

The Qur'an – Fall 2010

Banafsheh Madaninejad

TTh 11-12:30

UTC 3.124

Instructor: Banafsheh Madaninejad

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Discussions Sections: TBA

Course Description

Cross-listings:

ISL 340-2, MES 320, RS 325G, ARA 372, WGS 340, CL 323, CTI 375

In this course, we will study the religion of Islam through its sacred 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 themes of the Qur'an: *cosmology* (eg God, human nature, satan, and the afterlife), *ethical* principles, *ritual* prescriptions, and *legal* injunctions. We will also examine 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: those surrounding politics, intercommunal (i.e. interreligious) relations, and gender. Prior knowledge of Islam is helpful but not required for this course.

Undergraduate Requirements¹

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

Course grades will be based on a combination of quizzes, exams, and class participation, as follows:

3 quizzes, 13.3% each	= 40%
Midterm exam	= 25%
Final exam	= 25%
Class participation	= <u>10%</u>

Quizzes will normally be held at the start of class. There will be a **midterm exam** on the 19th class day, and a **final exam** on the last day. Be advised that quizzes and exams will be based on *both* class notes and readings. A failure to stay on top of course readings or attend class will result in poor grades. I will offer make-up quizzes and exams only for extenuating circumstances, at my discretion, if the reason is compelling and documented.

Your **class participation** grade depends on the following:

- **Attendance:** You are permitted 3 absences during the semester. Anything beyond that will 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.
- **Arriving 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.

¹ It is not possible to get graduate credit for this class.

- Being prepared, especially by having completed the readings beforehand. We will be engaging in group discussions at the beginning of many classes. *Please bring your Qur'an to class each day.*
- Demonstrating your preparedness by engaging with the material and participating in class discussion.

TA-led reading discussion sections: Your TA will organize discussions sections for the readings. These are not mandatory, but are *highly recommended* as ways to better grasp the course texts.

An encouragement to study together: I highly recommend getting to know some of your classmates in order to create a support network for yourself in this course, and to form study groups if possible. *If you are interested in being part of a study group, please contact your TA to be connected with others.*

IMP: You are responsible for being aware of 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 update your official UT email address and to check your email regularly. I will assume all Registrar-held email addresses are valid. Expect that I will check email from 9 to 5, only on weekdays.

Grading Rubric

<u>Average Grade</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Average 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-

Course Texts

- Toshihiko **Izutsu**, *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'an*. (McGills-Queens U Press, 2002)
- Jane D. **McAuliffe**, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Qur'an*. (Cambridge U Press, 2006)
- M. A. S. **Abdel Haleem**, tr., *The Qur'an*. (Oxford U Press, 2004)
- *Course packet readings*, including excerpts from the following:
 - Reuven **Firestone**. "Disparity and Resolution in the Quranic Teachings on War: A Reevaluation of a Traditional Problem." *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*. 56:1 (Jan, 1997) 1-19.
 - Hadia **Mubarak**. "Breaking the Interpretive Monopoly: A Re-Examination of Verse 4:34." *HAWWA* 2:3 (2004) 261-289.
 - Excerpts from Michael **Sells**. *Approaching the Qur'an: The Early Revelation*. White Cloud Press, 2000.
 - Excerpts 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.
- *The Bible*, any edition – this has not been ordered – students may use their own editions; searchable online versions found at www.biblegateway.com

Course Schedule

Unit 1: Introduction to the Course

1) Thu 8/26 Introduction to course topics, syllabus, readings

Concepts: revelation, scripture, author, oral text vs. written text

The Qur'an's self-representation; Muslim beliefs about the Qur'an

2) Tue 8/31 Introduction to Muslim world; basics of Islamic belief & practice; the Qur'an in Muslim life

Qur'an as symbol/talisman: ceremonial use and recitation of Qur'an

McAuliffe: Madigan, ch.4 (79-94, themes and topics of the Qur'an)

McAuliffe: Graham and Kermani, ch.6 (115-133, recitation and aesthetic reception)

