

The Qur'an – Fall 2013

(CL 323/34035, CTI 375/34275, ISL 340-2/42065, MEL 321-9/42205, MES 342-16/42385,
RS 325G/44180 & WGS 340/47800)

Prof. Hina Azam

CLASS INFORMATION

Day/Time: TTH 11:00 – 12:30

Class Location: CLA 0.128

PROFESSOR INFORMATION

Email: hina.azam@austin.utexas.edu

Office: CAL 506

Office Hrs: TTh 2:30 – 3:30 or by appointment

TEACHING ASSISTANT INFORMATION

Name: Tarek Benchouia

Email: tarekbenchouia@gmail.com

Discussion Hours: W 2:00 – 3:00 & Th 4:00 – 5:00

Office Hrs: 10:00 – 11:00

Course Description

In this course, we will study the religion of Islam through its core text, the Qur'an. To this end, this course will entail extensive reading of the Qur'an itself, as well as of other texts. In our studies, we will focus on the following religious themes of the Qur'an: *cosmology* (eg God, human nature, satan, and the afterlife), *ethical* principles, *ritual* prescriptions, and *legal* injunctions. We will also encounter the Qur'an as literature by examining some of the prominent *symbols*, *images* and rhetorical *structures* of the Qur'an. Through reading the *prophetic narratives*, we will have an opportunity to compare Qur'anic and Biblical accounts of the major prophets shared by Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The syllabus also includes an inquiry into role of the Qur'an in Muslim *devotion* and as a medium for *artistic* expression. We will also discuss the tradition of *interpretation* (or "*exegesis*"), especially as it pertains to those verses that engender the most debate today, with particular attention to questions of *women*, *gender* and *sexuality*. Prior knowledge of Islam is helpful but not required for this course.

Course Texts

- The **Qur'an**, any edition – online editions at <http://tanzil.net> (very user-friendly) and <http://quran.com>.
- The **Bible**, any edition – students may use their own editions; searchable online versions found at www.biblegateway.com
- Toshihiko **Izutsu**, *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'an*. (McGill-Queens U Press, 2002)
- Ingrid **Mattson**, *The Story of the Qur'an* (Blackwell, 2nd edition, 2013)
- **Supplemental** readings, available in pdf form on BlackBoard:
 - Excerpts from Michael **Sells**. *Approaching the Qur'an: The Early Revelation*. White Cloud Press, 2000.
 - Excerpts from Kristina **Nelson**. *The Art of Reciting Qur'an*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985.
 - Excerpts from Barbara F. **Stowasser**. *Women in the Qur'an, Traditions and Interpretations*. Oxford U Press, 1996.
 - Hadia **Mubarak**. "Breaking the Interpretive Monopoly: A Re-Examination of Verse 4:34." *HAWWA* 2:3 (2004) 261-289.

Grading

NOTE: The instructor reserves the right to adjust course requirements during the term. Students will be notified of any such adjustments either in class or via email.

Course grades will be based on a combination of quizzes, exams, and class participation, as follows:

3 Quizzes, 10% each	= 30%
5 Journal Entries, 2% each	= 10%
Midterm exam	= 25%
Final exam	= 25%
Attendance	= 10%
	= 100% total

Assessments: Quizzes will usually be on Thursdays and will normally be held at the start of class. There will be a **midterm exam** and a **final exam**, the latter during the College-assigned time slot. Be advised that quizzes and exams will be based *both* on class notes *and* readings. A failure to stay on top of course readings will result in poor grades. I will offer make-up quizzes and exams only for extenuating circumstances, at my discretion, if the reason is compelling and documented.

Journal Entries:

Over the course of the semester, you must write 5 journal entries (approximately one every other week) and upload them into BlackBoard. Available themes are found in the “Journals” section of the BlackBoard page for this class, and roughly parallel our class readings. You may select theme you like from the ones available for that entry. *Entries must be entered by midnight on the due dates given in the syllabus. Late entries may be marked down or receive no credit.*

In each entry, you must do the following:

- put the key ideas of the verses into your own words
- relate the verses to each other
- offer your own reflections upon the verses

Entries should be 200-300 words in length and must address *at least 4 verses* from that theme.

You will be grade based primarily on content, but also on mechanics, as follows:

2%	= A
1.75%	= B
1.5%	= C
1.25%	= D
1%	= F

Attendance: You are permitted *two* absences during the semester without consequence.

Anything beyond that will adversely affect your course grade. For extenuating circumstances, a note and/or prior permission is requested, and may mitigate the effect of an absence from class.

- Arrive on time. I will take attendance at the beginning of class. If you arrive late, it is your responsibility to come to me after class and tell me you’ve arrived. Repeated or significant tardiness may adversely affect your attendance grade.

