

Dr. Spellberg

Spring 2012, W 5-8 pm

Class meets in

History of Islam in the United States, HIS 350R, ISL 372, RS 346

Office:

Office Hours:

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Course Description

This course is intended to do three things: provide a brief introduction to Islam; define the role of Islam and views of Muslims in the early history of this country; and introduce students to major issues concerning contemporary American Muslims. The course surveys the presence of Islam in the United States from the colonial era to the twenty-first century through the use of historical documents and contemporary media.

The course is divided into three sections. The first explores the origins of Islam through primary textual examples. The second section focuses on early American views of Islam in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with an emphasis on the earliest Muslims in the United States. The final section of the course analyzes the diversity of the contemporary American Muslim population. The course is designated as a Writing Flag with a series of assignments designed to improve written communication, including one peer review exercise.

Required Readings

Robert J. Allison, The Crescent Obscured: The United States and the Muslim World, 1776-1815

Kambiz GhaneaBassiri, A History of Islam in America

Jonathan Brown, Muhammad: A Very Short History

John Esposito, What Everyone Needs to Know About Islam, first edition

John Esposito, Islam: The Straight Path, 4th edition

Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, Jane I. Smith, and Kathleen M. Moore, Muslim Women in America: The Challenge of Islamic Identity Today

Michael Muhammad Knight, Blue-Eyed Devil: A Road Odyssey

Xerox documents in a course packet

All books on sale at the University Co-op and on reserve at PCL

Xerox document packet available at Speedway in Dobie Mall and on reserve at PCL

Grading/Requirements: Late Assignments Will Incur Grade Penalties/Final Grades include plus/minus

Journal Entries: 5%, assigned over the semester and *due in class. No late work accepted.*

Attendance Required/Class participation - each unexcused absence will result in a point deduction from the final grade

February 8 Quiz 10%

February 22 First Essay 20%

March 21 Second Essay 20%

18 April Biography peer-reviewed first draft, 5%

2 May Biography final version 20%

2 May Final Essay 20%

*For this class, you **must** buy a notebook of lined paper 8 x 11 inches. (No computers or electronic devices will be permitted in this class.) The journal will serve for required assignments to be checked by the instructor as required. *Students should also bring the document packet with them for discussion.

*Those students with disabilities may register for accommodations at Services for Students with Disabilities (471-6259) and should apprise the instructor of any specific arrangements needed.

*The University honor code will be strictly enforced in this class.

I. ISLAM: ORIGINS

Week 1 January 18: Class Objectives/Assignments

Week 2 January 25: Sources of the Faith

Readings

Brown, Muhammad. (all)

Esposito, *Straight Path*, xiii-35 (4th edition).

Documents in xerox packet: "Comparison of dialogue and debate," Qur'anic Verses 1 and 2, "Civilizational Imprisonments," and Williams, *Word of Islam*, 1-35 (internal 13-39)

*Journal Assignment #1 due in class: In two paragraphs, describe the main argument of "Civilizational Imprisonments" and explain how it might apply to this course. From the Williams reading, in one paragraph describe the importance of prophets in Islam. Select one quotation from Brown's book and be prepared to explain why you think it worthy of class discussion.

Week 3 February 1: Early History

Readings

Esposito, *Straight Path*, 35-46, [on reserve earlier edition 35-41]

Smith, 28-43 [on reserve earlier edition, 27-42]

Documents: Williams, *Word of Islam*, 36-end; "Pact of Umar," and "How the Jizya Is To Be Collected"

*Journal Assignment # 2 due in class: Explain in two paragraphs the importance of the "Pact" and the "Jizya" as historical documents. What do they reveal about Muslim interactions with non-Muslims?

Week 4 February 8: Islamic Expansion and Cultural Interaction

Quiz

Readings

Esposito, *Straight Path*, 46-73

Documents: Hitti, *An Arab-Syrian Gentleman and Warrior in the Period of the Crusades, Memoirs of Usamah ibn Munqidh*, excerpt "An Appreciation of the Frankish Character"

*Journal Assignment # 3 due in class: From the perspective of the Muslim author, what is the "Frankish Character?" Is his conversation with the "Frank" or European a dialogue, according to the list in your xerox packet? Describe this in two paragraphs.

II. ISLAM IN EARLY AMERICAN HISTORY

Week 5 February 15 :American Views of Islam

Readings

Allison, *Crescent Obscured*, xiii-85

Documents: Images of the “Pope and Turk” and “Mahomet” (internal pages 63-65); Hayes, “How Thomas Jefferson Read the Qur’an;” Hutson, “The Founding Fathers and Islam”

First Essay Assigned

Week 6 February 22: American Debates about Muslims

Readings

Allison, *Crescent Obscured*, 87-185

Documents: U.S. Constitution Article 6, paragraph 3; Elliot’s *Debates*, “Wednesday July 30, 1788,” 191-215, Library Research Guide

First Essay Due

Week 7 February 29: Politics of Religion and Equality

Readings

Allison, 187-end

Documents: From *Political Sermons of the American Founding Era*, “Connecticut Dissenter’s Strongbox, (1802)” 120-129, “Lawmaker Affirms Muslim Remarks,” p. 137 in packet

*Journal Assignment #4 due in class: Where in the “Connecticut” document are Muslims and Islam mentioned? How do each figure in the author’s sermon? What can we learn about the author from his argument? Three paragraphs.

Second Essay Assigned

Week 8 March 7: Race and the First American Muslims

Readings

GhaneaBassiri, 1-134.

*Journal Assignment # 5: due in class: Choose one enslaved African Muslim mentioned in this book. Explain why you think his story should be included in an American history class. Why do you think there are no biographies of African Muslim women? Two paragraphs.

Week 9 March 14 SPRING BREAK

III. ISLAM IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICA

Week 10 March 21: Ethnic Diversity

Esposito, *Straight Path*, 73-276

GhaneaBassiri, 135-271

Documents: “Muslims in America, (map)” “Muslim Americans,” “We Are Each Other’s Business”

Second Essay Due

Week 11 March 28: Muslim Women and American Muslim Institutions

Readings

GhaneaBassiri, 272-381

Haddad, Smith, and Moore, *Muslim Women in America* (all)

Documents: “A Tale of Two U.S. Muslim Women: To Cover or Not?”

* Journal Assignment # 6 due in class: Find two American Muslim women mentioned in Haddad, Smith, and Moore and explain why you think they are important in two paragraphs.

Week 12 April 4: Media Portrayals and the Arts

Readings

Knight, *Blue-Eyed Devil* (all)

Documents: “Promises and Possibilities

*Journal Assignment # 7 In two paragraphs, describe how Knight’s book captures Islam’s diversity in America. What scene or quotation was most interesting?

Final Two Assignments Distributed/Individual Meeting Times with Students

Finalized

Week 13 April 11: Student Conferences on Final Assignment

(Class Does Not Meet: Required Individual Student Meetings during Course Time in my Office in Garrison 3.208)

Week 14 April 18: American Politics

Readings

Esposito, *What Everyone Needs to Know about Islam*, all

Esposito, *Straight Path*, 276-end

“How the News Media Covered Religion in the General Election,” “Muslim Voters Detect a Snub from Obama”

First Draft of Biographies Due to Student Reviewer

Week 15: April 25 Student Presentations

Week 16: May 2 Student Presentations

Final Biography and Final Essay Due in Class