

RELI 2509A

Islam

Instructor –Dr. Jeff Sims

Carleton University, College of the Humanities

Greek and Roman Studies and Religion

Lecture Time – Monday and Wednesdays: 10:05-11:25

Lecture Room – SOUTHAM HALL 416

SIMS OFFICE – 329C Paterson Hall

Office Hours – Wednesdays 12 - 1pm

Or, by Appointment

This course begins with the birth of Muhammad in 570 c.e and culminates at the end of the Mughal reign in India, in 1858. Throughout our study, we look at key features of Islamic development, its terminology and beliefs. Beginning with the biography and spiritual development of Muhammad, we observe the development of Islamic literature, most notably, the *Qur'ān* – the sacred text of Islam – and its exegesis (*tafsīr*) – as well as the commentaries on the life, character, acts, and sayings of the prophet (*Sunnah, Hadith*). It is from these texts that Islamic customs, observances, rituals, and beliefs forge a community of belief (*Umma*), one that gives identity and solidity to Muslim life. Following the prophet's death the development of the Caliphate will be discussed, that which gave rise to early Muslim Dynasties and the first major sectarian division in Islam, between the *Sunnīs* and *Shī'ites*.

Islam is a religion that fosters the creative power of interpretation. Various hermeneutical currents in Islamic thought will be studied, such as the rise of Muslim jurists and legal scholars (the study of *Shari'a* and *fiqh*) as well as the rise of dialectical theology (*Kalām*) in the schools (*Mu'tazalites* and later, *Ash'arism*). Philosophy was also well served by the House of Wisdom in Baghdad, which introduced the interpreted works of Neo-Platonic and Aristotelian thought to the Islamic world. This influx of philosophical thinking takes place through significant Muslim translators and philosophers, such as Al-Kindī (d. 870), and Al-Fārābī (d. 950), and progresses even further with ibn-Sina (d. 1037) and ibn-Rushd (d. 1198), each, who will be made familiar to us in the course. In response to analytic and scholastic tendencies of both theology and philosophy, the emergence of Islamic mysticism, notably Sufism – with the support of thinkers like Al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) – will be studied.

Throughout the course, we will be attentive to the geographic spread of Islam through Egypt, Syria, Iraq, North Africa, and Spain, and we establish the impact of the Christian crusades, especially as these expeditions threatened to halt the persistent march of Muslim power. We will also take note of Islam's reaction to other – existing – faiths, and their manner of dealing with non-Muslim beliefs. We note the emergence of the Ottoman Empire in the late 13th century – its unification of Arab peoples under the banner of Islam – and its interaction with non-Muslim cultures. Finally, we conclude our course by observing salient features of Islam's conquests in India, beginning in the 16th century.

Required Course Texts – (Reading Schedule TBA)

Caesar E. Farah – *Islam: Beliefs and Observances*. New York: Barron's, 2004.

Reza Aslan – *No God But God. The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam*. New York: Random House, 2005.

Further Readings and Reading Schedule – TBA

Grading Requirements and Deadlines

1st Quiz – 15% (September 22nd)

Assignment – 15% (October 8th)

Mid-Term Exam – 25% (October 29th)

Short Essay – 15% (November 17th)

Final Exam – 30% (TBA)

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 “to use and pass off as one’s own idea or product the work of another without expressly giving credit to another.” This can include:

- Copying from another person's work without indicating this through appropriate use of quotation marks and footnote citations.
- Lengthy and close paraphrasing of another person's work (i.e. extensive copying interspersed with a few phrases or sentences of your own).
- Submitting written work produced by someone else as if it were your own work (e.g. another student's term paper, a paper purchased from a term paper "factory", materials or term papers downloaded from the Internet, etc.).
- Handing in "substantially the same piece of work to two or more courses without the prior written permission of the instructors...involved." (University Senate)

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.

WITHDRAWAL WITHOUT ACADEMIC PENALTY

The last date to withdraw from Fall term courses is November 7th, 2008. Last day to withdraw from Fall/Winter (full year) and Winter term courses is March 6th, 2009.

REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

For Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Registered PMC students are required to contact the centre, 613-520-6608, every term to ensure that I receive 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 require accommodation for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodation to PMC by November 7, 2008, for December examinations, and March 6, 2009, for April examinations.

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)

For Pregnancy:

Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services 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

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