

RELIGION 3520 A
ISLAM
Valdosta State University
Fall 2009
TTH 11:00-12:15 p.m., WH 147

INSTRUCTOR: Cristóbal Serrán-Pagán y Fuentes, Ph.D.

OFFICE: Ashley Hall 111

OFFICE HOURS: MWF 1-2pm, TR 10-11 a.m., or by appointment

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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This upper level course is an introduction to Islam from its beginning in the 7th century to the present. This inquiry examines historical and social dimensions of Islam in several geographic and cultural contexts, including major contributions to western civilization. The study of principal figures, sacred texts, and traditions will familiarize students with the basic features of this world religion. In our academic inquiry we will examine important issues such as gender, sex, race, politics, ecology, mysticism and the question of God.

II. COURSE OUTCOMES: Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Demonstrate first-hand knowledge of Islamic thinking, classic texts, rich history, shared and unshared beliefs, and their cultural impact in our societies. **VSU Gen. Ed. Outcomes (1, 2, 6, 8); Department Educational Outcomes (Religious Studies Track 1--See pp. 155-156 in the Catalog)**
2. Explain and discuss major themes and motifs of the Islamic faith. **VSU Gen. Ed. Outcomes (2, 6); Department Educational Outcomes (Religious Studies Track 1, 2, 3)**
3. Collect data and cite good examples of similarities and differences between Islam and other world religions, especially Christianity. **VSU Gen. Ed. Outcomes (2, 3, 6, 7, 8); Department Educational Outcomes (Religious Studies Track 1, 2, 3, 4)**
4. Critically address the achievements and failures of the Islamic tradition, especially by taking greater responsibility for own learning through the demonstration of curiosity, motivation, and risk-taking characteristics. **VSU Gen. Ed. Outcomes (1, 2, 6, 7, 8); Department Educational Outcomes (Religious Studies Track 1, 2, 3)**
5. Utilize information technology to do research, specifically the Internet, and express themselves clearly, logically, and precisely in writing and in speaking. **VSU Gen. Ed. Outcomes (3, 4, 7); Department Educational Outcomes (Religious Studies Track 2, 4)**
6. Analyze and synthesize a broad range of material (including ability to make meaningful

connections between various academic disciplines). **VSU Gen. Ed. Outcomes (2, 7, 8); Department Educational Outcomes (Religious Studies Track 2, 3)**

7. Produce an original work based on their ability to formulate a problem, develop a plan of action, and prove or disprove a hypothesis. **VSU Gen. Ed. Outcomes (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8); Department Educational Outcomes (Religious Studies Track 1, 2, 3, 4)**

III. REQUIRED TEXTS

Esposito, John L. *Unholy War. Terror in the Name of Islam*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. Print.

---. *What Everyone Needs to Know about Islam*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. Print.

Lewis, Bernard. *Islam: The Religion and the People*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Wharton School Publishing, 2008. Print.

Miller, John, and Aaron Kenedi, eds. *Inside Islam. The Faith, the People, and the Conflicts of the World's Fastest-Growing Religion*. New York: Marlowe & Company, 2002. Print.

IV. RECOMMENDED READINGS

Bellinger, Charles K. "Internet Guide." *Wabash Center*. (date of publication?) Web. 2 Jan. 2008.

Eliade, Mircea, and Ioan P. Couliano, eds. *The Eliade Guide to World Religions*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991. Print.

Ferguson, Marianne. *Women and Religion*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1995. Print.

Fisher, Mary P. *An Anthology of Living Religions*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2000. Print.

Haglof, Anthony. "Buddhism and the *Nada* of St. John of the Cross." *Carmelite Studies* 1 (1980): 183-203. Print.

Smith, Huston. *The World's Religions: Our Great Wisdom Traditions*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991. Print.

