

Oakland University
College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Religious Studies

REL 3450 Islam in America
(4 Credits)
Fall/ 2018

Instructor: Aly Lela (alylela@oakland.edu)
Class Time: TR 3:00-4:47 pm
Class Location: 104 Mathematics and Science Center
Office hours: By appointment

Course Description:

This course traces a history of Islam in America, with emphases on (1) Muslim immigration prior to 1900, through slavery and voluntary immigration of Arabs and Muslims from the Middle East, as well as parts of Asia, beginning from the period of World War I; (2) the rise of Islamic Black Nationalism especially The ethno-religious movement of the Nation of Islam, (NOI); (3) the role of gender, sexuality, and feminism in contemporary Islam in America; and (4) the experiences of American Muslims in a post-9/11 world and its representation in American media and culture. Since this is a class on the history of Islam in the United States, we will proceed chronologically, beginning with the earliest Muslim immigrants (slaves) and finishing with the post-9/11 context. The course is loosely organized into three thematic sections, focusing on immigration, racial identity, and gender.

Course Objectives

1. To investigate this faith tradition through the multidisciplinary lens of religious studies.
2. To comprehend what it means to be Muslim in America and how, and why, they are framed in American culture.
3. To perceive how a faith tradition is refracted through the prism of race and ethnicity.
4. To understand the transformation of this faith tradition in America.
5. To study the conjunction of religion and diverse cultural backgrounds of American Muslims.
6. The place of Islam and its contribution to a pluralistic religious America

General Education Learning Outcomes:

- To think against a monolithic interpretation of Islam
- To become aware of the multiple interpretation of Islam in America
- To understand the role of Muslims and their contributions to America
- To become aware of the role of stereotypes in the interpretations of Islam
- To gain an understanding of how globalization affects the American Muslims through the study of their transnational networks.

- To meet Muslims in their own space through a mosque visitation

Required Reading:

Jane I Smith, *Islam in America*, 2nd edition (New York, Columbia University Press 2009)

Suggested Supplemental Readings:

1. Kambiz GhaneaBassiri, *A History of Islam in America* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2010)
2. Edward E. Curtis, *Columbia Sourcebook of Muslims in the U.S* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).
3. Malcolm X. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X, as told to Alex Haley* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1964).
4. Amy Waldman. *The Submission* (New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 2011).

**Additional readings will be posted on the course website

Class activities

- Visiting the Kresge library to familiarize ourselves with resources on the subject
- Visiting local Muslim mosques that represent various racial and sectarian Muslim communities (African American, Arab, Asians, Sufi, Sunni, Shi'a Muslim) and interviewing the leaders of these communities.
- Studying modern researches and findings of surveys on Islam and Muslims in America such as: PEW, Gallop, Zogby and others.
- Studying the development and growth of American Muslim institutions and their role in protecting the Muslim minority in US.

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 **Tuesday, October 18 at 3:00 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 11, 3:00 to 4:47 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 **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:

98-100	4.0	88-90	3.5	80-81	3.0
96-98	3.9	86-88	3.4	70-79	2.0-2.9
94-96	3.8	84-86	3.3	60-69	1.0-1.9
92-94	3.7	82-84	3.2	Under 60	0.0
90-92	3.6	81-82	3.1		

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/studentplaghando2008.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:

Week 1 Sep. 6

General Introduction

Week 2. Sep. 11-13

Jane Smith: Introduction & Ch.1 Muslim Faith and Practice

Week 3. Sep. 18-20

Jane Smith: Ch. 2 Contribution to the development of Islam

Week 4. Sep. 25-27

Jane Smith: Ch. 3 Islam Comes to America

Week 5. Oct. 2-4

Jane Smith: Cont. Ch. 3 Islam Comes to America

Week 6 Oct. 9-11

Jane Smith: Ch. 4 (part one) Islam in the African American Community
& choosing the topic of the term paper

Week 7. Oct. 16

Jane Smith: Ch. 4 (part two) Islam in the African American Community

Oct. 18 **Midterm Exam**

Week 8. Oct. 23-25

Jane Smith: Ch. 5. The Public Practice of Islam

Week 9. Oct. 30- Nov. 1

Visiting local mosques

Week 10. Nov. 6- 8

Jane Smith: Ch. 6 Women and the Muslim American Family

Week 11. Nov. 13-15

Jane Smith: Ch. 6 Women and the Muslim American Family

Week 12. Nov. 20-22

Thanks giving recess

Week 13. Nov. 27-29

Jane Smith: Ch. 7 Living a Muslim Life in American Society

& Submitting a draft of the term paper

Week 14. Dec. 4-6

Jane Smith: Ch. 8 Islam in America Post 9/11

& Submitting the final draft of the paper

Week 15: Final Exam: Tuesday December 11, 1:00 to 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.