

RELI 4302 Islam in the Modern World, Spring, 2013 Instructor: Dr. Godlas

Place: 219A Peabody Hall, 1:25- 2:15 pm, MWF

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Course Overview: Although it might seem that a class titled "Islam in the Modern World" should just cover the most significant facts about Islam today, in this class we will take a scientific, methodologically explicit approach understanding events in historical contexts and highlighting religious beliefs --using the methodologies of hermeneutical and religiological analysis--in order to reduce the distorting effects of self-ignorance and egotism, to decrease the potential for intercultural violence, and to increase the likelihood that students will understand with greater wisdom Islam, Muslims, and issues facing Muslims and Americans today.

Course Objectives:

- 1) To learn a methodology for the scholarly study of religions and beliefs in general and to apply it to our study of Islam in the Modern World and ourselves.
- 2) To gain a broad knowledge of many of the major events and issues in various regions where there are Muslims, including in the U.S.;
- 3) To learn a basic vocabulary of concepts and names that are crucial to understanding Islam and Muslims.

My Teaching Philosophy, its Significance, and This Course:

One of the major problems in our world today is unnecessary violence. Life in today's world can be both a beautiful and dangerous experience. One of the reasons why it is not as beautiful as it could be and more dangerous than it should be (although some degree of violence in dangerous situations and relationships may be necessary) is that people often relate to others and themselves with unnecessary degrees of violence because they lack sufficient valid information, understanding, and intelligence, especially emotional intelligence, regarding others viewpoints and their own biases (namely, even about students' own viewpoints!). In contrast, if they can gain greater degrees of these, their relationships to the world and other people will be governed by greater wisdom and less dominated by unnecessary violence. Unfortunately, although contemporary higher education emphasizes gaining valid information and thinking critically, it is deficient in helping students to cultivate understanding and to enhance their emotional intelligence (namely, for the most part it does not teach students how to utilize their own biases and emotions to enhance their thinking, problem solving abilities, and human relations). Hence, while this class pursues the traditional goals of any class on Islam in the modern world (such as providing students with valid information about Islam in the modern world and helping them to think critically about it), this class will also attempt to enhance students' ability to respect their own biases, and understand others and themselves as well as to enhance their own emotional intelligence—while students are studying Islam in the modern world. The means of achieving these goals will be an "ABC" holistic approach: "A," standing for "affective" (involving emotions and the enhancement of emotional intelligence); "B" referring to "behavior," (involving active engagement with texts and materials dealing with Islam in the modern world, rather than just passively listening to lectures); and "C" referring to "cognition" (involving facilitation of students' understanding through engaging in religiological analysis and cultivating hermeneutical understanding of beliefs of Muslims in the modern world and issues facing them and Americans in general). In this way, it is hoped that after completing this course, students will have become more empowered to make our world a less dangerous and more beautiful place by increasing the

likelihood that students will possess greater wisdom about themselves, Muslims, and Islam in the modern world.

Hermeneutical Understanding and Religiology Defined

By hermeneutical understanding, I mean a method of cultivating understanding of both one's own beliefs (whatever one's beliefs are) and the beliefs of the believers of the religions that you are studying (without necessarily sympathizing with other believers), a method that has the potential for diminishing unnecessary intercultural violence and moving the understanding of those who employ it closer to objective truth. This involves both historically contextualizing beliefs and learning and applying to the beliefs of others and oneself a *coherent, systematic, and relatively objective* analytical method for studying religious beliefs--a method (that I call religiology or religiological analysis) that focuses on the following categories of beliefs:

(a) **Epistemology**: Beliefs concerning the basis of knowledge (What do particular people believe they should rely on in order to gain valid knowledge? --with the subcategory of hermeneutical authority (i.e., interpretative authority): What do they believe they should rely on in order to understand and properly interpret that basis of knowledge?)

