

**Introduction to Islam****REL: 2362-Sections 2560, 4227, 4231****Fall 2014****Instructors:**

1) Rodney Sebastian

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 2pm – 5pm, Fridays 3pm – 5pm.

2) John Balch

Office: 119 Anderson Hall

Email: [jbalch@ufl.edu](mailto:jbalch@ufl.edu)**Meeting and Locations:**Lecture Class Meets on Mondays & Wednesdays -4<sup>th</sup> (10:40 -11:30) period in Anderson Hall 0134Section 2560 Meets Fridays 3<sup>rd</sup> period (9:35-10:25) in Matherly 0103Section 4227 Meets Fridays 4<sup>th</sup> period (10:40 -11:30) in Matherly 0116Section 4231 Meets Fridays 6<sup>th</sup> period (12:50 – 1:40) in Matherly 0103**Course Description:**

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 evolved over This course however is **not** an Islamic theology (a religiously committed intellectual discipline) course. This course will provide an overview of basic Islamic beliefs and practices based on an examination of history, law, sociology, anthropology and critical hermeneutics. It also examines practices and issues related to Islam in the contemporary period. The course aims

to give the students the ability to critically analyze the impacts of Islamic beliefs and values on social and cultural practices, and the formation of institutions, communities and identities.

**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 understand the variety of sects, beliefs and practices within Islam
4. To understand of the main currents within contemporary Islam

**Course Requirements and Percentages of your grade:**

- Class Attendance and Participation: **(10%)** Attendance will be taken at each class.
- Quizzes: There will be **Four In Class Quizzes**, which will equal **40%** of your final grade (10% for each quiz.)
- There will be a **Mid-Term In Class Exam**. This Exam equals **25%** of your final grade.
- There will be a **Final In Class Exam**, which will equal **25%** of your grade.
- Extra credits of up to 5% of the total grade will be provided if you visit a local mosque for the Friday Communal Prayers (*Juma’*) during the Fall term, and write a report of it

Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
Total %	100-93	92-90	89-86	85-82	81-79	78-76	75-73	72-70	69-67	66-63	62-60	<60

**Make-ups and Attendance:**

Make-up exams and tests will only be allowed in unavoidable circumstances or for compelling reasons that can be convincingly documented. Absence will only be excused when provided with satisfactory documentation.

Grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

In addition, please familiarize yourself with the official UF policies on how grade points are assigned: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/Pages/home.aspx>

**Academic Honesty:**

Students must conform to UF's academic honesty policy regarding plagiarism and other forms of cheating. This means that on all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The university specifically prohibits cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation, bribery, conspiracy, and fabrication. For more information about the definition of these terms and other aspects of the Honesty Guidelines, see <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/conductcode.php> and <http://www.chem.ufl.edu/~itl/honor.html>.

All students found to have cheated, plagiarized, or otherwise violated the Honor Code in any assignment for this course will be prosecuted to the full extent of the university honor policy, including judicial action and the sanctions listed in paragraph XI of the Student Conduct Code. For serious violations, you will fail this course.

**Students with Disabilities:**

Please do not hesitate to ask for accommodation for a documented disability. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office.

(<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>).

The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. Please ask the instructor if you would like any assistance in this process.

**Required Texts for the Course:**

Frederick M. Denny, *An Introduction To Islam*, **4th edition**, New York: Prentice Hall, 2011.

McCloud, A.M, Hibbard, S.W. Saud, L. (2013) *An Introduction to Islam in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell.

