The World of Islam (RS 139)
Westmont College
Spring, 2007
Charles Farhadian

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to Islam in its religious and historical contexts. Topics will include the life and times of Prophet Muhammad, the Quran, the division between Sunni and Shia, and the formation of the traditions of Hadith and Shariah, and modern interpretations of Islam. Students will be introduced to the rise and expansion of Islam from the seventh century to the present, its central beliefs, institutions and practices. Additionally, the course will stress the sources, doctrines, practices, institutions, and modes of expression of global Islam. Students will have the opportunity to lead class discussions on readings and research.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Frederick Denny, *An Introduction to Islam* (3rd edition; Pearson Prentice Hall)
John Esposito, *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam* (Oxford University Press)
Fatima Mernissi, *Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood* (Basic Books)
Class handouts on Eureka

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

John Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*
Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia*
Ignaz Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*
Bernard Lewis, *Arabs in History*
Tayeb Salih, *The Wedding of Zein*
William Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman*

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Attendance and Participation (20%). Attendance is mandatory and subject to the policies of Westmont College. Failure to appear for any examination will result in an “F” for that examination. Students are expected to actively participate in discussions. Beyond your attendance in class, the Attendance and Participation grade includes the following two requirements:

   Students are expected to lead informal class discussions throughout the course and actively engage in class discussions. Discussions that focus on introducing the primary source readings for the day should include some reflection on the similarities and dissimilarities between Christianity and Islam regarding the topic of the day. These will be student-led informal discussions, but please turn in your work to the professor after class. The student presenter should prepare the following on one or two pages:
a. A brief summary of the passages: e.g., who are the authors, roughly when were the passages written, what is the content of the passages?
b. Questions that arise from those passages; e.g., what strikes you as particularly interesting?
c. What do these passages teach us about the world of Islam?
d. If appropriate, how would you compare Christianity to Islam with regard to the reading: e.g., do the passages utilize Christian sources? If so, what are the differences between the two traditions?
e. Point out to the class sentences that highlight the important parts of the passage.

Note: If there are several passages to discuss, feel free to select the most interesting ones in your judgment. The questions above are only suggestions. You may engage the passages with whatever questions you think are important to discuss.

2. Research paper (20%). The paper will be graded on the basis of content, grammar, style, and presentation (see Grading Information section below). Rules regarding plagiarism will be strictly enforced. Papers should be 4000 in length. Each student should make an appointment with the professor prior to January 31 to discuss paper ideas. Papers should include some reflection on the comparison between Islam and Christianity, even if it is a small part of the paper. All students will turn in a statement of their topic on February 7 and briefly introduce the topic to the class for feedback. At the end of the semester, each student will have an opportunity to present their research results to the class. The research paper is due on April 11 in class.

3. Book review (10%). Write 1200-word paper on *Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girl*. The review paper should accomplish the following: a) provide a summary of the book, b) discuss what you have learned about Islam, c) what outstanding questions are left unanswered by the book; that is, what questions come to mind after reading the narrative. The paper is due in class on Feb. 21.

4. Midterm Examination (25%).

5. Final Examination (25%).

**GRADING INFORMATION**

Grading criteria include correctness, completeness, precision, depth, grammar, presentation, and coherence of your answer. The importance of the argument is also important in evaluating papers. The following is a brief explanation of how I distinguish among grades.

100-90%: Superior work that involves something more than mere competence. This work entails depth of analysis, imaginative insight, careful synthesis of the material, and an attention to detail that hints at a nuanced and subtle analysis. This level of work requires superb grammar, presentation, and content. This level of work is distinguished from lower levels by its qualitative difference, not just its quantitative difference.

89-80%: Good work that is solid, on target, and competent. It does not mislead. This level work states the important points and explains them adequately and competently. Work at this level attends carefully to the assignment, fulfilling each component of it. In examinations this requires...
answering the question in full. In papers it means exploring a carefully delineated topic or text as carefully and as fully as space allows.

