

**The College of Humanities: Religion
RELI 2330A: The Qur'an**

Professor A. Geissinger
Office Hours: Tuesdays 9:30-11:30 am,
or by appointment

Office: 2A41 Paterson Hall
Office phone: (613) 520-2600, ext. 3108
Email: Aisha_Geissinger@carleton.ca

Course Lectures: Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:05-2:25 pm (2104 Canal Building)

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the Qur'an, the sacred scripture of the Islamic religious tradition. Topics to be covered include: the history of the written text, major themes of the Qur'an, the idea of revelation, the Qur'an's structure and literary style, and quranic interpretation (*tafsir*), as well as the roles of the Qur'an in the lives of Muslims past and present. No previous knowledge of the Qur'an is assumed.

NOTE: It is not the purpose of this course to attempt to persuade you to adopt or reject any particular religious viewpoint. This course presupposes that students accept that the Qur'an will be studied using critical methods that are employed in a modern research university when examining any text, religious or otherwise.

Course Evaluation

Your final grade will be determined by the following:

- In-class pop quizzes—20%
- Mid-term exam—30%
- Written assignment on text and interpretation—15%
- Final Exam—35%

NOTE: Both the readings and the lectures are essential components of this course. The readings cannot substitute for the lectures—or *vice versa*. Some course materials will only be covered in class. It is expected that all students will come to class regularly, having already done the readings.

The in-class pop quizzes ask questions drawn from the readings. They are my way of marking class preparation (meaning, whether you are doing the readings) as well as attendance. Students may choose to substitute up to three (3) of the pop quizzes with written responses to the assigned reading(s) for the day on which a given quiz is held (1½- 2 double-spaced, typed pages in length). Written responses must be submitted to the professor in hard copy by noon the next day in order to be counted for credit. Aside from these 3 written responses, no make-up tests or other substitutions for the in-class quizzes will be permitted under any circumstances.

Required Course Readings

The following textbooks are required:

- Carl Ernst, *How to Read the Qur'an: A New Guide* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2011).
- Jane Dammen McAuliffe, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to the Qur'an* (Cambridge University Press, 2008). [CCQ]
- Ingrid Mattson, *The Story of the Qur'an: Its History and Place in Muslim Life* (Blackwell, 2013).
- *The Qur'an: A New Translation*, trans. M.A.S. Abdel Haleem (Oxford University Press, any edition).
- These books are available through Haven Books (43 Seneca Street, Ottawa, www.havenbooks.ca).

COURSE POLICIES

Exams

Please note that there will be no make-up examination for the mid-term. If you must miss the mid-term, you must choose whether to add its value to your final exam mark, or to your written assignment mark. In order to qualify for either of these options, you must (1) provide adequate documentation which shows why you missed the midterm, and (2) fill out a form (available in my office) asking to have the normal grade distribution changed.

In order to pass this course, you must pass the final exam. This stipulation stands regardless of the quality of your work during the rest of the term.

The Written Assignment

- **Ensure that you know what plagiarism is**, and how to avoid it. For details, see: <http://www2.carleton.ca/studentaffairs.academic-integrity/> If you are in any doubt about what constitutes plagiarism, ask.
- **If you have never written a paper like this before**, you are strongly urged to contact the Student Academic Success Centre: <http://www2.carleton.ca/sasc/writing-tutorial-service/writing-resources/>
- **Assignments are due** in hard copy, at the beginning of class, on the date specified in the syllabus. Late papers will be penalized by the deduction of 2% per day or partial day (including weekends), unless an extension has been arranged before the due date. Retroactive extensions will be granted only according to the rules of the university—personal and family emergencies (documentation must be provided). Extensions will not be granted because of exam or essay conflicts, jobs, busy schedules, etc.
- **Late papers can be submitted** through the drop box at the Religion and Classics Department (a large locked wooden box on the wall outside 2A39 Paterson Hall). Do not put them under my (or anyone else's) door; the cleaning staff may pick them up and throw them out.

- **Papers that do not follow the directions given** in class (in content, methodology, appearance, length) may be returned ungraded for resubmission. In such a case. Late penalties will accrue from the due date, regardless of when the problem was discovered.
- **Be sure to keep a hard copy of your paper**, and do a computer/disk back-up as well. Please submit the original for marking, not a photocopy.
- More detailed instructions for the assignment will be provided in class.

Email communication

Please be aware that in order to ensure compliance with the federal privacy act known as FIPPA, Carleton communications policy states that faculty may only communicate with students through their Carleton Connect accounts.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1

Sept. 9—Introduction to the course; academic approaches to the Qur'an

Sept. 11—Muhammad and the Qur'an: historical questions

Readings: Mattson, Chapter One, Donner, "The Historical Context," 23-39 [CCQ]

Week 2

Sept. 16—The transmission and collection of the Qur'an: historical questions

Readings: Bukhari, "Book of the virtues of the Qur'an," hadiths #4702-4703 (WebCT); Gilliot, "Creation of a fixed text," 41-57 [CCQ]; Mattson, Chapter Three (pages 79-109 only).

Sept. 18—The Qur'an's form and structure; how Muslims traditionally read the Qur'an

Reading: Ernst, 37-58; Mattson, Chapter Four.

Week 3

Sept. 23—Suras from the first Meccan period

Readings: ; Suras: 96, 74, 111, 108, 107, 102, 105, 92, 94, 93, 97, 80, 68, 95, 103, 73, 101, 99, 53, and 84.

Sept. 25—Early Meccan suras: historical contextualization, themes and structure

Reading: Ernst, 76-104.

Week 4

Sept. 30— Reading early Meccan suras

Readings: Suras 100, 88, 89, 83, 51, 52, 56, 55, 112, 109, 113, 114, 1, and 54.

