

California State University, Sacramento
Department of Humanities and Religious Studies
HRS 144: Introduction to Islam

Fall 2009

MW: 3:00-4:15

Building: MND 4004

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Special note: The information in this syllabi is subject to change as issues related to furlough planning are updated and resolved.

Course Description:

This course will examine Islam as a religion (i.e. its belief system, traditions and practices) based on *Qur'anic* origins and the practices of Prophet Muhammad (the *Sunnah*). A comparative approach will be applied to the discussion of examining the historical development of Islamic law, religious sects, mysticism, and the intellectual thought of global Muslim community from medieval to contemporary times.

Learning Objectives:

The course will investigate the religious and the historical aspects in order to provide sound knowledge and a culminating experience of Islam. By the end of the course, students should:

- Be familiar with Islam's belief system, its practices and traditions, and the historical development of its intellectual thought.
- Develop and refine analytical and critical thinking techniques through intellectual reading of the assigned texts and applying such techniques in the three writing assignments and class discussion.
- Compare and contrast the religious different sects in the Muslim World.
- Identify the main geographical temperament of the Muslim region(s) and apply it in a map quiz.
- Acquire the ability to assess information (i.e. library, Internet, and academic journals) in an array of different religious, historical, and socio-cultural topics.

Required Texts:

Armstrong, Karen. *Islam: A Short History*. New York, New York: Random House, Inc., 2002.

Fakhry, Majid. *Islamic Philosophy, Theology, and Mysticism: A Short Introduction*. Oxford, England: Oneworld Publications, 2005.

Nawawi-al. *An-Nawawi's Forty Hadith*. Reprint. Translated by Ezzeddin Ibrahim and Denys Johnson-Davies. Cambridge, England: Islamic Text Society, 2006.

Pals, Daniel L. *Eight Theories of Religion*. 2 nd ed. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Sells, Michael. Trans. *Approaching the Quran: The Early Revelations*. 2 nd printing. Ashland, Oregon: White Cloud Press, 2007.

----- . Trans. *Desert Tracings: Six Classic Arabian Odes by 'Alqama, Shanfara, Labid, 'Antara, Al-A'sha, and Dhu al-Rumma*. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1989.

Course Requirements:

Attendance (20%): Attendance will be taken at the beginning of every class session. Students are expected to come to class and **20% (200 points)** of the total grade will be based on attendance. Students are allowed to miss **two (2)** class sessions (i.e. **one (1)** academic week) without being penalized. Any missed class after the permitted two will result into the loss of **seven (7)** points for each missed class session.

Writing Assignments (30%): There are **three (3)** writing assignments on three of the readings. The first two are on Sells' *Desert Tracings* and *Approaching the Quran* and the third one is on al-Nawawi's Forty Hadith. These assignments must be **typed** (doubled spaced, 12-point font, and one-inch margin) and should be no longer than **two pages**. Hand written papers will not be accepted. Students **must** attend class to turn the assignment in, and it must be turned in during class. The assignments are **hundred (100)** points each, and they will account for **three hundred (300)** points, which is **(30%)** of the total course grade. Late papers will not be accepted. Extra information will be provided on expectations, writing style, etc.

Map Quiz (10%): The map quiz is intended to familiarize you with the geography of the Muslim World. Focus will be on countries, capitals, major cities, and the Muslim World global location. The date for the map quiz is given below in the class schedule. The map quiz will account for **hundred (100)** points, which is **(10%)** of the total course grade.

Minute Papers (10%): There are **ten (10)** minutes papers during the semester. Each minute paper will be **ten (10)** points each. The purpose for minute papers is to insure preparation and understanding of the discussed materials. Randomly, a question will be written on the board before class starts and students will have **five (5)** minutes to answer it. All ten questions for the minute papers will be from a previously discussed material.

Exams (30%): There are **two (2)** exams of **hundred fifty (150)** points each. The First exam will be multiple-choice, while the second exam will consist of terms (definitions) and short essays. Exams will account for **three hundred (300)** points, which is **(30%)** of the total course grade.

