

The Qur'an – Spring 2023 – Azam MWF 1:00-2:00

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Email: *use Canvas for all course-related matters; for non-course matters:*

hina.azam@austin.utexas.edu

Office Hrs: Tue 1-2 and Thu 2-3, or by appt, at <https://utexas.zoom.us/my/hinaazam>

COURSE CROSS-LISTINGS

CL 323 (34260), CTI 375 (30095), MEL 321 (40875), MES 342 (40485), RS 325G (42755), & WGS 340 (45610)

Course Description

In this course, we will study the religion of Islam through its core text, the Qur'an. In our studies, we will focus on the following religious themes of the Qur'an: cosmology (e.g. God, human nature, Satan, and the afterlife), theology, ethics, ritual, and law. We will also examine some of the prominent symbols, images and rhetorical structures of the Qur'an, and we will learn to navigate the text. Through reading the prophetic narratives, we will compare Qur'anic and biblical accounts of the major prophets shared by Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The role of the Qur'an in Muslim devotion and as a medium for artistic expression will be explored as well. We will study the context in which the Qur'an was composed, as well as how the text has been interpreted over time. Prior knowledge of Islam and/or Arabic is helpful but not required for this course.

This course emphasizes themes of language and literature, global cultures, women and gender, and ethics and leadership, in conformity with those cross-listings and flags: We will look at female figures in the scripture and in Muhammad's life, as well as give special attention to Qur'anic prescriptions related to gender relations. We will study the language, terminology, rhetorical structures, and narrative passages of the text. The text will be approached through the socio-historical context of late antique Arabia and its interpretation in medieval Islam and modern encounters with the West.

In fulfillment of the Ethics and Leadership flag, this course will give sustained attention to the ethical content of the Qur'an as well as to how Muslims interpret this content. Students will acquire knowledge about the Qur'an's ethical content by reading assigned passages from the text and discussing these in class. Students will have opportunity to reflect on these passages and their contemporary relevance both in class and through journal exercises.

Course Texts (all are required with noted exceptions)

• **Qur'an, required excerpts.** You are not required to purchase a copy of the whole Qur'an. Required readings will be available on Canvas. For those who are interested in having access to the whole text, here are some recommended resources:

↳ *The Qur'an*, tr. M. A. S. Abdel Haleem. (Oxford U Press, 2005)

↳ To consult the Arabic text or hear recitation, see online editions at <http://tanzil.net>, <http://www.quranwow.com>, and <http://quran.com>.

• **Bible, required excerpts.** Not all required Bible readings will be provided on Canvas, so you will need to use your own editions. Searchable online versions found at www.biblegateway.com.

• Toshihiko Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'an* (2002)

• Abdullah Saeed, *The Qur'an: An Introduction* (2008)

• PDFs on Canvas from

- Document: Ethics-Related Passages in the Qur'an
- Muhammad Abdel Haleem, *Understanding the Qur'an: Themes and Style* (1999)
- *The Qur'an*, tr. Muhammad Abdel Haleem (2005)
- Barbara F. Stowasser, *Women in the Qur'an, Traditions and Interpretations*. (Oxford U Press, 1996)
- Islamophobia graphics

Grading

NOTE: The instructor reserves the right to adjust course requirements during the term. Students will be notified of any such adjustments either in class or via email.

Course grades will be based on a combination of exams, journal entries, and attendance, as follows:

1 Initial writing exercise	= 2%
1 Midterm exam	= 20%
5 Journal entries, 6% each	= 30%
Final exam	= 30%
Attendance	= 12%
Preparation & Participation	= 6%
	= 100% total

Commented [AHI]: Should I add reading quizzes?

Grading Rubric

<u>Percentage Grade</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Percentage Grade</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>
94-100	A	73-76	C
90-92	A-	70-72	C-
87-89	B+	67-69	D+
83-86	B	63-66	D
80-82	B-	60-62	D-
77-79	C+	59 and below	F

Note: Final course grades will be rounded to the nearest point, eg:
 89.2 = 89 = B+ 89.7 = 90 = A- 89.5 = 90 = A-

Attendance:

- Arrive on time. I will take attendance at the beginning of class. If you arrive late, it is your responsibility to come to me after class and tell me you've arrived. Repeated or significant tardiness may adversely affect your attendance grade.
- You are permitted two absences during the semester without consequence. Anything beyond that may adversely affect your course grade. For extenuating circumstances, documentation is encouraged and may mitigate the effect of an absence from class.
- You may attend up to two class periods virtually if you are unable to attend class in person. For this, you must inform me by 9 am on class day; you will use the following class Zoom link: <https://utexas.zoom.us/j/99952277517>.
- You are responsible for what you miss when absent. Contact me or classmates to keep up.
- Virtual class: In the event of instructor illness or travel, class may be held by Zoom at the class Zoom link above. Typically for travel, this will be emailed/posted to the syllabus days in advance. However, in the event of illness, this will be posted by 9 am on class day. **It is critical that students keep abreast of course-related communication.**