79-70%: Acceptable but flawed work. This work may be flawed in different respects: missing the target, not quite seeing the point, misunderstanding what the question asks for, struggling for clarity. The work still demonstrates a grappling with the material and ideas in a plausible manner. In examinations, such work may make ambiguous points or use imprecise terms and concepts. Such work typically does not construct arguments well or misses some crucial points implied in the question. This level of work still evidences a general sense of the issues and a capacity to think about them. This level essay frequently is quite short in length.

69-60%: Unacceptable but passing work. This work usually demonstrates only a rudimentary awareness of the issues or problems, but even this is often confused by acute writing difficulties or an inattentiveness to the question. This level essay is typically quite short.

59-50%: Unacceptable and unpassable work.

INSTRUCTION FOR PAPER FORMATTING

1. In the upper right-hand corner type your name, the date, the number of words in the paper, and the course number. Never use a cover sheet.
2. Two lines down, centered, type the title of your paper.
3. Use the Times New Roman 12-point font.
4. Set your line spacing to double.
5. Use one-inch margins on all sides.
6. Place page numbers in the lower center of all pages except the first.
7. Staple the assignment (if more than one page) in the upper left-hand corner.

OTHER

1. Westmont College will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students should notify the office of Disability Services, and notify me within the first two weeks of class.
2. Written documentation from a medical doctor or student health services must be obtained and promptly forwarded to the professor if poor health prohibits you from appearing for an examination. Role will be taken at the beginning of each class period. Failure to appear for an examination will result in an “F” for that examination.
3. Lectures may not be recorded, unless with the permission of the professor.
4. Please bring relevant texts to class.
5. Consult Eureka for class handouts.
6. Please contact the professor if you have any questions or concerns:
   Office: PC10
   Office Hours: Tues and Thursday, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., or by appointment
   Email, farhad@westmont.edu; Phone, x7094
7. Finally, the professor reserves the right to revise the syllabus at any time.
READING SCHEDULE

I. HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

1. Jan. 10 W Welcome and introduction to the course
   • “We’ll be studying the world of Islam”

Jan. 17 W A. Judaism & Christianity
   • Denny, chapter 1
   • Peters
     o 3.1 The Peoples of the Book
     o 3.2 The Errors of the Jews
     o 3.3 The Jews Warned by Their Own Prophets
     o 3.4 The Error of the Christians

Class Discussion (1)
   • Qur’an (God in Creation) 56:57-74, 36:33-47, 6:95-101, 13:2
   • Qur’an (Adam, Eve, and Satan) 7:10-30; 15:26-43; 20:115-27
   • Qur’an (Prophetic histories) 11:25-49; 6:72-84

B. Class Discussion (2): The Past, Sacred and Profane
   • Peters
     o 1.1 The Quran on Creation
     o 1.2 Adam and Angels
     o 1.4 The Covenant with Abraham
     o 1.5 Abraham and Ishmael in the Holy Land
     o 1.8 The Prophet Moses
     o 1.9 The Wisdom of Solomon
     o 1.10 The Muslims’ Jesus

C. Pre-Islamic Arabia
   • Denny, chapter 2
   • Peters
     o 1.14 Pre-Islamic Monotheism
     o 1.15 The Hanifs
     o Qur’an 27:67-93, 36:68-83; 89:15-20

Jan. 24 W A. The Life of Muhammad
   • Denny, chapter 3

Class Discussion (3&4)
   • Peters
     o 2.1 Muhammad’s Descent from Adam
     o 2.2 The Birth of the Prophet
     o 2.3 The Scriptural Prediction of the Coming of the Prophet of Islam
     o 2.4 Marriage with Khadija
     o 2.5 Muhammad’s Call and First Revelation
     o 2.6 Sadness, Doubt, and Consolation
B. Early Muslim Community

Class Discussion (5)

