COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is a basic introduction to Islam, the faith of over one-fifth of the world’s population. Topics will include: the life and times of Islam’s founder, Prophet Muhammad; central themes in the Qur’an, the sacred scripture of Muslims; the remembered customs and traditions of the prophet; the basics of Islamic law or shariah; the status of Muslim women and the veil; and the differences between the three main interpretations of Islam - Sunni, Shi’a and Sufi.

Course goals:

- To know the central beliefs, practices and historical foundations of Islam
- To study the life and times of the prophet as recorded in Islamic tradition
- To recognize the diversity of views and practices within the Islamic world
- To analyze the role of social, political and cultural context in shaping Islam

Learning outcomes:

- Identify the key rituals, beliefs, historical events and personalities in Islam
- Assess the political and religious impact of Muhammad’s teaching on his society
- Discuss the aesthetic and visual expressions of the Qur’an and its central themes
- Explain the differences between the Sunni, Shi’a and Sufi interpretations of Islam

Note: Your first assignment is to go over the syllabus carefully at least twice, and to read the section on course requirements and assignments several times. Your success depends on clearly understanding the detailed instructions and following them consistently. Please review the syllabus periodically over the semester.
COURSE FUNDAMENTALS:

To read is to empower
To empower is to write
To write is to influence
To influence is to change
To change is to live
Jane Evershed

Course philosophy:

The premise of this course is that learning is a lifelong quest and that the genuine pursuit of knowledge is self-transformative. The more you understand about the world, the deeper your experience of life, and the greater your capacity to contribute to others and to fulfill your own destiny. Writing is one way to find out what you think, what you know and what you don’t know.

To learn is to think about things. Thinking begins with curiosity. Curiosity is expressed through questions. As you work through this course, constantly ask yourself: Why does this matter? How does this knowledge extend my horizons and stretch my imagination? What are my unconscious assumptions? Is there another way of looking at things? You can apply this attitude and approach to any subject.

Course format:

This is an online course only in format. In substance, it covers the same breadth and depth of the subject as the regular on-campus course. It has the same expectations from students in terms of workload, quality and punctuality. In fact, online courses require that you be more self-disciplined, highly motivated, and well organized. It is incumbent upon you to create and stick to a predictable routine. Estimate how long it will take you to do your readings and to complete your assignments and plan accordingly.

To enjoy, learn and succeed in this course you will need the following: knowledge of blackboard and word-processing skills; reliable internet access; time-management skills; a regular reading and writing routine; punctuality; a strong desire to improve clarity in thinking, writing and analysis; openness to new ideas and multiple viewpoints; a willingness to be challenged; and mutual respect.

Course interaction:

An essential part of the course is interaction with other students as described under course assignments. You will exchange ideas and comment on each other's work. My Teaching Assistant and I will read and give you regular feedback on your work. Periodically, after you have done your readings and written about them, I will give short lectures to review key points and respond to issues raised. If you have any questions, instead of e-mail, please use the Message menu button in Blackboard to contact the Teaching Assistant or myself.
Blackboard & Library:

Students are expected to know how to use Blackboard before taking an online course. Please take a tutorial to familiarize yourself with its features. If you have not done so, please make an appointment with a reference librarian. Ask for a tutorial on how to assess the quality and credibility of information available on the Internet. Also take some time to navigate around Syracuse University's Library home page and to learn about its book collection, electronic databases, periodicals etc. especially its digital resources on Islam and how to access these resources online.

Netiquette:

Please be courteous, concise and appropriate when posting work on Blackboard, asking questions and in exchanges with other students. Do not use slang, capitalized words, texting lingo, icons, etc. Express differences of opinion clearly but fairly and with reasoned arguments and evidence.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

Academic Integrity:

Syracuse University believes that promoting academic honesty is the responsibility of everyone in the Syracuse University community. We expect all students enrolled in Syracuse University programs to adhere to standards of academic integrity. All cases of academic dishonesty will be reported to the relevant Dean in the home College or School for that given course. Penalties will be dependent upon the seriousness of the infraction, and can be appealed to the relevant College/School Academic Integrity Committee. To learn more: http://academicintegrity.syr.edu.

The penalty of plagiarism is an F grade. Simply speaking: don't copy, don't modify, and always give full credit. Essentially, plagiarism is a combination of stealing and lying. Please read very carefully the handout that gives Syracuse University’s official description of plagiarism. A brief version is also attached at the end of the syllabus. It will also be useful for your other courses.

Disability:

Syracuse University is committed to full compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Our community values diversity and seeks to promote meaningful access to educational opportunities for all students. Students seeking disability-related services must contact the Office of Disability Services at Syracuse University, Room 309, 804 University Avenue, Syracuse, New York 13244-2330 for an authorization letter.

Religious Observances:

Students who cannot submit assignments, meet deadlines or take tests due to religious holidays are required to notify the professor within two weeks of the beginning of the semester. Please provide this request to be excused in writing so that any necessary arrangements can be made. Requests made after the two-week deadline will not be accommodated.
Note: The readings are very accessible in both senses of the word. Plan to read an average of 70-75 pages a week. In addition to the assigned texts, you are also required to watch videos, read news articles, and access other relevant information on the Internet. Most of these have been indicated in the weekly schedule, but the final links will also be posted on Blackboard under Readings. In case a copy of an assigned reading is not in the folder or a link does not work, please inform the instructor or TA immediately.