(b) **Ontology**: Beliefs concerning the nature of ultimate reality (What does someone believe is truly real? What do they believe are the major characteristics of ultimate reality? What is more real, less real? How is what is more real related to what is less real?) -- with subcategories of **Theology** [i.e., beliefs about God, (not simply does one believe in God... but it an individual or culture believes in God, what are God's qualities? How does God relate to existent beings?]; **Cosmology** [i.e., beliefs about the nature of created existence and degrees or levels of reality]; and **Eschatology** [i.e., beliefs about "end times" and an afterlife, What will be the nature of reality if and when the world as we know it ends?]

(c) **Anthropology**: Beliefs concerning the character of human nature, in general, and the identity of believers, in particular, as understood in the light of or in relation to that reality (Who are we as human beings? What does one believe are significant classes and identities, both as believers and non-believers? How are sexual/gender identities defined?)

(d) **Psychology** Beliefs concerning the nature of human psychology (What does our consciousness consist of? Namely, what are our faculties of consciousness? --e.g., mind, conscience, soul, etc.; and What are some of the major states or contents of consciousness? --some answers contemporary Western science gives are electro-chemical impulses, thoughts, and emotions such as love, sadness, happiness, depression, anger, ecstasy, etc.) --

(e) **Teleology** Beliefs concerning the purpose(s) of existence (What is/are the purpose(s) of existence in general? What are the purposes of human life? What is/are the purpose(s) or ultimate goal(s) of your individual life if you believe that there is no overriding purpose to human life?)

(f) **Methodology**, Beliefs concerning the way of life that leads to that attainment (How can we achieve the purpose? What are some of the major aspects of the method or way of life that leads to that attainment? --with the following methodological subcategories: social, political, military, legal, economic, religio-spiritual (e.g., means of worship and contemplation).

Major Obstacles and Solutions:

Even though most of you recognize that there is far too much unnecessary violence in our world and would like it to become a better place, I realize that at least five obstacles may hinder your enthusiastic embrace of this class and the method I am employing (for the ultimate purpose of helping the world become a better place): you may be anxious about the possibility that you may

not get an "A" or "B" in this class; you have only a limited amount of time; you may not understand how taking this class is going to help you "make a difference;" you may only be taking this class because it fulfills a requirement; and you may resent the fact that the class requires you to work each week (and not simply cram for exams). Although research in education clearly shows that in order for real learning to happen students must engage material that they are learning (rather than passively attempting to absorb it through simply listening to lectures, reading, and repeating it on exams), often students resentfully dismiss such engagement as "busy work" because they do not see its value and because it is a drain on their time. While I cannot lessen the amount of time your engaged writing assignments will take, I can certainly reward you for doing them by weighing the writing assignments heavily in the overall grade (40%) and by giving you an "A" (95%) for the writing assignments—as long as you do them on time, follow the instructions, and put into them college level thought and effort. In addition, since I have explained (under the "B" section of the ABC holistic approach) both how such engaged writing facilitates understanding and how in general learning the ABC holistic approach can enable you to play a part in both undermining some of the causes of unnecessary violence as well as making the world a more beautiful place to live, my hope is that this will increase the likelihood that you will appreciate the class. So if you can see the light at the end of this tunnel, I encourage you to take the class. If you cannot see it but want to see it, let's talk; maybe I'll be able to help you see it. If you can't see the point and thereby think the class will probably entail a lot of "busy work," I suggest that you not take this class.

Books: Required (available at bookstore at end of week 1 or during week 2; many can be bought cheaply at amazon, bookfinders.com, or as Kindle editions)

Nathan Lean, **The Islamophobia Industry: How the Right Manufactures Fear of Muslims**

Donohue & Esposito, **Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives**, second edition. (IT)

Khalid Abou El Fadl, **The Great Theft: Wrestling Islam from the Extremists**

Ayoob, **The Many Faces of Political Islam**

Curtis, **Muslims in America: A Short History**

Course Reader: Available at Bel-Jeans in Week 3.