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Active class participation (10%) and attendance (10%) are mandatory (1)	20%
Two reflection papers (20% each p.) (2)	40%
One oral presentation (20%) (3)	20%
Final research paper (20%) (4)	20%

(1) Total attendance grade will automatically drop **twenty** points if you miss more than one week of classes. Afterwards the grade will drop **ten** points for each additional absence. VSU policy of attendance states, “**A student who misses more than 20% of the scheduled classes of a course will be subject to receiving a failing grade in the course**” (See in the Undergraduate Catalog pp. 84-85). I will admit excused absences only when athletes bring ahead of time a written notice from their coach; when a student is ill he or she will have to provide doctor’s name, phone number, and a signed receipt from the doctor; or when a student brings a justification note from a supervisor explaining why he or she was absent from my class. You are responsible for all the material covered in class during your absence. **You will get an “F” grade (0) on any course material not submitted in time.** I highly recommend you complete and turn any academic task before the deadline if you are planning to miss a class. **I will not accept late papers under any circumstances.** You will submit your paper assignments at the beginning of class.

(2) There will be **two** reflection papers (check **Course Calendar**). Students will have to respond to the following questions:

A) Which part of the readings did you find the most troubling and **B)** which one the most appealing? Why? Support your answer with at least a quote and a source for each question. Cite your source in parenthesis. For instance, “...” (Lewis 112). All answers must be in print. Use MLA style. Write **one** page for each paper (use back side of the paper if you need it). Use double-spaced. You will lose **one** point for each mechanical error. Include your Works Cited at the end of your paper. There should be at least **two** sources (one from question A and two from question B). Also I encourage one source outside the assigned readings.

(3) Individual oral presentations will be graded according to the following:

creativity (use visuals like posters and/or power-point presentations, and play different character roles);

accuracy (“be clear and concise”--state the facts and comment on them);

oral skills (keep eye contact with the whole class, avoid reading off notes, do not use verbal expressions like “um”);

well-cited sources (before you start your presentation make sure you bring to the professor a hard copy of your Works Cited page--one copy per person--use the latest MLA Manual Handbook and include **three** scholarly books [the Bible like other sacred texts are excluded from this list] and **one** internet source; late copies will not be accepted and the student may lose up to 22 pts.);

and **time limit** (10 minutes per presenter).

Once you are done with your presentations, invite the audience to ask you questions and to share their thoughts or comments with the whole class. Each student will evaluate the performance of

his or her classmates. You will give presenters an overall grade and will provide a short list of comments explaining why you like or dislike their individual and team presentations and will assign a final grade (from F to A) based on the criteria listed above.

A FEW SUGGESTIONS: It is mandatory that each student meets with the professor in Ashley Hall 111 for getting the topic approved and for getting feedback in time. The meeting should take place at least one week prior to their oral presentations. Be prepared. Do your research before coming to my office. Bring me a copy of your presentation and I will check it in my computer. I will not correct it but will give you suggestions on how to improve it. Make sure you rehearse before your oral presentations. Work well as a team. Gather ideas together and put them into practice before the date of your presentation. Manage time wisely. Be well prepared and dress appropriately (you can use costumes). Avoid chewing gum. Bring objects (paintings, books, articles from journals) or anything that aids you to create the right atmosphere for your overall presentation. Check the equipment in class before your presentations. Make sure your power-point presentations are compatible with the computer's program. **Remember the purpose of this oral presentation is not to give a chapter summary from the book but rather to focus on one specific topic that you are interested in doing research and go deeper into it. Be creative, informative, and entertaining. Share your passion with us. Be enthusiastic! Check with me if you need further help in finding out an interesting topic.**

(4) There will be a **final** research paper due at the beginning of class--late papers will not be accepted. Check **Course Calendar**.

Students will select **one** major topic in Islamic studies (history, metaphysics, philosophy of religion, philosophy of science, morality, ethics, aesthetics, politics, and mysticism).

A. Find out a significant **weakness** in your selected area of study: What is a major problem that you have encountered in your research? Support your opinions with facts, quotes, and sources.

