

RELI 2702A

Islam in the Modern World

Instructor – J Sims

Carleton University, College of the Humanities

Greek and Roman Studies and Religion

Lecture Time – Tuesdays and Thursdays – 11:35-12:55

Lecture Room – TBA

SIMS OFFICE – Paterson Bldg
Room 329 C
Office Hours – TBA
Office hours also by Appointment

The course will proceed through a number of provocative reform movements and thinkers in recent Islamic history, many of which began to emerge in the 18th and 19th century. During this period, *Islam* was confronted by the ideological powers of western imperialism, and the provocation of western rational discourse. The provocative discourse of the west challenged Islam from a number of perspectives, not the least of which originated from socio-political, scientific, philosophical, and religious spheres. As a consequence of this western inclusion or intrusion, Islamic reformers have since been confronted with two, somewhat general choices in the matter of Islamic reform. One choice identifies those thinkers who seek to define Islam from within, and thus, *without* the adoption of western ideas and secular practices: these thinkers view the west as something of a threat to the hegemony and continuity of the revealed faith. Others, however, have sought to reform Islam from beyond, transcending the historicity of the faith, and adopting – to a considerable extent – the use of western ideological sources for their reformation.

After exploring some of the provocative thinkers from previous centuries, we ultimately arrive at the humanistic ruminations of an Iranian thinker, Abdulkarim Soroush, whose work *Reason, Freedom, and Democracy in Islam* (Oxford: 2000) attempts to give proper pace to Muslim life in the 21st century. Soroush is one of the most sensitive thinkers that Islam has witnessed in recent memory, and was adjudged by *Time Magazine* (2005) as one of the most important intellectuals in the 20th century: "Nobody studies modern liberal Islam without studying Soroush," urges one Islamic professor from Harvard University. Soroush's essential writings will provide us with a minor focus for the latter part of the course.

Throughout the course, we will inevitably broach controversial topics, those that present serious challenges to the Muslim faith, and that help create the diverse modern cultures of Islam. Within the modern world, Muslims from various global regions struggle to comprehend Islam's hegemonic claims in the vast world of revealed religions and western secularized culture. Inviting all critique and criticism, we will find ourselves asking basic and contentious questions, such as, what political rights do Muslims have in the present world, and how can Muslims situate themselves both politically and existentially in the intellectually advanced world of the 21st century.

Required Course Texts – available at Carleton Bookstore

Reason, Freedom, and Democracy in Islam (Oxford: 2000) – Abdulkarim Soroush.

Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives, 2nd Edition (Oxford: 2007) – John J. Donahue and John L Esposito, Eds.

Unholy War (Oxford: 2002) – John L Esposito.

Reading Schedule - forthcoming

Grading Requirements and Deadlines

Short Quiz – 10%
1st Essay – 20%
Mid Term Exam – 20%
Short Quiz 2 – 15%
Final Paper – 35%

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and will not be tolerated. The instructor will be very specific about the use and abuse of Internet and Web sources for this course. For further information on plagiarism see the Academic Regulations of the University in the Carleton University Undergraduate Calendar, 2008-09 (Section 14.3) or, go to www.carleton.ca/cuuc/regulations/acadregsuniv14.html.

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 range from a mark of zero for the plagiarized work to a final grade of “F” for the course, and even suspension from all studies or expulsion from the University.

GRADING SYSTEM

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

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

F	Failure. No academic credit
WDN	Withdrawn from the course
ABS	Absent from the final examination
DEF	Official deferral (see “Petitions to Defer”)
FND	“Failed, no Deferral” – assigned when the student is absent from the final exam and 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 November 7, 2008. The last day to withdraw from Fall/Winter (full year) and Winter term courses is March 6, 2009.

REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

1. For Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodations are required to contact a co-ordinator at the Paul Menton Centre (ext. 6608) to complete the necessary *letters of accommodation*. The student must then make an appointment to discuss their needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first in-class or CUTV test. This is to ensure sufficient time is available to make the necessary accommodation arrangements. Deadlines for submitting forms for formally scheduled exam accommodation: November 7 for December examinations and March 6, 2009 for April examinations.

2. For Religious Obligations

Students requesting academic accommodation on the basis of religious obligation should make a formal, written request to their instructors for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student.

Students or instructors who have questions or want to confirm accommodation eligibility of a religious event or practice may refer to the Equity Services website for a list of holy days and Carleton’s Academic Accommodation policies, or may contact an Equity Services Advisor in the Equity Services Department for assistance. (613-520-5622)

3. For Pregnancy:

Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services (613-520-5622) to complete a *letter of accommodation*. The student must then make an appointment to discuss her needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.

PETITIONS TO DEFER

Students unable to complete a **final** term paper or write a **final** examination because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control or whose performance on an examination has been impaired by such circumstances may apply in writing within five working days to the Registrar’s Office for permission to extend a term paper deadline or to write a deferred examination. The request must be fully and specifically supported by a medical certificate or other relevant documentation. Only deferral petitions submitted to the Registrar’s Office will be considered.

ADDRESSES: (Area Code 613)

College of the Humanities 520-2809	300 Paterson
Classics and 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	500 Unicentre
Writing Tutorial Service 520-6632	4 th floor Library