



WM 515 *Muslim Faith & Practice*
Winter 2011
Professor: Eric de Bruyn

Contacting the Professor

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Class Location: A2131

Course Description

This course is a survey of Muslim religious practice and belief, including the role of hadith (traditions). Special attention will be paid to the place of Muhammad in Muslim history and tradition.

Expected Learning Outcomes

1. To give the student a thorough grounding in the basic practices and beliefs of Muslims.
2. To help the student to begin thinking of the similarities and differences between Islam and Christianity.
3. To help the student better understand the nature of jihad, both in doctrine and in practice
4. To help the student to better understand the rising tensions among Sunni and Shi'a Muslims in the heart of the Islamic world.
5. To help the student to begin thinking about how to constructively engage with Muslims both within Canada and also in the world at large.

Required Texts

George W. Braswell, Jr., *Islam: its Prophet, Peoples, Politics and Power* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996)

David Cook, *Understanding Jihad* (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of

California Press, 2005)

Vali Nasr, *The Shia Revival. How Conflicts within Islam Will Shape the Future* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006)

Recommended

To do further and deeper study of Islam one must have a Qur'an. I recommend Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an* (Brentwood, MD: the Amana Corporation, 1991). This work has the English translation side by side with the Arabic text, and also has study footnotes with Muslim interpretations. This is the most common, scholarly Qur'an now available in English.

Reference Works

E. J. Brill's First Encyclopedia of Islam, 1913-1936. 9 Volumes. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1987.

Encyclopedia of Islam, 2nd edition. 11 Volumes. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960-2002.

Eliade, Mircea (ed). *The Encyclopedia of Religion.* 16 Volumes. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987.

Esposito, John L. (ed). *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World.* 4 Volumes. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Federspiel, Howard M. *A Dictionary of Indonesian Islam.* Athens, OH: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1995.

Kassis, Hanna E. *A Concordance of the Qur'an.* Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983.

McAuliffe, Jane Dammen (ed). *Encyclopedia of the Qur'an.* 5 Volumes & Index. Leiden: Brill, 2001-06.

Renard, John. *Historical Dictionary of Sufism.* Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2005.

Books on Reserve

Cragg, Kenneth (translator and editor), *Readings in the Qur'an.* London: Collins, 1993. (2 copies)

Important Studies found in the Ambrose Library

To assist you in the research and writing of your papers I have attached a lengthy Bibliography of volumes on Islam and Islamic thought and history on the course Moodle page. Please review the list and use those volumes that are most important for your paper. Although the list is very comprehensive, you are not limited to using only these resources.

Course Schedule

Week 1

Syllabus and introduction to Islam
Middle East background

Week 2

Arabia before Muhammad
The life of Muhammad to 610

Week 3

The life of Muhammad as prophet: the Meccan years (610-22)
The life of Muhammad as prophet and ruler: the Medinan years (622-32)

Week 4

Muhammad in Christian and Western eyes throughout the ages
The early history of Islam: Abu Bakr and the Ridda Wars (632-34)

Week 5

The early history of Islam: Expansion and Conquest under Umar (634-44) and Uthman (644-56)
The Problem of Ali (656-61) and the Sunni-Shia split

Week 6

The development of Dynasty in Islam: the Umayyads (661-750) and the Abbasids (750-1258)
Revelation and Tradition in Islam: the Qur'an, the Hadith, and the Sunna of the Prophet

Week 7

The Shari'a
The Five Pillars of Islam

Week 8

The Five Pillars of Islam
Video: The Five Pillars of Islam

Week 9

Jihad
The basic doctrines of Islam

Week 10

The basic doctrines of Islam
Islamic theology

Week 11

Islamic theology
Shi'a Islam

Week 12

Islamic mysticism or Sufism
Islamic history after the Mongol conquest: the Ottoman (1300-1920), Safavid (1501-1722) and Mughal (1526-1857) Empires and after

Week 13

Women in Islam

Course Requirements

- 1. Conscientious class attendance**
- 2. Paper comparing and contrasting Muslim and Christian Understandings of the Same Scriptural People (15%)**

The paper can be written on one of two topics, and must be 7 to 10 pages long:

- 1) Musa (Moses) and Ibrahim (Abraham), or;
- 2) Isa (Jesus) and Maryam (Mary)

In writing the paper you can use the Qur'anic passages found in Cragg (as he translates them) or you can use another translation of the Qur'an (we have many available different translations of the Qur'an in the Reference Section of the Ambrose Library). As some of these passages are quite long, please select only the most important texts and portions of texts in your paper, being sure to cite the Qur'anic and Biblical references. In most cases it is best simply to summarize the essence of the text in your work. That said, please put the Qur'anic or Biblical reference in the text or in a footnote so that I know where you are "coming from".

