

Carleton University

Winter 2011

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

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:35-9:55 am

Professor A. Geissinger
Office: Paterson Hall 2A57
Office hours: Wednesdays 10-12, or by appointment

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Course Description

This course is an introduction to the Quran, the sacred scripture of the Islamic religious tradition. Topics to be covered include: the idea of revelation, the history of the written text, major themes of the Quran, its structure and literary style, the development of the “sciences of the Quran” (*‘ulum al-Qur’an*) and quranic interpretation (*tafsir*), as well as the roles of the Quran in the lives of Muslims. No previous knowledge of the Quran is assumed.

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

Course Textbooks

The following textbooks are required:

- 1 - Anna Gade, *The Qur'an: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2010).
- 2 - Andrew Rippin, ed. *The Blackwell Companion to the Qur'an* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2008). [BCQ]
- 3 - *The Qur'an: A New Translation*, trans. M.A.S. Abdel Haleem (Oxford University Press, 2008).

- Several articles in PDF form, as well as the URLs for the online readings are posted on WebCT. Please print out these readings and bring them with you to class.

Course Requirements

Your final grade will be determined by the following:
In-class “one-minute essays” and pop quizzes—30%
Midterm exam—25%
Written assignment—15%
Final Exam—30%

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

The in-class “one-minute” essays and pop quizzes are based on the readings and lecture materials, and no make-up tests or other substitutions for them will be permitted.

COURSE SCHEDULE

I. History and structure

Week 1

Jan. 4—Introduction to the course

Jan. 6—Approaches to the study of the Quran; the Quran and the early Muslim community

Readings: Gade, 1-29; Sura 1 (al-Fatiha, “The Opening”)

Week 2

Jan. 11—Orality and the Quran

Jan. 13—The transmission and collection of the Quran

Readings: Ong, “Some psychodynamics of orality,” 31-76 (WebCT); Gade, 56-82; Bukhari, “Book of the virtues of the Qur’an,” hadiths # 4702-4703 (WebCT)

Week 3

Jan. 18—Quranic language and style

Jan. 20—Patterns of address in the Quran

Readings: Sura 26; Kermani, “Poetry and language,” 107-119 [BCQ]
Mir, “Language,” 88-106 [BCQ]; Gwynne, “Patterns of address,” 73-87 [BCQ]

II. Contents

Week 4

Jan. 25—Quranic conceptions of prophets and revelation

Jan. 27—Major themes: beliefs

Readings: Gade, 29-55; Rippin, “God,” 223-233 [BCQ]; Sura 112
Rubin, “Prophets and prophethood,” 234-247 [BCQ]; Sura 21

Week 5

Feb. 1—Major themes: “signs” and “guidance”

Feb. 3—Introducing quranic stories

Readings: Gade, 217-229; Sura 30, 55, 77

Gade, 229-239; Suras 7, 10, 11, 16, 18, 27, 85, 89

Week 6

Feb. 8—Narratives

Feb. 10 ***Mid-term exam**

Readings: Suras 12, 71

Week 7

Feb. 15—Moses in the Quran

Feb. 17—Mary and Jesus; the “stories of the prophets” genre

Readings: Suras 20 and 28; Wheeler, “Moses,” 248-265 [BCQ]

Suras 19 and 3; Klar, “Stories of the Prophets,” 338-349 [BCQ]

Week 8

Feb. 22—Winter Break

Feb. 24—Winter Break

Week 9

March 1—Major themes: eschatology

March 3—Quranic polemic

Readings: Gade, 239-269; Suras 36, 38, 39, 40, 41, 76, 81, 82, 99

Suras 68 and 9; Zebiri, “Argumentation,” 266-281 [BCQ]

III. Quranic interpretation

Week 10

March 8—Legal passages in the Quran

March 10—Meccan and Medinan suras; “occasions of revelation”

Readings: Suras 2, 4, 5; Gade, 109-159

Selections from al-Wahidi, *Asbab al-Nuzul* (WebCT); Reinhart, “Jurisprudence,” 434-449 [BCQ]

Week 11

March 15—Quranic commentary and theology

March 17—Approaches to quranic interpretation

Readings: Gade, 82-108

Saleh, “Hermeneutics: al-Tha’labi,” 323-337

Week 12

March 22— ***Written assignment due**

Twelver Shi’i approaches to quranic interpretation

Readings: Steigerwald, “Twelver Shi’i *Ta’wil*,” 373-385 [BCQ]

IV. The Quran: artistic expression and Muslim piety

March 24—Memorization (*hifz*); the art of Quran recitation

Readings: Mattson, “A sacred pedigree,” 76-82 (WebCT); Gade, 171-182

Week 13

March 29—The Quran in ritual

March 31—The Quran and Muslim piety

Readings: Gade, 182-216

Murad, “What the Prophet said about the excellent merits” (WebCT)

Week 14

April 5—conclusion of the course; review

COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES

Expectations

These are my expectations for you this semester:

- Come to class on time
- Attend every class (if a medical problem or emergency results in you missing more than three classes, contact me)
- Do the readings before coming to class
- Join in class discussion and listen respectfully to others

Getting the most out of this course (and increasing your chances of doing well)

- **Do the assigned readings before coming to class.** That way, you will get a lot more out of the lecture, find it easier to take notes, and can contribute to the class discussion. Do not put off doing the readings until just before an exam.
- **Attend class regularly.** Classes often provide information and viewpoints not found in the assigned readings, and exams are based on the lectures as well as the readings. Any changes to the course schedule will be announced in class. Also, areas to focus on in your readings of primary sources will be identified and discussed.
- **Take an active part in class discussion.** Ask questions, and relate the readings to the lecture materials.
- **Take notes.** I usually give a brief outline of the lecture at the beginning of the class; use that as a guide to your note-taking. Pay special attention to information and ideas that relate to the major themes of the course. For tips on taking lecture notes, see: <http://www.csbsju.edu/academicadvising/help/lec-note.htm>
- **Note key terms.** The lectures will regularly call attention to key terms, which I usually write on the board; key terms also appear in the readings. Keep a list of such terms, making a note of their meaning and significance in the context of this course. On the exams, you will be asked to define and explain the significance of key terms.
- **Make use of the library.** In particular, make use of standard reference works, such as the *Encyclopedia of the Qur'an* and the *Encyclopedia of Islam*.

Exams

The mid-term and final exams will be made up of short-answer (i.e. define and explain the significance of...) and essay questions.

Please note that **there will be no make-up examination for the midterm**. If you must miss the midterm, you must choose whether to add the 25% value of this exam to your final exam, or to your written assignment. 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.

The Written Assignment

More detailed instructions for this assignment will be provided in class.

- 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.
- **Assignments are due** in hard copy, at the beginning of class, on March 22. 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 to me in my office, or put in 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 outlined above and 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 photo-copy.
- **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/>

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.

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:

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|------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 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) |

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| 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. 6, 2010**. The last day to withdraw from **FALL/WINTER (Full Term)** and **WINTER** term courses is **APRIL 5, 2011**.

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 the last official day to withdraw from classes in each term. For more details visit the PMC website: carleton.ca/pmc/accommodations/

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)

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| 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 |