Preparation & Participation

- Be prepared, making sure to complete readings before the class for which they are assigned.
- Demonstrate your preparedness by engaging with the material and participating in class discussion.
- Please bring your Qur'an/assigned verses and your Bible/assigned verses on the days for which you have assigned readings from those texts.
- **Electronics use:** Laptops and cell phones may only be used for virtual class/attendance and specific in-class exercises, such as discussions on texts. At other times, those devices must be stowed. Tablets may be used for handwritten note-taking.

Journal entries

- Over the course of the semester, you will write five journal entries and upload them into Canvas. Prompts/instructions will be found in the "Journals" section of the Canvas page for this class, and will involve reflecting on assigned Qur'an passages.
- Entries must be uploaded directly onto Canvas (not as attachments) by midnight on their due dates. Late entries may be marked down.
- Entries should be 500-550 words in length and must address the assigned verses and readings.
- You will be grade based primarily on content, including how well you address the prompts, but also on mechanics, organization, and diction.

Exams

- The midterm and final exams are cumulative and will be based on both lecture/class material and readings.
- I will offer make-up tests only for extenuating circumstances, at my discretion, if the reason is compelling and documented.

Course, Classroom, and Communication Policies

- You are responsible for any announcements made in class or posted electronically. This includes announcements made during any portion of class for which you are absent, or email messages that you fail to receive. I will assume all Registrar-held email addresses are valid unless you tell me otherwise. If you use another email address, it is your responsibility to provide me with it and to check it regularly.
- All course-related email communications will be via Canvas. You may use my regular UT email address for non-course-related communication (eg recommendation letters, referrals, personal interest questions, etc).
- Students should address me (and all faculty) by title, such as Dr. Azam or Prof. Azam. First-name address and "hey" is inappropriate. Salutations should be used in all written communication as it is courteous and professional.

Student with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD), 512-471-6259, <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>. If you have SSD accommodations, please arrange to meet with me **within two weeks** of the start of the semester or within two weeks of acquiring such accommodations.

Scholastic Responsibility, Academic Integrity, and Plagiarism

The writing you do in this course must be your own. Passing off the work of others as your own can be either plagiarism or collusion. Both are scholastic offenses that will not be tolerated. *Plagiarism* is defined by UT

as “the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another’s work and the submission of it as one’s own academic work offered for credit.” “Another” here refers both to human and artificial intelligence, such as ChatGPT: any entity *other than you* is “another,” and any submission of *other-composed work* as your own constitutes plagiarism. *Collusion* is “unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments.” This includes unauthorized collaboration both with those in the course and those outside the course, such as friends, family, or contract writers. Plagiarism is taken very seriously at UT and is subject to academic disciplinary action, including failure of the course. To learn more about what plagiarism is and how to avoid it, see the [Avoiding Plagiarism tutorial](#) developed by the UT Libraries in partnership with the Writing Flag program and Student Judicial Services. For a detailed explanation of both plagiarism and collusion, and on the difference between honest and dishonest use of sources, see [Plagiarism & Collusion](#) at the Department of Rhetoric and Writing.

Students who violate University rules on academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, please visit the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity website at: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct>.

Sharing of course materials online or with anyone outside of the class is prohibited unless you have my explicit, written permission. This includes but is not limited to lecture hand-outs, videos, assessments (quizzes, exams, papers, projects, homework assignments), in-class materials, review sheets, and the link. Unauthorized sharing of materials is a violation of the University’s Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty. Any materials found online that are associated with you, or any suspected unauthorized using or sharing of such materials, will be reported to Student Conduct and Academic Integrity in the Office of the Dean of Students.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Important Dates

First day of class	Monday 1/9
Spring Break	Mon 3/13 to Fri 3/17
Last day of class	Monday 4/24
Final exam	TBA

UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION to the COURSE

- 1) Mon 1/9** Course Introduction
- 2) Wed 1/11** Introduction to the Muslim world; the Qur'an in Muslim life and belief
↳ **Abdel Haleem**, Introduction (ix-xxv) – pdf on Canvas
- 3) Fri 1/13** Ethical Principles in the Qur'an: Concepts of *iḥṣān* vs *qarar*, *ma'rūf* vs *munkar*
Ethics: General Injunctions to Iḥṣān
↳ **Ethics:** General Injunctions to Ihsan

