

# The Qur'an – Spring 2018 – Azam

TTH 2:00-3:15, PAR 1

CL 323.37, CTI 375.1, ISL 340.2, MEL 321.9, MES 342.16, RS 325G, & WGS 340.54

## INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Email: hina.azam@austin.utexas.edu

Office: CAL 506

Office Hrs: TTh 11:00 – 12:00 or by appt

## TEACHING ASSISTANT INFORMATION

Name: Jay Caballero

Email: jgcaballero1795@gmail.com

Discussions (optional): TTh 12:45-1:45 or by appt      Location: CAL 422

(Please note that Thurs discussion will not take place on 1/18 and 1/25.)

## 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](http://www.biblegateway.com).
- **Toshihiko Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'an*** (2002)
- **Abdullah Saeed, *The Qur'an: An Introduction*** (2008)
- Readings available in pdf on **Canvas**:
  - Excerpts from **Muhammad Abdel Haleem, *Understanding the Qur'an: Themes and Style*** (1999)
  - Excerpts from ***The Qur'an*, tr. Muhammad Abdel Haleem** (2005)
  - Excerpts from **Barbara F. Stowasser, *Women in the Qur'an, Traditions and Interpretations***. (Oxford U Press, 1996)
  - **Islamophobia selections**

## 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	= <u>18%</u>
	= 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 (one every six classes) 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 take into account 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.

### 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, except during the unit on comparative scriptures and during the last unit on Islamophobia.

**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 professor and the teaching assistant(s): Students should address the professor as "Dr. Azam" or "Prof. Azam." "Mrs. Azam," "Ms. Azam," and first-name address are not appropriate. The TA should also be addressed in a courteous manner, by name. "Hey" is inappropriate, as is omitting the salutation in writing, for both the professor and the TA.

**Note on TA discussion sections:** Your TA will hold 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	Tuesday 1/16
Spring Break	Monday 3/12 – Saturday 3/17
Last day of class	Thursday 5/3

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

### UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION to the COURSE (classes #1-2)

#1) Tue 1/16 Introductory lecture: course topics, syllabus, readings

#2) Thu 1/18 Introduction to Muslim world; the Qur'an in Muslim life and belief  
EL: Concepts of *iḥṣān* vs *ḍarar*, *ma'rūf* vs *munkar*; General Injunctions to *Iḥṣān*  
↳ Abdel Haleem, Introduction (ix-xxv) – pdf on Canvas  
↳ Qur'an: General Injunctions to Ihsan

### UNIT 2: STYLE, STRUCTURE and FEATURES of the TEXT (classes #3-5)

#3) Tue 1/23 Structure of the Qur'an; Style and content of the Qur'an  
EL: Comprehensive Injunctions to Ihsan

- ↳ Abdel Haleem, ch.1 (1-14, The Qur'an) – pdf on Canvas
- ↳ Qur'an; Comprehensive Injunctions to Ihsan
- ↳ Initial Writing Exercise due on Canvas

#4) Thu 1/25 Hearing, Reciting, and Translating the Qur'an  
Surahs “al-Balad” and “al-Ḍuḥā”

- ↳ Saeed: ch.7 (119-139, Translation of the Qur'an)
- ↳ Qur'an: Surahs *al-Balad* and *ad-Duha*, transliteration/translation

#5) Tue 1/30 The Qur'an's use of symbolism & parables; the “signs” (ayat) of God  
EL: Generosity/Charity/Alms – General Injunctions

- ↳ Izutsu: ch.3 (45-54, the pessimistic conception of the earthly life)
- ↳ Qur'an: Generosity/Charity/Alms – General Injunctions

### UNIT 3: MUHAMMAD, REVELATION and SCRIPTURE (classes #6-9)

#6) Thu 2/1 Pre-Islamic background of the Qur'an  
EL: Generosity/Charity/Alms – Specific Injunctions

- ↳ Izutsu: ch.4 (55-73, spirit of tribal solidarity)
- ↳ Qur'an: Generosity/Charity/Alms – Specific Injunctions
- ↳ Journal entry 1 due on Canvas

#7) Tue 2/6      **Life of Muhammad: Birth, Prophethood & Meccan Period**  
**EL: Protecting the Weak and Vulnerable**

- ↳ **Saeed**: ch.1 (1-20, The Qur'an in its context)
- ↳ **Qur'an**: Ihsan as Protecting the Weak and Vulnerable (esp orphans)

#8) Thu 2/8      **Life of Muhammad: Madinan Period**  
**EL: Good Treatment to Parents**

- ↳ **Izutsu**: ch.5 (74-104, the Islamization of old Arab virtues)
- ↳ **Qur'an**: Ihsan as Good Treatment to Parents

#9) Tue 2/13      **Assembly and Promulgation of the Text**  
**EL: Ihsan in Speech: Truthfulness/Fairness, vs Lying/Misrepresentation**

- ↳ **Saeed**: ch.3 (37-57, The Qur'an as scripture)
- ↳ **Qur'an**: Ihsan in Speech: Truthfulness/Fairness, vs Lying/Misrepresentation

#### **UNIT 4:      COSMOLOGY of the QUR'AN (classes #10-14)**

#10) Thu 2/15      **Cosmology: Beings**  
**EL: Ihsan in Speech: Kindness to the other's face**

- ↳ **Saeed**: ch.2 (21-34, Revelation and the Qur'an)
- ↳ **Qur'an**: Ihsan in Speech: Kindness to the other's face

#11) Tue 2/20      **Cosmology: Relationships Between Beings**  
**EL: Ihsan in Speech: Kindness behind the other's back (integrity)**

- ↳ **Saeed**: ch.4 (61-80, Major themes)
- ↳ **Qur'an**: Ihsan in Speech: Kindness behind the other's back (integrity)

