



KIIS MOROCCO, Summer 2018

RELS 306: Islam

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Syllabus subject to change



Course Description: In contemporary Euro-American cultures, “Islam” has become overburdened with meaning. Everyone has a strong opinion about Islam and Muslims, while knowing little about the religion or its history. This course introduces students to the scripture, doctrines, and practices of Islam in the context of Islam’s spread from the Middle East to every region of the world. The course will provide students with the historical and terminological background to understand some key issues in contemporary Islam and the heated debates surrounding Islam in American and European societies. This class fulfills the Tier 2 Humanities Core requirement at Ball State University.

Course Objectives: By the end of the course, students will

- 1) Be conversant in the academic study of religion, deploying a variety of analytical tools and terms to analyze the texts and contexts of early Islam.
- 2) Know and be able to distinguish between the key terms, figures, texts, practices, and interpretive traditions with which Muslims construct their religious life.
- 3) Recognize and explain how Muslims deploy these foundational elements in a vast array of configurations, over time and across space, in response to unique cultural, political, and economic conditions.

4) Be able to account for (some of) the diversity within the Islamic tradition - they will recognize some of the many ways one can be Muslim, and speak to the multiplicity of “Islams” that arise out of shared foundations and concerns.

Required Texts

(All readings not from the books listed below will be provided as PDFs for students. Used copies of any of these books will work fine, though be warned that the page numbers will be quite different from those listed below for older editions of Sells and Attar. Check with me or your classmates to confirm readings from these books if you purchase a used copy.)

Carl Ernst, *Following Muhammad*

Gabriel Said Reynolds, *The Emergence of Islam*

Michael Sells, *Approaching the Qur'an*

Attar (trans. Dick Davis), *The Conference of the Birds*

Grading

Preparation and Engagement: 40%

Reading Notes: 40%

Reflection Paper: 20%

A = 90-100% B = 80-89.99% C = 70-79.99% D = 60-69.99% F = 59 and below

Course Requirements

Preparation and Engagement (40%)

In this class, you do not receive credit simply for showing up. You must come to class prepared, having completed any readings and homework, ready to contribute to discussion and group work each day. Reading preparation will occasionally be evaluated through pop quizzes. If you are unprepared for the day's work, you will not receive P&E credit for the day. Tardiness, sleeping, texting, non-class related internet usage, or otherwise disruptive or disrespectful behavior will result in a loss of credit for the day. Finally, in order to participate actively, you must **always bring the reading assignments to class**.

Reading Notes (40%)

Students will be expected to fully read the texts ahead of time and come to class prepared to participate in discussion. To aid this process, you will be required to prepare written “Reading Notes” and bring them to class the day we discuss the reading (see formatting instructions below). **There will be 6 Reading Notes due over the course of the term.** Reading notes are graded on a pass/fail basis. If students fail a Reading Note, they may revise it within 1 week or replace it with an additional reading note later in the term.

Reflection Paper (20%)

At the beginning of the fourth week (Monday, July 16th), students will turn in a 1000-1250 word reflection paper. Papers will reflect on your pre-understanding of Islam and religion and discuss how

our excursions, in addition to class readings and discussions have shaped or changed your definition of religion and presumptions about Islam. A detailed assignment sheet and rubric will be provided a week before the due date.

Reading Notes Format

At the top of the page, you must include a full header (name, RELS 306, date). The reading note itself must contain the following elements:

I. Define Key Terms. Pick 1-2. What are the relevant terms we need to remember from this reading? What phrase or series of phrases does the author continuously use? These may be in English or in a foreign language; e.g. “*taqlid*” or “Modernity.” In 1-2 sentences, **define** the terms in your own words and talk about their significance for what we are learning in class.

II. Answer One of the Reading Questions. In **one paragraph**, answer one of the reading questions for the day. Daily reading questions will be provided in a detailed course schedule distributed before we leave for Morocco, so you may prewrite these notes if you wish. Additional questions may be added to the list as they arise in class in response to the course materials and our excursions.

III. Juicy Quote. Select a single quote from the reading that you find interesting, insightful or provocative. Quotes should be no longer than 3 sentences and accompanied by an in-text citation.

IV. 1-2 Discussion Questions. Formulate 1-2 discussion questions that you think will engage the class. These should be open ended questions, rather than straightforward factual ones. Good questions will invite us to debate an author’s definition or usage of a term, ponder a particularly evocative passage, explore the strengths and weaknesses of an argument, or relate the reading to previous course material or current events. Make sure that you **give page numbers** for specific passages in the book or article so that we can re-read and discuss them together.

Tentative Schedule:

- June 22: Depart United States
June 23: Arrival, orientation and neighborhood tour
June 24: Welcome reception
June 25: Rabat city excursion
June 26: **Introduction:** Ernst, “Approaching Islam in Terms of Religion,” *Following Muhammad* 37-70.
June 27: **Sacred Sources: Muhammad** – Ernst, *Following Muhammad*, 71-92.
June 28: **Sacred Sources: Muhammad** – Reynolds, *Emergence of Islam*, 3-24.
June 29: **Sacred Sources: Muhammad** – Reynolds, *Emergence of Islam*, 31-57.
June 30: Group Overnight Excursion
June 31: Group Overnight Excursion
July 1: **Sacred Sources: Qur’an** – Ernst, *Following Muhammad*, 93-106 & Reynolds, *Emergence of Islam*, 93-103.
July 2: **Sacred Sources: Qur’an** – Sells, *Approaching the Qur’an*, 1-28, 42-43, 172-173 (and listen to tracks #2, 23 & 33).
July 3: **Conflict & Consolidation** – Reynolds, *Emergence of Islam*, 59-82.
July 4: **Conflict & Consolidation** – Safi, *Memories of Muhammad*, 217-261.
July 5: **Conflict & Consolidation** – Schimmel, *Islam: An Introduction*, 59-72.
July 6: Free Day
July 7: Group Overnight Excursion
July 8: Group Overnight Excursion
July 9: **Codification & Canonization** – Ernst, *Following Muhammad*, 107-126.
July 10: **Codification & Canonization** – Ernst, *Following Muhammad*, 164-168 & 174-181.
July 11: **Codification & Canonization** – Attar, *Conference of the Birds*, selections.
July 12: **Codification & Canonization** – Attar, *Conference of the Birds*, selections.
July 13: **Codification & Canonization** – Cornell, *Realm of the Saint*, excerpts.
July 14: Free Weekend
July 15: Free Weekend
July 16: **Modern Transformations** – Ira Lapidus, “Islamic Revival and Modernity,” 444–460.
REFLECTION PAPER DUE
July 17: **Modern Transformations** – Kurzman, ed. *Modernist Islam: A Sourcebook*, 50-60.
July 18: **Modern Transformations** – Reynolds, *Emergence of Islam*, 171-204.
July 19: **Modern Transformations** – Janmohamed, *Generation M*, excerpts.
July 20: Farewell Ceremony & Reception
July 21: Depart Rabat