UNIT 2: STYLE, STRUCTURE and FEATURES of the TEXT

- Mon 1/16 Martin Luther King Day – no class
- 4) Wed 1/18** Structure of the Qur'an; Style and content of the Qur'an
Ethics: Comprehensive Injunctions to Ihsan
↳ **Abdel Haleem**, ch.1 (1-14, The Qur'an) – pdf on Canvas
↳ **Ethics:** Comprehensive Injunctions to Ihsan
↳ **Initial Writing Exercise due on Canvas**
 - 5) Fri 1/20** Qur'an Recitation and Translation
Ethics: Surahs "al-Balad" and "al-Duḥā"
↳ **Saeed**: ch.7 (119-139, Translation of the Qur'an)
↳ **Qur'an:** *Surahs al-Balad and ad-Duha*, transliteration/translation
 - 6) Mon 1/23** Style and Content of the Qur'an: symbolism, parables and "signs" (*ayat*)
Ethics: Generosity/Charity/Alms – General Injunctions
↳ **Izutsu**: ch.3 (45-54, the pessimistic conception of the earthly life)
↳ **Ethics:** Generosity/Charity/Alms – General Injunctions

UNIT 3: MUHAMMAD, REVELATION and SCRIPTURE

- 7) Wed 1/25** Pre-Islamic background of the Qur'an
Ethics: Generosity/Charity/Alms – Specific Injunctions
↳ **Izutsu**: ch.4 (55-73, spirit of tribal solidarity)
↳ **Ethics:** Generosity/Charity/Alms – Specific Injunctions
- 8) Fri 1/27** Pre-Islamic background of the Qur'an, contd
Ethics: Protecting the Weak and Vulnerable
↳ **Saeed**: ch.1 (1-20, The Qur'an in its context)
↳ **Ethics:** Ihsan as Protecting the Weak and Vulnerable (esp orphans)

9) Mon 1/30 Life of Muhammad: Birth to Prophethood
→ Journal entry 1 due on Canvas (Ethics #3-#8 - *iḥṣān*, generosity /charity, protecting weak/vulnerable -)

10) Wed 2/1 Life of Muhammad: Meccan Period
→ Izutsu: ch.5 (74-104, the Islamization of old Arab virtues)

11) Fri 2/3 Life of Muhammad: Madinan Period
Ethics: Good Treatment to Parents
→ Ethics: Ihsan as Good Treatment to Parents

12) Mon 2/6 Assembly and Promulgation of the Scripture
Ethics: Ihsan in Speech: Truthfulness/Fairness, vs Lying/Misrepresentation
→ Saeed: ch.3 (37-57, The Qur'an as scripture)
→ Ethics: Ihsan in Speech: Truthfulness/Fairness, vs Lying/Misrepresentation

UNIT 4: COSMOLOGY of the QUR'AN

13) Wed 2/8 Cosmology: Beings
Ethics: Ihsan in Speech: Kindness to the other's face
→ Saeed: ch.2 (21-34, Revelation and the Qur'an)
→ Ethics: Ihsan in Speech: Kindness to the other's face

14) Fri 2/10 Cosmology: Beings, contd
Ethics: Ihsan in Speech: Kindness behind the other's back
→ Saeed: ch.4 (61-80, Major themes)
→ Ethics: Ihsan in Speech: Kindness behind the other's back

15) Mon 2/13 Cosmology: Relationships Between Beings
Ethics: Ihsan in Moneys: Against Fraud, Usury, Misappropriation, Theft
→ Saeed: ch.10 (177-189, Selected exegetical principles and ideas)
→ Ethics: Ihsan in Moneys: Against Fraud, Usury, Misappropriation, Theft

16) Wed 2/15 Cosmology: Relationships Between Beings, contd
Ethics: Ihsan as Preserving Life
→ Ethics: Ihsan as Preserving Life

17) Fri 2/17 Cosmology: Sacred History
→ Izutsu: ch.6 (105-116, the basic moral dichotomy)

18) Mon 2/20 Cosmology: Sacred History
Ethics: Enjoining Justice vs Injustice: General Injunctions
→ Ethics: Justice vs Injustice: General Injunctions
→ Journal entry 2 due on Canvas (Ethics #11-15 - *ihsan* in speech and in moneys)

