

ISLAMIC RELIGION AND CULTURE

Religious Studies 331I
Dr. Diana Steigerwald

Spring 2008 Tu: 5:30-8:15
Office: MHB 612
Office Hours: MW10:00-10:45 Tu 5:00-5:30

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Course Description: The course is first of all a course in human thought and the history of ideas. It examines critically the Qur'an and the life of Muhammad, the traditions, the system of Muslim beliefs, theology, philosophy, Sufism (mysticism), law and jurisprudence. This course offers a general introduction to the religion of Islam and culture focusing on features that shape the subjective experience of Muslims.

Course Objectives: This course aims at transmitting the religion, philosophy, and intellectual outlook of a large area of the Middle East, South East Asia, and Africa. It is interdisciplinary, focusing the perspectives of Religious Studies, Philosophy, and Comparative Cultures in the development of the Islamic worldview. The course also provides an increased awareness of diverse Islamic ways of living and develops respect for multiple Islamic viewpoints ("diversity" "difference"). The objectives of the course are: 1) to develop familiarity with the thought, outlook, and culture of the Islamic world, 2) apply the parameters of modern academic perspective to this heritage: students will be initiated to the use of the historical and phenomenological approaches to the study of Islam. They will be encouraged to think critically about religion. 3) to be able to approach one or more aspects of Islamic philosophy, thought, and culture in depth. 4) learn about different viewpoints from diverse groups: Sunnīs, Shī'ites, Jurists, Theologians, Philosophers, and Sūfīs. In doing so, students become aware that no single perspective has an absolute claim to validity.

Course Requirements:

20% Students have to do all the scheduled readings. They have to do **two (2) syntheses** chosen out of a limited choice. Each synthesis will count 10%. For the first synthesis, students must choose to do either synthesis 1 or 2. For the second synthesis students must choose to do synthesis 3 or 4. Students are expected to complete assigned reading prior to each section and to give a short synthesis (5 pages typed double space Times New Roman point size 12) of each reading assignment on the day indicated on the schedule. The students must give a complete summary of the text and **each paragraph must have at least one reference indicating the pages summarized** (ex. B1, B2 or B3 pp. 54-89). The students must write *their personal comments in italics assessing critically the text in half a page*. Each short synthesis must be submitted on time. Missed due dates will result in grade penalties. All written assignments must be done individually. You are evaluated on the quality of your arguments, your critical thinking, and your capacity to summarize essentials ideas. **Read the handouts for more details.**

25% The **Final Exam** will contain an introductory section of identifications to be answered in five sentences or more. These are aimed at testing students' direct knowledge of material covered in lectures and readings. The essay questions to be answered in minimum one page or more, will be weighted more strongly. Essay questions will be general and broad, designed to test the students' overall grasp of ideas and religious, philosophical, and cultural processes, rather than specific facts. Good style and the ability to think critically are essential and students should develop their thoughts in an in-depth manner. Individual and creative thinking will be encouraged, but these should be tied to a realistic appraisal of the results of scholarly research on the subject. **Students must write the exam with their best handwriting in print letters, if their handwriting is unreadable they might loose many points.**

10% The **Quiz on April 15** follows the same requirements as the final exam, except that there will be no essay questions in the quiz.

5% Before starting his paper, the student must submit a **proposal of three hundred words explaining the purpose and scope of his paper**. The proposal must be submitted on **February 19** and must contain a bibliography of a minimum of **seven books or articles of specialized Journals** which the student intend to read for his paper. **The Professor must approve the bibliography**. The Professor might give suggestions to the students to read other books more appropriate to their topics.

20% **Term Paper of 10-13 pages** (typed double space Times New Roman point size 12) on a topic imposed by the Professor should have a clear introduction in which an outline of the purpose and scope of the paper is given; it is important to define clearly the objectives of the paper. Students should refer to a minimum of **seven books or articles of specialized Journals and each paragraph must have a note or a footnote. All their references must be complete** (including author, title, city, publisher, date, pages or author, title, journal, volume, date, pages). The deadline for submission is **March 25, 2008**. The term paper is due on the date announced. A missed due date will result in grade penalties unless properly excused. Each term paper must be done individually. Unlike the syntheses, **the students are graded more severely on the term paper**. The Professor will give 70% for the structure, the clarity and the quality of arguments and 30% for the mechanical elements of the paper (bibliographical style, diction, grammar, etc.). **Read the handouts for more details.**

10% **A ten-minute class presentation of the term paper**, on a date which will be determined by the Professor **after March 25, 2008**.

