

MES 170: Islam
General Education
Flexible Core-World Cultures and Global Issues (WCGI)

Instructor: Dr. R. Shareah Taleghani

Course Description:

An introduction to the scriptures, tenets, practice, and historical development of the religion of Islam and the principal genres of scholarly and religious expression in Islamic societies. Throughout the course, a chronological account will be paired with theme discussions on law, science, philosophy, mysticism, and daily life. The status of Islamic religion in the culture and its influence on the formation and development of various institutions in society will be investigated. In addition, the origins and development of sectarianism and the main religious sects in Islamic societies will be discussed. The changing nature of the relationship between religious tradition, political structures, economy and society from the rise of Islam in the seventh century until the post-colonial period in the twentieth century will be highlighted.

Flexible Core Area and World Cultures and Global Issues Learning Outcomes

Students will:

1. Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view.
2. Evaluate evidence and arguments critically and analytically.
3. Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.
4. Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring world cultures or global issues, including but not limited to anthropology, communications, cultural studies, economics, ethnic studies, foreign languages (building on previous language acquisition), geography, history, political science, sociology, and world literature.
5. Analyze culture, globalization, or global cultural diversity, and describe an event or process from more than one point of view.
6. Analyze the historical development of one or more non-US societies.
7. Analyze the significance of one or more major movements that have shaped the world's societies.
8. Analyze and discuss the role that race, ethnicity, class, gender, language, sexual orientation, belief, or other forms of social differentiation play in world cultures or societies.
9. Speak, read, and write a language other than English, and use that language to respond to cultures other than one's own.

This course will address Learning Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

Discipline-Specific Learning Objectives:

Students will:

- A. Master and analyze the complex historical development of Islam and Islamic cultures
- B. Identify, define, and debate key events in Islamic history and Islamic theology
- C. Apply acquired knowledge of the Quran, Islamic tenets and practices, and major ideas in Islamic intellectual history through the early 20th century in critical written responses and structured debates
- D. Analyze and interpret examples of foundational Islamic literature
- E. Recognize, describe, and analyze the connections between classical and early modern Islamic intellectual history and key developments and debates in contemporary Islamic societies
- F. Review and compare the historical roots of different, contemporary Islamist political movements

Required Books:

Curtis, Edward Muslims in America: A Short History

Esposito, John Islam: The Straight Path (4th edition)

Sells, Michael Approaching the Quran

(Please note: Sells' book is also available as an e-text through the QC library)

Required Readings on Blackboard:

Other required readings will be made available on the Blackboard site for this course via links or in pdf form. In addition, a number of recommended (but not required) supplemental readings as well as useful links will be available on Blackboard in order for students to further explore the topics discussed in class.

Films:

A number of films are included as part of the course materials. Some films may be assigned for individual viewing. Films assigned for individual viewing will be made available on reserve in the library whenever possible. The films will include the following:

Inside Mecca (2003)

The Light in Her Eyes (2012)

Malcolm X (1992)

Axis of Evil Comedy Tour (2007)

Assignments, Assessments, and Grade Evaluation

Class Participation and Discussion	15%
Weekly Exit Tickets	15%
Structured Debate	15%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	35%
Total	100%

Class Participation and Discussions (15%):

Students are expected to come to class having completed the required readings, viewed any films, and completed any assignments (including preparing notes for the answers to discussion questions and pre-class Blackboard reading quizzes) required in advance of the class session.

Students must be prepared to analyze, discuss, and critically engaged with the main points of as well as raise and answer questions about all of the course material in all class sessions. Specific discussion questions for class sessions will be posted on the Blackboard announcement page. Make sure to prepare responses ahead of time.

Supplemental materials below: rubric for how participation and discussion is graded. See also sample discussion questions that students prepare their responses to prior to class.

Class discussions satisfy Flexible Core Learning Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and Discipline Specific Learning Objectives A, B, C, D, E, F

Weekly Exit Ticket Assignments (15%):

Each week you will complete a short Exit Ticket on Blackboard.

- Exit Tickets will consist of 1 or 2 questions on each week's materials for which you must provide a written response of between 250-500 words (a minimum word count will be given for each question).
- Each Exit Ticket is an opportunity for students to critically engage with the week's materials in writing.
- Exit Tickets will be due each Sunday, before midnight.
- Each Exit Ticket will be graded on a 10 point scale

Exit Tickets satisfy Flexible Core Learning Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 8 and Discipline Specific Learning Objectives A, B, C, E, and F

Note: the LOs emphasized and satisfied by Exit Tickets vary according to specific Exit Tickets and the topics covered.

Supplemental materials below: sample Exit Ticket questions.