Books: Recommended

Esposito, **What Everyone Needs to Know About Islam**, 2nd edition

Adeeb Khalid, **Islam after Communism**

Tariq Ramadan, **Islam and the Arab Awakening**

Mattu and Maznavi, **Love, Inshallah: The Secret Love Lives of American Muslim Women**

Requirements:

Elearning Commons: The only valid email address you can use for Elearning Commons is your UGA MyID. You have automatically been added to Elearning Commons. If you add during the drop add period, email me immediately so that I can add you to ELC.

WEEKLY READING ASSIGNMENTS: Do the assigned reading in the texts or Web pages on the days listed in the schedule.

TESTS: Closed book exams. No use of notes, books, or other written material will be permitted.

Format: Essay (covering ABC approach, Hermeneutical Understanding, Religiology), matching, and other objective questions. There are a lot of names and terms, many of which are from foreign languages, that you will need to learn. I recommend putting them on flashcards. A downloadable flashcard program employing the latest in learning research is <http://ichi2.net/anki/>.

MIDTERM: One midterm given on Monday Feb. 25. No makeup will be given without a dean's or doctor's excuse. If you do obtain such an excuse, you have three days after you return to make up the exam.

FINAL: The final exam will be on **Fri., May 3, 12:00 - 3:00 pm.**, in the regular class room. If you do not show up for the final exam you will receive an F for the exam. Make up final exams or incompletes can only be given if you have a dean's excuse. If you receive a D or an F on the final exam you will not be able to receive a score in the "A" range (i.e., neither an "A" nor an "A-") in your course grade, no matter how high your overall numerical grade is for the class (and no matter how much extra credit you have done). If you get a score in the D range on your final exam, the highest score for your overall grade for the class will be a B+; and if you receive an "F" range score for your final exam, the highest score for your overall grade for the class will be a B. If you receive an 89, 79, etc. for your final cumulative grade, there is nothing that can be done to bump your grade up to a higher grade.

ATTENDANCE: Attendance will only be taken each class period. You can miss three classes without penalty. But for every additional class that you miss, your participation grade will decrease (starting from 95%) by 5%. Simply showing up will be the primary basis for your participation grade. In addition, my assessment of the quality of a student's participation can increase a student's participation grade to 100% in the cases where the quality of a student's participation is outstanding in comparison to everyone else. In general, if you show up and speak with intelligence about that week's discussion topics and if you listen to and respond empathetically to your fellow students (rather than berating them or preaching to them), you will get a 95%. If you miss four or more classes without an excuse deemed reasonable by me, you may be dropped from the class.

CLASSROOM DISCUSSIONS, WEEKLY JOURNALS, & MISC. ASSIGNMENTS & PROJECTS

A) RELIGIOLOGICAL INTERVIEWS: (required)

Using the religiological method, you will do four religiological analyses based on four interviews. Specifically, first, you will analyze yourself regarding your own beliefs; then you will interview one male and female your own age and also one person of an older generation. If they answer you in brief answers, probe! Ask them to further explain what they mean if they use brief words or phrases such as "I'm a Christian (or Muslim, etc.)," "God is the creator," "family," "literal," "heart," or "to serve the Lord." The format of these should follow the religiological format, giving answers per each category. When writing these up and posting them, each category should be LABELED (e.g., "epistemology," etc.) not simply numbered or simply indicated by letters. Also, precede the answers by the questions you asked. In addition, keep your interviews separate from one another; in other words, DO NOT combine all of the epistemologies together, all of ontologies together, etc. The self-analysis will be discussed on Friday Jan. 11 (with responses to it posted by Monday, Jan 14). The others will be discussed and due on Monday, Jan. 14. Your responses to the analyses of others must be posted on ELearning Commons by Friday, Jan. 18. You must also respond to at least ONE other student's posting per topic. (This is different from the normal amount of ELearning Commons postings, which is that normally you respond to at least TWO entries of other students per topic.)

