Introduction to Islam
Religion 250

Dr. Cathy Benton  
benton@lfc.edu, x5174  
Hotchkiss 100

Wed 1:00-3:50 p.m.  
Fall 2002

Required Texts


Required Packet [available 5th floor secretary's office]


Recommended Texts

Objective of the course
To gain an understanding of the worldview and ethical practices of the Islamic religious tradition, we will read primary source literature written by authors from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Through reading and discussion, you will be able to trace Islamic literature and religious traditions historically and across cultures. To gain some knowledge of Islamic practice in the Chicago area, we will also visit at least one area mosque and speak with the imam of this community.

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REQUIREMENTS for the course include:

- Keep up with the reading to prepare for class discussion.
- To help you think through issues before class discussion, you will be asked to write responses to in-class quiz questions. As class periods consist almost entirely of discussion of the texts, preparation for and participation in class will be reflected in the final grade.

Participation (quizzes and participation): 20%
One analytical paper [4-5 pages]: 12%
Description of research project and brief annotated bibliography (5 sources): 5%
One research paper [6-7 pages]: 18%
Midterm Exam: 20%
Final Exam: 25%

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A few points to keep in mind:
- Late papers will automatically be lowered by one letter grade.
- No make-ups will be given for quizzes.
- Papers containing more than five spelling/grammatical errors will receive a grade of C or lower.
- Because class participation constitutes such an important part of the learning process, excessive absences will also result in a lowered final grade.

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Week of September 2: Beginnings
Introductions and Expectations
Discuss The Journey of Ibn Fattouma. Look for repeated motifs, the reason for the journey, and perspectives on human nature, good/evil, and women. Keep notes on your responses to the writing.
Film: Introduction to Islam [HO: research topics]

Week of September 9
1. Read in Esposito, Ch 1: "Muhammad and the Quran: Messenger and Message"; beginnings of Islamic history
2. Read in the Koran "al Fatihah" and "the Cow"; and Ch 1 from Understanding the Qur'an, "The Qur'an" pp. 1-14. [listening to the recitation of the Qur'an]

3. Find two sources on an assigned topic. Write up all the bibliographic information, with an annotation, and one paragraph about your discoveries about the topic. [Good detective work: honest academic research, formulating theses, formatting bibliographies-notes-page numbers-title page, grammatical errors]

**Week of Sept 16: Muslim Community**
1. Esposito, Ch 2: "The Muslim Community in History" pp. 32-67
2. Esposito, Ch 3: pp. 87-100 Begin with "The Content of Law" . . . belief and practice within the Muslim community

[film excerpt: Islamic history]

**Week of Sept. 23: the Mosque**
Read [in packet] from Seven Doors to Islam pp. 44-52 "Art and Architecture"
Visit the Northbrook Mosque

**Week of Sept. 30: Adam and Eve in the Qur'an**
Research Paper TOPICS due: one sentence statements
Monday, Sept. 30, 5 p.m., YH 413

1. Read in the Koran p. 110 [7:18-28];
2. Read Ch 10 from Understanding the Qur'an, "Adam and Eve in the Qur'an and the Bible";
3. Read [in packet] from Tales of al-Kisa'i, pp. 33-47

**Week of Oct. 7 Quranic worldview: the Sharia**
Analysis Essay #1: Islamic Worldview and Teachings
Due Monday, Oct. 7, 5 p.m., 413 Young Hall

1. Read in Esposito, Ch 3: "Religious Life: Belief and Practice" pp. 68-87;

**Week of Oct. 14**

Due Mon, Oct. 14, 5 p.m.:
Research Topic: preliminary outline or two paragraph description and beginning annotated bibliography (5 sources)

MIDTERM EXAM

Prepare also:
Happy Fall Break!