B. Mention **one** major **contribution** to the study of world religions and/or world civilizations. Students need to explain why they have selected their topic using good examples and rational arguments. Select at least one quote from our textbooks and two quotes from outside sources (scholarly books and internet). For instance, "... " (Lewis 112) or "... " (Esposito, *Unholy War* 55). Cite at least **three** complete sources (**two** from scholarly books and **one** from the internet) in the Works Cited (on the back of your reflection paper). All answers must be in print. Use MLA style. The maximum of pages allowed is **four**. Use double-spaced. Use pagination numbers (ex. Serrán-Pagán 1). You will lose **one** point for each mechanical error (grammar, spelling, and format). Avoid plagiarism. Document all your sources. Plagiarized assignments will receive a failing grade and will be reported to the Dean of Students. Check the link below this text for further information on academic dishonesty. (Please also see pp. 93-94 in the Undergraduate Catalog.)

<http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/AcademicHonestyPoliciesandProcedures.shtml>

You are required to use the pronoun 'I' (such as "I think," "I agree," "I disagree") in all your papers. Combine facts, personal input and scholarly sources throughout your research paper.

GRADING SCALE: A (100 to 90); B (89 to 80); C (79 to 70); D (69 to 60); and F (59 to 0)

FAQ's

How can I get an A in my final research paper?

An "A" reflection paper must 1) demonstrate mastery of the topic in question, 2) show ability to apply the insights and theoretical models discussed in class, 3) balance good critical-thinking skills ("write your thoughts on paper") with facts, 4) have few spelling and/or grammatical errors, and 5) cite all sources properly throughout paper using parentheses and having them at the end in your Works Cited. I highly recommend to use expressions such as "I agree," "I disagree," "I think," "It is my understanding," etc. In doing so, I can recognize quickly your own ideas.

What is the minimum and the maximum number of pages in my final paper?

4 pages minimum and 4 pages maximum. The first page should include the introduction of your topic (thesis statement) and the history of the problem you are trying to tackle. The second page should address the similarity (give an example with a quote and a source, and your personal input). The third page should focus on the difference (give an example with a quote and a source, and your personal input). And the fourth page should be the conclusion. Have a paragraph at the end indicating what was the most interesting thing you have learned about your researched topic. Explain it in your own words. **DO NOT USE bold letters or underlining** in your title and in the Works Cited.

SUGGESTED SYLLABUS INFORMATION FOR DEPARTMENTS PARTICIPATING IN THE PILOT PROJECT:

This course is part of a pilot project this semester, testing a new online Student Opinion of Instruction (SOI) form. Student evaluations are extremely important in helping faculty members plan and revise their courses. Rather than completing these evaluations during class time, students will need to access evaluation forms via BANNER and complete them in a period prior to the last day of classes. You will only complete evaluations online for the classes that are part of this pilot project; other classes may still require you to complete a scranon form in class. Please take the time to complete this important evaluation (or opt out of providing an evaluation) during the designated period. If you do not do so, you will not be able to access the grade for this class.

SPECIAL NEEDS STATEMENT

Valdosta State University is an equal opportunity educational institution. It is not the intent of the institution to discriminate against any applicant for admission or any student or employee of the institution based on the sex, race, religion, color, national origin or handicap of the individual. It is the intent of the institution to comply with the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and subsequent executive orders as well as Title XI in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Students requesting classroom accommodations or modifications because of a documented disability must contact the Access Office for Students with Disabilities located in the Farber Hall. The phone numbers are (229) 245-2498 (voice) and (229) 219-1348 (tty).

