

The University of Calgary
Faculty of Arts
Department of Religious Studies

Religious Studies 353 L20: Islam in the Modern World

Spring Term 2011: May 11 – June 22 MW 2:00 – 4:45 pm

Instructor: Dr. Gordon Nickel
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Required Texts

Tariq Ramadan, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* (Oxford University Press, 2004).
Andrew Rippin, *Muslims: Their Beliefs and Practices*, Third edition (Routledge, 2005).
Roxanne L. Euben and Muhammad Qasim Zaman, eds., *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought* (Princeton University Press, 2009).

(Purchase paperback editions. Note that the *third* edition of Rippin is required. Library copies of these three texts will be placed on Reserve.)

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to modern Muslim religious thought and a selection of social, political and cultural issues connected with it. Important reform, revivalist and sectarian movements will be studied, as well as significant thinkers in modern Islam. The course will explore questions surrounding both the nature of Islam in the world today, and how Islam has dealt with the phenomenon of modernity. An area of special focus in this course will be the identity and influence of Islamism during the decade since September 11, 2001.

Course Objectives

The objectives of the course are to familiarize students with the major modern trends in Islam, to take into account a variety of perspectives on those trends, and to encourage respect for the people who advance them. Students are challenged to consult primary sources and the very best secondary sources in order to gather criteria for evaluating popular media portrayals of Islam. The course aims to approach class material in a descriptive and scholarly fashion while providing freedom in class for both confessional and critical expressions.

Core Competencies

The course aims to develop the skills of gathering and organizing information about Islam while providing an introduction to the analysis and evaluation of that information. The required assignments develop the ability to do research, to describe research material in one's own words, to acknowledge sources, to synthesize, and to read and think critically.

Course Schedule of Class Topics and Required Readings:

May 11 – Questions of Islamic identity in the modern world

Reading required before class: Rippin chapter 12; Ramadan chapter 1

May 16 – The significance of the Qur'an for Muslims

Required reading: Rippin chapters 2 & 14

May 18 – The centrality of Muhammad for Muslims

Required reading: Rippin chapters 3 & 13

May 23 – Victoria Day – no class

May 25 – The authority of Islamic Law

Required reading: Rippin ch. 6; Ramadan ch. 2; *Princeton Readings* ch. 3

May 30 – Ritual practices among Muslims today

Required reading: Rippin chs. 7 & 15

June 1 – The global importance of Islamism

Required reading: *Princeton Readings* chs. 1, 2 & 5

June 6 – Islam and politics

Required reading: Rippin ch. 4; Ramadan ch. 7; *Princeton Readings* Part II

June 8 – Islamic peace and war

Required reading: *Princeton Readings* Parts IV & V

June 13 – Sufis, Shi'a and sectarian groups

Required reading: Rippin chs. 8 & 9

June 15 – Focus on Islam in South Asia

Research paper due

June 20 – Contemporary patterns of spiritual loyalty

Required reading: Rippin ch. 5; Ramadan ch. 5

June 22 – Relationships with non-Muslims

Required reading: Ramadan chs. 3 & 9

Course Requirements

1. *Attentive reading of course textbooks:* a) Read the textbook by Andrew Rippin according to the required readings schedule on page 2, and come to class prepared to report the content. In order to assess your reading of this text, there will be a quiz on **June 22**. (10% of final mark)
b) Read the textbook by Tariq Ramadan according to the required readings schedule on page 2, and come to class prepared to report the content. Complete your reading of the entire book following the course. There will be an *online* quiz on this text on **June 24**. Questions to help you prepare for the quiz are given on page 5 of this syllabus. (10% of final mark)

2. *Islamic identity journal:* At the end of each class day May 11 – June 6, write a reflection of about 300 words (about one double-spaced page) on how the course material has helped you answer basic questions about Islamic identity. Your seven daily entries, plus a title page, are **due in class on June 8**. (10% of final mark)

3. *Islam on the internet:* Write a paper of no more than 1000 words about the portrayal of Islam on the internet, or about internet discussions of controversial issues related to Islam. Describe the content of the portrayals or discussions, then analyse and evaluate them according to what you are learning about Islam in this course. **Due in class on June 1**. (20% of final mark)

4. *Research paper on Islam:* Write a research paper on a topic of current interest which relates in a significant way to one of our main class topics. You may write on Islam in a country or region, on a movement or sect, influential individual, or relevant theme. Process your topic with the instructor during the first week of the course so that you can complete your research within the first four weeks. Your analysis of the topic (2000 words maximum) should provide the necessary factual material so that the topic can be seen against a solid backdrop (a minimum of five good scholarly sources). It should describe the opposing viewpoints which people have about the subject. It should also discuss the importance of the topic within the context of this course (as reflected in the textbooks and DVDs viewed, etc.) Your research and writing should focus on the *religious* issues at stake within the topic. **Due in class on June 15**. (40% of final mark)

5. *Regular class attendance and participation:* Your presence in each class session is both valued and required. Repeated absense will result in a failing grade. Come to class on time with required readings completed and ready to interact with the readings and participate in class discussions. The instructor may ask you to report on required readings. (10% of final mark)

NOTE: Late assignments will not be accepted unless a prior agreement with the instructor has been made and a valid medical certificate is submitted. No exceptions will be made. Any late or incomplete assignment will be awarded a mark of F for that component of the course.

