

**The College of Humanities: Religion
RELI 2310A: Islam**

Professor A. Geissinger

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Office Hours: Mondays, 2:30-4:30 pm, or by appointment

Course Lectures: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:05-11:25 am (Southam Hall 517)

Course Description

This course is a survey of the history and development of the Islamic religious tradition. It traces Islam from its historical roots down to the present, with an emphasis on the formative and classical periods. The aim is to introduce students to key concepts, beliefs, and practices of Islam within a historical framework, with attention to the diversity of Muslim interpretations past and present.

NOTE: The purpose of this course is not to attempt to persuade you to adopt or reject a particular religious viewpoint. This course presupposes that students accept that Islam will be studied using critical methods which are employed in the academic discipline of Religious Studies.

Course Objectives

In this course, students will learn about:

- the main elements of Muslim thought and practice, and how these have developed over time
- the great variety of expressions of Islam past and present
- how classical intra-Muslim debates about Islam relate to particular historical contexts
- religion as a complex historical, cultural and social phenomenon

Required Course Readings

- Alexander Knysh, *Islam in Historical Perspective* (Routledge, 2017), 2nd ed. This book is available through Haven Books (43 Seneca Street, Ottawa, www.havenbooks.ca). **Be sure to get the second edition only.**
- All other assigned readings are available through cuLearn.

Course Evaluation

Your final grade will be determined by the following:

- In-class tests—45%
- Review essay (approx.. 5 pages)—20%
- Final exam (cumulative)—35%

In-class tests: Four in-class tests will be held during the semester, on the dates indicated on the syllabus. Your best three test scores will be used to calculate the 45% of your final grade for in-class tests. Your lowest test score will not be counted. Therefore, there will be no make-up tests for any in-class test(s) that you might miss.

Attendance: 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 discussed in class. It is expected that all students will attend class regularly, having already done the readings.

Review essay: Further instructions will be provided in class and posted on cuLearn.

Laptops and other electronic devices

In order to help maintain a respectful environment that is conducive to learning, laptops and other electronic devices are only to be used in class for matters directly related to the course.

Please note that no audio or video recording of lectures with any electronic device is allowed.

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: Introduction to the course; studying Islam in the discipline of Religious Studies; the Near East before Islam; pre-Islamic Arabia

Jan. 8 readings: syllabus; Knysh, “Introduction”

Jan. 10 reading: Knysh, Chapter 1

Week 2: Foundational events in early Muslim sacred history: Muhammad’s life; the *hijra*; the first four caliphs; the conquests

Jan. 15 readings: Knysh, Chapter 2; The Qur’an, suras 112, 110 [link on cuLearn].

Jan. 17 reading: Knysh, Chapter 3

Week 3: Rival visions of the saved community: the *fitna* wars

Jan. 22: ***First in-class test**

Jan. 24 reading: Knysh, Chapter 4

Week 4: The Qur’an; Kharijis, Shi’is, Sunnis

Jan. 29 readings: Knysh, Chapter 5; Suras 1, 13, 31, 58, 61, 71, 78, 91 and 96 [cuLearn]
Jan 31 readings: Knysh, Chapters 7 and 8

Week 5: Hadith and *sunna*

Feb. 5 reading: Knysh, Chapter 6

Feb. 7 reading: “Al-Nawawi’s Forty Hadith” [cuLearn]

Week 6: Sharia as a concept; Islamic legal thinking and legal schools

Feb. 12: ***Second in-class test**

Feb. 14 reading: Knysh, Chapter 9

Week 7: Winter Break (no classes)

Week 8: Muslim ritual practices; transmission of knowledge and religious authority

Feb. 26 reading: Knysh, Chapter 16

Feb. 28 reading: Knysh, Chapter 15

Week 9: Classical theological and philosophical debates

March 5 readings: Knysh, Chapter 10

March 7 reading: Knysh, Chapter 14

Week 10: Classical Shi’isms: Twelver, Zaydi, and Isma’ili

March 12: ***Third in-class test**

March 14 readings: Knysh, Chapter 11; “Forty hadith on azadari” [cuLearn]

Week 11: Muslim ascetic and mystical movements

March 19 reading: Knysh, Chapter 13

March 21 reading: Arberry, *Muslim Saints and Mystics*, pp. 29-47 (Rabe’a al-Adawiya) [cuLearn]

Week 12: The impact of modernity; movements of renewal and reform

March 26 reading: Knysh, Chapter 20 ****Written report due today** (in class)

March 28 reading: Knysh, Chapter 21

Week 13: Major trends in modern Muslim religious thought

April 2: ***Fourth in-class test**

April 4 readings: Knysh, Chapters 22 and 23

Week 14

April 9: Course conclusion and review



University Regulations for 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.