The student must also use the relevant articles in both editions of the *Encyclopedia of Islam* and also the *Encyclopedia of the Qur'an* as the secondary sources in the paper.

These encyclopedias are not lightweight resources, but major scholarly tools that are highly respected. They must be utilized and properly cited in both the text of your paper and the bibliography. This will include the author's name, the title of the article and the usual publication information. For proper formatting please consult the History Department's Style Guide found at the History website: www.ambrose.edu/history. Please note: **Failure to use all these particular resources will result in a greatly reduced grade.**

Also, although full books are listed in your syllabus regarding the Muslim understanding of Jesus, these do not have to be included in the Jesus and Mary paper. (But you may do so if you wish).

In spite of great similarities between some Muslim and Christian scriptural texts, please be very careful not to read Christian understandings into the Qur'anic text. Be sure that you "connect the dots" over the course of many texts (not just one or two) so that you can understand the heart of the Qur'anic position regarding the teachings and acts of the person being discussed. You will probably find this to be more challenging with the first paper choice.

The paper is **due February 17**

3. **A major Research Paper (30%).**

This is a paper of some 10 to 15 pages in length. Please choose your topic from list of topic choices found on the course Moodle page. Again, for style and formatting issues please consult the style guide at the History Department website: www.ambrose.edu/history. The student is not strictly limited to these particular topics; however, if a different topic is desired it must first be cleared with the professor.

In writing this paper, it is expected that the student will use both primary and secondary sources. There are some good primary sources in the stacks of the Ambrose Library. Please also utilize the web. A good place to begin is: www.fordham.edu/halsall/. For both primary and secondary sources please make use of the Ambrose Library's electronic data bases, in particular Academic Search Complete, Academic OneFile and ATLA Religion Database.

For secondary sources please begin with the Ambrose Library's holdings listed in the syllabus (but do not necessarily exclude others that are not listed here). The bulk of your research should be done in these volumes. (N.B.: please use internet sources sparingly and carefully. They have rarely undergone peer review and are not necessarily reliable. Also, Wikipedia is unacceptable as a source for your paper.) For highest grades it is necessary for the student to utilize the major books and articles relating to their topic: should these resources be absent from the paper the result will be a reduced grade.

The paper is **due March 17**.

4. A **book review** of some 5-7 pages on **either** Vali Nasr's *Shia Revival* OR David Cook's *Understanding Jihad*. (15%)

This assignment must contain a summary of the book's contents, but that should not take up any more than about 1/3 of the paper's length. Read the author's Introduction and Conclusion very carefully: they will tell you what the book intends to accomplish. Read both first, then the body of the book. Also look at the Table of Contents very carefully to see how the book is weighted and structured. You must discuss this in the bulk of your paper.

To help you, please consult the electronic data bases in the Ambrose Library. You should be able to find scholarly reviews of your book of choice. Interact with them as well as with your book. And when discussing the book, please make reference to specific chapters and parts of the book to support your comments. Needless to say, you must document your information conscientiously.

5. A **Final Examination** scheduled during Final Exam week on **April 20 at 1:00-4:00 PM in room 2210**. (40%)

Important Notes/Dates

- Last day to enter course without permission and/or voluntarily withdraw from course without financial penalty: **January 21**.

- Last day to voluntarily withdraw from course or change to audit without academic penalty: **March 18**.
- **Final Exam Period: April 18-26**. Note: DO NOT schedule travel for the final examination period until the release of the final version of the exam schedule. There will be no rescheduling of final exams by the instructor; as the academic calendar reads, “Travel plans will not be considered an appropriate reason to request a revised final examination.”
- Last day to request a revised time for a Final Exam is **April 4** at the Registrar’s Office.
- **Final grades** will be available on the student portals. Printed grade sheets are no longer mailed out.