Structured Debate (15%)

Students will be required to participate in formal, structured class debates. A separate handout will describe the structure and guidelines of the debates as well as assessment. Students will sign up for debates the third week of class For the debates:

- Students must research the topic by using materials provided on Blackboard and in the required textbooks as well as conducting their own library and Internet research.
- Each debater must present a well-argued critical argument for their portion of the debate.

- Students will coordinate their presentation and speaking points with partner(s) on their side of the debate.
- Each debater will receive an individual grade for his or her participation in the debate.
- Each debater must submit a written copy of their main arguments as well as any pre-prepared rebuttal statements (minimum 500 words).
- Students participating in the audience are required to write down and ask at least three questions or comments for each side of the debate as well as explain in written form which side they think won the debate and why (minimum 200 words) to be submitted at the end of the debate.
- At the conclusion of the debate, all students in the audience will vote for the side they felt won the debate. Voting should be based on the quality of the arguments offered by the teams, not personal opinions on the debate subject.

Structured debates satisfy Flexible Core Learning Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and Discipline Specific Learning Objectives A, B, C, D, E, F

Note: the LOs emphasized and satisfied by debates vary according to specific debate topic and whether students are presenting the debate or participating in the audience--see class schedule.

Supplemental materials below: attached debate guidelines and rubric.

Midterm Exam (20%):

There will be one midterm exam in-class during the semester.

- The midterm exam will consist of two essay questions.
- Essays will be graded for argument, content, clarity, and organization.

Supplemental materials below: rubric and sample questions for midterm exam.

Midterm exams satisfy Flexible Core Learning Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and Discipline Specific Learning Objectives A, B, C, D, E, F

Final Exam (35%):

The final exam will consist of two essay questions.

- The final exam will take place on the date and time announced in the CUNYFirst system and will consist of essay questions.
- Essays will be graded for argument, content, clarity, and organization.

Supplemental materials below: rubric and sample questions for final exam

Final exams satisfy Flexible Core Learning Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and Discipline Specific Learning Objectives A, B, C, D, E, F

Computation of Grades and Grade Scale:

Exams and final grades will follow the following scale :

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Test Scale</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Test Scale</u>
A or A +	97 -100		
A	93 - 96.9	C +	77 – 79
A -	90 – 92.9	C	74 – 76
B +	87 – 89	C -	70 – 73
B	84 – 86	D	60 – 69
B-	80-83	F	0 – 59

Academic Honesty:

Cheating and plagiarism, including that from electronic resources, is UNETHICAL and a VIOLATION of the CUNY policy on academic integrity. Students who plagiarize or cheat on exams are violating the Academic Integrity Policy of CUNY and will receive a grade of “ZERO”, be reported to the Office of Student Conduct, and face possible sanctions, including suspension from the university.

For more information, see CUNY’s policy on academic integrity:

<http://www.qc.cuny.edu/StudentLife/services/studev/Documents/Academic%20Integrity%20Violation%20Form%20RV.pdf>

Technical Support:

If students encounter issues with Blackboard access, the [Queens College Helpdesk](http://www.qc.cuny.edu/computing/) (<http://www.qc.cuny.edu/computing/>, (718) 997-4444, helpdesk@qc.cuny.edu) is located in the I-Building, Room 151 and provides technical support for students who need help with Queens College email, CUNY portal, Blackboard, and CUNYfirst.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should register with and provide documentation to the Office of Special Services, Frese Hall, room 111. The Office of Special Services will provide a letter for you to bring to your instructor indicating the need for accommodation and the nature of it. This should be done during the first week of class. For more information about services available to Queens College students, contact the Office of Special Services (718-997-5870) or visit their website (<http://sl.qc.cuny.edu/oss/>).

Collegiality and Mutual Respect

Please remember that some of the topics we will be learning about and discussing are controversial, sensitive, and/or the subject of debate. You and your classmates may have strongly held personal opinions on different

sides of a given topic. Please express your opinions but be respectful of your fellow classmates even when you strongly disagree. Follow the adage that sometimes we must agree to disagree agreeable

Class Schedule:

Course Introduction: What is the Islamic World?

January 29th

Course Introduction: What is the Islamic World (What is the Umma)?

Assignment: In-class Google search for definition and image of Islamic world

LO 1, 4

Islam and the West: Clash or Encounter?