Required texts:

- Additional required readings have been posted on Blackboard. Links to websites and videos have also been listed on Blackboard in the Weekly Readings folder.

For extra credit assignment:


**COURSE EVALUATION**

**Summary:**

- Reflections and Responses* (140 points): 70%
- (You will be allowed two rewrites)
- Final Essay (20 points): 15%
- Interview and/or Site Visit (50 points): 15%
- (Outline: 10 points; Report: 40 points)
- Bonus Points: 2 page Book Review of Animal's Lawsuit (up to 15 points added to Reflection and Response Papers)

*The semester has 15 weeks. The first week's papers will receive 10 bonus points if posted by Friday January 16.
### WEEKLY TOPICS AND READINGS

Texbooks are given in *italics*. BB refers to readings posted on Blackboard. A complete list of readings, weblinks and articles is on Blackboard under Readings.

#### Wk 1  “Religion” as a Concept: the Academic Study of Religion(s)

**Jan 12-16**

- Streng, “The Nature and Study of Religion” 3-17 BB
- NPR: “Young People Moving Away from Religion: But Why?” 1-8 BB
  
  Listen to: [*Young People and Religion*](#)

#### Wk 2  Islam, Islamophobia, and the Clash of Civilizations

**Jan 19-23**

- Said, “The Clash of Ignorance” 1-4 BB
- Esposito, “Who speaks for Islam?” 47-57 BB
- Said, “Why the Many Islands Cannot be Simplified” BB
- FBI: Bias Crimes Against Muslims” 3-4, BB
- Zwemer: “Why is Arabia Topsy-Turvy Land?” 1-7 BB
- Watch MSNBC interview of producers of *The Muslims are Coming*
- Watch trailer of *The Muslims are Coming*

#### Wk 3  Islam and Islams: Diversity and Unity in Islam

**Jan 26-30**

- Fuller, “A World Without Islam” 1-8 BB
- Michon, *Introduction to Traditional Islam* 4-50

#### Wk 4  Pre-Islamic Arabia & the Meccan Setting

**Feb 2-6**

- Farah, “Pre-Islamic Values” 16-28 BB
- Cragg, “God and His Praise” (Verses) 84-92 BB
  
  > Watch video of Armstrong on her book [*A Prophet of Our Time*](#)

#### Wk 5  Prophet Muhammad: Life and Times

**Feb 9-13**

- Armstrong, *Muhammad*, 89-165
- Sells, *Approaching the Qur’an*, 42-71
- Cragg, “God and Creation” (Verses) 93-107 BB
  
  > Watch PBS documentary: [*Islam: Empire of Faith Part 1.*](#)
Wk 6  Muhammad: Prophet, Reformer and Statesman

Feb 16-20
> Armstrong, Muhammad, 165-214
> Farah, “Transformation of Pre-Islamic Values” 30-34 BB
> Cragg, “Prophets and Messengers” (Verses) 113-130BB
> Sells, Approaching the Qur’an, 72-103
  > Cont. PBS documentary: Islam: Empire of Faith Part 2

Wk 7  The Qur’an: Form, Interpretation & Themes

Feb 23-27
> Rosen, “Reading the Qur’an through Western Eyes” 75-91 BB
> Cragg, “Qur’an into English” 46-60 BB
> Rippin, “The Qur’an” 19-38 BB
> Sells, Approaching the Qur’an, 1-31; 105-140

  > Websites of the Qur’an with Multiple Translations (links on BB)
    > The complete Qur’an (with multiple translations):
      Qur’an with parallel translation and recitation:
      http://www.islamic-awareness.org/Quran/
    > MES Forum: Assessing English Translations of the Qur’an:
      http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/16955
    > Orientalist Distortions of the Qur’an:
      http://www.islamic-awareness.org/Quran/

Wk 8  Experiencing the Qur’an: Aurality and Art

Mar 2-6
> Graham, “Orality of Qur’an” preface, 1-13 BB
> Sells, Approaching the Qur’an, 145-163
> Graham, “Muslim Scripture as Spoken Word” BB

  > Cragg, “Islamic Art and Architecture” 152-170
  > Michon, Introduction to Traditional Islam 51-90

  > Websites on Calligraphy and Recitation (links on BB)
    > Websites on Calligraphy: Click on Calligraphy Links
      http://www.sakkal.com/CalligContents.html
    > Reciting the Qur’an: Listen to different styles
      Excellent Documentary: World Quran Competition in Egypt 2013:
      http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vx5IEOVsm0
      Qari (Reciter) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qari%27
Wk 9  Spring Break

Mar 9-13  (For extra credit: 15 points)
2 page Book Review of Ikhwan Al-Safa, Animals’ Lawsuit Against Humanity

