

REL 140: The Holy Qur'an  
Spring, 2008  
Dr. Millar

Office: Melrose 211, Ext 2456  
wmillar@linfield.edu  
Home: (503) 434-5856

## Syllabus

### Course Description:

Literature of the Qur'an: its form, content, historical development, and interpretation. The course is designed especially for students with some familiarity with Old and New Testament narrative. Since many of the stories and figures of the Old and New Testament reappear in the Qur'an, it is instructive to engage in interreligious dialogue at the textual level. The goal is to give students an opportunity for further study of the major world faith that is Islam.

### Textbooks:

- Karen Armstrong, *Muhammad: A Biography of the Prophet* (New York: HarperSanfrancisco, 1992)
- N. J. Dawood, trans., *The Koran: With a Parallel Arabic Text* (New York: Penguin, 2000)
- John Kaltner, *Ishmael Instructs Isaac: An Introduction to the Qur'an for Bible Readers* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999)
- Irshad Manji, *The Trouble with Islam Today* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2003)
- Tariq Ramadan, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004)

### Course Requirements:

1. Regular access to WebCT and preparation for online discussion.
2. Active participation in discussion groups, to include a minimum of two postings per week on WebCT.
3. Four Response Papers (25% each). Course grade is determined by the average of grades on the four Response Papers and the level of participation in online discussion.

### Learning Objectives:

1. To write and speak knowledgeably about the Qur'an within its historical context;
2. To gain an understanding of the origins of Islam as a third Abrahamic faith;
3. To explore what the Qur'an has to tell us about the development of Judaism and Christianity in the seventh century;
4. To gain experience in interpreting sacred texts and apply insights to contemporary interreligious dialogue.

*Students with documented disabilities who may need accommodations, who have any emergency medical information the instructor should know, or who need special arrangements in the event of evacuation, should make an appointment with the instructor as early as possible, no later than the first week of the term.*

## **LECTURE AND DISCUSSION TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS**

### **Part I: Muhammad: A Biography of the Prophet**

#### **Week 1**

Feb 18: "Preface and Introduction"

*Karen Armstrong, Muhammad, pp. 6-20.*

Feb 19: "Muhammad the Enemy"

*Karen Armstrong, Muhammad, pp. 21-44.*

Feb 21 : "Muhammad the Man of al-Llah"

*Karen Armstrong, Muhammad, pp. 45-54.*

Feb 22: "Jahiliyah"

*Karen Armstrong, Muhammad, pp. 55-71.*

#### **Week 2**

Feb 25: "Revelation"

*Karen Armstrong, Muhammad, pp. 72-90.*

Feb 26: "The Warner"

*Karen Armstrong, Muhammad, pp. 91-107.*

Feb 28: "The Satanic Verses"

*Karen Armstrong, Muhammad, pp. 108-137.*

Feb 29: "Hijra: A New Direction"

*Karen Armstrong, Muhammad, pp. 134-163.*

### **Week 3**

Mar 03: "Holy War"

*Karen Armstrong, Muhammad, pp. 164-210.*

Mar 04: "Holy Peace"

*Karen Armstrong, Muhammad, pp. 241-249.*

Mar 06: "Death of the Prophet?"

*Karen Armstrong, Muhammad, pp. 256-266.*

Mar 07: Set Topics for Response Paper #1 on Muhammad

### **Week 4**

**Mar 10: Response Paper #1 on Muhammad Due**

## **Part II: Ishmael Instructs Isaac: Introduction to the Qur'an for Bible Readers**

Mar 11: Introduction

*John Kaltner, Ishmael Instructs Isaac, pp. 9-25.*

Mar 13: Adam

*John Kaltner, Ishmael Instructs Isaac, pp. 26-52*

Mar 14: Adam (Continued)

*John Kaltner, Ishmael Instructs Isaac, pp. 26-52.*

### **Week 5**

Mar 17: Surah Passages Related to Adam

*Selected Passages from the Qur'an*

Mar 18: Surah Passages Related to Adam (Continued)

*Selected Passages from the Qur'an*

Mar 20: Noah

*John Kaltner, Ishmael Instructs Isaac, pp. 53-86.*

Mar 21: Noah (Continued)

*John Kaltner, Ishmael Instructs Isaac, pp. 53-86.*

**Week 6**

**Spring Break: March 24-28**

**Week 7**

Mar 31: Surah Passages Related to Noah

*Selected Passages from the Qur'an*

Apr 01: Surah Passages Related to Noah (Continued)

*Selected Passages from the Qur'an*

Apr 03: Abraham

*John Kaltner, Ishmael Instructs Isaac, pp. 87-131.*

Apr 04: Abraham (Continued)

*John Kaltner, Ishmael Instructs Isaac, pp. 87-131.*

**Week 8**

Apr 07: Surah Passages Related to Abraham

*Selected Passages from the Qur'an*

Apr 08 : Surah Passages Related to Abraham (Continued)

*Selected Passages from the Qur'an*

**Apr 10: Set Topics for Response Paper #2 on Adam, Noah, and Abraham**

**Apr 11: Response Paper #2 on Adam , Noah, and Abraham Due**

**Week 9**

Apr 14: Moses

*John Kaltner, Ishmael Instructs Isaac, pp. 132-206.*

Apr 15: Moses (Continued)

*John Kaltner, Ishmael Instructs Isaac, pp. 131-206.*

Apr 17: Surah Passages Related to Moses

*Selected Passages from the Qur'an*

Apr 18: Surah Passages Related to Moses (Continued)

*Selected Passages from the Qur'an*

**Week 10**

Apr 21: Mary

*John Kaltner, Ishmael Instructs Isaac, pp. 207-239.*

Apr 22: Mary (Continued)

*John Kaltner, Ishmael Instructs Isaac, pp. 207-239.*

Apr 24: Surah Passages Related to Mary

*Selected Passages from the Qur'an*

Apr 25: Surah Passages Related to Mary (Continued)

*Selected Passages from the Qur'an*

**Week 11**

Apr 28: Jesus

*John Kaltner, Ishmael Instructs Isaac, pp. 240-295.*

Apr 29: Jesus (Continued)

*John Kaltner, Ishmael Instructs Isaac, pp. 240-295.*

May 01: Surah Passages Related to Jesus

*Selected Passages from the Qur'an*

May 02: Surah Passages Related to Jesus (Continued)

*Selected Passages from the Qur'an*

**Week 12**

May 05: Set Topics for Response Paper #3 on Moses, Mary, and Jesus

**May 06: Response Paper #3 on Moses, Mary, and Jesus**

**Part III: Western Muslims and the Future of Islam**

May 08: Irshad Manji, *The Trouble with Islam Today*, Chap 1

May 09: Manji, Chap 2-3

**Week 13**

May 12: Manji, Chap 4-5

May 13: Manji, Chap 6-7

May 15: Manji, Chap 8-9

May 16: Ramadan, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam*, Chap 1

**Week 14**

May 19: Ramadan, Chap 2-3

May 20: Ramadan, Chap 4-5

May 22: Ramadan, Chap 6-7

May 23: Ramadan, Chap 8-9

**Week 15**

May 26: Ramadan, Chap 10

May 27: Set Topics for Response Paper #4 on Western Muslims and the Future of Islam

**May 29: Response Paper #4 on Western Muslims and the Future of Islam Due**