

**UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

RELS 357 L01
The Religious Civilization of Islam

COURSE OUTLINE – WINTER 2012

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| Logistics | Prerequisites | RELS 201 or 273 |
| | Time | Tuesday and Thursday 2:00-3:15 pm |
| | Location | SH 274 |
| | Instructor | Dr. David A. Bergen SS 1308 dabergen@ucalgary.ca 403-220-7063 |
| | Office Hours | Friday, 2:00-3:00 pm or by appointment |
| | Textbooks | Jenkins, Keith <i>Rethinking History</i> ; 2003 (London and New York: Routledge). Efraim Karsh, <i>Islamic Imperialism: A History</i> ; 2007 (Yale University Press). Additional PDF readings in Blackboard (“Course Documents”). |

**Course
Description**

This course will investigate the topic of Islamic civilization, with particular emphasis on the first three hundred years. Utilizing New Historicist theory, we will also critique conventional understandings of history so as to analyze “minimalist” reconstructions of the origins of Islam and the Quran. Throughout, we will critically reflect on “history” as a strategy for myth-making and power-structuring, whether in the madrasahs of Islam or the classrooms of the university. Key questions will entail: Whose past is being narrated? Who is telling the story? For which audience (and in which discourse) does a particular historiography create understanding and power?

This course follows the academic mandate set out by Bruce Lincoln:

*When one permits those whom one studies to define the terms in which they will be understood, suspends one’s interest in the temporal and contingent, or fails to distinguish between ‘truths,’ ‘truth-claims,’ and ‘regimes of truth,’ one has ceased to function as a historian or scholar. In that moment, a variety of roles are available: some perfectly capable (amanuensis, collector, friend and advocate) and some less appealing (cheerleader, voyeur, retailer of import goods). None, however should be confused with scholarship. (“Theses on Method,” *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 8, 225-7; 1996)*

**Student
Responsibilities**

Attend, Understand, Analyze—three fundamental academic tasks.

**Learning
Assessment**

Two Midterm Exams – Feb 9 and Mar 22 (20% each)

Students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of assigned readings, lectures, and discussions in two midterm exams.

Final Week Debate (10% of course grade)

In the final week of class, students will participate in a debate that will draw on the entire course and to demonstrate on-one's-foot thinking skills. Participants in the debate will be selected in a "debate quiz" which will be administered on April 5. The debate quiz grade of those students not selected for the debate will be applied to the "debate" component of the course, with the opportunity to improve that grade by raising pertinent questions during debate week. The debaters will compete for the highest grade in the debate.

Three Equally-Weighted, "Research-Directed" Assignments (50% of course grade)

Students will develop the skills necessary for writing a good academic paper through three research-directed assignments:

1. Demonstrate understanding of a scholarly position by reducing the principal argument of an assigned reading to a single paragraph, sentence, and headline. **Due Jan 24.**
2. Demonstrate critical engagement with scholarship by submitting an annotated copy of an assigned reading. **Due Feb 28.**
3. Demonstrate undergraduate research ability by locating two academic sources that disagree significantly with an assigned reading, then describing the discursive field that emerges between the three differing positions. **Due Mar 13.**

NOTE:

- tests and assignments must be written/submitted on the dates scheduled. No exceptions will be made, except for death, significant illness, or domestic affliction (corroborated by a valid, original note from a physician or counselor). You should contact the instructor within twenty-four hours of a missed exam or deadline.
 - The University Calendar states: "It is the responsibility of students who have prolonged absences from class because of physical and/or emotional health problems to present to the faculty office offering the course a statement from a physician/counselor attesting to the physical or emotional health of the student."
- a passing grade on any of the three exams is not essential for passing the course.
- no external aids will be allowed for any exams in this course.
- no remedial assignments are available in this course.
- please note that the University of Calgary regulations strictly prohibit the following during examinations (the penalty for which is suspension or expulsion or such other penalty as may be determined):
 - speaking to other candidates or communicating with them under any circumstances whatsoever;
 - bringing into the examination room any textbook, notebook, or document not authorized by the examiner;
 - leaving answer papers exposed to view
 - attempting to read other student's examination work.
- the assessments of this course will be geared to rewarding students who are conscientious in their attendance, participation, and preparation of classes.
- computers should be used for note-taking purposes only. Extra-curricular computer activities will result in the suspension of computer privilege, perhaps even for the entire class.
- if you are anticipating a class absence you should find a classmate willing to loan

his/her notes; no lecture notes will be available from the instructor.

- a 5%/day late penalty will be levied for all late submissions. Late submissions must be placed in the Department's assignment drop-box (SS 1301), where they will be date-stamped.
- class schedule, readings, and additional relevant materials will be posted online.
- all submissions should be backed up electronically. No concessions will be made for papers lost.

Grading Scale

A numerical grade is assigned for each course requirement. Following the final graded component, a letter grade is assigned, using the department-approved table of equivalencies:

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

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

Important Dates

Please note the information regarding withdrawals and fee refunds in the current University Calendar.

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.

Course Withdrawal

Please note the information regarding withdrawals and fee refunds in the Academic Schedule of the current University Calendar.

Lecture Recording

Recording any part of any lectures in any form must be first approved by the instructor in writing and is for individual private study only. See current Calendar, Tape recording of Lectures.

Safewalk Program

"You don't have to walk alone...." Call 403-220-5333 and a member of the Safewalk Team will walk you to your car, the LRT, or any destination on campus. Safewalk is available to all students, staff and faculty any time of the day or night. Look for the Campus Security Help Phones located throughout the University. Please don't hesitate to call!

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>.

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.

Blackboard Help

Go to <http://www.ucalgary.ca/computersupport/onlineservices/blackboard> for Student Help and FAQ's about Blackboard. Troubleshooting tips and a tutorial are available at <http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/blackboard/students>. Instructions for using the Digital Drop Box are available here: http://library.blackboard.com/docs/r6/6_1/student/bbls_r6_1_student/digital_drop_box.htm.

Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources

- Have a question, but not sure where to start? The new Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (PIC) is your information resource for everything in Arts! Drop in at SS110, call us at 403-220-3580 or email us at artsads@ucalgary.ca. You can also visit the Faculty of Arts website at <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate> which has detailed information on common academic concerns.
- For program planning and advice, contact the Student Success Centre at (403) 220-5881 or visit them on the 3rd floor of the Taylor Family Digital Library.
- For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at (403) 210-ROCK [7625] or visit them at the MacKimmie Library Block.

Student Ombudsperson and Students' Union Representative

The Office of the Student Ombuds provides independent, impartial and confidential support for students who require assistance and advice in addressing issues and concerns related to their academic careers. See www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds for more information.

The Students' Union Faculty of Arts representative can be reached at arts1@ucalgary.ca.

Emergency Evacuation Assembly Point

In case of an emergency evacuation during class, students must gather at the designated assembly point nearest to the classroom. The list of assembly points is found at www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints. Please check this website and not the nearest assembly point for this course.