

**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, RIVERSIDE**  
**RELIGIOUS STUDIES DEPARTMENT**

**RLST 111: ISLAM**  
**SPRING 2016**  
**Tuesdays and Thursdays**  
**05:10 p.m.– 06:30 p.m.**  
HMNSS 1503

**Dr. Muhamad Ali**

**Office Hours: Tuesdays, 01:00-04:00 p.m.**

**Course Description**

This upper-division undergraduate course explores Islam, its scriptures, and Muslims' interpretations of Islam from the past to the contemporary time, by means of an active and interactive learning, including of the use of the UCR campus libraries. It focuses on the history and content of the Qur'an and the Hadith (Prophetic Tradition), and Islamic traditions of theology, philosophy, law, mysticism, gender, education and contemporary issues. Students are equipped with some theoretical and methodological tools for understanding Islam as a dynamic and multi-faceted religion of one fifth of the world population today.

**Learning Objectives**

- **Developing Academic Skills:** a. Thinking critically of Islam and religion in general; b. Reading texts and speaking critically; c. Writing academic essays; d. Working together on creative project
- **Understanding Key Concepts:** such as religion, God, ritual, law, gender, jihad, and pluralism.
- **Understanding Subject Matters:** Allah, Muhammad, the Qur'an, pillars of Islam, iman or faith, shari'a or law, Sufism, madrasa, and diversity of Islam and Muslims.

**Course Requirements and Grading**

- **Class attendance and participation** (20 points = 10 % of the final grade). Regular attendance, asking questions, making comments, and participation in discussions are considered active class participation. Every lecture requires students' engagement. Students are required to read the materials before class. There will be a mosque visit on one of the Fridays (date to be announced).
- **Weekly essays**, due every Tuesday, double-spaced. The first one is about "What I know and what I want to know about Islam and Muslims" due in class on Thursday, March 31, and the last one is about "What I have learned about Islam and Muslims from this course" due in class on Tuesday, June 2. All the other weekly essays are your thoughtful responses to any particular subject matters covered during lectures, readings, mosque

Friday visit before each Tuesday (10 weeks = 10 essays = 40 points = 20 % of the total grade).

- **First Essay** (50 points = 20 %, 4-5 pages) is due in class and Safe Assignment on Thursday, April 21
- **A take-home written exam** (50 points = 20%) is due in class and Safe Assignment on Thursday, May 19.
- **Response Essay on** Ayad Akhtar's *Disgraced: A Play* (3-4 pages) is due in class on Thursday, June 2.

**Or A group creative project, group presentation, and individual 1 page-report of the project (groups of 5 students), due on Thursday, June 2:** The project can be short story, calligraphy, poster, poem, drama, dance, music, song, video, game, brochure, power point presentation, or any piece of creative work. Presentations of the projects will be held at the end of class on each week starting on April 21 and ending on June 2 (for a maximum of 10 minutes). (20 points = 10%)

- **Final Essay** (50 points = 20 %, 4-5 pages), double-spaced, due in class and Safe Assignment on Thursday, June 2.

**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 Readings:

- Carole Hillenbrand, *Introduction to Islam: Beliefs and Practices in Historical Perspective* (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd, 2015)
  - Available at our campus store
- Ayad Akhtar, *Disgraced: A Play* (Dramatist's Play Service, 2015)
  - Available at amazon.com and other online stores.  
[http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0822230429/ref=olp\\_product\\_details?ie=UTF8&me=](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0822230429/ref=olp_product_details?ie=UTF8&me=)

OR

Any novel/stories/play/movie related to Islam/Muslim.

### Schedule of Lectures

#### Week 1: Introduction to the Course and Study of Islam

Tuesday, March 29: **Introduction to the Course**

Thursday, March 31: **Studying Islam**

Film “the Empire of Faith”

Readings: Hillenbrand, pp. 1-22  
Chapters and articles on iLearn

## **Week 2: Muhammad and His Tradition**

Tuesday, April 5

Thursday, April 7

Film: “Muhammad: Legacy of A Prophet”

### Readings:

Hillenbrand, pp. 23-57

Chapters or Articles on iLearn

## **Week 3: the Qur’an**

Tuesday, April 12

Thursday, April 14

Film “Secrets of the Koran”