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

**Readings:**

*Week 1, Aug 25 & 27: Introduction to the Study of Islam*

Introductions, Review of Syllabus, Course Outline

Video: Beginning of viewing of *Inside Islam* w/ Q & A

Readings: Muscati 2003, Gilsean 2000 (9- 26)

**Week 2, Sep 1 (holiday), Sep 3: *The Birth of a Religion***

Readings:

Early Civilizations and the Origins of Judaism and Christianity, Denny, Chpt. 1, pp. 5- 27 (pp. 3-28)

Pre-Islamic Arabia: Beliefs, Values, Way of Life, Denny, Chpt. 2, pp. 32-36 (pp. 29-43)

McCloud et al. pp. 31 - 50

**Week 3, Sep 8 & 10: *Islam in History***

Readings:

McCloud et al. pp 13 -29

Muhammad and the Early Muslim Community, Denny, Chpt. 3, pp. 49 -73 (pp. 47-71)

Esposito, Chpt. 1, "*Muhammad and the Qur'an: Messenger and Message*" (pp.1-31) from *Islam The Straight Path*, by John L. Esposito, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.

**Week 4, Sep 15 & 17: *Islam in History II***

Readings:

The Arab Conquests & Islamic Rule: The Struggle for a Unified Umma, Denny, Chpt. 4, pp. 74-96 (pp.72-94)

Esposito Chapter 2 "*The Muslim Community In History*", (pp. 32-67) from Esposito: Islam The Straight Path.

**Week 5, Sep 22 & 24: *Islamic Beliefs***

Readings:

Denny, Chpt 5, pp. 97- 129 (pp.97-127)

McCloud et al. pp. 31 – 80.

**Quiz 1.**

**Week 6, Sep 29 & 1 Oct: The Scriptures of Islam**

The Nature and Function of the Qur'an, Denny, Chpt. 6, pp. 130-149 (pp. 128-148)

The Prophet's Sunnah as Preserved in the Hadith, Denny, Chpt. 7, pp. 150-163 (pp.149-163)

McCloud et al. pp. 142 – 164.

**Week 7, Oct 6 & 8: *Islamic Law and Creeds***

Readings:

Muslim Creeds and Theologies: Their Purposes and Varieties, Denny Chpt. 8, pp. 164-186 (pp. 164-186)

Law and the State in Classical Islamic Formulations, Denny, Chpt. 9, pp. 187-208 (pp.187-210)

**Week 8, Oct 13 & 15: *Sufism, Aspects of Islamic Mysticism***

Readings:

Islamic Mysticism and the Disciplines of Esoteric Piety, Denny, Chpt. 10, pp. 211-237 (pp.211-237)

Masters and Disciples: The Forms and Functions of Sufi Orders, Denny Chpt. 11, pp. 238-260 (pp. 238-262)

**Quiz 2.**

**Week 9, Oct 20 & 22: *Islam in the West***

Readings:

McCloud et al. pp. 157 – 170.

Mid-term Review

**Mid-term Exam**

**Week 10, Oct 27 & 29: *Islam, Purity and Reform***

Readings:

Major Movements and Trends in Renewal and Reform, Denny Chpt. 14, pp. 315-340 (pp. 315-339)

Three Forms of Islamic Revival: Fundamentalism, Feminism, Establishing The Umma in North America, Denny Chpt. 15 pp. 341-364 (pp. 340-362)

**Week 11, Nov 3 & 5: *Islam and Politics***

Readings:

McCloud et al. pp. 81 – 108, 111 – 156.

**Week 12, Nov 3 & 5: *Islam and Violence***

Readings:

McCloud et al. pp. 285 – 308.

Greaves 2005, pp. 165 – 189 (will be posted on SAKAI)

**Quiz 3.**

**Week 13, Nov 10 & 12: *Islam and Women***

Readings:

Greaves 2005, pp. 217 – 240; Kreinath 2012, pp. 121 - 141

**Week 14, Nov 17 & 19: *Progressive Muslims***

Readings:

Whither Islam and the Muslims? Progressive Muslims with a Vision of an Islam without Borders, Denny Chpt. 16 pp. 363-380)

Safi 2008 (pp 1-29)

Duderija 2010

**Week 15, Nov 24: *Movie week***

**Quiz 4.**

**Week 16, Dec 1 & 3: *Conclusions and Final Exam Review***