

The College of Humanities: Religion
RELI 3340A: The Life and Image of Muhammad

Professor A. Geissinger

Office: 2A41 Paterson Hall

Office Hours: Tuesdays 10:30-12:30 am,
or by appointment

Office phone: (613) 520-2600, ext. 3108

Email: AishaGeissinger@CUNET.CARLETON.CA

Course Lectures: Mondays 8:35-11:25 am (Southam Hall 501)

Course Description

This course examines the life of Muhammad as it is presented in biographical and historical Muslim writings. Students will be introduced to the critical methods used in contemporary academic scholarship to investigate and reconstruct Muhammad's life. Issues to be studied include: Muhammad's teachings, the relationship between Muhammad's life and the Quran, Muslim concepts of prophecy, Muhammad's religious significance for Muslims, and common Western European perceptions of Muhammad's life, past and present.

NOTE: This course presupposes that students accept that Muhammad's life will be studied using critical methods which are employed in a modern research university when examining any historical figure. All those taking this course are required to study historical-critical methods, as well as to critically examine a selection of the various ways that Muhammad has been presented historically—both by Muslims of different sectarian and theological persuasions, as well as by indifferent or hostile Others.

Course Evaluation

Your final grade will be determined by the following:

- In-class assignments and group work—20%
- Mid-term exam—25%
- Essay—20%
- Final Exam—35%

NOTE: Both the readings and the classes 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, and ready to participate in group work. Be aware that the readings for this course are heavy. When signing up for this course, it is important to consider whether you will be able to make the time commitment required.

Required Course Readings

The following textbooks are required:

- Jonathan Brockopp, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Muhammad* (Cambridge University Press, 2010).
- Kecia Ali, *The Lives of Muhammad* (Harvard University Press, 2014).
- These books are available through Haven Books (43 Seneca Street, Ottawa, www.havenbooks.ca).
- All other required readings are available online. Links are posted on cuLearn.

COURSE POLICIES

In-class assignments and group work

The in-class assignments ask questions drawn from the readings. In-class group work involves small-group discussion/analysis of an assigned reading (typically, of a primary source text), with findings reported to the class. The assignments and group work are my way of marking class preparation and contribution to the class discussion, as well as attendance. Therefore, it is not possible to make up or substitute for either the quizzes or the group work.

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.

Extensions and late papers

The essay is due in hard copy on the date and time specified in the syllabus. Late papers will be penalized by the deduction of 2 marks 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.

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

Jan. 11—Retellings of Muhammad's life, past and present

Readings: Ali, Chapter 1

Week 2

Jan. 18—Historical methods; the world on the eve of Muhammad's birth

Readings: Peters, "The quest of the historical Muhammad" (link on cuLearn); Saleh, "The Arabian context of Muhammad's life," 21-38 (in Brockopp);

Week 3

Jan. 25—History, context, and Muhammad's early life; Muhammad's Meccan preaching

Readings: Qur'an chapters: 105, 106, 96, 73, 74, 93, 94, 108 and 53; Conrad, "Abraha and Muhammad: some observations apropos of chronology" (link on cuLearn)

Week 4

Feb. 1—Major themes of Muhammad's Meccan preaching; Muhammad and the Meccans

Reading: Qur'an chapters: 112, 102, 107, 109, 99, 100, 104, 111, 91, 92, 89, 76, 71, 28, 14.18, 19, 20, 91, and 54; Rubin, "Muhammad's message in Mecca," pp. 39-60 (in Brockopp)

Week 5

Feb. 8— Establishing a community in Yathrib/Medina

Readings: "The so-called Constitution of Medina," 75-79 (Brockopp); Lecker, "Glimpses of Muhammad's Medinan decade," 61-82 (in Brockopp); Qur'an chapters: 60, 3, 4, 33 and 61.

Week 6

Feb. 15—Winter Break (no class)

Week 7

Feb. 22 * **mid-term exam (in class)**

Week 8

Feb. 29— Internal and external conflicts; the fall of Mecca; Muhammad's last days

Readings: Lecker, "Waqidi's account of the status of the Jews in Medina," 15-32 (link on cuLearn); Qur'an chapters: 63, 24, 110, 48 and 9.

Week 9

March 7—Medieval debates about the scope of *'isma*: the “Story of the Cranes”; Muhammad as an exemplar

Readings: Qur'an chapter: 53; Ahmed, “Ibn Taymiyya and the Satanic Verses,” 67-124 (link on cuLearn); Gleave, “Personal piety,” 103-122 (in Brockopp)

Week 10

March 14— Common medieval and modern Western European perceptions of Muhammad

Reading: Tolan, “European accounts of Muhammad’s life,” 226-250 (in Brockopp); Ali, Chapters 2 and 3

Week 11

March 21—Muhammad and constructions of gender, marriage and family

Readings: Ali, Chapters 4 and 5

Week 12

March 28—Constructions of Muhammad as a cosmic figure

Readings: Bashir, “Muhammad in Sufi eyes,” 201-225 (in Brockopp); Ali, Chapter 6

Week 13 * Essay Due (in class)

April 4—Muslim veneration of Muhammad

Readings: Katz, “The Prophet Muhammad in ritual,” 139-157 (in Brockopp)

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. 7, 2015**. The last day to withdraw from **FALL/WINTER (Full Term)** and **WINTER** term courses is **APRIL 8, 2016**.

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. 6, 2015** for the Fall term and **March 6, 2016** 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 a final assignment or take home, in courses without a final examination, 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