

Title: Introduction to Islam
Meetings: MWF (10:40AM-11:30AM)
Class: TBA
Instructor: Muktar Sanni
Email: <a href="mailto:msanni@ufl.edu">msanni@ufl.edu</a>
Office hours: TBD
Course readings: Readings will be on Canvas

### **Some Course Readings:**

Armstrong, Karen. *Islam : A Short History*. 1st ed. New York: Modern Library, 2000.

Brown, Jonathan (Jonathan A. C.). *Hadith : Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World*. Oxford: Oneworld, 2009.

Cook, M. A. *The Koran, a Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2000.

Ernst, Carl W. *Following Muhammad : Rethinking Islam in the Contemporary World*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003.

Esposito, John L. *Islam : The Straight Path*. Rev. 3rd ed., Updated with new epilogue. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

**The Encyclopedia of Islam:** For resources related to Islam.

<https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/browse/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2>

## **Introduction to Islam**

### **Description:**

Religion has long been a cornerstone of diverse cultures and civilizations, adapting alongside modernity and technological advancements. With nearly 2 billion adherents, Islam represents one of the world's major religious traditions. Public discourse often features Islam, yet misconceptions about its beliefs, sacred sources, and way of life abound.

To this end, this class will introduce students to the rich tradition of Islam, its history, belief systems, its spread, diversity, theological and cultural debates, Sufism, and Islamic movements, and Islam in the contemporary world. This introductory course assumes that students have little to no background on topics on Islam and Islamic practices.

### **Course Learning Outcomes:**

- Demonstrate an understanding of Islam's history, beliefs, and practices.

- Describe the sources of authority in Islam.
- Understand the socio-historical context of early Islam in Arabia.
- Identify and describe various currents and interpretations within Islam.
- Examine the evolution of Islam and its intersections with political and cultural shifts over time.
- Critically engage with and analyze texts on Islam’s historical emergence and modern role.

**Approach to Study:**

There is a need for empathy in the study of religion. Hence, we need to understand ‘religions’ as living practices deeply rooted in imagination and meaning for their adherents. Therefore, The historical-critical methodology we shall employ in this course is not antithetical to cultivating empathy. To say it differently, we should be committed to trying to understand traditions different from our own in terms that also make sense to their adherents

**Grading and Requirements:**

- Participation in discussions and attendance: 15%
- In-Class Quizzes (20%): Based on the week’s readings
- In-Class Essays (20%): Based on the week’s readings
- Film Presentation (20%): In consultation with the instructor, students will choose a topic based on the themes discussed and create a PPT presentation.
- Group Presentation (15%)
- Midterm (25%): A midterm exam consisting of multiple-choice and short essay questions covering class discussions from weeks 1-8.

**Grading Scale:**

The below grading scale will be used for this course:

A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-82
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-70
C-	70-72

D+	67-69
D	63-66
F	62- below

## **Resources and Services**

### **Writing Studio**

**<https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>**

The Writing Studio is committed to helping University of Florida students and faculty meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. We support independent learning and encourage scholarship by providing one-on-one consultations, workshops tailored to specific classes (graduate and undergraduate), and faculty retreats focusing on publishing original research. Students and faculty at all levels and in every discipline are welcome!

### **Students Requiring Accommodations**

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

### **University Honesty Policy**

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. 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 Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor

### **Counseling and Wellness Center**

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center:

<https://counseling.ufl.edu/about/>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

## Schedule

### Week 1

**W&F:** Introduction: Breakdown of the syllabus and discussion about the class.

### Week 2: A Brief History

**M: Karen Armstrong** in “Islam: A Short History”: Chapters 1& 2: pp:3-65.

**Emory Bogle:** “Islam Origin and Belief: Chapter 1

**W: Karen Armstrong** “in Islam: A Short History”: Culmination. 81-96

**John Esposito:** Islam the Straight Path: Chapter 2 (The Muslim Community in History)

**F: In-class quiz 1**

### Week 3: Continuation on the history of Islam

**M: Karen Armstrong:** in “Islam: A Short History”: Chapter 4: Islam Triumphant: Imperial Islam 1500-1700 (The Safavid Empire, the Moghul Empire, and the Ottoman Empire).

**Carl Ernst:** “Following Muhammad: Rethinking Islam in the Contemporary World”: Chapter 2.

**W: Carl Ernst:** “Following Muhammad: Rethinking Islam in the Contemporary World” Chapter 4 (Islamic Religious Ethics).

