

Oakland University
College of Arts and Sciences

Department of Religious Studies

Fall/ 2018

REL 1150: Introductions to Islam

(4 Credits)

Instructor: Aly Lela (alylela@oakland.edu)

Class Time: TR 1:00-2:47 pm

Class Location: 104 Mathematics and Science Center

Office hours: By appointment

Course Description:

Pre-Islamic Arabia, Muhammad and early Islamic history; the Qur'an and basic beliefs, practices and law; the Islamic Caliphate; Islam in the modern world and Muslims in America; women in Islam and other contemporary issues.

This course satisfies the General Education requirements in the Global Perspective Exploration and Writing Intensive in General Education.

Course Prerequisite/ Co-requisites:

Completion of the University Writing Foundation Requirement (WRT 160).

Course Objectives

Student will learn about:

1. Understanding the meaning and origin of Islam and the foundational scriptural sources of Islam.
2. Developing knowledge of the core beliefs and practices of Islam and their theological and ethical underpinnings.
3. Understanding Muslims as a global and multicultural community.
4. Understanding Islamic systems and influences of socio-historical contexts.

General Education Learning Outcomes:

The students are expected to:

- Obtain general knowledge about Islamic sources, history, theology, ethics and law and their affect on the formation and cultural production in the global Multicultural Muslim community.

- Understand the religious/cultural background of the diverse Muslim community in and outside of the United States.
- Be aware of the intercultural dynamic and the role that different cultural heritages, past and present, play in forming values in another part of the world, enabling the students to think within a more global context.

Cross-Cutting Capacities:

1. Critical thinking
2. Social awareness
3. Effective communication

Required Reading:

- 1- John Esposito, *What Everyone Needs to Know About Islam*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).
- 2- John Esposito, *Islam, the Straight Path*, 5th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).
 - Excerpts of primary sources and/or article(s) to be handed out or posted on Moodle.

Suggested Supplemental Readings:

- 1- Sayyed Nasr, *Islam: Religion, History and Civilization* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2003).
- 2- Hammudah Abd al-Ati, *Islam in Focus*, 3rd ed. (Maryland: Amana Publications, 1998).

Lecture Notes and Moodle:

Students are highly encouraged to read the required materials before they come to class and take notice in lectures and class discussion. Moodle will be used in this course.

Class Structure and requirements:

Reading: Class will be lecture based with a strong focus on course texts. Texts will be the basis for lectures; it is crucial that students keep up with assigned readings.

Evaluation Components (Please see detailed description below):

1. Examinations (50%):
 - **Midterm Exam (20%):** There will be a Midterm Exam on **Thursday, October 18 at 1:00 pm**. The midterm is worth 20% of your overall grade and will cover all the material presented to that point. The exam will consist of six essay questions, of which each student must select three. The questions should be answered with an essay of 150-250 words *each* (for a total of 450-750 words).
 - **Final Exam (30%):** There will be a Final Exam on **Tuesday December 13, 12:00 to 3:00 pm**. The Final exam will consist of six essay questions, of which each student must select three. The questions should be answered with an essay of 150-250 words *each* (for a total of 450-750 words for the final exam.)
 - The *final exam will be cumulative and is worth 30% of your overall grade*. If you are unable to attend the exam on the specified date, you must inform and gain approval from me **at least one week prior to the exam**. **If you simply do not attend, you will receive a failing grade for that exam, no exceptions.**

- Be sure to check your final exam schedule for all your classes **at the beginning of the semester**, so that you can adequately prepare yourself in the event that you have more than one exam in a single day.
- Alternative testing accommodation will only be made for those who are registered with Student Disabilities Services (SDD) as requiring such accommodations. (See below, "Recommendations for Success," for more info.)

2. **Term Paper (30%):**

- Each student is expected to write a final paper. The paper must be 4000 words long (approximately 10-15 double spaced pages). This paper is not to be simply a book report, but the student should formulate an argument, demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the subject matter chosen and making a point of his/her own. While the student should formulate an argument, the paper should be grounded in the literature/resources used and not a long/personal rant. You should elect your research topic on or before **Thursday October 11**. A draft of the paper is due **November 29**. **The graded term paper is due on December 6. Papers received after this date will not be accepted.**
- The argument should be introduced in the first paragraph(s) of the paper, and then move on to a discussion of the available literature on it. After surveying appropriate scholarship on the subject, then a conclusion should be formulated in the final part of the paper. The bibliography for the paper should include at least five books. Only web articles from peer-reviewed academic journals will count. The topic is up to the student, but topics should be cleared and approved with the instructor in advance.

