

The Qur'an – Fall 2015 – Prof. Hina Azam

CL 323.37/32860, CTI 375.1/33165, ISL 340.2/40620, MEL 321.9/40725,
MES 342.16/40935, RS 325G/42745 & WGS 340.54/46130

CLASS INFORMATION

Day/Time: TTH 2:00-3:30 pm

Class Location: MEZ Bo.306

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Email: hina.azam@austin.utexas.edu

Office: CAL 506

Office Hrs: TTh 11:00-12:15 or by appointment

TEACHING ASSISTANT INFORMATION

Name: Mitch Bacci

Email: mitch.bacci@utexas.edu

Office Hrs: By appointment

Discussion Sections (optional): Tue 1:00-2:00, in BIO 301 & Wed 1:00-2:00, in CAL 221

Course Description

In this course, we will study the religion of Islam through its core text, the Qur'an. To this end, this course will entail extensive reading of the Qur'an itself, as well as of other texts. In our studies, we will focus on the following religious themes of the Qur'an: cosmology (eg God, human nature, satan, and the afterlife), ethical principles, ritual prescriptions, and legal injunctions. We will also encounter the Qur'an as literature by examining some of the prominent symbols, images and rhetorical structures of the Qur'an. Through reading the prophetic narratives, we will have an opportunity to compare Qur'anic and Biblical accounts of the major prophets shared by Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The syllabus also includes an inquiry into role of the Qur'an in Muslim devotion and as a medium for artistic expression. We will also discuss the tradition of interpretation (or "exegesis"), especially as it pertains to those verses that engender the most debate today, with particular attention to questions of women, gender and sexuality. Prior knowledge of Islam is helpful but not required for this course.

Course Texts

- *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> (very user-friendly) and <http://quran.com>.
- The **Bible**, any edition – students may use their own editions; searchable online versions found at www.biblegateway.com
- Toshihiko **Izutsu**, *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'an*. (McGill-Queens U Press, 2002)
- Abdullah **Saeed**, *The Qur'an: An Introduction*. (Routledge, 2008)
- Readings available in pdf on **Canvas**:
 - Excerpts from Michael **Sells**, *Approaching the Qur'an: The Early Revelation*. (White Cloud Press, 2000)
 - Excerpt from Kristina **Nelson**, *The Art of Reciting Qur'an*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985)
 - Excerpts from Barbara F. **Stowasser**, *Women in the Qur'an, Traditions and Interpretations*. (Oxford U Press, 1996)

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	= 25%
5 Journal entries, 4% each	= 20%
Final exam	= 35%
Attendance	= 18%
	= 100% total

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.

Journal entries: Over the course of the semester, you will write five journal entries (approximately one every other week) and upload them into Canvas. Available themes are found in the “Journals” section of the Canvas page for this class, and roughly parallel our class readings. You may select a topic you like from the ones available for that entry. Entries must be entered by midnight on the due dates given in the syllabus. Late entries may be marked down or receive no credit.

In each entry, you must do the following, in addition to addressing the prompt:

- put the key ideas of the verses into your own words
- relate the verses to each other
- offer your own reflections upon the verses

Entries should be 200-300 words in length and must address all or most of the verses under that topic. You will be grade based primarily on content, but also on mechanics.

Attendance: You are permitted two absences during the semester without consequence.

Anything beyond that may adversely affect your course grade. For extenuating circumstances, a note and/or prior permission is requested, and may mitigate the effect of an absence from class.

- 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.
- Be prepared, making sure to complete readings before the class for which they are assigned. Please bring your Qur’an/assigned verses and your Bible/assigned verses on the days for which you have assigned readings from those texts.
- Demonstrate your preparedness by engaging with the material and participating in class discussion.

Note on electronics: Laptops, cell phones and other electronic devices may not be used during class.

Note on communication: You are responsible for any announcements made in class or sent out via email. This includes announcements made during any portion of class for which you are absent, or email messages that you fail to receive. It is your responsibility to provide me a valid email address and to check it regularly. I will assume all Registrar-held email addresses are valid unless you tell me otherwise.

