**Dr. Sauder’s Lecture Summary**

Dr. Sauder’s Lecture was on the Islamic religion and Islamic Law. It helped us listeners to better understand exactly what the Islamic tradition is based off of, its variations, and most importantly, that not every one of the 1.4 Billion Muslims on the planet is out to destroy America. But rather it is just a relatively small group of extremely conservative Muslims. Dr. Sauder first explained that Islam is an Abrahamic religion (coming from Abraham, similar the Hebrew and the Christian religions). The significance of this is that they generally accept most of the New Testament, with the main difference being that Jesus was a prophet, not the son of God, who was followed later by Muhammad, the Last prophet. They also refer to Jews and Christians as “People of the Book” Dr. Sauder also explained that there are two main branches of Islam, the Sunnis and the Shi’ites.

The Sunnis make up roughly 80% of Islamic believers, and the Shi’ites the other 20%. The Sunnis and the Shi’ites vary in many different ways. The Sunnis say that one can believe whatever they want in terms of who should lead the religion after Muhammad’s death. Sunnis are similar to Catholic Christians in the sense that they are a part of a very large faith that doesn’t have much separation within itself, as opposed to fragmented religions such as Protestant Christians, who have many sub-groups such as Baptist, Lutheran, and Presbyterian. This fragmented religious structure is more similar to the Shi’ites. The Sunnis differ from the Catholics in that they don’t have an established hierarchy with an absolute head like the Pope, but rather just small areas with their leaders, in this way they resemble the Jews more than the Catholics. The biggest difference between Sunnis and Shi’ites is in where the Sunnis don’t really care about who lead the religion after Muhammad, the Shi’ites firmly believe that only direct descendants of Abraham could be religious leaders (Muhammad was descendant of Ishmael, one of Abraham’s two children).

Dr. Sauder went on to explain that within the Sunnis are different schools of Law, one of which is known as the Solophus, which is the most conservative and restrictive school of Law. Out of this school comes groups such as Isis and Al-Qaeda, who are the extreme conservatives of this school of Law. Dr. Sauder also explained the confusion around the Term Ji-had and misconceptions surrounding it. Although to some of those conservative Muslims them Ji-had represents a “holy war” and a military expedition to rule the world and spread Islam, to most Muslims it means something radically different. Ji-had translates to mean “Struggle” and to most Muslims this is exactly what it means to them, an *internal* and *personal* struggle to serve Allah and do the right thing, not a holy war to rule the world.

In addition to these things Dr. Sauder explained a bit on Sharia Law, and how most laws are drawn more from works of or about prophets known as the Hadiths rather than the Quran itself, as well as other outside sources. He also explained how many times the religion has been twisted and used against people, primarily women. He ended the lecture with discussing some of the modern problems with politics in the middle east, and how, hopefully, people of this religion can move forward. Overall a wonderful and incredibly enlightening lecture concerning Islam.