Other Syllabus Features

- It is the responsibility of all students to become familiar with and adhere to Ambrose Academic Policies, such as the policy on Academic Dishonesty, which are stated in the current Ambrose Calendar and Ambrose Student Handbook. (<http://www.ambrose.edu/publications/academiccalendar>).
- **Personal information**, that is, information about an individual may be collected as part of taking this class. Any information collected will only be used and disclosed for the purpose for which the collection was intended. For further information contact the Privacy Compliance Officer at privacy@ambrose.edu.
- The following **grading system** will be used for this course. A student's final grade in a course is recorded as a letter grade on the student's permanent record of marks. Each letter grade has a corresponding grade point value which is used to determine the number of quality points earned by the student for a given course. Quality points are used to compute the student's grade point average.

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Grade Point</i>	<i>Description</i>
A+	4.0	Superior performance showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.
A	4.0	
A-	3.7	
B+	3.3	Clearly above-average performance with knowledge of subject matter complete.
B	3.0	
B-	2.7	
C+	2.3	Basic understanding of subject matter.
C	2.0	
C-	1.7	
D+	1.3	Marginal performance.
D	1.0	
F	0	Unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.

- All sources used in written assignments must be listed in a bibliography (this will always appear on a separate page AFTER the end of your essay). All quotations and paraphrases from published material must be annotated by means of footnotes. (As to formatting in general, please consult the History Department website for both documentation and bibliography at: www.ambrose.edu/history). Plagiarism will not be tolerated, and is defined as the unattributed copying and presentation of another person's thoughts, writings and discoveries from another source--including a purchased essay--as your own. This also includes close paraphrasing--changing a few words from the sources. Plagiarism or cheating will lead to disciplinary action such as failure in the course and/or dismissal from the College.
- **Course changes**, including the adding or dropping of a course, may be made during the Registration Revision period, as outlined in the Calendar of Events. All course changes must be recorded on a Registration form, available from the Office of the Registrar. Due to circumstances such as class size, prerequisites or academic policy, the submission of a Registration form does not guarantee that a course will be added or removed from a student's registration. Students may change the designation of any class from credit to audit up to the date specified in the Calendar of Events, although students are not entitled to a tuition adjustment or refund after the Registration Revision period.
- **Withdrawal from courses** after the Registration Revision period will not be eligible for tuition refund. Students intending to withdraw from some or all of their courses must submit a completed Registration form to the Registrar's Office. The dates by which students may voluntarily withdraw from a course without penalty are listed in the Calendar of Events. A grade of 'W' will be recorded on the student's transcript for any withdrawals from courses made after the end of the Registration Revision period and before the Withdrawal Deadline (also listed in the Calendar of Events). 'W' grades are not included in grade point average calculations. A limit on the number of courses from which a student is permitted to withdraw may be imposed. Students wishing to withdraw from a course, but who fail to do so by the applicable date, will receive the grade earned in accordance with the course syllabus. A student obliged to withdraw from a course after the Withdrawal Deadline because of health or other reasons may apply to the Registrar for special consideration.
- **Appeal for a change of grade** on any course work must be made to the course instructor within one week of receiving notification of the grade. An appeal for a change of final grade must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar in writing within 30 days of receiving notification of the final grade, providing the basis for appeal. A review fee of \$50.00 must accompany the appeal to review final grades. If the appeal is sustained, the fee shall be refunded.
- Please note the following **additional academic criteria**:
 - All assignments must be submitted either in hard copy to the professor or by an attachment sent by email.
 - All assignments must have a title page containing all the pertinent information, such as the title of the essay, the student's name, the course number and name and the professor's name.

- All assignments must be submitted as Microsoft Word documents.
 - All assignments must be double-spaced and in 12 point font.
 - All assignments are due at the beginning of the class on the date indicated. Any assignment received later will be regarded as late, and will receive a late penalty.
 - Late assignments will be penalized one grade level for each two day late period. Hence, an “A” paper up to two days late will receive an “A-“ grade, etc.
 - Very tardy assignments cannot receive a passing grade, but must still be handed in in acceptable form if the student hopes to pass the course. (The professor will determine what constitutes “acceptable form”).
 - All assignments must employ proper spelling and grammar. Sloppy papers will be heavily penalized—up to a full letter grade. Hence, a sloppy “B” paper could be reduced to a “C”.
 - All assignments—papers and the final exam—must be submitted by the student in order to receive credit for the course. If one component is missing, the student will receive an automatic “F” grade for the course.
- The professor reserves the right to change elements of this syllabus if external circumstances necessitate alterations or if the interests of the students are better served by altering course components.
 - Please turn off your cell phones before class
 - Please use your computers ONLY for note-taking while in class
 - Please come to class on time, and once in class please remain in the classroom for the duration of the class (so as to minimize disruptions for both your fellow students and the professor).