

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

Fall 2008
T Th 1:30-2:45
Building: MND 4004
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Course Description:

This course is a survey of the Islamic way of life: its beliefs, traditions and practices from Qur'anic origins and the *sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad. The historical development of Islamic law, religious sects, mysticism, and intellectual thoughts of the global Muslim community from medieval to contemporary times.

Learning Objectives:

The course will study Islam by investigating the religious and the historical aspects in order to provide sound knowledge and a culminating experience of the subject. A comparative approach will be applied to the discussion. 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, analytical writing, and class discussion.
- Compare and contrast the religious different sects in the Muslim World.
- Identify the main geographical temperament of the Muslim region(s).
- Acquire the ability to assess information in an array of different religious, historical, and socio-cultural matters in order to construct a full picture of the studied subject.

Required Texts:

Denny, Frederick Mathewson. *An Introduction to Islam*. 2nd ed. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1994.

Hammond. *Atlas of the Middle East*. New Jersey: Hammond World Atlas, 2001.

Hourani, Albert H. *The History of the Arab Peoples*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002.

Course Requirements:

Attendance and Participation: Attendance will be taken at the beginning of every class session. Students are expected to come to class and **(15%)** of the total grade will be based on attendance and participation. In order to obtain the total **(15%)** students need to attend all classes.

Writing Assignments on the Readings: Preparation is crucial for participation. In order to foster good discussions, students will need to prepare answers to questions on the readings. The questions are underlined in the course schedule. 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 **ten (10)** in total, **twenty** points each, and they will account for **(20%)** of the total course grade.

Map Quiz: The map quiz is intended to familiarize you with the geography of the Muslim World. Focus will be on countries, capitals, 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 **fifty** points, which is **(5%)** of the total course grade.

Midterm: There will be **one midterm**. The date for the midterm is given below in the class schedule. The midterm will consist of short-answer questions on the lectures and readings. A midterm **study guide** will be distributed approximately one week before the exam. The midterm will account for **two hundred** points, which is (20%) of the total course grade.

Book Review Essay: Each student will write **one** book review essay, **four pages in length**, on one monograph of the student's choice from among those approved by the instructor. The book review essay will account for **(10%)** of the total grade. In one or two paragraphs, give the subject, scope of the book, and the author's approach. The second part of the essay should include the author's most important points. The major and the final part should be the analytical one. It should contain the significance of the material presented by the author and your own critique on the author's ideas, methodology, and presentation of the topic.

Final Exam: There will be a final exam. Final exam will incorporate both **in-class (10%)** and **take-home (20%)** components. Students will need to write an essay to turn in the last day of class. During the last day, students will take the in-class portion, which will consist of short-answer questions. A final exam guide will be

distributed approximately a week before the exam. The final exam is *cumulative*, though it will focus on material from the second half of the semester.

Grades:

Attendance and Participation:	150 points= 15%
Map Quiz	50 points= 05%
Writing Assignments on the Readings (10)	200 points= 20%
Book Review	100 points= 10%
Midterm	200 points= 20%
Final, in-class (10%) + take-home (20%)	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.
- 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: September 02-04

T: Introduction to the Course & Historical-Geographical Background.

Readings:

Th: Denny, "Religion and Common Life in the Pre-Islamic Near East," p. 3-52

Week 2: September 09-11

Readings:

T: Denny, "Muhammad and the Early Muslim Community," p. 59-104

Th: Denny, "The Islamic Religious System," p. 107-71.

Q: From the reading identify the nature of the Qur'an and the Hadith. How do they function in a Muslim's life?

First writing assignment on the readings due at beginning of Tuesday's class.

Week 3: September 16-18

Readings:

T: Hourani, "The New Power in an Old World," p. 1-21.

Th: Hourani, "The Formation of an Empire," p. 22-37.

Q: Explain how Muslims manage to expand from Arabia and formed a large Empire?

Second writing assignment on the readings due at beginning of Tuesday's class.

Map quiz at the end of Thursday's class.

Week 4: September 23-25

Readings:

T: Hourani, "The Formation of Society," p. 38-58.

Th: Hourani, "The Articulation of Islam," p. 59-79.

Q: Discuss the role that language and faith played in unifying the Muslim Ummah.

Third writing assignment on the readings due at beginning of Tuesday's class.

Week 5: September 30- October 02

Readings:

T: Hourani, "The Arab Muslim World," p. 81-97.

Th: Hourani, "The Countryside," p. 98-108.

Q: Discuss the main geographical characteristics of the Arab World.

Forth writing assignment on the readings due at beginning of Tuesday's class.

Week 6: October 07-09

Readings:

T: Hourani, "The Life of Cities," p. 109-29.

Th: Hourani, "Cities and their Rules," p. 130-46.

Q: Discuss the following:

1. The 'Ulamah and the law.
2. The role of women in the city.
3. Muslims and non-Muslims in the city.

Fifth writing assignment on the readings due at beginning of Tuesday's class.

Week 7: October 14-16

Readings:

T: Hourani, "Ways of Islam," p. 147-57.

Th: Hourani, "The Culture of the 'Ulamah," p. 158-71.

Q: Discuss the 'Ulamah and the Shari'ah.

Sixth writing assignment on the readings due at beginning of Tuesday's class.

Midterm study guide passed out at end of Thursday's class.

Week 8: October 21-23

Readings:

T: Hourani, "Divergent Paths of Thought," p. 172-88.

Th: Hourani, "The Culture of Courts and People," p. 189-205.

In-class midterm last hour of Thursday's class.

Week 9: October 28-30

Readings:

T: Hourani, "The Ottoman Empire," p. 207-30.

Th: Hourani, "Ottoman Societies," p. 231-62.

Q: Highlight the main elements of the Arabs societies under the Ottoman rule.

Seventh writing assignment on the readings due at beginning of Tuesday's class.

Week 10: November 04-06

Readings:

T: Hourani, "European Power and Reforming Governments," p. 263-78.

Th: Hourani, "European Empire and Dominant Elites," 279-98.

Book review is due at the beginning of Thursday's Class.

Week 11: November 11-13

Readings:

T: Veterans Day Holiday

Th: Hourani, "The Climax of European Power," p. 315-32.

"The Culture of Imperialism and Reform," p. 299-314.

Q: Discuss the culture of reform in the Arab World as a rising opposition against Imperialism.

Eights writing assignment on the readings due at beginning of Tuesday's class.

Week 12: November 18-20

Readings:

T: Hourani, "Changing Ways of Life and Thought," p. 333-49.

Th: Hourani, "The End of the Empire," p. 351-72.

Q: Evaluate the rise of national independence between 1945-56.

Ninth writing assignment on the readings due at beginning of Tuesday's class.

Week 13: November 25-27

Readings:

T: Hourani, "Changing Societies," 373-88.
"National Culture," 389-400.
"The Climax of Arabism," p. 401-15.

Th: **Thanksgiving Recess**

Q: What tools did the Arabs used to create a national culture? Were they successful?

Tenth writing assignment on the readings due at beginning of Tuesday's class.

Week 14: December 02-04

Readings:

T: Hourani, "Arab Unity and Disunity," p. 416-33.
"A Disturbance of Spirits," p. 434-58.
Th: Denny, "Three Forms of Islamic Revival," 245-55.

Make up writing assignment:

What are the main reasons behind Arab disunity?

Final study guide and take-home question(s) passed out at end of Thursday's class.

Week 15: December 09-11

Conclusion and Reflections.

Take-home final due at beginning of Thursday's class; in-class final.

Make up writing assignment:

Q: Discuss the fragility of Arab regimes.