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Introduction to Islamic Religion

Religious Studies 143 (AMES 136)

We will meet in Room 421 Williams Hall on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:30 to 12:00

Course Requirements

- 30 % Class participation (attendance and discussion)
- 30 % Take-home midterm
- 40 % Students have two options for the end-of-term work:

You can either write a 10-15 page research paper on a topic chosen in consultation with me (due the day of the final exam) or you can sit for the final exam (questions handed out last day of class).

If you choose to write a paper, you may, if you turn the paper in on or before Tuesday Dec 1, re-write it and turn it in again the day of the final exam for a better grade based on my comments and your own revisions.

Books for Purchase

Penn Book Center 3726 Walnut 222-7600

- An Introduction to Islam, Frederick Denny (new ed.)
- Windows on the House of Islam: Muslim Sources on Spirituality and Religious Life, John Renard, ed.
- American Jihad, S. Barboza
Reserve Books

Rosengarten

Under my name, all the required books, and

- *The Essential Koran*, Th. Cleary
- *The Holy Qur’an*, Yusuf Ali
- *Qur’an and Woman*, Amina Wadud-Muhsin
- *The Life of Muhammad*, Ibn Ishaq/Ibn Hisham
- *Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources*, Martin Lings
- *A Reader on Classical Islam*, FE Peters
- *An Introduction to Shi’i Islam*, J. Momen
- *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, Esposito and Voll

Bulkpack

Will be available for purchase

Course Outline

**Thursday Sept 10: Introduction to Islam and the Modern Muslim World**

Reading (Read for next Tuesday):

- Frederick Denny, *An Introduction to Islam*, Part One, especially "Pre-Islamic Arabia" 43-58
- Begin *American Jihad*. Select two individuals from the book: The person with whom you feel the most affinity and the person whose story seems most alien to you. For **Thursday Sept 24** write a two-page commentary explaining why you have chosen these two people. Their background is not as important as their ideas. In their shoes, could you imagine yourself following a similar path? This assignment is required, but it will not be given a letter grade.

**Tuesday Sept 15 & Thursday Sept 17: Muhammad and the Background of Islam**
Biography, Family of the Prophet, Mecca and Medina

Reading:

- Denny, "Muhammad and the Early Muslim Community" 59-80

**Bulkpak**: Annemarie Schimmel "The Prophet Muhammad as a Centre of Muslim Life and Thought," from *We Believe in One God: The Experience of God in Christianity and Islam*, E. Waugh, "The Popular Muhammad"

Tuesday Sept 22 & Thursday Sept 24: **The Qur’an**

Creation and cosmology, Revelation and prophecy in Islam, Oral to written scripture, Major themes of the Qur’an, Interpretation, Jews and Christians in the Qur’an

Reading:

- Denny, "Nature and Function of the Qur’an" 138-155
- *Windows* 1-27, 35-58, 144-148

Tuesday Sept 29 & Thursday Oct 1: **Islamic History**

Conquest and conversion, Imperial civilization, After the caliphs

Film "Smithsonian World of Islam"

Reading:

- Denny, "The Arab Conquests and Islamic Rule" 83-103 and 206-212

**BP**: N. Levitzion, "Toward a Comparative Theory of Islamization" and B. Lewis, "The Judeo-Islamic Tradition" from *The Jews of Islam*

*Windows* 223-234

Tuesday Oct 6 & Thursday Oct 8: **Islamic Legal Studies**

Codification of the divine law (*Shari’ah*), sayings of the Prophet (*hadith*), Religious professionals and jurisprudence (*fiqh*) in the *sunnī* law schools (*madhabs*)

Reading:

- Denny, "The Prophet’s Sunna as Preserved in the Hadith" 158-168 and 195-204
BP : Law text selections (hadith and fiqh on intoxication; hadith on social interactions; hadith on marriage)

Web: Begin "The Ajwiba: An Islamic Catechism" paying attention to norms concerning actions

Tuesday Oct 13: Theology

Heresy and normative beliefs (‘aqa’id), Ontology, Heaven and hell, Free-will and determinism

Reading:
- Denny, "Muslim Creeds and Theologies" 172-193
- Windows 269-277

Web: Finish "The Ajwiba" paying attention to theological positions, read "Fiqh al-akbar" also on my web page

Thursday Oct 15: Shi’ism

Sects in Islam, Religious and political authority, Shi’i doctrine and practice

Reading:
- Denny, "Shi’i Law Schools" 204-206 and 313- 320
- Windows 95-106 and 149-154

BP : S. Haeri "Temporary Marriage"

Tuesday Oct 20: Fall Break (no class)

Thursday Oct 22: Shi’ism (continued)

Take-home midterm due in class

Tuesday Oct 27 & Thursday Oct 29: Islamic Art and Architecture (slides)

Calligraphy, iconoclasm, mosques, tombs and colleges

Visit to Overbrook Mosque (on Friday)

Reading:
- Denny, "The Mosque" 294-298
- Windows 250-268
BP: O. Grabar, "Islamic Attitudes toward the Arts" in *The Formation of Islamic Art*

Tuesday Nov 3 & Thursday Nov 5: **Mystical Islam/Sufism and Spiritual Experience**

Mystical Islam, Drunk and sober Sufism, *unio mystica*, Three masters (al-Ghazali, Ibn ‘Arabi, and Jalal al-Din Rumi), Crystallization of Sufi orders and their role in Muslim societies

Film "Sufism in Sudan"

Reading:
- Denny, "The Sufi Way of Mysticism and Fellowship" 219-262 and 305-320
- Al-Qushayri *Principles of Sufism* (optional)

Tuesday Nov 10: **Mystical Islam/Sufism** (continued) & Thursday Nov 12: **The Hajj Pilgrimage**

Personal and communal responsibilities, rituals

Film "Guests of God"

Reading:
- Denny, "Basic Beliefs and Worship Practices of Islam" 107-137 and "Islamic Life Cycle and the Family" 269-293
- *Windows* 85-91 and 107-118

Tuesday Nov 17 & Thursday Nov 19: **Muslim Women**

The "four perfect women," Women in early Islamic history - warriors and scholars, Sufis, Islamic feminism and the revision of tradition

Film "Boys, Girls and the Veil"

Reading:
- Denny, "Islam and the Status of Women" 351-355
- *Windows* 92-94, 130-138, 244-248, 286-290

BP: R. Hassan, "An Islamic Perspective," from *Women, Religion, and Sex*; N. Keddie, "Deciphering Middle Eastern Women’s History," from *Women in Middle Eastern History*

Tuesday Nov 24: **Islam in America**
Conversion to Islam, the immigrant population, African-American sunni Muslims, The Nation of Islam, media Muslims

Reading:

- Denny, "Islam and Muslims in North America" 355-366
- *Muslim Communities of North America*, J. Smith and Y. Haddad, eds. (chapters assigned in class for discussion)
- *American Jihad* (second look)

Thursday Nov 26: **Thanksgiving Break** (no class)

Tuesday Dec 1: **Islam in America** (continued)

Thursday Dec 3 & Tuesday Dec 8: **Islamic Revival**

Defining fundamentalism, Renewal and reform in Islam, Colonialism and modernism, Militancy and revolution

Film "Fundamentalism in Egypt"

Reading:

- Denny, "Fundamentalism," 345-351
- *Windows* 217-222 and 325-335

**BP** : Y. Haddad, "Sayyid Qutb: Ideologue of the Islamic Revival" from J. Esposito, *Voices of Resurgent Islam* and "The Clash of Civilizations?" (Huntington and Mottahedeh)

Tuesday Dec 10: **Review and Discussion**

Final exam questions handed out in class