B) CLASSROOM DISCUSSIONS and WEEKLY JOURNALS (required)

During most weeks, on Friday of each week for 10-15 minutes (unless we are falling behind schedule or have a film), we will engage in small group discussions concerning the readings.. To insure that you will have something substantial to say, you will prepare, with a word processor, a minimum of ONE journal entry, roughly one-half page each, per the weekly assigned reading in

the required readings (RR); and you will bring this RR journal entry to class" and hand it in then. You will then post them (by copying and pasting them into the appropriate topic, NOT by attaching and uploading them) in the ELearning Commons discussion topics (minimum one per topic) and at least one response to others (see online discussion below). ELearning Commons discussion topics will be open on Sunday, Jan. 13. The page numbers that you will read for each topic and concerning which you will post will be noted there. So once you see the topics, the assignment will be clear. The form of the printed copy of each entry will be as follows:

At the top of the half-page, below your name type (using the numbering system below)

- 1a) week number and date of the entry
- b) name the reading, article, chapter, or url

Then in the body of the entry

- 1) On the first line above your quote, indicate the page number of the quote.
- 2) On the second line write the word "title" and afterwards, use a phrase or a few words relevant to the content of your entry in order to title it. (Do not use titles such as "Jim's entry for week.")
- 3) Type a quote that was of interest to you in that week's reading
- 4) **Religiologically analyze** by (a) labeling the religiological category to which you think it is relevant, (b) underlining the label; (c) below that, explaining the meaning of the quote or paraphrase, and (d) noting why you think that the quote is relevant to the particular religiological category, noting the religiological implications of the quote or paraphrase; and
- 5) **Increase your hermeneutical understanding** by (a) Explaining in some detail why your chosen quote interested you; (b) Briefly noting and discussing at least one aspect of your own beliefs in this particular religiological category.
- 6) **Enhance your emotional intelligence** by (a) noting the emotion or emotions that you feel while reading and writing about that quote, rating yourself on the mood meter, which will be discussed by Dr. Godlas; and (b) briefly speculating about the causes of these emotions, keeping in mind that the causes may be a mixture of both something related to the quote and circumstances in your life that you are going through that are irrelevant to the quote. (Note that this step, i.e., #6b, in the assignment is confidential. You are not required to post #6b on ELC. If you feel that writing about your emotions in #6a and #6b is too personal, then make up a fictional character and write about his/her emotions instead.)

N.B. (*nota bene*, i.e., Note well!): Beginning in week 2 until the end of week 5, these journals must be posted by Thursday night before Friday's class period so that you can have done them by the time of your discussion of them, in order to prepare you for your discussion of the readings in WW. (After week 5, you will bring them to class each Friday and post them on ELC but I will not collect them until the end.) If an emergency comes up making it impossible for you to hand them in to me on Friday, email them to me before the class. If the passage to which you are responding is longer than a paragraph, either summarize it or choose a particular portion to respond to. You will also hand these journals in to me on Friday, April 26. Note: you must print them from a word processing program, NOT from copies made off ELearning Commons, which will not be accepted.

C) **ONLINE DISCUSSION:** Using the ELearning Commons Bulletin Board

For the required readings (RR), beginning in week 3, you are required to do the following:

- 1) to post (by Thursday night when the reading will be discussed on Friday) your journal entries, at least ONE ENTRY PER TOPIC listed in the ELC discussion section. You do this by picking an appropriate phrase that describes the content of your posting and putting that phrase in the "subject box" of that week's discussion topic. ****By using a distinctive title for your posting, you**

will also be more likely to attract readers and responses. **Note: Please do NOT put your name in the subject box.** It is superfluous since the ELC will automatically note that you are the author by placing your name in the author column of the listing of everyone's discussion posting.

2) respond to at least TWO ENTRIES OF OTHER STUDENTS per topic. (You can post your responses to your fellow students until the Thursday of the following week.) Feel free to post and respond to more entries than are required, but NOTE WELL: if two other students have already posted their responses to one student, please respond to some other student's posting.

