

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, RIVERSIDE  
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

RLST 112  
**ISLAM IN AMERICA**  
SPRING 2013

4 units, Lecture, 3 hours; individual study, 3 hours.

Prerequisite(s): upper-division standing or consent of instructor.

**MWF: 01:10 p.m. – 02:00 p.m. SPR 2355**

**Dr. Muhamad Ali**

**Office Hours: M 02:15- 04:00 p.m.**

**Catalogue Description**

The course explores historical and contemporary dimensions of Islam in America and the way in which Islam shapes and is shaped by American politics and cultures. Introduces analytical tools for understanding Islam and contemporary ideas and practices, including conversion, migration and diaspora, knowledge production, ritual, identity politics, ethics, education, gender, and media.

**Course Description**

This upper-division course seeks to explore multiple and dynamic dimensions of Islam in American history and culture. It focuses on the history and contemporary religious beliefs and practices of Islam in America. It highlights issues of multiple levels upon which Islam conveys its meanings to Americans and how it interacts with other American religions and cultures.

The course seeks not only to familiarize the students with some historical and doctrinal dimensions of Islam but also to engage them through critical thinking, discussion, and writing. It will give them some analytical tools for understanding crucial issues, including conversion, knowledge production and transmission, identity, and ethics within the American context. The course also familiarizes the students with contemporary issues and questions that concern Americans and other people, such as the relationship between Islam and American citizenship, Islam and other religions, *da'wa* and *jihad*, violence and peace, human rights, and *hijab* and gender relationship.

**Course Requirements and Grading**

- Class participation will count for 10 % of the final grade. Regular attendance, asking questions, making comments, answering questions, participation in Riverside mosque visit and participation will be considered as “active class participation”. The discussions are intended to assist the students to thoughtfully analyze topics and issues pertaining to Islam in America.
- A short essay on “what I know, what I don’t know about Islam and Islam in America, and what I want to learn from this course,” 1 page, single-spaced. It will count for 5 % of the total grade. It is due on Wednesday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2013.
- 2 (two) critical analysis papers will count for 15 % each or 30 % both of the total grade. Each student will write a paper in a topic or issue based on the lectures and readings. Each paper is between 4-5 pages and double-spaced. Topics will be suggested, but students may suggest a topic related to Islam in America after consulting to the instructor. The first paper will be on Monday, April 15<sup>th</sup>, and the second paper will be due on Friday, May 17<sup>th</sup>.
- A take-home mid-term exam will be due on Wednesday, May 1<sup>st</sup>. This will count for 20 % of the final grade.
- A final paper will count for 30 % of the final grade. The final paper is 6-8 pages, typed and double-spaced, and will be due on Friday, June 7<sup>th</sup>.
- A short essay, 5%, about “what I have learned about Islam in America from this course” will be due on Friday, June 7<sup>th</sup>. 1-2 pages, single-spaced.

**Academic Honesty and Plagiarism: plagiarism will fail the student in this course.**

Please familiarize yourself with the UCR guidelines on academic integrity and the rules concerning cheating and plagiarism. The links are:

<http://library.ucr.edu/?view=help/plagiarism.html>

<http://senate.ucr.edu/bylaws/PDF%20Files/P3%20Ch6.pdf>

**Required Textbook**

- Jane I. Smith, *Islam in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010) or the 1999 version.

**Optional (particularly useful for essays)**

- Kambiz GhaneaBassiri, *A History of Islam in America*
- Kambiz GhaneaBassiri, *Competing Visions of Islam in the United States: A Study of Los Angeles*
- Edward E. Curtis IV, *Muslims in America: A Short History*
- Edward E. Curtis, *Islam in Black America: Identity, Liberation, and Difference in African-American Islamic Thought*
- Richard Brent Turner, *Islam in the African-American Experience*
- Selcuk R. Sirin and Michelle Fine, *Muslim American Youth: Understanding Hyphenated Identities through Multiple Methods*

- Yvonne Y. Haddad, Farid Senzai, and Jane I. Smith, eds, *Educating the Muslims of America*
- Yvonne Y. Haddad, ed., *the Muslims of America*
- Yvonne Y. Haddad, ed., *Mission to America: Five Islamic Sectarian Communities in North America*
- Yvonne Y. Haddad and John L. Esposito: *Muslims on the Americanization Path*
- Larry A. Poston and Carl F. Ellis, Jr. *the Changing Face of Islam in America*
- Ingrid Matson, *the Story of the Qur'an*
- Thomas S. Kidd, *American Christians and Islam: Evangelical Culture and Muslims from the Colonial Period to the Age of Terrorism*
- Imam Hassan Qazwini, *American Crescent: A Muslim Cleric on the Power of His Faith, the Struggle against Prejudice, and the Future of Islam in America*
- Feisal Abdul Rauf, *Moving the Mountain: Beyond Ground Zero to a new vision of Islam in America*
- Mucahit Bilici, *Finding Mecca in America: How Islam is Becoming an American Religion*
- Michael Muhammad Knight, *Journey to the End of Islam*
- Eboo Patel, *Sacred Ground: Pluralism, Prejudice, and the Promise of America*
- Garbi Schmidt, *Islam in Urban Chicago*
- Reza Aslan and Aaron J. Hahn Tapper, eds, *Muslims and Jews in America: Commonalities, Contentions, and Complexities*
- Leila Ahmed, *A Quiet Revolution: the Veil's Resurgence, from the Middle East to America*
- Manning Marable, *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention*
- Michael Angelo Gomez, *Black Crescent: the Experience and Legacy of African Muslims in the Americas*
- Akbar S. Ahmed, *Journey into America: the Challenge of Islam*
- Carole Anway, *Daughters of Another Path: Experiences of American Women Choosing Islam*
- Jeffrey Lang, *Even Angles Ask: A Journey to Islam in America*
- Jamillah Karim, *American Muslim Women: Negotiating Race, Class, and Gender Within the Ummah*
- Barbara C. Aswad and Barbara Bilge, eds, *Family & Gender among American Muslims: Issues facing Middle Eastern Immigrants and their Descendants*