Addressing the instructor: Students should address the instructor as “Dr. Azam” or “Prof. Azam.” “Mrs. Azam,” “Ms. Azam,” and first-name address are inappropriate. “Hey” is also inappropriate, as is omitting the salutation.

Note on TA discussion sections: Your TA, Mitch Bacci, will organize discussions sections to discuss the readings. While these are optional, they are highly recommended as ways to better grasp the course content.

Grading Rubric

<u>Percentage Grade</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Percentage Grade</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>
93-100	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-

Note: Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 512-471-6259, <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>

CLASS SCHEDULE

Important Dates

First day of class	Thursday 8/27
Thanksgiving break	Thursday 11/26 – Sunday 11/29
Last day of class	Thursday 12/3

*** Please see final exam schedule for exact time/date/location. ***

UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE (class #1-2)

- #1) Thu 8/27 Introduction to course topics, syllabus, readings
- #2) Tue 9/1 Introduction to Muslim world; the Qur'an in Muslim life and belief
- ↳ Sells, 1-28 (Introduction) – pdf on Canvas
 - ↳ Qur'an: divine guidance (2:2-7; 5:44-48, 22:16)

UNIT 2: STYLE, STRUCTURE AND FEATURES OF THE TEXT (class #3-5)

- #3) Thu 9/3 Structure of the Qur'an; Style and content of the Qur'an
- ↳ Surahs *al-Balad* and *ad-Duha*, transliteration/translation – pdf on Canvas
 - ↳ Nelson, ch.1 (1-13, history, nature & form of Qur'an) – pdf on Canvas
 - ↳ Saeed: ch.5 (83-93, The Qur'an in daily life)
 - ↳ Qur'an: revelation process (44:3, 2:185, s.97, 25:32, 17:105-6, 59:21, 85:21-22, 56:77-9)
 - ↳ Initial Writing Exercise due on Canvas
- #4) Tue 9/8 Translating the Qur'an
- ↳ Saeed: ch.7 (119-139, Translation of the Qur'an)
 - ↳ Sells, 199-223 (Sound, Spirit, and Gender in the Qur'an)
- #5) Thu 9/10 Hearing and Reciting the Qur'an
- ↳ Sells, 161-196 (Hearing the Qur'an: The Call to Prayer & Six Surahs) – pdf on Canvas
 - ↳ Qur'an: nature of God and relationship b/w God and creation (2:255, 22:6 & 17-18, 59:22-24, 50:16, 24:35 & 42, s.112, 19:88-93, 55:26-7, 3:26-27)

UNIT 3: MUHAMMAD, REVELATION AND SCRIPTURE (class #6-9)

- #6) Tue 9/15 Pre-Islamic background of the Qur'an
- ↳ Izutsu: ch.3 (45-54, the pessimistic conception of the earthly life)
 - ↳ Izutsu: ch.4 (55-73, spirit of tribal solidarity)
 - ↳ Journal entry 1 due on Canvas
- #7) Thu 9/17 Life of Muhammad: Birth, Prophethood & Meccan Period
- ↳ Saeed: ch.1 (1-20, The Qur'an in its context)
- #8) Tue 9/22 Life of Muhammad: Madinan Period

- ↳ **Izutsu**: ch.5 (74-104, the Islamization of old Arab virtues)
- ↳ **Qur'an**: revelation/prophethood (42:51-3, 35:23-26, 11:12, 88:21-22, 22:52, 3:79, 21:7-9, 41:6, 17:90-5, 53:1-18)
- #9) Thu 9/24 Assembly and Promulgation of the Text
- ↳ **Saeed**: ch.3 (37-57, The Qur'an as scripture)

UNIT 4: COSMOLOGY OF THE QUR'AN (class #10-14)