Grades:

Attendance	200 points= 20%
Writing Assignments (3)	300 points= 30%
Map Quiz	100 points= 10%
Minute Papers (10)	100 points= 10%
Exams (2)	300 points= 30%

Important Notes:

- *Cheating and plagiarism* will not be tolerated and will result in an automatic **(F)** for the course.
- No food allowed during the lecture. However, drinks are Ok.
- No cellular phones, laptops, IPods, etc.
- No late coming to class because of class disruption. Exceptions could be made on an ad-hoc status.

Cheating:

- To deceive by trickery.
- To act dishonestly.

- To violate rules deliberately.¹

Plagiarism:

The unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work.²

- 1 <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/cheating>
- 2 <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/plagiarism>

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1: August 31- September 2 (Introduction, Tylor, and Frazer)

M: Pals, *Eight Theories*, Introduction, p. 3-15.

W: Pals, *Eight Theories*, Animism and Magic, p. 18- 48.

Week 2: September 7-9 (Freud and Durkheim)

M: **Labor Day Holiday**

W: Pals, *Eight Theories*, Religion, Personality, and Society as Sacred, p. 53-114.

Week 3: September 14-16 (Marx and Weber)

M: Pals, *Eight Theories*, Religion and Alienation, Karl Marx, p. 118-145.

W: Pals, *Eight Theories*, A Source of Social Action, Max Weber, p. 149-188.

Map Quiz at the end of Wednesday's class.

Week 4: September 21-23 (Eliade and Evans-Pritchard)

M: Pals, *Eight Theories*, The Reality of the Sacred, Mircea Eliade, p. 193-226.

W: Pals, *Eight Theories*, Society's "Construct of the Heart," E.E. Evans-Pritchard p. 229-257.

Week 5: September 28- 30 (Geertz and Conclusion)

M: Pals, *Eight Theories*, Religion as Cultural System, Clifford Geertz, p. 260-289.

W: Pals, *Eight Theories*, Conclusion, p. 292-320.

Week 6: October 5-8 (Historical Background)

M: **First Exam**

W: Armstrong, *Islam*, p. 3- 33.

Week 7: October 12-14 (Pre-Islamic Poetry)

M: Sells, *Desert Tracing*, p. 3- 31.

W: Sells, *Desert Tracing*, p. 32- 76.

First writing assignment due at beginning of Wednesday's class.

Week 8: October 19-21 (The Quran)

M: Sells, *The Quran*, p. 1- 40.

W: Sells, *The Quran*, p. 42-76.

Week 9: October 26-28 (The Quran Continued)

M: Sells, *The Quran*, p. 78- 149.

W: Sells, *The Quran*, p. 150- 180.

Second writing assignment due at the beginning of Wednesday's class.

Week 10: November 2- 4 (The Hadith)

M: Al-Nawawi, *Forty Hadith*, p. 7- 61.

W: Al-Nawawi, *Forth Hadith*, p. 62- 127.

Third writing assignment due at the beginning of Wednesday's class

Week 11: November 9-11 (The Historical Development and Culmination of Islam)

M: Armstrong, *Islam*, p. 41- 80.

W: **Veteran's Day Holiday**

Week 12: November 16-18 (The Historical Triumph and Dilemmas of Islam)

M: Armstrong, *Islam*, p. 81- 140.

W: Armstrong, *Islam*, p. 141- 187.

Week 13: November 23-25 (Ancient and Early Islamic Philosophy)

M: Fakhry, *Islamic Philosophy*, p. 1- 37.

W: Fakhry, *Islamic Philosophy*, p. 38- 72.

Week 14: November 30- December 2 (Mysticism and Contemporary Trends)

M: Fakhry, *Islamic Philosophy*, p. 73- 100.

W: Fakhry, *Islamic Philosophy*, p. 101- 142.

Week 15: December 7-9 (Course Conclusion)

M: Conclusion and Reflections.

W: **Second Exam**