Qur'an: revelation process (44:3-4, 2:185, s.97, 25:32, 17:105-6, 59:21, 85:21-22, 56:77-9)

3) Thu 9/2 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)

Qur'an: God/divine attributes and relationship b/w God and creation (2:255, 59:22-24, 6:12-14, 50:16,

24:35 & 40, s.112, 42:4-5, 19:88-93, 22:74-76, 28:88, 55:26-7, 3:27-27)

Unit 2: Style, Structure and Basic Features of the Text

4) Tue 9/7 Structure of the Qur'an; Style and content of the Qur'an

Structure: divisions, surah numbers/titles/order, indices/tables of contents

Style: linguistic/poetic features and literary genres/topics; translation/transliteration

Course packet: Nelson, ch.1 (1-13, history, nature & form of Qur'an)

McAuliffe: Neuwirth, ch.5 (97-111, structural, linguistic and literary features)

Qur'an: the created world, its purpose, all submitted to God (51:56-7, 38:27, 22:18, 23:115, 3:83, 17:44, 24:41)

5) Thu 9/9 Style/content contd; Translation/interpretation issues

Listening/discussion: Sells' recordings

Course packet: Sells, "Hearing the Qur'an" (145-180)

Qur'an: human creation/human nature (*fitra*) (creation process - 6:2, 23:12-15, 15:26, 55:14)

Unit 3: History of Revelation and Scripture

6) Tue 9/14 Life of Muhammad: From Birth to Prophethood & Meccan Period

Prophetic biography from birth to prophethood; Meccan prophetic period

Quiz on Units 1 & 2

Abdel Haleem/Qur'an: Introduction (ix-xxxviii, life of Muhammad and history of revelation)

Izutsu: ch.5 (74-104, the Islamization of old Arab virThus)

7) Thu 9/16 Life of Muhammad: Madinan Period

Madinan prophet from Hijra to death

Izutsu: ch.6 (105-116, the basic moral dichotomy)

Qur'an: human nature (30:30, 7:179, 95:4-5, 70:19-21, 4:128, 21:37, 11:8-10, 41:49-51)

8) Tue 9/21 Assembly and Promulgation of the Text

Writing, collection, canonization and promulgation of the text, during and after Muhammad's life

McAuliffe: Leemhuis, ch.7 (145-157, from palm leaves to the internet)

Qur'an: jinn (15:26-27, 18:50, 46:29-31, 55:14-15, s.72)

Unit 4: The Meccan Revelations: Style, Content & Symbolism

9) Thu 9/23 Structure, style and symbolism in Meccan verses

Discussion of Sells' translation

Course packet: Sells, 14-28 (the Meccan surahs)

Qur'an: satan, the enemy, deceives (43:62, 29:38, 12:5, 17:53, 35:6, s.114, 6:43, 8:48, 28:15, 4:118-121)

10) Tue 9/28 Cosmology: Beings

God, angels, humans, prophets, jinn/iblis, shaytan, other creatures/things;

Qur'an: sacred history/mythic narrative/eschatology (God creates/says "be!" - 36:82, 2:117, 3:47, 3:59, 6:73; covenant - 7:172)

Qur'an: creation of world/life on earth/in 6 days (21:30-34, 7:54, 10:3, 11:7, 25:59); measuring time (32:5, 70:4)

11) Thu 9/30 Cosmology: Relationships

relationship between God and creation (*ibada*); concept of *tawhid*

Qur'an: the concept of guidance (6:110, 4:115, 13:11, 8:53, 91:7-8, 22:46, 5:44-48/65-69)

12) Tue 10/5 Cosmology: Sacred History

Creation narratives/mythical timeline (creation, origin of life, making of adam/humans, the covenant, the first sin, the *dunya*, the breaking of the world, the judgment, the akhira/heaven/hell)

Qur'an: revelation/prophethood (42:51-2, 16:89, 28:75, 35:23, 11:12, 88:21-22, 22:52, 3:79, 14:11, 21:7-9 & 27-29, 41:6, 17:94-5, 53:1-18)

13) Thu 10/7 Cosmology: Sacred History, contd.