#10) Tue 9/29 Cosmology: Beings

- ↳ **Saeed**: ch.4 (61-80, Major themes and text types)
- ↳ **Qur'an**: jinn (15:26-27, 18:50, 46:29-31, 55:14-15, 72:1-15)
- ↳ **Qur'an**: satan/shaytan (29:38, 17:53, 35:6, s.114, 6:43, 8:48, 28:15-16, 4:118-121)

#11) Thu 10/1 Cosmology: Relationships

- ↳ **Qur'an**: the created world, its purpose (51:56-7, 38:27, 23:115, 3:83, 17:44, 24:41-3)
- ↳ **Qur'an**: human nature (30:30, 95:4-5, 70:19-21, 4:128, 21:37, 11:9-10, 41:49-51)

#12) Tue 10/6 Cosmology: Sacred History

- ↳ **Qur'an**: sacred history (36:82, 2:117, 3:47 & 59, 6:1 & 73; covenant - 7:172)
- ↳ **Qur'an**: creation of world/in 6 days (21:30-35, 7:54, 10:3-6, 11:7); measuring time (32:5, 70:4-7)
- ↳ **Qur'an**: human creation/human nature (fitra) (6:2, 23:12-17, 15:26, 32:7-11, 55:14)
- ↳ **Journal entry 2 due on Canvas**

#13) Thu 10/8 Cosmology: Sacred History, contd.

- ↳ **Izutsu**: ch.6 (105-116, the basic moral dichotomy)
- ↳ **Qur'an**: end of the world/resurrection/judgement (50:20-35, s.81, 80:33-42, s.99, s.101, 69:13-32, 41:19-21, 39:67-75)

#14) Tue 10/13 The "signs" (ayat) of God; Qur'anic symbolism and parables

- ↳ **Qur'an**: nature signs/symbolism/parables (3:190-1, 22:73, 27:60-65, 29:41, 13:16, 14:24-7, 24:39-40, 75:36-40)
- ↳ **Saeed**: ch.2 (21-34, Revelation and the Qur'an)

UNIT 5: MAJOR FIGURES IN THE QUR'AN (class #15-20)

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

#15) Thu 10/15 Adam, Eve and Satan

- ↳ **Saeed**: ch.8 (143-156, The Qur'an and other scriptures)
- ↳ **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)
- ↳ **Stowasser**, ch.2 (25-38, Eve in the Qur'an and exegesis)

#16) Tue 10/20 **MIDTERM EXAM on Units 1 – 4**

#17) Thu 10/22 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)

#18) Tue 10/27 Abraham and family

- ↳ **Bible:** Gen 11-18, 21-22 (on Abraham & family)
- ↳ **Qur'an:** Abraham and family (6:74-83, 11:69-3, 19:41-50, 21:51-70, 37:83-113, 51:24-37)
- ↳ **Journal entry 3 due on Canvas**

#19) Thu 10/29 Moses, Aaron and Pharaoh

- ↳ **Bible:** Moses (Ex.1-20, 24, 31:12-3; Num. 11)
- ↳ **Qur'an:** Moses/Aaron/Pharaoh (7:103-156, 10:75-93, 26:10-68, 28:1-46, 20:1-98, 18:60-82, 44:17-33)

#20) Tue 11/3 Mary, John, Jesus

- ↳ **Stowasser,** ch.7 (67-82, Mary in the Qur'an and exegesis)
- ↳ **Qur'an:** Mary/John/Jesus (3:33-60, 4:157-9, 5:46-7, 5:109-18, 19:1-34, 43:63-5, 5:17)

UNIT 6: VIRTUE & ETHICS IN THE QUR'AN (class #21-23)

#21) Thu 11/5 Spiritual foundations of virtues and ethics

- ↳ **Izutsu:** ch.7 (119-155, the inner structure of the concept of kufr)
- ↳ **Qur'an:** ethical injunctions: 2:177, 6:151-153, 16:90-97, 17:26-37, 23:96, 31:14-9, 33:35, 42:36-9