Wk 10  Faith and the Quest for Knowledge

Mar 17  > Hamdun & King, Ibn Battuta in Black Africa
    > Watch Video on Ibn Battuta’s Rihla (Journey) to Mecca

Wk 11  Distinctions between Shi’a & Sunni

Mar 24  > Nasr, “Sunnism” 147-179 BB
    > Jafri, “Twelve Imam Shi’ism” 160-179 BB
    > Mommen, “The Imamate” 147-160 BB
    > Skim Muzzafar, “Imamate” 1-50 BB
    > Watch Video of Tombs of Shi’a Imams (song in praise of Ali)

Wk 12  Sufism: The Mystical Tradition of Islam

Mar 31  > Michon, Introduction to Traditional Islam 123-148
    > Nicholson, Mystic of Islam, Chapters 1-3
    > Watch documentary on the Sufi Path by Houston Smith

Wk 13  Rumi & Whirling Dervishes

    > Chittick, William, “The Never Ending Dance” 74-96 BB
    > Chittick, William, The Sufi Doctrines of Rumi complete
    > Watch documentary on Rumi’s life (links on BB)
    > Explore Website on Sufism
http://islam.uga.edu/Sufism.html
    > Click on links: Sufi women
    > Sufi Jokes (Mulla Nasrudin): (scroll down)
http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Sufism/Nasrudin#Truth
Wk 14  Music and Spirituality

Apr 14  
> Michon, *Introduction to Traditional Islam* 91-122  
> Nasr, Seyyid, “Islam and Music: Legal and Spiritual Dimensions” 219-235 BB  
> Raba Saoud, “Arab Contribution to Music of the Western World” 1-17 BB  
> Go to # 2. “Types of Devotional Recitation and Music”  
> Select and skim Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and Junoon  
> Watch the following You Tube Videos:  
  > Pakistan *Qawwals*: Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan  
  (for translation of lyrics go to [Translation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_music))  
  > Andalusian music: *Orchestra Otmani of Fez*  
  > Traditional *Shashmaqâm* of Central Asia  
  > *Eftekasat Sufi Jazz* Tour 2012 in Cairo  
  > *Gnawa and Moroccan Mystical* Music at UCLA

Wk 15  Muslim Women Speak

Apr 21  
> Hassan, “Post Patriarchal Islam” 39-64 BB  
> Ebrahimji & Suratwala, *I Speak for Myself*, i-xvi; 30-41; read 10-12 stories  
> BBC, “Islamic Veil Across Europe” 2pp  
> Badran, “Islamic Feminism Revisited” 1-6 BB  
> Watch video: Muslim women holding opposing views of Veil  
  > Burkha debate moderated by Peter Lavelle’s CrossTalk  
  [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d9m8xdzuK0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d9m8xdzuK0)  

optional:  
> al-Hibri, “Islamic Herstory” 1-8 BB  
> Badran, “Islamic Feminism Revisited” 1-6 BB  
> Badran, “Islamic Feminism: What’s in a Name?” 1-8 BB  
  > Debate on banning the veil in France moderated by Eliot Spitzer on CNN  
  [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kWJRam64dQY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kWJRam64dQY)

**Note:** If any readings are missing on Blackboard, please inform the instructor or TA. If Blackboard has readings that are not indicated in the Syllabus, you are still required to read them. Let the professor know so that the Syllabus can be corrected.
Academic Integrity Policy at Syracuse University

University-Wide Policy – Administered Locally

Syracuse University adopted a university-wide academic integrity policy in 2006 and revised the policy in 2011. The policy sets general guidelines. Individual cases are brought by faculty members and instructors working with the Academic Integrity Coordinator appointed by their school or college.

The Academic Integrity Office works with faculty, instructors, staff, and students to broaden understanding of SU’s academic integrity policy and to coordinate its administration. The office maintains records of all academic integrity cases.

Key Elements of the Policy Every SU Undergraduate Should Know

- The policy covers a range of academic integrity matters, including: citation of sources in course work and research; unauthorized collaboration on assignments and examinations; misrepresentation of authorship/identity; and submitting the same work in two courses without written permission from both instructors.

- Instructors are responsible for communicating course-specific academic integrity expectations, including policies regarding student collaboration. Students are responsible for consulting instructors for clarification of university or course-specific academic integrity policies.

- The policy distinguishes between academic negligence and academic dishonesty. Negligence occurs when a student violates academic integrity policy unintentionally. Dishonesty occurs when a student violates the policy intentionally.

- Students are accountable for academic negligence even if they did not intend to violate the policy. Negligence results in a written warning that cannot be appealed.

- The presumptive penalty for a first act of academic dishonesty by an undergraduate is a failing grade marked on your transcript to indicate that the F resulted from a violation of SU’s academic integrity policy. The presumptive penalty for a second violation is suspension or expulsion.

- Students have the right to appeal academic dishonesty charges and penalties to the hearing panel.

For More Information

To read the full policy, view frequently asked questions, or find other resources, visit http://academicintegrity.syr.edu. For additional information, email or call:

Margaret Usdansky, Director
aio@syr.edu

Janine Jarvis, Program Coordinator
443-5412

July 2013