**Useful Websites:**

[www.globalquran.com](http://www.globalquran.com)

[www.quranexplorer.com](http://www.quranexplorer.com)

## **Useful DVDs**

*America at a Crossroads*

*Inside Islam*

*The Road to 9/11*

*Islam: Empire of Faith*

*Islam in America*

*Inside Mecca*

*Taqwacore*

*Struggle for Jihad*

*New Muslim Cool*

*Wearing Hijab*

## **Schedule of Lectures**

### **Week 1**

#### **Defining and Forming Islam**

##### Required Reading:

Jane I. Smith, *Islam in America*, chapter 1 “Muslim Faith and Practice”, pp.1-21.

Film “Inside Mecca”

**Monday, April 1:** Introduction to the Course, Overview of Islam and Islam in America

**Wednesday, April 3:** Faith (*iman*) and Practice (*amal*)

**Friday, April 5:** Submission (*islam*), Five Pillars, and Completion (*ihsan*)

### **Week 2**

#### **Contesting Islam**

##### Required Reading:

Jane I. Smith, *Islam in America*, Chapter 2 “Contributors to the Development of Islam”, pp.22-49.

Film “Inside Islam”

**Monday, April 8:** Prophet Muhammad and other Prophets

**Wednesday, April 10:** the Qur’an and other Books

**Friday, April 12:** Early Muslims, Muslims Division, Philosophy, Theology, Mysticism, Law.

### **Week 3**

#### **Islam comes to America: Migration and Conversion**

Required Reading:

Jane I. Smith, *Islam in America*, Chapter 3 “Islam Comes to America”, pp. 50-75.

**Monday, April 15:** the First Muslim Immigrants

**Wednesday, April 17:** Sunni and Shi’ite Muslims

**Friday, April 19:** Converts to Islam, Ahmadiyya, and others

### **Week 4**

#### **Islam, the African American Identity, and others**

Required Reading:

Jane I. Smith, *Islam in America*, Chapter 4 “Islam in the African American Community”, 76-103.

Film “Malcolm X”

**Monday, April 22:** the Moorish Science Temple of America

**Wednesday, April 24:** the Nation of Islam, Malcolm X

**Friday, April 26:** African American Sunni Muslims and others

### **Week 5**

#### **Women, Gender, and Family**

Required Reading:

Jane I. Smith, *Islam in America*, chapter 5 “Women and the Muslim American Family”, pp. 104-125

Film “Muhammad: Legacy of Prophet”

**Monday, April 29:** Roles and Responsibilities

**Wednesday, May 1:** Marriage, Divorce, Inheritance

**Friday, May 3:** Children, Youth, and the Elderly

### **Week 6**

#### **Da’wa: Schools, Mosques, and Society**

Required Reading:

Jane I. Smith, *Islam in America*, Chapter 6 “Living a Muslim Life in American Society”, pp.126-149

Jane I. Smith, *Islam in America*, Chapter 7 “the Public Practice of Islam”, pp.150-176

***A class visit to Islamic Academy of Riverside will be arranged.***

**Monday, May 6:** Education

**Wednesday, May 8:** Economics, Nutrition, Health, and Personal Problems

**Friday, May 10:** Mosques, Imams, Chaplains

**Week 7:**

**Religious Pluralism: American Muslims, Jews, Christians, and others**

Required Reading:

Byron L. Haines, “Perspectives of the American Churches on Islam and the Muslim Community in North America”, Haddad, *the Muslims of America*, pp.39-49

**Monday, May 13:** Christians and Muslims

**Wednesday, May 15:** Jews and Muslims

**Friday, May 17:** Muslims and other Muslims

**Week 8**

**American Muslim Organizations and the Media**

Required Readings:

Jane Smith, “Islamic organizations”, “Combating Anti-Muslim Prejudice”, 167-176

Gutbi Mahdi Ahmed, “Muslim Organizations in the United States”, in Haddad, *the Muslims of America*, pp.11-24.

Film “New Muslim Cool”

**Monday, May 20:** Islamic Organizations

**Wednesday, May 22:** Islamic Organizations

**Friday, May 24:** the Media

## **Week 9**

### **Authority and Identity, Unity and Diversity before and after 9/11**

#### Required Reading:

Jane I. Smith, chapter 8 "Looking to the Future", pp.177-187, or "Islam in American post 9/11".

Film "Struggle for Jihad" (New York Times)

**Monday, May 27:** Holiday, No Class

**Wednesday, May 29:** Authority and Unity

**Friday, May 31:** Politics and Morality

## **Week 10**

### **Muslim Americans and American Islam**

Film "America at a Crossroads"

#### Required Readings:

Edward E. Curtis IV, *Muslims in America*, chapter 5, pp. 97-116

Kambiz GhaneaBassiri, *A History of Islam in America*, pp. 327-381

**Monday, June 3:** American Muslims

**Wednesday, June 5:** American Islam

**Friday, June 7:** Conclusion