Week of Oct. 21: Al-Ghazali
Segment of film study of Islam

Week of Oct. 28: Art and Islam
1. Read [in packet] from *Seven Doors to Islam* pp. 92-104 on morals, storytelling, and the visual arts
2. Read [in packet] from *Tales from the Land of the Sufis* pp. 9-47 "Hallaj" and "Abu Sa'id"
3. Assignment to be completed at the Art Institute

Field Trip: Saturday, Nov 2, 8:30-11:30
Art Institute of Chicago

Week of Nov. 4: Women and Islam
Prepare article in packet: from *Qur'an and Woman*, "The Qur'anic View of Woman in this World"; and read from the *Koran* surah "Women". Make a list of 5 positive and 5 negative perspectives on women from the surah. [film: Leila Ahmad]

Week of Nov. 11
Assignment to be announced
Presentation of Research -- Schedules to be announced
Issues of South Asian women in Islam [film: A Day will Come]

Week of Nov. 18: Sufi Tradition
Research Paper Due: Monday, Nov. 18, 5 p.m., YH 413
1. Read Packet: Ernst, "What is Sufism" pp. 15-31 in *The Shambhala Guide to Sufism*;
2. Sufi Music: Read in packet "Listening to Music" from *Teachings of Sufism* pp. 95-117
3. Begin *Conference of the Birds* pp. 29-75
4. Listening and moving to Sufi music

Week of Nov. 25
No class in exchange for field trip

**Happy Thanksgiving!**

Week of Dec 2: Sufism
1. Finish reading *Conference of the Birds* pp. 75-229
2. Conclude discussion of Sufism
3. Write questions for the final exam

Film on Sufi traditions in Turkey and Pakistan
Week of Dec. 9
FINAL EXAM: Friday, December 13, 1:30 p.m.

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:30-3:30; or by appointment. Feel free to call me at x5174 or send me an email to set up another time to meet.

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List of Dates: Papers and Field Trips

Sept. 25, 1-3:30 p.m.: Northbrook Mosque [field trip]
Sept. 30, 5 p.m.: Research Paper TOPICS due
Oct. 7, 5 p.m.: Analysis Essay #1 due
Oct. 14, 5 p.m.: Outline or description of research and annotated bibliography due
Oct. 16: Midterm Exam
Nov. 2 (Saturday), 8:30-11:30 a.m.: Art Institute of Chicago [field trip]
Nov. 18, 5 p.m.: Research Paper due
Dec. 13, 1:30 p.m.: Final Exam
Introduction to Islam
Religion 250


Selected Readings for

INTRODUCTION TO ISLAM

Religion 217
Introduction to Islam
Religion 213 – Fall 2007

Dr. Cathy Benton
benton@lakeforest.edu
Buchanan 007 (office)
847-735-5174
TTh 9:30-10:50 p.m.

Objective of the class
This class explores the worldview and practice of the Islamic religious traditions. Examining a history of these traditions, we will discuss literature written by authors from a variety of cultural backgrounds, and from different historical periods and cultures.

In addition, we will meet people in our local Muslim community, as we visit an area mosque and learn about contemporary religious practices from the imam of this community.

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REQUIRED TEXTS


REQUIRED READINGS selected from these texts.
Please PRINT articles from MOODLE: http://moodle.lakeforest.edu/

Renard, John. Seven Doors to Islam, Berkeley: University of California, 1996.


**RECOMMENDED TEXTS**


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**REQUIREMENTS include:**

KEEP UP WITH THE READING TO PREPARE FOR CLASS DISCUSSION.

To help you think through issues before class discussion, you will be asked to write responses to in-class quiz questions. As class periods consist almost entirely of discussion of the texts, preparation for and participation in class will be reflected in the final grade.

Participation (quizzes and participation): 20%
Three analytical papers [4-5 pages]: 13% each
Midterm Exam: 19%
Final Exam: 22%

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**CLASS POLICIES**

- Information about class assignments, field trips, and presentations are posted on Moodle. Please check the Moodle class site frequently.

- **LATE ASSIGNMENTS:** Assignments received within first 3 days of the deadline are docked one letter grade. No credit if submitted more than three days past the deadline.

- **WRITING:** Grades based on content and structure (grammar, sentence construction, logical flow, and organization of ideas.). Remember to **PROOFREAD** and schedule Writing Center appointments early.

- **QUIZZES:** No make-ups for quizzes.

- **ABSENCES:** Excessive absences result in a lowered final grade as class participation constitutes an essential part of the learning process. For a missed class, please consult with a classmate who takes accurate and complete notes.

- **NO TEXTING and NO LAPTOPS:** Please check with me for any exceptions.

- Please be **ON-TIME** to class: Please let me know of unusual circumstances.

- Please **NO CELLPHONES** or **EATING** during class.