February 3rd

Readings: Huntington "The Clash of Civilizations"

Said "The Clash of Ignorance", "The Clash of Definitions"

Assignment: Prepare In-Class discussion questions on assigned readings as posted on Blackboard

LO 1, 2, 3, 4, 8

Emergent Islamic Cultures: The Prophet Muhammad, Early Shi'i Dissent, the Early Islamic Empires, and Non-Muslim Communities under Islamic Rule

February 5th and 10th

Readings: Esposito Chapter 1

Assignments: Prepare In-Class discussion questions on assigned readings as posted on Blackboard

Weekly Exit Ticket due Sunday

LO 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8

February 17th and 19th

Readings: Esposito Chapter 2

Excerpt from *The 1001 Nights*: the Frame Story

Assignments: Prepare In-Class discussion questions on assigned readings as posted on Blackboard

Weekly Exit Ticket due Sunday

LO 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8

Debate #1: Islam and the West: A Clash or Encounter of Civilizations

LO 1, 2, 3, 4, 6

Beliefs and Practices: Interpreting the Quran and the Hadith

February 24th and 26th

Readings: Sells Pages 1-51, 68-71, 84-85, 104-107

Assignments: Prepare In-Class discussion questions on assigned readings as posted on Blackboard

Weekly Exit Ticket due Sunday

LO 1, 2, 3, 4, 8

March 3rd and 5th

Readings: Sells Pages 114-121, 183-207

Surat Yusuf (The Chapter of Joseph)

Hadith Selections and Varying Interpretations

Assignments: Prepare In-Class discussion questions on assigned readings as posted on Blackboard

Google search for varying interpretations of Hadith al-Kisa' (Shi'i and Sunni interpretations)

Weekly Exit Ticket due Sunday

LO 1, 2, 3, 4, 8

Beliefs and Practices:

The 5 Pillars, Islamic Law, Theology, and the Sunni-Shi'i Debate

March 10th and 12th

Readings: Esposito Chapter 3

Film: *Inside Mecca*

Assignments: Prepare In-Class discussion questions on assigned readings as posted on Blackboard

Weekly Exit Ticket due Sunday

LO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

Debate #2: The Question of Free Will and Logic: the Mutazalite and Asharite Debate

LO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

Beliefs and Practices: Sufism: an Anti-Establishment Movement?

March 17th and 19th

Readings: Schimmel "Mystical Islam and Sufi Brotherhoods"

Sufi Poetry Selections

LO 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

Beliefs and Practices: the Status of Women in Islam

March 24th and 31st

Readings: Abu Lughod "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?"

Taraki "The Role of Women"

Ayan Hirsi Ali "What the Future Holds for Muslim Women"

Film: *The Light in Her Eyes*

Assignments: Prepare In-Class discussion questions on assigned readings as posted on Blackboard

Weekly Exit Ticket due Sunday

LO 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7

Debate #3: Islamic Law and Women's Rights

LO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8

April 2nd

Exam: Midterm Exam

LO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

(Note: Spring Recess from April 3rd until April 11th-No class)

**18th and 19th Intellectual Trends: Revivalism as Anti-Colonialism:
April 14th and April 16th**

Readings: Esposito Chapter 4 Pages 141-175

Assignments: Prepare In-Class discussion questions on assigned readings as posted on Blackboard
Weekly Exit Ticket due Sunday

LO 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8

**Islamist Political Movements and the Redefinitions of Jihad and Jahiliyya:
Sayyid Qutb and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt**

April 21st and 23rd

Readings: Esposito Chapter 4 Pages 175-186
Qutb Excerpt from *Milestones*

Assignments: Prepare In-Class discussion questions on assigned readings as posted on Blackboard
Weekly Exit Ticket due Sunday

LO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

Islamist Political Movements:

The Iranian Revolution, the Islamic Republic, and the Status of Women and Non-Muslim Minorities

April 28th and 30th

Readings: Esposito Chapter 5 Pages 187-221
Layachi "Iran"

Assignments: Prepare In-Class discussion questions on assigned readings as posted on Blackboard
Weekly Exit Ticket due Sunday

LO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

Debate #4: Islam and Democracy

LO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8

**Extremist Islamist Movements:
al-Qaeda, Terrorism, and September 11th**

May 5th

Readings: Esposito Chapter 5 Pages 221-249
CFR article "al-Qaeda"

Hashmi "Not What the Prophet Wanted: How Can Islamic Scholars Sanction Suicidal Tactics?"