UNIT 5: COMPARATIVE SCRIPTURES: the BIBLE and the QUR'AN

*** NOTE: Please bring Qur'an and Bible (or passages) to class on these days. ***

19) Wed 2/22 Comparative Scriptures: the Bible and the Qur'an

Ethics: Economic Justice & Procedural Justice

↳ Ethics: Economic Justice & Procedural Justice

↳ Saeed: ch.8 (143-156, The Qur'an and other scriptures)

20) Fri 2/24 Adam, Eve and Satan

↳ Bible: Gen.1 – Gen.3 (on Adam, Eve, serpent)

↳ Qur'an: on Adam/Eve/Iblis (2:30-9, 7:11-25, 15:26-50, 20:115-123, 38:71-85)

21) Mon 2/27 Adam, Eve, and Satan; presentations of Eve

↳ Stowasser, from ch.2 (20-38, Eve in the Qur'an and exegesis) – WGS

22) Wed 3/1 Noah

↳ Bible: Gen.5:28 - Gen.9 (on Noah)

↳ Qur'an: Noah (s.71 all, 7:59-64, 23:23-30, 29:14-15, 11:25-49)

23) Fri 3/3 Abraham and family

↳ Bible: Gen 11-18, 21-22 (on Abraham & family)

↳ Qur'an: Abraham and family (19:41-50, 6:74-83, 21:51-70, 51:24-37, 11:69-76, 37:83-113)

24) Mon 3/6 **MIDTERM EXAM on Units 1 – 4**

25) Wed 3/8 Moses, Aaron and Pharaoh; presentation of women

↳ Bible: Moses (Ex.1-20, 24, 31:12-3; Num. 11)

↳ Qur'an: Moses/Aaron/Pharaoh (28:1-46, 20:9-98, 26:10-68, 7:103-156, 10:75-93, 18:60-82, 44:17-33)

26) Fri 3/10 Mary and Jesus; presentation of Mary

↳ Stowasser, ch.7 (67-82, Mary in the Qur'an and exegesis) – WGS

↳ Qur'an: Mary, Zakariya, and John (3:33-47, 19:1-30, 66:12) and on Jesus (5:46-7, 19:16-35, 3:45-60, 5:109-118, 43:63-65, 4:157-9, 5:17)

SPRING BREAK – Mon 3/13 to Fri 3/17

UNIT 6: ETHICS in the QUR'AN: JUSTICE, the VIRTUES, and CHARACTER

27) Mon 3/20 Spiritual Foundations of Ethics: *Īmān*, *Shukr*, and *Kufr*

↳ Izutsu: ch.7 (119-155, the inner structure of the concept of *kufr*)

↳ Journal entry 3 due on Canvas (Ethics #16, 18-19 - *ihسان* in matters of life; justice)

28) Wed 3/22 Justice/Balance/Equity (*'adāla. qist*) vs. Injustice/Oppression/Cruelty (*zulm, baghy*)

↳ Izutsu: ch.8 (156-177, the semantic field of *kufr*)

29) Fri 3/24 Ethics of *Kufr* vs Ethics of *Īmān* / *Shukr* [Izutsu]

↳ Izutsu: ch.10 (184-202, the believer/*mu'min*)

30) Mon 3/27 *Akhlāq* (Personal Ethics): Virtue, Vice, and Character

Ethics: Justice in punishments

↳ Ethics: Justice in punishments

31) Wed 3/29 Religious Ethics vs Religious Law: Virtue vs Worship, and Vice vs Sin
Ethics: Equality, Autonomy, Privacy

↳ **Izutsu:** ch.11 (204-249, good and bad)

↳ **Ethics:** Equality, Autonomy, Privacy

33) Fri 3/31 The Private and the Public: Faith/Ethics/Character vs Etiquette/Collective Good
Medieval Exegesis (*tafsir*) and Traditional Morality

↳ **Saeed:** from ch.11 (193-208, Medieval Qur'anic Exegesis)

UNIT 7: MORAL LAW (*shari'a*): WORSHIP/DIET, GENDER/FAMILY, & WARFARE

33) Mon 4/3 Moral law (*shari'a*) concepts: *halal/haram* & the five values
Ethics: *Akhlāq*: Integrity

↳ **Saeed:** ch.9 (161-173, Ethico-legal teachings)

