

The University of Calgary  
Faculty of Arts  
Department of Religious Studies

Religious Studies 353 L01  
Islam in the Modern World

Winter 2013

Block Week: January 2-7 WRFSaM 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Instructor: Dr. Gordon Nickel  
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Office Hours: By appointment  
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### Required Texts

1. Roxanne L. Euben and Muhammad Qasim Zaman, eds., *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought: Texts and Contexts from al-Banna to Bin Laden* (Princeton University Press, 2009).
2. Andrew Rippin, *Muslims: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, Fourth edition (Routledge, 2011).

(NOTE: Get these textbooks in paperback. Don't purchase earlier editions of *Muslims*.)

### Course Description

This course provides an introduction to modern Muslim religious thought and a selection of social, political and cultural issues connected with it. Important reform, revivalist and sectarian movements will be studied, as well as significant thinkers in modern Islam. The course will explore questions surrounding both the nature of Islam in the world today, and how Islam has dealt with the phenomenon of modernity. A special focus of this version of the course will be Islamist thought about Islamic Law, politics, gender and violence.

### Course Objectives

The objectives of the course are to familiarize students with the major modern trends in Islam, to take into account a variety of perspectives on those trends, and to encourage respect for the people who advance them. Students are challenged to consult primary sources and the very best secondary sources in order to gather criteria for evaluating popular media portrayals of Islam. The course aims to approach class material in a descriptive and scholarly fashion while providing freedom in classroom discussion for both confessional and critical expressions.

## Core Competencies

The course aims to develop the skills of gathering and organizing information about Islam while providing an introduction to the analysis and evaluation of that information. The required assignments develop the ability to do research, to describe research material in one's own words, to acknowledge sources, to synthesize, and to read and think critically.

## Course Requirements (subject to change by the beginning of the term)

### 1. Pre-session assignments

*Because this is a Block Week course rather than a regular course stretching over a semester, be sure to invest a significant amount of time preparing for the course during December 2012.*

1. Before the beginning of the course January 2, 2013, read the following five chapters from our two course textbooks:
  - From *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought*: chapters 3 (Mawdudi), 5 (Sayyid Qutb), and 18 ("Declaration of War," pp. 436-459)
  - From *Muslims: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*: chapters 2 (The Qur'an) and 3 (Muhammad).
2. There will be a quiz on these five chapters on the **first day of class January 2, 2013**. Questions to help you prepare for the quiz will be posted on the course Blackboard site. Download these questions and keep them with you as you review the chapters.
3. Write a short paper (600 words) for **submission at the beginning of the first class January 2**, which includes the following parts: a) Briefly describe your knowledge of, and experience of, Islam as you enter this course. b) Read chapter 12, "Describing Modernity," in *Muslims: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*. After carefully reading the description of modernity by Andrew Rippin and others, would you describe yourself as "modern" *in the terms of this chapter*? At which points are you "modern"? At which points are you not? c) Which topic(s) in particular would you like to see treated during class sessions? This assignment will not be graded; however, if it is not completed and submitted on time your final course grade will be lowered by 5%.

### 2. Block Week assignments

*In order to receive maximum benefit from this course, plan to use this full week for course work alone rather than scheduling other work or studies.*

1. *Quiz* on the five chapters from our textbooks (see above), **9:00 a.m. January 2**. 10%
2. *Read* the textbook by Andrew Rippin according to the following schedule. In order to assess your reading, you will be quizzed on the following chapters on **January 7**. 10%
  - Before Thursday January 3: *Muslims* chapters 13 and 14
  - Before Friday January 4: *Muslims* chs. 5 and 7
  - Before Saturday January 5: *Muslims* chs. 4 and 6

- Before Monday January 7: *Muslims* chs. 8 and 9
3. *Video check*: at the end of each of the first four class days (Wednesday through Saturday), respond to the content of the DVD presented in class that day. The basic question is how you would go about evaluating the truth of the content of each DVD. Details of this assignment will be posted on the Blackboard site for our course. Due **January 7**. 10%

### Homework:

- You will need to devote between one and two hours each night to reading and writing assignments (see above). Students will be expected to have completed the readings before class and will be asked to describe and analyze the material each day during lectures. (No intention to embarrass any student!—only a desire to maximize opportunities for you to speak, and to give other students a chance to hear important content from your voice.)

### 3. Assignments for after Block Week

*N.B. All assignments due after January 7 must be submitted electronically by email attachment to Dr. Nickel before midnight of the due date.*

1. *Review of chapters* on Islamism as presented in your textbook, *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought*. Choose and read two parts from Parts II, III and IV, then write a review of the contents. Details of this assignment will be handed out in class January 7 and the completed assignment is due Monday, **January 21** (1000 words). 20%
2. *Research paper* on your choice of one of the following five topics:
  - Blasphemy: Muslim sensitivities about the messenger of Islam
  - Law of Apostasy: Freedom to leave the Muslim community
  - Dhimmitude: Life for non-Muslims within a Muslim state
  - Da‘wa: Invitation to Islam in the modern world
  - Qur’anic Studies: Modern academic research into Muslim scriptureFinalize your choice during Block Week. Your analysis of the topic (2000 words maximum) should provide the necessary factual material so that the topic can be seen against a solid backdrop (a minimum of five good scholarly sources). It should describe the opposing viewpoints which people have about the subject. It should also discuss the importance of the topic within the context of this course (as reflected in the textbook and DVDs viewed, etc.) Your research and writing should focus on the *religious* issues at stake within the topic. Due Monday, **February 25**. 40%
3. *“Arab Spring” balance sheet*: Choose one Middle Eastern country which has been included in media reports on the “Arab Spring.” Briefly summarize events in that country since the Tunisia protests of December 2010. Then follow events in that country for nine weeks starting with the last day of lectures (January 7). What are the gains and what are the losses? What does Islam have to do with it? You may start at