Assignments: Prepare In-Class discussion questions on assigned readings as

posted on Blackboard
Weekly Exit Ticket due Sunday

LO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

Muslims in the U.S.: Between Marginalization and Belonging

May 7th and 12th

Readings: Curtis Chapters 1, 4

Malcolm X Excerpt from *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*

Film: Malcolm X (1992)-individual viewing

Assignments: Prepare In-Class discussion questions on assigned readings as posted on Blackboard
Weekly Exit Ticket due Sunday

LO 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8

Debate #5: Park 55: The Islamic Community Center at Ground Zero

LO 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8

May 14th

Readings: Esposito Chapter 6

Curtis Chapters 3, 5, 6

Assignments: Prepare In-Class discussion questions on assigned readings as posted on Blackboard
No Exit Ticket due to final exam

LO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8

Final exam will take place on the date and time given by the CUNYFIRST system

Supplemental Material (added March 2021)

I. Sample Rubric for Evaluating Class Participation:

Students will be assessed for participation according as follows:

Grade range A to A-

At this level of preparation and participation, you are clearly prepared for every class discussion through reading, thinking, taking notes, and critically applying course ideas to the texts. You consistently contribute verbally without being called on, in and out of groups (a minimum of four critical or analytical comments or questions per class session). You are familiar with all of the readings to date, and it is clear from your remarks and questions that you are thinking critically and thoughtfully about the course topics and materials. At the level of participation, you take charge by verbally sharing your ideas boldly, show a willingness to take intellectual risks, and possess a positive attitude even when the work is difficult. You are intellectually generous, civil, and helpful toward your class as a whole, and you come across as inspired or inspiring. You are able to express disagreement with a classmate's ideas cogently and diplomatically.

Grade range B+ to B-

At the level of preparation and participation, you show that you have completed the reading and have done some additional preparation for class discussion. You may have to be prompted by the instructor to volunteer your ideas verbally, but you are familiar with all readings and course ideas and are vocal in group work. At the level of participation, you show a consistently attentive and engaged attitude and some thoughtful and constructive participation in the class dialogue (a minimum of three critical or analytical comments or questions per class session). You have a positive, engaged attitude, and are a solid class participant.

Grade range C+ to C-

At this level of preparation and participation, it is clear that you have done most of the reading but there is room for improvement in how you critically engage with the material; you seem to know the content and be familiar with some basic course concepts, although not always consistently. Your understanding of readings may show less depth than content, or a lack of further engagement and critical thinking. At the level of participation, you are usually attentive in class although you contribute less frequently than other students (a minimum of 2 critical or analytical comments or questions). Your verbal contributions to discussions are sometimes off-topic. You participate during group work, but you may be quieter or work without as much depth as possible.

Grade Range D+ to D-

At this level of preparation and participation, it is consistently evident that you have only done part of the reading and other assignments and/or have done so poorly. You appear to be unfamiliar with many of the basic concepts used in class or the main points and arguments of the readings or other materials. You occasionally participate, but more often seem disengaged from the course sessions and our discussions and activities. You often fail to contribute to group work and may be disruptive or frequently absent.

Grade F

You will receive a failing participation grade if it is clear that you are not keeping up with the reading, the concepts being examined in class, class discussions and other course work. You consistently make no effort to engaged in and participate in class. You will also receive a failing participation grade if you are disruptive, disrespectful, or your behavior interferes with the instructor's ability to teach and your classmates' ability to learn.

II. Sample Discussion Questions:

Feb. 3rd:

- 1) How does Huntington describe the clash of civilizations and why, according to him, is such a clash inevitable?
- 2) How does Huntington define the term civilization? What are the different civilizations he names in the article and how are those civilizations defined (i.e. in religious terms, ethnic terms, geographic terms etc)? Of the 7-8 civilizations he names, which civilization(s) do you identify with? Why might Huntington's categorization of these 7-8 civilizations be problematic?
- 3) How, specifically, does Huntington define Islamic civilization? How does he describe Islamic civilization's relationship with the West?
- 4) What are four of the major critiques Said makes of Huntington's "clash of civilizations" thesis?
- 5) Said makes numerous criticisms of Huntington's thesis. What criticisms can you raise about Said's arguments against Huntington?
- 6) Huntington's theory of a "clash of civilizations" has had major longevity and is still evoked in mainstream media discourse in the US. What is compelling about his theory and why do you think it has had such longevity?

III. Sample Exit Ticket Question

Exit Ticket (due February 23rd) (minimum 500 words)

The Quran mandates equality and egalitarianism among all Muslims, regardless of tribe, race, ethnicity, or sect, as well as respect for non-Muslim "People of the Book." To what extent were these mandates achieved under the Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates? How and why did issues of equality shape the early Islamic empires?

IV Sample Debate Guidelines and Rubric

Debate Structure: For Those Presenting in the Debate

Main Argument:

-Each debate team will have 6 minutes total to present the main argument of their side of the issue (2 minutes each person in the case of a 3 member team, 3 minutes each person in the case of a 2 member team).