3. **Quizzes (10%)**

- There will be a brief quiz at the end of every session. These will not be “pop quizzes” since each session will be concluded with a quiz. However, only 5 of these will be graded. Each graded quiz is worth 2% of your final grade. Quizzes will cover major points presented during lecture, and serve to reinforce these major points (as well as encourage students to attend all lectures). No make-up quizzes will be offered unless the absence is due to a religious holiday (communicated to the professor well in advance) or an illness documented by a physicians’ note; for all other excuses please consult with the professor in advance.

4. **Attendance and Participation (10%)**

- Attendance, involvement and participation in the discussion, showing personal initiative and keeping up with the readings will also be evaluated. **Students entering class later than 10 minutes after the start of class will be considered absent- so don't be late!**

Final Grade Scale:

A	4.0	C	2.0
A-	3.7	C-	1.7
B+	3.3	D+	1.3
B	3.0	D	1.0
B-	2.7	F	0.0
C+	2.3		

Disability Support Services

⇒ Students who have learning, psychological, and/or physical disabilities may be eligible for accommodations that provide equal access to educational programs and activities at Oakland University. Students should notify the instructor early in the semester with a Faculty Notification Letter from the Office of Disability Support Services (DSS) regarding accommodation requests. Eligibility for services can be discussed by contacting DSS at

248-370-3266, room 103A North Foundation Hall. For more information please visit: <http://www.oakland.edu/dss/>.

- ⇒ Please be aware that the DSS urges students with disabilities to make an appointment **six weeks in advance** of when they require services. A delay in getting DSS recommendation for the current semester may hinder the availability or facilitation of accommodations in a timely manner.

Class Policies:

1. Academic conduct policy:

All members of the academic community at Oakland University are expected to practice and uphold standards of academic integrity and honesty. Academic integrity means representing oneself and one's work honestly. Misrepresentation is cheating since it means students are claiming credit for ideas or work not actually theirs and are thereby seeking a grade that is not actually earned. Following are some examples of academic dishonesty as they pertain to our class:

- a) Cheating on examinations. This includes using materials such as books and/or notes when not authorized by the instructor, copying from someone else's paper, helping someone else copy work, substituting another's work as one's own, theft of exam copies or other forms of misconduct on exam.
- b) Unauthorized collaboration on assignments and unauthorized access to and use of computer programs, including modifying computer files created by others and representing that work as one's own
- c) **Plagiarism:**
 - Plagiarism is stealing the words and ideas of another and presenting them as your own. Unintentional or intentional, plagiarizing is a serious offense. Students found to have plagiarized will be reported to the Dean of Students. Possible consequences for being proved a plagiarist include an academic disciplinary warning, academic probation, suspension or expulsion (dismissal) from the university. Simply put: Plagiarism or cheating on exams and written projects are grounds for failing the course and could lead to expulsion from the university. Please refer to the Academic Conduct policy, pp. 82-83 of catalogue for more information.
 - Also note: Do not copy/summarize things off the internet. It is very easy to tell when students have taken ideas from the internet. Copying or summarizing things from the internet, without citing the source, will be treated as plagiarism. **Again, neglecting to cite sources is plagiarism.** For more information on when and how to cite in order to avoid committing plagiarism, please visit: <http://library.oakland.edu/tutorials/studentplaghandout2008.pdf>

2. Add/Drops:

The university policy will be explicitly followed. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of deadline dates for dropping courses. For more information, please visit: <http://www.oakland.edu/?id=20468&sid=219>

3. Internet Usage Laws:

This is not a distance education class; therefore attendance, participation, and bringing your *printed* assignment to lecture are necessary for the successful completion of this course.

4. Cell-phones:

Please turn off your cell phone before entering the classroom.

- **Texting or using your cell-phone in any form during class is not tolerated and will result in an absence for the day and potential dismissal from the classroom.**

5. Use of Computers in Class:

Students are prohibited from connecting to the internet during class, unless allowed for academic purpose. Also, students may not electronically record a class without prior approval of the professor. Violation of these policies constitutes student misconduct.

6. E-mail Communication:

Please be advised that person to person communication is the best mode of communication with me, which can be done before or after class. However, I will respond back to your e-mail within 48 hours from receiving it. **Please note that I do not respond to emails inquiring about material covered in class during a student's absence or to ones trying to explain a reason for an absence for which a student does not wish to be penalized.** Without a verifiable document, absences beyond two will be marked unexcused.

For announcements and in case of an emergency that entails a class cancellation, I will e-mail you and will post a note on Moodle; hence, students are expected to check their Oakland e-mail regularly.