10% **(Group work** requiring the integration of knowledge done in class related to the reading of the week or to complementary topics). Students have to do all the scheduled readings. Students are expected to complete assigned readings prior to each class meeting and to come prepared to discuss the topic. Students will work in groups (four members) each week. As part of the requirements of the courses, students will keep a guided journal in which they will explore their responses to a daily question or problem that the professor will give them. Students will write answers to questions in class. The purpose of the journal is to stimulate thinking about issues, questions, and problems raised by the study of religion. This journal will be an exam preparation journal from which exam questions will be derived. In focused freewriting, however, the students need to keep their entire entry focused on the assigned question or problem. Their purpose is to explore their responses to the question as fully as possible within the set time period. After, each individual will join a group and will be given a set time to debate alternative solutions to the same problem. **In a plenary session, groups report and justify their solutions to the whole class.**

10% Students may voluntarily choose to do synthesis 5 or 6 to increase their average and to gain **10% extra points**.

Academic Integrity: The University expects that students will submit their own original work and properly cite sources for their ideas, including the Qur'ân, handouts, class notes, and ideas from other students. **Plagiarism is a serious matter. Students found to be cheating on any exam, syntheses, papers, attendance or other course element may lead the Professor to "the assignment of a failing grade for a course and for administrative actions which may lead to dismissal from the university."** (See campus policies.).

Attendance: Student presence is important. Class work comprises a substantial component of the course grade, and one must be present to participate. However, for serious reasons "1. Illness or injury, or serious illness of an immediate family member, 3. Religious reasons, 4. Jury duty or government obligation, 5. University sanctioned or approved activities" (see campus policies) a student will receive an excused absence. In such a case, it is the student's responsibility to provide documentation and find out what he or she missed.

Grading scale: A= 90-100; B = 80-89; C= 70-79; D= 55-69; F= 0-55

Required Books:

- 1) Cragg, Kenneth and Speight Marston, *The House of Islam*, Belmont (California): Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1980. **B1**
- 2) William, John Alden (ed.), *The Word of Islam*, Austin, University of Texas Press, 1994 **B2**
- 3) Pines, S. "Philosophy" in *The Cambridge History of Islam*, edited by P.M. Holt, Ann K.S. Lambton and Bernard Lewis, vol. 2B, pp. 780-823. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1970. **B3**

Schedule of reading assignments

January 29	Course outline
February 5	B1, Lord of the Worlds and Muhammad —Apostle of God, pp. 1-27
February 12	B2, The News of God's Messengers: The Hadīth, pp. 36-65
February 19	B1 Qur'ān, pp. 29-41; B1, Law, pp. 42-54 <i>Deadline Proposal</i> Deadline SYNTHESIS 1 , B1 pp. 1-27; B2, pp. 36-65
February 26	B2 The Word of God: the Qur'ān, pp. 7-34. Deadline SYNTHESIS 2, B1 pp. 29--54; B2 pp. 7-34
March 4	B2, The Law of God, pp. 66-108
March 11	B1, The Muslim Community in Doctrine and Practice, pp. 72-85 Deadline SYNTHESIS 3, B1 72-85; B2 pp. 66-108
March 18	B1, The Muslim Community in the Mirror of Its Cities, pp. 86-110
March 25	Deadline TERM PAPER
April 1	Spring Recess
April 8	B2, The Statement of Theologians, pp. 140-169 Deadline SYNTHESIS 4, B1 pp. 86-110; B2 pp. 140-169
April 15	B1, Worship and the Sufi Path, pp. 55-71 <i>QUIZ</i>
April 22	B2, Interior of Religion: Sufism, pp. 109-139
April 29	B3, Philosophy, pp. 794-811, 816-819 Deadline SYNTHESIS 5, B1 pp. 55-71; B2 pp. 109-139; B3 pp. 794-811, 816-819
May 6	B1, Questions of Modern Time, pp. 111-127; B2, Afterward: Islam Today, pp. 211-220
May 13	B2 Sectarian Movements, pp. 170-210. Deadline SYNTHESIS 6, B1 pp. 111-127, B2, pp. 170-220

N.B. POLICY ON LATE PAPERS: I will not accept any proposal, term paper, or synthesis later than the following class. Unless for serious reasons "1. Illness or injury, or serious illness of an immediate family member, 3. Religious reasons, 4. Jury duty or government obligation, 5. University sanctioned or approved activities" (see campus policies). In such a case, it is the student's responsibility to provide documentation with their late assignment. I do not accept assignments by email you must bring a hard copy in class.