#12) Thu 2/22      **Cosmology: Relationships Between Beings, contd.**  
**EL: Ihsan in Moneys: Against Fraud, Usury, and Misappropriation (inclg theft)**

- ↳ **Saeed**: ch.10 (177-189, Selected exegetical principles and ideas)
- ↳ **Qur'an**: Ihsan in Moneys: Against Fraud, Usury, and Misappropriation (inclg theft)
- ↳ **Journal entry 2 due on Canvas**

#13) Tue 2/27      **Cosmology: Sacred History**  
**EL: Ihsan as Preserving Life**

- ↳ **Izutsu**: ch.6 (105-116, the basic moral dichotomy)
- ↳ **Qur'an**: Ihsan as Preserving Life

#14) Thu 3/1      **Cosmology: Sacred History, contd.**  
**EL: Ihsan in Punishments**

- ↳ **Saeed**: start ch.11 (193-208, Medieval Qur'anic Exegesis)
- ↳ **Qur'an**: Ihsan as Punishments

## UNIT 5: PROPHET STORIES in the QUR'AN and the BIBLE (class #15-20)

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

#15) Tue 3/6 Adam, Eve and Satan  
EL: Concepts of Justice ('*adl*'/*adāla* & *qisṭ*) vs.  
injustice/oppression/cruelty (*zulm*, *baghy*)

- ↳ 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+ (20-38, Eve in the Qur'an and exegesis) – WGS

#16) Thu 3/8 **MIDTERM EXAM on Units 1 – 4**

### SPRING BREAK

#17) Tue 3/20 Noah  
EL: Enjoining Justice vs Injustice: General Injunctions

- ↳ 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)
- ↳ Qur'an: Justice vs Injustice: General Injunctions

#18) Thu 3/22 Abraham and family  
EL: Enjoining Justice vs Injustice: General Injunctions, contd

- ↳ 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)
- ↳ Qur'an: Justice vs Injustice: General Injunctions, contd
- ↳ Journal entry 3 due on Canvas

#19) Tue 3/27 Moses, Aaron and Pharaoh  
EL: Economic Justice

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

#20) Thu 3/29 Mary and Jesus  
EL: Procedural Justice

- ↳ 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, 33:45-60, 5:109-118, 43:63-65, 4:157-9, 5:17)
- ↳ Qur'an: Procedural Justice

**UNIT 6: CHARACTER FORMATION: VIRTUES, ETHICS, ETIQUETTE (class #21-23)**

**#21) Tue 4/3 Spiritual Foundations of Ethics: *Īmān*, *Shukr*, and *Kufr***  
**EL: Equality, Autonomy, Privacy**

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

↳ **Qur'an:** Equality, Autonomy, Privacy

**#22) Thu 4/5 The Qur'an on Character (Virtues and Vices) (*Akhlāq*)**  
**EL: Equality, Autonomy, Privacy, contd**

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

↳ **Izutsu:** ch.9 (178-183, religious hypocrisy/nifaq)

↳ **Qur'an:** Equality, Autonomy, Privacy, contd

**#23) Tue 4/10 The Qur'an on Etiquette and Good Character**  
**EL: Virtues (*akhlāq*) and Values: Humility and Self-Restraint**

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

↳ **Qur'an:** Akhlaq: Humility and Self-Restraint

**UNIT 7: MORALITY (*shari'a*): WORSHIP & GENDER/FAMILY (class #24-28)**

**#24) Thu 4/12 Moral (*shari'a*) concepts: halal/haram & the five values**  
**EL: Akhlaq: Integrity**

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

↳ **Qur'an:** Akhlaq: Integrity

↳ **Journal entry 4 due on Canvas**

**#25) Tue 4/17 Rules of Worship (*'ibada*): Confession, Purity, and Prayer**  
**EL: Akhlaq: Forgiveness, Reconciliation, Peace-Keeping**

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

↳ **Qur'an:** Akhlaq: Forgiveness, Reconciliation, Peace-Keeping

**#26) Thu 4/19 Rules of Worship, contd: Charity, Fasting, and Pilgrimage**  
**EL: Akhlaq: Moderation and not being Wasteful**

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

↳ **Qur'an:** Akhlaq: Moderation and not being Wasteful

**#27) Tue 4/24 Social Relations: Gender Relations in Public Life**  
**EL: Akhlaq: Chastity and Modesty**

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

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

↳ **Qur'an:** Akhlaq: Chastity & Modesty

#28) Thu 4/26      **Social Relations: Gender Relations in Private Life**

**EL: Akhlaq: Attitude toward & Interactions with Other Religions/Practitioners**

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

↳ **Qur'an**: Akhlaq: Attitude toward and Interactions with Other Religions/Practitioners

## **UNIT 8:      MODERN INTERPRETATIONS of the QUR'AN (classes #29-30)**

#29) Tue 5/1      **Anti-Muslim/Islamophobic Interpretations of the Qur'an, Part One**

**EL: War and Peace**

↳ **Islamophobia readings**: "Islam: A Religion of Peace?" – pdf on Canvas

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

#30) Thu 5/3      **Anti-Muslim/Islamophobic Interpretations of the Qur'an, Part Two**

↳ **Islamophobia readings**: "Deception, Lying, and Taqiyya" – pdf on Canvas

↳ **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.



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

### Initial writing exercise

**Prompt:** What type of ethical principles do you expect to find in the Qur'an? How might they be similar to or different from other principles, such as those one might find in the Bible, or in modernity? How might one apply a scriptural text from the remote past, and from a different society and culture, to contemporary problems and situations?

### Journal Entry #1 – Injunction to *iḥṣān*; 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.