**There will be no registrar-scheduled final examination for this course.*

ASSIGNMENT REQUIREMENTS

The text of all the written assignments must be double-spaced except for quotations of more than four lines, which should be single-spaced and indented. Submit assignments in Times New Roman 12 pt. Notes should be single-spaced and placed at the bottom of each page. Notes should be provided in order to 1) provide documentation for the source of specialized information or a quotation; or 2) provide documentation for an important point which needs justification. A bibliography of works consulted is required in every assignment. Our format guide is Kate L. Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*.

Grading

A numerical mark will be given for each course requirement. A letter grade will be assigned on the following number and letter grade scheme:

A+	100 - 96	A	95.9 - 90	A-	89.9 - 85
B+	84.9 - 80	B	79.9 - 75	B-	74.9 - 70
C+	69.9 - 65	C	64.9 - 60	C-	59.9 - 55
D+	54.9 - 53	D	52.9-50	F	Under 50

N.B. All written assignments will be graded with regard to both form and content.

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism is not tolerated at the University of Calgary and has serious consequences. Your essays/presentations must be your own work and inadequate referencing may be seen as plagiarism. Please see the relevant sections on Academic Misconduct in the current University Calendar. If you have questions about correct referencing, please consult your instructor.

Academic Accommodation

If you are a student with a disability who requires academic accommodation and you have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 403-220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. Once registered, please discuss any upcoming tests/examinations with the instructor **two weeks** before the scheduled date.

Gnosis

Gnosis is the Religious Studies Student Club. For membership or more information please email: gnosis@ucalgary.ca or visit <http://www.ucalgary.ca/~gnosis>.

Study questions for the quiz on *Western Muslims* (see assignment # 1b page 3)

Many consider Tariq Ramadan to be one of the best-known voices for Islam in Europe. He is particularly celebrated by groups of North American academics such as the American Academy of Religion. Spend an hour browsing the internet and reading articles and blogs, etc. about Tariq Ramadan. How would you describe the internet perception of this author? Where would you locate him on a spectrum of different types of Muslims in the world today?

Complete your reading of Tariq Ramadan's book, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam*.

Here are a few questions which will help you prepare for, and do well on, the June 24 quiz.

1. How does Ramadan categorize the major groups of “those for whom Islam is the reference point for their thinking, their discourse, and their engagement”? In which of these groups does he seem to place himself?
2. Ramadan writes about “points of reference” (p. 9) by which, he says, all of the world's Muslims define themselves. What does Ramadan include in these points of reference? How would you describe Ramadan's particular approach to these sources? Which sources does Ramadan leave out of “points of reference” which many orthodox Muslim may include?
3. What is Ramadan's approach to Islamic Law, which he calls “The Way (al-sharia)” in chapter 2? If you are not familiar with the basics of Islamic Law, first read chapter 6, “Legal developments,” in our second textbook, Andrew Rippin's *Muslims: Their beliefs and practices*. This will help you greatly.
4. The categories *Dār al-Islām* and *Dār al-Harb* have been important to many Muslims in the past in their understanding of the geography of conquest. What do these terms signify? Does Ramadan accept the traditional Muslim understanding of these terms? What does Ramadan propose for the relationship of Muslims to the non-Muslim West?
5. In Ramadan's presentation of Muslim spirituality in chapter 5, which elements would you expect to clash with the worldview of “modernity”? For a workable definition of modernity, check chapter 12 of the Rippin textbook.
6. A major question about Muslims who live in the West is whether—and if so how—they will participate in the political process. Part of Ramadan's notoriety is his attempt to propose an answer to this question. Become thoroughly familiar with his proposal in chapter 7. Do you find yourself convinced by his argument?
7. Ramadan writes in chapter 9 that many efforts to foster Muslim-Christian “dialogue” end up involving only Muslims and Christians who do not authentically represent their own faith communities. How then will meaningful faith conversation come about between those

Muslims and Christians who, as Ramadan indicates, really need it? What would that conversation look like? What would be included in it?

Course Bibliography

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE WORKS

- Encyclopaedia of Islam*. H.A.R. Gibb *et al*, eds. Second edition. Leiden: Brill, 1960-2000, 12 volumes (Rolfing Library has volumes 1-6).
- Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*. Jane Dammen McAuliffe, general editor. Leiden: Brill, 2001-6, five volumes and index.
- Encyclopedia of Religion*. Second edition. Lindsay Jones, ed. New York: Macmillan, 2005, 15 volumes (check whether also accessible on internet through the library website).
- Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*. James Hastings *et al*, eds. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1908-26, thirteen volumes.
- Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World*. John L. Esposito, ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009, six volumes. (update of *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*)
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MODERNIST VISIONS OF ISLAM

- Arkoun, Mohammed. *Rethinking Islam: Common questions, uncommon answers*. Robert D. Lee, trans. Boulder: Westview, 1994.
- El Fadl, Khaled Abou. *The Great Theft: Wrestling Islam from the extremists*. New York: HarperCollins, 2005.
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- Adams, Charles J. "The Ideology of Mawlana Mawdudi." In *South Asian Politics and Religion*. D.E. Smith, ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966.
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