Please observe ordinary classroom decorum. For example: Be on time and don't leave early. Don't distract the class with ongoing conversations. Turn off beepers and cell phones, etc.

List of Term Paper Topics

1. Muhammad's relations with the Jews of Arabia
2. Muhammad's relations with the Christians of Arabia
3. Mystical elements in the life of Muhammad;
4. The opposition to Muhammad in Makka
5. Principal sources for the Life of Muhammad, their use and value
6. Muhammad's relations with the Bedouins
7. Makka on the eve of Islam, social, economic and political life
8. Muhammad's diplomacy with the Arabian tribes
9. The religion of the pre-Islamic Bedouin
10. Factors of continuity between pre-Islamic Arabia and Islam
11. Was Muhammad a revolutionary?
12. Growth of a cult of the Prophet
13. The conception of the Prophet among the Islamic philosophers (*falâsifa*)
14. The pre-Islamic poetry; its significance for the study of Islam
15. The concept of God in Makkan surât (verses)
16. The concept of prophecy in the Qur'ân
17. The role of Abraham in the Qur'ân
18. The concept of umma (community) and its evolution during the Prophet's lifetime
19. The doctrine of the "impeccability" of the Prophet: its origin, growth, and significance
20. Eschatology of the Qur'ân
21. The *Mi'râj* of the Prophet: its nature and its significance
22. Eschatology in the writings of the Muslim theologians
23. The significance of the word "Islam" as used in the Qur'ân in contrast with its significance in the writings of modern Muslims
24. The controversy about the Attributes of God among the Muslim Theologians
25. The Mu'tazila: their nature, doctrine and significance
26. The question of "big sins" and "little sins" in Islamic theology
27. The chronology of the Qur'ân: problems encountered, suggested solutions, significance of the issue
28. The Muslim understanding of the Scripture
29. The science of *hadîth* (tradition)
30. The authenticity of the *hadîth*
31. The problem of *tadwîn al-hadîth* (writing down of hadîth)
32. The sources of Islamic law
33. The structure and organisation of a Sûfi Tarîqa
34. The doctrine of the Perfect Man in Sûfism
35. The nature and significant of *hajj* (pilgrimage)
36. The Shî'î doctrine of the *Imâma*
37. Al-Mâwardî's theory of the Caliphate
38. The metaphysical thought of Ibn Sînâ
39. The nature and function of a *qâdî* (judge)
40. Development and function of the mosque in Muslim life
41. The relationship between God and the world in Sufi thought
42. Muslim festivals
43. Attitudes to Women in the Qur'ân and *hadîth*
44. Studies in the thought of al-Ghazzâlî
45. Islamic artistic expression
46. Specific themes of Muslim ethic
47. The concept of *sunna*
48. The idea of sainthood in the Islamic tradition
49. Notion of tolerance in Islam
50. The nature and function of *madrassa* (religious school)
51. The thought and significance of al-Ash'arî
52. The doctrine of the Mahdî

53. The role of religious minorities in Islamic thought
54. The nature and significance of the ritual prayers (*salât*)
55. The nature and significance of *zakât* (alms)
56. Destiny in the Qur'ân and in Islamic traditions
57. The concept of brotherhood in the Qur'ân and in the Islamic traditions
58. The concept of faith in the Qur'ân and in Islamic traditions
59. Notion of freedom in Islam
60. Democracy in Islam
61. Is there a clash of civilization between the Islamic world and the Western world?
62. Taliban in Afghanistan
63. Wahhâbism and their vision of Islam
64. The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict
65. The causes leading to the Gulf War
66. Islam in Spain in the Middle Age
67. Islam in a specific country of Africa
68. Islam in India or Pakistan
69. Islam in Indonesia
70. Islam in Malaysia
71. Islam in China
72. Islam in a specific Arab country
73. Islam in Iran
74. Islam in America