**F: In-class Essay 1**

### Week 4: Sacred Sources

**F: Carl Ernst:** “Following Muhammad: Rethinking Islam in the Contemporary World”: The Sacred Sources of Islam: pp: 71-93

**Wael B. Hallaq:** “Introduction to Islamic Law” (1st edition): pp: 10-30

**W: Michael Cook:** “The Koran A Very Short Introduction” (1st edition): pp: 8-108

**Jonathan AC Brown:** “Hadith. Muhammad’s Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World” Chapter 4: Forms of Imami Shiite Hadith.

**F: In-class Quiz 2**

### Week 5: Muslim Beliefs and Practices

**M: Emory Bogle:** “Islam Origin and Belief: Chapter 2: Islamic Belief and Practice

**John Esposito:** “Islam the Straight Path”: Chapter 3: Religious Life, Belief and Practice.

**W: Emory Bogle:** Islam Origin, and Belief: Chapter 4: Shi'i Islam.

**F:** In-class Essay 2

Week 6: Continuation on Muslim Beliefs and Practices

**M:** Recap -Midterm

**W:** Group Presentation on one or some of the themes covered in class

**F:** Group Presentation on one or some of the themes covered in class

Week 7: Islam and the West: Islam and Modernity

**M: Karen Armstrong:** “Islam: A Short History”: Chapter 5: ‘Agonistes’, The Arrival of the West. pp: 141-178.

**W: Nile Green:** “Global Islam”: Introduction

**F:** In-class Quiz 3

Week 8: Islam and Modernity continued

**M: Nile Green:** “Global Islam”: Chapters 1 and 2

**Talal Asad:** “Formations of the Secular in Christianity, Islam, and Modernity”.

**W: Carl Ernst:** “Following Muhammad’: Rethinking Islam in the Modern World”: (Reimagining Islam in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century) pp: 199-211

**Huntington Samuel:** The Clash of Civilizations (excerpt).

**F:** In-Class Essay 3

Week 9: The Ulama and Contesting Religious Authority

**M: Ismail Alatas:** “What is Religious Authority: Cultivating Islamic Communities in Indonesia” (excerpt)

**Yildirim Kadir:** “The new guardians of religion: Islam and authority in the Middle East” (article).

**W: Hackett Rosalind and Benjamin Soares:** “New media and the Religious transformations in Africa” (excerpt)

**Alex Thurston:** “The Salafi Ideal of Electronic Media as an Intellectual Meritocracy in Kano”.

**F:** In-Class Quiz 4

Week 10: Break

Week 11: Sufism

**M: William Chittick:** “Sufism: A Short Introduction” (excerpt)

**Acim Rachid:** “The Reception of Sufism in the West: The Mystical Experiences of American and European Converts”. 57-72

**Meena, Sharify-Funk, Rory Dickson William and Shobhana Xavier Merin:** “Contesting Sufism Today: Contemporary Sufi and Anti-Sufi Responses” pp.62-98.

**W: Masquelier, Adeline, and Benjamin F Soares:** “Malian Youths, Between Sufism and Satan “(article)

**Zachary Wright:** “Living Knowledge in West African Islam” (excerpt).

**F:** In-Class Essay 5

#### Week 12: Islamic Revivalist Movements

**M: Roel Meijer:** “Global Salafism: Islam’s New Religious Movement. Chapter 1

**Terje Ostebo:** “Local Reformers and The Search for Change: The Emergence of Salafism in Bale, Ethiopia” (article).

**W: Sounaye Abdoulaye:** “Salafi Aesthetics: Preaching Among the Sunnace in Niamey, Niger”. 9-41.

**F:** In-Class Quiz 6

#### Week 13: Islam and Digital Media:

**M: Jon Anderson:** “New Media and New Publics; Reconfiguring the Sphere of Islam”. Pp: 887-906.

**Guest Speaker: TBA**

**W: Gary Bunt:** “Re-wiring the house of Islam”. (excerpt)

**Gary Bunt:** “Islam in the Digital Age: E-Jihad, and Online Fatwas” (excerpt).

**F:** In-Class Essay 7

#### Week 14: Islam and Politics

**M: Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori:** “Muslim Politics”: Chapter 1 & A Documentary Film on Religion and Politics in Iran that will be watched in class.

**W: Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori:** “Muslim Politics” **Chapter 6.**

**F:** In-Class Quiz 8

#### Week 15:

**M:** Film Presentation

**W:** Film Presentation

**F:** In-Class Essay 8

#### Week 16:

**M: Conclusion**