Academic Integrity at Carleton

Plagiarism is presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas, or work of others as one's own. Plagiarism includes 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. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, art works, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, and material on the internet. More information can be found [here](#).

Academic Accommodation Policy

Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to the instructor 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. For more details see the [Student Guide](#)

Religious obligation: write to the instructor 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. For more details see the [Student Guide](#)

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at

613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the [PMC website](#) for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

Survivors of Sexual Violence

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and is survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support

Accommodation for Student Activities

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor 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. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

Grading System at Carleton University

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor, subject to the approval of the faculty Dean. Standing in courses will be shown by alphabetical grades. The system of grades used, with corresponding grade points and the percentage conversion is below. Grade points indicated are for courses with 1.0 credit value. Where the course credit is greater or less than one credit, the grade points are adjusted proportionately.

[Grading System](#)

Course Sharing Websites and Copyright

Classroom teaching and learning activities, including lectures, discussions, presentations, etc., by both instructors and students, are copy protected and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s). All course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, outlines, and other materials, are also protected by copyright and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s).

Students registered in the course may take notes and make copies of course materials for their own educational use only. Students are not permitted to reproduce or

distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly for commercial or non-commercial purposes without express written consent from the copyright holder(s).

Statement on Class Conduct

The Carleton University Human Rights Policies and Procedures affirm that all members of the University community share a responsibility to:

- promote equity and fairness,
- respect and value diversity,
- prevent discrimination and harassment, and preserve the freedom of its members to carry out responsibly their scholarly work without threat of interference.

Deferred Term Work

In some situations, students are unable to complete term work because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control, which forces them to delay submission of the work.

Students who claim illness, injury or other extraordinary circumstances beyond their control as a reason for missed term work are held responsible for immediately informing the instructor concerned and for making alternate arrangements with the instructor and **in all cases this must occur no later than three (3.0) working days after the term work was due.**

The alternate arrangement must be made before the last day of classes in the term as published in the academic schedule. Normally, any deferred term work will be completed by the last day of term. More information is available [in the calendar](#).

Deferred Final Exams

Students who are unable to write a final examination because of a serious illness/emergency or other circumstances beyond their control may apply for accommodation. Normally, the accommodation for a missed final examination will be granting the student the opportunity to write a deferred examination. In specific cases when it is not possible to offer a deferred examination, and with the approval of the Dean, an alternate accommodation may be made. [More information.](#)

The application for a [deferral](#) must:

1. be made in writing or online to the Registrar's Office no later than **three working days** after the original final examination or the due date of the take-home examination; and,
2. be fully supported by appropriate documentation and, in cases of illness, by a medical certificate dated no later than one working day after the examination, or by appropriate documents in other cases. Medical documents must specify the date of the onset of the illness, the (expected) date of recovery, and the extent to which the student was/is incapacitated during the time of the examination. The University's preferred medical form can be found at the Registrar's Office [forms and fees page](#).

Any questions related to deferring a Final Exam or Final Assignment/Take Home Examination should be directed to the [Registrar's Office](#).

Withdrawal From Courses

Withdrawn. No academic credit, no impact on the CGPA. WDN is a permanent notation that appears on the official transcript for students who withdraw after the full fee adjustment date in each term (noted in the Academic Year section of the Calendar each term). Students may withdraw on or before the last day of classes.

Important dates can be found [here](#):

Financial vs. Academic Withdrawal

Make sure that you are aware of the separate deadlines for Financial and Academic withdrawal!

Making registration decisions in Carleton Central involves making a financial and academic commitment for the courses you choose, regardless of attendance. If you do not attend – you must withdraw in Carleton Central within the published deadlines to cancel your registration. [More information](#)

Department Contact Information

College of the Humanities 300 Paterson Hall (613)520-2809

CollegeOfHumanities@cunet.carleton.ca

Drop box for CLCV, HUMS LATN GREK Term Papers and assignments is outside 300 P.A.

Greek and Roman Studies 300 Paterson Hall (613)520-2809

GreekAndRomanStudies@cunet.carleton.ca

Drop Box is outside of 300 P.A.

Religion 2A39 Paterson Hall (613)520-2100

Religion@cunet.carleton.ca

Drop box for RELI and SAST Term Papers and assignments is outside of 2A39 P.A.

Registrar's Office 300 Tory (613)520-3500

<https://carleton.ca/registrar/>

Student Resources on Campus

[CUKnowHow Website](#)

[Academics: From registration to graduation, the tools for your success.](#)