

Introduction to Islam**SYLLABUS****REL: 2362-Sections 2560, 4227, 4231****Lecture Classes Meet on Mondays & Wednesdays - 4th (10:40 – 11:30) period****in
Matherly 18****Section 2560 Meets Fridays 4th period (10:40-11-30) in Matherly 113****Section 4227 Meets Fridays 5th period (11:45 -12:35) in Matherly 114****Section 4231 Meets Fridays 7th period (1:35 – 2:45) in FLI 121**

Islam is a rich and dynamic religious tradition with approximately one billion adherents making it the second largest world religion. For more than fourteen centuries, Islam has grown and spread from the seventh century Arabia of the Prophet Muhammad to a world religion whose followers may be found across the globe. The Islamic religion gave rise to and informed the practices and policies of Islamic empires and states as well as to a great world civilization that stretched from North Africa to Southeast Asia. In the process, a great monotheistic tradition, sharing common roots with Judaism and Christianity, has guided and transformed the lives of millions of believers down through the ages.

This course is an academic study of the Islamic Tradition and the civilization(s) that it evolved. This however is not an Islamic theology (a religiously committed intellectual discipline) course. Rather this is an academic investigation of this great religion, which will use an intellectually rigorous and critical lens that draws on history, sociology, anthropology and critical hermeneutics in our study. For those looking for a theology course that sets out to show that one religious tradition is superior to the others or has “the truth”, this is not the class that you want. Also for those wanting to demonize the tradition, you too are in the wrong class.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. To attain knowledge of the fundamental elements of Islamic history, thought, beliefs and culture. This includes knowledge of the Qur'an, the life of the Prophet Muhammad, the Sunnah of the Prophet and the Ahadith Collections, Islamic law (*Shari'ah*), theology (*Kalam*), *Sufism* (Islamic Mysticism) *Salat* (Ritual Prayer) other rituals (*Zikr* (Remembrance of God) fasting, and pilgrimage.
2. To attain knowledge of the development of pre-modern, modern, and current political and social movements known collectively as Islamic Revival and Renewal Movements,

including “fundamentalism,” Progressive Muslims, feminism, and an understanding of the impetus behind the growing **political Islam** phenomena.

3. To gain a sense of a new political thrust in Islamic thinking amongst U.S. based Muslims, who call themselves Progressive Muslims. This group is working to develop a modernist “progressive” interpretation of Islam. A few years ago some of them collaborated on a volume, simply called, Progressive Muslims, published in 2003. In their movement and

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in their book, they are addressing the contentious issue of “women and Islam,” pluralism, and democracy, among other issues currently being debated in mainstream discourse on Islam.

4. To attain experiential knowledge of the religious rituals of the faith, each member of the class will be required to visit a local mosque for the Friday Communal Prayers (*Juma’*) (**from 1:30 to 2:30 pm**) during the Fall term. We will go as a group to the Islamic Center of Gainesville located at 1010 W. University Avenue. For those who cannot go with us to the mosque on the day I have selected for the class, (this date will be sent to the class via our list and our Course e-Learning site on Canvas) they will need to attend *Juma’* services on an alternate Friday (or to some other Islamic service with special permission).

Course Requirements and Percentages of your grade:

- 1.) Class Attendance: We are going to cover a lot of ground in a concentrated amount of time. Therefore each class meeting is very important. Because of the importance of class attendance, **Roll will be taken at each class. Only THREE unexcused absences are permitted before it impacts negatively upon your grade.**

Excused absences include:

- a). Serious illness. You must have a note from your doctor or the Health Center **written on official stationary** saying that you were too ill to attend class on the specific date that you missed. **Arriving in class late can cause you to be recorded as absent for that day.** Roll will be taken soon after class begins.
- b). Death of a close family member certified by a letter from the funeral director who handled your family member’s service. **This must be on official stationary from the funeral home or some other official with knowledge of the death.**
- c). Attendance and participation in university activities, i.e. choirs, debating teams, sports teams, etc. Please inform the Instructor and the Teaching Assistant at the beginning of the term of your membership in these activities and your expected days of absence. I need official documentation of your membership and confirmation from the university official advising the group of your scheduled absence on official stationary with a phone number.

After the three unexcused absences without penalty, **each unexcused absence will result in the loss of 2 points per unexcused absence. If you accumulate a number of these it will have a negative impact upon your grade.**

- 2). There will be **Four In Class Quizzes**, which will equal **40%** of your final grade (10% for each quiz.).
- 3). There will be a **Mid-Term In Class Exam**. This Exam equals **25%** of your final Grade.
- 4). There will be a **Final In Class Exam**, which will equal **25%** of your grade.
- 5). Your **Trip to the mosque** (or if you are Muslim and attend Juma' and would prefer to do something else related to Islam) will equal **10%** of your grade.

Required Texts for the Course:

Frederick M. Denny, *An Introduction To Islam*, **4th edition**, New York: Macmillan, 2011.
Norman Calder, Jawid Mojaddedi & Andrew Rippin, eds., *Classical Islam: A Sourcebook of Religious Literature*, 2nd edition, New: Routledge, 2013

Additional readings will be on the Canvas site for this class, and /or sent to you as a pdf file via our **Class List**.

The **Course Outline** (Assigned readings, page numbers, dates for Quizzes and Exams) is attached.

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