#22) Tue 11/10 Key Qur'anic Virtues

- ↳ **Izutsu:** ch.8 (156-177, the semantic field of kufr)
- ↳ **Izutsu:** ch.9 (178-183, religious hypocrisy/nifaq)
- ↳ **Qur'an:** ethics and etiquette in speech (4:148, 49:11-12, 59:9-10); faithfulness/sincerity (3:76-77, 4:58, 5:89, 16:91-92, 16:94-95, 17:34-35)

#23) Thu 11/12 Etiquette in the Qur'an

- ↳ **Izutsu:** ch.10 (184-202, the believer/mu'min)
- ↳ **Qur'an:** etiquette with parents (4:1, 17:23-24, 29:8, 31:14-15, 46:15); etiquette with God/Prophet/religion (sincerity in religion - 6:68, 6:70, 7:29; visiting mosques - 9:17-19; reciting Qur'an - 7:204-5, 16:98, 73:20, 75:16-19, 5:101-102; with Prophet - 2:104, 9:61, 33:53/56); etiquette, generally (s.49, 58:11)
- ↳ **Journal entry 4 due on Canvas**

UNIT 7: QUR'ANIC LAW AND MODERN INTERPRETATION (class #24-28)

**#24) Tue 11/17 Moral (*shari'a*) concepts: halal/haram & the five values
Rules of Worship (*ibada*): Confession, Purity, and Prayer**

- ↳ **Izutsu:** ch.11 (204-249, good and bad)
- ↳ **Qur'an:** on prayer (salat): the command to pray (2:238, 11:114, 22:77, 29:45); the essence of prayer (17:110, 2:177); timings (17:78-9, 20:130, 30:17-8); Fridays (62:9-10); Ka'ba/qibla (2:144, 2:149-150)
- ↳ **Qur'an:** on fasting (sawm): fasting in Ramadan (2:183-185, 2:187); penitential fasting (2:196)

#25) Thu 11/19 Rules of Worship, contd: Charity, Fasting, and Pilgrimage

- ↳ **Saeed:** ch.9 (161-173, Ethico-legal teachings)
- ↳ **Qur'an:** on pilgrimage (hajj): procedures and conduct (2:196-203, 3:97, 5:1-2, 5:95-96)
- ↳ **Qur'an:** charity and principles (2:261-274, 90 (all), 107 (all)); trade/usury (riba)/debt (4:29, 2:275-6, 2:278-80, 3:130, 30:39, 83:1-6); gambling (2:219, 5:90-1); circulating wealth (9:60, 59:7, 17:26-9)

#26) Tue 11/24 Social Relations: Gender and Sexuality in Public Life

- ↳ **Saeed:** ch.10 (177-189, Selected exegetical principles and ideas)
- ↳ **Qur'an:** shared natures (4:1); idea of clothing (7:26-27); modesty/veiling/segregation (hijab) (24:30-31, 24:60, 33:32-33, 33:53-55, 33:59)

THANKSGIVING BREAK – THU 11/26 – SUN 11/29

#27) Tue 12/1 Social Relations: Gender and Sexuality in Private Life

- ↳ **Saeed:** ch.11 (193-215, Approaches to Qur'anic exegesis)
- ↳ **Qur'an:** kindness to females (4:127); marriage is love/mercy (30:21); marriage partners (2:221, 4:2-3, 4:22-25, 5:5, 24:32-33); marriage procedures (2:235, 4:25); marital life/treatment of wives (4:19-21, 4:34); marital sexuality (2:223); nursing (2:233); marital disputes/arbitration/fairness (4:35, 4:128-30); divorce procedures (2:228-232, 2:236-7, 65:1-2/4/6-7); fornication/penalty (17:32, 24:2-5)

#28) Thu 12/3 Modern Interpretation of the Qur'an

- ↳ **Saeed:** ch.12 (219-231, Modern interpretation of the Qur'an)
- ↳ **Journal entry 5 due on Canvas**

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.