- Be prepared, making sure to complete readings before the class for which they are assigned. *Please bring your Qur'an/assigned verses and your Bible/assigned verses on the days for which you have assigned readings from those texts.*
- Demonstrate your preparedness by engaging with the material and participating in class discussion.

Note: *Laptops, cell phones and other electronic devices may not be used during class.*

Note: You are responsible for being aware of any announcements made in class or sent out via email. This includes announcements made during any portion of class for which you are absent, or email messages that you fail to receive. It is your responsibility to provide me a valid email address and to check it regularly. I will assume all Registrar-held email addresses are valid unless you tell me otherwise.

TA-led reading discussion sections: Your TA will organize discussions sections for the readings. These are *optional*, but are *highly recommended* as ways to better grasp the course texts.

Grading Rubric

<u>Percentage Grade</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Percentage Grade</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>
93-100	A	73-76	C
90-92	A-	70-72	C-
87-89	B+	67-69	D+
83-86	B	63-66	D
80-82	B-	60-62	D-
77-79	C+	59 and below	F

Note: Final course grades will be rounded to the nearest point, eg:

89.2 = 89 = B+

89.7 = 90 = A-

89.5 = 90 = A-

Note: Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 512-471-6259, <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>

CLASS SCHEDULE

Important Dates

First day of class	Thursday 8/29
Thanksgiving break	Thursday 11/28 – Sunday 12/1
Last day of class	Thursday 12/5

Please see final exam schedule for exact time/date/location.

UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE (class #1-2)

#1) Thu 8/29 Introduction to course topics, syllabus, readings

Concepts: revelation, scripture, author, oral text vs written text

The Qur'an's self-representation; Muslim beliefs about the Qur'an

**#2) Tue 9/3 Introduction to Muslim world; basic beliefs re Qur'an;
the Qur'an in Muslim life**

Qur'an as symbol/talisman: ceremonial use and recitation of Qur'an

- **Mattson**, 1-22 (ch.1, God speaks to humanity)
- **Qur'an**: divine guidance (2:2-7; 5:44-48, 22:16)

UNIT 2: STYLE, STRUCTURE AND BASIC FEATURE OF THE TEXT
(class #3-5)

#3) Thu 9/5 Structure of the Qur'an; Style and content of the Qur'an

Structure: divisions, surah numbers/titles/order, indices/tables of contents

Style: linguistic/poetic features and literary genres/topics; translation/transliteration

- **Supplement**: Qur'an, transliteration/translation of s. al-Balad and s. ad-Duha – pdf on BB
- **Supplement**: Nelson, ch.1 (1-13, history, nature & form of Qur'an)
- **Qur'an**: revelation process (44:3, 2:185, s.97, 25:32, 17:105-6, 59:21, 85:21-22, 56:77-9)

#4) Tue 9/10 Translation/interpretation issues

- **Supplement**: Sells, 1-34 (Introduction)

#5) Thu 9/12 Listening to the Qur'an

Listening/discussion: Sells' recordings and of Sells' translation

- **Supplement**: Sells, 159-196 ("Hearing the Qur'an")
- **Qur'an**: nature of God and relationship b/w God and creation (2:255, 22:6 & 17-18, 59:22-24, 50:16, 24:35 & 42, s.112, 19:88-93, 55:26-7, 3:26-27)

UNIT 3: MUHAMMAD, REVELATION AND SCRIPTURE (class #6-9)

#6) Tue 9/17 Pre-Islamic background of the Qur'an

- **Izutsu**: ch.3 (45-54, the pessimistic conception of the earthly life)
- **Izutsu**: ch.4 (55-73, spirit of tribal solidarity)

Journal entry 1 due

#7) Thu 9/19 Life of Muhammad: Birth, Prophethood & Meccan Period;
Quiz 1 (on Units 1 & 2) – MOVED TO #8) Tue 9/24

Prophetic biography from birth to prophethood; Meccan prophetic period

- **Izutsu**: ch.5 (74-104, the Islamization of old Arab virtues)

#8) Tue 9/24 Life of Muhammad: Madinan Period; *new* Quiz 1 date

Madinan prophet from Hijra to death

- **Mattson**, 27-74 (ch.2, the Prophet conveys the message)
- **Qur'an**: revelation/prophethood (42:51-3, 35:23-26, 11:12, 88:21-22, 22:52, 3:79, 21:7-9, 41:6, 17:90-5, 53:1-18)

#9) Thu 9/26 Assembly and Promulgation of the Text

Writing, collection, canonization and promulgation of the text, during and after Muhammad's life

