

Religion 8

An Introduction to the Study of Islam

Summer Term 2014

10 hour MWF 10:00-11:05; X-hour (Thurs 12:00 -12:50)

Professor Reinhart

Thornton 315

646-3204 & Blitz; for substantial questions, please see me after class or during office hours

Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, 2-4 pm and by appointment.

Course Description: This course is an *Introduction* to the study of Islam. It is not “all you need to know” about Islam, but it is a ten-week exploration of some of the topics essential to an understanding of Islam.

Among the topics we will consider this term are:

- “ The Qur'ān as a historical document and as an object of veneration
- “ The Prophet Muhammad as a source of religious knowledge
- “ Gender hierarchies and their ideation in Islamic thought
- “ Islamic mysticism (Sufism)
- “ The religious theory underlying Islamic law
- “ Problems that Muslims face in the contemporary world

Course Goals: To understand the heritage of texts and concepts that have defined Islam for Muslims since its origins. To grasp that Islam (like all religious traditions) has changed and evolved over time, and continues to change. To understand that there have been and continue to be diverse understandings of what it means to be a Muslim. To understand something of the particular concerns of contemporary Islam. (For a more extensive understanding of contemporary Islam, you might also consider Religion 16, Modern Islam.)

ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMS

Presence 40% (showing up; being prepared—students start with 40% and can go down).

- **Citizenship:** Preparedness, “presence,” sense of your being engaged. 12%
- There will be two in-class exams (10% each), given during X-hours. 24 July and 14 August.
- There will be one final take-home exam, five pages, due the day scheduled for Religion 8’s exam. 28%
- It is a class requirement to turn in the course-improvement form.

Because of the term schedule, our videos will all be shown as streaming media. These must be viewed from a reasonably fast on-campus computer. I am responsible to make sure the media is available and working. You are responsible for finding an appropriate computer and watching the video by the date due. Details to follow.

Because of scheduling issues this term, I cannot accept or negotiate early or late exams, or late papers except in exceptional cases.

👉 **Written work:** You are responsible for knowing both “Instructor’s Preferences” and “Student writing” at www.dartmouth.edu/~akr. You may also find “on reading” very helpful for this class, as well as “on exams.” Other items may also be useful.

The usual accommodations for physical, learning or other challenges are available, provided you do not spring them on the instructor at the last moment. The first week’s office hours are a good time to meet to discuss these matters.

Dartmouth recognizes that religious events, and family events connected with them, may have claims on students’ time and attention. Reasonable accommodation will be made, but if you miss class, you are missing class, and you are still responsible for any material covered. This is true *a fortiori* for athletic, theatrical, and other obligations. If these regularly interfere with class time (for example, requiring you to miss most Friday classes) you might want either to reconsider the *extra-curricular* commitment, or to take classes that meet Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Illness policy. After lengthy discussions with Dr. J Turco, my policy is this: Since Dick’s house won’t/can’t certify illness unless you are actually admitted, I have no way of assessing your illness. I *am* a doctor, but in Islamic studies and the study of religion. My basic stance is that everyone gets ill at some point, faculty included, and we soldier on. Much of the world’s work is done every day by people who are not at their best. If you feel unable to come to class, ask a colleague to share his/her notes, and then discuss those notes with your friend. You won’t be at your best every day, but unless you are prostrated by a serious illness, I am inclined to urge you to attend class, do your work

on time etc.. If you think your case exempts you from this expectation, by all means, let's talk.

Office hours are good times for discussing ideas, lectures (and of course papers and exams). The instructor will *always* be there, unless he lets you know otherwise (very rarely). Come by! *This* is the appropriate venue for substantial discussions, not blitzmail.

REQUIRED PURCHASE

The Qur'an, AJ Droge (Translator). An attempt to provide both text and commentary.

Carl Ernst, *The Shambala Guide to Sufism*. The best introduction to Sufism on the market.

Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah*: an extremely original and insightful discussion of Modern Islam.

These books are available from Wheelock Books.

Required: Print out the Readings on Canvas (*I know it's a lot of GreenPrint, but studies show that you retain only a fraction of what you read on screen compared to what you read on the page.*) IPAD

Please note: In a class that covers exotic material, especially a class organized chronologically, it is very important to **keep up with the reading**. I will be distributing a term list to help you study.

Readings are marked as follows:

•= Source book

+ = Required Purchase

‡=**Canvas**

Scholarship: These are readings that are not required, but that, for those who are interested, will deepen their understanding of a topic and put them in touch with a little bit of the scholarship that informs the course. All are on *Canvas*.