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-12482309> Due Monday, **March 11**. 10%

## WEIGHTING OF ASSIGNMENTS

- 10% - 2.1. Quiz on pre-session reading, January 2
- 10% - 2.2. Quiz on eight chapters from *Muslims*, January 7
- 10% - 2.3. Video check assignment, due January 7
- 20% - 3.1. Review of chapters from *Princeton Readings*, due January 21
- 40% - 3.2. Research paper, due February 25
- 10% - 3.3. “Arab Spring” balance sheet, due March 11
- 100% - TOTAL COURSE MARK

*\*There will be no Registrar scheduled final exam for this course.*

## Grading

A numerical mark will be given for each course requirement. A letter grade will be assigned on the following number and letter grade scheme:

A+	100 - 96	A	95.9 - 90	A-	89.9 - 85
B+	84.9 - 80	B	79.9 - 75	B-	74.9 - 70
C+	69.9 - 65	C	64.9 - 60	C-	59.9 - 55
D+	54.9 - 53	D	52.9-50	F	Under 50

N.B. All written assignments will be graded with regard to both form and content.

**Late assignments** will be down-graded by 10% per day, including weekend days. If a valid medical certificate is submitted, it must be submitted on the due date of the assignment, *along with work already completed*, in order to avoid being downgraded for lateness. Amount of extra time given because of medical reasons will vary depending on circumstances, and will be at the discretion of the instructor.

All assignments that are due after block week (3.1, 3.2, 3.3) are to be *electronically* submitted to [gdnickel@ucalgary.ca](mailto:gdnickel@ucalgary.ca) as an email attachment. No hardcopies are required for these post-block-week assignments. You are responsible to ensure that your papers arrive by 12 midnight (MST) of the due date. Submit early enough to allow for computer glitches, electricity cuts, and anything technical that could delay your submission. Late submissions will be down-graded by 10% for each day late.

## ASSIGNMENT REQUIREMENT

The text of all the written assignments should be double-spaced except for quotations of more than four lines, which should be single-spaced and indented. Submit assignments in Times New Roman 12 pt. Notes should be single-spaced and placed either at the bottom of each page or at

the end of the assignment. Notes should be provided in order to 1) provide documentation for the source of specialized information or a quotation; or 2) provide documentation for an important point which needs justification. A bibliography of works consulted is required in the research paper (3.2.) and the “Arab Spring” balance sheet (3.3.). For further format guidelines, see Kate L. Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*.

#### **Block Week course regulations**

- The last day to drop a Block Week course (without it appearing on the student’s transcript) shall be the end of the first day of lectures.
- The last day to withdraw from a Block Week course shall be the final day of lectures during the Block Week.
- Although lectures, etc. are completed during the Block Week, students should be prepared to complete assignments during the remainder of the term.
- Final grades for Block Week courses will not be required until the end of the term in which the course is offered.

#### **Academic Honesty**

Plagiarism is not tolerated at the University of Calgary and has serious consequences. Your essays/presentations must be your own work and *inadequate referencing may be seen as plagiarism*. Please see the relevant sections on Academic Misconduct in the current University Calendar. If you have questions about correct referencing, please consult Kate L. Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*.

#### **Academic Accommodation**

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 403-220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. You are also required to discuss your needs with your instructor no later than **fourteen (14) days** after the start of the course.

#### **Blackboard Help**

Go to <http://www.ucalgary.ca/computersupport/onlineservices/blackboard> for Student Help and FAQ’s about Blackboard. Troubleshooting tips and a tutorial are available at <http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/blackboard/students>. Instructions for using the Digital Drop Box are available here: [http://library.blackboard.com/docs/r6/6\\_1/student/bbls\\_r6\\_1\\_student/digital\\_drop\\_box.htm](http://library.blackboard.com/docs/r6/6_1/student/bbls_r6_1_student/digital_drop_box.htm).

#### **Gnosis**

Gnosis is the Religious Studies Student Club. For membership or more information please email: [gnosis@ucalgary.ca](mailto:gnosis@ucalgary.ca) or visit <http://www.ucalgary.ca/~gnosis>.

#### **Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources**

- Have a question, but not sure where to start? The Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (PIC) is your information resource for everything in Arts! Drop in at SS110, call us at 403-220-3580 or email us at [artsads@ucalgary.ca](mailto:artsads@ucalgary.ca). You can also visit the Faculty of Arts website at <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate> which has detailed information on common academic concerns.
- For program planning and advice, contact the Student Success Centre at (403) 220-5881 or visit them on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Taylor Family Digital Library.
- For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at (403) 210-ROCK [7625] or visit them at the MacKimmie Library Block.

#### **Student Ombudsperson and Students’ Union Representative**

The Student Ombuds Office provides independent, impartial and confidential support for students who require assistance and advice in addressing issues and concerns related to their academic careers. See [www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds](http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds) for more information.

The Students’ Union Faculty of Arts representative can be reached at [arts1@ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts1@ucalgary.ca).

**Emergency Evacuation Assembly Point**

In case of an emergency evacuation during class, students must gather at the designated assembly point nearest to the classroom. The list of assembly points is found at [www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints](http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints). Please check this website and not the nearest assembly point for this course.

**Safewalk**

The Safewalk program provides volunteers to walk students safely to their destination anywhere on campus (including McMahon Stadium, Health Sciences, Student Family Housing, the Alberta Children's Hospital and the University LRT station). This service is free and available to students, staff and campus visitors 24 hrs/day, 365 days a year. Call 403-220-5333 or use one of the Help phones located throughout campus to request a walk.