- Please **REMAIN** in the room once class begins, except for an emergency.
August 30: Beginnings
Introductions and Expectations

Week of September 3: Historical origins: the Prophet

Thurs: Read in Esposito, Ch 1: "Muhammad and the Quran: Messenger and Message", pp. 1-17; beginnings of Islamic history

Week of September 10: Hearing the Qur’an
Tues: [Moodle] Ernst Following Muhammad, Ch 3 “The Seal of the Prophets: The Prophet Muhammad” pp. 72-92; ways the Prophet is understood within the tradition

Thurs: Read Esposito, pp. 17-31; Read Sells, “Introduction: Approaching the Qur’an” pp. 1-28 and pp. 42-59; understanding and experiencing the Qur’an

Field Trip: Friday, September 14, Mosque, noon to 1:30 (Friday prayers)
Leave Campus at 12:10 and return by 1:30
Post Response Paper on Moodle by Sat, Sept 15, 5 pm

Week of September 17: Muslim Community
Tues: Discuss Mosque visit; Work in teams on surahs translated by Sells, pp. 60-140; compare to Hadiths

Thurs: Esposito, Ch 2: "The Muslim Community in History" pp. 32-67

Paper #1 on the Qur’an
Due in 413 YH, Friday Sept 21, 5 p.m.

Week of September 24: Women and the Qur’an
Tues: Esposito, Ch 3: pp. 88-100, "The Content of Law" . . .; belief and practice within the Muslim community: 5 pillars and Family Law

Thurs: NO Class (away for an Asian Studies Meeting)

Saturday, Sept 29: LFC Day of Service
Sign up for Volunteer Project – your choice !

Week of October 1: Quranic worldview: the Sharia
Tues: [Moodle] Qur’an and Woman, Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman’s Perspective; Discussion of film presentation: Leila Ahmad
Thurs: Esposito, Ch 3: "Religious Life: Belief and Practice" pp. 68-87

**FRIDAY (Oct. 5): LFC ACADEMIC FESTIVAL**

**Week of October 8: Shii and Sufi practices**
Tues: Esposito, pp. 100-114; Ernst, pp 168-174, “Spirituality of Shi’ism”;

Thurs: [Moodle] *Tales from the Land of the Sufis*; lives of al-Hallaj and Abu Sa’id

**Week of October 15: Review and Exam**
Tues: Review for Exam
Thurs: midterm

**Week of October 22: al-Ghazali**
Tues: *Happy Fall Break!*

Thurs: Prepare *The Faith and Practice of Al-Ghazali* translated by W. M. Watt, pp. 11-15, 19-27, 54-68, and 131-152; Education and ethics; medieval learning

**Week of October 29: Sufi Music and Dance**
Tues: [Moodle]: Ernst, "What is Sufism" pp. 15-31 in *The Shambhala Guide to Sufism*;
Sufi Music: [Moodle] "Listening to Music" from *Teachings of Sufism* pp. 95-117;

Thurs: Sufi Turning: Film: Sufi traditions in Turkey, Balkans, and Pakistan

**Paper #2 on al Ghazali**
Due Friday, Nov 2, YH 413, noon. Please post on Moodle

**Week of November 5: The Mosque**
Tues: [Moodle] from *Seven Doors to Islam* pp. 44-52 "Art and Architecture"; discussion of Mosque visit; [Film]: prayer and Islamic life

Thurs: Visit to the Mosque and discussion with Imam

*Mosque Assignment*: Observations/Reflections on the Mosque visit in reference to the article in the packet from *Seven Doors to Islam* pp. 44-52
Due Monday, Nov. 12, noon. Please post on Moodle

**Week of November 12: Conference of the Birds**
Tues: *Conference of the Birds* pp. 29-75
Thurs: Finish *Conference of the Birds* pp. 75-229

**Week of November 19:**
NO CLASS (American Academy of Religion Meetings)
Week of November 26: Islam and Women
   Tues: Novel: Sweetness in the Belly by Camilla Gibb
   Thurs: Ernst, FM, pp. 2-36 “Islam in the Eyes of the West”

Week of December 3: Islam and Contemporary Society

Analysis Paper #3
   Due by Monday, Dec. 3, noon. Please post on Moodle

   Tues: Find 2 presentations of Islamic cultures and traditions in American media – Bring to class for presentation and discussion

   Thurs: TBA

Week of December 10:
   Tues: Wrap-up and conclusions

FINAL EXAM: Saturday, December 15, 1:30 p.m.