Recommendations for Success:

- ⇒ Please keep in mind that this course is taught using primarily the dialectical method for the purpose of learning. In other words, you are my partner in the intellectual investigation that we pursue in the classroom and you will be expected to participate in the classroom discussion that will dominate our meeting session. I want to assure you that you have plenty of significant thoughts to contribute and worthy questions to ask.
- ⇒ Given the above, success in this course depends on reading the assigned sections of the text prior to attending the lectures. Many of the names of people and places will be unfamiliar and/or strange, so reviewing these names and familiarizing yourself with the general topic under discussion will make for a more comprehensible lecture.
- ⇒ Familiarize yourself with the geography of the modern Middle East through such sources as the Atlas of the Middle East published by Cambridge University Press, or the Atlas of Islam by Harvard University.

Schedule of Lectures/Discussions w/ Corresponding Readings:

Weeks	Date	Reading	Topics	Remarks
Week 1	Sep. 6	General Introduction		
Week 2	Sep. 11	Esposito, Introduction & Ch. 1 (Page: 3-18)	<i>Why do we need to know about Islam?</i> <i>What is Islam?</i> <i>The origin of Islam</i> <i>Characteristics of Islam</i>	
	Sep. 13	Esposito, Ch. 1. Continue.	<i>Scriptural sources of Islam</i> <i>The Quran</i> <i>The Sunna of Prophet Muhammad</i>	
Week 3	Sep. 18	Watching Movie	'The Message' Part 1	
	Sep. 20	Watching Movie	'The Message' Part 2	
Week 4	Sep. 25	Esposito, Ch. 1. 18-23.	<i>Islamic Belief/Theology</i> <i>The six articles of faith</i>	
	Sep. 27	Esposito, Ch. 1. Continue.	<i>Cont. Islamic Belief/Theology</i> <i>The six articles of faith</i>	
Week 5	Oct. 2	Esposito, Ch. 1 23-40	<i>The five Pillars of Islam</i>	
	Oct. 4		<i>Cont. The Five Pillars of Islam</i>	
Week 6	Oct. 9	Esposito, Ch. 2. 72-95	<i>Islam and Other Religions: A brief history.</i> <i>Timeline of Religion</i> <i>Abrahamic Traditions</i>	
	Oct. 11	Esposito, Ch. 2. 72-95	<i>Islam and Other Religions</i> <i>People of the book</i> <i>Non-Muslims in Muslim Societies</i> General Review	Research topics finalized
Week 7	Oct. 16	Esposito, Ch. 1. 40-65	<i>Muslim Diversity</i> <i>Global Muslim Community</i> <i>Religion and local culture</i> Review	
	Oct. 18	Midterm Exam		1:00 to 2:47 pm
Week 8	Oct. 23	Esposito, Ch. 1. 42-72	Sunni & Shi'a Muslims: A brief history	
	Oct. 25	Esposito, Ch. 1. 42-72	Cont. Sunni & Shi'a Muslims: Political theories & contemporary conflict	
Week 9	Oct. 30	Esposito, Ch. 1	<i>Visiting a local Mosque</i>	Writing a brief report

	Nov. 1	Esposito, Ch. 6	<i>American Muslim Community: History, Diversity and Challenges</i> <i>Guest speaker</i>	
Week 10	Nov. 6	Esposito, Ch. 3. 95-110	<i>Muslim Customs and Cultures</i> <i>Family in Islam</i> <i>Gender relation in Muslim societies</i> <i>Hijab & Niqab</i>	
	Nov. 8	Esposito, Ch. 3. 110-129	<i>Women rights</i> <i>Marriage & Divorce in Islam</i>	
Week 11	Nov. 13	Esposito, Ch. 4. 133-158	<i>Violence and Terrorism</i> <i>Global Jihad</i>	
	Nov. 15	Esposito, Ch. 5. 158-80	<i>Shari'a</i> <i>Islamic Law: Scope, flexibility and the challenge of modernity</i> <i>Islamic Family Law</i>	
Week 12	Nov. 20	Break		Thanks giving recess
	Nov. 22	Break		Thanks giving recess
Week 13	Nov. 27	Esposito, Ch. 5. 180-192	<i>Islam and politics</i> <i>Islamism and Secularism</i> <i>Islam and Democracy</i>	
	Nov. 29	Esposito, Ch. 5. 193-214	<i>Islamic banking</i>	Submitting a draft of the term paper
Week14	Dec. 4	Esposito, Ch. 5. 173-180	<i>Islamic bioethics</i>	
	Dec. 6	Esposito, Ch. 1. 65-68	<i>Islamic Reform</i> General Review	Last day of class & Submitting the Term paper
	Dec. 13	Final Exam: Thursday, December 13, 12:00-3:00 pm		

This is a contractual agreement and commitment by you, the student, therefore binding you to its terms. The professor, however, reserves the right to change the terms of this agreement if deemed necessary after viewing student output and achievement.