↳ **Ethics:** *Akhlaq*: Integrity

34) Wed 4/5 Rules of Worship (*'ibada*): Witness, Purity, and Prayer

Ethics: *Akhlāq*: Humility and Self-Restraint

↳ **Abdel Haleem**, ch.2 (15-28, The Fatiha) – pdf on Canvas

↳ **Ethics:** *Akhlaq*: Humility and Self-Restraint

35) Fri 4/7 Rules of Worship, contd: Charity, Fasting, and Pilgrimage

Ethics: *Akhlāq*: Forgiveness, Reconciliation, Peace-Keeping

↳ **Saeed:** ch.5 (83-93, The Qur'an in daily life)

↳ **Ethics:** *Akhlaq*: Forgiveness, Reconciliation, Peace-Keeping

36) Mon 4/10 Social Relations: Gender Relations in Public Life

Ethics: *Akhlāq*: Chastity and Modesty

↳ **Ethics:** *Akhlaq*: Chastity & Modesty

↳ **Journal entry 4 due on Canvas (Ethics #31-38 - on personal rights and virtues/values)**

37) Wed 4/12 Social Relations: Gender Relations in Private Life

Ethics: *Akhlāq*: Moderation and not being Wasteful

↳ **Ethics:** *Akhlaq*: Moderation and not being Wasteful

38) Fri 4/14 Intercommunal Relations and Warfare

Ethics: Interreligious Attitudes and Interactions

↳ **Abdel-Haleem:** ch.5 (War and Peace in the Qur'an) – pdf on Canvas

↳ **Ethics:** Interreligious Attitudes and Interactions

UNIT 8: MODERN INTERPRETATIONS of the QUR'AN

39) Mon 4/17 Modern Muslim Interpretation of the Qur'an

↳ **Saeed:** end ch.11 (208-215, Modern Qur'anic exegesis)

40) Wed 4/19 Modern Muslim Interpretation of the Qur'an, contd

↳ **Saeed:** ch.12 (219-231, Modern interpretation of the Qur'an)

41) Fri 4/21 Anti-Muslim/Islamophobic Interpretations of the Qur'an
↳ Islamophobia readings: "Islam: A Religion of Peace?" – pdf on Canvas

42) Mon 4/24 Course Roundup
↳ Islamophobia readings: "Deception, Lying, and Taqiyya" – pdf on Canvas

↳ Journal entry 5 due on Canvas (on the Qur'an and Islamophobia) on Thursday 4/27

Final Exam – Date and Location TBA

The final exam will be cumulative, with more emphasis on the second half of the course than on the first half of the course.

Prompts for Initial Writing Exercise and for the five Journal Entries:

For Journal Entries, make sure to follow the rules given in the syllabus. Also, make sure to do the following:

- address the whole prompt
- engage the ethics themes directly
- engage as many of the verses as possible and cite them
- avoid fluff and tangents

Initial writing exercise

Prompt: What moral principles do you expect to find in the Qur'an? How might they be similar to or different from moral principles one might find in the Bible or in American culture? To what extent do you think one can constructively apply the moral principles from the remote past and from a different society and culture to contemporary problems and situations?

Journal Entry #1 – Injunction to *ihsān*: generosity and charity: protecting the weak and vulnerable

Prompt: Reflect on the ethical content for classes #2-6. Identify any aspects that are particularly thought-provoking to you. What are specific ways that these directives can be applied at the individual level and at the communal level? How might they function as a standard by which to critique contemporary social practices?

Journal Entry #2 – *Ihsan* in speech and in moneys

Prompt: Reflect on the ethical content for classes #8-12. Identify any aspects that are particularly thought-provoking to you. Now consider these passages through the framework of economic justice and institutional leadership. How can the ethical principles related to finance and economics be applicable today to promote economic justice? How can they inform the idea of good leadership – whether moral, political, in the workplace, or at home?

Journal Entry #3 – *Ihsan* in matters of life and justice

Prompt: Reflect on the ethical content for classes #13-18. Identify any aspects that are particularly thought-provoking to you. Now consider these passages in the context of government, law enforcement, and the court system. What specific guidelines for best practices in these areas could be built upon these passages?

Journal Entry #4 – Justice, personal rights, and virtues

Prompt: Reflect on the ethical content for classes #19-24. Identify any aspects that are particularly thought-provoking to you. Which human rights and civil rights principles can be built on these passages? Could the Qur'an be said to support or reject ideals such as religious freedom or representative government, for example? What makes Pharaoh a bad leader and an unethical person?

Journal Entry #5 – The Qur'an and Islamophobia

Prompt: Analyze the two Islamophobia readings carefully and compare each cited verse and its given translation/commentary with your own examination of the same verse/translation in a standard academic translation. Consider also what we have been learning all semester of the Qur'an's historical context and interpretive methods. Identify points where the readings appear to distort the words, meanings, or intent of the passages in question.