

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

Professor A. Geissinger

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

Course Lectures: Mondays, 11:35 am to 2:25 pm (Residence Commons 214)

Course Description

This course examines the life of Muhammad as it is presented in biographical and historical Muslim writings. Issues to be studied include: the critical methods used in contemporary academic scholarship to investigate and reconstruct Muhammad's life, surviving historical sources, the relationship between Muhammad's life and the Qur'an, and the veneration of Muhammad as reflected in religious texts.

Learning Objectives

In this course, students will:

- Learn about historical-critical methods
- Examine the main issues and challenges involved in historians' attempts to reconstruct Muhammad's life
- Learn about some of the ways that Muhammad has been represented historically by Muslims with various theological and sectarian perspectives
- Further develop their ability to analyze primary source texts within their historical contexts
- Hone their ability to summarize, analyze, and discuss academic arguments in a nuanced way
- Further improve their research and writing skills

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. 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

Ma'mar ibn Rashid, *The Expeditions: An Early Biography of Muhammad*, trans. Sean Anthony (New York University Press, 2015).

Jonathan Brockopp, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Muhammad* (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

These two books are available through Haven Books (43 Seneca Street, Ottawa, www.havenbooks.ca).

M.A.S. Abdel Haleem's Qur'an translation is one that will be used in this course. An inexpensive paperback edition can be obtained online, and the library has two electronic copies of it.

All other readings are available through 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. Active, informed, and regular participation in both is key to developing your ability to critically analyze texts. Therefore, it will not be possible to make up or substitute for either the in-class assignments 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 essay 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) request 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 5 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 for personal or 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, which is a large locked wooden box on the wall outside 2A39 Paterson Hall.

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. 7—Introduction to the course; the Middle East before Muhammad; introducing historical method

Readings: Peters, “The quest of the historical Muhammad” (cuLearn)

Week 2

Jan. 14—Pre-Islamic Arabia; the sources for Muhammad’s life

Readings: *The Expeditions*, pp. xv-xxxiv

Hoyland, “The Earliest Christian Writings on Muhammad,” pp. 276-97 (cuLearn)

Week 3

Jan. 21—Representations of Muhammad’s early life

Readings: Qur’an chapters 93, 94, 105, 106, 108

Conrad, “Abraha and Muhammad: Some observations apropos of chronology,” pp. 225-40 (cuLearn)

The Expeditions, pp. 3-13

Week 4

Jan. 28—Muhammad and the Meccans; Muhammad’s early preaching

Readings: Qur’an chapters: 96, 102, 107, 109, 99, 100, 104, 111, 91, 92, 89, 76, 71, 28, 14.

The Expeditions, pp. 13-25; 113

Saleh, “The Arabian context of Muhammad’s life,” pp. 21-34 (in Brockopp)

Week 5

Feb. 4—Major themes of Muhammad’s Meccan preaching

Readings: Qur’an chapters: 54, 6

Saleh, “The Arabian context of Muhammad’s life,” pp. 34-38 (in Brockopp)

Rubin, “Muhammad’s message in Mecca,” pp. 39-60 (in Brockopp)

Week 6

Feb. 11— The *hijra* and the Medina Agreement

Readings: “The so-called Constitution of Medina,” 75-79 (in Brockopp)

Lecker, “Glimpses of Muhammad’s Medinan decade,” 61-82 (in Brockopp)

Qur’an chapter: 60

The Expeditions, pp. 113-29

Week 7

Feb. 18—Winter Break (no class)

Week 8

Feb. 25—**midterm exam** (in class)

Week 9

March 4—Muhammad as a law-giver

Readings: Qur'an chapters: 2, 24, 65

The Expeditions, pp. 149-159; 273-281.

Lowry, "The Prophet as a lawgiver and legal authority," pp. 83-102
(in Brockopp)

Week 10

March 11—Muhammad as a political and military leader

Readings: Lecker, "Waqidi's account of the status of the Jews in Medina," pp. 15-32 (cuLearn)

Qur'an chapters: 59, 63

The Expeditions, pp. 51-65; 77-81; 145-147; 67-75; 83-93

Week 11

March 18—Conflicts with the Meccans; the fall of Mecca; Muhammad's last days

Readings: Qur'an chapters: 48, 110

The Expeditions, pp. 27-49; 95-111; 239-243; 131-143; 177-191

Week 12

March 25 —Medieval debates about the scope of *'isma*

Readings: Qur'an chapter: 53

Ahmed, "Ibn Taymiyya and the Satanic Verses," pp. 67-124 (cuLearn);

Week 13

April 1—Muslim veneration of Muhammad

Readings: Gleave, "Personal piety," pp. 103-122 (in Brockopp)

Katz, "The Prophet Muhammad in ritual," pp. 139-157 (in Brockopp)

Week 14 *essays due (in class)

April 8: 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.](#)