Oct. 2— Structural and stylistic approaches to suras from the second Meccan period

Readings: Suras 15, 36, 50, 26, 15; Ernst, 105-120.

Week 5

Oct. 7— Structure, style and aesthetic reception

Readings: Suras 20 and 19; Graham and Kermani, “Recitation and aesthetic reception,” 115-141 [CCQ]

Oct. 9—The Qur’an and the biblical tradition; the Sura of the Cave

Readings: Suras 17 and 18; Ernst, 120-138.

Week 6

Oct. 14—Thanksgiving (no class)

Oct. 16 ***mid-term exam (in class)**

Week 7

Oct. 21—Quranic narrative: the story of Joseph

Readings: Sura 12; Mustansir Mir, “The Qur’anic Story of Joseph: Plot, Themes, and Characters,” *The Muslim World* 76.1 (Jan. 1986), 1-15 (library resource: link on WebCT)

Oct. 23—The quranic rhetoric of debate; key features of suras from the third Meccan period

Readings: Suras 32, 30, 11, 14, 40, 6; Ernst, 138-154.

Week 8

Oct. 28—Fall Break (no class)

Oct. 30—Fall Break (no class)

Week 9

Nov. 4—Introducing Medinan suras

Readings: Sura 2; Ernst, 155-171.

Nov. 6—Structure and narrative in Medinan suras

Readings: Ernst, 171-190; Sura 3.

Week 10

Nov. 11—Major themes of Medinan suras

Readings: 47, 61, 57, 4, 63, 24, 58 and 22.

Nov. 13—Legal passages in the Qur'an

Readings: Suras 9 and 5; Ernst 190-212.

Week 11

Nov. 18—Classical Qur'anic interpretation (*tafsir*)

Reading: McAuliffe, "The tasks and traditions of interpretation," 181-209 [CCQ]

Nov. 20—Introducing contemporary approaches to interpreting the Qur'an

Reading: Mattson, Chapter Five

Week 12

Nov. 25—Contemporary quranic interpretations: pluralism

Reading: Sachedina, "The Qur'an and other religions," 291-309 [CCQ]

Nov. 27—Contemporary quranic interpretations: Muslim feminist rereadings

Reading: Barlas, "Women's readings of the Qur'an," 255-271 [CCQ]

Week 13

Dec. 2—Politics and quranic interpretation

Reading: Wild, "Political interpretation of the Qur'an," 273-289 [CCQ]

Dec. 4—The Qur'an, ritual, and future directions

Reading: Mattson, Chapter Three (pages 109-140 only).

Week 14

Dec. 9—Course conclusion and review * **Written Assignment Due (in class)**

REGULATIONS COMMON TO ALL HUMANITIES COURSES

COPIES OF WRITTEN WORK SUBMITTED

Always retain for yourself a copy of all essays, term papers, written assignments or take-home tests submitted in your courses.

PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in “*substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.*”

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of “F” for the course

GRADING SYSTEM

Letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100 (12)	B = 73-76 (8)	C - = 60-62 (4)
A = 85-89 (11)	B- = 70-72 (7)	D+ = 57-59 (3)
A- = 80-84 (10)	C+ = 67-69 (6)	D = 53-56 (2)
B+ = 77-79 (9)	C = 63-66 (5)	D - = 50-52 (1)

F	Failure. Assigned 0.0 grade points
ABS	Absent from final examination, equivalent to F
DEF	Official deferral (see “Petitions to Defer”)
FND	Failure with no deferred exam allowed -- assigned only when the student has failed the course on the basis of inadequate term work as specified in the course outline.

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean.

WITHDRAWAL WITHOUT ACADEMIC PENALTY

The last date to withdraw from **FALL TERM** courses is **DEC. 9, 2013**. The last day to withdraw from **FALL/WINTER (Full Term)** and **WINTER** term courses is **APRIL 8, 2014**.

REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term because of disability, pregnancy or religious obligations. Please review the course outline promptly and write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at: carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Documented disabilities could include but not limited to mobility/physical impairments, specific Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/psychological disabilities, sensory disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and chronic medical conditions. Registered PMC students are required to contact the PMC, 613-520-6608, every term to ensure that your Instructor receives your Letter of Accommodation, no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations. If you only require accommodations for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodations to PMC by **Nov. 8, 2013** for the Fall term and **March 7, 2014** for the Winter term. For more details visit the Equity Services website: carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/

PETITIONS TO DEFER

If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a **FINAL** assignment by the due date because of circumstances beyond your control, you may apply a deferral of examination/assignment. If you are applying for a deferral due to illness you will be required to see a physician in order to confirm illness and obtain a medical certificate dated no later than one working day after the examination or assignment deadline. This supporting documentation must specify the date of onset of the illness, the degree of incapacitation, and the expected date of recovery.

If you are applying for a deferral for reasons other than personal illness, please [contact](#) the Registrar’s Office directly for information on other forms of documentation that we accept.

Deferrals of assignments must be supported by confirmation of the assignment due date, for example a copy of the course outline specifying the due date and any documented extensions from the course instructor.

Deferral applications for examination or assignments must be submitted within **5 working days** of the original final exam.

ADDRESSES: (Area Code 613)

College of the Humanities 520-2809	300 Paterson
Greek and Roman Studies Office 520-2809	300 Paterson
Religion Office 520-2100	2A39 Paterson
Registrar's Office 520-3500	300 Tory
Student Academic Success Centre 520-7850	302 Tory
Paul Menton Centre 520-6608/TTY 520-3937	501 Uni-Centre
Writing Tutorial Service 520-2600 Ext. 1125	4 th Floor Library
Learning Support Service 520-2600 Ext 1125	4 th Floor Library