### Readings:

Hillenbrand, pp. 58-88; Any translation of the Qur’an

Chapters and Articles on iLearn

## **Week 4: Faith and Ritual**

Tuesday, April 19 (Film: Paradise Now, Separation, or another)

Thursday, April 21

Presentation Group 1

### Readings:

Hillenbrand, 89-113

Chapters and Articles on iLearn

## **Week 5: Law**

Tuesday, April 26

Presentation Group 2

Thursday, April 28

Presentation Group 3

Film: “Inside Mecca”

Readings:

Hillenbrand, pp. 114-137

Chapters and Articles on iLearn

**Week 6: Diversity: Sunni and Shi'ite**

Tuesday, May 3

Presentation Group 4

Thursday, May 5

Presentation Group 5

Readings:

Hillenbrand, 138-168

Chapters and Articles on iLearn

**Week 7: Theology and Philosophy**

Tuesday, May 10

Presentation Group 6

Thursday, May 12

Presentation Group 7

Readings:

Hillenbrand, 169-188

Chapters and Articles on iLearn

**Week 8: Sufism and Jihad**

Tuesday, May 17

Presentation Group 8

Thursday, May 19

Presentation Group 9

Film “Sufi Soul: the Mystic Music of Islam”

Readings

Hillenbrand, pp. 189-218, 219-246

Chapters and Articles on iLearn

## **Week 9: Women and Family**

Tuesday, May 24

Presentation Group 10

Thursday, May 26

Presentation Group 11

### Readings:

Hillenbrand, pp. 247-273

Ayad Akhtar, *Disgraced: A Play*

Chapters and Articles on iLearn

## **Week 10: Education, Pluralism, Contemporary Issues, & Conclusion**

Tuesday, May 31:

Presentation Group 12

Thursday, June 2:

Presentation Group 13

### Readings:

Hillenbrand, pp. 274-285

Chapters and Articles on iLearn

**Final Essay, Last weekly Essay, & Response to *Disgraced* OR a group project report due on Thursday, June 2, 2016**

### **Further Readings:**

Reading Materials (chapters and articles) posted on your iLearn under Course Materials

Other Sources for Readings and Essays (most of these are available at Rivera Library)

Shahab Ahmed, *What is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016)

William Shepard, *Introducing Islam* (London: Routledge, 2014)

Frederick Mathewson Denny, *An Introduction to Islam*, Fourth Edition (Prentice Hall, 2011)

Reza Aslan, *There is No God but God*

Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, Second Edition (2002)

John L. Esposito, *Islam: the Straight Path*, third edition (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004)

Annemarie Schimmel, *Islam: An Introduction* (State University of New York Press, 1992)

The Holy Qur'an, any English translation (e.g. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Ahmed Ali, Muhammad Asad)

Jonathan P. Berkey, *The Formation of Islam: Religion and Society in the Near East, 600-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)

Michael Sells, *Approaching the Qur'an: the Early Revelations*, second edition (Ashland, Oregon: White Cloud Press, 2007)

Carl W. Ernst, *Following Muhammad: Rethinking Islam in the Contemporary World* (2003)

Jonathan A.C. Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2009)

Martin Lings, *Muhammad*  
*An-Nawawi's Forty Hadith*, trans. Ezzeddin Ibrahim & Denys Johnson-Davies (Cambridge, UK: the Islamic Texts Society, 2006)

*The Wisdom of the Prophet: Sayings of Muhammad, Selections from the Hadith*, trans. Thomas Cleary (Shambhala, 2001)

Ingrid Mattson, *The Story of the Qur'an: Its History and Place in Muslim Life* (Blackwell Publishing, 2008)

Farid Esack, *the Qur'an: A User's Guide* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005)

Amina Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* (Oxford University Press, 1999)

Barbara Freyer Stowasser, *Women in the Qur'an, Traditions, and Interpretation* (Oxford University Press, 1994)

Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam* (Yale University Press, 1992)

Qamar ul Huda, ed., *Crescent and Dove: Peace and Conflict Resolution in Islam*

Lesley Hazleton, *After the Prophet: the Epic Story of the Shia-Sunni Split*

Lesley Hazleton, *The First Muslim: the Story of Muhammad*

### **Novels/Stories/Plays/Movies**

Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

Sagheer Afzaal, *The Reluctant Mullah* (and other potentially useful novels:  
<http://www.zephyr.org/#!/resources/c1jk2>)