Qur'an: end of the world/resurrection/judgement (50:20-35, 79:34-5, 81:1-14, 80:33-42, s.99, s.101, 69:13-37, 41:19-22, 39:67-75); God's judgment b/w religious communities (22:17)

14) Tue 10/12 The "sign" (*ayah*) of God; Qur'anic symbolism and parables

The concept of guidance, signs in revelation, and in nature, history and ourselves; revelation/prophethood (*nabi*, *rasul*, Gabriel); prominent symbolism (e.g. water, fire, darkness, rock/ground, gardens); key 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)

Unit 5: Major Figures in the Qur'an (class #15-18)

15) Thu 10/14 Adam, Eve and Satan

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

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

Course packet: Stowasser, ch.2 (25-38, Eve in the Qur'an and exegesis)

16) Tue 10/19 Noah; Abraham and family

Quiz on Units 3 & 4

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)

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)

17) Thu 10/21 Moses, Aaron and Pharaoh; Solomon/Queen of Sheba

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)

Bible: Solomon (1 Kings 1, 3-5, 8, 10 – 11)

Qur'an: Solomon/Q of Sheba (34:10-17, 21:78-82, 27:15-44, 38:17-26)

18) Tue 10/26 Mary, John, Jesus

Course packet: 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)

19) Thu 10/28 MIDTERM EXAM on Units 1 – 5

Unit 6: Ethical Principles of the Qur'an

Concepts: *kufr*, *zulm*, *shirk*, *iman*, *shukr*, *husn*, *su'*, *taqwa*, *hudud*

20) Tue 11/2 Spiritual foundations of ethics

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

Qur'an: general/collective ethical injunctions: 2:177, 6:151-153, 16:90-97, 17:26-37, 23:96, 31:14-9, 33:35, 42:36-9

21) Thu 11/4 Spiritual foundations of ethics, contd.

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)

22) Tue 11/9 Virtues: generosity, bravery, trustworthiness, honesty, patience and justice

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

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

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)

Unit 7: The Madinan revelations: Moral law (class #23-28)

23) Thu 11/11 A: Family & Gender Relations

Topics: modesty/hijab, gender interactions

McAuliffe: Barlas, ch.12 (255-269, women's readings of the Qur'an)

Qur'an: idea of clothing (7:26-27); modesty/veiling/segregation (*hijab*) (24:30-31, 24:60, 33:32-33, 33:53-55, 33:59)

24) Tue 11/16 B: Family & Gender Relations, contd.

Topics: sexuality, marriage, divorce

Qur'an: sexuality, marriage, divorce: shared natures (4:1); 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/kindness to 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); widowhood (2:234); fornication/penalty (17:32, 24:2-5); interspousal accusation of fornication (24:6-9)

25) Thu 11/18 C: Intercommunal Relations (War & Peace)

Quiz on Units 6 and 7

Course packet: Firestone, 1-19, Qur'anic teachings on war

McAuliffe: McAuliffe, ch.9 (181-203, the tasks and traditions of interpretation)

Unit 8: The Exegetical Tradition, Past and Present

Trends/concepts: conservative/traditionalist, salafi/Islamist, modernist/liberal, progressive

Issues: gender/sexuality, (inter-)communalism/politics, science/rationalism

26) Tue 11/23 Case study #1: women and male authority

Concepts/methods: exegesis, tafsir/ta'wil, asbab al-nuzul, abrogation

Types of exegesis: legal/hadith/theological/mystical

Course packet: Mubarak, 261-288, interpreting Q 4:34

27) Thu 11/25 Thanksgiving Break

28) Tue 11/30

Case study #2: politics and warfare

Course evaluations

McAuliffe: Wild, ch.13 (273-287, political interpretation of the Qur'an)

29) Thu 12/2

Final Exam (during class time)