday, Aug. 3rd**

Directions:

After reading the selections from the past Monday and Wednesday, please compose an essay discussing the following: In what way does European intervention and colonialism affect Islamic intellectual trends? Do these trends seem to be entirely negative to the West? How do these Muslim intellectuals use the Qur'an to further their arguments?