Your online discussion grade: If you post one meaningless response or a response that does not exhibit college-level thought, you will be warned. If you post two such responses, you will get a "0" for your total online discussion grade. I will determine whether or not your response is meaningless or does not exhibit college-level thought. Note also that your grade may be lowered if you wait until after your Thursday discussion session to post your own journals or if you wait longer than a week afterwards to respond to your fellow students' postings.

Grading:

Note: If you show up to class, follow the instructions for the writing assignments, and do them with college level effort and quality, you will get an "A" (95%) for 60% of your grade. (Truly extraordinary writing may receive higher than a 95%.)

Journals: 30%: (ELC posting and discussion: 20%; printed and handed in when noted above: 10%).

Class participation and misc. assignments: 10%

Test 1: 20 %

Test 2: 20%

Final exam 20%

Extra Credit assignment: to be determined, depending on the assignment.

Grading Letter to Number Equivalencies:

| Letter | Number | Letter | Number | Letter | Number |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| A | 92-100 | A- | 90-91 | | |
| B+ | 88-89 | B | 82-87 | B- | 80-81 |
| C+ | 78-79 | C | 72-77 | C- | 70-71 |
| D | 60-69 | F | < 60 | | |

Make-up and tests: Make-up test are only possible with a "reasonable" excuse. *NOTE: the professor will have the final word whether the excuse is "reasonable" or not.*

WEEKLY SCHEDULE an asterisk (*) below indicates the weeks when we will have regular lesson quizzes (on Monday).

1) January 7-11

Intro to course methodology, Religiological self-Interviews (see above).

*Esposito, "10 Things Everyone Needs to Know about Islam,"

<http://www.teachmideast.org/essays/35-religion/58-ten-things-to-know-about-islam>

2) January 14-18 Islam overview, Religiological interviews of others (see above).

Read by the end of the second week, Aug. 23 the follow:

(a)*Article by Prof. John Voll, "Islam" (Surveys Islamic history)

http://www.cqpress.com/context/articles/epr_islam.html (Professor Voll teaches at George Washington University. This article was published in Congressional Quarterly, 2001.) A term sheet for this article will be posted on ELC on Aug. 22.

(b) *Kaltner, "Talking With Churches About Islam," (Professor Kaltner teaches at Rhodes College in Memphis, TN. The article is on a Christian website, the Congregational Resource Guide.) <http://www.congregationalresources.org/talking-churches-about-islam>

3) January 21-25 Monday Jan 21st, Holiday

Wednesday, Jan. 23, test

4) Jan 28- Feb 1, Islamophobia

5) February 04-08 Islamophobia cont. & Islam in Transition readings.

6) February 11-15 Great Theft & IT readings

7) February 18-22 Great Theft & IT readings

8) February 25- March 1, midterm Monday Feb. 25. Many Faces of Political Islam (MFPI) & IT readings

9) March 4-8 Many Faces of Political Islam (MFPI) & IT readings

Spring Break March 11-15

10) March 18-22. Many Faces of Political Islam (MFPI) & IT readings

11) March 25- March 29 Many Faces of Political Islam (MFPI) & IT readings

12) April 1- April 5 Many Faces of Political Islam (MFPI) & IT readings

13) April 8- April 12 Muslims in America & IT readings

14) April 15- April 19 Muslims in America & IT readings

15) April 22- April 26 Review

16) April 29 Monday, Last day of classes, review.

Final exam: Fri., May 3, 12:00 - 3:00 pm. (This is from the University Mandated Final Exam Schedule it can only be changed if you have three exams on that day.)

Note: Additional readings from course packet and chapter and pages will be added in the second week and posted on ELC

Honesty Policy: The UGA Academic Honesty Policy will be followed. In other words, all academic work must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty." Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. The link to more detailed information about academic honesty can be found at <http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/honesty/acadhon.htm>

Changes to this Syllabus: The instructor reserves the right to make any changes to this syllabus. The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary. Changes will be posted on Elearning Commons.