VI. COURSE CALENDAR

Aug. 18--Reading the syllabus

Aug. 20--*Watch Video*--Islam--Read from 1 to p. 6--Lewis's Introduction--also read from p. 11 to p. 26 (H. Smith's "Islam") in *Inside Islam*

Aug. 25--Read from p. 7 to p. 24--Lewis's Chapters 1 and 2 (the faith and the 5 pillars)--also read from p. 27 to p. 40 (A. Ahmed's "Muhammad") in *Inside Islam*

Aug. 27--Read from p. 25 to p. 50--Lewis's Chapters 3 and 4 (scripture, tradition, law, and the mosque)--also read from p. 41 to p. 48 (T. Cleary's "The Qur'an") in *Inside Islam*

Sep. 1--Read from p. 51 to p. 70--Lewis's Chapters 5 and 6--Tolerance, Diversity and Sects

Sep. 3--Read from p. 71 to p. 90--Lewis's Chapters 7 and 8--Some History and Government and Opposition--**Dr. Al-Aasam**

Sep. 8--Read from p. 91 to p. 110--Lewis's Chapters 9 and 10--The Wider World of Islam and the Economy

Sep. 10--Read from p. 111 to p. 135--Lewis's Chapters 11 and 12--Women in Islam and Dress

Sep. 15--Read from p. 137 to p. 143--Lewis's Chapters 13 ("Language and Writing") and Appendix ("Some Practical Matters")--**Dr. Al-Aasam**

Sep. 17--Read from p. 145 to p. 167--Lewis's Chapters 14 and 15 and Conclusion--War and Peace and Radical Islam--**1st paper due**

Sep. 22--Read from p. 1 to p. 38--Esposito's *Islam*--Faith and Practice--also read from p. 49 to p. 71 (M. Wolfe's "Mecca") in *Inside Islam*

Sep. 24--Read from p. 39 to p. 61--Esposito's *Islam*--Divisions within Islam--**Dr. Al-Aasam**

Sep. 29--Read from p. 69 to p. 86--Esposito's *Islam*--Islam and Other Religions

Oct. 1--Read from p. 213 to p. 233--G. Brooks' "Women" in *Inside Islam*--**Dr. Al-Aasam**

Oct. 6--Read from p. 87 to p. 116--Esposito's *Islam*--Customs and Culture

Oct. 8--Read from p. 139 to p. 168--Esposito's *Islam*--Society, Politics, and Economy

Oct. 13--Read from p. 169 to p. 180--Muslims in the West in Esposito's *Islam*--also read from p. 75 to p. 80 (M. Singer's "Islam in America") in *Inside Islam*

Oct. 15--Read from p. 81 to p. 134--Islam in Iran, Malaysia, Indonesia, Egypt, and Turkey in *Inside Islam*

Oct. 22--Read from p. 167 to p. 190--K. Armstrong's "Muslims and the West" in *Inside Islam*

Oct. 27--Read from p. 191 to p. 212--B. Lewis's "The Roots of Muslim Rage" in *Inside Islam*

Oct. 29--Read from p. 235 to p. 260--F. Zakaria's "Why they Hate us" in *Inside Islam*--**Dr. Al-Aasam**

Nov. 3--Read from p. 117 to p. 138--Esposito's *Islam*--Violence and Terrorism

Nov. 5--Read from p. 135 to p. 164--W. Vollmann's "Islam in Afghanistan" in *Inside Islam*

Nov. 10--Read from p. viii to p. 25--Esposito's *Unholy War*--the Making of a Modern Terrorist

Nov. 12--Read from p. 26 to p. 61--Esposito's *Unholy War*--Jihad and the Struggle for Islam

Nov. 17--Read from p. 62 to p. 94--Esposito's *Unholy War*--Jihad and the Armies of God

Nov. 19--Read from p. 94 to p. 117--Esposito's *Unholy War*--Jihad and the Armies of God (Hamas, the Wahhabi Threat)

Nov. 24--Read from p. 118 to p. 160--Esposito's *Unholy War*--Where Do We Go from Here?
--**2nd paper due**

Dec. 1--*Watch Video*--Sufism--Islamic Mysticism

Dec. 3--Submit **Final Research Paper**--Student Evaluations