-You must do your own research to prepare your main argument.

-The goal of main argument is to present a clear, concise, analytical, and persuasive case for your side.

-Each participant should speak for approximately the same amount of time

-The appointed moderator will cut off the speakers if they go over their allotted time (be careful about time management because the moderator may cut you off before you get to your main points).

-You must submit a written copy of your main arguments and any pre-prepared rebuttal statements (minimum 500 words) which will be evaluated as part of your grade.

Rebuttal

-After the main argument, each side will be given two to three minutes each for spontaneous rebuttal. (1 minute for each participant)

-The purpose of the rebuttal is to refute the other side's arguments and also to add any additional points to your argument. It is recommended that you do a little research on the points the other side may make in order to be prepared to rebut them.

Question and Answer

-After rebuttal arguments are made, a question and answer session will be held in which members of the audience are ask questions of any participant. Responses are limited to 1 minute.

Debate Structure: For Those in the Audience

-Each audience member will be required to come up with three questions or comments for each side.

-Questions must be addressed to a specific side. The opposing side is not allowed to respond unless and until a question is posed to them.

-The class will vote on which side won the debate. (Please note: the class vote does not affect the individual grades of those presenting the debate).

-Your vote should not be based on your personal opinion of the issue involved but on the quality of arguments made by the debaters.

-For your participation to count that day, you must participate orally and submit your written questions and comments along with your commentary on which side

you think won the debate and why (minimum 250 words). This will be graded on a 5-point scale.

Debate Evaluation Rubric

-You will receive a grade out of 20 points for your participation in the debate. Everyone will receive an individual grade.

You will be graded on the following:

1) Quality of Main Argument (including submitted written version-10 points):

a) presenting a logical, clear and strong argument or series of arguments for your side of the issue

b) providing ample and accurate evidence to support your side of the argument

2) Clarity of Argument (2 points):

a) presenting your argument in a logical order

b) using clear and concise language to make your points

3) Coordination (2 points): your arguments are coordinated with your partners' arguments and you avoid repetition of points of argument)

Failure to coordinate with your team members and/or to show up for the debate will result in a failing debate grade.

4) Quality of Rebuttal and Response (4 points): you counter the opposite side's arguments with critical responses and support for your side of the debate and respond logically with accurate evidence to questions from the audience

V. Sample Midterm and Final Essay Questions and Evaluation Rubric

1) In your opinion, is a clash of civilizations between Islam and the West inevitable or is a dialogue of civilizations possible? Discuss with reference to Samuel Huntington's views of civilizations, including Western and Islamic civilizations as well as Edward Said's critiques of Huntington. Make sure to state your personal opinion within the essay.

2) How and why did 18th century Islamic revivalist movements emerge, and how did 18th century revivalism compare and contrast to Islamic modernism? How have the basic tenets of both 18th century revivalism and 19th century modernism shaped modern Islamist and Islamist extremist movements in the 20th and 21st centuries? Make sure to include examples of specific movements in your discussion.

Name: _____

	Outstanding	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Thesis/Main Argument ____/6	Distinctive thesis, clearly stated, and well-argued.	Appropriate, identifiable thesis, could use some clarification.	Difficult to identify, unclear, <i>or</i> inappropriate thesis
Organization ____/6	Effective essay structure Organization of essay reinforces thesis/main argument Paragraphs structured for logical flow Effective sequence of ideas with concise focus	Essay structure generally clear and appropriate Paragraph structure or sequence of ideas could be improved; Some points of essay may be off-topic	Unclear or ineffective essay organization; Abrupt or illogical shifts between paragraphs and ideas Discussion is vague-- not enough focus on prompt topic.
Interpretation and Incorporation of Assigned Texts ____/6	Demonstrates nuanced and sophisticated understanding of texts Effective integration of relevant readings/texts.	Demonstrates a basic understanding of texts, but could be more nuanced. Includes some relevant points from readings/texts.	Weak understanding of readings/texts demonstrated; Few or no relevant points from readings/texts. Inaccurate interpretation and incorporation of texts
Author's Analysis ____/6	Analysis is consistent and well-supported Conclusion strongly supports thesis	Some development and support for analysis; Conclusion supports thesis, but could be stronger	Analysis difficult to follow or identify; Author does not offer their own opinion or analysis
Writing Style & Mechanics ____/6	Very well written Proofread-free of grammar, punctuation, spelling, capitalization errors	Clearly written with <i>few</i> errors; Needs a bit of editing and/or proofreading.	Multiple errors interfere with meaning and comprehension Proof-reading not evident;

Grade: _____

Comments: