

ISLAM

REL 354 (Spring 2007)

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Office: JH202G

Office Hours: Tuesdays/Thursdays 9:00-10:30; 1:00-2:00; 4:00-4:45 or by appointment

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DESCRIPTION

A basic introduction to the scriptures, history, thought, practice, and diverse expressions of the Islamic tradition

ISLAM AND THE LIBERAL ARTS

The liberal arts tradition, as I understand it, is premised on the assumption that a true education requires more than the mere mastery of trade-specific data, but also the cultivation of a variety of valuable **cognitive** and **social** abilities. Among the **cognitive** skills a teacher in the liberal arts tradition assays to nurture are the capacity to think and learn independently, and to critically assess one's own presuppositions, perspectives, and biases, as well as those of others (including teachers and the authors of course texts). In addition, the liberal arts tradition seeks to foster academic facility in formulating, evaluating, and expressing arguments, as well as in seeking, classifying, and organizing information. The liberal arts tradition, however, is not merely about cognitive skills, but also entails the development of certain **social** qualities, the most noble among them being respect, an empathetic imagination, and counter-conventional thinking (i.e., the ability to envisage how, in the words of a Buddhist text, it "might be otherwise"). Challenging students to wrestle with the viewpoints, values, and worldviews of other people is one of the most efficient ways to achieve these goals of a liberal education. RL354 exposes students to one of these worldviews in a sustained fashion. If it is successful, the course will do more than just purvey information about Islam, but will also facilitate a sincere, thorough, and reorienting *encounter* with the Islamic tradition and those who adhere to it.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

If all goes well, upon completing this course you should be better equipped than before to:

- sketch the outlines of Islamic history from the time of Muhammad to the present day;
- articulate the basic tenets of Islamic thought and their development over time;
- describe various elements of Islamic practice; and
- demonstrate an awareness of the great variety of Islamic expression and belief.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Mahmoud Ayoub, *Islam: Faith and Practice*
- Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur'an*
- M. M. Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an*
- Michael Sells, *Approaching the Qur'an*
- Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*
- Carl Ernst, *Shambhala Guide to Sufism*
- John Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*
- Monika Ali's *Brick Lane*, Khaled Hosseini's *Kite Runner*, or Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* (Not available in bookstore).

**Note: These texts are referred to below by the name of their author only.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADE

The following five components will comprise the grade for this course:

- **Participation (20%):** Students will be expected to attend the class regularly, to ask informed questions, and to respect each other, the professor, and guest lecturers. Students will also participate in periodic discussions. If these discussions are to be successful, students will need to have carefully read the assigned texts. A large portion of the participation grade will be determined by the extent to which the student's participation in these discussions demonstrates his or her engagement with and understanding of the assigned texts. Students can increase their participation grade by visiting their professor in his office for informal conversation or help with/conversation about the course. **Attendance policy:** *I do not take attendance in class, but I do expect regular attendance. If you are absent frequently enough that I (and others) notice, your participation grade will suffer (unless those absences are caused by hospitalization or some other traumatic personal or family event). Mild illnesses and/or fatigue in general do not constitute an excusable reason for absence, so you should do what you can to avoid them.*

As part of their participation grade, students will attend Muslim prayers on Friday, January 16th, and Friday, February 26th, between 11:00 and 3:00 (more details later).

- **Examination (20%):** On February 15th, students will take a short mid-term exam covering the basics of Islam.
- **Mosque Comparison Paper (10%):** By class time on February 27th, students will submit (by e-mail) a five-page paper comparing the two mosques we will be visiting as a class. Students may comment on architecture, membership, demographics, location, sights, sounds, rituals, theology, themes of the services, etc., as well as their own experiences. However, students should also attempt to draw inferences about the more general differences between the two mosques and the people who attend them. Papers should be focused and organized, but should not draw upon any sources other than the student's experience.
- **Islam in Literature Paper (25%):** Students will read either Monika Ali's *Brick Lane*, Khaled Hosseini's *Kite Runner*, or Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*. Students will then write a paper (5 pages total), briefly describing the plot of the novel (in no more than 2 pages) and then, at more length, discussing its relationship to the themes of the course. It is expected that the papers will also make reference to *published* texts written about the novel, its author, or its historical/cultural/religious setting. The papers should have a clear, argumentative

thesis preceded by words such as, “It is the thesis/central argument of this paper that...” (more about this in class). The paper will be due at the beginning of class on April 3rd.

- **Final Examination (25%):** From 1-3 pm on Tuesday, May 8th, students will take a final examination composed largely or entirely of essay questions.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

Paper Submission:

All papers should be submitted as a Microsoft Word (.doc) or, for Mac users, a Rich Text Format (.rtf) document attached to an e-mail to the instructor. *Please do not turn in hard copies.*

Lateness Policy

Extensions will generally be granted without question to those who request them *before the assignment is due*. (No extensions will be given, however, beyond the last day of class.) Extensions will not be granted, however, if requested after the due date. Late assignments will be assessed a penalty of two points per day.

E-mail Policy

All students are expected to check their Butler e-mail account daily (when school is in session) for class updates and reminders.

Rough Drafts:

The professor will read and comment on complete rough drafts of student papers, provided they are submitted at least one week in advance of their due date.

Student Disability Accommodation

It is the policy and practice of Butler University to make reasonable accommodations for students with properly documented disabilities. Written notification from Student Disability Services is required. If you are eligible to receive an accommodation and would like to request it for this course, please discuss it with me and allow one week advance notice. Otherwise, it is not guaranteed that the accommodation can be received on a timely basis. If you have questions about Student Disability Services, you may wish to contact Michele Atterson, JH 136, ext. 9308

Academic Integrity:

Students will be expected to adhere to the standards of academic integrity as outlined in the Butler University Student Handbook, as well as to the highest standards of honesty, good faith and fair dealing. Students discovered violating those standards will **fail the course**, and may face additional sanctions which could include expulsion from the University. Violations include (but are not limited to) cheating, collaborating improperly on assignments assigned individually, and plagiarizing (turning in another person's work as one's own, copying text from any source, *including the internet*, books, articles, or magazines, without acknowledgement, etc.). Students should consult Butler's statement on academic integrity, posted on the course's Blackboard site under "Course Documents," for more detailed information on the University's expectations and policies. The library provides a tutorial on plagiarism for those needing more instruction: www.butler.edu/library/instruction/tutorial/index.html.

Statement on Disruptive Classroom Behavior:

The classroom is a special environment in which students and faculty come together to promote learning and growth. It is essential to this learning environment that respect for the rights of others seeking to learn, respect for the professionalism of the instructor, and the general goals of academic freedom are maintained. Differences of viewpoint or concerns should be expressed in terms which students and faculty may learn to reason with clarity and compassion, to share of themselves without losing their identities, and to develop an understanding of the community in which they live. Student conduct which disrupts the learning process shall not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action (Butler University Rules of Conduct #2) and/or removal from class. Some specific examples include talking during lecture or the use of cellular phones, pagers, etc.

SCHEDULE

January

T 16 – Studying Religion/Studying Islam

- Ayoub, Preface and Prologue (Islam: A Personal Faith?), pgs. ix-7
- **In class, turn in sheet of paper indicating that you have cleared (or cannot clear) your schedule for the two mosque visits.

R 18 – The Pre-Islamic Context

- Ayoub, Chapter 1 (Origins and Early History), pgs. 8-29
- Pickthall, Surah 8 – The Spoils (revealed after the battle of Badr)

T 23 – 7:00-10:00 in the EVENING: View film, *The Message* in JH236

T 23 – No class (to make up for evening film)

R 25 – Muhammad and the Qur'an

- Ayoub, Chapter 2 (Prophethood, Revelation, and the Qur'an), pgs. 30-50
- Sells, Introduction, pgs. 1-31
- Pickthall, Surahs 1 (The Opening) and 96 (The Clot)

Friday, January 26th (reserve 11:00-3:00 on your schedules): Visit to Plainfield Mosque

T 30 – The Qur'an and its Monotheistic Antecedents

- Cook, *Muhammad*, 4 (Monotheist History), pgs. 31-41 (on Blackboard under Course Documents)
- Pickthall, Surahs 2:28-54 (God, Adam, and Eve), 23:21-49 (Noah), 2:122-132 (Abraham/Ka'ba), 26:1-78 (Moses and Pharaoh), 5:19-29 (Moses/Promised Land), 12 (Joseph), 3:40-65 (Jesus' Birth and Prophethood), 4:153-159 (Jesus' Crucifixion and Ascension), and 112 (Unity)
- Rahman, Appendix II (The People of the Book and Diversity of "Religions"), pgs.162-170
- Hmida Ennaifer, "Jesus and the Koranic Ideal," available at <http://www.30giorni.it/us/articolo.asp?id=2180>

February

R 1 – Major Themes of the Qur'an, I

- Rahman, Chapters 1 (God) and 3 (Man in Society), pgs. 1-16, 37-64

T 6 – Major Themes of the Qur'an, II

- Rahman, Chapters 6 (Eschatology) and 7 (Satan and Evil), pgs. 106-131
- Pickthall, Surahs 7:11-38 (Iblis/Satan) and 38:66-88 (Iblis/Satan)