- **Mattson**, 79-105, 109-114, and 127-135 (from ch.3, collection & transmission of the Qur'an)

UNIT 4: COSMOLOGY OF THE QUR'AN (class #10-15)

#10) Tue 10/1 Cosmology: Beings

God, angels, humans, prophets, jinn/iblis, shaytan, other creatures/things;

→ **Qur'an**: jinn (15:26-27, 18:50, 46:29-31, 55:14-15, 72:1-15)

→ **Qur'an**: satan/shaytan (29:38, 17:53, 35:6, s.114, 6:43, 8:48, 28:15-16, 4:118-121)

#11) Thu 10/3 Cosmology: Relationships

Relationship between God and creation (*ibada*); concept of *tawhid*

→ **Qur'an**: the created world, its purpose (51:56-7, 38:27, 23:115, 3:83, 17:44, 24:41-3)

→ **Qur'an**: human nature (30:30, 95:4-5, 70:19-21, 4:128, 21:37, 11:9-10, 41:49-51)

Journal entry 2 due

#12) Tue 10/8 Cosmology: Sacred History

Creation narratives/mythical timeline (creation, origin of life, making of adam/humans, the covenant, adam/eve/the first sin, the *dunya*, the judgment, the *akhira*/heaven/hell)

→ **Qur'an**: sacred history/cosmogony/eschatology (36:82, 2:117, 3:47 & 59, 6:1 & 73; covenant - 7:172)

→ **Qur'an**: creation of world/life on earth/in 6 days (21:30-35, 7:54, 10:3-6, 11:7); measuring time (32:5, 70:4-7)

→ **Qur'an**: human creation/human nature (*fitra*) (creation process - 6:2, 23:12-17, 15:26, 32:7-11, 55:14)

#13) Thu 10/10 Guest Lecture: Qur'an Recitation

The concept of guidance, signs in revelation, and in nature, history and ourselves; revelation/prophethood (*nabi*, *rasul*, Gabriel); prominent symbolism (e.g. water, fire, darkness, rock/ground, gardens); key parables

→ **Qur'an**: nature signs/symbolism/parables (3:190-1, 22:73, 27:60-65, 29:41, 13:16, 14:24-7, 24:39-40, 75:36-40)

→ **Mattson**, 147-168 (from ch.4, Qur'an in theology and culture)

#14) Tue 10/15 Cosmology: Sacred History, contd.

→ **Izutsu**: ch.6 (105-116, the basic moral dichotomy)

→ **Qur'an**: end of the world/resurrection/judgement (50:20-35, s.81, 80:33-42, s.99, s.101, 69:13-32, 41:19-21, 39:67-75)

#15) Thu 10/17 Gender in Qur'anic Cosmology

→ **Supplement**: Sells, 197-223 ("Sound, Spirit, and Gender in the Qur'an")

#16) Tue 10/22 **MIDTERM EXAM on Units 1 – 4; moved to #17) 10/24**

#17) Thu 10/24 **new MIDTERM EXAM date**

UNIT 5: MAJOR FIGURES IN THE QUR'AN (class #18-21)

#18) Tue 10/29 Adam, Eve and Satan

→ **Bible**: Gen.1 – Gen.3 (on Adam, Eve, serpent)

→ **Qur'an**: on Adam/Eve/Iblis (2:30-9, 7:11-25, 15:26-50, 20:115-123, 38:71-85)

→ **Supplement**: Stowasser, ch.2 (25-38, Eve in the Qur'an and exegesis)

#19) Thu 10/31 Noah; Abraham and family *

- ↳ **Bible:** Gen.5:28 - Gen.9 (on Noah)
- ↳ **Qur'an:** Noah (s.71 all, 7:59-64, 23:23-30, 29:14-15, 11:25-49)
- ↳ **Bible:** Gen 11-18, 21-22 (on Abraham & family)
- ↳ **Qur'an:** Abraham and family (6:74-83, 11:69-3, 19:41-50, 21:51-70, 37:83-113, 51:24-37)

Journal entry 3 due

#20) Tue 11/5 Moses, Aaron and Pharaoh; Solomon/Queen of Sheba *

- ↳ **Bible:** Moses (Ex.1-20, 24, 31:12-3; Num. 11)
- ↳ **Qur'an:** Moses/Aaron/Pharaoh (7:103-156, 10:75-93, 26:10-68, 28:1-46, 20:1-98, 18:60-82, 44:17-33)
- ↳ **Bible:** Solomon (1 Kings 1, 3-5, 8, 10 - 11)
- ↳ **Qur'an:** Solomon/Q of Sheba (34:10-17, 21:78-82, 27:15-44, 38:17-26)