- Peters
  - 2.7 Conversion of Ali
  - 2.8 The Earliest Preaching of Islam
  - 2.9 The Opposition of the Quraysh
  - 2.32 The Beginning of the Muslim Era
  - 3.5 The Muslim Community
  - 3.21 The Powers of the Caliph-Imam
  - 3.25 Moral Islam
  - 3.26 Alms and Charity

C. Mecca

Class Discussion (6)

- Peters
  - 1.12 Mecca in the Era of Ignorance
  - 1.13 The Religion of Mecca
  - 2.12 Muhammad’s Night Journey
  - 2.13 Losses, Personal and Political
  - 2.14 An Invitation from Yathrib
  - 2.15 A Turn to Armed Resistance
  - 6.1 How Paganism and Idol Worship Came to Mecca

Medina


Class Discussion (7)

- Peters
  - 2.16 The Hijra or Migration to Medina (622 CE)
  - 2.17 The Constitution of Medina
  - 2.18 Jewish Opposition
  - 2.20 The Battle at the Badr Wells
  - 2.22 From Badr to the Battle of the Trench
  - 2.26 “The Truth has Come and Falsehood Has Passed Away”

Film selections: Islam: Empire of Faith

Jan. 31  

W  

The Qur’an

- Denny, chapter 6
- Qur’an 77, 84, 52:7-28

Class Discussion (8)

- Peters
  - 4.1 A Muslim View of Prophesy
  - 4.2 Did the Jews and Christians Tamper with Scripture?
4.3 The Divine Origin of the Quran
4.4 Muhammad’s Ascension into Heaven
4.6 The Heavenly Book
4.7 The Quran: Created or Uncreated?
4.10 The Heart of the Quran: The “Throne Verse”
4.11 The “Satanic Verses”
4.14 Who Put Together the Suras?
4.23 Quranic Exegesis

Class Discussion (9)
• Peters
  o 5.1 On the Usefulness of Tradition
  o 5.2 Scripture, Tradition, and the Law in Islam
  o 5.3 The Word of God is One: The Inspiration of the Prophetic Tradition
  o 5.4 Their Transmission
  o 5.6 The Criticism of Traditions
  o 5.7 The Categories of Traditions
  o 5.9 Contradictory Traditions
  o 5.12 On Consensus
  o 5.15 The Collective Obligation

Film selections: *Islam: Empire of Faith*

Feb. 7 W A. Muhammad’s Sunnah (Hadith)
• Denny, chapters 7
• Peters
  o 3.7 “Catholic” Islam: Staying Close to the Tradition

B. Muslim community in history
• Denny, chapter 4
• E-Maps:
  o http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~rs143/map.html
  o http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~rs143/meast.jpg

Class Discussion (10)
• Peters
  o 3.8 The Shi’ite View of the Community
  o 3.10 The Caliphate
  o 3.11 Caliph and Imam
  o 3.12 The Ruler, Chosen by the People or Designated by God?
  o 3.13 Ali, the First Imam
  o 3.15 The Martyrdom of Husayn
  o 3.17 The Shi’ite Succession
  o 3.18 Awaiting the Hidden Imam
  o 3.19 “Twelvers” and “Seveners” among the Shi’ites

Film selections: *Islam: Empire of Faith*
Film: *There is No God but God* (Long Search Series)
• Student Discussion of Paper Topics: turn in one paragraph describing your research interest & briefly share your topic with the class

Feb. 14 W No class because of Mosque visit on Friday

Feb. 16 FRIDAY Mosque Visit; we will to visit either Los Angeles or Goleta

Feb. 21 W Law and Theology
• Denny, chapter 9
Class Discussion (11)
• Peters
  o 5.19 Abrogation in Islamic Law
  o 5.20 The Case of the Woman Taken in Adultery
  o 5.21 Crimes and Their Penalties in the Quran
  o 5.22 Divorce in Islamic Law
  o 5.23 Controversial Questions