Akbar Ahmed, *The Trial of Dara Shikoh*

Jennifer Zobair, *Painted Hands*

Michael Knight, *Taqwacores*

Nadia Davids, *An Imperfect Blessing*

Shaida Kazie Ali, *Not a Fairytale*

Imraan Coovadia, *Green-Eyed Thieves*

Laila Lalami, *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*

Elizabeth Strout, *The Burgess Boys*

Ashraf Kagee, *Khalil's Journey* (paired with Chris Van Wyk's memoir, *Shirley, Goodness & Mercy*)

Ayad Akhtar, *American Dervish*

Amy Waldman, *The Submission*

Amin Maalouf, *Leo Africanus*

Tariq Ali, *In the Shadow of the Pomegranate Tree*

Kurban Said, *Ali and Nino*

Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *House of Glass*  
Abd al-Hakim Qasim, *Rites of Assent*  
Achmat Dangor, *Kafka's Curse*  
Robert Ferrigno, *Prayers for the Assassin*  
Camilla Gibb, *Sweetness in the Belly* (several people suggested this one)  
Shorter novels by Naguib Mahfouz, Orhan Pamuk, Leila Aboulela, Toufic El Rassi, and Mohsin Hamid.  
Aminata Sow Fall, *The Beggars' Strike*  
Cheikh Hamidou Kane, *Ambiguous Adventure*  
Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, *Sultana's Dream: A Feminist Utopia*  
Alifa Rifaat, *Distant View of a Minaret* (short stories)  
Tayeb Salih, *Season of Migration to the North* and *The Wedding of Zein*  
Nadine Gordimer, *The Pick Up*  
Leila Aboulela, *Minaret*  
Myriam Warner-Vieyra, *Juletane*  
Umm Zakiyyah, *If I Should Speak*  
Mariama Ba, *So Long a Letter*  
Jacqueline St. Joah, *My Sister's Made of Light*  
Kamran Pasha, *Mother of the Believers: A Novel of the Birth of Islam*

Plays:

Wajahat Ali, "Domestic Crusaders"  
Nadia Davids, "At Her Feet"  
Anne-Garcia Romero, "Paloma"  
Ayad Akhtar, "Disgraced"

Works of other genres (memoirs, nonfiction, etc.):

The Autobiography of Malcolm X  
The Butterfly Mosque by G. Willow Wilson  
Love, Inshallah by Ayesha Mattu and Nura Maznavi  
Impossible Man by Michael Knight  
Dave Eggers, *Zeitoun* (with some discussion of the problem of later reports of the subject's abuse of his wife and attempt to murder her)  
Fauziya Kassindja, *Do They Hear You When You Cry*  
Marguerite van Geldermalsen, *Married to a Bedouin*  
Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis* (as well as the film of the same name)  
Azar Nafisi, *Reading Lolita in Tehran*  
Farah Ahmedi, *The Other Side of the Sky*  
Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin, *Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace... One School at a Time*  
V.S. Naipaul, *Among the Believers: An Islamic Journey*

### **Documentaries related to Islam/Muslim**

*The Story of Islam*, MPI Media Group, 1983  
*Islam: Empire of Faith*, PBS, 2000  
*Muhammad: Legacy of A Prophet*, Kikim Media and Unity Productions Foundation, 2002

*Inside Islam*, the History Channel, 2002  
*Inside Mecca*, National Geographic, 2003  
Islam: the Untold Story  
*Secrets of the Koran*, the History Channel, 2006  
Science and Islam

### **Movies related to Muslims**

*The Message*  
*Lion of the Desert*  
*Malcolm X*  
*Arranged*  
*Separation*  
*Paradise Now*  
*Journey to Mecca*  
*Mooz-lum*  
*The Reluctant Fundamentalist*  
*Djinn*  
*American East*  
*The Infidel*  
*A Jihad for Love*  
*Children of Heaven*  
*Wajda*  
*Muhammad: the Messenger of God*

### **Useful Websites:**

[www.globalquran.com](http://www.globalquran.com)  
[www.quranexplorer.com](http://www.quranexplorer.com)  
[http://www.searchtruth.com/hadith\\_books.php](http://www.searchtruth.com/hadith_books.php)