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:15-12:30, or by appointment. Feel free to call or email to set up another time to meet.
REQUIRED TEXTS


REQUIRED READINGS selected from these texts.
Please PRINT articles from MOODLE: [http://moodle.lakeforest.edu/](http://moodle.lakeforest.edu/)


REQUIREMENTS for the course include:

- Consult the MOODLE course page often – and read your college email – to stay informed about changes in the syllabus, quizzes, and field trip updates. [http://moodle.lakeforest.edu/](http://moodle.lakeforest.edu/)

- Prepare for and PARTICIPATE in class discussion. The participation grade is based on in-class quizzes as well as preparation for and participation in class discussion. 30%
Three analytical papers (3-5 pages) 14% each
Observation/response (mosque), and Research Topic with Select Bibliography 8%
Final Research Paper 20%

CLASS POLICIES

- LATE ASSIGNMENTS: Assignments received within 3 days of the deadline are docked by one letter grade. **No credit if submitted more than three days past the deadline.**
- SPELLING and GRAMMAR: Please proofread. Papers with more than five spelling/grammatical errors cannot receive a grade higher than C. You are encouraged to schedule Writing Center appointments early.
- QUIZZES: **No make-ups for quizzes.**
- ATTENDANCE: As class participation constitutes an essential part of the learning process, excessive absences will result in a lowered final grade.

CLASSROOM COURTESY (business model)

- Please be ON-TIME to CLASS: Coming in late distracts everyone. Unless the result of unusual circumstances, consistent lateness will be counted as an absence.
- Please NO CELLPHONES or TEXTING.
- Please NO LAPTOPS.
- Please DO NOT leave the room once class begins, except for an emergency. Individual comings and goings break everyone’s concentration.
- Please NO EATING during class.

Week of 25 October: Review Early History: Muhammad and the Qur’an
Mon: [Moodle] Esposito, Ch 1: "Muhammad and the Quran: Messenger and Message", pp. 1-17; beginnings of Islamic history

**Research Paper Topics and Brief Annotated Bibliography**
Due Monday, Oct. 25, in class

Wed: [Moodle] Esposito, pp. 17-31; [Moodle] Hadith Examples; Discussion of Quran and Hadith
Week of 1 November: Review Early Muslim Community in History

Monday: [Moodle] Esposito, Ch 2: pp. 32-50
Wed: [Moodle] Esposito, Ch 2: pp. 51-67

Site Visit FRI, Nov. 6: Juma Prayers at Mosque
Meet behind Commons 12:30 – return to campus by 2 p.m.
Mosque Observations/Reflections
DUE Sunday, Nov. 7, by 5 p.m. on MOODLE

Week of 8 November: Religious Practice and Law

Mon: [Moodle] Seven Doors to Islam “Mosque Art and Architecture” pp. 44-52; discussion of Mosque visit; [Film]: prayer and Islamic life
Wed: Esposito, Ch 3: pp. 74-87 Development of Shariah

Analysis Paper #2: Islamic Belief and Practice
Due Sun, Nov. 14, 10 p.m. (007 Buchanan)

Week of 15 November: Women, the Qur’an, and Family Law

Mon: [Moodle] Qur’an and Woman, Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman’s Perspective; Discussion of film presentation: Leila Ahmad
Wed: [Moodle] Esposito, Ch 3: pp. 88-100 the 5 pillars and Family Law

Week of 22 November: al-Ghazali

Mon: Prepare The Faith and Practice of Al-Ghazali translated by W. M. Watt, pp. 11-15, 19-27, 54-68, and 131-152; Education and ethics; medieval learning

Analysis Paper #3: Editorial Response
Due Wed, Nov. 24, noon, on MOODLE

Happy Thanksgiving!

Week of 29 November: Sufism


Wed: [Moodle] “Attar” from Tales from the Land of the Sufis, pp. 48-71

Week of 6 December: Islam and Modernity

Mon: TBA

Final Paper DUE: Friday, Dec. 10, 11:30 a.m.

OFFICE HOURS: TTh: 11-12 and 4-5. Please give me a call if you would like to schedule another time to meet.