R 8 – Islamic Practice/Five Pillars

- Ayoub, Chapter 3 (Faith and Worship), pgs. 51-69
- Film, *The Hajj*
- Begin reading novel

T 13 – No Class (to make up for mosque visits)

R 15 – Examination

Friday, February 16th (reserve 11:00-3:00 on your schedules): Visit to Nur Allah Mosque

T 20 – Early Muslim History

- Ayoub, Chapters 4 (The Formative Period of Muslim History) and 5 (The Age of the Caliphs), pts. 70-90
- Continue reading novel

R 22 – The Spread of Islam

- Ayoub, Chapter 6 (The Spread of Islam), pgs. 91-108

T 27 – No Class (to make up for mosque visits)

**** Mosque comparison paper due electronically at what would have been class time**

March

R 1 – Islamic Law/Hadith Literature

- Ayoub, Chapter 7 (The Religious Sciences), pgs. 109-138
- Maulana Muhammad Ali, *A Manual of Hadith*, pgs. 158-164; 208-221; 266-281 (on Blackboard under Course Documents)

T 6 – Sufism, I

- Ayoub, Chapter 8 (Sufism: The Mystical Tradition), pgs. 139-158

T 8 – Sufism, II

- Ernst, *Shambhala Guide to Sufism*, Chapters 2 (The Sacred Sources of Sufism) and 6 (Poetry), pgs. 32-57; 147-178

T 13 – Spring Break!

R 15 – Spring Break!

T 20 – Islamic Theology and Philosophy

- Ayoub, Chapter 9 (Theology and Philosophy), pgs. 159-176
- Continue reading novel

R 22 – Women and Gender in Islam, I

- Ayoub, Chapter 10 (Women and Men), pgs. 177-196
- Pickthall, Surahs 2:229-232, 3:33-59 (Mary and Zacharia), 4:1-35, 19:1-38 (Maryam)
- Barbara Stowasser, *Women in the Qur'an, Traditions, and Interpretation* (Chapter on Mary), pgs. 67-82.

T 28 – Women and Gender in Islam, II

- Ahmed, Chapter 5 (Elaboration of the Founding Discourses) and Chapter 8 (The Discourse of the Veil), pgs. 79-101; 144-168
- Continue reading novel

R 29 – NO CLASS (to make up for mosque visits)

April

T 3 – Islam and Modernity

- ****Islam in Literature Paper Due****
- Ayoub, Chapter 11 (Islam and Modernity), pgs. 197-218
- Charles Kurzman, *Modernist Islam*, Chapters 3 (Muhammad ‘Abduh), 11 (Sayyid Jamal al-Din al-Afghani), 40 (Sayyid Ahmad Khan), and 41 (Muhammad Iqbal:), pgs. 50-60; 102-110; 291-303 (on Blackboard under Course Documents)
- Continue reading novel

R 5 – Islam and the Contemporary Geopolitical Situation

- Samuel Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?” pgs. 22-49 (on Blackboard under Course Documents)

T 10 – NO CLASS (to make up for mosque visits)

- Begin reading long assignment for next class

R 12 – Discussion: Huntington vs. Esposito

- Esposito, Chapter 6 (Islam and the West: A Clash of Civilizations?), pgs. 212-289

T 17 – War and Peace in Islam

- Malise Ruthven, *A Fury for God: The Islamist Attack on America*, Chapter 2 (Jihad), pgs. 44-71 (on Blackboard under Course Documents)
- Fuwad Abdul Baqi, *The Translation of the Meanings of Al-Lu’lu’wal-Marjan* (excerpts from Al-Bukhari’s Hadith), vol. II, Chapters 1-11 (on Jihad), pgs. 88-93 (on Blackboard under Course Documents)
- Muzammil Siddiqi, “Does the Quran Promote Violence?” available online at <http://www.twf.org/Library/Violence.html>
- “A Collection of Sound Hadith on Nonviolence, Peace, and Justice,” available online at http://www.spiritualityhealth.com/newsh/items/blank/item_3598.html
- “The Qur’an on Terrorism,” available online at <http://islam.about.com/library/weekly/aa090402a.htm>
- Pickthall, Surah 9:3-6 – The “Sword Verse”

R 19 – View Film, *My Son, the Fanatic*

- Fatema Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy*, preface (on 9/11), pgs. ix-xxi (on Blackboard under Course Documents)

T 24 – Islam and Democracy Discussion/Course Evaluations

R 67 – Optional Review

Final Exam: Tuesday, May 8th, 1:00-3:00 (normal room)