Theologies
• Denny, chapter 8

Class Discussion (12 & 13): Theologies
• Peters
  o 8.1 The Origins of Theology in Islam
  o 8.2 The Intrusion of Philosophy into Dialectical Theology
  o 8.3 The Limited Role of Dialectical Theology
  o 8.6 Rationalist Theology
  o 8.7 Farabi on God’s Providence
  o 8.8 Ghazali on Theology and Muslim Belief
  o 8.11 Ibn Rushd: the Law Commands the Study of Philosophy
  o 8.15 The Second Coming: The Muslim Tradition
  o 8.17 The Preaching of God’s Final Judgment
  o 8.18 The End Defined
  o 8.19 The Torments of the Grave
  o 8.22 The Vision of God

Paper Due: Book review of Dreams of Trespass

II. MUSLIM RELIGIOUS LIFE AND PRACTICE

Feb. 28 W Basic beliefs and worship practices
• Denny, chapter 5
Class Discussion (14)
• Peters
  o 6.2 Islam and the Graven Image
6.3 The Muslims’ Prayer
6.4 Prophetic Traditions on Prayer
6.5 The Direction of Prayer
6.7 The Institution of the Call to Prayer
6.8 On the Manner and Intent of Prayer
6.9 The Friday Service

Basic beliefs and worship practices
- Peters
  - 3.24 The Five Pillars of Islam
  - 3.25 Moral Islam
  - 3.26 Alms and Charity
  - 3.27 The Sixth Pillar: War in the Path of God
  - 3.28 There is No Compulsion in Religion

Class Discussion (15)
- Peters
  - 6.14 Islamicizing the Hajj

Film: Inside Mecca (National Geographic)

Mar. 7 W MIDTERM
Mar. 14 W SPRING BREAK
Mar. 21 W Sufism
- Denny, chapter 10

Class Discussion (16)
- Peters
  - 7.1 This World and the Next: The Islamic Preaching
  - 7.2 The Historical Origins of the Sufi Movement
  - 7.4 Two Sufi Autobiographies: Ibn Abi al-Khayr and al-Ghazali
  - 7.7 Sufi Communities
  - 7.10 What is the Mystic Way?
  - 7.12 Self-Obliteration
  - 7.13 Oneness with God is Not Identity with God
  - 7.15 “I am the Truth”
  - 7.16 Ecstatic Utterances
  - 7.19 Ibn Khaldun: An Evaluation of the Sufi Tradition
  - 7.20 Sufis and Shi’ites

Film: I am a Sufi, I am a Muslim

Mar. 28 W Film: Yol (Serif Gören, Turkey)
- Denny, chapter 12
Apr. 4  W  Women in Islam
  • Denny, pp. 346-350
  • The Place of Women in Pure Islam” (sections 1-3)
    http://debate.domini.org/newton/womeng.html
  • “Hijab and Muslim Women”
    http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/humanrelations/womeninislam/hijabexperience.html

Class Discussion (17)
  • Kurzman
    o chapter 4, Qasim Amin (Egypt)
    o chapter 28, Halide Edib Adivar (Turkey)
    o chapter 26, Dzemaluddin Causevic (Bosnia)

Film: Leila (Dariush Mehrjui, Iran)

III. ISLAM AND MODERNITY

Apr. 11  W  Islam and the West: Modern Religious Interpretations
  • Esposito, Unholy War (read entire book)

Class Discussion (18)
  • Handouts: Kurzman
    o chapter 3, Muhammad ‘Abdul (Egypt)
    o chapter 40, Sayyid Ahmad Khan (North India)
    o chapter 41, Muhammad Iqbal (North India)

  • Student Research Paper Due

Apr. 18  W  Student Paper Presentations: 10 minutes each

Apr. 25  W  WRAP UP & CONCLUSION

Final Examination
  May 2 (Wednesday), 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Note: Final Examinations will not be rescheduled to accommodate travel arrangements