#21) Thu 11/7 Mary, John, Jesus

- ↳ **Supplement:** Stowasser, ch.7 (67-82, Mary in the Qur'an and exegesis)
- ↳ **Qur'an:** Mary/John/Jesus (3:33-60, 4:157-9, 5:46-7, 5:109-18, 19:1-34, 43:63-5, 5:17)

UNIT 6: ETHICAL PRINCIPLES OF THE QUR'AN (class #22-23)

Concepts: *kufri*, *zulm*, *shirk*, *iman*, *shukr*, *husn*, *su'*, *taqwa*, *hudud*

#22) Tue 11/12 Spiritual foundations of ethics; Quiz 2 (on Unit 5)

- ↳ **Izutsu:** ch.7 (119-155, the inner structure of the concept of *kufri*)
- ↳ **Qur'an:** ethical injunctions: 2:177, 6:151-153, 16:90-97, 17:26-37, 23:96, 31:14-9, 33:35, 42:36-9

#23) Thu 11/14 Spiritual foundations of ethics, contd; Virtues of generosity, bravery, trustworthiness, honesty, patience, justice

- ↳ **Izutsu:** ch.8 (156-177, the semantic field of *kufri*) and ch.10 (184-202, the believer/*mu'min*)
- ↳ **Qur'an:** ethics and etiquette in speech (4:148, 49:11-12, 59:9-10); faithfulness/sincerity (3:76-77, 4:58, 5:89, 16:91-92, 16:94-95, 17:34-35); treatment of parents (4:1, 17:23-24, 29:8, 31:14-15, 46:15); virtues, generally (s.49, 58:11)

UNIT 7: MORAL LAW AND QUR'AN INTERPRETATION (class #24-28)

#24) Tue 11/19 Core concepts in Qur'anic morality

Rules of Worship: Purity, Prayer, Fasting

Concepts: *ibada(t)*, *halal*, *haram*, the five values (*ahkam*),

Concepts: *tahara*, *wudu'*; *salat*, *adhan*; *sawm*

- ↳ **Qur'an:** on prayer (*salat*): the command to pray (2:238, 11:114, 22:77, 29:45); the essence of prayer (17:110, 2:177); timings (17:78-9, 20:130, 30: 17-8); Fridays (62:9-10); facing Ka'ba/*qibla* (2:144, 2:149-150)

- ↳ **Qur'an:** on fasting (*sawm*): fasting in Ramadan (2:183-185, 2:187); penitential fasting (2:196)

- ↳ **Izutsu:** ch.11 (204-249, good and bad)

Journal entry 4 due

#25) Thu 11/21 Rules of Worship: Pilgrimage, Charity

Concepts: hajj, haram, Ka'ba

Concepts: sadaqa, zakat (charity)

→ **Qur'an**: on pilgrimage (hajj): command to hajj, procedures and conduct (2:196-203, 3:97, 5:1-2, 5:95-96)

→ **Qur'an**: command to charity and principles (2:261-274, 90 (all), 107 (all)); trade/usury (*riba*)/debt (4:29, 2:275-6, 2:278-80, 3:130, 30:39, 83:1-6); gambling (2:219, 5:90-1); circulating wealth (9:60, 59:7, 17:26-9)

#26) Tue 11/26 Rules of Community: Gender/Sexuality in Public; Quiz 3 (Unit 6)

Topics: modesty/hijab, gender interactions

→ **Mattson**, 175-217 (ch.5, Qur'an interpretation, traditional and contemporary)

→ **Qur'an**: shared natures (4:1); idea of clothing (7:26-27); modesty/veiling/segregation (*hijab*) (24:30-31, 24:60, 33:32-33, 33:53-55, 33:59)

THANKSGIVING BREAK – THU 11/28-SUN 12/1

#27) Tue 12/3 Rules of Community: Gender/Sexuality in Private Life

Topics: sexuality, marriage, divorce

→ **Qur'an**: kindness to females (4:127); marriage is love/mercy (30:21); marriage partners (2:221, 4:2-3, 4:22-25, 5:5, 24:32-33); marriage procedures (2:235, 4:25); marital life/treatment of wives (4:19-21, 4:34); marital sexuality (2:223); nursing (2:233); marital disputes/arbitration/fairness (4:35, 4:128-30); divorce procedures (2:228-232, 2:236-7, 65:1-2/4/6-7); fornication/penalty (17:32, 24:2-5)

#28) Thu 12/5 Case Study in Qur'an Interpretation: Feminist Exegesis of Q 4:34

→ **Supplement**: Mubarak, 261-288, interpreting Q 4:34

Journal entry 5 due